

out there who I really admire: Tina Fey, Amy Poehler, the *Broad City* girls [Abbi Abrams and Ilana Wexler], Lena Dunham and Kathryn Bigelow. I don't know, it just seems like it's happening."

Ironically, Gosling was given the opportunity to set hearts aflutter as Noah in *The Notebook* because director Nick Cassavetes didn't want a 'traditional' leading man.

"I never had an opportunity in my life like *The Notebook* until then, and that was because the director wanted me because I wasn't some kind of heart-throb," he explains, looking every inch the off-duty movie star with his casual-chic navy knit and stubble. "He wanted me because he thought I was crazy enough to do these crazy things and he, for whatever reason, felt like I was just more of a regular guy and not the kind of guy you would see in a movie like that."

And how does his popularity with women sit with him now?

"Ahh..." Gosling squirms in his chair. "I don't know how to answer that. I really don't."

After a bit more probing (and a lot more squirming), he says,

"I'VE ALWAYS BEEN A LITTLE MORE CONFIDENT THAN MY TALENT WARRANTED: 'FAKE IT 'TIL YOU MAKE IT'"

finally, "You know, I've been on the flip side of it. Growing up, you know? It... [searching for words] ...it definitely wasn't always this way. And I remember what it was like when it wasn't this way [laughs], so I guess, you know, it's just... ah, but I don't know how to answer that question."

Before, he says, he could never get an audition as the guy who got the girl. He was always up for roles as the best friend or the weirdo.

Perhaps that's the reason you're seen as the thinking woman's crumpet? I ask.

"Crumpet?" he says with distaste. "That's a first. I don't know how I feel about that... *That* I have a strong feeling against."

Not into being a crumpet?

"That's not hard to answer," he laughs. "Crumpet's got to go."

Fair enough. Buttery breakfast foods aside, I think Gosling's individuality, rather than being the generic jock type, is part of his appeal, I say.

"Yeah, growing up, I never played sports," he agrees. "And I guess, growing up, the guys girls liked were jocks or, you know, that sort of thing, and because I never did that; I was in dance class and things like that. Also, I just grew up around a lot of girls. I was [involved] in a lot of their conversations about guys and I found it frustrating because I felt like I must not be a threat if they're being so open in front of me. That used to bother me [laughs]. Yeah, that bothered me. I didn't like that."

No doubt Gosling picked up some helpful information during those formative years as a fly on the wall. He has, after all, snagged the very talented and beautiful Mendes, with whom he lives in Los Angeles, with their daughter.

How did he find directing someone he's in a relationship with?

"Well, and I'm not trying to avoid the question, but everybody in this film, for the most part, I had worked with before. For me, it was crucial to work in this intimate, low-budget, small way, with people I had worked with before, because I feel like in my experience that's where everyone was at their best. So, it helped, was the answer to that question," he says.

There wasn't any kind of lack of professional respect because you have that intimacy?

"No, there's more," he says. "Because they know what is at stake for you personally, and all the work that's gone into getting there."

Their low budget meant that making the film was a collaborative process, he says. One day, Gosling, Mendes and the costume designer went to the Salvation Army to fill garbage bags of clothes, from which the actors could choose their costumes.

"[Eva] picked this gold sequinned jacket," he says. "Matt Smith saw destiny staring him in the face and he made that his character's uniform. And that happened a lot in the film, where she indirectly picked things that became very important to different people involved. Never wanting credit. She hates credit and she'll even be mad that I'm giving her that credit. But she was very helpful in so many ways."

It may have been a team effort, but along with writing and directing *Lost River*, Gosling also wrote and performed a song on the soundtrack. It's not his first foray into music. He had a band called Dead Man's Bones a few years back (now "six feet under"

he says). But his musical talent is probably no surprise given he got his start in showbiz alongside Justin Timberlake and Britney Spears as a Mouseketeer in *The Mickey Mouse Club*. Recently, a video of him dancing in the early '90s, showing rampant enthusiasm and wearing MC Hammer-style pants, has been doing the rounds on social media (it can be found on YouTube).

The videos are "hilarious" he says, but also great evidence for why he used to get into fights when he was young.

"If you watch those videos, you see how you might want to take the confidence out of that kid a little bit," Gosling explains. "I've always been a little more confident than my talent warranted: 'fake it 'til you make it' philosophy."

Sure, they're funny, but he clearly has rhythm.

"I had my little hustle," he laughs. "Everyone's got to do their shimmy shimmy ya."

The man's a triple threat, then. So would he ever consider doing a musical?

"Yeah," he laughs. "Maybe not [re-]creating those moves specifically, but I do love Gene Kelly and *Singin' in the Rain* and *An American in Paris*, those styles of musicals. Busby Berkeley, I'm a huge fan of."

I think we'd all like to see a sequel to that video, though.

"Right, yeah, maybe I can do some kind of *Magic Mike* thing where I revisit that," he chuckles.

Not long after this conversation, it's announced that Gosling will star opposite Emma Stone in a musical directed by *Whiplash* director Damien Chazelle, called *La La Land*. It's not the story we had workshopped, but I think we can all settle for the duo being reunited for a film filled with scenes where Gosling catches her *Dirty Dancing*-style.

And luckily for his loyal army of fans, though Gosling will "absolutely" direct again, he has no plans to disappear behind the camera for good. "I've always admired actors who directed and directors who acted, and I feel like for me it feels very natural to do both," he says. **S**

*Lost River* is available to buy on DVD from June 17.

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