




DRESS BY J. MENDEL
BANGLES AND RING BY JOHN HARDY.



A WOMAN OF PARIS She was actually raised in Switzerland. But Kiera Chaplin—the French-speaking, 25-year-old writer-model-actress, and heiress to grandfather Charlie's throne—has a certain *je ne sais quoi*, no? Here, in residence at the 6 Columbus hotel.

PHOTOGRAPHY TAKU STYLING BRYAN LEVANDOWSKI





BODYSUIT BY PREEN SASH BY DERERCUNY.

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At a photo shoot for *Vogue*, in the late '90s, a stylist asked Kiera Chaplin the same old question: "So how exactly are you related?"

"He was my father's father," said Kiera, for the millionth time.

That's when the photographer, Mario Testino, chimed in: "Who are you talking about?"

It was the proudest moment of Kiera Chaplin's life—the moment she broke the golden shackles of her famous last name and began her own career. Someone—not just someone, but Mario Testino—had booked her without knowing that her grandfather was perhaps the most iconic movie star in the history of cinema. If Testino had looked closely enough at Chaplin's bone structure, he could have figured it out. But such comparisons irk her. After all, she says, "*Je suis une fille*." Evidently.

Chaplin hasn't spoken French for a very long time, though it's her native tongue. Born in Belfast in 1982, she grew up in Vevey, Switzerland, where her grandparents had lived since Charlie Chaplin's political sympathies landed him on Joe McCarthy's naughty list. Although Switzerland may be a peaceful spot for an old Hollywood legend to retire, it's no place for a teenager with a wild streak, yearning to make a name for herself rather than live off someone else's. "I'd go to school and do fuck all. I'd say, Fuck this, I'm gonna be a star." (She speaks English with a charmingly Gallic accent.)

She was told she was beautiful by the age of 12, and at 16 moved to Paris to model. There, she flaunted her most un-Chaplinsque attributes—tattoos, pierced nipples—on magazine covers and on the catwalk, where she strutted with a grace far removed from her grandfather's tramp-waddle. She was emblazoned on the Pirelli calendar in 2002, and became a spokesmodel for Tommy Hilfiger, Roberto Cavalli, and now, Maggie Norris couture.

After conquering the runway, Chaplin—who *The New York Times* recently estimated is worth \$30 million—took on Hollywood. She landed small but promising roles, notably in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, and ran a production company with her then-fiancé, Ale de Basseville, called Limelight Films. Her film career and her engagement were both cut short two years ago, however, when de Basseville was arrested for having used Limelight as a front for international drug smuggling and money laundering. Like her father and his father before him, she grew disgusted with Hollywood. "I left and never looked back," she says.

Today, living in New York, she has turned to writing (an inclination that—as long as we're giving her relatives all the credit—she may have gotten from her great-grandfather, playwright Eugene O'Neill). French publishers wanted her to pen a tell-all about her grandfather, but she adamantly refused, claiming she never even knew him. (He died in 1977.) Chaplin has instead finished a fashion-world thriller-à-clef called Vega, which is already out in France. She appears on the cover in all her leggy splendor. After all, as you can see in the following pages, she has inherited Charlie Chaplin's ability to stun without speaking a single word. —Julian Sancton



DRESS BY MAGGIE NORRIS COUTURE
EARRINGS, BRACELET, AND RING
BY JOHN HARDY.



DRESS BY DOLCE & GABBANA FUR SHRUG BY
J. MENDEL TIGHTS BY WOLFORD
SHOES BY VERSACE EARRINGS, BANGLES,
AND CUFF BY JOHN HARDY CLUTCH BY
SANGA.

