



Top by Jil Sander; skirt by Balmain; pumps by Sophia Webster; bracelet by Kimberley McDonald; (right hand) ring by Ana Khouri; all other jewelry Maggie's own

# An actress less ORDINARY

*From getting thrown out of her co-op to crying during yoga class, MAGGIE GYLLENHAAL is just as interesting as the characters she plays. CHRISTA D'SOUZA discovers a wise woman indeed*

*Photographs by CARLOTTA MANAIGO  
Styling by KARINA GIVARGISOFF*

If there is one thing that annoys Academy Award nominee Maggie Gyllenhaal, it is the automated tipping system in New York taxicabs. “You know when it asks you whether you want to give a 20, 25 or 30 percent tip? Usually I’m a good tipper, but it really p\*\*\*\*\* me off when they do that.”

It is an unseasonably warm day in downtown Manhattan and we are sitting in Nobu, a mere subway ride (perfect for avoiding those taxing



Dress by DKNY;  
earrings by Maria Black;  
ring by Repossi

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taxis) from Park Slope, Brooklyn, where Gyllenhaal – star of cult S&M movie *Secretary* and elder sister of actor Jake – lives with her husband, actor Peter Sarsgaard (*Blue Jasmine*) and their two daughters, Ramona, seven, and Gloria Ray, two.

Wearing beaten-up Dicker boots, a fisherman’s sweater through which her white bra shows and fluoro-pink lipstick, Gyllenhaal, 36, looks like the Queen of the Indie Flick, as expected. But see beyond the dime-store lipstick (that she buys in bulk) and the effortless mop of hair (that she dyed platinum blond days after *The EDIT*’s shoot, inspired by our stylist, Karina) and there is no mistaking her Hollywood starlight. There is just something about

those super-sparkling green eyes, that wry, confident smile... Yes, those Gyllenhaal siblings have got ‘it’, whatever ‘it’ is.

The reason we are here? To talk about her two latest projects. Firstly, a BBC/Sundance TV spy thriller, *The Honourable Woman*, in which she plays “an English Jewish billionaire heiress who is trying to broker peace in the Middle East”. Then there is *Frank*, a black comedy shot in Ireland about an experimental rock band, in which Michael Fassbender, her co-star, wears a massive papier-mâché mask throughout. “I told him he’s never looked better,” shrugs Gyllenhaal.

**T**he daughter of Emmy Award-nominated director Stephen Gyllenhaal and Oscar-nominated scriptwriter Naomi Foner, Maggie and Jake had supporting roles in their parents’ projects from early ages. Their mother, in particular, was always very encouraging, telling Maggie she could be the best at anything she wanted to be – a habit she

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does not want to pass on to her own daughters. “There’s something a little bit wrong with what my mom did there,” recalls Gyllenhaal fondly. “I remember a couple of auditions for musicals when I was a kid, and the shock of being told I didn’t cut it... To come to terms with what you are actually capable of is sort of important, right? When I had my first daughter, I remember telling a friend, ‘I’m not perfect!’ – because *of course* I wasn’t, nobody is – and her coming right back to me with, ‘But that implies you think you are close’, that put me in my place!”

**A**fter graduating with a degree in English Literature from Columbia University and completing a



Top by Chloé; skirt by Vionnet; pumps by Sophia Webster; earrings and ring by Maria Black; cuffs by Alexander McQueen

Dress by Prabal Gurung;  
pumps by Gianvito Rossi;  
earrings by Maria Black; all  
other jewelry Maggie's own

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summer program at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts in London, Gyllenhaal really hit the radar when she played her brother's screen sister in the 2001 cult hit *Donnie Darko*. But it was in 2002, in the independent film *Secretary*, wearing a polka-dot pussybow blouse, a saddle on her back and a carrot in her mouth, that she first garnered her reputation as one of the industry's bravest talents.

"I am way more wild in my characters than I am in real life," the actress agrees. "Like with Nessa Stein (her role in *The Honourable Woman*). By the second episode, she's having sex with strangers in the stairwell. I have *never* done that – not yet, anyway – but it's cool to imagine what that would be like. Not in a Victoria's Secret way; in a totally realistic way, the way you are when you are as daring and wild as you would be with your real lover or husband. But of course it's *not* real, because if it were real there would be too much at stake. There's always that subtle difference."

Gyllenhaal and her husband were introduced to each other 14 years ago at a dinner party held by Jake, who starred with Sarsgaard in *Jarhead*, and have been together ever since. If not quite the virulent new-ager she played so well in Sam Mendes' 2009 film *Away We Go*, the couple, who live round the corner from friends such as Emily Mortimer and her husband Alessandro Nivola, do sound pretty earthy. Sarsgaard "is not just a super-environmentalist and recycler, he runs barefoot", volunteers his wife, with a twitch of a smile. He also played nanny to their daughters while Gyllenhaal was on set in London and Morocco for *The Honourable Woman* ("He'd been

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Coat by Lanvin; pumps  
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thinking about doing another movie, but I told him I couldn't do the job unless he was going to help me... I didn't think the part was good enough for him anyway”). And yes, they belong to a co-op. “People are so sneery about it,” says Gyllenhaal. “Even I used to hate it. In fact, I got kicked out once for forgetting to do my shift, but it's really important to Peter and he doesn't care what people think. I have to say, it has the best produce out of all five boroughs, it's a third of the price and I like to cook, so it makes sense.”

**T**he actress is a big fan of therapy and has also taken up yoga again, after going through a phase of thinking it “supremely cheesy and irritating”.

In fact, Gyllenhaal was so moved by her yogi's words at a recent class that she burst into tears. “I feel that irony serves me less now that I'm older,” she muses. “What I used to think was cheesy, I don't anymore. Hopefully that's the upside about getting older – the deepening of experience, the ability to become more vulnerable and open. Because I can see how trying to make sure you don't have any wrinkles and your breasts are where they were in your twenties would surely kill you.”

Wise words from a wise woman. What a shame it is time to go. As we stand on the steps of Nobu saying goodbye, the actress spots a clutch of paparazzi, nestled under some scaffolding, patiently waiting for her to come out. “Darn,” she sighs, putting on her huge sunglasses and turning up the hood of her parka, even though it is now nearly 70 degrees outside. “I guess that means I have to take a taxi after all.”

*Frank is out on May 2*

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