

When Rachel McAdams, currently on-screen as the beautiful and clever foil to Robert Downey, Jr.'s, Sherlock Holmes, goes to bed—she shares a Toronto Victorian with her brother—she spends a few minutes writing in her Keel's Simple Diary. The Simple Diary,

which first appeared in the summer of 2009, offers daily axioms, fill-in-the-blanks, multiple choices, and other quirky ways for a diarist to keep a record of and learn from her day. "I really look forward to it," says McAdams as she pushes her Trek bike along a street in the gluten-free, pleasantly scruffy Kensington Market district on a winter's afternoon. Since she is such a famously private, relatively reclusive star, one can't help speculating, cheekily, about what McAdams's diary might contain on a given day.

YOUR DAY BEGAN: (only choose one)

- Not waking up in a Proenza Schouler tie-dye, surf-girl tee
 With air conditioning on full-blast
 Breathing noisily at 5:00 A.M.

McAdams practices Kundalini yoga every morning, even when she's on set. "The earliest I'll start is four-thirty. That's my limit." Throw in her habit of biking or walking everywhere, and there you have the long and short of her fitness regimen. It works: The 31-year-old is curvy, tiny-waisted, and fits any runway sample. Not that she's one to dwell on such things. Says Diane Keaton, McAdams's costar in Thomas Bezucha's *The Family Stone* and Roger Michell's forthcoming *Morning Glory*, "Rachel's not drawn toward fashion. I think she's really an actress—solid, right there." Her interest in catwalk trends is so slight that when she received a Proenza tie-dye tee—before the runway, before anyone, the must-have piece for spring 2010!—she wore it to bed, alone. And as regards air conditioning, she thinks green: "I can't live with it. I feel I'm not living in the world."

YOU ARE SEEKING: (only choose one)

- Great new bucket bag
 Knife skills
 An updated cowboy boot

McAdams has enrolled in a knife-skills class at Good Egg, a small kitchenware store in Kensington Market. She explains, "I need to have better knife skills . . . for vegetables. Sometimes you pick up a tomato. . . ." The night before, she cooked "halibut with Gruyère sauce." The actress isn't acquisitive in the conventional sense: "I don't really desire things. I prefer to spend my money on experiences, on meals or travel." This stems from her modest, small-town upbringing—she is the daughter of a truck driver and a nurse, raised in St. Thomas, Ontario, where her parents still live—and from her ever-deepening environmental awareness. "I look at the world through a green lens now, but you can't make yourself crazy. That feeling of green guilt can be really inhibiting. It's about a changing mind-set, remembering to turn off the water when you are brushing your teeth." This means that McAdams will keep using a tote bag or a pair of shoes—even one purchased when she was still a drama student at York University—long past its prime. When Susan Downey (wife of Robert and a

producer of *Sherlock Holmes*) suggested to the actress that it might be time to "rethink the boots," McAdams protested, "But they are just broken in perfectly."

"Vintage is something you collect in your parents' attic."

YOUR PERFECT DAY, THEN: (describe)

1982–87, on the ice: McAdams started figure skating at age four and "thought about a life in it for about a nanosecond. At nine years old I was presented an opportunity to move to Toronto to train for pairs dancing. As soon as I heard that that's what it entailed, I was out of there. It's like a past life. I hung up my skates and never looked back."

1995, on the sofa: "I grew up watching so much television. I was really into soap operas. I'd begin with *Days of Our Lives*, then *Another World*, and finish off with *General Hospital*. And before dinner I'd watch Oprah. I would fake sick all the time to the point where I'd convince myself I was sick. In high school I really didn't pay attention. I took the bare minimum to get by." She was the opposite of Regina George, her blisteringly evil character in *Mean Girls*. "My mother never put an emphasis on looks. She let us grow up on our own time line. She never forced any beauty regimen into my world." McAdams was teased in high school for not shaving her legs. "Why didn't you tell me?" she asked her mom. Mom: "Once you start, there's no turning back."

2002, in a Jacuzzi: While filming *The Hot Chick* ("my first film in the U.S. and a huge milestone in my life"), McAdams and her friend Megan Kuhlmann "would take the shuttle bus to Macy's to hang out at the makeup counter and eat at Islands. We'd sit in the hot tub at night"—at the Marriott Residence Inn in El Segundo—"and talk about our day." Flash-forward to 2007: McAdams and Kuhlmann start greenissexy.org with their pal Didi Bethurum. They offer tips on how to live greener. McAdams has recently reviewed green jeans and underwear.

YOUR PERFECT DAY, NOW: (describe)

"Get up. Go to the grocery store. Go out to the movies. Do a little work on the Web site." This is McAdams's routine in Toronto, where she has been since filming wrapped in New York on *Morning Glory*, a blockbuster romantic comedy also starring Harrison Ford, due out later this year. She takes the streetcar, opts to receive public rather than private health care, and fixes up her home: "Having a house that's always falling apart was so romantic when I bought it," she says, sighing, "but now seems less so." Says Eric Bana, her costar in *The Time Traveler's Wife*: "Rachel's someone who would survive outside of this business. She just blends with the traffic on the street. She's someone from the real world and not at all affected by the industry."

"I've always zipped through life—the things I missed when I was buzzing to nowhere in particular."

THAT SPECIAL SOMEONE? (only choose one)

- Ryan Gosling
 Josh Lucas
 No comment

"The first thing Diane [Keaton] always asks me is about my love life. I thwart her as I do everyone else," says McAdams, who was famously engaged to Ryan Gosling,

her costar in *The Notebook*, and briefly dated Josh Lucas, her costar in *Morning Glory*, last summer. She is currently single and pondering the question of Mr. Right in a totally relaxed way. McAdams does want a family but finds it tricky to reconcile her experience of family life—"for eighteen years I knew where my chair was at the dinner table every night; my life was incredibly secure"—and her nomadic existence as an actress. She is thinking perhaps a writer. But she's in no rush: "I'm pretty good on my own, and I like just getting out and walking, which seems very rudimentary." Keaton says, "Rachel isn't looking for a lot of friends and a big fat social life. I don't feel like she's drawn toward 'everyone love me' or 'I want to be the richest woman on Earth.' But of course, men fall in love with her like crazy."

TO EMBRACE CHANGE MEANS:

Dye hair. On McAdams's green card, her hair is fluoro pink. The picture was taken in 2004, when the actress burst into prominence with *Mean Girls* and *The Notebook*. She was adorable, original, and daring. Her kid sister, Kayleen McAdams, a celebrity makeup artist, says, "Rachel is very adventurous with personal style, especially with hair and makeup. She takes a chance and isn't afraid to not look the best." Says the actress, "A customs agent told me not to do that again. I'd like to do blue as well."

TELL A STORY:

On *Mean Girls*, which was shot in Toronto, and Lindsay Lohan: "I just remember marveling about how much she knew as an actor, how much she understood. She did very few takes and had this naturalness to her. And beyond that, I was 26 at the time. I'd be asked, 'Where do you go out?' " (McAdams throws her hands up in bafflement and defeat.) "I felt like I was in a different place at that time."

IF LIFE'S A PARTY, YOU CAN BE FOUND: (make a list)

- a) Munching dried nori
- b) Dancing to Bon Iver
- c) Sitting in the kitchen sampling homemade ice cream

When in New York, McAdams seeks out unstarry, cash-only, foodie-slacker restaurants such as Kasadela, a tiny favorite of Japanese students in Alphabet City. She orders spicy chicken wings, grilled salmon skin, and plates of dried nori ("my new potato chip"). Her musical tastes are indie, with a current emphasis on neo-bluegrass. Though she belongs to the Upstairs class, she naturally gravitates Downstairs. Finding herself at Sting's birthday party, McAdams ended up in the kitchen sampling the Sumner estate's homemade ice creams with Susan Downey.


WHAT YOUR FANS SAY:

Diane Keaton: "Such a brilliant actress—not like Meryl, but she has that kind of intelligence. That brain is substantial, and if you have that along with a face you can't take your eyes off, it's so compelling. It's rare."

Joel Silver (*Sherlock Holmes* coproducer): "She cares about the craft, not the parties or the fancy clothes."

Kayleen McAdams: "Rachel is the most open, warm, inviting person. When she meets anyone, she makes them feel special."

Rastafarian on street in Kensington Market: "Rachel McAdams: You do Canada proud!" □

Watch an exclusive interview with **Rachel McAdams** as she is photographed for the January cover at vogue.com. 

CHEERY RED

"She cares about the craft, not the parties and fancy clothes," says *Sherlock Holmes* coproducer Joel Silver. Dior belted organza-and-satin dress with built-in bra. Cartier white gold-and-diamond earrings. Details, see In This Issue.

