



Oscars >

2024 Oscar nominations

Snubs and surprises

Lily Gladstone makes history

Osc

AWARDS

Oscars rewind -- 2004: Charlize Theron wins on her first try



Actress Charlize Theron thanked her mother in her lead actress acceptance speech for her work in “Monster” at the 76th annual Academy Awards in 2004. (Kevork Djanszian/Associated Press)

BY RANDEE DAWN

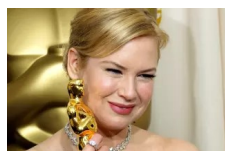
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It might seem that all of the milestones have already been achieved in Academy Awards history, but as the 76th ceremony kicked off on Feb. 29, 2004, at the Kodak Theatre in Hollywood, there was at least one more to be set.

That was thanks to Charlize Theron, who on her first Oscar nomination won the lead actress award for her portrayal of a serial killer in “Monster.” Although she wasn’t the first South African ever nominated in an Oscar category, she was the first actor from that country to earn an Oscar. Theron strode up to the stage wearing a dress made by Tom Ford for Gucci, and accessories that included Chopard earrings valued at \$25,000. (Presumably she left her Lana Marks purse, worth \$50,000, in the hands of her date, actor and then-boyfriend Stuart Townsend.)

Pucker Up

But before her speech, Theron had to wait for her presenter, Adrien Brody, to do a little shtick. Brody had made headlines when he won lead actor at the 2003 Oscars and planted a surprise kiss on *his* presenter, Halle Berry. Ahead of opening the envelope to read Theron’s name, Brody pulled out a breath freshening spray and gave himself a couple of spritzes. (Theron, to her credit, did give him a little buss on the lips when she got to the stage — but nothing like the dramatic dip he’d given Berry.)



AWARDS

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Nov. 29, 2023

Clearly excited, Theron thanked her family and “Monster” director Patty Jenkins, along with the producers and crew and her co-star Christina Ricci, whom she called “the unsung hero of this film.” She then added, “I’m going to thank everybody in South Africa, my home country. They’re all watching tonight, and I’m bringing this home next week. And I have to thank my incredible partner in crime. You’re one hell of a partner to have. Thank you so much for standing by me. And my mom [Gerda Jacoba Aletta Maritz, who was in the audience]. You’ve sacrificed so much for me to be able to live here and make my dreams come true, and there are no words to describe how much I love you.”

The actress got a bit choked up while referring to her mother and later told Ryan Seacrest in an interview for People magazine, “I knew that I couldn’t look at her [during the speech], because if I looked at her, I wouldn’t be able to get through it.” She added, “I was just a mess.”



AWARDS

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Feb. 7, 2024

Another Down Under Milestone

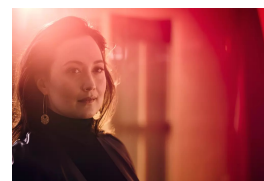
Theron wasn’t the only one to set a record that evening; her fellow nominee Keisha Castle-Hughes, who’d earned her first (and so far only) nomination for “Whale Rider,” was just 13 when the nominations came out. That made her the youngest person nominated in the category — until 2013, when 9-year-old Quvenzhané Wallis was nominated for her lead role in “Beasts of the Southern Wild.”

The category was fierce with competition that year. Diane Keaton, nominated for the comedy “Something’s Gotta Give,” already had one Oscar from 1978 for “Annie Hall” and two other nominations: “Reds” (in 1982) and “Marvin’s Room” (in 1997). Samantha Morton’s nomination for “In America” was her second; her first came in 2000, for “Sweet and Lowdown” — a movie that starred Sean Penn, who would win that night for “Mystic River.” Naomi Watts’ nomination for “21 Grams” was her first, and in 2013 she earned her second, for “The Impossible.”

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