

SHRINK RAP

Inside the head of...

Sofie Gråbøl

She's the ice-cool, knitwear-clad star of *The Killing*... a great driver, a lousy cook and a tad forgetful when it comes to the rules for swearing live on Radio 2

'WHEN I MET KATE BUSH I WAS SO STARSTRUCK I COULDN'T SPEAK. I JUST STOOD THERE SWEATING'

What is your earliest memory?

I was four and I was running to get an ice cream at our local parlour in Copenhagen, and tripped on the steps, fell down and smashed out both of my front teeth. I've learnt my lesson – I still love ice cream but nowadays I don't run quite so fast to the shops.

What sort of child were you?

I was shy and insecure and thought of the world as a dangerous place. I blushed like a cartoon character and still do now if I find myself at the centre of too much attention.

When did you last feel really happy?

I had breast cancer two years ago, and ever since finishing my treatment and getting well, the most unexpected things can make me happy.

What is the worst thing anyone has ever said to you?

When *The Killing* was shown in Denmark, one of the tabloids carried a review headlined: 'The problem with *The Killing* is Sarah Lund.' It was very harsh and upsetting.

What has been your most embarrassing moment?

I swore on the Simon Mayo show live on BBC radio. In Denmark, swearing is no big deal, and nobody had told me that you're not allowed to do it on the BBC. I said something about 'the f***** jumper' [in *The Killing*] and the

audience just went 'Oooh!' I had no idea what they were screaming about.

What is your best character trait?

I don't hold a grudge – I simply forget any wrong that's been done to me, in part because I've got such a bad long-term memory. I just move on.

... and your worst?

I'm stubborn.

Who would your dream dinner date be?

Kate Bush. I'm a longtime fan, and was lucky enough to see her at London's Hammersmith Apollo last year. I was thrilled to meet her after the show but I was so starstruck that I couldn't say a thing. I felt so stupid. So it would be lovely to have dinner with this wonderful woman and tell her how much I admire her work, without sweating like a pig.

Do you have any phobias?

I've always been scared of spiders. When I was young I'd have to phone a friend to get rid of a spider, which is ridiculous because the spiders in Denmark are so sweet and tiny. Then I learned to kill them. I've also got a bit of a phobia about heights: if I'm too far above the ground my brain just explodes.

What is your biggest regret?

I regret a lot of things I haven't allowed myself to do in life, just out

of plain fear. When I was young I was offered the part of Juliet in *Romeo And Juliet*, and I thought: 'No, I'm not ready for that...' A few years later, I was told I was too old to play the part.

What's the worst thing you have said to someone else?

I grew up without my biological father, because my parents split up, and then he turned up when I was 20 and wanted to get to know me. But I couldn't deal with that and said to him: 'You are not my father.' That must have been very hurtful, and I now regret saying it. Thankfully we got to know each other again a couple of years before he died this year.

What is your most treasured possession?

My photos of my children [Bror, 11, and Gudrun, 13]. The hard disc of my old computer broke down and I lost all the pictures from the first five years of my children's life. Since then, I've been very careful to keep a back-up.

Tell us a secret about yourself

I love checking the mini-bars in hotels.

What are you best at?

I'm an excellent driver, even if I say so myself. I'm also

pretty good at parking. I'm very bad at remembering names and faces, though... and I'm a lousy cook.

Which words or phrases do you most overuse?

'What does that mean?' and 'Oh!'

What do you dislike most about your appearance?

My worried look. I'm often asked what's wrong when I'm just thinking of nothing at all.

What's your guiltiest pleasure?

Nicotine gum. Crazy quantities. At my worst I chew the equivalent of 100 cigarettes a day. After 14 years I'm still trying to quit.

How do you relax?

Playing the Scrabble game Wordfeud on my phone.

How would you like to be remembered?

I hope my children, friends and family remember me with love. To anyone else, I don't mind just being the woman who wore that jumper.

Interview by
York Membery

'Fortitude: The Complete First Season' is out now on Blu-ray

LAST FILM YOU SAW?

Whiplash – and *Mary Poppins* at home with my daughter.

LAST BOOK YOU READ?

The Godhavn Report, by Søren Svejstrup, who wrote *The Killing*.

LAST TV SHOW YOU LOVED?

The Legacy, a great modern drama about family.