

= The Rhodes Not Taken =

" The Rhodes Not Taken " is the fifth episode of the American television series Glee . It premiered on the Fox network on September 30 , 2009 and was written by series co -@-@ creator Ian Brennan and directed by John Scott . The episode features glee club director Will Schuester (Matthew Morrison) recruiting former star April Rhodes (Kristin Chenoweth) , hoping to improve the club 's chances in the wake of Rachel 's (Lea Michele) defection to the school musical . Finn (Cory Monteith) flirts with Rachel in an attempt to convince her to return , and although Rachel is angry when she discovers Finn 's girlfriend is pregnant , she ultimately rejoins the club .

Special guest star Kristin Chenoweth played April , and performed on three of the episode 's six musical tracks . Studio recordings of four of the songs performed in the episode were released as singles , available for digital download , and two appear on the album Glee : The Music , Volume 1 .

The episode was watched by 7 @.@ 32 million U.S. viewers . It received mostly positive reviews from critics , with Chenoweth 's appearance and the performance of Queen cover " Somebody to Love " in particular receiving praise . Raymund Flandez for The Wall Street Journal , Mike Hale of the New York Times and Denise Martin for the Los Angeles Times all deemed " Somebody to Love " the show 's best musical number since the staging of Journey 's " Don 't Stop Believin ' " in the pilot episode .

= = Plot = =

With lead singer Rachel Berry (Lea Michele) no longer part of New Directions , the McKinley High glee club , director Will Schuester (Matthew Morrison) grows concerned about the club 's forthcoming performance at Invitationals . He discovers that April Rhodes (Kristin Chenoweth) , a member of the club during his own high school days , never actually graduated , and convinces her to return to school in order to get her diploma and join the glee club . Having failed to achieve her Broadway dreams , April is now an alcoholic , and goes about winning the favor of the existing club members by unconventional means , including getting Kurt (Chris Colfer) drunk and teaching Mercedes (Amber Riley) and Tina (Jenna Ushkowitz) to shoplift . After guidance counselor Emma Pillsbury (Jayma Mays) warns Will that April is corrupting the students , Will asks April to become sober , and she vows to do so .

Club member Finn (Cory Monteith) is concerned for his future , having been told by his girlfriend Quinn (Dianna Agron) that she is pregnant with his child . Emma suggests that instead of aiming to attend college on a football scholarship , Finn should utilize his musical talent . Believing Rachel 's participation to be the glee club 's only chance at success at Invitationals , Finn feigns romantic interest in Rachel and takes her on a date . Rachel , realizing she is unhappy performing in the school musical and excited over Finn 's interest in her , returns to the glee club . Meanwhile , Kurt , Mercedes and Tina are informed of Quinn 's pregnancy by Puck (Mark Salling) , who pretends Finn fathered the child though he is the actual father . Finding out about Quinn , Rachel becomes furious with Finn and confronts him , asking if he is actually attracted to her at all . Finn insists the kiss they shared was honest , but Rachel is unconvinced and defects from glee club once again , returning to the school musical , where she is given full artistic control . At Invitationals , a drunk April , accompanied by the glee club , performs Carrie Underwood 's " Last Name " for a packed auditorium and receives the standing ovation she always dreamed of . Because she had performed drunk , Will tells April during intermission that she is no longer in the glee club . She accepts , telling him that she has realized that it is the kids , not her , who are the ones that should get the spotlight . This leaves New Directions without a lead singer for their next number , but Rachel offers to go on in April 's place ? she has quit the musical , and wants to rejoin the club ? and they all perform Queen 's " Somebody to Love " .

= = Production = =

Chenoweth guest starred in the episode as former glee club member April Rhodes . April is an "

alcoholic and bad influence on the glee club members " , described by Chenoweth as someone who never graduated , but was " kind of the deal " in her high school glee club . She explained that April didn 't become the " big star " everyone expected her to , and so is brought back by Will to become part of the glee club again .

Chenoweth was previously acquainted with Glee creator Ryan Murphy , having appeared in his 2006 film *Running with Scissors* . Murphy commented that he loves writing for Chenoweth , and enjoyed pitching songs she had never sung before . She found singing in three different styles , as required by the role , to be " fun and challenging " , and though she had never before sung " *Maybe This Time* " , after singing it on *Glee* , she went on to use it in shows as her opening number . Chenoweth stated that she would love to return to *Glee* in the future , a sentiment shared by Murphy . She commented : " they are all working hard to figure out stories all the time . It 'd be great for it to make sense for her to come back . This part is like nothing I 've had the chance to do on TV . " It was confirmed in October 2009 that Chenoweth would reprise the role , which she did in " *Home* " .

Asked to explain Finn 's actions in flirting with Rachel to entice her back into the glee club , Monteith explained : " Finn is not only strangely attracted to Rachel , but he respects what she chases after in her life . He 's walking a thin line and trying to be somebody for everybody , and she 's an example of someone truly following her dreams and that 's attractive . "

The episode features cover versions of " *Don 't Stop Believin '* " by Journey , " *Maybe This Time* " and " *Cabaret* " from *Cabaret* , " *Alone* " by Heart , " *Last Name* " by Carrie Underwood and " *Somebody to Love* " by Queen . Studio recordings of " *Maybe This Time* " , " *Alone* " , " *Last Name* " and " *Somebody to Love* " were released as singles , available for digital download . " *Maybe This Time* " charted at number 100 in Australia , and 88 in the US , " *Alone* " charted at number 94 in Australia , 58 in Canada and 51 in the US , and " *Somebody to Love* " charted at number 65 in Australia , 33 in Canada and 28 in the US . " *Maybe This Time* " , " *Alone* " and " *Somebody to Love* " also feature on the album *Glee : The Music , Volume 1* .

= = Reception = =

The episode was watched by 7 @. @ 32 million U.S. viewers and attained a 3 @. @ 2 / 9 rating / share in the 18 ? 49 demographic . It was the most viewed episode of the season since its fall return with " *Showmance* " . It was the twenty @- @ sixth most watched show in Canada for the week of broadcast , with 1 @. @ 45 million viewers . In the UK , the episode was watched by 1 @. @ 89 million viewers (1 @. @ 48 million on E4 , and 410 @, @ 000 on E4 + 1) , becoming the most @- @ watched show on cable for the week , as well as the most @- @ watched episode of the series at the time .

The episode received mostly positive reviews from critics . Robert Bianco for *USA Today* wrote of Chenoweth 's guest appearance : " Her presence may not make much sense , but that 's probably all right . If it means hearing Chenoweth sing , we can put up with any explanation the show cares to offer . " Raymund Flandez for *The Wall Street Journal* was equally positive regarding Chenoweth 's role , praising her " powerful voice " , " kittenish mien " and " commanding presence " . Flandez deemed the performance of " *Somebody to Love* " the show 's best number since " *Don 't Stop Believin '* " debuted in the pilot episode . Mike Hale of the *New York Times* similarly stated that " *The Rhodes Not Taken* " was " the best episode musically since the pilot " , calling the performance of " *Somebody to Love* " " truly rousing " . *TV Guide* included the renditions of " *Somebody To Love* " and " *Maybe This Time* " in its list of *Glee* 's best performances so far . Jarett Wieselman for the *New York Post* called the episode : " the smartest , funniest , heart @- @ warmingest , song @- @ tastic @- @ est episode of the show yet . "

The *Los Angeles Times* 's Denise Martin also enjoyed the episode , writing : " I don 't know how *Glee* keeps topping itself ? it just does ! " Martin too praised the performance of " *Somebody to Love* " , writing : " Love or hate Queen , when New Directions sings it , it 's magical . And it 's the first time since ' *Don 't Stop Believin '* ' that I got goosebumps . Something about kids singing songs , raising all those arms , makes everyone ? can 't just be me ! ? giddy and hopeful . They 're not as technically skilled as [rival glee club] Vocal Adrenaline ? yet ? but that only makes their underdog

story more real . " Tim Stack of Entertainment Weekly also called " The Rhodes Not Taken " the best episode of Glee so far , deeming all the musical numbers " fantastic " . Eric Goldman for IGN rated the episode 8 @. @ 5 / 10 . He felt that Chenoweth was " terrific " as April , and that the character was a " hysterical creation " . Goldman assessed that the episode " soared " musically , though felt that its resolution was " rushed " and " forced " , suggesting that the series has yet to find the right balance between music , comedy and drama .