

How To Hold Your Breath Audition excerpts

All: I would like everyone to look at Dana's opening speech (sc I). Regardless of which part you are interested in this can be done in many different ways.

Dana: I am standing at the back. Don't look out. Gets shouted at for looking down. I am eyes closed, head bent in every gathering. I am knees bowed, chest to the floor. I am a flower by the wall, grass in the shade. I am back turned, shoulders hunched, face hollowed. I am a scream. A howl. I am a snake on the plane, a hyena, an antelope. I am ant under a stone, beetle scurrying away. I am beaten at birth, blackened. I am sand. I am soil. I am earth. I am less than earth. I am poor. I'm so poor my skin is my clothes. I am uncovered. Ashamed. The land can't feed me. I am the end. The dead. The carcass by the roadside. I am the abyss into which people dread to fall.

Jarron and Dana:

sc 6 p47 – p50 (to Jarron '*find a way*')

Jarron: you want a drink?

Dana: where were you?

Jarron: I had some work to do. I came back didn't I?

Dana: you came back here?

Jarron: I drove to the south, I did my work I came back

Dana: why?

Jarron: we hadn't finished

Dana: hadn't we?

Jarron: no we hadn't and I didn't like it. This needs to be over and done with now. And quickly.

Dana: quickly?

Jarron: I'm presuming you would have changed your mind

Dana: about what?

Jarron: the cheque. I have written it out, and before you ask no it's not sizeable.

Dana: oh that

Jarron: it's 45 euros which I think is an adequate representation of the time taking into account the distress you have caused me, the inconvenience of having to return. I have charted it all, put my petrol in, my time, the wear and tear on my car, and 45 euros left to you covers it I think.

Dana: is that right?

Jarron: If you want to make a different representation then we can enter into a negotiation at the end of this meeting

Dana: this is a meeting?

Jarron: I am prepared to raise it slightly but only just. And before you say there is no debt, there is a debt. There is a big fucking debt that is the only explanation

Dana: for what?

Jarron: for what has been happening with me since I saw you. This sensation I have; this uncomfortable sensation, why I can't control my thoughts as I should - You are nothing, you are inconsequential, you aren't even beautiful. You don't make me laugh. Your dress sense is terrible. Your teeth are crooked, your breath smells in the morning, you are ugly in some lights, not as clever as you think

Dana: glad we've got that clear

Jarron: and you are a woman. Basically. You are a woman. You aren't even nearly the sort of person I should be thinking about.

Beat.

Jarron: please take the money and release me. I thought I knew every trick in the book, but there is obviously one that got away.

Dana: I can't release you

Jarron: I'll pay you to undo it, how about that. 45 euros. it's not a payment for the other night, it's a payment for your unlocking services

Dana: and if I can't?

Jarron: find a way.

Jasmine:

sc 16 p114 – 115 (to bottom of p115 ... *'left it some place'*)

Jasmine: I thought when it came to it I would be good at it. I thought I would find it all instinctive. I thought maybe there would be this part of me that had been waiting all these years, that would know exactly what to do. But hold on to it. That's the first thing isn't it. Rule number one. You want to be a mother; seal it in; don't let it go all over the floor.

I was stupid, see. If I had been one of the good mothers, I would have told it I loved it. I would have known it was precious. I would have put my knees together, I would have taped myself up. Sat down more. You should have made me do that. Why wasn't I sitting? I could have stayed in bed. I shouldn't be here with you on tis stupid trip. What was I thinking? You've got to know how precious things are if you want to hang onto them.

And if I was this stupid before imagine how it could have been after it was born? What if I still didn't realise and left it someplace?

Jasmine and Dana:

sc 7 p55 (Dana: *we were going to do something together this weekend*) to p58 Jasmine: *maybe I should come with you*)

Dana: we were going to do something together this weekend.

Jasmine: doesn't matter.

Dana: look at some flats, see about our deposit.

Jasmine: we've got lots of weekends.

Dana: not if I go to Alexandria

Jasmine: I can amuse myself for forty eight hours, don't worry.

Dana: Can you?

Jasmine: I'm not completely useless. I've got work to do.

Dana: I'll lock the fridge.

Jasmine: I'm through that. Please. I'm through that.

beat

Dana: I can't go to Alexandria for Monday.

Jasmine: course you can.

Dana: what don't you come too.

Jasmine: I've got so much to catch up on.

Dana: Bring it with you. Have a few days away. We could get a train, see some of the coast.

Jasmine: which coast?

Dana: the south coast, go right down to the Adriatic, maybe take a boat

Jasmine: why would we do that?

Dana: I am just talking about making it more of a trip, saving money, we always said we wanted to see more of Europe, the sea, I was just thinking of ways to make it

Jasmine: what?

Dana: more fun

Jasmine: by going a thousand miles out of our way?

Dana: isn't that the basis of an adventure?

Jasmine: he's a dick you know that

Dana: who?

Jasmine: the man you were with. All men are dicks but he is a high-class, representative of his species. I went into the bar this morning, he didn't pay for all his drinks, tried to con the waitress, then left a credit card number that didn't work.

Dana: Why are you telling me this?

Jasmine: because I think you're still thinking about him

Jasmine: maybe I should come with you -

Librarian and Dana:

sc 10 p81 (Lib: I have those books you ordered) to p83: Lib: 9if you could just tell me where the bank is).

Librarian: I have those books you ordered

Dana: what are you doing here?

Librarian: I'm in Hartenharten for the weekend. I work in Hartenharten on the weekends, we have a pretty good library, and as you see it's open.

Dana: I didn't know there was a library

Librarian: you have brought yourself here, you walked right in the door. The rest of Hartenharten shuts at 5, but we are open more or less all the time

Dana: you live in Berlin. I saw you in Berlin only this morning

Librarian: I am on secondment here, this is like my second job, and look some of your books are on these shelves, so we might as well -

Dana: are you following me?

Librarian: Why would I follow you? Listen, don't knock it, I'm trying to help you. Last time I just about got pulverised for it, luckily I am resilient. And ever helpful. The true librarian to the end. If you don't want these books I can just put them back on the shelves for you, or you can fill out a little yellow slip for reserved.

Dana: OK I'll take them

Librarian: first things first, a guide book to Hartenharten,

Dana: I didn't ask for that

Librarian: maybe not, but I put in a few extras and believe me you'll need it. The illustrations are very good although it comes to the conclusion of many, don't stay here long. My advice pretty much concurs with that for what it's worth, get back on a main route train as fast as you can. My second suggestion is a 'how to' book. Always the best, you can't go wrong with a 'how to' book. This one '*How to live with no money*' published a few years ago but still one of the classics.

Dana: what do you mean no money?

Librarian: I mean not much money.

Dana: we have lots of money

Librarian: look do you want these books or not?

Dana: we have lots of money in our bank account, we just need a bank

Librarian: third, '*how to survive an economic disaster*'. Bit outdated but -

Dana: if you could just tell me where the bank is

Interviewers and all other parts:

Sc 18 (second half) top of p 135 to p137 (Int 1: we'll see you soon then).

Dana: is that you?

Interviewer 1: Ms Edwards?

Dana: oh

Interviewer2: can you hear us?

Dana: yes

Interviewer 1: we were expecting you last Monday.

Dana: I'm sorry about that

Interviewer 3: is that all you have to say?

Dana: I got held up

Interviewer 2: if we are to hold this research grant for you -

Dana: I'll be there

Interviewer 3: when Ms Edwards?

Dana: as soon as I can. Can you help me get to the border?

Interviewer 2: we leave travel arrangements up to the individuals.
We understand that this is a difficult time for those coming from the European Union, but

Dana: they have more or less closed the border into Turkey, and if we go by boat -

Interviewer 3: we are sure you will find a way

Dana: there is no way. all the borders are shut

Interviewer 1: we'll leave it open for a week.

Dana: could you give me a piece of paper, saying that you have invited me?

Interviewer 1: we aren't really sure

Interviewer 3: the administrative burden

Dana: if you could give me a piece of paper saying that I have a position to go to

Interviewer 2: but you don't have a position. That is just the matter that we are discussing.

Interviewer 3: You might have a position

Dana: there are thousands of people ahead of me even if they re-open the borders

Interviewer 3: are you saying you want to cancel Ms Edwards?

Interviewer: there are plenty of others we could fill this post with.

Dana: no

Interviewer 2: you'll be here?

Dana: I'll be there

Interviewer 1: we'll see you soon then.