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*Rachel
Skansten*



Photographer: Vitorija Pashuta
Styled by Jesse J
www.jessejcollections.com
MUA: Barbara Yriguez
Hair Stylist: Veronica Nunez using Criba
SA: Kimberly Shores Phoenix Mason

R U N W A Y @ E N T E R T A I N M E N T

Rachel
Skansten

dress: Marla Costello Couture / jewelry: Troy's Jewelry / shoes: BCBG

R U N W A Y @ B E A U T Y • R A C H E L S K A S T E N



Your look is absolutely stunning and those eyes speak volumes... looking to both your inner and outer beauty, can you share what's behind your beauty regime and what you strive to share with the world as an actress?

First of all, thank you! What a lovely way to start an interview, so sweet. I can't take credit for either though, they were gifts from my parents :) I'll start with what I strive to share with the world... This industry is so obsessed with beauty, but I've met so many gorgeous women who are completely rotten on the inside. After a while no matter how beautiful they are, that makes them less attractive. I am always flattered and humbled when people tell me I'm beautiful, but beauty is temperate. And I've done nothing to deserve it or work for it. What is it really? What lasts forever is heart. In fact, if you do it right, THAT true beauty only gets better with age. I want to be known as an actress first for the quality of kindness. I want to encourage in young girls a focus on intelligence, playfulness, happiness, strength, conviction and grace. If I can do that, I've been a success.

Rachel's external beauty regime:

My most valuable lesson came from my mother, less is more, except when it comes to moisturizer. I think she gave me my first bottle of moisturizer when I was 12 and taught me to put it on both morning and night. Also because I was acting as a child and had to wear a lot of makeup for work, makeup never held that allure it did for my friends. To this day I much prefer to go without makeup when I'm not shooting. I think we condition ourselves as women to only see ourselves as "us" when our faces are in full makeup. But to be honest, I think most women are more beautiful when they first come out of the shower. Loving that face and being okay with it as is is something I try to practice in my everyday life.

Rachel's inner beauty regime:

As for inner beauty, (which always radiates outward) I think it's so easy for women to fall in to the trap of self-criticism. My mother never dieted, she encouraged us to live actively, to have everything in moderation and she always made sure to tell me how beautiful I was on the inside first. To love yourself is the most beautiful thing of all. When you do that, everyone else who matters falls in line.

Women around the world are eager for the release of Fifty Shades of Grey. How did it feel to be part of one of the most anticipated movies of 2015, and what has been your favorite experience on the project thus far?

Fifty Shades was by far the biggest project I have ever been a part of. But what initially attracted me to it was its director, Sam Taylor-Johnson. I have been a fan of Sam's for years, both for her art and for how she lives her life. She doesn't conform to the conventional perimeters of what society expects from a woman, which I adore. I love when women march to the beat of their own drum. I respect it, because it's hard. Working with her was my favorite experience on this movie.

In Lost Girl, for your role as Tamsin (a Valkyrie), a mercenary and bounty hunter, how had you prepared for that character and what do you look forward to most as Tamsin continues to evolve?

I was lucky because my father was Norwegian and his side of the family all still live there so I grew up with Norse stories and mythology and didn't have to do much preliminary research for the role. Going in to an already established show, my biggest fear was not being welcomed by its devoted audience, or not, on my part, doing justice to the story they already loved. But the fans were overwhelmingly gracious. I'm still always pleasantly surprised by the reception Tamsin received.

We've seen Tamsin go through many transitions and phases, from sassy bad ass to naive innocent, but in this final season I wanted to see her either find what she is ultimately looking for - love and acceptance - or to be totally and utterly destroyed. (As morbid as that sounds). The writers, bless them, gave me both.

Between the TV shows and the feature films you have been part of, you've played a variety of roles. Describe a new challenging role you'd like to take on...

When I was 10 someone told me I wasn't funny and I just believed them. When I first moved back to LA after college my agent told me I should try comedy and I flat out said "but I'm not funny". It wasn't until Lost Girl came along that I got to exercise my long atrophied comedy muscles and little by little I started to own my humor as an actress. Now I can't get enough. There is something about comedic timing I find fascinating. It is as much a craft as dramatic acting. Take Lucille Ball, just genius. So, I would love to take on a comedy. That would be an exciting new adventure.

When you need to get away for relaxation, what are some of your favorite destinations and your choice activities for rejuvenation?

My favorite place on earth is at my family's house in Bergen, Norway. I love everything about it. The fjord, the mountains, the smell of the air, the sound of people speaking Norwegian and the memories of my father. It was there I took my first step, had my first birthday and spoke my first word. My parents also like to remind me it's where I was conceived haha. Trauma. But that city makes me feel like I've come home. And there is no better place to rejuvenate than where you began.

Rachel Skarsten

My favorite activity is sitting in the shower. Whenever I'm tired or stressed or upset I go sit in my shower and mull everything over. Either that or I walk my dog. (An adopted pit bull, Maddy) Your dog always thinks you're a rockstar. And fresh air is good for the spirit.

What was the driving factor pushing you to pursue your advanced academic study versus only working as an actress?

I have a double degree with honors and I am the least educated person in my family. My parents have 6 degrees between them, including a PhD, so clearly education was something I was raised to deeply value and respect. In fact, it wasn't so much my own choice as it was a requirement in my family. You went to university. Period. (My mum was the opposite of a "stage mum") So I left LA and just went. I don't think I truly appreciated the gift my parents gave me though until later though. As an actor you're constantly worried about whether or not you'll work again. There is a confidence I get from having a degree to fall back on. I always know if this doesn't work out, the world is still my oyster. I also look at so many of my peers from when I was 17 and living in LA, some have had amazing success but other have buckled under the pressure. It's hard growing up in Hollywood. You never really get to be a child. I got to leave, make mistakes where the stakes weren't so high, learn to think in different ways and really figure out who I was through trial and error (lots of error) before I came back to Hollywood. That was the priceless gift my University education gave me. Oh, and my degree of course :)

Which writer has influenced you most in your life and what is your favorite literary work?

CS Lewis is my favorite author. He has been ever since I was a little girl. His series The Chronicles of Narnia are my lifelong favorite books. I think I've read them 20 times over. I've also read all his other books. Shakespeare's Hamlet is one of my favorites. I have pages of it framed on my wall. I love Leo Tolstoy, George Eliot and John Steinbeck. I also love Søren Kierkegaard and Ovid. That doesn't even include the poets I love...how much time do you have...this might be a while.

Do you see yourself pursuing other artistic areas based on your background and interests? What other passions and desires do you have for your future that you can share?

I'm always drawing, that was my first artistic outlet and what I studied in school and will be the great love affair I continue to pursue my whole life. I also play the cello. But those loves are just for me.

As for acting, I never went in to it thinking it was what I'd do with the rest of my life. I didn't get into it to be famous or to make a lot of money. I just loved the craft of it, the adventure of it. I always say I live my life in a state of eager anticipation of my next adventure. And until acting isn't that anymore, I will follow it where it leads.

There seems to be larger audiences for thrillers. Are there any intriguing or juicy facts you can share about one of your latest projects, The Cove?

The Cove was a real departure from anything I've done in the past, which was part of what made it such an appealing and exciting opportunity for me. That and getting to work with Callum Blue and John Ryes Davis. I play a woman who has just lost her child in a fire. We see her unravel in front of us, while also uncovering the truth behind what really happened. It was great to play a character who didn't have to be pretty, in fact she required the complete opposite. The role was gritty and dirty and hard. And I dove in head first.

What differences have you noticed comparing Canadian Television to what is shown in the U.S and do you have specific genre preferences (e.g. drama vs comedy)?

There has always been a very visible distinction between Canadian and American television, with Canadian television often getting the bad wrap of being lesser quality. I think in many ways it just came down to cultural preference. People think Americans and Canadians are largely the same (and in many ways we are) but in more ways we aren't. Canadian programming didn't always translate. In the past few years I've seen a real push in Canada to make television that can be appreciated beyond our borders, while still remaining true to where it's content comes from. I'm proud to have been a part of shows like Flashpoint and Lost Girl that sort of blazed that trail. And to see shows like Orphan Black be such a success makes me proud to have come from the Canadian television industry.

Being a hockey player when you were younger, do you still follow the sport closely?

When I played, I knew every team, player and statistic there was to know. I had a voracious appetite for all things hockey. I would stay home on a Saturday night to watch Hockey Night in Canada's double header game. Living in Los Angeles and traveling the world where hockey isn't as big as it is at home, I found it harder to get my fix. I remember when I first moved to Los Angeles being so shocked that the sports section sometimes didn't even have a single story about the NHL. (That's since changed with the Kings winning the Stanley Cup.) Nowadays I don't pay as much attention to the statistics, or watch as many games but I still love the smell of a rink. It's weird, I know. And I will always be a die-hard Edmonton Oilers fan. I go see them every time they're in LA. I even have a lucky pair of socks I wear every time I go and I quite enjoy dragging my friends along and embarrassing them with my overzealous cheering.

We heard that you love the beach! If you could live on an exotic island for a while, which one would you choose?

I love to travel anywhere and everywhere but being a water baby, destinations that involve an ocean that I can swim in are usually my favorite. My most recent favorite is Iceland, which counts as an island and is actually pretty exotic, albeit not in the traditional sense. I'd probably go there. They have such an appreciation for artists, art is everywhere, just bursting from the seams of Reykjavik. It is one of the most scenically spectacular places I have ever been and since the language is derived from old Norse I can understand some of what they say. Also, you have never seen so many beautiful and genuinely friendly people in your life. It's a good place.

Thank you for taking the time to speak with RUNWAY. Let fans know how they can connect with you...

Twitter: @rachieskarsten
Instagram: @rachieskarsten

Rachel Skarsten, known for her roles in *Lost Girl*, *The Vow*, *Birds of Prey* and the highly anticipated *Fifty Shades of Grey*, has more than established herself as a quality performer that can capture your attention. Not only has this beauty dominated television, but her ventures with feature films are growing. Speaking with RUNWAY, Skarsten impressed us with her educational background, hidden talents and her charming wit.

by Eva Louis

Jumpsuit: Dead Ivy
Jewelry: Troy's Jewelry
Shoes: Boohoo

