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PHOTOGRAPHY MITCHELL NGUYEN MCCORMACK STYLIST ALEXA RANGROUMMITH GREEN

THROUGH HER VARIOUS ROLES
ACROSS DIFFERENT MEDIUMS,
RACHEL SKARSTEN IS CONSTANTLY
REDEFINING HERSELF AS AN ACTRESS.
SHE LETS DA MAN INTO HER WORLD



Dress by The Kooples,
bra by Calvin Klein,
bracelet by Pushmataaha



Dress by Halston Heritage,
necklace by Makko,
ring by Charles Albert,
shoes by Carmen Steffens

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tudious, adventurous, irrepressible, radiant. These are just some of the adjectives one might employ when describing Rachel Skarsten. After cutting her teeth in a number of energetic roles, the Canadian beauty has now arrived on the big screen with one of the most highly anticipated films of the decade, “Fifty Shades of Grey.” Her character Andrea is a suitably feisty individual. If you’re thinking of taking on Rachel Skarsten, you had better bring your A-game.

DA MAN: Rachel, we’re excited to see you in “Fifty Shades of Grey.” Tell us a bit about your character Andrea.

Rachel Skarsten: Andrea is Christian Grey’s assistant. She’s smart and capable. She’s also blonde and, therefore, not his physical type, which frees her to have a strictly professional and platonic relationship with him unlike most of the other female characters. This means she has an interesting female role in the novel and movie.

DA: There are plenty of erotic literature novels out there. Why has “Fifty Shades of Grey” become such a phenomenon?

RS: Knowing your audience is very important, so starting as “Twilight” fan fiction gave it a base before it was even published. To be honest, while I was aware of the story, I hadn’t read any of the books prior to being cast in the role.

DA: Just how heavy has the weight of expectation been?

RS: We shot the movie over a year ago and I had to keep my casting a total secret. I couldn’t even tell my friends, so it hasn’t seemed real up until now. When the trailer came out, I think that’s when the magnitude of it hit me because my face was seen by over 200 million people in one day! Having said that, you can’t get too caught up in the hype or you run the risk of being swept away. I’ve learned that the entertainment business is a moving target, and I just try to keep focused on the moment I’m in.

DA: Jamie Dornan plays the irresistible Dorian Grey. What makes him the right man for the job?

RS: Aside from his considerable skill as an actor—watch TV drama “The Fall” and tell me you aren’t impressed—have you seen him? Yup. Next question! [Laughs]

DA: You previously starred on supernatural TV show “Lost Girl.” What is the premise of the show?

RS: “Lost Girl” is about a succubus (a female demon) named Bo, who feeds on people’s sexual energy. However, raised as a human, she refuses to embrace the supernatural underworld and its ruthless clan system. The show follows Bo and her friends on their journey to help other underdogs and discover their mysterious origins.

DA: Where did your character fit into all of this?

RS: I played Tamsin. She was introduced in the third season strictly to shake things up. She was a take-no-prisoners, bad ass with a past. Playing her in seasons four and five gave me the opportunity to delve into her vulnerable past and really flesh out a complete character, while keeping the quick wit and humor the audience loved her for. I had a real soft spot for Tamsin. I was lucky to live in her skin for three years.

DA: If you could have a supernatural power, what would it be?

RS: I’d be able to teleport from one place to another so that I could save the travel time. Not flashy, but when you spend the better part of your life in an airport, it’s a dream.

DA: You’ve accrued a multitude of TV and movie roles during your career. Has this helped you develop as an actress?

RS: When I started acting, I considered myself a purely dramatic actor; however, by playing different roles over the years, I discovered sides to myself as an actor that I wasn’t even aware I could access. Geraldine Clark said it best, “That’s what makes acting so attractive. You get to break all your own rules.” With each new character and each new genre, I get to break all my own rules, grow as an actor and explore myself as an artist.

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DA: Do you have preference between TV and movies?

RS: TV gives you the time and space to develop a character, but movies offer the chance to know the beginning and end, to research everything in between before even wrapping your first day. One isn’t better than the other; they’re just different. And now both television and film both have such meaty content, such strong female characters, and there is so much actor crossover. I’d say at this point I have no preference. I just exist in a state of eager anticipation of the next adventure.

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DA: You're originally from Canada but made the move to L.A. to pursue your career. Was this a difficult decision?

RS: The only thing I miss when I'm away is my family, that and free healthcare! But I've always been a bit of a vagabond. My mum grew up in India, my dad in Norway. We always traveled. I have many homes. L.A. is where my life is now for sure, but Canada will always be where I started. I'll never forget where I came from and my gratitude for the country and industry there that gave me my start.

DA: What other projects are you involved in at the moment?

RS: I'm off to Malta for a month to film a feature film called "The Cove" with Callum Blue.

DA: Tell us something not many people know about you.

RS: I have a tattoo of the state of Texas on the bottom of my foot, a souvenir that vodka gave me on a night out in Austin with my brother. That's all I have to say about that!

DA: What would you say is your best character trait?

RS: I took a personality test for this, called StrengthsFinder. It named my two most dominant character traits as competitive and empathetic. I think they are what equip me for my profession. I'm so competitive that I'll never give up on a dream, but I'm empathetic enough that I'd never step over someone to do it.

DA: Acting can take people all around the world. Do you enjoy this aspect?

RS: When I was 21, I made a list of all the countries I wanted to see before I died. The list came out to 99. My job affords me to opportunity to travel to so many amazing places, checking countries off my list at a furious rate, which is very cool. I also have a voracious appetite for adventure and the travel aspect satiates that. On the flip side, I hate flying and I miss my brother and my pit bull Maddy when I'm away.

DA: What do you do to take your mind off work?

RS: I don't think of my job as work, so I don't need anything to take my mind off of it. As for what I do in my spare time? Sleep. I'm a bear. I need lots of it. When I'm not filming? Checking as many countries off my list as possible—I'm currently in Turkey—and reading over a cup of coffee.

DA: Do you have any resolutions for 2015?

RS: I make a list every year on my birthday. I write down all the things, however outrageous, that I want to achieve before my next birthday. It's remarkable how many things come true. I highly recommend it! 🍷



Vest by Charabia,
skirt by Halston Heritage,
ring by Pushmataaha,
earrings by Lionette by Noa Sade



Dress by Moschino,
earrings and ring by Charles Albert,
shoes by Carmen Steffens



Dress by BCBG Max Azria,
bracelet by Charles Albert



Dress by Karen Millen,
earrings and cuff by Charles Albert



Dress by Halston Heritage,
earrings by Charles Albert,
cuff by BCBG Max Azria



Negligee by Calvin Klein,
necklace by Makko,
ring by Charles Albert,
tights by Hanes,
shoes by Carmen Steffens

Makeup Elie Maalouf using Yves Saint Laurent
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