

Heathcliff's Daughter – three extracts

Heathcliff's Daughter (Radio Play) Extract 1

SCENE 2

INT. EARLY AFTERNOON

KATE: So, is this what you do all the time?

PHIL: Yeah – mainly. Often it's girls who've got themselves pregnant...

KATE: It takes two, you know.

PHIL: Or they're permanently excluded for hitting a teacher. Not always the same one, of course.

KATE: I came close.

PHIL: I don't need to know why you were suspended: we just need to make sure you stay on track for the next couple of weeks.

KATE: I'm not going back. Stuff the GCSEs – stuff the school. I can manage.

PHIL: So I'm told. Your English teacher thinks very highly of you, you know.

KATE: Mrs Marsh? All she's interested in is books no-one has ever heard of.

PHIL: "Wuthering Heights"? A few people have actually heard of it.

KATE: Well, so have I. It was a song, as well, wasn't it? – that screechy one Dad likes. Weird voice.

PHIL: Her later stuff is worth listening to. But it's actually a fascinating novel: you might...

KATE: I'm not reading any books! They kick me out when it's not my fault and then you expect me to be Miss Goody Two Shoes and do all my homework and stuff.

PHIL: You'll be back in a fortnight: you don't want to get too far behind.
This is for coursework.

KATE: As if it matters: I'm not going back! (PAUSE) You know the only
reason I go to school, don't you?

PHIL: Go on.

KATE: To have a shower. It's that or swimming in the river.

PHIL: Yeah, I can see it's a bit...

KATE: What?

PHIL: ...lacking in the usual amenities.

KATE: And I get a free lunch. Not that they're worth eating. Not that
anyone'll sit next to me. They call me a "gyppo" or a "pikey".
Would you go back?

PHIL: It's tough if you haven't made many friends since you moved here.

KATE: It's not worth it, is it? Just as I start to get to know anyone we always
move on. It's easier not to bother.

PHIL: I can see that. Not a lot of fun.

KATE: What do you know? How would you know what's it like?

PHIL: Believe me, Kate, you're not the only one who's been through it. You
should see some of the kids I work with...

KATE: And you'll be talking about me behind my back when we're done, will
you?

PHIL: I only meant... (BRIEF PAUSE). Anyway, I've brought a copy of the
book along so we can make a start. We can make quite a lot of
progress in a fortnight.

KATE: I'm not reading it!

PHIL: OK. To begin with, we can just talk about it.

KATE: You can talk, if you like – doesn't mean I'm listening.

Heathcliff's Daughter Second Extract

Heathcliff's Daughter (radio play) Extract 2

SCENE 6.

EXT. BY THE RIVER. EVENING. SFX: FOOTSTEPS.

KATE: God, Adam! You scared me to death! What're you doing here?

ADAM: I was, just, er, going for a walk... just passing.

KATE: On the way to where? This isn't exactly a main thoroughfare.

ADAM: I like walking along the river. I often come down to this bit of the bank.
Feed the ducks... Throw a few stones.

KATE: (TEASING) At the ducks? That's really cruel.

ADAM: You know what I meant. (PAUSE). Anyway, just wondered how you
were. (BEAT) Missing school?

KATE: What do **you** think?

ADAM: (BEAT) Look, I just want you to know... I think that lot were well out of
order – they deserved it. Taz's still got a fat lip.

KATE: Good. I'm better off out of there. How can you be mates with them
anyway? They're pathetic – none of them can think for themselves.

ADAM: I can.

KATE: Really?

ADAM: (QUIETLY BUT FIRMLY) Yes, I can.

KATE: Ok, so what do you think of **me**? Do **you** think I'm "a dirty crusty"?
"Stupid" and "weird"?

ADAM: (HESITANT) No. I think... I think you're clever and funny – and mysterious. And I like the stuff you say in English lessons – I'm rubbish at that kind of thing. (PAUSE) I know what I want to say but... And I'm interested in how you live. I don't know anyone else who lives in a double decker. Moving on all the time – you must have been to some great places. I think it's really cool what your family's doing.

KATE: (SLIGHTLY TAKEN ABACK) It's not so "cool" when you're living it. My parents are embarrassing.

ADAM: Everyone's are.

KATE: It's just the way they go on about not being "slaves of materialism and consumerism". You know, sometimes I'd like to just go out and buy something crappy that I don't really need.

ADAM: (LAUGHS) How about a bag of chips? My treat – you can get scraps at the chippie I go to.

KATE: I'd love to but –

ADAM: Don't tell me – you're washing your hair?

KATE: Oh yeah – in my en suite? – very funny. No, I've got English coursework. So have you. "Wuthering Heights", remember?

ADAM: Oh right, yeah. Have you started that then? What's it like?

KATE: Well, there's this really clever framing device... I think that's what it's called, and multiple narrative techniques – well, lots of different people tell the story. It's really, like, cool. Just like a movie.

Third Extract

Heathcliff's Daughter Extract 3

SCENE 7. EXT TO INT. DAY. MAGGY AND PHIL WALK FROM OUTSIDE THE BUS TO INSIDE.

MAGGY: I don't know what you did to her but she's had her head in that book since you left.

PHIL: Not me – Emily.

MAGGY: Hmm?

PHIL: Emily Bronte. She's weaving her magic all over again.

MAGGY: I prefer her sister.

PHIL: Charlotte?

MAGGY: Ann. Here we are. You can put it down, now, Kate – Mr Nelson's here again.

KATE: Ah, but it's a book you **can't** put down. Right, Phil?

MAGGY: Kate! Manners, please.

PHIL: It's all right, Mrs Ryan. Maggy.

MAGGY: I'll go and make you a cup of tea, shall I?

KATE: And for me.

MAGGY: Cheeky monkey!

PHIL: Well?

KATE: I've read Volume One. And a couple of chapters of Volume Two. She's dead now. So what's the rest of the book all about? The story's already over.

PHIL: Not quite. There's another generation to get interested in. Actually, I think the second half's better. Read it and you might see what I mean.

KATE: Yeah, Ok, I might. Maybe. (PAUSE) Phil... can I ask you something?

PHIL: Of course. I think that's probably why I'm here.

KATE: When Cathy's thinking about getting engaged to... what's his name?

PHIL: Edgar Linton.

KATE: That's him. And Heathcliff's listening in. And she says to Nelly she could never marry Heathcliff...

PHIL: Yes...

KATE: I hated that bit. He goes running off, and he's not there to hear how much she really loved him.

PHIL: You hated that?

KATE: Because it was all a mistake really. If only he'd stayed to listen, then none of the rest of it would have happened.

PHIL: You think we might have had a happy-ever-after love story?

KATE: Well, no, not exactly. He was too... messed up ever to be really happy. I'd say. But he might have been a lot happier than he turned out. And Cathy might not have died.

PHIL: Ifs and buts and mights.

KATE: Phil – where do you think Heathcliff might have gone?

PHIL: Sorry?

KATE: When he went running off. I mean – he was away from Cathy for three years. Three years!

PHIL: I don't really know: I've not given it a lot of thought.

KATE: But Nelly Dean does...and what's his face? Lockwood.

PHIL: Sorry – you've lost me.

KATE: And **you're** the teacher? They both wonder where he's disappeared to for all that time. And when he comes back, he's different. He's bigger and stronger. He's like a soldier. And he's learnt stuff. And he's got money. Isabella thinks he's hot! So, where's he been?

PHIL: I don't think Emily Bronte is actually all that worried about...

KATE: But she is! Nelly and old Lockwood, they think he's been abroad somewhere and he might have been a soldier and he might have spilt British blood and that. They're really interested to know.

PHIL: I don't think it's terribly productive to speculate...I mean...

KATE: Because if he was abroad somewhere where the British were fighting, where could he have been?

PHIL: I'm more interested in what the book actually tells us.

KATE: But she wants us to think about it. She's put all the dates in. It's like a puzzle. You can work out when he ran away.

PHIL: Can you? I don't think it's supposed to be so precise as to...

KATE: 1779. That's when he ran away. The book starts in 1801 when Heathcliff is... what? Your age? So, Phil – you should know this –

PHIL: I know I'm getting on a bit, but I wasn't actually alive in 1779.

KATE: Who were the British fighting ...and where...that year?

PHIL: That's three years after America declared independence. George Washington and all that? The fighting started before then, and it went on for quite a bit longer. I don't really know the details.

KATE: So that's it! Lockwood even suggests it. That he might have escaped to America. That's what Emily wanted us to know.

PHIL: Know what?

KATE: What Heathcliff had suffered.

PHIL: You've lost me again.

KATE: It's what he says...to Cathy...when they're back together again. "I've fought through a bitter life since I last heard your voice, and you must forgive me, for I struggled only for you." It's one of the best bits in the

book! That's what he said, right in front of her husband! I memorised it.

PHIL: I'm impressed Kate. You're right – that's exactly what he says.