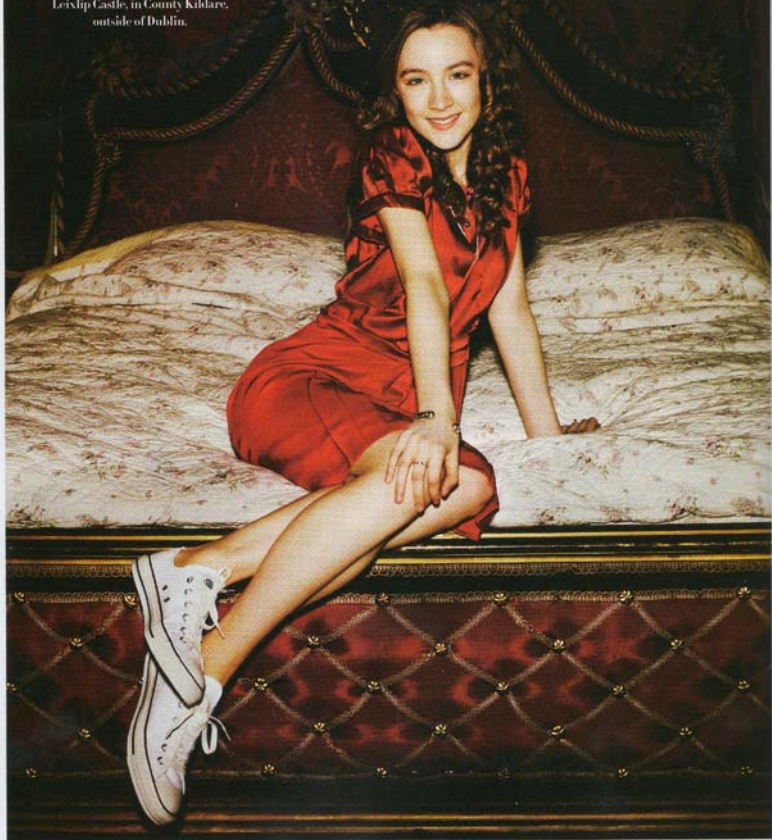


## IRISH EYES ARE SMILING

Saoirse Ronan, photographed at Leixlip Castle, in County Kildare, outside of Dublin.



STYLING: KATHY HARRIS; HAIR: JACQUELINE; MAKEUP: JACQUELINE; DRESS: CALVIN KLEIN; SHOES: CONVERSE; PHOTOGRAPHY: JULIAN BROAD

## BED AND BREAKTHROUGH

**T**he *Lovely Bones*, out next month, will be Peter Jackson's first time behind the camera since *King Kong* (2005). Adapted by Jackson, Fran Walsh, and Philippa Boyens from Alice Sebold's best-selling novel of the same name, the story follows 14-year-old Susie Salmon, played by 15-year-old Irish actress Saoirse (Sir-shah) Ronan, who, after her brutal rape and murder, watches from above as her family unravels. Mark Wahlberg and Rachel Weisz play the parents of the murdered girl, with Susan Sarandon as her grandmother. Ronan's first leading film role came two years ago as Briony Tallis in *Atonement*. The immediacy of Ronan's performance and the naïve

destructiveness behind her icy blue eyes as she falsely accuses her sister's lover of rape earned her a best-supporting-actress Oscar nomination at the age of 13. Ronan's performance as Susie Salmon is one of hope set against a bleak reality. Jackson said writing and directing *The Lovely Bones* "was a challenge, probably the hardest film I've ever made"; however, he believes "it's an emotional experience, but it's far from a grim and depressing story. I found it to be both hopeful and strangely comforting." Jackson attributes this comfort to Ronan's character: "I think perhaps because Susie herself comes to terms with her death... her attitude helps to inform our own."

—KRISTA SMITH