

Movie links

Name the films in which these stars appear together to link Catherine Zeta-Jones and Bruce Willis.
Answer on page 44.

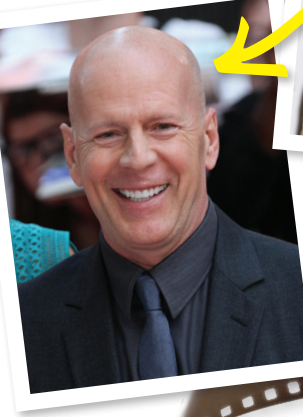
JUST FOR FUN











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RECLAIMING REAL LIFE

ONE-EYED WONDER

Despite being bullied, Katie Elliott, 20, from Glasgow, realised that losing her eye wasn't a loss but a gain...

Snuggling up in front of the TV, I couldn't wait for the film to start. With my younger sister Millie, now 13, cuddled up beside me, we waited for our mum Gillian, 43, to press play. With me then being 11 years old, she knew that just like any other child, I'd love *Monsters Inc.* just as much as Millie. Packed full of animated characters and silly jokes, we would cackle with laughter. And that we did, until a certain green-eyed monster appeared on-screen. 'Oh look! That's your twin!' Millie exclaimed, pointing at

the one-eyed green alien named Mike Wazowski. Immediately, the three of us erupted into laughter. 'Hey, that's mean!' I giggled. But I had to admit that Millie's joke landed – it suited me perfectly. When I was just four years old in 2007, I had my right eye removed after being diagnosed with retinoblastoma. With a 1cm wide cancerous tumour found behind my right eye, causing pressure and pain, removing it was the only option, Mum later told me. Despite not remembering much at the time, I adjusted to life with one eye quickly. In fact, I can barely remember life before losing it. My earliest memories of my cancer journey in the Royal Children's Hospital in London included picking out my very own eyeball – not your typical childhood memory! Finishing chemo in 2008, with my right eye now healed over, Mum allowed me to have a prosthetic eye fitted. After being told I could pick a colour for my new eye, I leapt at the opportunity. 'Can I have a pink or a sparkly gold one?' I begged. But custom eyes weren't available on the NHS, so I had to settle



I'M PROUD TO BE ME



I adjusted to life quickly

for one that matched my natural eye colour. Growing up, the prosthetic eye helped me fit in – it boosted my confidence knowing I didn't look out of place. And despite being only seven, I was determined for it to not hold me back – I even won medals in showjumping competitions with my pet horse. My eye hadn't deceived me. And I'd even grown more confident wearing it, too. So when she compared me to the one-eyed alien Mike Wazowski, I wasn't offended. I saw no harm in the joke. Until it was used against me. Walking into the classroom, I was 11 years old and had just started Year 7 at a new school. But immediately, a young boy set his sights on me. 'Hey, Mike Wazowski!' he yelled. 'What have you got one

eye for?' The comment stung – while I'd been compared to the one-eyed monster before, this time, it wasn't just a joke. And while my prosthetic eye was very convincing, you could still tell up close that it wasn't real – it didn't move. Frozen, I started welling up and my cheeks burned red. *He won't understand...* I thought to myself. It was pointless explaining it to someone so naïve. I knew he'd chosen that comparison to hurt me – he wasn't curious, just nasty. Leaving the classroom, I spent my toilet break sobbing in the stall alone. And coming home to Mum that night, I broke down just telling her what had happened. 'Don't worry about what those bullies are saying to you,' she reassured me. 'You're

I was even compared to a one-eyed monster



Beautiful inside and out

always beautiful to me.' But from that moment on, I spent two more years at secondary school trying to blend in and be unnoticeable, covering my prosthetic eye with my long hair. But my best friends since the age of eight, Ellie and Lucy, now both 21, were always there to remind me of my beauty. And after all, there was nothing I could do about my eye now it was gone – but the nasty comments forced me to adjust to it all over again. But by Year 10, I was wearing my hair back and spreading the word about my prosthetic eye – the more people that understood, the more confident I felt. Meeting my boyfriend Liam, 21, through mutual friends in November 2021, he didn't even bring up my eye. Usually, it was the first thing people asked me about – so I was surprised. But he wanted to get to know me for me. On one of our first dates over drinks, I decided to tell him. 'You do know I have a prosthetic eye, right?' I said nervously. 'I lost my real one to cancer as a kid.' 'Yeah, I know,' he smiled. And so it was no big deal! My prosthetic eye hasn't held me back from other aspects of my life either. Studying event management at college and working part-time as a supervisor at a golf course in Glasgow, I'm always busy. Only, if I'm in a rush at work, I find myself bumping into doorframes on my right side, leaving me with a few bruises. Laughing, I just brush it off

as me being clumsy. I even passed my driving test first-time in January 2022 – I only need an extra wing mirror or inside mirror to help me see. Now, I regularly take selfies without my prosthetic in. And signing with the modelling agency Zebedee in February this year, I'm determined to help spread more awareness. Now I know that I'm not a one-eyed monster, like those kids at school called me. I'm a one-eyed wonder and a proud one, too.

For more, please follow @katieelliott3 on TikTok



It has never held me back

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