



Full Look AMI Paris

SO FIA OXENHAM

[11-16]

Words By Holly Armstrong

Sofia Oxenham’s story so far has been nothing short of Extraordinary. From reprising her BAFTA-nominated role as Carrie in the series’ second season to playing a princess in A Very Royal Scandal, the actor proves that her patience is well and truly paying off.

Perseverance, grit and determination make up the foundation of Sofia Oxenham’s blooming career as an actor—and even more so, the person behind her characters.

Growing up in a rural Cornish village, spending summer holidays working an ordinary job at a local waterski centre, Sofia never expected how Extraordinary her life would become. Watching her older brother performing on stage, Sofia soon followed in his footsteps and began taking part in school plays as well as local amateur dramatics. There, she discovered her own special power: telling stories.

But in the increasingly competitive world of acting, a slow burn can often be the key to long-term success—something which Sofia has on lock. Moving to London to pursue her career as an actor, she spent the first few years working as a runner on a film set, while picking up shifts working as a performer at children’s parties. Slow-burner? Yes. Hard worker? Undeniable.

Earning a spot in drama school – specifically RADA – was the first step of her game plan (where she won a place, third time lucky, after twice reaching the final round of interviews without success.) She graduated in 2017 and cut her professional teeth booking one-off parts in a handful of household British series, including Grantchester and Doc Martin. After earning her first recurring role as Tess Tregidden in Poldark in 2019, Sofia was finally on her way to becoming a recognisable face in the landscape of British television...but she wasn’t slowing down.

Since Poldark, she has featured in several series, including a recurring role in Netflix’ Cursed and a BBC production of Dracula. But it was the breakthrough role of Carrie in Emma Moran’s Extraordinary in 2023 that marked a turning point in the actor’s career. Released

to much critical acclaim, the comedy superhero series is set in a modern-day, alternate-universe London. The story follows Jen, who is yet to realise her superpower, alongside her flatmate, Carrie, (Sofia) who has the power to channel the spirits of the dead. The series was renewed for a second season in 2023, with the addition of comedy legend, Julian Barratt of Mighty Boosh fame and esteemed stage and screen actor, Sir Derek Jacobi.

While Extraordinary promises to keep Sofia’s face emblazoned across our screens, she will also star as Princess Eugenie in the upcoming three-part Amazon mini-series, A Very Royal Scandal, a dramatic retelling of Emily Maitlis’ career, culminating with her infamous interview with Prince Andrew.

Ready to regale her story so far, Sofia shares behind-the-scenes insights on Extraordinary season two, how she’s preparing for her Royal role and her personal aspirations for the future.

HOLLY ARMSTRONG Why do you act?

SO FIA OXENHAM I love the process of connecting and collaborating with a group of different people to create a story. Working together to bring a project from audition to finish is an exhilarating process which I absolutely love.

HA Was a career in acting always the ultimate goal? How did it materialise?

SO Going to drama school was always the goal, and the dream was to be a working actor but I wasn’t sure how to make it a reality. I didn’t know any actors when I was younger and any time I mentioned it to teachers or adults I was reminded only about how tough it can be. In the end, I went to RADA and that was amazing training and taught me a lot about the craft and the industry as a whole.



Full Look Nanushka



Full Look Fendi

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HA Would you say you have thick skin? How has your experience within the industry thus far shaped you as a person?

SO I don't have thick skin, no. I am a bit sensitive and tend to overthink. However, over the last few years I have tried to build a thicker skin as I realised that if I wanted to stay in this world long-term, I had to find a way to be more resilient. One of the ways I have managed to do this is by having a great network of actor friends who understand the industry's highs and lows and offer great support, so that sense of community has been really helpful.

HA What was the first acting job you booked? How did that feeling compare to how you felt when you first booked Extraordinary?

SO The first job I booked was a TV show called Grantchester, where I played a sex worker. I had recently left drama school and I remember really doubting whether I could actually do it. But that project gave me such a confidence boost and the team made it such fun for a newbie. But when I found out about the booking for Extraordinary, I was over the moon. From the very first moment reading the scripts, I was in love with the project and desperate to be a part of it. I jumped up and down outside for an embarrassing length of time when my agent phoned with the good news.

HA It must have been exciting to find out the show was being renewed for a second season, can you remember how you felt when you heard the news?

SO It was the best news. I felt so, so excited! All the cast went out to celebrate and I remember we were so elated by the opportunity to do it all again.

HA Did you find it easier to get into the character of Carrie, more specifically the hilarious channelling of spirits, this time around?

SO I did! With our directors, I had worked out a system on how to best build the people that I was supposed to channel, so it seemed much more intuitive to do it second time around. I remember in the first series finding it one of the strangest (and most hysterical) experiences, looking into a mirror, flirting with myself whilst pretending to be Charles II...but in series two, they became a joy. The channelling scenes also gave me incredible scope to play around with characters I would probably never normally be cast as.

HA Some new exciting names were added to the cast list for season two, including Julian Barratt and Derek Jacobi. Did you get to work with either of them and if so, how was it?

SO Yes!! Very exciting! I worked a bit with Julian Barratt, which was amazing. He is an icon and it was so cool to be in a scene with him. I recently went to a Mighty Boosh-themed party, so that felt very full circle.

HA How do you feel like the character of Carrie changed/developed between season one and two?

SO In season one, Carrie has a boyfriend, Kash, and she cares deeply about what people think of her. I suppose you would have to say she is a bit of a people-pleaser. Then, in season two, she is getting used to single life and she has more time and space to figure out what she wants, rather than being led by other people's expectations...and more importantly to embrace being on her own. Hopefully, the storyline will chime positively for anyone who's just been through a breakup.

HA The characters of Jen and Carrie have a really lovely friendship in the show, and you guys seem to have a lot of fun together on and off-screen. Is that something that came quite naturally to the pair of you?

SO I agree. They do have a lovely friendship, and it is something I too really love about the show. At our age, when there is so much focus on romantic relationships, it's so important to realise the importance of our good friends. Máiréad [Tyers] and I hit it off straight away when we first started working on Extraordinary. We share a very similar sense of humour and she always makes me laugh.

She is a trusted friend in real life and luckily we have a very balanced relationship off-screen, unlike Jens and Carries...

HA What was the most fun part of filming for the second season?

SO The scripts are yet again hilarious. Emma Moran has done such a great job. They create a really funny vibe when we film them. I particularly love the scenes where the four of us are interacting, as the dynamic is so fun and the energy is very high. But in the end, being back together, working with the whole crew and production team, who are like family, as well as my fantastic cast mates...that was the real highlight.

HA What can we expect from the second series of Extraordinary?

SO I think the second season feels more grown up, with all the characters experiencing big changes in their lives. It feels bolder and more adventurous, and maybe even a bit wilder. There are some incredible new characters and superpowers, and also lots of kittens. And who doesn't want to see that?

HA You're playing Princess Eugenie in the upcoming Amazon series, A Very Royal Scandal. How did it feel to act the part of a real-life royal? Did it come with any specific pressures?

SO With every character I play, I feel a responsibility in trying to accurately portray them, and with Eugenie being a real, living, breathing person, it certainly added to that pressure initially. I wondered if it might allow less creative freedom to explore the role, as people may already have a certain version of her, mentally. But our director, Julian Jarrold, reassured us that he wasn't looking for a mere imitation of the person, which definitely freed us from that specific pressure.

HA I can't think of a more extreme shift to make as an actor, going from a superhero comedy like Extraordinary to a dramatic retelling of real events like this one. How did you find the transition? Which project felt more "comfortable" to you?

SO I feel so lucky that I got to experience both of them in the same year. But yes, moving from Extraordinary to A Very Royal Scandal did take a bit of adjustment initially. However, with guidance from our director, combined with doing lots of research and watching as many Eugenie interviews as I could, we worked it out. A Very Royal Scandal also meant working alongside Michael Sheen and Ruth Wilson, who were inspirational. In the end, I felt equally comfortable on both projects but I suppose you could say that the experiences were very different.

HA How much does the genre of show you're creating affect your experience on set?

SO I think the genre can definitely play into the culture on set. On Extraordinary, because the world it depicts is so crazy, dystopian and fun, it seems to create a supercharged energy. I also think the relationship between the rest of the cast plays into the experience on set. As it was the second series, it was like working with your best friends. Filming A Very Royal Scandal was incredibly different but no less enjoyable and the production team created a very relaxed atmosphere on set.

HA It sounds like you've been busy with Extraordinary and A Very Royal Scandal, but what would you like to do next, if you got your dream role?

SO Oooh. Good question! There are so many I have in mind. I would really love to explore more genres, to be honest. But maybe next time something completely different...like a psychological thriller.

Extraordinary S2 is streaming on Disney+. Stream the first series now on Disney+ and ITVX.

Right: Full Look **Isabel Marant**



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