

Bourne
toWrite...
creative writing
workshops

Heathcliff

by MaryPat Campbell

I've been writing what's app notes to you in my head for weeks. The emojis I add are the one with the smile and the sunglasses 🕶️, the one that looks like Edvard Munch's the 🌀. Or the one with the 🍷 and the 🍷, not to mention the numerous hearts, any colour you like, and clusters of different sized 🍷 pink hearts. I'm in love with you and you don't want anything to do with me so I think we can make this work. It's because I'm young and inexperienced, naive some would say. I've been building a picture of you in my mind, and starve myself of your actual company. Your real attention would spoil everything, your real connection with me or mine with you.

I tried to tell my best friend Alice about you, but although she's a whole year older than me, 17 last May, she scoffed and said I was a daydreamer and hopelessly wrapped up in my own slender world. Since when has she been so successful in her love life? How come she's always free to come round to mine on Saturday evenings to drink coke and eat Pringles and steal gin if my parents are out and listen to our favourite hip-hop with me?

You remind me of Heathcliff, that dark brooding boy Emily Bronte wrote about, ostracized from society and quietly fuming with rage. That belligerent angry boy, intent on wrecking everything and taking his revenge. Except now I'm running away with myself, again. You aren't really like Heathcliff, you are shorter than I imagine he was and maybe a bit more sociable. You hang around with the cool guys in year 12. Those guys who look straight through me because I'm invisible and can't possibly compete for their attention. Your devotion is the only thing I long for. Except that's much too scary, much too real. My attention centred on you is what I can manage. It's enough.

If I sleep seven hours every night, then you take up the other seventeen. I draw pictures of your chocolate brown eyes, write your name out loud on my jotter, make up stories about you like Emily Bronte did, write love letters and imagine you being captivated by them and by me.

Alice says her brother Tom likes me. He's nice enough I suppose. Since she told me, I've noticed how he blushes whenever I'm at her house and he happens to come into the room. He never speaks to me, just mutters unintelligible sounds and leaves the room as if he's in a hurry to be somewhere else. Tom isn't my type, he's too young and shy. Not like you Heathcliff man - towering over me waiting to hear me speak, certain that I am outrageously funny and intelligent. I imagine what it might be like as your gaze follows me around the room and you can't take your eyes off me, I'm so modern and complicated and endlessly careless about your love for me.