

TRACKS

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CHARACTERS

THE HOMELESS GIRL – about 20 years old, afraid and unsure of herself. After running away from home, she has been staying in the subway station for almost three years. She tries to tune out the conversations of others in the station, but can't help contributing. This results in increased frustration and insecurity. She is trapped in a vicious cycle.

THE OLD MAN – a tired man, in his early 80s. He is a Korean War veteran who walks with a limp from a war injury. After living a long, decent life, he has been battling cancer. Despite everything that has occurred, he has very little regrets and is willing to accept his destiny.

THE LAWYER – a single, driven prosecuting attorney in her late 30s. She has dedicated her life and career to the pursuit of justice, but in doing so is unable to look at others without criticizing their faults. This high standard she has for others is still below the standard she holds for herself. She assumes total responsibility for every case she has lost.

THE PROFESSOR – a confident, friendly professor of literature in his early 50s. His charming demeanor has made him quite popular with his students. Thus, he is extremely devoted to his job, perhaps at the expense of his wife and his son, who is almost done with college.

THE NUN – after being a self-proclaimed “hooligan” in Catholic school, she devoted the next fifty years of her life to her faith, which has gotten her through all difficulties in her life. Though she does not wish to force her faith upon others, she

is always willing to offer a helping hand to those who may have lost their way.

THE BUSINESSWOMAN – a married woman in her mid-30s, with two young children at home with her husband. She reluctantly returned to a career after her husband was laid off from work. Though she understands the responsibility of providing for her family, she feels guilty about all the time spent away from them.

THE BUSINESSMAN – a married man in his mid-40s, with two teenaged daughters. He works at a mid-level job for an insurance company and struggles to make ends meet. Always worried about how he is perceived, not only by his employers but by everyone else, he often comes across as nervous, anxious, guilty or even paranoid.

THE HIGH SCHOOL GIRL – a senior in high school, ranked near the top of her class. Very smart, with a level head on her shoulders, she will be headed to college soon, and cannot wait for the opportunity to escape from her hometown. Though she wants to move on, she is afraid how it will impact her boyfriend.

THE HIGH SCHOOL BOY – her boyfriend, also a senior in the same high school. He is not ranked near the top of his class, and if further education is in his future, it will be at a local community college at best. He procrastinates and clings too much to his girlfriend.

THE WAITRESS – a woman in her late 30s from “the wrong side of the tracks.” She has lived a hard life, her deadbeat husband having left her. She has been forced to take a string of jobs to keep herself and her daughter afloat. She tries to live her life as calmly and honestly as possible but has occasionally released a gesture of thoughtlessness.

NOTE: See Properties List at end of play.

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(The play opens with the sound of a subway train leaving the station. Ideally, the sound comes only from stage right. The stage is awash with red light as a strobe light flickers. The frequency of the strobe decreases as the sound effect softens—i.e., the train is getting farther away. Simultaneously, the remainder of the stage lights slowly rise to reveal a dirty, run-down subway station.

The D edge of the stage serves as the edge of the subway platform. Across the length of the stage is a wall. Center stage are two stairways leading upward out of the station. Only the bottom few steps of each staircase are in view, the rest masked by another wall, DC of the main wall. There are three benches: A short (6' or so) bench in front of the C wall, and two (8' to 10') benches on either side of the stairs, creating a completely symmetric space. Symmetry is broken, however, by what is on the walls. Subway maps, torn advertisements and graffiti may appear on the walls, but must not give any specific locations. The station either should not be named or any name should be sufficiently obscured.

The lights have come up to reveal two figures on stage. One is a young woman, the HOMELESS GIRL, some-

what anxious yet lethargic, standing DR. She has been waiting in the station for a long time, unsure of herself. She holds an unlit cigarette that she has debated whether or not she will smoke. She wears dirty, torn clothes covered by a dirty, torn, unkempt coat. Her hair may be somewhat disheveled.

Lying down on the L bench is an OLD MAN, who is sound asleep. He is clearly a senior citizen. He is dressed in a hospital gown or bathrobe, but this is difficult to see since his body is blanketed by newspapers. However, it is clear to see his stockinged feet are shoeless and a cane is within his reach.

Before the sound effect fully fades, a professionally dressed female LAWYER rushes down the L stairs trying to catch the train. She realizes, much to her dismay, that she has missed it. She turns toward OLD MAN, turns away in subtle displeasure, glances and then glares at HOMELESS GIRL, looks at her watch and resigns herself to sit on the C bench. She sits facing R, laying her briefcase on the bench beside her. She opens the case and oddly stares at its contents—only a single legal-sized file folder. Shaking the oddness off, she removes the folder from the case and studies the papers inside.

Next, the PROFESSOR, smartly dressed in a shirt, tie and sweater vest, comes down the R stairs. He sees the HOMELESS GIRL and confidently approaches her. She glances at him and he gives her a quick smile. She nervously paces away, fiddling with her cigarette. The PROFESSOR sees this, reaches inside his jacket pocket