



People | Dreaming of a minivan future, including dog

Rachel Skarsten is a 17-year-old Toronto actress brimming with confidence—and for good reason. She currently plays Dinah in the new Batman-inspired TV series, *Birds of Prey*, and has one of the lead roles in *Virginia's Run*, a family film about two teenaged girls coping with the loss of their mother, starring **Gabriel Byrne**. But Skarsten seems most excited about returning home from L.A. for her upcoming season as the goalie of the Leaside Wildcats Midget AA. “The producers of *Birds of Prey* were really worried I might ruin my face playing hockey,” says Skarsten, who became passionate about the game after watching then-Maple Leafs goalie **Curtis Joseph** in the '99 playoffs. “I was a ballerina and just loved the way he moved. I told my mom the next day I wanted to be a goalie and she just laughed at me. Looking back it was probably fair, since I didn't even know how to skate at the time.”

But if Skarsten's acting and hockey careers don't pan out, she has a lot to fall back on. “Acting was never supposed to be this large a part of my life,” she says. “In some ways it has been tough, because I've not only lost my anonymity, but my identity, as well. People now identify me as Rachel Skarsten, the actress, and I sometimes just want to say, ‘I do so much more.’” In fact, Skarsten studied ballet at Toronto's Royal Academy of Dance and music at the prestigious Claude Watson School for the Arts, where she was a cellist in the orchestra. And while she'd eventually like to go to university, her goal in life is to be a full-time mother. “I want to have kids, a minivan and a dog,” says Skarsten, who lost her father to cancer when she was nine and was raised by her stay-at-home mom. “I've always thought it's so rewarding and an honour to raise children.” But for now, she's happy stopping pucks and the occasional villain. **JOHN INTINI**

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