



**WE WOVE A
WEB IN
CHILDHOOD**

Cally Phillips

We Wove a Web in Childhood

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About the play

This is the Brontës as you have never seen them before.

Leave rural Yorkshire for the battlefields of Napoleonic France. Enjoy a stunning recreation of the battles, fictional histories and melodramatic romances written by the Brontës in the years before the publication of their famous novels.

This is a must for anyone interested in the Brontës, the play debunks the myth of 'three tragic sisters with an alcoholic brother' and shows them full of life and vigour with powerful, often shocking imaginations.

'We Wove a Web in Childhood' charts the lives of all four Brontës in parallel with their writings, providing a unique insight into the jealousies and ever shifting alliances at work in the Brontë Parsonage between the years 1826 and 1848.

This play was first performed from August 30th to September 18th 1993 at the Duke's Head Theatre, Richmond.

Notes from the playwright

Melodrama

It needs to be said right up front that if you don't get the 'style' of this play you will not 'get' the play. Melodrama tends to be a 'dirty' word these days but in the 18th and 19th century it was a) very popular and b) a dominant dramatic form. So please, buy into melodrama. The salient features of melodrama which will help you 'get' this play are that it uses heightened speech, action etc in order to engage the 'emotions.' We are looking at 'sentiment' from the context of the early 19th century not from an early 21st century context. That's important.

When the young Brontës wrote their stories they were adopting the melodramatic style which was popular in their day. But remember, they were children (and adolescents) attempting an adult style. It's imitation. It's a world seen from a child's perspective. They are putting on the high heels, dressing up and acting out. There is a lot of humour in this play as we are able (as adults) to see the excesses of childhood. The play (at least in the first two acts) represents childhood 'play' and it's really okay to laugh at the 'dressing up' antics of the Brontë children as they write about love and war, apeing the stories they've read in the popular magazines of their day. Adolescents attempting melodrama has to be about as excessive as you can get and if you try to read or watch this with a 'straight laced' face you'll completely miss the point. You have to give yourself up to the 'drama' and to the 'melodrama'. If you 'buy into this' I think you'll really enjoy the ride.

By the third act things are a bit darker as the Brontës age and (as I contend within the play) they begin to somewhat lose themselves in their own characters. The conflicts of childhood are now more real, the sibling rivalries have an uglier undertone. Any maybe you won't be laughing so much.

The process

In 1990 I spent six months researching the juvenilia of the Brontës from original source material.

From that she constructed a narrative in which the lives of the young Bronte's became entwined with their own writing, drawing some original and at times shocking conclusions. The final playscript is virtually exclusively written from the original juvenilia and poems of the Brontes. I simply collated it and arranged it coherently in date order and then into a dramatic version of how this 'might' have represented their lives. It's speculative but then its drama. It's simply my thoughts on how we might learn something about the lives of the Brontes from their writings.

Since then a lot more work has been undertaken on the juvenilia and none of it, in my opinion, works against the 'theory' I explore in the play.

It's twenty years since this play was performed and actors are flighty fellows - and I'm not in touch with any of them now. I hope that they will excuse my not tracking them down to ask them if they are happy for their younger selves to be part of this ebook. I am still immensely proud of this production and I hope they are too - it's in that spirit that I thought the world deserved to see what we did in the web of the Brontes all those years ago.

Contact

If anyone wants to mount a production (amateur or professional) of this play, I'd be very happy to discuss that with them. I'm also happy to talk about the concept and welcome feedback about the 'enhanced' version of the play. The best way to establish contact is via email:
cally@callyphillips.co.uk

About this ebook edition

The formatting is as far as possible standard playscript (bearing in mind there is verse as well as prose) and the particular ereader settings you use may impact upon the visual display.

Reading this play carries a number of challenges - the scenes are quick moving and the main 'characters' take on other personas with alarming speed. The switching between Bronte names and their character names as the play progresses is intentional and gives an indication of the 'perspective' of the character - where Charlotte or Branwell for example are 'losing' themselves in the characters of Arthur or Northangerland this is revealed by that character being given the speech direction.

Initially this was devised as a way of getting the actors to appreciate which character focus they should be taking but it has been kept in for the reader because it's central to the underlying belief propounded throughout the play that increasingly real 'relationships' were played out via the created characters. You need to keep your wits about you while reading that's for sure. It's one of these instances where it's so much easier to 'see' it rather than read it. And thanks to modern technology, it's possible for you to do both.

If you have a tablet device, an ipad or a Kindle fire you will be able to take advantage of the video clips embedded into this ebook. The links take you to YouTube. Video quality is poor because the original recording was made 20 years ago, but we hope that this enhanced feature gives added enjoyment to your experience of this ebook.

Setting and cast

The action of the play takes place in the Parsonage, Haworth from whence, via the 'web' we are

transported to the imaginary worlds of Angria and Gondal. The young Brontë's themselves take on the parts of their fictionally created characters. As the play progresses the line between fact and fiction becomes increasingly blurred and fictional battles reflect real life ones.

Act 1 Scene 1: Brontë Parsonage, 1848

Act 1 Scene 2: Brontë Parsonage, 1826

Act 2 Scene 1: Angria, Battlefield, 1832

Act 2 Scene 2: Verdopolis (The Angrian Capital)

Act 2, Scene 3: Verdopolis – Major Selby's Ball

Act 2, Scene 4: Verdopolis – Ellrington's Hall

Act 2, Scene 5: Angria, Battlefield, 1836

Act 2, Scene 6: Angria – Zamorna's Mansion

Act 2, Scene 7: Angria, Northangerland's House/Battlefield 1838

Act 3, Scene 1: Angria, 1838

Act 3, Scene 2: Angria

Act 3, Scene 3: Angria, 1840

Act 3, Scene 4: Brontë Parsonage, 1840

Act 3, Scene 5: Brontë Parsonage, 1841/1845

Act 3, Scene 6: Brontë Parsonage/ Gondal, 1845

Act 3, Scene 7: Gondal

Act 3, Scene 8: Gondal

Act 3, Scene 9: Brontë Parsonage, 1848

Original cast:

Charlotte Brontë: Valeria Fabbri.

(In Angria, Charlotte is Arthur Wellesley the Marquis of Douro and Duke of Zamorna. Also Northangerlands mother)

Branwell Brontë: Thomas Anderson.

(In Angria, Branwell is Alexander 'Rogue' Percy, the Duke of Ellrington and Earl of Northangerland. Also Howard Warner. In Gondal, Branwell is King Julius Brenazaida)

Emily Brontë: Annette Bullen

(In Angria, Emily is Lady Zenobia Ellrington. Also Mary Percy. In Gondal, Emily is Queen Augusta.)

Anne Brontë: Anna Soderblom

(In Angria Anne is Montmorency. Also Edward Sydney and Louisa Vernon)

Each Brontë also takes on the role of various 'minor' characters throughout the play.

This play was first performed from August 30th to September 18th 1993 at the Duke's Head Theatre, Richmond.

ACT ONE SCENE ONE

We open to a black stage. Centre spotlight only lights Charlotte who stands in the middle of the central area which is marked out in tape with a spiders web.

CHARLOTTE: The busy day has hurried by

And hearts greet kindred hearts once more;

And swift the evening hours should fly,

But- what turns every gleaming eye

So often to the door.

Lights up to reveal DSR a trunk. DSL are two chairs either end of a trunk - these covered to give the impression of a chaise long. On this lies EMILY. Behind her stand BRANWELL and ANNE. USR two more trunks.

CHARLOTTE: And then so quick away - and why

Does sudden silence chill the room

Emily is dying. Branwell holds her hand and Anne closes her eyes

CHARLOTTE: And laughter sink into a sigh

And merry words to whispers die,

And gladness turn to gloom.

Emily, Branwell and Anne come to join Charlotte on their respective lines - forming up to a tableau "the gun picture"

BRANWELL: Oh we are listening for a sound

EMILY: We know shall ne'er be heard again.

ANNE: Sweet voices in the halls resound

CHARLOTTE: Fair forms, fond faces gather round.

ALL: But all in vain - in vain!

Emily moves DSR to sit on the trunk.

EMILY: Their feet shall never waken more

The echoes in these galleries wide,

Anne and Emily spread a cape centre stage - wave in the air as a mountain, then lay on the ground as a river.

EMILY: Nor dare the snow on the mountain's brow

Nor skim the river's frozen flow,

Nor wander down its side.

They, they who have been our life - our soul -

Through summer-youth, from childhood's spring

ANNE: Who bound us in one vigorous whole

BRANWELL: To stand 'gainst Tyranny's control,

For ever triumphing.

ANNE: Who bore the brunt of battle's fray.

BRANWELL: The first to fight

They fight.

CHARLOTTE: The last to fall.

Whose mighty minds

BRANWELL: With kindred ray.

CHARLOTTE: Still led the van in glory's way

EMILY: The idol chiefs of all.

The fight is over.

EMILY: They, they are gone! Not for a while

As golden suns at night decline

CHARLOTTE: And even in death our grief beguile

Foretelling with a rose red smile,

How bright the morn will shine.

EMILY: NO; these dark towers are lone and lorn;

This very crowd is vacancy

CHARLOTTE: And we must watch, and wait, and mourn

ANNE: And half look out for their return

BRANWELL: And think their forms we see.

EMILY: And fancy music in our ear

ANNE: Such as their lips could only pour

BRANWELL: And think we feel their presence near

CHARLOTTE: And start to find they are not here

ALL: And never shall be more.

BLACKOUT

To view rehearsal video of the original production [CLICK HERE](#)

ACT ONE SCENE TWO

The parsonage, Haworth 1826. Charlotte, aged 10 sits DSL on one end of the chaise longue, writing in a notebook. Anne sits curled up at the chair at the end.

CHARLOTTE: Papa lent me this book. The book is an hundred and twenty years old. It is at this moment lying before me as I write this. I am in the kitchen of the parsonage house, Haworth. Tabby the servant is washing up after breakfast and Anne, my youngest sister (stern look) is kneeling on a chair, looking at some cakes which Tabby has been baking for us. Emily is in the parlour brushing the carpet. Papa and Branwell are gone to Keighly. Aunt is upstairs in her room and I am sitting by the table, writing this in the kitchen.

Branwell enters with a box of soldiers.

CHARLOTTE: When papa came home it was night and we were in bed, so next morning Branwell came to our door with a box of soldiers. Emily and I jumped out of bed and I snatched one up and exclaimed.

Charlotte and Emily run over to the box and take out soldier

CHARLOTTE: This is the Duke of Wellington. It shall be mine!

She goes back to her writing. She is stagemanaging the actions which follow.

CHARLOTTE: When I said this, Emily likewise took one and said it should be hers. When Anne came down, she took one also.

Charlotte is clearly impatient, as Anne, the youngest, is always one step behind in the game.

The girls sit in the middle of the "web" to play with the soldiers.

The spotlight moves to Branwell who is writing DSR.

BRANWELL: On June the fifth, AD eighteen twenty six, papa procured from Leeds another set of soldiers. I carried them to Emily, Charlotte and Anne. They each took up a soldier, gave them names, which I consented to, and I gave Charlotte Wellington, to Emily Gravey, or Parry, to Anne Waiting Boy, or Ross, to take care of them, though they were mine, and I to have disposal of them as I would.

He gathers up the soldiers. Anne slightly resistant to letting hers go.

Branwell shows the girls his small booklet.

BRANWELL: What is contained in this history is a statement of what myself, Charlotte, Emily and Anne really pretended did happen.

The four children sit on the floor - playing a new game.

CHARLOTTE: We set sail with a fair wind from England on the first of March, seventeen ninety three. On the fifteenth we came in sight of Spain, On the sixteenth we landed, bought a supply of provisions (Emily picks a telescope out of the box.) and set sail again on the twentieth. On the twenty fifth, about noon, Henry Clinton who was in the shrouds, cried out that he saw the oxeye.

Anne grabs the telescope, rushes to the chaise longue, kneels on it, looking through the telescope.

ANNE: I see the oxeye.

The others look at her disparagingly. But the game is on, and they all act out their parts in the ensuing speech.

BRANWELL: In a minute we were on deck and all eyes gazing eagerly and fearfully towards the mountain over which we saw hanging in the sky the ominous speck. Instantly the sails were furled, and the boat was made ready for launching in our last extremity. Thus having made everything ready we retired to the cabin; everyone looked as sheepish as possible, and in no way inclined to meet our fate like men.

Anne is carried away by the game, and begins to cry.

BRANWELL: Some of us began to cry

Emily comforts her and throws dagger looks at Branwell to tone the story down.

BRANWELL: But we waited a long time and heard no sound of the wind and the cloud did not increase in size. At last Marcus O'Donnell exclaimed.

EMILY: I wish it would either go backward or forward.

BRANWELL: At this he received a box on the ear.

Charlotte boxes Emily's ear. Emily retaliates.

BRANWELL: O'Donnell returned the compliment.

The tussle looks like it's getting out of hand, so Branwell intervenes, reminding them it's HIS story.

BRANWELL: But just then we heard the sound of the wind and Henry bawled out.

Proud that Branwell is including her again, Anne plays her part to the full again..

ANNE: The cloud is as big as me

Another stern look from big brother not to overdo it. Branwell senses he's losing control of the story.

BRANWELL: We were all silenced by a fierce flash of lightening and a loud peal of thunder. The wind rose and the planks of our ship creaked. Another flash of lightening, brighter and more terrible than the first, split our mainmast and carried away our topsail. And now the flashes of lightening grew terrific and the thunder roared tremendously. The rain poured down in torrents and the gusts of wind were most loud and terrible. The hearts of the stoutest men in our company now quailed.

Branwell has got totally carried away.

Charlotte is determined to take control once more. She challenges him.

CHARLOTTE: At last the storm ceased. (pause) But we found it had driven us quite out of our course and we knew not where we were. When we spied land, we sailed along the coast for some time to find a good landing place. To our surprise we found the country cultivated.

EMILY: Grain of a peculiar sort grew in great abundance.

BRANWELL: And there were large plantations of palm trees.

ANNE: There were also many olives, and large enclosures of rice.

The others throw her a withering look - be real in your fantasy!

CHARLOTTE: We were greatly surprised at these marks of the land being inhabited.

The children prepare for the new game. Charlotte and Branwell arm with swords and sashes. Emily and Anne are the natives.

BRANWELL: After we had travelled about two miles, we saw at a distance twenty men, armed.

Emily and Anne stand firm, armed to the teeth with a shelalagh and a broom.

BRANWELL: We immediately prepared for battle, having each of us sword, musket and bayonet.

He picks up toy muskets from the toy chest USC and throws one to Charlotte. Then he brandishes his at the "enemy"

CHARLOTTE: We stood still and they came near.

Emily and Anne seem disinclined to come too near to the weapons. But Charlotte is in charge of the game and they are persuaded.

BRANWELL: When they had come close up to us, they likewise stopped. They seemed greatly surprised.

Anne holds her ground, Emily walks round Branwell and Charlotte.

ANNE: What strange people.

EMILY: Who are you? (as if confused as to who everyone is in the game)

CHARLOTTE: We were cast up on your shores by a storm and request shelter.

ANNE/EMILY: You shall not have it.

CHARLOTTE: We will take it then.

They fight. Ending in the capture, at sword point, of Emily the chief and the retreat of Anne.

BRANWELL: It was a very fierce encounter but we conquered. Killed ten, took the chief prisoner, wounded five and the remaining four retreated.

He holds Emily at swordpoint.

BRANWELL: The chief was quite black, very tall. He had a fierce countenance and the finest eyes I ever saw. We asked him what his name was

Emily stands stock still.

BRANWELL: But he would not speak.

Branwell looks to Charlotte for support - make her do what I say!

BRANWELL: We asked him..

CHARLOTTE: Then what is the name of your country.

Emily still doesn't seem to be playing. Branwell pushes the point.

BRANWELL: And he said.

After a considered pause, when she has made the point that she's in charge of at least her part of the story, Emily answers with all the authority of an African chief.

EMILY: Ashantee.

Branwell and Charlotte are happy that the game can now continue. They include Anne, who acts out her part in the following speech.

BRANWELL: Next morning a party of twelve men came to our tents, bringing with them a ransom for their chief and likewise a proposition of peace from their king.

Anne offers them toys.

BRANWELL: This we accepted, as it was on terms most advantageous to ourselves. Then we set about building ourselves a city.

BLACKOUT

To view rehearsal video of this scene from the original stage production in 1993 [CLICK HERE](#)

ACT ONE SCENE THREE

An adult Anne (1850) is sitting writing about the past - Charlotte and Branwell as children are dressing for their parts.

ANNE: Charlotte and Branwell established the imaginary world of Angria. Emily and I only joined in to swell the numbers, and the main characters became firmly established. Charlotte was Arthur Wellesley, the eldest son of the Duke of Wellington, who became in later days Marquis of Douro and Duke of Zamorna. Branwell was Alexander Rogue, or Percy, Lord Ellrington and Duke of Northangerland. There were many bitter rivalries between these characters over a span of nearly ten years. The first disagreement leads to the Great Rebellion of eighteen thirty one.

Emily sits beside Anne, also writing at her slope.

EMILY: I moved from the world of Angria to the world of Gondal, a secret world shared only between Anne and myself. But we still played our role in Angria. We were useful as backdrops to the more exciting characters of Douro and Rogue.

Branwell is dressed and ready for another game. The others will follow the actions he narrates.

BRANWELL: One evening about dusk, as the Marquis Douro was returning from a shooting excursion into the country, he heard suddenly a rustling noise in a deep ditch on the roadside. He was preparing his fowling piece for a shot, when the form of Lady Ellrington (played by Emily) started up before him. Her head was bare, her tall person was enveloped in the tattered remnants of a dark velvet mantle. Her dishevelled hair hung in wild elflocks over her face, neck and shoulders, almost concealing her features, which were emaciated and pale as death. He stepped back a few paces, startled at the sudden and ghastly apparition. She threw herself on her knees before him, exclaiming in wild, maniacal accents

EMILY: (as Lady Ellrington) My lord. Tell me, truly, sincerely, ingenuously, where you have been. I heard that you had left Verdopolis, and I followed you on foot five hundred miles. Then my strength failed me, and I lay down in this place, as I thought to die. But I was doomed I should see you once more before I became an inhabitant of the grave. Answer me, my lord. Have you seen that wretch Marian Hume? Have you spoken to her. Viper! Viper! Oh that I could sheathe this weapon in her heart.

Emily pulls out a quill pen, masquarding as a knife. She is getting truly carried away and Branwell steps in to take back control of the story.

BRANWELL: Here she stopped for want of breath.

Emily gives him a dirty look.

He relents somewhat.

BRANWELL: And drawing a long, sharp, glittering knife from under her cloak, brandished it wildly in the air. The Marquis looked at her steadily, and without attempting to disarm her, answered with great composure.

CHARLOTTE: (As Douro) You have asked me a strange question Lady Zenobia, but before I attempt to answer it, you had better come with me to our encampment. I will order a tent to be prepared for you where you may pass the night in safety and tomorrow, when you are a little recruited by rest and refreshment, we will discuss this matter soberly.

BRANWELL: Her rage was now exhausted by its own vehemence and she replied with more calmness than she had hitherto evinced.

EMILY: (as Zenobia) My lord, believe me, I am deputed by heaven to warn you of a great danger into which you are about to fall. If you persist in your intention of uniting yourself to Marian Hume, you will become a murderer and a suicide. I cannot now explain myself more clearly; but ponder carefully on my words until I see you again.

BRANWELL: Then bowing her forehead to the earth in an attitude of adoration, she kissed his feet, muttering at the same time some unintelligible words. The Marquis paced slowly back to camp, lost in deep reflection on what he had heard and seen.

ANNE: Months rolled away and the mystery remained unsolved. Lady Zenobia Ellrington appeared as usual. Her voice was more subdued and her looks pale, and it was remarked by some that she avoided all communication with the Marquis.

BRANWELL: In the meantime, the Duke of Wellington had consented to his son's union with the beautiful, virtuous, and accomplished, but untitled, Marian Hume.

Charlotte and Anne prepare for their roles. Once again, Anne gets above herself enjoying the veil and Branwell is barbed in his comment "untitled"

BRANWELL: Vast and splendid preparations were in the making for the approaching bridal, when just at this critical juncture news arrives of the Great Rebellion headed by Alexander Rogue.

He's seen that the girls are all getting too into the "wedding" part of the story, wants to reinsert some "action."

BRANWELL: Unequivocal symptoms of dissatisfaction began to appear among the lower orders in Verdopolis. The workmen at the principal mills and furnaces struck for an advance in wages. Colonel Grenville, one of the great mill-owners, was shot. His assassins were interrogated by torture, but they remained inflexible, not a single satisfactory answer being elicited from them. Orders were issued that no citizen should walk abroad unarmed. Parliament was summoned to consult on the best measures to be taken. In the house, the Marquis of Douro rose and made one of his most celebrated orations.

CHARLOTTE: (as Douro) I call on you, my countrymen, to rouse yourselves to action. There is a latent flame of rebellion smouldering in our city, which blood alone can quench: the hot blood of ourselves and our enemies freely poured forth. We daily see in our streets, men whose brows were

once open as the day, but which are now wrinkled with dark dissatisfaction, and the light of whose eyes, formerly free as sunshine, is now dimmed by restless suspicion. Our peaceful citizens cannot pass their thresholds in safety unless laded with weapons of war, the continual dread of death haunting their footsteps wherever they turn. And who has produced this awful change? What agency of hell has effected, what master spirit of crime, what prince of sin, what Beelzebub of black iniquity has been at work in the kingdom? I will answer that fearful question: Alexander Rogue! Arm for the battle then, fellow countrymen; be not faint-hearted, but trust in the justice of your cause as your banner of protection and let your war shout in the onslaught ever be "God defend the right".

ANNE: When the Marquis had finished this harangue, he left the house amidst long and thunderous applause, and proceeded to a shady grove on the river banks. There he came across Zenobia.

EMILY: (as Zenobia) My lord, your eloquence, your noble genius has again driven me to desperation. I am no longer mistress of myself, and if you do not consent to be mine and mine alone, I will kill myself where I stand.

CHARLOTTE: (As Douro) Lady Ellrington, this conduct is unworthy of your character. I must beg that you will cease to use the language of a madwoman, for, I do assure you, my lady, these deep stratagems will have no effect on me.

EMILY: (as Zenobia) Oh! Do not kill me with such cold cruel disdain. Only consent to follow me, and you will be utterly convinced that you ought not to be united to one so utterly unworthy of you as Marian Hume.

Douro follows Zenobia.

EMILY: (as Zenobia) You are now in the sacred presence of one whose counsel I am sure you, my lord, will never slight.

Branwell is hidden USL under a cloak. He is playing the part of an oracle.

BRANWELL: Harken to the counsels of wisdom and do not in the madness of self will, destroy yourself and Marian Hume, by refusing the offered hand of one whom, from the moment of your birth was doomed by the prophetic stars of heaven to be your partner and support through the dark, unexplored wilderness of future life.

Anne cannot stand the excitement. She whispers into Charlotte's ear.

ANNE: There is danger, beware.

Branwell reveals himself as Rogue.

EMILY: About a week after this event the nuptials of Arthur Augustus, Marquis of Douro, and Marian Hume, were solemnized.

They act out the marriage.

BRANWELL: After a time, Lady Ellrington seemed to recover, and the Marquis, convinced that her extravagances had arisen from a disordered brain, consented to honour her with his friendship once more.

CHARLOTTE: But Zenobia sought revenge on Arthur, by marrying his rival, Alexander Rogue. She was still madly in love with the Marquis and thus their marriage was not destined for success.

EMILY: (as Zenobia) Oh, that I should have resigned myself into the hands of such a man, in a moment of pique at love neglected, contemned, spurned; in an hour of false, fleeting admiration of abused and degraded talents. I yielded up my liberty and received the galling yoke of worse than Egyptian bondage. Arthur. Arthur! Why did I ever see you? Why did I ever hear your voice? If love for another did not occupy my whole heart, absorb my whole existence, perhaps I might endure the cruelty of this man with less utter, less unendurable misery. Perhaps I might, by unwearied patience, by constant and tender submission, win some portion of his regard, some slight share of his affection. But now it is impossible. I cannot love him. I cannot even appear to love him, and therefore I must hereafter drag out the remnant of my wretched life in sorrow and woe, in hopeless and careless mourning.

BRANWELL: (as Rogue) Well, termagent. I suppose you thought I'd forgotten your insolent behaviour to me about a week ago, but I assure you if that was our opinion you're very much mistaken. Kneel at my feet this instant and humbly and submissively ask pardon for all past offences or..

He grabs her arm. She pushes him off.

EMILY: (as Zenobia) Never, never will I so far degrade myself. Do not hope, do not imagine that I will.

He draws a sword.

BRANWELL: (as Rogue) I neither hope nor imagine anything about the matter, but I'm certain of it; at least if you refuse, an inch of cold steel will find it's way to your heart. Do you think that I will have you dancing and manoeuvring before my very face with that conceited, impertinant, white livered puppy.

EMILY: (as Zenobia) Dare not, at your peril, to speak another insulting word of the the Marquis of Douro.

BRANWELL: (as Rogue) Fool and madwoman. Is this the language calculated to screen either you or him from the terrible effects of my wrath? You may grovel now in the dust. You may kneel and implore my forgiveness till your bold tongue rots and refuses to move. I will not grant it now were ever angel celestial and infernal to command me.

EMILY: (as Zenobia) Base villain, I scorn your forgiveness. I trample your offers of mercy underfoot. And think not to harm the Marquis, he is far above your power. That blood-stained, that crime-blackened hand, could not harm one hair of his noble head. Yet know, wretch, that though I honour him thus highly, though I look upon him as more than a man, as an angel, a demigod, yet - rather than break my faith even with you, I would this instant fall a corpse at your feet.

BRANWELL: (as Rogue) Liar. These words shall be your sentence and I will execute quickly. But you shall not die quickly. No! I'll thrust this sharp blade slowly through you that you may feel and enjoy the torture.

They fight.

CHARLOTTE: He twisted his hand in her thick black hair, and was just in the act of striking her as she lay, unresisting and motionless, when a strong and sudden grasp arrested his arm from behind. Half choked with fury, he turned round to see the hideous visage of Montmorency.

ANNE: (a reluctant Montmorency) My beloved friend, in passing I happened to look through your keyhole, and I beheld as pretty a tragedy as one could wish to set eyes on, but when I saw that matters were approaching a crisis, I remembered that the gallows often follows murder. Thus I stepped forward like a hero, and effected the deliverance of this fair damsel in distress.

BRANWELL: (as Rogue) Well, since the brother of my heart has interposed, I will permit that woman to escape the punishment due to her crimes this once. (To Emily) Get up you heap of baseness and begone instantly from my presence.

BLACKOUT

To view rehearsal video of this scene from the original stage production in 1993 [CLICK HERE](#)

ACT TWO SCENE ONE

CHARLOTTE: Storms are waking to inspire us

BRANWELL: Storms upon our morning sky.

EMILY: Wildly wailing tempests fire us.

ANNE: With their loud, God-given cry.

CHARLOTTE: Winds, our trumpets, shrieking come

BRANWELL: Thundering waves our deeper drum

EMILY/ANNE: Wild woods o'er us, swell the chorus

Bursting on the starry gloom.

CHARLOTTE: What's their omen?

BRANWELL: Whence the doom?

CHARLOTTE: Storms are waking

BRANWELL: Earth is shaking

EMILY: Banners wave and bugles wail.

ANNE: And beneath the tempest breaking

Some must quiver

EMILY: Some must quail.

BRANWELL: Hark the artillery's iron hail

Rattles through the ranks of war

Who beneath its force shall fail?

CHARLOTTE: Tempest blow thy mightiest blast

EMILY: Wild wind sound thy wildest strain

ANNE: From God's right hand

O'er his chosen land

Your music shall waken its fires again.

CHARLOTTE: And over the north now

EMILY: And over the ocean

ANNE: And whoever shall shadow these storm covered skies.

BRANWELL: The louder though battle may roar

ALL: 'Twill only sound stronger - OH ANGRIA - ARISE!

BLACKOUT

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ACT TWO SCENE TWO

ANNE: (As Edward) And this is Verdopolis. That splendid city, rising with such graceful haughtiness from the green realm of Neptune. Queen of nations, accept the homage of one who seeks but to be among the number of thy slaves!

EMILY: Such was Edward Sydney's brief, but enthusiastic address to our beloved city as he caught the first glimpse of her proud enduring towers. As he rested from his travels at Bravey's hotel, a wagon appeared, followed by a troop of musicians and some ragged looking children.

BRANWELL: (as Rogue) Gentlemen, we are now going to show you a feat which never has been performed before and never will be again.

EMILY: What followed was the most horrible sight. Edward was forced to watch as the two children were set to dancing within the flames of a fire, until they were completely consumed by it. He watched with feelings of such deep horror as rendered him unable to stir, but at length he rushed forward from the crowd.

ANNE: (as Edward) Wretch! How dare you thus brutally murder innocent children in the open street, and how gentlemen.. How can you behold such infernal barbarity unmoved.

CHARLOTTE: (as Douro) What is the matter?

BRANWELL: (as Rogue) Nothing but an Englishman singing over his deserts.

CHARLOTTE: (as Douro) Hold your teeth you scoundrel. I'll knock your teeth down your throat if I hear any more impudence. Deliver up your prey on pain of death.

She draws a sword. Threatens Branwell. Then turns to Anne.

CHARLOTTE: I should like to know what brought you into such a pickle.

ANNE: (as Edward) I merely attempted to remonstrate with that horrible monster, respecting his treatment of some innocent children whom he was cruelly murdering.

BRANWELL: (as Rogue) A stuck pig. Meddling ninny. Come now Douro, you surely won't spend any more time in talking to such a whey faced whiner?

CHARLOTTE: (as Douro) Hold your tongue or else bite it off!

To Anne.

CHARLOTTE: I want to know sir, where this unhappy heap of mortality is going. I say Sir. In what direction will you turn your charming phiz now? You look very much in doubt as to the matter I can say.

ANNE: (as Edward) Really sir, I do not know what right you have to ask me such a question.

CHARLOTTE: (as Douro) The right of might.

Turns her sword on Anne.

CHARLOTTE: (as Douro) Come my lad, you and I must not part in this way. I see by that flash in your eye that you're worth preserving.

ANNE: (as Edward) Sir, I will not be detained.

There is a brief fight. Which Charlotte wins hands down.

CHARLOTTE: (as Douro) But you shall Sir, and that as long as I please.

EMILY: Edward was kept confined by the Marquis for two weeks. On the fifteenth morning, as he pensively entered the library, he started on perceiving Douro seated at the breakfast table and engaged in perusing a newspaper. As Edward came forward, Douro rose, and advanced to meet him with that bewitching smile which he so well knows how to assume, and frankly offering his hand, addressed him thus.

CHARLOTTE: (as Douro) Well my good fellow, I am at last come to set you free. Nothing, I assure you, but the most urgent business could have prevented me from visiting you long since, and I did not choose to send orders for your release, because, as you are an Englishman, and totally unaquainted with the manners of our citizens, I knew that you would be continually getting into scrapes, some of which might have proved fatal to you before assistance could be procured. I have no desire to detain

you any longer against your inclination, but before you go, permit me to ask a few questions. In the first place, what is your name?

ANNE: (as Edward) Edward Sydney.

CHARLOTTE: (as Douro) Are you possessed of an independent fortune?

ANNE: (as Edward) My income amounts to three thousand pounds per annum.

CHARLOTTE: (as Douro) Is it derived from landed property or commercial concerns?

ANNE: (as Edward) From landed property.

CHARLOTTE: (as Douro) Are your parents living?

ANNE: (as Edward) I don't know.

CHARLOTTE: (as Douro) How have you been brought up?

ANNE: (as Edward) I have received a University education.

CHARLOTTE: (as Douro) Which I presume from your juvenile appearance is not yet completed?

ANNE: (as Edward) Yes it is. I attained the rank of senior wrangler, and took my degree before I left College.

CHARLOTTE: Senior wrangler! Why? What age are you?

ANNE: Twenty two.

EMILY: A slight blush suffused the young nobleman's fine features at this reply. He answered quickly.

CHARLOTTE: (as Douro) Why, I have been conversing with you all this time as if you were my junior, and now it turns out that I am myself three years younger than you.

ANNE: (as Edward) Do not be offended my lord, your superior stature and manliness of bearing are sufficient excuses for the mistake.

CHARLOTTE: (as Douro) Well, never mind. I have taken upon myself the office of patron, and I will maintain it were you fifty years my senior. Now pray tell me if you would like to be a member of the Commons House of Parliament which represents this great Empire?

ANNE: (as Edward) My lord, are you in earnest?

CHARLOTTE: (as Douro) Decidedly so.

ANNE: (as Edward) Then nothing would be more gratifying to every feeling of my heart.

CHARLOTTE: (as Douro) You would consider that a lucky event which should elevate you to such a post?

ANNE: (as Edward) The most superlatively so of any that ever happened to me.

CHARLOTTE: (as Douro) Then know, Mr Sydney, that the business in which I have been engaged during the last fortnight, was ousting an obnoxious member from his seat, and procuring your election instead. But now, do you know what is required of you as a return for this piece of service?

ANNE: (as Edward) I believe I do

CHARLOTTE: (as Douro) What?

ANNE: (as Edward) A staunch and unflinching opposition to the vile demagogue Alexander Rogue.

CHARLOTTE: (as Douro) You have hit the nail right on the head.

BLACKOUT

To view rehearsal video of this scene from the original stage production in 1993 [CLICK HERE](#)

ACT TWO SCENE THREE

EMILY: A grand ball and supper was held by the Major General Lord Selby. Douro and Marian, Rogue and Zenobia were all invited.

BRANWELL: It was the last function they both attended before the Great Rebellion started and Angria was plunged into bloody and bitter civil war.

CHARLOTTE: (as Douro) Marian, what is the matter sir? What were you saying to this lady?

BRANWELL: (as Rogue) I do not know whether I am obliged to tell you everything I say to such ladies as I choose to honour with my notice.

CHARLOTTE: (as Douro) But you shall tell me or..

ANNE: (as Marian) Arthur, Arthur, don't be so angry. He was only asking me to dance and I was so silly as to turn away without replying and that displeased him I suppose.

BRANWELL: (as Rogue) No fair lady, it did not displease me, but I trust you will now grant me a favourable answer?

ANNE: (as Marian) Sir, I hope you will excuse me when I say that I cannot comply with your request.

BRANWELL: (as Rogue) And why not?

ANNE: (as Marian) Because I do not think my husband's enemy a fit companion for myself.

BRANWELL: (as Rogue) Oh! If that is your only objection, I do not despair.

He turns to Emily.

BRANWELL: (as Rogue) Madam, prepare instantly to quit this place and to proceed homewards.

EMILY: (as Zenobia) Three hours hence I will do so, but not till then.

BRANWELL: (as Rogue) What! Am I to be bearded in this way by my own wife? Obey my commands this instant or I shall find some method of compelling you to your duty.

EMILY: (as Zenobia) Ellrington, I know your motives for acting thus, but be assured I will never succumb to such unjust, such tyrannical treatment. You are sensible that once my determination is fixed it seldom alters, therefore give yourself no further trouble, for I will not go home - yet.

Branwell goes back to his seat - annoyed.

Emily joins Charlotte and Anne, in the dance.

EMILY: (as Zenobia) Well my lord, I suppose it is as much your fault as mine that we do not see each other oftener. Why do you never come to Ellrington House?

CHARLOTTE: (as Douro) Why, my lady, surely you would not wish me to frequent the house of a man whom I detest and who detests me?

EMILY: (as Zenobia) Sir, it is not my husband's residence, it is mine, and there I will see any visitors I please without asking his leave.

CHARLOTTE: (as Douro) I will not dispute your ladyship's resolution, which doubtless is perfectly just, but as I have no inclination to involve either you or myself in unnecessary fracas with your worthy husband, you will excuse me when I say that I should prefer meeting you in the house of a third person rather than in your own house. Now let us change the subject. What makes you so melancholy and so fond of solitude now? In former times you were the life and soul of every party that was so fortunate to be honoured by your presence.

EMILY: (as Zenobia) Arthur. That question sounds rather taunting. How can I be otherwise than melancholy when I am united for life to a tyrant, and what pleasure can I find in society where my best and dearest friends regard me with coldness and suspicion because I am the unwilling wife of a demagogue.

CHARLOTTE: (as Douro) Yes, but Zenobia, I once thought you had a spirit which would rise superior to all terrestrial evils, and now you tremble at the frown of a wretch who is scarcely worthy to be your vassal.

EMILY: (as Zenobia) Arthur. You do not know Rogue. His anger once roused is terrible, unappeasable. I have often striven to stand against it, but in vain. He always compels me to abject submission in spite of that spirit which you used to call unconquerable.

CHARLOTTE: (as Douro) Yet you withstood him bravely tonight my lady.

EMILY: (as Zenobia) I did. But it was your presence gave me courage. I resolved that you at least should not see me cowed and degraded by him. But when we return home I shall have to pay the penalty for my steadfastness and a heavy one it will be.

ANNE: (as Marian) I pity you very much my lady, but at the same time I feel very glad that I am not married to such a hideous and cruel man.

EMILY: I give you envy in return for your pity.

CHARLOTTE: (as Douro) Marian. How dare you call Lord Ellrington hideous. (as herself) He is a very handsome man in my opinion.

ANNE: He is not so in mine though. (as Marian) His very look frightened me so far from my propriety that I could not muster sufficient sense to frame an answer to his question.

CHARLOTTE: Why you little carping critic. What particular features in his face do you find fault with?

ANNE: His eyes I think, though I can't say with exactness, where all are so ugly.

CHARLOTTE: His eyes! They are as fine dark optics as any one could wish to see.

ANNE: That does not signify. They are totally unlike yours, not so large, not so bright, not so smiling and therefore I hate them.

EMILY: And so do I.

BLACKOUT

To view rehearsal video of this scene from the original stage production in 1993 [CLICK HERE](#)

ACT TWO SCENE FOUR

ANNE: It was night. The clocks had all chimed twelve. The saloons were fireless and lampless. No company had enlivened them that night or for many preceeding ones. Rogue had disappeared months before, taking with him his mistress, Louisa Vernon.

Emily, as Zenobia - a Victorian melodramatic heroine verging on Lady MacBeth, glides slowly across the stage.

CHARLOTTE: Zenobia, as she glided past their portals thought how lonely their silence and darkness was. With a less inceding and slower tread than was customary to her, she sought her chamber with the intention of retiring to rest, for she was weary of struggling against thoughts that tamed her pride and lowered her soaring spirits.

ANNE: A fine woman she looked with a solemn but not sad aspect in her eyes as she opened the door and crossed the threshold of her dressing room. Why does she stop? What means that look of astonishment, changing quickly into one of a different and inscrutable meaning, that parting of the beautiful lips and that sudden erection of the splendid bust.

CHARLOTTE: A tall shadow quivers on the walls and ceiling. Look, yonder! That is a human being, a man, a gentleman! Yes, one in a black dress with a white forehead and fine nose leans against that cabinet with folded arms and eyes directed straight, daringly and unflinchingly towards the awful Countess. The first petrifying effect of this apparition over, Zenobia closed the door.

ANNE: In a moment she turned and glanced again on the intruder as if to be certain he was still there; he was indeed but he had changed his place and stood close beside her.

EMILY: (as Zenobia) Rogue.

BRANWELL: (as Rogue) Why my dear Zenobia, this excitement makes you look interesting, almost so much so as.. as.. Louisa Vernon.

EMILY: (as Zenobia) My lord. I am a Western! And the heiress of Henry Ellrington of Ennerdale, and the granddaughter of Don John Louisiana. I will not be insulted - by my life. I would have forgiven you and loved you again at that moment because you looked pale and weary, but I'll not now. You did ill to speak of Louisa Vernon - I thought you were tired of your false rest and come back to lean upon your true one in adversity.

BRANWELL: (as Rogue) I am, my Countess, and a most placid rest I've found. You look all repose Zenobia.

EMILY: (as Zenobia) You are possessed. You are sick at heart I see, and satiated, and utterly without hope, and yet there's a light foam on your desperation that churns up the more wantonly and fantastically the more madly the torrent rushes.

BRANWELL: (as Rogue) An Evangelical truth! Verily your ladyship speaks right. Satiated I was with the semi-gallic, semi-Italian and wholly Paradisaical graces of my delightful Louisa, ennuied utterly by her grasping monopoly of my precious self and her tiresome jealousy of my favours. Frightened at her violence and propensity to scenes. I began to look for the dying scene as a relief but it never came. I took myself off. I wandered here and there, and when I'm at last arrived, after an absence as they say in the newspapers of nearly three months, my wife's first greeting is couched in a genealogical account of herself and her family. Talking of those times reminds me of one Alexander Rogue that I used to know. It's long since and I remember very little about him except that his brains were less irretrievably cracked than those of the present, most mighty Earl of Northangerland. Zenobia. What did that glance mean? It meant you thought me mad. You are frightened at hearing my jaunty desperation! I don't pretend to say I've lost my senses, or that I'm much wronged or in frenzied despair, to speak the truth, I'm only horribly dissatisfied.

EMILY: Then lash your broken, helmless bark wholly to me. I've enough firmness and fidelity to be a most steadfast anchor. Trust me!

BRANWELL: That is to say, in other words, tie yourself to my apron strings. I might have yielded, but another thought has just struck me. There's one quarter I've left untried. A project has entered my head, shabby, despicable, and contemptible in its nature and therefore the more in harmony with the whole state of my feelings. Good night, Zenobia.

BLACKOUT

To view rehearsal video of this scene from the original stage production in 1993 [CLICK HERE](#)

ACT TWO SCENE FIVE

BRANWELL: Welcome heroes to the war

Welcome to your glory.

Will you seize your swords and dare

To be renowned in story?

EMILY: What though fame be distant far

Flashing through the upper air.

Though the path which leads you there

Be long and rough and gory?

ANNE: Angrians, when your morning rose

Before your monarch's eye

He swore that ere it's evening close

All your foes should fly.

CHARLOTTE: Down from heaven Zamorna came

To guide you to the sky

And shook his sword of quenchless flame

And shouted VICTORY!

BRANWELL: Angrians, if your noble king,

Rides foremost in the fight

Up in glorious gathering

Around that helmet bright.

CHARLOTTE: Angrians, if you wield your sword

Every stroke shall be

Fixed as one undying word

In Afric's history.

EMILY: Angrians if in fight you die

The clouds that o'er you rise

Shall waft your spirits to a sky

Of everlasting joy.

ANNE: Angrians, when that fight is o'er

Heaven and earth and sea

Shall echo in the Cannon's roar

Your shout of victory.

CHARLOTTE: So now if all your bosoms beat

ANNE: To reach your native star

EMILY: Shake the shackles from your feet.

BRANWELL: And welcome to the WAR!

They fight.

BLACKOUT

To view rehearsal video of this scene from the original stage production in 1993 [CLICK HERE](#)

ACT TWO SCENE SIX

CHARLOTTE: Time has passed. Marian Hume died an untimely death, and Douro married Rogue's daughter Mary. He hoped by this to turn an enemy into a friend. Douro became Duke of Zamorna and Rogue became Earl of Northangerland. An uneasy peace reigns until Zamorna inherits the crown of Angria.

BRANWELL: It is time for Northangerland's revenge and he plots civil war.

CHARLOTTE: Zamorna swore that if he ever did this, his daughter Mary, now Queen of Angria, would suffer.

ANNE: The eyes of everyone are now open to the fact that our country Angria has just entered upon what will probably prove one of the most terrific intestine wars that have ever desolated the world. WE know this because we see the fiery and daring characters of our people, the embroiled and exasperated state of parties, and above all, the bold, mighty and remarkable men who at present act as their leaders. Our eyes must first turn to Zamorna, who is in conference with his advisor, Howard Warner.

Branwell is in disguise as Warner.

BRANWELL: (as Warner) My lord - are you doing right? The matter lies between god and your own conscience. I know that the kingdom must be saved at any hazard of individual peace or even life. I advocate expediency my lord. In the government of a state I allow of equivocal means to procure a just end. I sanction the shedding of blood and the cutting up of domestic happiness by the roots to stab a traitor to the heart. But nevertheless, I am a man, sire, and after what I have seen during the last day or two, I ask your Majesty with solemn earnestness, is there no way by which the heart of Northangerland may be reached except through the breast of my Queen?

CHARLOTTE: (as Zamorna) Warner! But two living creatures in the world know of the nature of the relations that have existed between Alexander Rogue and myself. From the very beginning in my inmost soul, while I watched his devious and eccentric course, I swore that if he broke those bonds

and so turned to vanity and scattered in the air sacrifices that I had made, and words that I had spoken, if he made as dust and nothingness causes for which I have endured jealousies and burning strife and emulations amongst those I loved; if he froze feelings that in me are like living fire, I would have revenge. In all but one quarter he is fortified and garrisoned. He can bid me defiance, but one quarter lies open to my javelin, and dipped in venom I will launch it quivering into his very spirit, so help me Hell!

BRANWELL: (as Warner) Hell will help you and I fear my lord, God will veil his spirit that it will finally leave us. I am incessantly haunted by the certain knowledge that you, a man who has his reward in Earth in superior gifts and more splendid endowments than other men, that you have no place among the elect of god. Long before the foundations of the world were laid, you were numbered with the everlastingly condemned; all your thoughts and your words, the whole bent of your mind prove it. When you die Sire, and you are not framed for a long life, I shall bid you an eternal farewell. Your pulse once at rest we shall never meet again. There is a lady in the next room wishes to see you. May I admit her?

CHARLOTTE: (as Zamorna) As you like.

Emily approaches, disguised as Mary.

CHARLOTTE: (as Zamorna) Be so kind as to remove your veil madam.

EMILY: (as Mary) Sire, I want your Majesty's gracious permission to see my dear, dear husband once more in this world before he leaves me forever.

CHARLOTTE: (as Zamorna) Warner!

Branwell reveals himself under his disguise.

CHARLOTTE: (as Zamorna)Rogue! How dared you do what you have done? How dared you bring my wife here, when you know I'd rather have an evil spirit given to my arms this night? You must have been conscious Sir, that I had wrought my resolution with toil and trouble. That I had decided to let her die, if her father cut loose, and decided with agony.

CHARLOTTE: (as herself) And what possessed you to ruin it all, and set me the whole torturing task over again.

ANNE: The sword is drawn. The arm uplifted in the space that will intervene before the impending blow falls. Let Zamorna listen to the voice of his shuddering country. We will faithfully speak what she breathes in the hour of suspense, her head on the block and the executioners axe hanging over it.

EMILY: Sovereign! I was fair and flourishing, the happy Province of a mighty mother state. You saw me and I kindled your ambition - though the apparent heir to another throne, you would not wait till Death should take the diadem from your father's brows. You built a capital, you raised towns, you encouraged commerce, you modelled an army, you made me splendid without; I was gilded by your hand from the crown of my head to the sole of my foot. To attain this magnificance I was laden with debt.

ANNE: Now Zamorna. You should have been my mantle and my shield, and helmet for my head and

a buckler for my bosom. You should have been my protector, my warder, my counsellor. Have you been this? Where is my capital? Beseiged, stormed, taken, a broken wall. Where are the men who supported me, where are their labours? All shattered, overthrown, involved in the genral wreck of the Kingdom. Lastly, where is my army ? I see it, there it stands, dispirited, enfeebled, wasted by disease and defeat, still rallying round your banner, still devoted to your cause, still obedient without murmur or mutiny to him for whose sake their homes are as lifeless and desolate as the fanes of the Indians in Peru.

EMILY: Still willing to present even life as their last sacrifice in his service, their last stake in the bloody game playing on his account. Waiting patiently, valiantly, to hear the word from your lips which shall send them to destruction or to a gory victory. Pause a moment Zamorna. Should that first event rush on them without hope of the last, should the reprieve delay and the axe descend, how will you feel as my blood streams over the scaffold? For my part, I, yes I your martyred Angria, will curse you with my dying breath. I will curse you for your rashness, your cruelty, your selfishness, for the mean atrocity of hazarding a nation and the wealth of a nation. I shall despise you, and hate you and so will my children and their children to the third and fourth generation.

ANNE: You thought to be called the founder of a dynasty that should rule half the world. If tomorrow fate should prove adverse, you will be called the impious fool who aimed at Heaven, slipped and fell into Hell.

BLACKOUT

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ACT TWO SCENE SEVEN

ANNE: As Northangerland sat at his breakfast preparing for the final rout of Zamorna, he received an unexpected visitor in the frame of his mother.

MOTHER: (Charlotte) Alexander, what is this you are bent upon? Is it what I dread to name, and must I again see my son the curse not only of himself but of his country? I saw you raise the rebellion of 1832 and then you narrowly escaped death by the confiscation of a noble fortune. Will you tread the same ground over again, or Alexander, is it untrue, this frightful...

NORTHANGERLAND: (Branwell) True, madam, every inch of it – every word and letter.

MOTHER:(Charlotte) I cannot change you, I see. But I must wait calmly as I have by this time learned calmness from necessity. Alexander, is it your intention to throw this city into horrible confusion and ruin the ancient order of things?

NORTHANGERLAND: (Branwell) In six hours your ladyship.

MOTHER:(Charlotte) I have borne long with you, my son, through years of unceasing vicissitudes; I have seen you a murderer, and outlaw, a rebel and now I see you without one single friend. And I – I feel my affection for you as if a guilty one, as if a crime to my country. You know Alexander, that my character is one which clings most firmly to one I love, through good report and evil report,

sacrificing everything to the object of my affection. But there is a point beyond which I dare not go. Alexander, I once hoped that I should not have to detest you as a monster. But I know I cannot swerve you from your purpose. I have visited you because your daughter is dying. She saw that reconciliation between yourself and her husband was humanly impossible. She could see in the future for Arthur only hate and strife and power overthrown and life hunted by those who thirst for his blood, while you she knew though you might attain momentary greatness, could not and would not feel it's effects. Zamorna has cast her aside as revenge. She cannot hate him for an instant and she cannot bow to fate. She is sinking fast and cannot possibly sustain her agony long. If she could see Zamorna, if she could hear him speak, I believe she would rejoice to die! Your name she hardly mentions for she must know that her ruin is owing to you.

NORTHANGERLAND: (Branwell) She will not see him, he shall be defeated. I will not lose all that I have to Zamorna.

ANNE: Some of the constitutionalists had still a lingering partiality for Zamorna, like that of an indulgent father for a prodigal son. But the wish prevailed throughout the city of annihilation for him and his. Tuesday told them it was granted, that the Angrian army was ruined, the Angrian nation freed and the Angrian King routed.

Enter Branwell as Northangerland and Charlotte as Zamorna with swords to do battle.

NORTHANGERLAND: (Branwell) Through the hoarse howlings of the storm

I saw but did I truly see

A glimpse of that unearthly form

Whose name has once been Victory?

'Twas but a glimpse and all seems past

For cares like clouds again return

And I'll forget him, till the blast

For ever from my soul has torn

That vision of a Mighty Man

Crushed into Dust.

Branwell and Charlotte begin to fight, the fight goes on as background to the poem

EMILY: He sees his soldiers round him falling

In vain to Heaven for Vengeance calling

He sees them lie, with glaring eye

Turned up toward him, that wandering star

Who led them still from good to ill

In hopes of power to meet with war

And fall from noontide dreams of glory

To this strange rest, so grim and gory.

ANNE: When rolling on those friends o'erthrown

War's wildest wreck breaks thundering down

Zamorna's pale and ghastly brow

Darkens with anguish – all in vain

To stem the tide of battle now

For every rood of that wide plain

Is heaped with thousands of his dead.

EMILY: 'Tis hopeless and he knows it so

ANNE: That eye! Oh I have seen it shine

Mid scenes that differed far from these.

I saw him in his beauty's pride

With manhood on his brow

The falcon-eyed with heart of pride

EMILY: I knew him and I marked him then

For one apart, as far

From the surrounding crowds of men

As heaven's remotest star

I saw him in the battle's hour

And conquered by his side

ANNE: I was with him in his height of power

And triumph of his pride

'Tis past but I am with him now

Where he spurs fiercely through the fight

EMILY: I see them falling in the storm

'Mid crowds of horse, that wildly ride

Above each gashed and trampled form

His charger shot, Zamorna down

'Mong foes and friends alike o'erthrown.

ANNE: Yet never may that desparate soul

Betray the thoughts which o'er it roll

For everyone on earth might die

And not a tear should strain that eye

Or force a single sob or sigh

From him who cannot yield

EMILY: Yet stay one moment – 'tis but one

A single glance to heaven is thrown

One frenzied burst of grief – 'Tis gone

His heart once more is steeled

That was a burst of anguish there

Blazed all the intenseness of despair

It said 'Oh all is lost forever.'

ANNE: All he loves to him is dead

All his hopes of glory fled

All the past is vanished

Save what nought can sever

Ever living memories

That shall haunt him till he die

With things that he can realise

Charlotte is finally defeated but from a position of yielding on the ground raises her head to shout

ZAMORNA: (Charlotte) Never, never , never.

Emily and Anne carry her off.

NORTHANGERLAND:(Branwell) I said I saw his anguished glance

Say did he think on me?

Incendiary of rebel France

Parrot of Liberty?

The wretched traitor who let in

Of Afric's opened land

Deceit and craft and cant and sin

In one united band.

Who raised the standard of Reform

And shouted 'Earth be free'

To whelm his country in the storm

Of rebel Tyranny.

Who called himself the good right hand

And father of the King

Only on his adopted land

This awful curse to bring.

Yes, it was I and only I

Who hurled Zamorna down.

From conquering glory placed on high

This day to be o'erthrown

I heft the sword to leave him dead

I pierced my Sovereign's breast

And only on my guilty head

May all his sufferings rest.

BLACKOUT

To view rehearsal video of this scene from the original stage production in 1993 [CLICK HERE](#)

ACT THREE SCENE ONE

The Four Brontes on stage.

EMILY: Come, the wind may never again

Blow as now it blows for us

ANNE: And the stars may never again shine as now they shine

BRANWELL: Long before October returns

Seas of blood will have parted us

CHARLOTTE: And you must crush the love in your heart

And I the love in mine.

ANNE: For face to face will our kindred stand

EMILY: And as they are, so shall we be

ANNE: forgetting how the same sweet earth has bourne and nourished us all

BRANWELL: One must fight for the people's power

CHARLOTTE: And one for the rights of the Royalty

EMILY: And each be ready to give his life to work the others fall

ANNE: The change of war we cannot shun

Nor would we shrink from our fathers cause

BRANWELL: nor dread Death more because the hand that gives it may be near

ANNE: We must bear to see ambition rule

Over love with his iron laws

EMILY: Must yield our blood for a stranger's sake, and refuse ourselves a tear

CHARLOTTE: So the wind may never again

Blow as now it blows for us

BRANWELL: And the stars may never again shine as now they shine

CHARLOTTE: Next October the cannon's roar

From hostile ranks may be urging us

BRANWELL: Me to strike for your life's blood and you to strike for mine

BLACKOUT

To view rehearsal video of this scene from the original stage production in 1993 [CLICK HERE](#)

ACT THREE SCENE TWO

Emily is onstage as Mary Percy, Duchess of Zamorna, Rogue's daughter and Duoro's wife.

ANNE: There is something peculiarly sad in the numbness of sensation that succeeds intense suffering. Mary, the Duchess of Zamorna could not feel for ever the biting and bitter pain that when separation was fresh, hunted her day and night. Days and weeks had now passed since the fall, the capture and punishment of Zamorna. It had been tenderly revealed to her that his ship, the Rover, was wrecked on the open Atlantic and that since that event no trace could be discovered, no tidings gained of the exile. The last three years of her life had become strangely visionary to her. The remembrances of a thousand characters who had moved and shone around her was grown dim and vague.

MARY:(Emily) I am maddening myself with the image. I wish it would leave me. It is very vivid. I cannot bear it because through all this winter, through all next spring, through all the lovely days of summer –through autumn and further, further still if I should live so long, I shall see him no more. He is dead. How shall I pass the night before me?

Emily mimes reading the letter in the foreground as Charlotte as Zamorna appears in the background

ZAMORNA: (Charlotte) By this time you and all the world believe that I am dead. Robert has done me a good turn in spreading such a report but he knows well I was not on board the Rover when she was wrecked. For yourself, cherish life, I will win you back sometime. No sea rolls between us now – not so much as a river or a rill. I may be far nearer than you think. I have a task to perform before I see you but when that is accomplished I think there are few earthly obstacles that will keep me from you. You know to what commissioners Northangerland has deputed the government of the kingdom. I think I feel an impulse in the region of my heart which will enable me to give your father's Lieutenants some trouble. Colnemoss and Edwardston are still covered with corpses. I think when I have earned a right to bury them a certain suffering sensation I have in my breast will be a little relieved. I should like to have you in my arms for a moment but I suppose that is not to be as yet. If you are strong enough, come down to the park-gates tomorrow at nine o'clock in the morning and you will perhaps see me but don't expect to speak to me. I am not lurking about like a felon but following my calling in an independent way. I defy the devil himself either to catch or retain me just now. There's a lock of my hair enclosed. You've romance enough about you to like the gift. This letter sounds rather hard and rough but I've had something to go through lately. I don't intend to die in a hurry. Goodbye.

MARY: (Emily) My father! Will he banish him again? I must go to Ellrington Hall where I can watch him. O God, look upon Zamorna, guard his life, give him victory, crush his foes and above all, in life or death, let him not forget me. Great movement in the East! Return of Zamorna! Battle of Ardsley! Defeat of the Allied Troops. I could read with rapture but my father, that recollection brings agony. Oh what will he do? Treachery all around him, the Angrians, all wild fury, full of savage thirst for his blood. And they are advancing led by Zamorna – Zamorna the man he exiled, the soldier he fettered from action in the midst of his whirlwind career, the king he tore away from his darling country. But listen, my father comes. I will hide these papers. I dare not let him see them.

Enter Anne as Louisa Vernon

LOUISA: (Anne) It is over! It is over and we are victims crushed and bound. I see round us

scaffolds. I feel the edge of the descending steel. I hear the blood streaming – oh- Rogue! But stay, who is this – like – hideously like- it must be – it is his daughter. You! You! I know you. Have we not glorious news this morning. Your paramour is upon us. Now go sell your father – barter him at a price – so many months of Zamorna’s love. He won’t have you for his wife you know, but perhaps you may do for his mistress.

MARY:(Emily) What can she be? Is the person sane?

LOUISA: (Anne) What can I be? I am the woman who has had the power to fascinate Northangerland, to make him desert his wife and banish his friend, to make him revolutionise Africa. I am Lousia Vernon.

MARY: (Emily) I thought as much. I never saw you before. Till now you have been nothing more to me than an annoying word, a nuisance of sound. Now leave the room – this is my apartment – I do not wish to be troubled by you.

LOUISA: (Anne) Leave it? Miss Mary or whatever your name is, I would have you to understand I am not accustomed to such language in this house. It is my own. Am I not Lady Protectores? Go! Or my servants shall carry you away. I will ring the bell.

Enter Branwell as Rogue (Northangerland)

LOUISA:(Anne) Oh Alexander, my Alexander. You will save me from every insult, you will save me from danger. Don’t let me be guillotined. Look at my neck – you would not like it to be gashed with the sharp axe and they are coming – they will take me =- they will behead me. Look he smiles! Are you glad? Well it is all your own doing. You have brought them. You would not listen to me and slay whilst you had the power. I wanted you to kill and you only banished. Fool, it serves you right – he is come back. I wish he may take you and kill you

NORTHANGERLAND: (Branwell()) Thank you my love. I need some good wishes and I’m likely to get them. Meantime, what has occasioned this burst of fondness? Any special news this morning

LOUISA: (Anne) Zamorna has re-appeared in Angria, has taken the command of the Angrian forces and the East has risen from Olympia to GAZemba. Their whole cry is Verdopolis! Vengeance on republican VERdopolis and Oh Alexander – down with the Demagogue. Doom to the Usurper! Blood to him that has shed blood. How are you to be saved? The earth yawns on all sides. There is no bridge over the abyss. Must you slip, sink, vanish?

NORTHANGERLAND: (Branwell) Aye if that is my fate. All this is very much my own work and I am not more unhappy at this crisis than in hours of dead calm, so shed no tears for the matter and as for these Angrians, do as you will.

BLACKOUT

To view rehearsal video of this scene from the original stage production in 1993 [CLICK HERE](#).

ACT THREE SCENE THREE

Anne, Charlotte and Emily on stage

ANNE: All the summer plains of Angria were asleep in perfect peace

And the soldier as he rested deemed that foreign wars would cease

All the slain were calmly buried – the survivors home returned

Crossed again the silent thresholds –where their faithful consorts mourned

CHARLOTTE: And the knight, who never yielded, in the battle to a foe

Now like Manoah's sun is fettered, with encircling arms of snow

EMILY: And why may not soldiers rest, when the fiery charge is sped

They may gather thornless flowers who on bristled spears have bled

ANNE: Wherefore then that sound of trumpets sent at noonday through the land?

EMILY: Why that rustling waft of banners and that gathering band by band?

ANNE: Are there hosts upon the frontiers, are there ships upon the sea?

EMILY: Are there chains in senates forging, for the children of the free?

CHARLOTTE: No though every foe is conquered and though every field is won

Yet Zamorna thinks his labours for the Kingdom but begun.

ANNE: And those trumpets are his summons –those deep bugles are his call

EMILY: From bower, to couch and chamber, he has raised his nobles all.

CHARLOTTE: The horse again is saddled, that from conflict scarce has breathed.

The sabre flashed in daylight, that the peace had hardly sheathed.

EMILY: And vaulting to their chargers, a hundred heroes spring

ANNE: Yes ten thousand to Gazemba are gone to meet the King

EMILY: Forth staff and plume and banner, forth crest and sword and lance

ANNE: Amid the battery's thunder, the royal guards advance

EMILY: A flash from every cannon – a shout from every man

ANNE: For the King is dashing forward, he is spurring to the van.

CHARLOTTE: You have followed me in danger

ANNE: Says the monarch to his men

CHARLOTTE: When we scarce had hope to cheer us – will you follow me again?

While you keep my kingdom free, I will reign your sovereign true

While your hearts are staunch for me, shall my hand be strong for you.

ANNE: The trumpets breathed a thrill and then paused, then wild and high

Pipe and horn and clarion shrill, burst in triumph on the sky

EMILY: With hearts too rapt for words, stood the troops as still as death

Then arose a clash of swords but there never stirred a breath.

Enter Branwell with swords. He fights Charlotte but the fight ends with him throwing down his sword in disgust and walking out.

CHARLOTTE: (triumphant) Sound the loud trumpet, o'er Afric's bright sea

Zamorna has triumphed, the Angrians are free

Sing for the sun has arisen on Creation

Sound ye the Trumpet to herald his dawn

Rise man and Monarch and City and Nation

Away with your midnight and Hail to your morn

Sound the Loud Trumpet o'er land and o'er sea

Join Hearts and Voices rejoicing to sing

Africa arising hath sworn to be free

And Glory to Angria and God Save our King.

Exit Emily and Anne. Charlotte sits down to write a letter.

CHARLOTTE: (writing) Branwell has been conducting himself very badly lately.

BLACKOUT

To view rehearsal video of this scene from the original stage production in 1993 [CLICK HERE](#)

ACT THREE SCENE FOUR

Charlotte and Branwell together as of old on the floor constructing a story. They will act out the narrations.

EMILY: The course of things in this world is strange, inscrutable. Mary died and for seventeen years her husband Duoro gave himself up to the wildest extravagances of vice. During those seventeen years he never spoke of Mary Percy – never revived by words the remembrance of her features, her voice, her pure life and saintly death. At last we see him again spent almost with sin – lying down looking upwards, confiding his long pent-up feelings to an ear which to us seems all unmeet for the

confession

ANNE: Who can calculate the probabilities or possibilities of this our changeful life? Percy, who had never referred to his daughter or her actions or his feelings towards her since the first spadeful of earth run hollow upon his coffin-lid, now contradicts every habit of his life and befriends Douro.

EMILY: Douro pestered him – thwarted him - opposed his will, counteracted his projects, ridiculed his peculiarities, stormed at his prejudices – and still he endured.

ANNE: True Ellrington broke upon his young comrade sometimes with fury, and at other times he seemed to freeze and turn away with hollow coolness from him. But Douro could meet Percy's passion with wilder passion and it so happened that Rogue, even when intoxicated, never inflicted on him the reckless violence by which he had certainly shortened the life of some of his own associates.

EMILY: Once or twice he is known to have held his sword to Douro's breast, after some mad provocation of the young scoundrel, but he never ran him through, though dared to do it by the bold tongue and defying eyes of his prostrate vice-president.

ANNE: Yet after all, twenty four hours would hardly elapse before they would be bound together again, perhaps reasoning calmly on things high and sublime like Milton's Angels – perhaps sitting almost silently side by side – or it may be again in the furious contention – ready to drink each other's hearts blood.

Exit Charlotte. Branwell, as Northangerland comes across to Emily

NORTHANGERLAND: (Branwell) Is Arthur here?

EMILY: No

NORTHANGERLAND (Branwell) Where is he Zenobia?

EMILY: I don't know. Last time I saw him he was talking to the Duchess in Lady Helen's drawing room – but that was just after tea.

Branwell goes up to Charlotte

NORTHANGERLAND:(Branwell) Is Arthur here?

CHARLOTTE: No

NORTHANGERLAND: (Branwell) Where is he mother?

CHARLOTTE : I don't know my son – what do you want with him?

BRANWELL: I only want to tell him he has been long enough here. I can't bear his commotion, he keeps the house in too great a bustle. Damn him!

Enter Charlotte as Douro

CHARLOTTE: Hey, all darkness!

BRANWELL: I desire you won't ring for candles.

CHARLOTTE: What are you doing here by yourself? Come now, you're no worse this evening are you?

BRANWELL: I'm worse every evening.

CHARLOTTE: On the contrary, I believe you improve daily. I could not help noticing to Zenobia this morning how bucking you were beginning to look in the silks and smalls.

BRANWELL: Your language is unpleasant to me and there's a kind of jaunty slang in all you say which annoys me extremely.

CHARLOTTE: Oh you get so refined and romantic with living out of the world. I think now if I could get you off to a fashionable watering place – Mowbray for instance – it would do you an incredible deal of good.

BRANWELL: (rising to leave but pinned down by Douro) Have you entered into a conspiracy to send me to Mowbray?

CHARLOTTE: I don't know. I'm thinking about it, especially if you don't shake off these solitary habits.

BRANWELL: Damn you, none of your hectoring.

CHARLOTTE: Now what new crotchet has come over you? Why you remind me of nobody so much as Louisa Vernon – you've all her ladyship's theatrical starts and trances and capricious changes of temper.

BRANWELL: Where is Louisa now? Is she still in your custody?

CHARLOTTE: Yes, safe enough, I keep her at a little place on the other side of Calabar.

BRANWELL: Do you ever see her?

CHARLOTTE: I saw her once about three weeks since, for the first time since my return from the Cirhala.

BRANWELL: Are you sure it was the first time?

CHARLOTTE: Yes sir, why do you ask me so particularly – surely you're not jealous you old Puritan.

BRANWELL: I never had occasion to be jealous of you yet, but Louisa is very pretty.

CHARLOTTE: Never fear Sir, I think your tastes and mine are very much opposed. I never thought Vernon pretty – she's so dark and fierce.

BRANWELL: Does she frighten you then Arthur?

CHARLOTTE: Sometimes, especially when she turns sentimental.

BRANWELL: then the witch tries that method with you now and then. Now confess the truth, has she not made love to you sometimes.

CHARLOTTE: Very furiously (laughs)

BRANWELL: Damn her! What did she say?

CHARLOTTE: That she adored me. Then she jumped up, threw her arms around me and kissed me to her hearts content.

BRANWELL : What did you do?

CHARLOTTE: Why, what would you have done under the circumstances?

BRANWELL: Surrendered at discretion to be sure.

CHARLOTTE: But I did not (walks over to where Anne as Louisa has entered) I begged her to be more composed –but that was out of the question.

LOUISA(Anne) People say you are wild! But I am sure you are not – I never saw anything like gallantry about you yet. You seem to be impenetrable to love, neither music, mirth, sentiment, vivacity nor even an absolute declaration of intense passion can make the least impression on you. Even as you smile at me just now, there is something so scornful about your lips. I do hate you! I abhor you! I could kill you. But still, still, I love you too till my heart aches as if it would break.

Charlotte crosses back to Branwell still lying on the couch

CHARLOTTE: (as Douro)Now sire, what do you think of that?

Exit Charlotte and Anne crosses to Branwell.

LOUISA: (Anne) Will you come to supper?

NORTHANGERLAND:(Branwell) They have left me.

Re-enter Charlotte – showing him a piece of paper

CHARLOTTE: Do you remember this?

He nods, reading from the paper

CHARLOTTE: What are your sisters names?

BRANWELL: Charlotte Wiggins, Jane Wiggins and Anne Wiggings.

CHARLOTTE: Are they as queer as you?

BRANWELL: Oh they are miserable silly creatures not worth talking about. Charlotte, eighteen years old, a broad dumpy thing, whose head does not come higher than my elbos, Emily's sixteen, lean and scant with a face about the size of a penny, and Anne is nothing, absolutely nothing.

CHARLOTTE: What is she an idiot?

BRANWELL:Next to it.

Exit Charlotte.

Branwell sits and writes on the other side of the paper reading it out loud as he does so

BRANWELL: I grew weary of heroics and longed for some chat with men of common clay.

BLACKOUT

To view rehearsal video of this scene from the original stage production in 1993 [CLICK HERE](#)

ACT THREE SCENE FIVE

Enter Charlotte sits at the table to write.

CHARLOTTE: I have now written a great many books and for a long time dwelt on the same characters and scenes and subjects. But we must change, for the eye is tired of the picture so oft recurring and now so familiar. Yet, it is no easy theme to dismiss from my imagination the images which have filled it so long, they were my friends and intimate acquaintances, they peopled my thoughts by day and not seldom stole strangely even into my dreams by night. Charlotte Bronte July 1839.

Exit Charlotte. Enter Emily sits down to write.

EMILY: A paper to be opened when Anne is twenty five years old, or my next birthday after, if all be well. Emily Jane Bronte. July the 30th 1841. It is Friday evening near nine o'clock –wild rainy weather. I am seated in the dining room alone writing this document .

Enter Anne sits on the couch to write

ANNE: Scarborough July the 30th A.D. 1841. This is Emily's birthday. She has now completed her twenty third year and is, I believe, at home.

EMILY: The Gondalians are at present in a threatening state, but there is no open rupture as yet. All the princes and princesses of the Royalty are at the palace of Instruction.

ANNE: How will it be when we open this paper and the one Emily has written in four years time? I wonder whether the Gondalians will still be flourishing and what will be their condition?

EMILY: And now I must close, sending from far an exhortation 'courage, courage' to exiled and harassed Anne, wishing she was here.

ANNE: We are now all separate, and not likely to meet for many a weary week.

Exit Emily and Anne. Enter Branwell, sits down to write

BRANWELL: Haworth August 4th 1845. Dear Sir. John Brown wishes to know whether or not you can make your intended visit to Haworth this week. I need hardly add that I shall myself be most delighted to see you, as God knows I have a tolerably heavy load on my mind just now and would look to an hour spent with one like yourself as a means of at least temporarily lightening it. I returned yesterday from a week's journey to Liverpool and North Wales but I found during my absence that wherever I went a certain woman, robed in black, and calling herself 'misery' walked by my side and leant on my arm as affectionately as if she were my legal wife. Like some other husbands I could have

spared her presence. Yours most sincerely, Patrick Branwell Bronte.

BLACKOUT

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ACT THREE SCENE SIX

Emily and Anne sit writing.

EMILY: Haworth Tuesday July 30th 1845. My birthday. Showery, breezy, cool. I am twenty seven years old today.

ANNE: We have had so far a very cold, wet summer.

EMILY: The Gondals still flourish bright as ever.

ANNE: We have not yet finished our Gondal Chronicles that we began three years and a half ago. Emily is writing some poetry too, I wonder what it is about?

EMILY: I must hurry off to my turning and ironing.

Exit Emily. Enter Charlotte and looks over the papers that Emily has left.

CHARLOTTE: One day in the autumn of 1845 I accidentally lighted upon a manuscript volume of verse in my sister Emily's handwriting. Of course I was not surprised, knowing that she could and did write verse; I looked it over and something more than surprise seized me – a deep conviction that these were not common effusions, nor at all like the poetry women generally write. I thought them condensed and terse, vigorous and genuine. To my ear they had also a peculiar music, wild, melancholy and elevating.

She reads a poem – as she does so Emily reenters and stands shocked to hear Charlotte read her work.

CHARLOTTE: Lord of Elbe on Elbe Hill

The mist is thick and the wind is chill

And the heart of they fried from the dawn of day

Has sighed for sorrow that thou went away.

Bright are the fires in thy lonely home

I see them far off and as deepens the gloom

Gleaming like stars through the high forest –boughs

Gladder they glow in the park's repose

O Alexander! When I return

Warm as those hearths my heart would burn

Light as thine own my foot would fall

If I might hear thy voice in the hall

But thou art now on a desolate sea

Parted from Gondal and parted from me

All my repining is hopeless and vain

Death never yields back his victims again.

Emily wrests the volume from Charlotte

EMILY: None but one beheld him dying

Parting with the parting day

Winds of evening sadly sighing

Bore his soul from earth away.

ANNE: Emily was not a person of demonstrative character, nor one on whom the recesses of whose mind and feelings even those nearest and dearest to her could, with impugny, intrude unlicensed.

CHARLOTTE: It took hours to reconcile her to the discovery I had made. But as we read through the poems another world came to light, the secret world of Gondal known hitherto only to Emily and Anne.

Emily now plays Augusta and Branwell enters to play Alexander.

AUGUSTA(Emily) O wander not so far away,

O love forgive this selfish tear

It may be sad for thee to stay

But how can I live lonely here?

ANNE: Augusta sat watching by that water side

The light of life expiring slow

From his fair cheek

There he lay among the bloom

His red blood dyed a deeper hue

Shuddering to feel the ghostly gloom

That coming Death around him threw

Sickening to think one hour would sever
The sweet sweet world and him for ever
Maddening with despair and pride
He turned his dying face to her and wildly cried

ALEXANDER: (Branwell)

Oh once again
Might I my native country see!
But once again – one single day!
And must it – can it never be?
To die, and die so far away
When life has hardly smiled for me
Augusta – you will soon return
Back to that land in health and bloom
And then the heath alone will mourn
Above my unrememebered tomb
For you'll forget the lonely grave
And mouldering corpse by Elinor's wave.

Branwell as Alexander dies and Emily as Augusta is carried off by Charlotte and Anne as if under arrest.

BLACKOUT

To view rehearsal video of this scene from the original stage production in 1993 [CLICK HERE](#)

ACT THREE SCENE SEVEN

Charlotte on stage with Emily as Augusta

CHARLOTTE: (reading) O God of heaven! The dream of horror

The frightful dream is over now

The sickened heart, the blasting sorrow

The ghastly night, the ghasstlier morrow

The aching sense of utter woe

The burning tears that would keep welling

The groans that mocked at every tear

That burst from out their dreary dwelling

As if each gasp were life expelling

But life was nourished by despair

AUGUSTA :(Emily)

It's over now and I am free

And the ocean wind is caressing me

The wild wind from that wavy main

I never thought to see again

My voice is choked but not with grief

And salt drops from my haggard cheek

Descend like rain upon the heath

How long they've wet a dungeon floor

Falling on flag-stones damp and grey

I used to weep even in my sleep

The night was dreadful, like the day

ANNE: But this is past and why return

O'er such a past to brood and mourn

Shake off the fetters, break the chain

And live and love and smile again

The waste of youth, the waste of years

Departed in that dungeon's thrall

The gnawing grief, the hopeless tears

Forget them, O forget them all.

CHARLOTTE: (reading)

King Julius left the south country

His banners all bravely flying

ANNE: His followers went out with Jubilee

But they shall return with sighing

CHARLOTTE: Loud arose the triumphal hymn

The drums were loudly rolling

ANNE: Yet you might have heard in distance dim

How a passing bell was tolling

EMILY: The sword so bright from battles won

With unseen rust is fretting

CHARLOTTE: That evening comes before the noon

The scarce risen sun is setting

ANNE: While princes hang upon his breath

And nations round are fearing

EMILY: Close by his side a daggered death

With sheathless point stands sneering

Charlotte stabs Branwell and he falls to the ground

CHARLOTTE: That death he took a certain aim

ANNE: For death is stony-hearted

CHARLOTTE: And in the zenith of his fame

Both power and life departed

AUGUSTA: (Emily) When will he come? Twill soon be night

He'll come when evening falls

CHARLOTTE: Lady; Brenzaida's crest is down

Brenzaida's sun is set Lady

His empires overthrown!

ANNE: He died beneath t his palace dome

True hearts on every side

CHARLOTTE: I saw him fall, I saw the gore

From his heart's fountain swell

Emily knocks Charlotte down.

EMILY: And mingling on the marble floor

His murderer's life-blood fell

For who forgives the accursed crime

Of dastard treachery

Rebelling in its chosen time

May freedom's champion be

Revenge may stain a righteous sword

It may be just to slay

But traitor, traitor – from that word

All true breasts shrink away!

Exit Emily.

CHARLOTTE: So foes pursue, and cold allies

Mistrust me every one

Let me be false in others eyes

If faithful in my own.

BLACKOUT

To view rehearsal video of this scene from the original stage production in 1993 [CLICK HERE](#)

ACT THREE SCENE EIGHT

Emily, Branwell and Anne are sitting together onstage. Enter Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE: Were they shepherds, who sat all day

On that brown mountainside?

But neither staff nor dog they had

Nor woolly flock to guide.

They were clothed in savage attire

Their locks were dark and long

And at each belt a weapon dire

Like bandit knife was hung

One was a woman tall and fair

A princess she might be

From her stately form, and her features rare

And her look of majesty.

'Twas well she had no sceptre to wield

No subject land to sway

Fear might have made her vassals yield

But Love had been far away.

ANNE: Yet Love was even at her feet

In his most burning mood.

CHARLOTTE: That love which will the wicked greet

As kindly as the good.

BRANWELL: Augusta, from my very birth

I have been nursed in strife

And lived upon this weary Earth

A wanderer all my life

The baited tiger could not be

So much athirst for gore

For men and laws have tortured me

Till I can bear no more.

EMILY: The guiltless blood upon my hands

Will shut me out from Heaven

And here, and even in foreign lands

I cannot find a haven.

BRANWELL:(to Charlotte)

For thee, through never-ending years

I'd suffer endless pain

But only give me back my tears

Return my love again.

CHARLOTTE: I've known a hundred kinds of love

All made the loved one rue

And what is thine that it should prove

Than other love more true?

BRANWELL: Listen, I've known a burning heart

To which my own was given

Nay, not in passion, do not start

Our love was love from heaven

My soul dwelt with her day and night

She was my all sufficing light

My childhood's mate, my boyhood's guide

My only blessing, only pride

EMILY: But cursed be that very earth

That gave that fiend her fatal birth!

With her own hand she bent the bow

That laid my best affections low.

BRANWELL: And mocked my grief and scorned my prayers

And drowned my bloom of youth in tears

Warnings, reproaches, both were vain –

What reaked she of another's pain?

ANNE and EMILY: We both were scorned – both sternly driven

To shelter neath a foreign heaven

CHARLOTTE: I will not now those days recall

The oath within that cavernous hall

And it's fulfilment, those you know

We both together struck the blow.

EMILY: But you can never know the pain

That my lost heart did then sustain

When severed wide by guiltless gore

I felt that one could love no more

They all now act out the parts described in the dialogue.

CHARLOTTE: Now hear me in these regions wile

I saw today my enemy

Unarmed, as helpless as a child

She slumbered on a sunny lee

Two friends, no other guard had she

My hand was raised, my knife was bare

With stealthy tread I stole along

But a wild bird sprang from his hidden lair

And woke her with a sudden song.

Charlotte is standing over Emily poised to kill her.

CHARLOTTE: Yet moved she not, she only raised

Her lids and on the bright sun gazed

And uttered such a dreary sigh

I thought just then she should not die

Since living was such misery.

Assist me with my heart and hand

To send to hell my mortal foe.

Charlotte stabs Emily, Branwell and Anne rush towards her.

CHARLOTTE: In vain in vain you need not gaze

Upon those features now

That sinking head you need not raise

Nor kiss that pulseless brow

Branwell cradles Emily in his arms, Charlotte stabs him too.

ANNE: (to Branwell) Let out the grief that chokes your heart

Lord Lesley, set it free

The sternest eye, for such a death

Might fill with sympathy.

BRANWELL: Her heart is beating

She is not really gone

Oh death delay

Thy last fell dart to throw.

Till I can hear my Sovereign say

The traitor's heads are low.

God guard her life, since not to me

That dearest boon was given

God bless her arm with victory

Or bless me not with heaven.

ANNE: Then came the cry of agony

The pang of parting pain

And he had overpassed the sea

That none can pass again.

Emily gets up and goes towards Charlotte

EMILY: Oh I have wrongs to pay

Give life, give vigour now

ANNE: She turns, she meets the Murderer's gaze

Her own is scorched with sudden blaze

Charlotte and Emily fight. Both are wounded by Charlotte wins.

ANNE: The blood streams down her brow

The blood streams through her coal black hair

She strikes it off with little care

She scarcely feels it flow

For she has marked and known him too

And her own heart's ensanguined dew

Must slake her vengeance now.

As Emily falls to the ground defeated she shouts

EMILY: False friend

ANNE: (to Charlotte)

No tongue save thine can tell

The mortal strife that then befell

CHARLOTTE: Ere the night darkened down

The stream in silence sang once more

And on its green bank, bathed in gore

Augusta lay alone.

Exit Charlotte. Branwell gets up and rushes across to where Emily lies.

BRANWELL: Long he gazed and held his breath

Kneeling on the bloodstained heat

Long he gazed those lids beneath

Looking into death.

Anne goes across to join him.

BRANWELL: Not a word from his followers fell

They stood by mute and pale

That black treason uttered well

It's own heart harrowing tale.

ANNE: But earth was bathed in other gore

There were crimson drops across the moor

And Lord Eldred glancing round

Saw those tokens on the ground

BRANWELL: Bring him back

Wounded is the traitor fled

Vengeance may hold but minutes brief

And you have all your lives for grief.

Anne goes off in search of Charlotte and Branwell carries Emily to the couch ,set as it was in the opening scene. Emily speaks from the couch to Branwell.

EMILY: And thou art gone, with all thy pride

Thou so adored, so deified.

Exit Branwell. Enter Anne, crosses to Emily and places her hand on Emily's head.

ANNE: Cold as the earth unweeting now

Of love, or joy, or mortal woe

Exit Emily. Anne sits down on the couch. Enter Charlotte

CHARLOTTE: For what thou wert I would not grieve

But much for what thou wert to be

Exit Anne

CHARLOTTE: And vain too must the sorrow be

Of those who live to mourn for thee

But Gondal's foes shall not complain

That thy dear blood was poured in vain.

BLACKOUT

To view rehearsal video of this scene from the original stage production in 1993 [CLICK HERE](#)

ACT THREE SCENE NINE

CHARLOTTE: (writing) It took hours to reconcile her to the discovery I had made, and days to persuade her that such poems merited publication. I knew, however, that a mind like hers could not be without some latent spark of honourable ambition and refused to be discouraged in my attempts to fan that spark to flame. We agreed to arrange a small selection of our poems.

Enter Branwell

BRANWELL: Patrick Branwell Bronte died of consumption, brought on by a chill he caught one night returning from the Black Bull Public House on 24th September 1848 at the age of Thirty One.

Enter Emily

EMILY: Emily Jane Bronte caught a chill at Branwell's funeral. She never left the house from that date and died of consumption on 19th December 1848 aged thirty. She had published one novel

Wuthering Heights before her death. It shocked contemporary critics.

Enter Anne

ANNE: Despite going to Scarborough in an attempt to hold her consumption at bay, Anne Bronte died there on 28th May 1849 aged twenty nine. She had published two novels before her death.

CHARLOTTE: Charlotte Bronte lived to see three novels published before her death, following complications during pregnancy, on 31st March 1855 aged thirty nine.

The four join together

CHARLOTTE: We wove a web in childhood

A web of sunny air

ANNE: We dug a spring in infancy

Of water pure and fair

EMILY: We sowed in youth a mustard seed

We cut an almond rod

CHARLOTTE: We are grown up to a riper age

Are they withered in the sod?

ANNE: Are they blighted, failed and faded

Are they mouldered back to clay?

BRANWELL: For life is darkly shaded

And it's joys fleet fast away

ANNE: Faded! The web is still of air

But how its folds are spread

BRANWELL: And from its tints of crimson clear

How deep a glow is shed

The light of an Italian sky

Where clouds of sunset lingering lie

Is not more ruby red

EMILY: But the spring was under a mossy stone

Its jet may gush no more

CHARLOTTE: Hark! Sceptic bid thy doubts be done

Is that a feeble roar

Rushing around thee?

BRANWELL: Lo the tide

Of waves where armed fleets may rid

Sinking and swelling, frowns and smiles

An ocean with a thousand isles

EMILY: And scarce a glimpse of shore

BRANWELL: Dream that stole o'er us in the time

When life was in its vernal clime

EMILY: Dream that still faster o'er us steals

As the mild star of spring declining

The advent of that day reveals

That glows on Sirius' fiery shining

ANNE: Oh! As thou swellest and as the scenes

Cover this cold word's darkest features

CHARLOTTE: Stronger each change my spirit weans

ALL: To bow before thy god-like creatures.

BLACKOUT

To view rehearsal video of this scene from the original stage production in 1993 [CLICK HERE](#)

CURTAIN

About Angria, Gondal and melodrama

Cally Phillips writes: Since the late 1980's a lot more material has become available to the general reader and it's much easier now to find the juvenilia in various volumes. This play however is (to my knowledge) still the only attempt to draw some kind of chronological 'perspective' on how the created stories parallel the lives and actual relationships between the Brontes. It might be too easy to see the Brontes themselves as 'characters' in this play but I think it's important for the reader to remember that the Brontes were real people. They used characters in many creative ways - and the blurring between fiction and fact which is laid out in this play is a kind of speculation - but it's a speculation which led me on a journey which has encompassed a study of narrative psychology and keeps me coming back to the notion that somehow the 'storied' nature of the Bronte's writings may have an important insight into their lives. I do not claim to have 'got it right' or to represent them accurately - the aim of the

play was to try to find out more, to connect in some way - the best way I could since it was impossible to actually speak to the real Brontes. For me, it's one of the joys of reading - the opportunity to try and connect with people you can never meet, never talk to - and yet you can try to 'understand' who they were, in some meaningful way. It's personal for every reader, and all I would advocate is that each reader thinks about 'what if' - 'What if Charlotte and Branwell were so angry with each other that they chose to kill of the other's character as a way of expressing their anger?' Once you start asking 'why did she write it that way?' 'Why did they make that choice?' you are half way towards something quite extraordinary in my opinion.

About the web the Brontes wove in my life

We Wove A Web in Childhood was the first play I wrote, in 1990 and the first play I produced and directed in 1993. Since then I have written extensively for the theatre and been active as a playwright/dramatist for some twenty years.

A Substantial number of my plays have been published by HoAmPresst Publishing as ebooks and you can find out more about them [HERE](#).

To find out more about my other writing go to www.callyphillips.co.uk