

Jennifer Castle

In an assessment at RADA I was described as being unable to handle criticism. The panel was told I reacted badly when told I did something wrong or was unconvincing. I sulked when given direction that took me in a new direction to that in which I saw my character moving. I couldn't hear that I was wrong.

Then Dee Cannon spoke up.

"I have never had a problem with Jenny," she said, "In fact, she is very receptive and hardworking."

And that is why, when she made me sweat (planting seeds in a makeshift plantation in a lecture room on the second floor of the RADA main building), she made me cry ("you haven't even prepared, Jenny..."), she made me want to scream blue bloody murder at her ("Just...*sigh*"), I trusted her more than any other teacher I've ever had. Because when I set my mouth in a thin line when she told me what I'd done was rubbish, she knew that I was angry with myself, not her. She was on my side when, shaking her head, she said I hadn't got it and I stormed out of the room, and she gave me hell for not bringing three suitcases worth of props to an exercise and didn't bat an eyelid when I told her to go to hell. She didn't want me to suck up to her. She wanted me to be good.

So when she finally gave a curt nod and said, "Yes. You got it.", it meant more to me than the gushing praise of any other teacher.

And it certainly didn't hurt when she came up to me after seeing me in my first major role and said "Well done, you did well and.... you looked...HOT."

Thank you, Dee. You believed in me, and you never let me give a substandard performance. If that isn't great teaching, I don't know what is.