

Diane Witter

Imagine my surprise, arriving at RADA from The Big Apple, expecting Shakespeare and tweed, only to discover Doreen, a dynamic, gum chewing New Yorker, to be my primary acting coach. Even though she had lived in the UK for a while, she still kept her American Swagger and directness, and she made me secretly very proud. Of course Doreen's coaching wasn't about countries, it was about Stanislavski, whose work she was deeply and passionately committed to. And she was committed to us. She yelled, she waited, she kept us moving forward all the time. Naturally, we all wanted to have her approval, and Doreen would never play favorites. It was all about the work and we were all treated equally with her laser attention. I'm not going to lie, I was completely terrified of her. I remember in our first year, trolling the West end one night with a gang of classmates and someone spotted her across the street. We mumbled "Should we call her?", and some brave soul did. Looking glamorous as always with her black mane and deep red scarf, she graciously came over to share an uncensored (and scathing) review of the play she had just seen. Honest, fun, generous and patient, we knew we were in the hands of a legend!