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HER SHOCKING
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COSMO EXCLUSIVE

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WAS GAY"**

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Collins' Ex Speaks Out

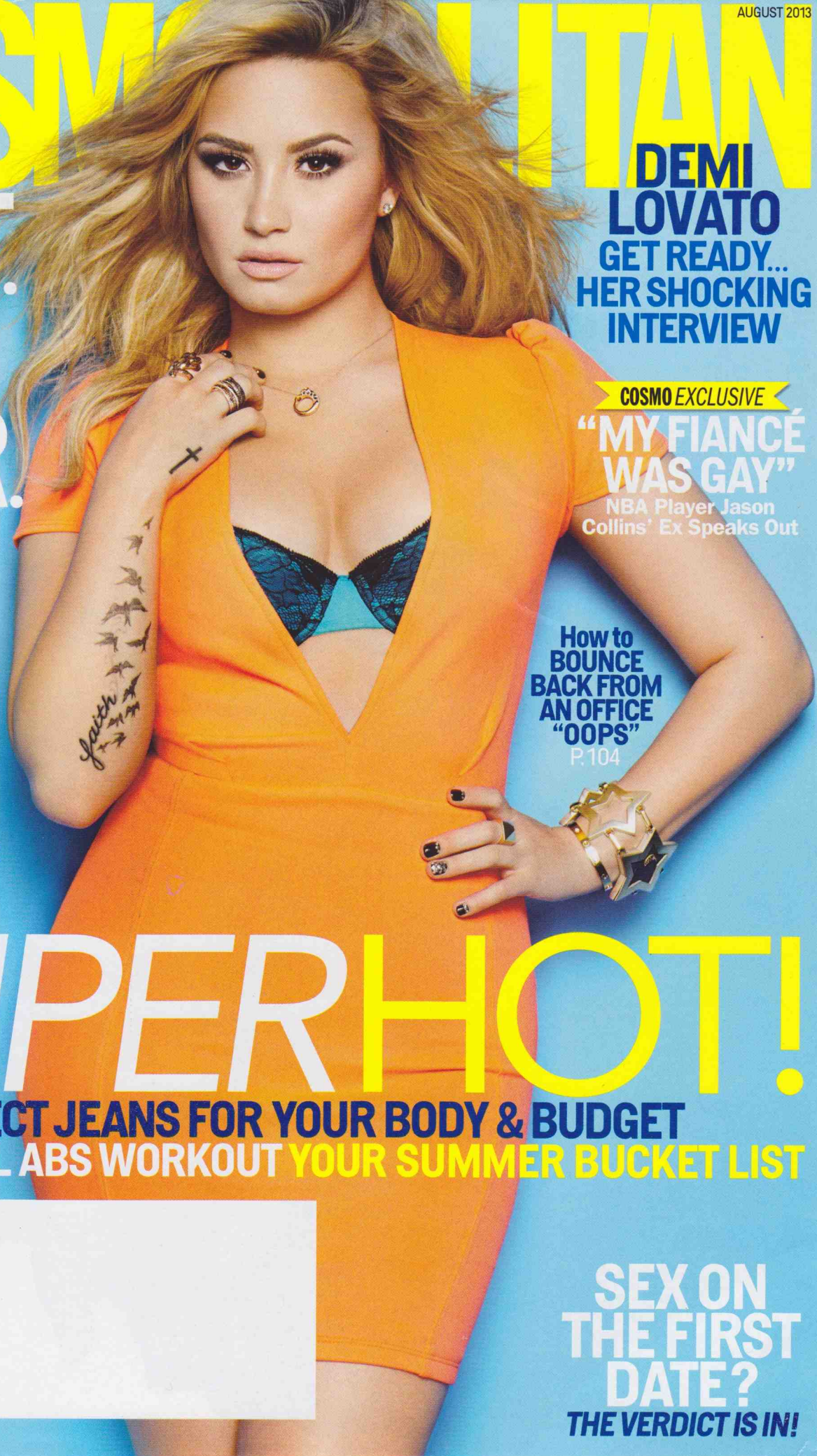
How to
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DEMI TURNS 21

At an age when most women are just starting out, Demi Lovato is starting fresh. Celebrating a big birthday and her biggest album ever, she opens up about accomplishing so much at an impossibly young age...and the tough lessons she has learned along the way.

By Logan Hill

As she pulls up to a skyscraper on Manhattan's rain-slicked Hudson Street, Demi Lovato, ascendant pop idol, is confidently rocking all black in the back of a black Lincoln SUV: zippered skintight pants, studded rocker boots, and a leather jacket covered in so many metal studs, it's practically weaponized.

"It's a new beginning for me," she says, as fans juggle umbrellas on the other side of the car's rain-streaked windows. "A year and a half ago, I was frustrated," she admits—although not for the reasons you might expect.

"I was like, there are people on the radio and they're not even singing—it's all Auto-Tuned, and I *know* I can sing. It's taken me three albums to figure out what works for me."

"It's the next chapter," Lovato says as she hops out of the car, signs autographs with an extra-smiley face for each fan, and poses for photos (even retaking an iPhone photo for a mom whose shot turned out blurry). Last year, she roared back from her struggles with bulimia and self-harming with hit singles "Skyscraper" and "Give Your Heart a



Blazer: Calvin Klein;
gold bangle worn
throughout: Lovato's own
Cartier bracelet; chain ID
bracelet: Ann Dexter-
Jones Design

PHOTOGRAPHED BY MATT JONES
FASHION EDITOR: AYA KANAI

**"EVEN
BEFORE
BARNEY,
I WAS
SUICIDAL.
I WAS 7."**

auditioned for lead roles in the Disney musical *Camp Rock* and the series *Sonny With a Chance*—and won both parts. She enjoyed the fame and the fun but also buckled under the constant scrutiny of her body and personality. Her battles with bulimia and cutting are well-documented, as is the time she punched a backup dancer.

"I just had the idea in my head that I was on the Disney Channel, so somehow I had to prove that I was a badass. So on the weekends, I'd go crazy," she says. "There were

moments when I was at parties and would laugh, like, 'Yeah, I'm such a role model,'" Lovato remembers. "Looking back, how disrespectful to the people who you are a role model to and the parents who are letting their children trust you."

This is the most fired up I'll see Lovato all day. She starts talking and doesn't stop for several minutes—it's clear she's thought hard about what kind of star she wants to be. "When I look at someone who's out there partying excessively or rappers rapping about doing drugs, who people look up to, and think, Oh that's a G; that's a gangster. I think, You're actually being a giant pussy. Sorry, but those rockers in the '80s were the furthest thing from rock stars. They were so insecure and so lonely that they had to do these things to get them through the day."

"If you're spending your entire early 20s chasing the next party, what are you running away from?" she continues. "That's not a badass. What's badass is when you can sit through your problems and feel emotions when you don't want to have them. There have been nights where I've had to sit on my hands, because I want to act out, because I physically can't sit still in the pain I'm dealing with, from looking back and being bullied or other things that happened. And now, as hard as it may be, I will do that. That's what makes me a badass. Being a badass is handling your shit."

By her own definition, being a badass also means fighting through your bad days, and Lovato, like anyone, still has them. This winter, she broke her leg. "I gained weight 'cause I wasn't able to work out," she says, back in the SUV after another round of radio interviews and finally headed home for the day. "I stayed on the couch. My body-image issues flared up. And I just got depressed."

Not long ago, Lovato might have unraveled. "A year ago, I may have purged, I may have restricted, I may have done...something," she pauses. "But I don't have that option anymore. It's not even like, Well, if I throw up one time, it's not gonna be a huge deal.... That thought can't go

Jacket: DSquared2;
black bustier: Marciano;
necklace and rose gold
panther-paw ring:
Effy; gold two-finger
ring: Emar Batalha

**Yep, definitely
badass.**

Dress: Omo
Norma
Kamali

Break," recasting her image as a big-voiced power-pop vocalist. At about the same time, she was cast on *The X Factor* as the show's youngest judge and the only person sassy enough to spar with Simon Cowell. Her new album, *Demi*, is stacked with radio-friendly singles, including the smash "Heart Attack," which, like most songs on the album, she cowrote. Lovato did it all while living in a sober living house, her home until just a few months ago.

Health is a priority. Global superstardom is the plan. Today, she's in the middle of a monthlong stretch that will take her to Singapore, Manila, Jakarta, Moscow, Barbados, and New York City for a riot of TV and radio spots, photo spreads, and packed concerts. Escorted by her manager, assistant, guard, and pint-size mother, Lovato heads up to the offices of New York's 92.3 NOW, where a banner calls her the Queen of Pop. She laughs, tosses her hair back, and kicks out a hip to show off her butt. Snap. Her 13.4 million Lovatics retweet the photo more than 34,000 times.

Thirty minutes later, she's wrapped up interviews with three different radio shows, munching on a few handfuls of a Texas favorite, turkey jerky, for energy. I tell her that, to an outsider, the pace is crazy. Lovato, a 20-year-old who has been working for 13 years, shrugs.

Station managers usher in two dozen contest winners, who shake with excitement every time Lovato speaks. I ask one shy 14-year-old what her favorite Lovato lyric is. She names "Skyscraper," about standing tall in the face of bullies. "Every time I'm having a hard time," she says, "I just think, 'Stay strong.'"

Actually, *Stay strong* isn't a Lovato lyric at all—it's the tattoos (*Stay* on the left wrist, *Strong* on the right) that Lovato got to cover up what she's called the battle scars from her years of self-harming. "I got them in North Hollywood, right after I got out of treatment [in 2011]," she says. "I thought, there's no better place for a former cutter to get a tattoo than on a place where they used to self-harm." In a way, it's a Batman-like origin story: The moment she got those

tattoos, she transformed from a perfect Disney star whom other girls aspired to be into something more interesting: a girl they felt they knew, a survivor.

"I'm not super religious, but I grew up Christian and I believe in God," Lovato says a few minutes later, back in the Lincoln. "When I'm in L.A., I don't talk about it that much because people are very judgmental, but I just feel like God gave me a voice, not just to sing with. He put me through those things, which seemed horrible at the time, but they were so worth it. With the obstacles I've overcome, I can help people."

Lovato has always felt like she had a purpose. Arms wrapped around her legs as she takes a break in a downtown hotel room, she says, "I remember reading about Shirley Temple and looking up at God and being like, Okay, I'm 5. I'm ready."

At the same time, she was a little girl whose parents divorced when she was 2 and whose mother—a former Dallas Cowboys cheerleader-turned-secretary—married her boss when Demi was 4. "She was a single mom living in the ghetto of Dallas, and he took her in," Lovato says. "I remember walking into his house the first day—he had all-white carpet, and the first thing I did was spill a glass of red Kool-Aid. Like, Oh my god, I just ruined this guy's mansion. And it kept happening."

When she turned 7, she got her first gig, on *Barney & Friends*, dancing with that giant purple dinosaur and a tiny pixie of a girl named Selena Gomez. Every day, the girls sang the same song—and every time that "I love you, you love me" song would end with the same needy little plea, "Won't you say you love me too?" Lovato admits that "Barney could be a little codependent," but she needed love too. Badly.

"At the time, I was just so grateful to be on TV, but I also was really struggling," she says. "Looking back, there was a connection, probably between any kid who's ever sang that song to Barney, a little place in a child's heart, a void, that could be filled. And maybe Barney fills it. Even before *Barney*, I was suicidal.



I was 7. With Barney, I guess subliminally, I did have a relationship with this figure that was saving my life in a way."

Looking out the window into the drizzle, Lovato adds, "I've talked about being bullied and the years of being a teenager," she says, "but I went through things when I was younger that I've never talked about that probably caused me to turn out the way I ended up turning out."

Lovato has divulged more than most celebrities, but she's still holding something back. She won't say why she would feel suicidal at such a young age. And she tenses up when pressed for details about exactly what kind of pain she's confronting in "Warrior" when she sings, "There's a part of me I can't get back / A little girl grew up too fast / All it took was once, I'll never be the same / Now I'm taking back my life today."

"My family knows what it's about," she says. "When I'm ready to open up that subject with the outside world, then I'll be free to talk about it. But right now, it's kind of one of those things where the lyrics speak for me. It's all in the song."

Whatever troubles were there didn't stop her success: On the same day in 2007, Lovato, not yet 15,

HAIR: ADIRABERGEL AT STARWORKSARTISTS.COM. MAKEUP: KRISTOFERBUCKLE FOR BENEFIT COSMETICS AT CROSBY CARTER MANAGEMENT. MANICURE: JULIE KANDALEC FOR CHANEL BEAUTÉ. SEE PAGE 234 FOR SHOPPING INFORMATION.

through my head, because if I do that, everything will spiral out of control. There are bad days, bad weeks, but I don't allow myself the option of falling back."

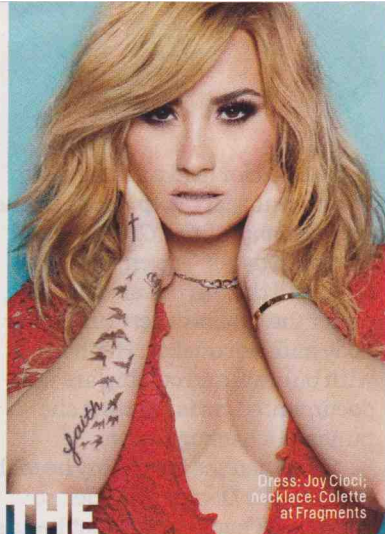
Instead, she says, "I totally allow myself to cry my eyes out, and I allow myself to open up to people and ask for help." She relies on her recovery team, her counselor, her family, and her best friends—who are not, contrary to her public image, red-carpet buddies. "I have two incredibly close amazing friends who are not celebrities, who wouldn't mind hanging out with my family and my dogs," she says. "Those are the types of friends that I would have, rather than those who just want to use me. I had to learn that the hard way."

As for her romantic life, she's keeping it private. "If I'm dating someone, you may see me out," she says, "but until I'm marriage-serious, I probably won't walk the red carpet with anyone." The album is stacked with emotional breakup songs. "On the last album, I was still a little numb and just wanting to stay positive and not tap into that pain or those emotional issues," she says. "On this album, I was able to release some stuff that had built up."

The album, magnified by her plum TV gig, has the potential to push Lovato to the next level. So 2013 will be a very big year, not least because in August, she will turn 21.

If celebrations are hard for anyone in recovery, the 21st birthday of a pop star is especially dangerous turf. "It's socially acceptable for people on their 21st birthday to just go out and get drunk," she says. Instead, she'll celebrate in Kenya with her family and the charity Free the Children. "I'm not gonna lie, it's gonna hurt a little bit," she says, looking out the car window, maybe at all the bars and clubs whizzing by. "Sometimes, I wake up and I'm like, Why can't I be normal? Why can't I just.... You know...? But I can't. So I don't."

"I look at birthdays as celebrating another year of your life," she says, smiling. "You've made it another year. An entire year." The last year could have turned out very differently. "Some people," she says, "don't make it to 21." ■



Dress: Joy Clozi; necklace: Colette at Fragments

THE COSMO QUIZ

Name: Demi Lovato

Nickname: Demi or just D!

My favorite feature is:

My skin & my booty and I play it up by wearing tight jeans or dresses



My ultimate beauty icon is:

Kate Winslet

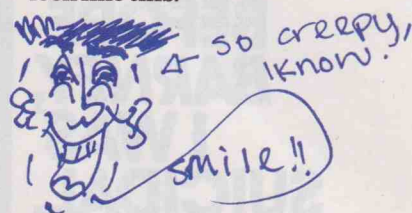
The nicest thing I've heard Simon Cowell say is:

He told me "skyscraper" is one of the best pop songs of all time.

My first kiss was:

awkward!

My notebook doodles always look like this:



My biggest celebrity crush is:

Rihanna & Amber Heard



J-Depp also loves her.

We want a duet!

My biggest turn-off is:

small talk and guys that drink too much. Pot heads!! so gross.

The funniest fan mail/tweet I've gotten said:

trending topic said "LESBIANS FOR DEMI" ♥

The app I can't live without is:

Unblock me or snapchat



girl power!!



The newest X Factor judges are Paulina Rubio and Kelly Rowland (far left).