

Rare Breed

MOVIE STAR, ATHLEISURE MOGUL, INSTAGRAM SENSATION, *NEW YORK TIMES* BEST-SELLING BODY-POSITIVE-BOOK AUTHOR. IS THERE ANYTHING THIS SINGLE MOTHER CAN'T (OR WON'T) DO? WELL, MAYBE—**KATE HUDSON** SOUNDS OFF ON MOM/WORK BALANCE AND THE MYTH OF PERFECT PARENTING

by **AMY SYNNOTT**
photographed by **GREG KADEL**
styled by **MELISSA RUBINI**



Giambattista Valli
Haute Couture
embroidered
macramé gown.
Dior Haute Couture
gold-finished and
palladium-finished rings,
worn throughout.



Chanel Haute Couture
Embroidered tunic with floral garland and dégradé paillettes.
Jemma Wynne
sapphire, diamond, blackened pavé diamond, and 18kt white gold bar stud.

Opposite:
Giorgio Armani Privé
silk gazar dress.
Boucheron
diamond and 18kt pink gold ring (middle finger), worn throughout.



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Kate Hudson is running a bit behind schedule. She has just spent the past eight hours posing on the side of a cliff in the Pacific Palisades wearing a series of couture dresses that are worth, collectively, more than most anyone makes in a year. The shoot was supposed to have ended an hour ago, but when you're in dresses like these, why would you want to rush—and why should you? “I definitely need this one for my Snap[chat],” she says with a playful smirk. She emerges from her dressing area into the California sunshine in a stunning macramé Giambattista Valli gown with an asymmetrical hem and a distinctly bridal feel. She's walking slowly, with a tiny, almost imperceptible lift at the end of each step, as if she's walking down the aisle. Before the official picture is taken, she will have produced a spontaneous “snap” that involves her longtime stylist David Babaii chasing after her as she scampers about the yard, laughing and posing amid the lush blooms of this idyllic estate.

It's close to 6 P.M. by the time the shoot wraps up, and Hudson is scheduled to attend the Saint Laurent fashion show (a one-night-only event at L.A.'s Palladium) and needs to leave in 30 minutes. “Do you mind talking to me while I get my hair and makeup done?” Hudson asks politely, scurrying into the house in a strapless lavender confection from Armani. Moments later she emerges, swaddled in a fluffy white robe, and takes a seat in a dining room chair near the window. As makeup artist Angela Levin dabs cover-up under her eyes and Babaii works a

**Schiaparelli
Haute Couture**
silk gown with
wheat-fiber
waistcoat.



curling iron through her perfectly tousled bob, she tells me about the first time she met Garry Marshall, the director of her new comedy, *Mother's Day*. "He directed my mom in *Overboard* [1987], so I used to visit them all the time on the set when I was little." And did her own kids come to see her on the set this time? "Of course," she says, as if I had asked if her right leg spent much quality time with her left leg. "And it was just amazing to watch that circle of life."

As Hudson starts talking about her close relationship with her two boys, Ryder, 12 (from her first marriage to Black Crowes frontman Chris Robinson), and Bing, 4 (dad is Muse singer Matthew Bellamy), I'm reminded of that scene in *Mean Girls* in which Amy Poehler tries to bond with her daughter and her daughter's friends, saying, "I'm not a regular mom. I'm a cool mom." Only in Hudson's case, she really is *that* cool—the kind of mom who brings her kids to the premiere of *Kung Fu Panda 3* one day and attempts to teach them Transcendental Meditation the next. And, despite the many projects she is currently juggling—*Mother's Day*, a book tour for her new wellness primer, *Pretty Happy* (Dey Street Books), her role as co-founder of Fabletics—Hudson still manages to find time to dance around the house with her kids almost every day. In fact, many of the family's spontaneous performances have been captured on Instagram, where Ryder can be seen dancing the Nae Nae as a big brown bear or tearing it up to Fetty Wap's "Trap Queen." "When we do something, he's the first person to say, 'Mom, you gotta post that,'" she says.

It's a rare mother who can hold her own in a dance-off with a 12-year-old, I point out. "I was really young, like, 23, when I had Ryder," she says. "So our relationship has always been [a little unusual]. I mean, we're close, and I am his mom. I'm big on manners. I'm big on politeness. I'm big on gratitude. But I'm a bit of a wild mom."

"A wild mom?" I ask.

"Yeah, as strict as I am when it comes to things like manners, Ryder sometimes has to put me in check. He and I are like *buddies*. He'll turn to me and say, 'Mom, you're crazy for going out in that outfit.'"

A passing glance at Hudson's Instagram reveals that she has a booming social life—and there's nothing mumsy about her fashion choices. As FOMO-inducing shot after shot at-tests, Hudson is part of an L.A. girl squad that would give Regina George and her gang whiplash. "I kind of like that we're intimidating," she says of the posse that includes (among others) actress Sara Foster, jewelry designer Jennifer Meyer, and multihyphenate Nicole Richie. "You know, when you see a group of girls walk in that are having more fun than anyone?" Hudson, who joined Instagram in 2014, says she loves sharing intimate snapshots of her life with

her 3.8 million followers. "Someone asked me, 'Who does your Insta? It's great!' And I was like, 'Are you out of your mind? I wouldn't want anyone to touch my social media!'"

One thing she's not particularly interested in sharing with the social universe? Her relationship status. Though the star is rumored to be dating Nick Jonas, she is tight-lipped on the subject. "Am I single?" she repeats my question out loud, smiling privately to herself, before saying very slowly and deliberately, "Yes, I am." When I ask her how she deals with the constant public scrutiny of her personal life, she laughs. "It really feels like high school. I can't say hello to anybody without [people speculating we're together]. I don't comment when I'm single because some of them are right, some of them are wrong. But I end up with everybody anyway! I've been linked to every one of my brother's best friends. We're going to do a coffee-table book of all of my 'mystery men.'"

Just then, Bing bounds into the room with Hudson's assistant. He's dressed in an almost all-black ensemble, with a skeleton emblazoned across his T-shirt. "He's really got his own little style," she says proudly, flashing him the same dazzling smile that's helped turn many a frothy rom-com into blockbusters. Without missing a beat, he climbs onto her lap and she pulls him close, her long, flawlessly manicured mauve nails disappearing into a mop of sandy brown hair as he nuzzles his head against her chest. A delicate gold necklace (made by Meyer) inscribed with the words "I love you" sparkles in the dim light above his head as she explains that she won't be putting him to bed tonight because she has to go to a "silly fashion show."

"Hold on a second while I change," she says to me, dashing into the bathroom carrying a short black leather mini-skirt and sheer top. Seconds later, she flings open the door. "Can someone help me with this zipper?" she calls out. I am standing right there, so I offer to help. It won't budge. She pushes the sides together even closer, and I pull a little harder. Suddenly, it moves. For a moment, there is a sense of relief. And then we realize the pull has flown right off the teeth. "Well, that decides it," Hudson says. "I can't go. Guess what, Bing? I am going to put you to bed tonight."

After gamely posing for a selfie, Hudson says her good-byes and I get into my car. I am mortified, both for busting her zipper and for crushing her plans for the evening. Hours later, pictures of Justin Bieber and Lady Gaga whooping it up at the Saint Laurent show will be plastered all over social media. But as I dart through the streets of Santa Monica, replaying the tape of our interview and hearing the happiness in her voice as she talks about her two boys, I can't help but wonder if a broken zipper—and a cozy bedtime snuggle—isn't just what she really wanted after all.

“I’m big on manners.
I’m big on politeness.
I’m big on gratitude.”

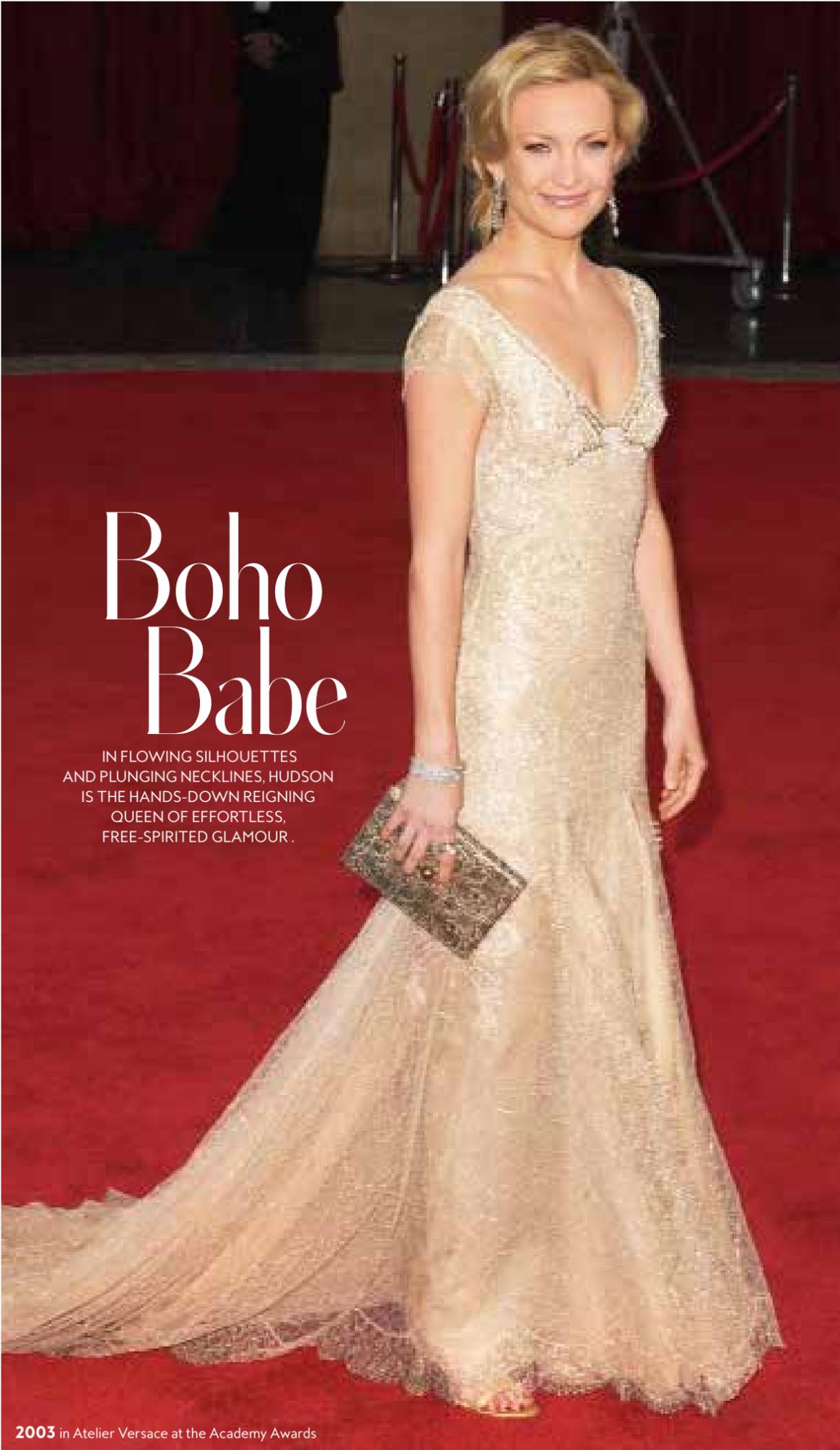


Valentino
Haute Couture
velvet plissé dress.

Hair: David Babaii for Tracey Mattingly. **Makeup:** Angela Levin for Tracey Mattingly. **Manicure:** Ashlie Johnson for The Wall Group. **Set and floral design:** Bette Adams for Mary Howard Studio.

Boho Babe

IN FLOWING SILHOUETTES AND PLUNGING NECKLINES, HUDSON IS THE HANDS-DOWN REIGNING QUEEN OF EFFORTLESS, FREE-SPIRITED GLAMOUR.



2003 in Atelier Versace at the Academy Awards



2010 in Emilio Pucci at the SAG Awards



2014



2014



2015



2005 in Roberto Cavalli at the premiere of *The Skeleton Key*



2013 in Alexander McQueen at the Golden Globe Awards



2003 in Valentino at the Golden Globe Awards



2012 in Atelier Versace at the Vanity Fair Oscar Party



2012 in Prabal Gurung at amfAR's Inspiration Gala



2015 in Giles at the InStyle Awards



2007 in Dior at Christian Dior's 60th anniversary

Sometimes I Feel Like a Bad Mom



THOUGHTS FROM A SINGLE WORKING MOTHER OF TWO.

BY KATE HUDSON

Yep, it's true. I figured I may as well just come right out and say it. I also have a feeling that many women reading this will be nodding their heads with a hint of a smile, knowing EXACTLY what I'm talking about. Sometimes I feel like a bad mom!

When *InStyle* asked me if I would be interested in writing a first-person essay for my cover story, I was incredibly excited. A bit nervous, as my personal writing style may be more suited for a publication like *The Atlantic*, but I have a strong feeling all the women who read *InStyle* will embrace the contents of this essay.

I actually struggled about which direction I wanted to go in for this. It is the Mother's Day issue, so a love letter to my mom could have been appropriate—but that seemed too easy. Summer is almost here, so I thought maybe something geared toward my love of travel, but that feels like a snooze-fest of a read. I then, literally, wrote this very feminist essay that is now neatly tucked away in my computer because it just felt a little too heavy-handed. I mean, it's summertime, for goodness' sake. I'll save my feisty feminist for October!

So I ruminated and ruminated.

Meanwhile, the writer for *InStyle* who is penning the supplement accompanying my essay was asking me a few questions. I don't mean this in any way negative, but it was questions I get quite often, which I understand, as it seems to be what most people are interested in hearing about.

Question: HOW DO YOU BALANCE IT ALL? The dreaded question. One I feel I never answer properly. A question I wonder if anyone truly has any answer to. I don't balance it all. Some days I feel incredibly overwhelmed. Some days I don't. Some days I feel like I should win best mom of the day award, and some days I find myself doing strange things that don't have any real purpose, in faraway corners in my house, and I realize I am literally and deliberately hiding from my children.

Question: DO YOU HELP THEM WITH THEIR HOMEWORK OR ARE THEY PRETTY INDEPENDENT? Oh, man, now this just triggers every mom-guilt bone in my body. Yes, I help my kids with their homework. But I also get bored doing it. I

will sit and listen to my children pontificate and discuss their ideas till the day is long because it warms my heart, but I really don't want to do math! I'm gonna say it: I'd prefer to watch *The Bachelor* rather than do fractions and divisions.

The questions I've gotten from other writers over the years go on and on. DO I COOK DINNER EVERY NIGHT? HOW DO I STAY IN TOUCH WITH THEM WHEN I'M GONE? DO I HAVE A RULE ABOUT HOW LONG I ALLOW MYSELF TO BE AWAY FROM THEM? DO I DO MY OWN GROCERY SHOPPING? I always answer them very politically because context is important and the power of the pen is real. I never want anyone taking my words and changing them to fit their construct because I make a real practice in my life of being true to my world. And when it comes to my kids, and the most important job I have, which is being a parent, if I'm gonna break it down, it will be from my mouth to God's ears, or in this case, my pen to the readers of *InStyle*.

And here it is, more often than not, when I have finished these interviews talking about my personal life: I feel like I could be doing so much more as a mother. And it's a constant, even when I've just dedicated an entire week to nothing but being Mom, which is challenging. As I am self-sustaining and my work rarely stops, I always feel I could be doing more. And the funny thing is, when it comes to your own kids, you always can be doing more.

Even as I write this, I am traveling for a week away from my children to promote my book, *Pretty Happy*, and I'm so happy to have some time to myself and excited to have this experience. But there's this tight, pulling sensation that never goes away that it comes at the cost of missing a week of my children's lives, and it aches.

I know what some will say: Quit, then—if it hurts so bad, then why do you choose to do it? *Ahhhhh*, I love that question. Because I do know that answer!

I do it because I love it. Because even though every primal ounce of the nurturing, domestic woman in me gets pulled, I'm a hunter as well. And I love to hunt! And as a woman I feel that somehow we are supposed to feel apologetic about wanting both. But I don't want to apologize for that anymore. Being both already comes at an emotional



Hudson with Ryder (left) and Bing in January at the premiere of *Kung Fu Panda 3*. "My boys are very different, but they both have swagger," she says.

cost, without adding society's antiquated idea of the traditional roles of man and woman in the home. Not to say that I don't have those days that I envy the stay-at-home mom and days I envy the mom who is so involved in her kids' school she would never miss a school event. Then, in a moment of feeling overwhelmed or stressed, I do think maybe I should just stop. But I'd be lying to myself. I wouldn't be the best mom I could be if I didn't follow my creative endeavors. I would feel an emptiness that would be felt in our home. So a stay-at-home mom will never be my life and that will never be my kids' experience of me.

Hopefully, I can give them something different. Not better, not to be compared, just different. Hopefully, something that will inspire more women to feel comfortable being a domestic hunter. I'm kinda liking the sound of that ... Something

that will take the sting away from women who carry this similar guilt. Hopefully, I can give my kids the same sense of healthy attachment, even though my job requires distance. Hopefully, I can show them a sense of their own freedom and that following a dream and a passion can bring much happiness into their lives. Hopefully, I can show them that with some sacrifices comes great reward. Hopefully, I am creating an environment for them to feel that they are my absolute priority no matter what. Yes, I may be that mom on FaceTime watching my son's science presentation from 6,000 miles away. But it's midnight where I am, and I'm on that phone and maybe ... just maybe ... my kids will find inspiration in their mom, who's trying to juggle a million plates but still shows up however she can. Maybe that will warm their hearts just as much as the kids whose moms are there. Maybe it's not me being a bad mom, just a different kind of mom.

It's up in the air; it could go either way, and I will continue doing the best I can. But if Ryder's Mother's Day present two years ago is any indication, it's looking like I might be on the right track. I can be proud of "World's Okayest Mom," but I'm more proud that my son is funny. Laughter will take me and my kids really far, so I'll cheers to that!

To all my moms everywhere, stay-at-home moms, working moms, dad-moms, mom-dads, whatever kind of mom you are, here's to doing the best we know how, and here's to the greatest, most complex role we'll ever play!

Happy Mother's Day. ■