



the secret life of **Shai**

BY **SARAH BRUNING**
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **JEFF LIPSKY**

Shailene Woodley is as authentic as they come, but that doesn't mean you know everything about her.

Now the leading lady of *The Fault in Our Stars* and *Divergent* opens up about the personal passions she's rarely been able to discuss in full.

Melissa Odabash dress, \$194, odabash.com; Vix Paula Hermann bikini: top, \$96, bottom, \$100, vixpaulahermann.com; Melissa Joy Manning earrings, \$125, melissajoymanning.com; Lola James necklace, \$48, lolajamesjewelry.com; Karen London bracelet, \$80, karenlondon.com; brown bracelet, Woodley's own; Painted Bird shoes, \$68, shoppaintedbird.com.

ray, blustery weather would send most people running from the beach, but not Shailene Woodley. In fact, the 22-year-old actor—clad in denim shorts and a striped shirt—is completely in her element as she performs a series of unprompted cartwheels, first for fun, then again for the camera. And despite the frigid breeze coming off the Pacific Ocean, Woodley gleefully splashes her feet in the surf, tilting her head back and breathing in the salty air. Her deep love of nature shines through immediately, but as the afternoon progresses, it's clear that she relishes not just being outdoors, but also the general spontaneity and unexpected pleasures life can bring. “Right now, we’re in this beautiful house in Malibu, and we just had an awesome photo shoot on the beach,” she says. “In the next moment, I might be spending the night on some random person’s couch, and that’s amazing, too. It’s about being present and surrendering to what’s in front of you.”

Despite her relatively young age and her adolescent-centric breakout roles (first in *The Secret Life of the American Teenager* and *The Descendants*, more recently in *The Spectacular Now* and *Divergent*), the Southern California native displays the kind of quiet confidence and clarity that take most people their entire lives to achieve. “Living in a state of fear makes no sense,” Woodley says. “If I have X number of days to live, I am not going to live them in fear. Where’s the laughter in it? Where’s the joy?” This seize-the-day ethos drives Woodley in both her personal and professional lives: She chooses work that’s meaningful to her, then uses her A-list clout to spread a message of compassion for her fellow humans and for the Earth.

Her greatest epiphany came courtesy of her latest role as Hazel Grace Lancaster, the 16-year-old, cancer stricken protagonist of the film *The Fault in Our Stars* (out June 6). “While filming, I met so many young people who either had someone close to them die of cancer or who had a tumor in their head and were so excited to meet me, then passed away a few weeks later,” Woodley recalls. “That experience was the biggest wake-up call I’ve ever had.” But it’s far from the only revelation that’s shaped who she is. Here, she delves into her zeal for sustainable living and herbal remedies—and how she cultivates her unshakable peace of mind.



Saint James top, \$70, saintjamesboutique.com; Anine Bing shorts, similar styles at aninebing.com; Alisa Michelle earrings, \$60, alisamichelle.com; brown bracelet, Woodley’s own.

NATURAL HEALTH: What first sparked your environmentalism and passion for nature?

SHAILENE WOODLEY: There’s one defining moment that I’ll never forget: It was an incredibly windy day and I was walking through the quad of my public high school, which is surrounded by pine trees. There were hundreds of pine needles swirling around in the air, and I looked down and scattered across this huge grassy expanse was all of the trash left over from lunch—plastic bags, soda cans, that kind of thing. And something just clicked when I saw the juxtaposition of the ignorance on the ground against the beauty and freedom in the sky. That’s when I knew I wanted to dedicate my life to this, because there’s something really wrong here.

NH: And how did that evolve into your current philosophy?

SW: As a teenager, I started researching factory farming and genetically engineered foods and agriculture, and I found myself asking, “What’s the point of environmentalism if we keep separating ourselves from nature?” The message was, “We’ve gotta save the Earth!” when in reality, we *are* nature and we *are* the Earth. As human beings, we’re just another creature. But luckily, we’re gifted with consciousness and a mind that can manufacture change. If we plan to save the planet, we have to start with ourselves.

STYLING: AMY BETH BERLIN; HAIR: CAILE NOBLE AT JED ROOT USING JOHN FRIEDA; MAKEUP: ROXY AT THE MAGNET AGENCY USING 100% PURE; MANICURE: JOANIE MOSCATELLO WITH EXCLUSIVE ARTISTS USING COVERGIRL

NH: Have you influenced your friends’ habits?

SW: All of them live that lifestyle already, so I’m fortunate. We joke that our conversations sound like a *Sh*t Wild People Say* video. We were foraging for wild leeks in Maine last year, and one of my friends said, “Does anyone want the rest of my rhizome?” And we all cracked up, thinking that only here and with this group of people would someone ask that question.

NH: It’s cool that you’ve learned to eat directly from the earth like that.

SW: People have told me my thinking on this is kind of post-apocalyptic, but I think it’s important to be a sovereign human in today’s world because there are so many things we don’t know. Take GMO foods—I don’t necessarily think they’re great for us, but I could be wrong; we just don’t know yet. Regardless, the fact that we are not allowed to know what’s in our food is huge. For me, having my basic necessities covered and being able to take care of myself is reassuring. If the power goes out, I know how to make a fire and where a water source is and how to find my own food.

NH: You’ve said that filming *The Descendants* in Hawaii brought a new appreciation for living naturally. Why is that?

SW: Hawaiian culture is so laid-back. A local told me that on some freeways, they have a

Shailene’s Mushroom Tea

To bolster her immunity on a daily basis, Woodley sips a drink made from medicinal mushrooms that she’s foraged herself or ordered from Surthrival.com. “I like the company because it’s high-integrity and doesn’t sacrifice the planet for its own profit,” she says. “I keep a slow cooker on with water in it and chaga on the bottom and use it as the base for coffee or soups.” If the chaga is dried and you have to cut it up into small pieces, Woodley suggests using 1 to 2 tablespoons for a pot of water, which should last about two weeks in the fridge. When the water color gets lighter, it’s time to make a new batch.

minimum speed limit because people get ticketed more often for going too slowly than too fast. It was special to experience that when I was 18 because I grew up in L.A., and I’d been used to one particular paradigm of living. The abundance of traditional Hawaiian culture is magnificent. It’s a lot of connection to the land that we don’t have in the “my ego, my mind, my this, my that ...” way of thinking. I heard that in the Hawaiian language, *ha* means breath, and when you say *Aloha* to someone, you’re really saying, “I’m breathing so that you can inhale my spirit, and when you exhale, I’m inhaling your spirit.” It’s true recognition of another person’s soul and entity.

NH: What piqued your interest in herbalism?

SW: When I started researching agriculture in America, I thought, *People say meat’s bad for me, but so are vegetables because of pesticides, but I can’t afford organic. Ahhhh!* So I decided to research what Native American cultures ate in Southern California, as well as other indigenous cultures from around the world. I found that not only were they hunter-gatherers, they were also healers who relied on the plants around them. I thought that was really profound, so I started learning about all the wild plants in my area, as well as all of the wild medicines that I could gather and create for myself. I was in control of my body, and I could feel what was happening. It was eye-opening.



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How Shailene Goes Green

Steal Woodley's tools for down-to-earth well-being.

FOR NATURAL KNOWLEDGE

“GaiaScouts.com is a really beautiful, empowering blog for women. It was transformative for me in connecting to my power and role as a woman. For foraging skills, you can read books, but I like to go out and do plant walks with people. If you go to Meetup.com and search for foraging or wild plant walks, you'll find options all across the country.”

IN HER MAKEUP BAG

“The only brand of makeup I use these days is 100% Pure (100percentpure.com). It's been around for years. The brand makes every single product you can imagine, and they are all legitimately 100 percent pure. But if we're doing a photo shoot and we need something colorful, I'll use Tarte (tartecosmetics.com). It's the most mainstream brand I've found that still takes that extra step in the right direction.”

FOR DAILY HYGIENE

“I use shampoo and conditioner from Living Libations (livinglibations.com); it's an amazing company based out of Canada. I also use their Seabuckthorn Best Skin Ever to wash my face, and I like the Lavender Poetic Pits underarm essential oil blend.”

NH: Which herbs are part of your regimen?

SW: One of my favorites is stinging nettle. She—I always think of it as a female plant because I take it when I'm about to start menstruating—is especially good for women and full of vitamins and minerals. I fill a little less than a quarter of a mason jar with nettle and add boiling water until it reaches the top. Then I seal it, let it sit overnight and strain it and drink it in the morning. There's something very special about seeing a plant and turning it into a tea or infusion or tincture versus taking pills.

NH: Any healthy eating habits you think have helped you thrive?

SW: I listen to my body. I've gotten to the point where I'm really tuned in to what it needs. Sometimes I can go weeks at a time without eating meat because all my body wants is vegetables and rice and not much protein. Then I'll go through other times where for months on end I just need red meat or chicken or eggs *right now*. Our bodies are constantly changing, so if you were to eat a certain way forever, I don't see how that could possibly be right for you.

NH: Has sustainability played into your style?

SW: I know nothing about fashion, so when I do the red carpet, I'm fortunate to have a stylist who's one of my best friends and knows me inside and out. I'll only wear things that'll be reworn again and again, and the jewelry I use is my own or a friend of a friend's. In my personal life, I shop at thrift stores and exclusively buy used items. The only thing that might not be used is shoes; those are a little harder!

NH: Let's talk about your latest project. What drew you to *The Fault in Our Stars*?

SW: Books like *The Alchemist* and *The Four Agreements* are incredible and have helped me so much, but then you read a book like *The Fault in Our Stars*—fiction written not by a spiritual guru who lives up in the mountains, but by this guy who writes books for young adults because he sees their value and power and strength and maturity. Somehow, John Green weaves these crazy-beautiful, universal messages into the voices of two real, witty young people. To walk away from a book grieving and celebrating at the same time and realizing it's because you can relate to the things that the characters went through is amazing. Every single quote from that book really spoke to my soul.

NH: So many people have commented on how authentic and positive you are—both as a person and as an actor. How do you maintain that in an industry that tends to foster insincerity?

SW: A, I'm so, so fortunate to be part of the family I was born into. I have two superhumans as parents and an amazing support system in my brother and best friends. B, I know that it's all fleeting, especially in this industry, so why would I sacrifice my integrity for something that could go away tomorrow? And C, so many things are demanding change, and if anything has a platform to do it, it's this industry. Am I going to sit here and waste this opportunity or am I going to try to be the best version of myself that I can be? I can't change anything in the world in the same way that none of us can change anything in this world, but we can change ourselves and stand up for what we believe in and talk about it.

NH: For now, how do you maintain balance despite all the craziness and gossip in Hollywood?

SW: I just do me! *[Laughs]* Someone once told me that it's none of my business what anyone else thinks of me. That was an epiphany. The thing about this industry that ungrounds people so often is fear. It's the fear of not being accepted, not being enough, being compared, not being this or that ... It's just clutter! It just doesn't. Need. To be there.

NH: One of your biggest projects this past year was *Divergent*, in which your character, Tris, struggles with following her internal compass. How have you dealt with that in your own life?

SW: I find myself living in two worlds sometimes—being this person who can walk a red carpet in a huge, fancy-ass ball gown, high heels and crazy amounts of makeup, but also being the girl at a hippie festival in the middle of the forest with war paint on my face, dancing around with hairy armpits. I exist so well in both, and I used to feel like I had to choose one or the other. I struggled with that up until doing *The Fault in Our Stars*. I have one life to live, and it could end any minute, so I'm going to appreciate every single moment. I'm going to own my day before my day owns me. Show up the way you expect others and the world to show up for you, and that's all there is to it. Life is too fleeting, too unpredictable and too unfair to focus on anything else. ♦