

*Her character on Lost  
may be an enigma, but Evangeline Lilly  
is as straightforward as they come.  
Smart, funny, and shockingly candid,  
she breaks the Hollywood actress  
mold into a million little pieces.*

# evangeline uncensored

BY MARSHALL HEYMAN // PHOTOGRAPHS BY TONY DURAN

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**Y**ou've gotta say this much for Evangeline Lilly: She cleans up good. *Lost* viewers are used to seeing mud streaked across her lightly freckled features, her tank top torn and fluttering in the island breeze. But today, the 29-year-old actress is dressed for lunch at the Four Seasons in Beverly Hills in a form-fitting camisole, brown tailored pants, and giant hoop earrings, her trademark waves blown out sleek. But just as you're struggling to reconcile this sophisticated creature with the down-and-dirty fugitive she plays on TV, she busts out with, "Are we drinking today? Because I could really use a drink." And then the fun begins.

To have lunch with Evangeline is to be entertained. She's quick-witted and opinionated; she's also something of a contradiction. This is a woman who once volunteered at a Bible camp and has Christian music on her iPod, yet swears liberally, regularly detonating F-bombs. And though she reportedly shuns nude scenes and refuses to take part in overtly sexy photo shoots, she doesn't shy away from risqué topics in conversation. Case in point: She bluntly states why guys shouldn't go commando: "They need to tuck it away because, frankly, it's distracting."

In all honesty, so is Evangeline. Even in a town of head-turners, this radiant beauty—who manages to fuse girl-next-door with an air of exotic mystery—is

a special breed of stunning. So it's not all that surprising that she's inspired hundreds of worshipful websites since her debut five years ago as escaped prisoner Kate Austen on *Lost*.

Still, she's wary of all the hype—and dismissive of the haters who come with it. "That happens when you have a lot of good things in your life," she says with a shrug. "In high school, people wanted to find the worst in me. I was a good student, I was good at soccer, I was vice president of the student council, I was a pretty girl. It was easy for people to look at me and say 'Fuck you.' That's what happens in Hollywood. People are like, 'I want to hate you, because everyone else seems to love you.' But the reality is this: I'm a simple person who's not interested in attention and who just wants to go about her business."

#### NORTHERN EXPOSURE

Credit her solid, small-town upbringing for her levelheaded approach to life in the fast lane. Evangeline grew up in the Canadian town of Fort Saskatchewan, Alberta. "I didn't grow up in a home that glorified Hollywood," she says. "We didn't watch TV. We didn't have a lot of magazines around. My family didn't have a lot of money, and I'm grateful for that. Money is the longest route to happiness."

According to Evangeline, both sides of her family played a big part in shaping who she is today. "The people on my mom's side of the family are atheist intellectuals who are über-proper," she explains. "My dad's side of the family are missionaries who are more comfortable sitting around in sweatpants than they are in a five-star restaurant. But those two influences converged in my life. My heart is in helping people and in the less materialistic side of things,

but there's the side of me that's more polished. If I were to live in Africa, serving the poor, the number-one thing I'd miss wouldn't be running water or electricity—it would be style...being able to get dressed up and feel beautiful."

#### LOST AND FOUND

Before she landed *Lost*, Evangeline's résumé had to be one of the most colorful of all time: flight attendant, waitress, bartender, oil-change technician, and Bible-camp counselor. But it was her time as a counselor that resonated strongest. Before attending the University of British Columbia as an international relations major, she spent three weeks in the Philippines with a Christian missionary group and decided to make a career out of it.

But missionary work doesn't pay the tuition, so Evangeline scored a few commercials and gigs as an extra, eventually moving on to bit parts in TV shows such as *Smallville* and *Kingdom Hospital*. In 2004 she found her way into the office of *Lost* producer J.J. Abrams. After more than a month of auditions, she nabbed the part—and that's when the ambivalence kicked in. "I kind of didn't want it," Evangeline admits. "I actually said, 'That seems like a really crap script.' Because we never saw the entire script, just little pieces. It was a plane crash on a desert island. I thought, 'Oh, give me a break. A dramatic *Gilligan's Island*.' Turns out it was fucking brilliant."

Considering the show's fervent fan base and critical acclaim, that's a dead-on description. Evangeline knows just how lucky she is to have landed the part of a lifetime, but says *Lost* is actually a

means to an end, a way to earn enough money to finance her humanitarian endeavors. (She's been doing charitable work in Rwanda for the past seven years.) "The show was a rare opportunity, but there were ulterior motives," she says. "I knew if I did this for five or six years, what it would result in. The good that I have been able to do has been worth the sacrifice. Ultimately, acting is not my passion. It's my day job."

#### THE RELUCTANT CELEBRITY

Ardent *Lost* fans have tried to unlock the mysteries of the show's wacky plot lines, but Evangeline couldn't care less. "All I want to know are the character arcs," she explains, sipping her latte. "Who's happy? Who's not?" As for whether her character ends up with Jack (the sexy doctor played by Matthew Fox) or Sawyer (the sexy con man played by Josh Holloway)—the subject of endless speculation on the Internet—Evangeline says, "I'm not invested one way or the other. Matt and Josh are like my brothers. I love them, but I could never go there. It's like if you had two [brothers] and had to decide which of them you'd like to [do]."

Evangeline's laissez-faire attitude has always baffled her *Lost* colleagues. If they initially thought her anti-Hollywood stance was a calculated maneuver in playing hard to get, they have been forced to reconsider. "They've seen that I haven't picked up on the opportunity to become a big movie star," she says. "I think they're starting to be convinced that I'm not full of shit, and this is who I really am. My producer Bryan Burk is always like, 'My God, the opportunities you have!' It frustrates him that they've given me this chance to become the next Angelina Jolie [and I haven't gone after it]. Sure, I'd love to be her, but just the [humanitarian] side."

Evangeline also admires how Angelina carefully rides the line between being a public figure and a private person. "No one knows that woman; she's a complete ice queen, which is perfect. Why should she be any more? She doesn't owe us anything."

So when asked if she's currently with former *Lost* costar Dominic Monaghan (who, according to press reports, she started dating not long after the show went into production and split from

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STYLING: KATE MOODIE; HAIR: PATRICK GAUGLLE; MAKEUP: LISA STOREY/THE WALL GROUP; MANICURIST: JENNA HIPPO FOR SPARTAN/CELESTINE AGENCY

## evangeline's life rules

↙  
The actress offers five strategies for staying fit and busting stress.

**Don't be a slave to exercise** "Your mind and soul are the kings of your physique way more than any exercise you do. I was a hardcore buff girl, [but now] I go on leisurely walks and have a swim in my pool. Simple things. My body looks 10 times better."

**Dance away stress** "I'm really into this type of expression where you put on music and literally feel it. I will go crazy—dancing like a little girl who's pretending to be a ballerina. A lot of it for me is releasing pent-up energy when you have a lot of stress in your life."

**Leave room for dessert** "Diets are a fool's errand. I eat something sweet every day, whether it's chocolate or a cookie or a latte. If I don't, I guarantee you that there's going to be a day every week when I'm going to stuff myself, especially if it's PMS time."

**Hit the sheets** "Sleep is the number-one thing. I think you need between eight and 10 hours a night. When I don't sleep enough, I look bloated, my hair gets flat, and my skin goes to pot. If you struggle with bloating, get some effing sleep."

**Trim the to-do list** "Everyone thinks they can cure stress by adding something to their schedule, like going to yoga class. Oh, great—one more thing to feel guilty about when you can't do it. I have limits, and I will fall down dead if I push those limits."

## “Things I’ve lost”



**A JOB** “I got fired once from a volunteer position at a Bible camp.”

**MY DIGNITY** “All the time, every day. I’m the type of person who, when I’m in the jungle working with Matthew Fox, will just crouch beside a bush three feet away and take a pee.”

**MY MIND** “After the first season of the show, I said something [on *Late Night with Conan O’Brien*] that you cannot say on national television. I was so mortified. I called them

in tears and said, ‘You can’t let that get on the air!’ I was heaving and sobbing—the kind of sobbing you only see in the movies. It was a genuine adult breakdown. They ended up editing it out.”

**MY BEARINGS** “I summited Mount Baker, in Washington—it’s about 11,000 feet—with no ropes, no appropriate gear, and without training, purely on guts and will. I was so exhilarated that I started running down at full tilt, treating it like a tobogganing mountain, sliding on my bum. The next thing I knew, my legs dropped, my upper body went flying forward, and I ended up hanging in a crevasse, like something out of *K2*. But I was able

to catch myself and crawl up. My life is full of that kind of shit.”

**MY SENSE OF DIRECTION** “Several times, actually. I’m pretty good with direction for a woman—but I am still a woman.”

**MY INNOCENCE** “I think it’s fairly intact, but I’m kind of waiting for that to happen. I’m almost 30 and I’m wondering, shouldn’t I have lost this already?”

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MALANDRINO dress,  
GOLDEN GOOSE boots

in late 2007 only to reconcile with a few months later), it’s not too surprising that Evangeline pleads the Fifth, then adds: “If I were to tell you that Sandra Miggum and Henry Pickett are dating, would you even care? They’re completely fictional, so you don’t know them. Well, people don’t know us. So why should they care?”

But care they do—sometimes a little too much. “I say no to photographs,” Evangeline says. She makes no apologies: “When people take my picture, I feel like they’ve taken a piece of me, and I can’t get that back. It’s soul draining. I was getting angry. Somebody could take a picture of me from across the room and I would feel like I wanted to rip their face off.” But it didn’t take her long to realize that being angry would get her nowhere. “I needed to deal with it because this is my job,” she says. “Because the only way to want millions of people invading your life is to be off your rocker. This industry is conducive to cuckoo. It likes cuckoo. It encourages cuckoo. I’ve had to find my sanity.”

### KEEPING IT REAL

One of the ways Evangeline has kept sane is to take downtime seriously. She enjoys the occasional dinner or barbecue with the *Lost* crew, but for the most part, she says, “I’m not a highly social person. I’m a highly productive person.” Proof: Last year she started renovating three homes, one in Hawaii and two near Vancouver. She loves to write in her spare time. Currently, she’s working on her third novel, about a successful prostitute turned madam. She wrote a script, *The Fortress*, which she hopes to sell after *Lost* finishes its sixth and final season next year. Also on her to-do list: continuing her humanitarian work and becoming a mother. “The world is full of opportunities, and I want to try as many as I possibly can,” she explains. “But right now, I’m happy doing a job that’s not my ultimate dream.”

That candid remark gets right to the heart of Evangeline’s perspective on happiness. “Even if you’re unhappy, just pretend that you’re happy,” she says, offering one final contradiction. “Eventually, your smile will be contagious to yourself. I had to learn that. I used to think, ‘I’m being fake.’ But you know what? Better to be fake and happy than real and miserable.” ■