

The Girl on the Train at Sharnbrook Mill Theatre

Audition Material

Rachel Watson

Gender: Female

Playing age: 25-40

Accent: British

Appearance: Any ethnicity and body type.

Content: Rachel will be required to kiss Scott and Tom. She spends a lot of the show drunk (but functional), and will be both the target and aggressor of physical and emotional aggression.

Character Description

Rachel is the titular girl on the train. We meet her at a low point in her life, where she has divorced from her ex-husband Tom, after being unable to conceive a child. She struggles seeing Tom live a happy life with his new wife Anna, and their baby, who live in the house that Rachel and Tom bought together. Rachel drinks alcohol excessively throughout the day, and is practiced at hiding her alcoholism, although that does not often work. She lost her job due to her drinking, but still commutes each day on the train, because it passes by her old house. Although initially she watched Tom and Anna in their home from the train, she becomes more infatuated with another couple instead, Megan and Scott. She becomes obsessed with Megan, especially when she suddenly disappears, and entangles herself in the missing persons investigation, and everyone else impacted by it. Rachel is a mentally and physically challenging role, which will require a lot from the actor. She will be in most scenes, and very rarely leaves the stage.

Audition Material

Pages 2-4

Rachel is in her bedsit. She had a lot to drink the night before, and can't remember what happened. She is woken up by DI Gaskill buzzing through the intercom.

For this piece, we're wanting to see your physicality of the written directions (eg confused, hesitates) and in addition to your portrayal of having a difficult conversation whilst very hung over with the detective.

Pages 25-26

Rachel is having a therapy session with Megan's therapist to find out more about Megan, but she ends up disclosing more than she thought she would.

For this piece, we're looking for your portrayal of the switch of character between Rachel in therapy, and the Rachel in her violent flashback.

Waitrose bag. Unwashed clothes.)

RACHEL START (*RACHEL is lying on the floor. She wakes at the sound of the bottle smashing.*)

(She touches a cut on her head. Confused. Unsettled.)

(Her mobile phone rings. She ignores it.)

(The intercom buzzer sound.)

(She presses the button.)

GASKILL. *(Through the intercom.)* I'm Detective Gaskill. Ashbury Police.

(RACHEL, confused, hesitates, then presses the button, to buzz him in.)

(She quickly tries to straighten herself up.)

(Takes a swig from one of the wine bottles.)

(Opens the door.)

GASKILL. *(Showing her his badge.)* Detective Gaskill. May I...?

(She allows him in.)

RACHEL. I'm sorry, I'm a bit of a - *(Corrects herself.)* it's a bit of a mess.

(RACHEL begins a quick tidy-up.)

GASKILL. Been having a party?

RACHEL. No. I mean, yes. But they've gone. My friends, they've all...

(Realising.) They've all gone.

I was just clearing up.

GASKILL. You're Rachel Watson?

RACHEL. What have I done?

GASKILL. It's a missing person. She lives on your old road.
Blenheim Road.

RACHEL. How do you know where I used to live?

GASKILL. Your husband – sorry, ex-husband's new wife
gave me your address.

RACHEL. Anna?

GASKILL. You know her?

RACHEL. No.

GASKILL. Oh. She said you call the house quite a lot.

RACHEL. I know who she is. I just don't know her.

(Beat.)

RACHEL. Who's the missing person?

GASKILL. Her name's Megan Hipwell. Do you know her?

RACHEL. I don't think so, no.

GASKILL. She used to run the art gallery, on Roseberry
Avenue.

(GASKILL shows her a picture on his phone.)

RACHEL. I'm sorry. I've never -

(RACHEL takes the phone. As she looks at it.)

(Lights change.)

(The scream of a train hurtling past.)

(MEGAN appears.)

*(RACHEL looks at her. A shocked look of
recognition on RACHEL's face.)*

(MEGAN disappears.)

(Lights back to normal.)

RACHEL. I'm sorry, I don't know a Megan.

(Hands back the phone.)

RACHEL STOP

GASKILL. Are you sure? She lives two doors down from your ex-husband.

RACHEL. She must have moved there after I left. I didn't know her - Don't know her. I'm not saying she's...

GASKILL. I'm speaking to people who were in the vicinity when she disappeared. Where were you Saturday night?

RACHEL. Here.

GASKILL. The big party...

(They both smile.)

GASKILL. So, you weren't at Blenheim Road.

RACHEL. No.

GASKILL. (Writes in his notepad.) The only thing is, the new Mrs Watson, she said you were there Saturday night.

RACHEL. But, but I wasn't. She must be...

GASKILL. ...?

RACHEL. Lying. She must be lying.

GASKILL. Why would she -

RACHEL. She -

GASKILL. She was certain you'd come to her house Saturday night.

RACHEL. (Still confused.) That doesn't make any sense. Saturday, I -

Scene Five

RACHEL START

(KAMAL ABDIC in his therapist's chair.
RACHEL drinking from her 'water' bottle.)

RACHEL. It's like my memories get sucked into a black hole. And then, even the bits that remain are so fragmented, it's like... Have you ever bought a jigsaw puzzle from a jumble sale? Bits missing and bits from other puzzles finding their way in.

KAMAL. So, you're saying the problem is not just what you have forgotten; what you remember is also unreliable.

RACHEL. I get these... I don't know, flashes of memory, but it's like, like I've tried to fit the wrong pieces into the puzzle. Tried to force bits in just to complete the picture.

KAMAL. So why now? Why have you waited until now to address this?

RACHEL. Do you ever get to know your clients personally?

KAMAL. Sometimes our subconscious likes to cherry-pick the memories we like, or we repress the ones we don't. Is there a part of you that wants to forget?

RACHEL. No. Well. Maybe sometimes...

KAMAL. Go on.

RACHEL. I suppose I'm always worried I've done something embarrassing or...even worse.

KAMAL. You must have a very low opinion of yourself.

RACHEL. Why?

KAMAL. You have periods of memory loss, and you assume that the blank spaces are filled with you doing something embarrassing, or "worse." Why not something kind or funny or intelligent?

Are you capable of kindness? Humour? Intelligence?

RACHEL. Yes.

KAMAL. So, where are those puzzle pieces?

(RACHEL struggling to hold it together.)

RACHEL. I try my hardest to remember. But my memory tells me one thing and then evidence tells me something else. There was one time, when I was married:

(TOM appears, aside.)

I got so enraged with my husband...

(RACHEL swings for TOM with a golf club, again and again, TOM ducking each time.)

TOM. Don't do this again, Rach. This isn't you! Rachel!

RACHEL. Fuuuuuuck!

(RACHEL swings again, wildly, violently. She smacks a hole in the wall.)

TOM. You have to control this! Before you really hurt someone.

(Beat. TOM holds her.)

I'll look after you. We're in this together.

(RACHEL turns back to KAMAL.)

RACHEL. I don't remember doing it, but I put a massive dent in the wall. It's there for all to see, what I'd done. But that's not who I am. I know it's not.

RACHEL STOP

KAMAL. Violence clouds the memory. And then you have to reconstruct it. Only, now the memory becomes susceptible to other influences.

RACHEL. Your voice. It's very gentle.

Is that your real voice or just for this?

(Beat.)