




Sarah Jessica
Parker talks to
Eve MacSweeney
about juggling three
children, acting,
producing, fashion,
charity work, and
her new movie,
the aptly named
I Don't Know
How She Does It.
Photographed
by Mario Testino.

Show and Tell



A black and white photograph of a couple in formal attire. The woman is wearing a strapless, floor-length dress with a large black polka-dot pattern. Her hair is styled in a bun. The man is wearing a dark tuxedo with a white shirt and a dark bow tie. They are standing in front of a window with a view of a city skyline. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights from the window and deep shadows in the room.

DATE NIGHT

"If I didn't have kids, I would be at the theater or the ballet every single night of my life," says Parker, whose husband, Matthew Broderick (RIGHT), will star on Broadway in *Nice Work if You Can Get It* next spring. Oscar de la Renta sequined dress. Stephen Russell diamond earrings. In this story: hair, Serge Normant for sergenormant.com; makeup, Leslie Lopez at the Wall Group. Set design by Mary Howard. Details, see In This Issue.

prequel, *Summer and the City*, to say nothing of Melissa Tredinnick's forthcoming novelty book *Sex and the Kitty: A Celebrity Meowmoir*—Parker knew it was time to move on. The 20-hour days on set, during which she also worked as producer, were no longer viable once she became a mother. "It wasn't hard when I didn't have children," she says. "I loved it. But I ultimately chose to stop doing the television series because I felt like it required, and deserved, a lot of time when I really wanted to be a parent." Also, she says, circumstances had changed. "It was such a different time in the city, culturally,

Parker dreams of having time to read the papers on the beach on a Sunday morning with her husband

socially, economically . . . the kind of liberty that Carrie Bradshaw had. You couldn't start off with a story like that today."

Meanwhile, the relevance of Pearson's novel, though it was written ten years ago, appears to have only grown stronger. According to Pamela Haag, author of the just-published and fabulously subtitled *Marriage Confidential: The Post-Romantic Age of Workhorse Wives, Royal Children, Undersexed Spouses, and Rebel Couples Who Are Rewriting the Rules*, "That have-it-all dream has fallen on hard times. Marriage and family life are under unprecedented financial stress today, and the workplace is still designed with a 1950s idea of who a worker is." Much of the story's (tragi)comedy derives from the degree of dissembling its heroine has to practice, the sense of living a double life in which it is inadmissible to allow any sign of motherhood to intrude into the office, or of work into the home.

Parker says she hears the double-life conversation around her all the time, in interviews, in books, at dinner parties, like the fashion executive she met recently who described getting the lice call—just like in the movie—and debating whether it was more embarrassing to collect her daughter in high heels and a miniskirt or to change into gym clothes in the car. "There are probably more women, even now, who are trying to be all things to all people," she observes. All of which is good news for the timeliness of *I Don't Know How She Does It*.

How Parker does it seems to come down to a combination of organization, boundary-setting, and formidable will. If she set her mind to it, you feel, Parker could do anything—how about mayor of New York City? For now, she schedules her meetings after walking James Wilkie to school but tries to be home after the twins' afternoon nap. "I feel like if I'm only missing up until 3:30, when they wake up, that's not so awful." She doesn't use a cell phone, except in emergencies; for her it's e-mail or texts, "otherwise it's one more thing I'm trying to keep up with."

She escapes to the Hamptons on weekends and in summer and occasionally to Matthew's family's cottage in Ireland, though it's so small she hasn't yet figured out how to fit the twins' cribs in. She dreams of reading the papers on the beach on a Sunday morning with her husband, but it never happens. Where Carrie had her girlfriends and Kate Reddy has her e-mail buddies, Parker has her mom friends, fellow parents at James Wilkie's school with whom her relationships "have

evolved over time in a very natural way." Once school is out, Parker and her brood will join a group of their families on vacation in Italy, where the twins will celebrate their birthday.

After her much-publicized struggles with fertility, Parker had her daughters via a surrogate, and, in their white sandals, slightly outgrown smock dresses, and hair ribbons, they couldn't be more adorable. Loretta is bigger and fairer than Tabitha, who is tiny and olive-skinned, with enormous brown eyes. "Tabitha's very, very outgoing, but physically she's very shy," says Parker. "She shakes in elevators; it's very sweet, like Bambi. And then Loretta is pale, like my husband, with piercing blue eyes. But she's physically bold." Watching them, she marvels at how they could be so different and yet so recognizably related. "I think it's funny how much she looks like my husband," she says of Tabitha. "Except then I look at Loretta and she has my husband's mouth and sort of sad eyes, you know the kind that go down? The Broderick eyes. They both really look like him."

Being a little older as a parent, Parker says, means that she's probably a lot more patient than she would have been. "I guess I think there are things about it that I hope have made me a better mother," she says. "I've had a lot of opportunities to do the things that I wanted to do, like sleep. I have slept till 11:00 for a lot of years. Honestly, the only thing that I'm concerned about is the energy: I hope I can maintain the energy. I think about all the years I've spent parenting James Wilkie and everything I put into it, and there are *two* of them."



for her professional life, Parker continues to redefine the rules. "I kept thinking that this age was the one to be worried about," she says. "Like probably for the last five, six years I kept thinking, Oh, this is that age that I've heard about; this is that bad age where the work slows down. I assumed that at this point in my life I would be feeling frustrated, left behind, or marginalized, playing parts I was reluctant to. But I've been so busy, I'm not so sure that I see this fallow period yet. I'm not saying it's not coming and that it won't hit me like a ton of bricks, but I do find work that I'm excited about and interested in with people that I want to work with." Later in the year she will appear in the ensemble movie *New Year's Eve*, by *Valentine's Day* director Garry Marshall, alongside Robert De Niro, Michelle Pfeiffer, Halle Berry, Zac Efron, and a long list of others. "I play Abigail Breslin's mother, who is the wardrobe supervisor at Radio City Music Hall, which of course I loved!" She's mulling her fall schedule and is considering breaking with type by taking a role in a thriller. "I don't know how to even telescope the future," she continues, "except to say that I like to be an actor and I like to be a working actor and I don't know how long I'll be doing that, but it seems to stretch itself out in front of me more than I thought."

Time has zoomed by, and suddenly Parker realizes she's late, something you sense rarely happens. "Oh, my God, it's 11:59," she says. "I'm going to run home and change clothes because I have to be at a business meeting at 12:00." With that she says goodbye to her daughters, who burst into heartbreaking tears, and, a little torn but still determined, she literally sprints up the block to her next appointment, ponytail flying behind her. □