



Kate Winslet stars in "Mare of Easttown," premiering Sunday on HBO.

A detective struggles with a murder and her past in HBO's 'Mare of Easttown'

A detective investigates a murder that upends life in her hometown, thus forcing her to confront expectations from her past in a limited drama series upcoming on HBO.

In "Mare of Easttown," a seven-part series premiering Sunday, April 18, Kate Winslet ("Ammonite," "Titanic") is cast in the role of Mare Sheehan, a 40-something police detective who investigates when a child's lifeless body is pulled from a local creek, a troubling crime that rocks her titular small Pennsylvania town.

It turns out the investigator herself is troubled. The daughter of a detective, now deceased, she has struggled with expectations ever since she made the winning shot in a high-school basketball championship game 25 years earlier. She doesn't get along with her mother, Helen (Jean Smart, "Watchmen"), and spends her idle hours at the bar, where she hooks up with Richard (Guy Pearce, "Mildred Pierce"), a local writing professor. But she has a confidante in Lori (Julianne Nicholson, "August: Osage County"), her protective best friend since childhood.

The role was a challenging one for Winslet, who was just coming off playing British paleontologist Mary Anning in the 2020 feature film "Ammonite," and thus struggled to get into this completely different character's headspace.

"She's nothing like me," says Winslet, who won an Oscar for "The Reader." "So that's pretty scary in a great way if you're an actor like me who likes to feel terrified and exposed. And

I just had never done anything like this, (I) was excited to read something that just gripped me right away. I really felt the sense of not just who she was, but the world that she lives in, where she comes from, that sense of community, being so entrenched in a society that you sort of forget who you are from time to time, and the sense of responsibility/burdens that Mare carries – for lots of reasons to do with her backstory – really, really intrigued me."

For the part of Mare, Winslet did months of prep work, spending time with police departments in Easttown and Marple Township outside of Philadelphia and working extensively with series creator Brad Ingelsby, a native of that area, to get the dialect and accent right. But in the end, it was one universal theme that enabled Winslet to connect with the character.

"That real sense of family and how much it means to her to hold that together at all costs," the British actress says. "And also to be able to admit to herself from time to time that she has failed in a lot of areas and tries desperately to correct those errors and to hold everyone as close to her as she can, even if she's a difficult person to live with from time to time. It doesn't change the fact that her love for her family is the thing that bolts her down and drives her in life and is her number one priority. And that was something that I was able to connect with in the midst of all these other things that were so far away and so far removed from myself.

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