

education • career • lifestyle

september 2005

choices

for life!

Demystifying Entrepreneurship

It's a way of life!

A Stroke of 'Madness'

Nominated MP Dr Tan Sze Wee
on doing business and more...

Hats Off!

Turn heads with eye-catching caps

So Bad, She's Good!

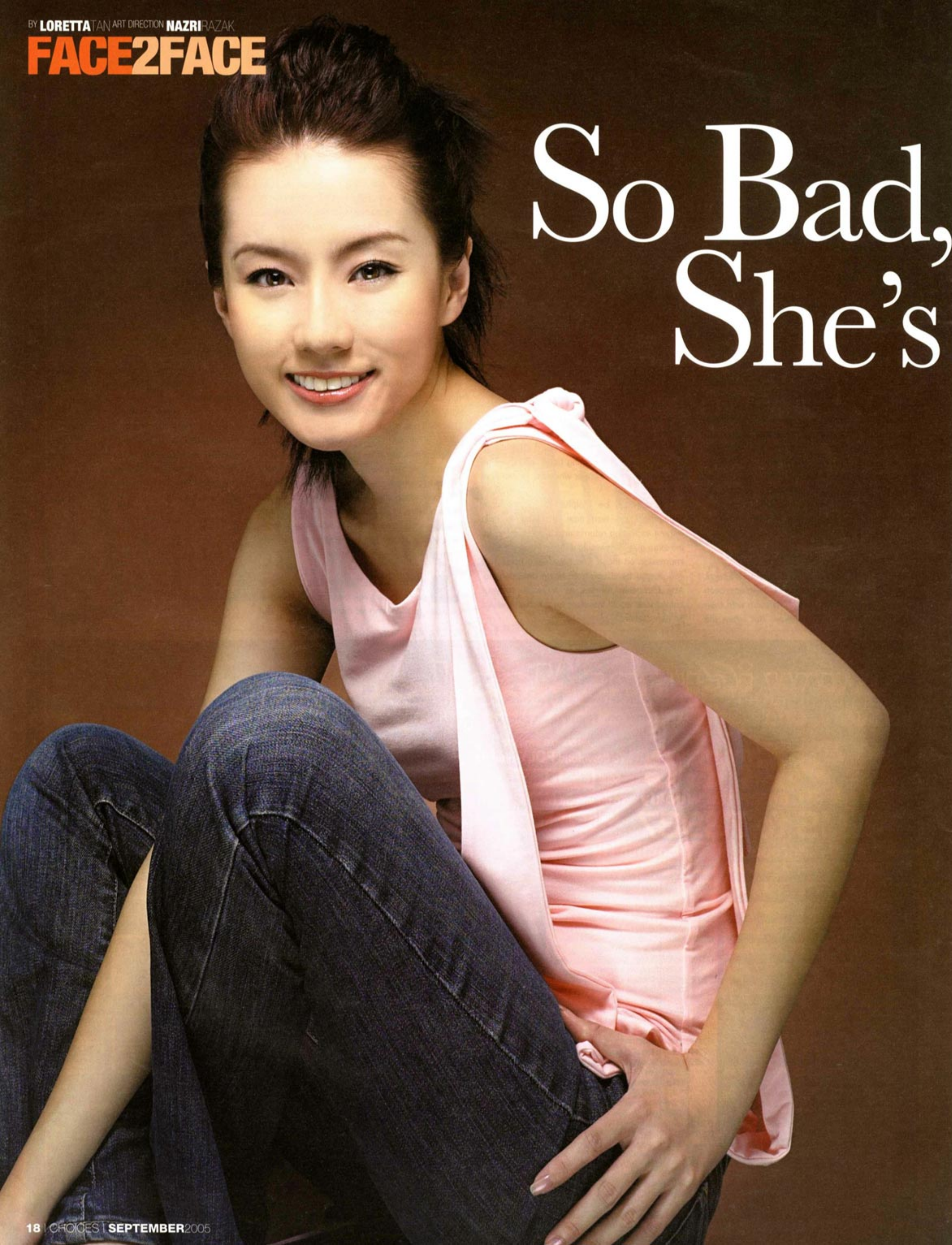
Face2Face with 'villain' Yvonne Lim

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+ many more attractive prizes
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So Bad, She's Good!

Face2Face with 'villain' Yvonne Lim

In the recent drama serial *Portrait of Home*, Yvonne Lim's portrayal of the detestable Fyn (a mutant of Glenn Close in *Fatal Attraction*) is so compelling that her friends sent her "hate" text messages!

"I would receive SMS-es from my friends who told me they hated me. I got so worried I called them, only to have them tell me that it is Fyn they detest!"

It sure looks like this sweet young thing can also ruffle a few feathers. In fact, she is elated when I tell her that even veteran actress Xiang Yun commended her acting, "Fyn is a very difficult role but Yvonne took it on and played it very well. You really want to hate this woman. For an actress to take on such a challenging role with so much gusto, it is a clear signal that Yvonne has really come into her own."

Without a doubt, Fyn is a ground-breaking role for Yvonne as she now has, for the first time, people on the street coming up to tell her that she is so bad, she is good!

"It is a real challenge and risk playing Fyn as I could not decide if I wanted to be a successful actress or a likeable artiste. A successful actress meant that you must play your character to such a despicable extent that your viewers hate you ... but a likeable artiste had to play the sweet innocent thing in order to get your fans to like you!"

Thankfully, Singaporean audiences are very discerning. They know that Fyn is not Yvonne. And it is comments like these that really make Yvonne's day and inspire her to work even harder!

The \$2 Meal That Made a Big Deal

Like most celebrities, Yvonne chanced upon her luminous career in the media. As a fresh-faced part-time model, Yvonne's gamine features and photogenic appeal was noted by many of her stylist and hairdresser friends. In fact, she was 1st runner-up in the Miss Singapore Polytechnic Pageant and a finalist in the Go Cover Girl contest.

They encouraged her to take part in the now defunct Star Search contest. However, being shy and introverted, Yvonne declined but eventually submitted her application after seeing herself on a MacDonald's ad. She laughingly recalls, "In my first ever TV commercial, I played the McDonald's girl that served the \$2 McChicken

meal. I saw myself on TV and thought, 'Hey maybe I am telegenic after all!'"

With that affirmation, Yvonne sent in her application and made her debut in Star Search 1997. Whilst Yvonne only managed a finalist placing, her good looks and credible acting ability appealed to the masses and she was cast as the lead in the serial *Starting Point*.

Reel versus Real: Starting Point

Ironically, the serial was a starting point for Yvonne. The light-hearted drama cemented Yvonne's credibility as a young star in the making. Fans and pundits alike saw her as the "next big thing" and billed her as the successor to MediaCorp's evergreen darling Fann Wong. Undaunted by the pressures of a burgeoning career, Yvonne aims to hone her acting craft and resolves to make every day and every experience a learning journey.

"*Starting Point* was such a good training ground for me. The director, cast, cameramen and crew were all very understanding with us newbies and gave us good advice. The production schedule was very tight and I barely caught forty winks, but I kept telling myself that I had to focus on producing an end product that I would be proud of!"

Life is No Smooth Operator – But Enjoy the Ride!

In the demanding showbiz industry, the ability to sniff out an opportunity is vital to one's survival. One must dare to take up a challenge and face the unknown, like what Yvonne did.

"When I graduated from Singapore Polytechnic, I wanted to continue to study in University of Bath or Glasgow University. However, Star Search happened and the next thing I knew, I was asked to join the then Television Corporation

of Singapore (TCS). The decision was hard to make, but I knew that I only had this one chance and I had to take it and make it work!"

Sounds every inch the entrepreneur. I venture to query if Yvonne sees herself as one who epitomises the "can-do" spirit...

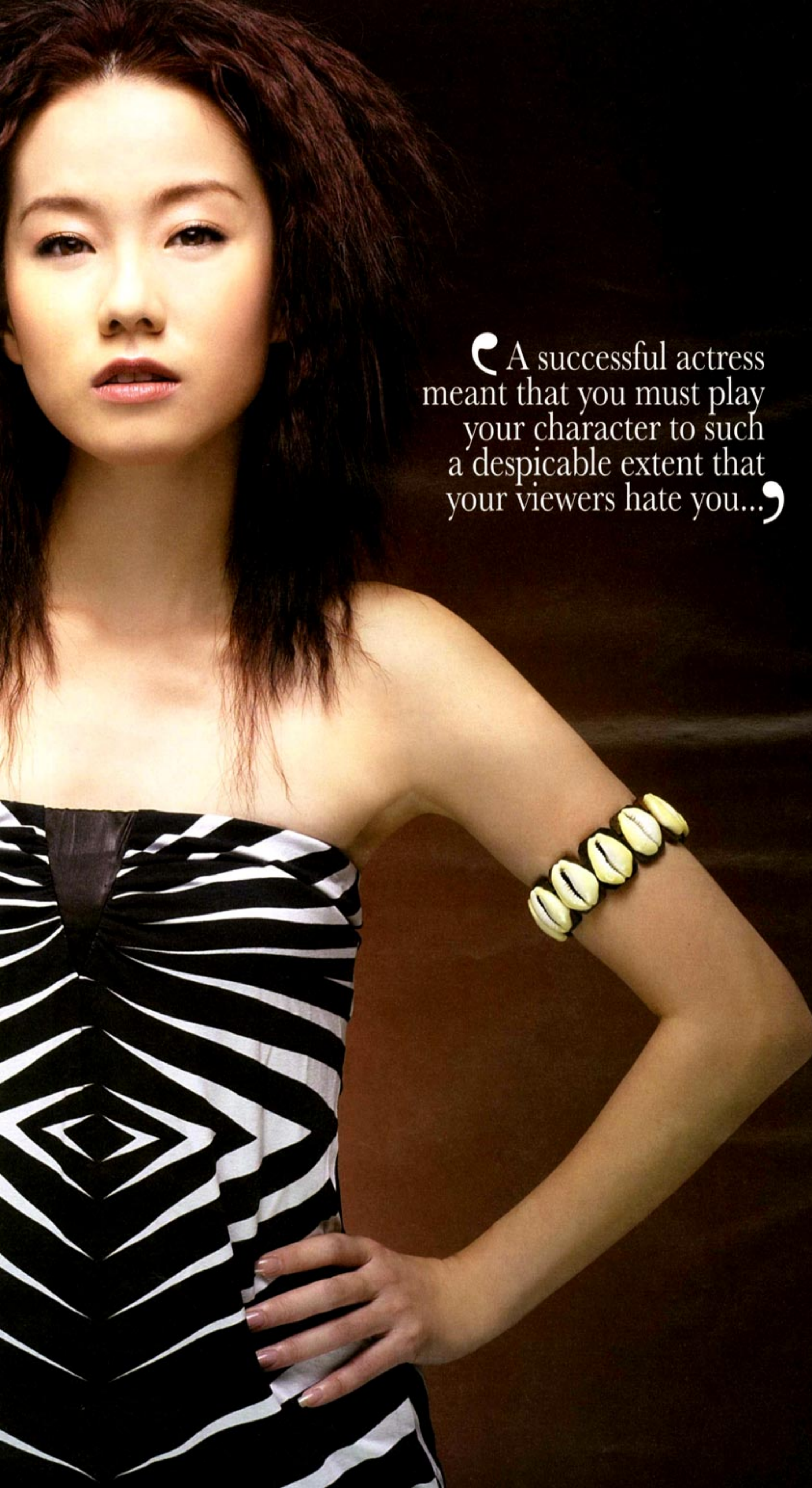
"Entrepreneurship is essentially 50 per cent risk-taking and 50 per cent hard work. If you take the risk, then you must make the risk pay off by working very hard. Based on this definition, you can say I am an entrepreneur. That is the attitude I take to everything that I do."

Maiden Voyage to China

Prophetic. In end-2003, Yvonne was faced with a dilemma. She was given a chance to further her career in China and was hard-pressed to make a decision.

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“A successful actress meant that you must play your character to such a despicable extent that your viewers hate you...”

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“Tempting as it was to branch out to China, it also meant that I would not be in touch with my local fan base and this could lead to a decline in my popularity. However, I plucked up the courage to venture abroad to try out something new. And guess what? It all paid off! Not only did I mature as a person and as an actress through my interactions with the Chinese, I was also pleasantly surprised to be nominated as Top 10 Most Popular Artist that year when I was not in Singapore!”

Undoubtedly, her experience in China made her stronger and more independent. “Being away from home meant you are completely responsible for your actions. In addition, I also saw myself as being on a ‘scholarship’ – I felt that I owed it to the company and to my family and supporters to work hard and not let them down.”

I Just Want to be Happy

Talking to Yvonne is like – for lack of a better phrase – talking to an old friend. (Yvonne and yours truly were good friends throughout our St Theresa’s Convent days and have remained buddies for over a decade.)

Our friendship notwithstanding, her girlish charm is evident and infectious. On the day of the photo shoot, Yvonne came down with a nasty bout of flu but persisted like a true professional. Despite her ailment, she came into the room exuding simple elegance and sporting a spunky attitude to the day ahead.

One could not help but think that Yvonne must be the consummate convent girl par excellence, giving the CHIJ motto “Simple In Virtue, Steadfast in Duty” a whole new twist.

Finally, from one convent girl to another, I ask her, “What would you say if you had a chance to meet God?”

“Wow! I will want to say so many things! I will ask Him to first stop all the wars, restore peace, eradicate poverty and make the world a better place. And then I will start asking all the ‘why’ questions – why did you make my life this way, why didn’t you make me richer and my life easier? And can you please grant me more wishes... because human beings are all greedy, right? (Grins)... But seriously, when I really do meet God, I will just ask for one thing – to be happy.”

See I told you. Beyond all the glamour and glitz, Yvonne is really your typical girl-next-door – simple in virtue, steadfast in duty. Venus in blue jeans. 