


 A full-length photograph of Meghan Markle standing in the center of the page. She is wearing a long-sleeved, knee-length dress with a green and white floral pattern. Her hands are clasped near her chest, and she is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. She is wearing light-colored, pointed-toe pumps. The background is a plain, light color.
 

# HEAR HER ROAR

**WISE, STRONG, INVINCIBLE —SUITS' MEGHAN MARKLE IS A WOMAN WHO WANTS TO BE HEARD AND WE'RE EAGER TO LISTEN**

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**M**eghan Markle and I are on the outdoor patio of Sessanta Ristorante in New York City's SoHo. It's a sunny, sweltering day, the sort of day that begs for immediate, cold refreshments. The waiter offers us water. "No, we would like some pink water," Meghan says while pointing out our rosé selection on the menu. "Who's not a fan of pink water?" she asks with a smile.

The beautiful actress is in town doing press as the season six premiere of *SUITS*, on which Meghan plays Rachel Zane, aired the night before. I mention that her co-star Abigail Spencer and I enjoyed rosé too when I interviewed her last year. "I love Abby," she coos. "We call each other birthday soul sisters; we were both born August 4th '81, like 3 hours apart. And I don't know anyone else who was born on the exact same day and we're both actresses. And actually, with the time difference, 'cause she was born in Florida and I was born in L.A., we might have been born the same exact time. And we both ended up

working on the same show, both have the same career path —it's great. I love Abs."

At the time of our interview, the *SUITS* cast was filming season six's episode nine. Season five ended with Mike, Rachel's love interest, going to jail. "It's really opened up Rachel's world for her. We've always seen her at her home, at the firm, but with Mike there. Now, the places we know her well, she's alone and navigating that." Mere minutes into our conversation a guy sits down at the table beside us, introduces himself to Meghan (they share a mutual friend), then leans in to listen in on her speak on season six. I give her a look. Meghan smiles and politely tells him that we're in the midst of an interview. This does not deter him. "In season one, Rachel was so ambitious, driven... We lost a lot of that part of Rachel season two-four, because she became so love struck, and I think what's really nice is that we're revisiting that Rachel was so ambitious, badass, and strong willed and I love that. It's a good season for her. Emotional, but less tears and more feistiness."

The waiter brings us our rosé and compliments Meghan's long camel-hued "business vest," which she has paired with a black sleeveless, shin-skimming dress. A natural beauty, her brown eyes are framed by dark liner and lush lashes and her thick, dark hair falls loosely around her shoulders. She proposes a toast and clinks her wine glass against mine. "Rachel is New York, Upper Eastside, old money, proper. She's like my sprit animal... I'm not that girl. I can play dress up, but I was born and raised in L.A. I'm used to no makeup, flip flops on, just really chill. We both pride ourselves on being driven and educated and all that, but our backgrounds couldn't be more different. Also, I don't cry as much as Rachel. That girl cries all the time. 'Rachel, it'll be OK. You will get through this,'" she says with a smile.

Nine months out of the year, *SUITS*' cast and crew film the New York-based show in Toronto. Filming for this season began in April and wraps at the end of November. "We shot the pilot here in New York in November, got picked up late February the next year. Once we were picked up, we moved the show to Toronto, and that was six years ago... It's been an interesting, not rollercoaster, but not a merry-go-round either. I think it's a learning curve with all of us, 'cause with the exception of Rick [Hoffman] and Gina [Torres], none of us have been on a series before. Sarah [Rafferty], Patrick [Adams] and I, this is our first real big break. For Gabriel [Macht], this was his shift from film into TV. So for all of us to have this experience communally and have it in Toronto, where at the time, the show wasn't airing, no one knew what we were doing. We needed each other, 'cause we were all we had. We'd run around the city, go out drinking, and ride bikes late at night. We were ridiculous. We'd never do that now. But I'm really grateful for that first season because it made us so close and I think you see that on camera."

Our neighbor finishes his drink and leaves, prompting me to ask if fan encounters of this kind are par for the course. Meghan smiles. "People are really excited about the show, so they're really vocal. Unlike film stars, they're larger than life, they're on this big screen—television is so different. I'm with people in their homes. I'm with you when you have your pajamas on, ordering takeout, and you're totally comfy and vulnerable... It seems familiar. I love that Rachel is seen as a role model and it's translated. Young girls run up and just hug me like, 'Ohmygod. Hi Meghan!' We don't know each other, but it feels that familiar. They've known me for six years." Another couple of fans stop by our table. Meghan asks them their names and chats with them for a moment. Once they leave, we place our lunch order: Zucchini Carpaccio for Meghan and Watermelon Salad for me.

The interactions are normally kind and respectful, but Meghan has had some aggressive encounters by way of social media. "The hardest thing, truth be told, when we had the storyline with Rachel and Logan Sanders. This guy wooed Rachel away and she kissed him, even though she was with Mike." This outraged male viewers because men relate to Mike "the underdog" and because Rachel was on a pedestal as

"the girl who would never do something wrong," she explains. But they weren't mad at Rachel, they were mad at Meghan. "They were like, 'Meghan Markle, I wanna kill you. You slut, whore,'" she says quietly. "Words I could never say in this interview. They were like, 'I'm unfollowing you. I can't believe you would do that to Mike.' I was like, 'By the way, Mike is not real nor is Rachel nor is Logan Sanders. We film in Toronto. It's all fake.' But they were so angry."

Because of the anger this sparked, Meghan went to *SUITS* creator Aaron Korsh and asked him to scale it back. "It was a lot more forward than what ended up being onscreen... I'm not trying to play the villain. I like playing Rachel. I like what she stands for, so I was very vocal about wanting that pulled back... She was actively pursuing it and that felt very out of character to me. Thankfully, our editor who is a woman on the show, Angela, she said to Aaron, 'I love Rachel, but if you put this scene on the air, I would never be able to like her again. That's the kind of woman that I would not want at the office working with my husband.' And he listened to her—the voice of reason," she says. "Oooh, got hot. Might have to take off my *work vest*. Oh no, now she doesn't mean business anymore," she says playfully. On the flipside, fans love to celebrate Rachel's triumphs. "When Rachel got

three hours a day to get water, then they can't be in school. They're subject to violence, abduction, all sorts of predatory things... If they just had access to fresh water in their community, these girls could be in school." Through The Water Color Campaign, Meghan traveled to Rwanda, helped build a well, then took cups of water from the well, and taught the kids how to paint with water colors. "They all painted what they want to be when they grow up and what their dreams are. Ohmygod, it was amazing." The paintings were framed, then auctioned off at an event—the money raised went toward building more wells. "For me, in my downtime, that makes so much more sense for me to do than a film that doesn't move the needle," she says thoughtfully.

Being on a hit show like *SUITS* has really expanded Meghan's reach. "The moment that social media came into the mix and people started listening to what I have to say, I feel even more of a responsibility to say something of value, so being able to do that and to talk about those projects has been important to me." Two years ago, Meghan created her lifestyle site, [www.TheTig.com](http://www.TheTig.com), so that she could share think pieces and op-eds on self empowerment as well as celebrate her passion for travel, food, fashion, etc. Past Tig contributors include friends Serena Williams, Jessica

## Here Kitty, Kitty

"The other day, Gina, my cast mate, was like, 'Oh, Nutmeg, you're not a night owl. You're a house cat. You just want to be home.' And I was like, I am! Just pet me and love me and let me hang out and lounge around. That is very much my temperament. I just want to eat, sleep, chill out, and get a little affection—that's it."

engaged, ohmygod, I have never in my life been in more restaurants where someone sends over a glass of champagne to say congratulations. I'm like, 'But I'm not getting married, my character is.' People are like, 'We're so happy for you! You're getting married!' I'm like, 'No, I'm not, but sure, thanks. I'll take it.' I love a glass of bubbles," she beams with a smile.

When Meghan is not shooting *SUITS*, she has a window from December to March to explore other projects. This past winter, Meghan appeared in the Hallmark movie, *Dater's Handbook*. "Those are so fun... Some jobs you do for a pay day. Some jobs you do because it's a creative stimulus. For me, I've really spent the bulk of my hiatuses doing more humanitarian work 'cause it's important to me." Meghan spent her past two breaks working closely with World Vision to combat poverty around the world as well as with The United Nations Women—working on empowering young women and girls' education.

Recently, Meghan worked with World Vision on their Water Color Campaign. "My focus has always been on women's rights and empowering and educating young girls. When a community doesn't have access to clean water, then those young girls have to walk

Alba, and Heidi Klum. "It's my baby. It's become my space to voice my own opinion, whereas as an actor, you're paid to say someone else's words for a living. In the first six months, it was Best of the Web on *InStyle* and *Elle*—that stems from *SUITS* and that access. With that I was then able to write a piece on Independence Day, which made UN Women reach out to me... suddenly I'm in Rwanda."

Her life is more than red carpets and hair and makeup, and she wants fans to see that. "It's really important for me to be like: *And here's real life*," she says referencing her social media posts. "Here's me walking my dogs with a baseball cap on... It's not all about the glitz and glam, that's not where I come from." It was only ten years ago that Meghan couldn't even afford to fix her Ford Explorer's broken door locks. To get into the SUV, she would open the trunk and crawl over the front seat. "That is what I remember from my experience as an actor. So this version of it, where you get to play dress up, it's still a Cinderella moment and it's no reason to not be forthcoming about that and be like, 'Oh yeah, this is what life is like.' No, this is not what life is like. This is what I've earned and I'm so grateful... If anything it serves as an inspiration. It's attainable. I didn't think my life would be

## We Want More!

**You have some interesting nicknames:**  
Flower. Nutmeg.

MM, M&M, what else do people call me? Sarah calls me Megs. I don't know why they pluralize Meg, but I get called Megs a lot. MSH Markle on set. Making Shit Happen. MSH, right here!

**What do you think fans would be surprised to find out about you?**

My first job was at yogurt store Humphrey Yogart. I was 13 and I had to take out the trash all the time—my least favorite thing in the whole world to do. So I go out with the trash bags and I see Yasmine Bleeth, who was on *Baywatch*. I used to be obsessed with her. It took me so much courage. I'm going to go up and say hi to her. 'Hi Yasmine, I love you in your Soft & Dri deodorant commercial.' She was like, 'That is so nice, sweetheart. What's your name?' 'I'm Meghan.' She's like, 'I'm Yasmine. Good to meet you,' and shook my hand. That moment with Yasmine is exactly what I base every interaction with fans on. No one teaches you how

to do this, how to make someone feel special or important, but I remember at 13 being so touched that she asked me my name and that I wasn't just some other person. I would've never known that interaction would inform how I move in the world twenty years later.

**What are you watching on TV?**

I TiVo *The Bachelor*, *Bachelorette*, *Scandal*, *Jeopardy*—you don't understand my love of *Jeopardy*; I told you I'm a nerd. I love endless knowledge. I'm watching *Billions*. But I'm on the grind right now, so if I have a moment of free time I'm not watching a show, I'm probably drinking rosé with some friends.

**What's one word you'd use to describe yourself?**

Thoughtful—in everything. In my friends. In my work. In my philanthropic work. I give things a lot of thought and I try to be as sensitive and thoughtful as possible to how it'll make someone feel.

this amazing, so I think it's a really good reminder that you have to dream bigger."

Our food arrives. 'Oh, that looks beautiful! Mmm... This looks like an Instagram photo.'" She arranges the table and snaps a photo. Though Meghan grew up on a TV set (her father was a lighting director), she never thought she'd become an actress. She thought she'd end up producing. The Northwestern University graduate started out as an English major and in her first year made that her minor and double majored in Theater and International Relations. After college, she went on to work for the US Embassy in Buenos Aires. "Talk about a pivotal time in my life. People will go, 'But I don't understand—politics and acting?' Same thing. They're both negotiating drama but in a different way. It's understanding personalities, triggers... There's a really strong parallel in that and as an actor, the more life experience you have, it makes you a better actor."

What she loves most about being an actress is connecting with people and the feeling of community. "Of course, I love the lifestyle that's now come with it and my access to things. I also appreciate that with that access, I've been able to do something more with it. I could just be a girl on a show and that could be enough, and that's perfectly fine. I just want more than that. I love that *SUITS* has opened so many doors for me and I've just kicked them down. Like, 'Let's do it! Yes, I'll do that! Yes, I'll go there!'" What inspires you to do all of this outside of acting? "My mom says, 'Flower, you were just born that way.' I've always had a really strong work ethic. I got that from my dad. I think I've always had a really strong sense of responsibility and I think a lot of that comes from my upbringing." Having grown up in Catholic school and with a mother who is a social worker, her desire to make a difference began at a young age.

She tells me about her 9-minute speech on International Women's Day a year and a half ago for the UN. "I was sitting in the front row with Ban Ki-moon [Secretary-General of United Nations] and he started the standing ovation for me. Talk about a mic-drop-moment. I'm done. I did it! Ohmygod! What just happened to my life!?" she says excitedly. In her speech she tells the story about how at 11-years-old, she was angered when the boys in her class said that women belonged in the kitchen after seeing a TV commercial for Clear Ivory dishwashing liquid say, Women all over America are fighting greasy pots and pans. She tells her dad how upset she is and he suggests that she write some letters. So she did, to Procter & Gamble, Hillary Clinton (the First Lady at the time), Gloria Allred, and Linda Ellerbee, who hosted Nickelodeon's *Nick News*. "My favorite show 'cause I've always been a nerd. I was like, 'I'm going to watch the news!'" she says in an old-timey voice. Everyone's team sends a supportive letter back, except for Procter & Gamble. After Linda Ellerbee comes to her house with a camera crew, Procter & Gamble changes the commercial from *women* all over America to *people* all over America. "At 11-years-old, I was like, 'Yes! My voice is heard! That's who I am... If something's wrong, I wanna make it right. And if something is great, I want to make it greater. That's what I do.'" ML

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and [www.Facebook.com/MeghanMarkleFanPage](http://www.Facebook.com/MeghanMarkleFanPage)

