

## **CHARACTER**

**Back for a third season,** the ABC-TV series *Scandal* costars

Bellamy Young as Mellie Grant, the ruthless first lady of the U.S., a role the vegan actress says is "sort of a strange, dark-side wish fulfillment."

-GINA ROBERTS-GREY

At her doctor's suggestion, your mother is now eating a plant-based diet. What's that been like for you?

A Love is so tied up in food, and there were a few years we were both confused how to share that. Now I'm always sending her recipes, and it's fun to see her experiment. On my trip home to North Carolina this past summer, we were sitting on her back porch watching lightning bugs, and I said I wished I had a biscuit. She said she had vegan butter and almond milk and a lemon to curdle the milk; the thrill of the hunt for alternative ingredients to make over our favorites like biscuits is now something we can share.

You've called yourself a "spice girl." What are some of your favorite herbs and spices?

A Fennel! I'll make a salad with arugula and sliced fennel, or a stir-fry with curried

brown lentils, fennel, and dried apricots. And fresh cilantro is a must. I love to prepare [soy cheese] quesadillas with fresh cilantro. Herbes de Provence and cumin are also staples in my kitchen.

Fans of Scandal call themselves gladiators, which is how the show's lead character, Washington, D.C., crisis manager Olivia Pope, refers to her team. What's your take on the role that social media has played in the show's success? A I'm a social media Luddite; poor Kerry [Washington, who plays Pope] had to sit me down and explain what Twitter is. I'm so thankful the gladiators are patient with me. But there is no doubt their support has helped keep us on the air. Nowadays people want more of an interactive experience, and why not? TV watching doesn't have to be passive.



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