

Hollywood's most glamorous couple say they're also its happiest. The gossips disagree...

A wife to die for?

She's taller, tougher and knows how to get what she wants – but Tom Cruise adores his beautiful, bossy-boots wife

Report by Tanya Reed

From the moment their glances met across a crowded film set, Tom Cruise has only had eyes for Nicole Kidman. The tall, Australian redhead and her somewhat shorter man, recently voted the fifth sexiest in the world, have since been inseparable. It's six years since they married and Cruise still talks of his wife with the frank adoration of the

newly bewitched. 'I'm madly in love with Nic. She's both my wife and best friend. I've never shared my life so fully with a person before. She's taught me to think about life; to stop and smell the flowers,' he says. It's tempting to say gushes, except he's so charmingly sincere.

There are those, however, who take a more cynical view. They believe Nicole has taken over Tom's life, both personally and professionally. 'Since they married Nicole has gained control. He's so besotted she can get away with anything,' one insider claims.

'It never occurs to him he's henpecked.' Well, one man's henpecked is another man's cosseted.

The gossip is fuelled by stories like the time Nicole is alleged to have made builders at her home face the wall as she strutted by. True or not, Hollywood's rumour mill is doing a full mincing job on her



Ladies first... Nicole strides out with Tom in tow

reputation.

It started with little things. Soon after their marriage Nicole made Tom cancel his season ticket to his favourite baseball team, the LA Dodgers.

'Tom was miffed but said he'd rather be with Nicole anyway,' says a friend. Next she packed all his favourite ripped and well-worn jeans off to the charity shop – without telling him.

'Tom doesn't even buy clothes without Nicole's approval. When he goes shopping, she goes too.'

But it's where work's

concerned that the knives really flash.

In the movie world work is sacred and interfering with work is the ultimate sin. So did Nicole – along with their adopted children, Isabella, two, and Conor, 22 months – insist on being on set when Tom was filming Mission: Impossible in London? Or is this a family that just likes to be together?

Less arguable is that she demanded Tom cut passionate clinch scenes with actress Emmanuelle Beart. And this, say her



Adoring looks on the set of *Far and Away*, their second film together

critics, from the woman who banned Tom from the set of *To Die For* because his presence would make her feel self-conscious.

'He's too big a distraction. I can't create a complex character with Tom gawking at me,' she complained crossly.

Director Gus Van Sant relates how she set out to persuade him to give her the starring role in *To Die For*. 'She had a very authoritative view on the story,' he says.

This authority governs the way she runs their entire domestic life. And Tom loves her for it.

Yet he's no walkover himself, with a steely determination over work. Only where Nicole is concerned is he vulnerable. He'll pay any price for her happiness and love.

As for Nicole, over here with him now making *Eyes Wide Shut*: 'I'm addicted to Tom,' she says. 'He's my drug and I adore him.' And revealingly: 'I've got what other people want and that makes me feel grateful.'

She leaves you in no doubt that she's going to keep it that way. ■

I enjoy the challenge of a strong, independent woman who can stand up for herself – and can stand up to me



Confident

- Tom presented Nicole with two parachutes on her birthday. She loved it
- They spent £10,000 buying toys for their children when they should have been at the London film premiere of *Mission: Impossible*
- They devote themselves to the Church of Scientology
- Only two men in Cruise's family have lived beyond the age of 50, so the star has two full medical check-ups each month
- When Heloisa Vinhas was knocked down by a hit and run driver Cruise called the emergency services, paid her medical bills and gave her a part in his film *Jerry Maguire*