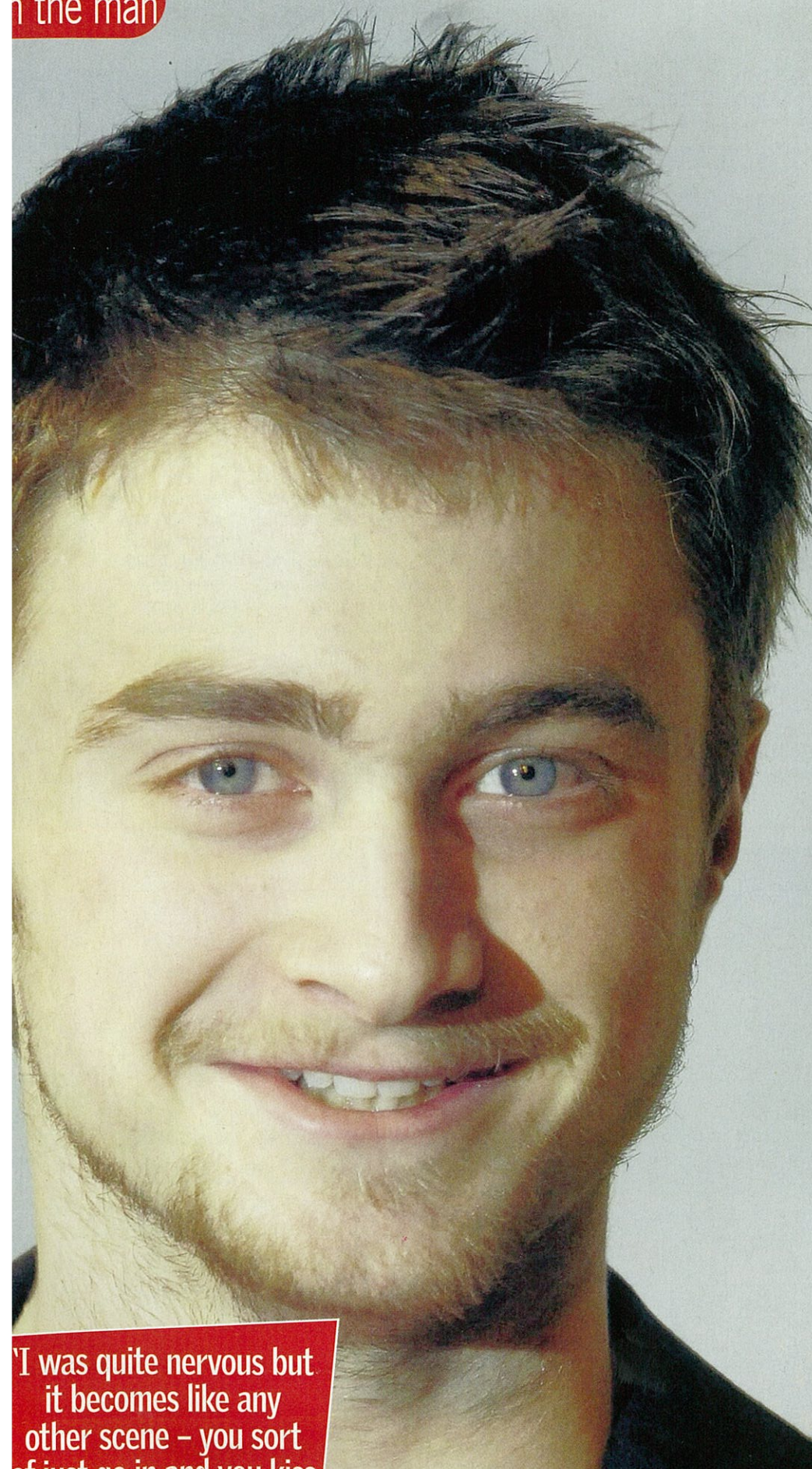


n the man



LOOKING down at my note pad I highlight a message on the top of the page - 'Don't call him Harry.'

Daniel Radcliffe is world-famous for his role as the boy wizard Harry Potter, but in the last year he has made a desperate attempt to break away from the fairytale character and I don't want to ruffle any feathers - or cloaks - by mixing the two of them up.

While talking about his new film *December Boys*, Radcliffe is impeccably polite and looks younger than his 18 years in a childish black t-shirt with cartoon moths on it.

It has been a big year for the young star, not only has he had his first kiss as the boy wizard Harry Potter, he also stripped naked on stage in *Equus* and had his first steamy love scene in his latest film *December Boys*.

Last year, Radcliffe stripped off his Harry Potter glasses and exposed his wand for his London stage debut *Equus*.

At only 17, he flashed his naked body to a packed audience each night for 10 whole minutes sending shockwaves across the world and upsetting Warner Brothers - the makers of the Potter series.

A spokesperson for Warner Bros said at the time: "Warner Bros have been building up their publicity machine for Harry's first - chaste - screen kiss when the next Potter film comes out in the summer.

"Now our star is out there doing full-frontal scenes. We've been blown completely out of the water."

But Daniel didn't seem too worried about his naked romp.

"I wasn't really worried about people seeing me naked on stage, I had so many other things to worry about, like getting my lines right," he says.

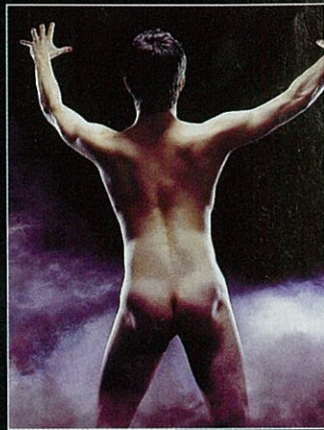
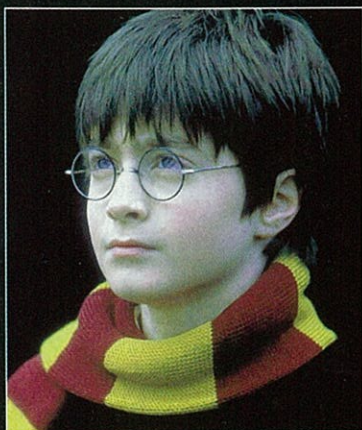
"The press made a much bigger deal about Harry's first kiss, they have seen Harry growing up on screen so his first kiss was a huge deal."

He went one step further in *December Boys* by acting out his first lovemaking scene on film with stunning blonde *Grudge 2* actress Teresa Palmer.

"It was very strange, luckily Teresa's done kissing scenes before and she was quite cool

I was quite nervous but it becomes like any other scene - you sort of just go in and you kiss

HAVING PLAYED HARRY FOR SO LONG IT WAS A BIT WEIRD DOING SEX SCENES



BOY WONDER: Young Daniel as Harry Potter in the Order of the Phoenix, in his new role in December Boys and stripping off for his stage role in Equus

Actor Daniel Radcliffe tells NIAMH BYRNE about shedding his wizard image, going naked on stage and taking on more daring roles



there was nothing to worry about," says Daniel.

"I was quite nervous about it but it actually becomes like any other scene – you sort of just go in and you kiss but it's kind of weird.

"It just feels different from when you actually kiss someone because everyone's watching.

"You stand with your faces a centimetre apart and then the camera crew tell you ask you to move your head a little to the left to get the lighting right. It's not in the least bit exciting or romantic."

So what's next for the daring actor?

"I'd do a gay scene if the script warranted it," he admits.

Turning 18 this year was an exciting time for Radcliffe and for the press.

"I think the paparazzi are waiting to see me falling out of clubs now that I've turned 18, I went to

Lords to see the cricket on my birthday and they were waiting outside for me, luckily I hadn't been drinking," he says.

"I think as long as you don't court the press you're fine, I know a lot of famous people ring up the press and tell them where they're going to be so they get their picture in the paper and then they moan when their privacy is invaded, you can't have it both ways."

The teenager is wise enough to keep his relationships out of the papers as well – so we

won't be seeing any girlfriends on his arm anytime soon.

"I don't think it would be fair on them, when your picture is in the paper every little bit of you is scrutinised, I wouldn't put her through that," he says.

Harry Potter madness swept across the world in July this year with the release of Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows, the seventh and final part of JK

Rowling's series.

In Ireland alone more than 30,000 fans queued outside Eason stores all day to get their hands on a copy of the book – yearning to see what happens to their hero.

The ending did not sit well with a lot of fans but Radcliffe is very happy with the way the story has been wrapped up.

"I loved the ending of the book, I don't think it could have ended any other way, it is written in such a way that there can't be any spoilers, yes people can try and

ruin it by telling you that Harry lives, but that tells you nothing about the way he came to survive," he says.

Maps – his character in December Boys – is a poor orphan schoolboy like Harry, but Radcliffe insists that the two characters are very different.

"There is a big difference between the two characters," he says.

"Harry often wears his heart on his sleeve and is quite open and not very good at always hiding his emotions, whereas Maps is a very, very restrained character – he hardly talks for the first hour in the film."

Fans would love to see Radcliffe take on a completely different role, maybe in a comedy.

The young actor proved he doesn't take himself too seriously by appearing in Ricky Gervais' Extras last year playing a parody of himself – a young famous actor hitting on all of the older women on set.

"I'd love to do a comedy, I'd definitely work with Ricky Gervais again," he says.

December Boys by Warner Bros is released nationwide on September 14. ●



ROLE: Daniel with his stunning co-star Teresa Palmer