**INK – Audition extract from A Convenient Adult**

***Characters***

*EVIE – a 16-year-old GCSE student*

*NANCY – head teacher*

Authoritative, approachable and provocative. She is fully in control of this play but makes the other character believe they are.

***Play Synopsis***

*Evie Bullen is a high school student who gets in a fight during a maths lesson. Her headteacher, Nancy Adams, works with her to get to the bottom of why she broke. The play explores the feeling of political powerlessness felt by young people.*

***Extract Context***

*Nancy has managed to convince Evie to debate evenly what happened in the classroom only moments before. They have put the previously strewn tables on either side of the room to symbolise both sides of the debate.*

**Nancy:** This is what I do with my sixth formers. We push the tables apart, I put them into groups, and I pose a statement. ‘Nuclear weapons should be banned’, ‘The monarchy should be abolished’*.* One side argues the affirmative, the other the negative.

*The stage is set for debate. Nancy sits on one side.*

Sit, sit.

*Evie goes to sit next to Nancy.*

No. Over there. Come on.

*Evie goes to sit on the other side.*

You start. Tell me in the affirmative why ‘Evie Bullen was justified in pushing Ben’.

**Evie:** He called me things. I felt threatened.

**Nancy:** Gonna need more than that. Evidence. What did he *do* that made you feel threatened?

**Evie:** Said things. ‘Commie, Stalin’, whatever. Stupid things he always says. And Evans only hears me telling Ben to watch his mouth. He tells me to mind myself, so I tell him what Ben was saying and I get this little lecture – the same one he always does – says I gotta stop being so sensitive, that I got a lot of growing up to do because ‘communism doesn’t work. Never has. Never will.’ Not exactly being impartial I might add. Then he left, and Ben gets really close to me and calls me a ‘backwards fascist’, says ‘your lot are always extremists’. He got so close.

**Nancy:** So, you punched him.

**Evie:** *Pushed* him - pushed! And he hurt me too – look at my arm.

*Evie shows the scratches on her arm.*

I’d call that evidence.

**Nancy:** I’ll take it into account.

**Evie:** And I got so angry when Evans cleared everyone out of the class like I was some kind of animal. So, I trashed the room… proving his point somewhat.

**Nancy:** Now come sit over here.

*Evie and Nancy swap places.*

Now, tell me why ‘you were wrong’.

**Evie:** Can I abstain?

**Nancy:** No.

**Evie:** I shouldn’t have let myself get in such a state. I should have controlled myself. I didn’t mean to hurt him, but I didn’t feel bad about hurting him afterwards. That’s wrong. I should have been the bigger person. And I should have apologised straight away instead of destroying your classroom.

**Nancy:** Anything else?

**Evie:** Best I can do.

**Nancy:** Thank you.

**Evie:** What happens now?

**Nancy:** You argued well, with much more maturity than you demonstrated when I walked in. And while I respect what you have said, your behaviour cannot go unpunished. But what I have deduced from Ben, Mr Evans and now you, is that this was a crime of passion, so I think a shorter sentence is in order and in the spirit of respect, I will punish you in line with your beliefs. You will be internally excluded for three weeks – you’ll report to the learning support room every morning without fail. That seems sufficient enough to also satisfy Ben’s parents in light of his injury and will hopefully stay off any complaints which too will make me happy. Then you have a choice. After your exclusion is over, you will either spend every Wednesday lunchtime until the end of term in my debating society or in detention with Mr Evans. I hope you will choose the former as I believe it will make *you* happier and allow you to channel your beliefs and opinions safely and learn about the beliefs of others as you said. Thus, the greatest happiness of the greatest number shall be achieved. Is that fair?

**Evie:** Seems a pretty simplified view of communism –