



## Hearts Of Gold

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## Hearts Of Gold



From deep in the South Wales Valleys comes a bittersweet but heart-warming love story of attraction across the class divide in the poverty-stricken Thirties.

Dr Andrew John is the pillar of middle-class respectability as he takes a post in his father's infirmary and workhouse. There he meets bright nurse Bethan Powell, who has just passed her training exams with the highest honours. But, when Bethan discovers she feels more for the doctor than her present beau, Alun, and he falls for her strength and spirit, so lacking in his usual girlfriends, there are repercussions on both sides. Bethan's mining family fears she'll be toyed with and cast aside, while Andrew's upright parents think that their son is risking his reputation for a girl from the wrong side of the tracks.

When their families succeed in dividing them, the lovers suffer a series of setbacks – worthy of Thomas Hardy – which could see them parted forever.

*Hearts Of Gold*, which stars *Holby City*'s Jeremy Sheffield as Andrew and newcomer Kate Jarman as Bethan, is the first book to be adapted for television in the *Hearts Of Gold* series by Welsh author Catrin Collier. Set in Collier's home town of Pontypridd, the novel is adapted by Matthew Baylis, himself a novelist and former story-liner for *EastEnders*.

The book, originally published in 1992, is the first to feature the core group of characters who populate the remaining seven books in the series.

"Very many people will be familiar with Catrin Collier's work," says executive producer Matthew Robinson. "They are confident, heart-warming stories, full of fantastic characters the audience will love."

Filmed on location in some of the mining towns of South Wales, *Hearts Of Gold* features established actors such as Jeremy Sheffield, Geraldine James,

David Troughton and David Warner. The two-part drama marks the leading role debut for Kate Jarman, whose only previous role on BBC One was in the acclaimed Dominic Savage film, *Nice Girl*.

"We were very lucky to find and cast Jeremy and Kate, two really talented actors, who light up the screen whenever they are together. They bring a whole new warmth to an already rich drama," concludes Robinson.

## Synopses

### Episode 1

Bethan Powell passes her nursing exams with top honours. She's the only breadwinner in the family, where mam Elizabeth doesn't work, her father, Evan, is a striking miner, brother Eddie is unemployed and sister Maud is at school.

She attends the hospital ball to celebrate her success and meets a young doctor, Andrew John, son of the strict head of the hospital. When her current beau, Alun, gets too drunk to take her home, Andrew is happy to step in.

After this, Bethan and Andrew spend time together and, on his birthday, he invites her to his home for the first time, believing his parents will be away. Instead, there's a surprise party for him and Bethan stays, although her forthright views on poverty and politics win her few friends. Distressed and ready to leave, Andrew persuades her to stay with him and they consummate their relationship for the first time.

The next morning, Bethan and Andrew approach Bethan's Aunt Megan for help, hoping to secure an alibi for Bethan's overnight absence from home. But Megan and her daughter are arrested for shoplifting and Bethan gets caught up in the drama.

### Episode 2

Following the scandal, Andrew's father forbids him to have any contact with Bethan. And Bethan's parents are fighting with each other. But Bethan has problems of her own. She is pregnant and is terrified of telling Andrew for fear of trapping him, as her mother had done with her father.

Dr John senior blackmails his son in order to part the lovers. Andrew must leave for London or Bethan will be sacked. As Bethan's job is the only source of income for her family, Andrew agrees to

his father's demands, telling a distraught Bethan that he doesn't love her.

When Bethan's mother discovers her secret, she is desperate to avoid another scandal. She hides a letter from Andrew, imploring Bethan to forgive him, and bribes Alun to marry her daughter.

But their marriage is unhappy, and soon, Dr John fires Bethan from the hospital as married women are not allowed to work as nurses. He informs Andrew that Bethan has married someone else but Andrew returns to see for himself.

Bethan's marriage is unveiled as a sham when Alun is arrested for bigamy. But, though Andrew wants to work things out, Bethan thinks that he's only doing the right thing for the baby and tells him to go.

Elizabeth finally gives Andrew's letter to Bethan, which was written before he knew about the baby. Bethan realises that Andrew's love is real and the pair are reunited at last.

## Hearts Of Gold

### Cast

Dr Andrew John	Jeremy Sheffield
Bethan Powell	Kate Jarman
Evan Powell	David Troughton
Elizabeth Powell	Geraldine James
Eddie Powell	Jonathan Floyd
Laura Ronconi	Siobhan Flynn
Maud Powell	Catrin Stewart
Alun Price	Andrew Howard
Dr John senior	David Warner
Mrs John	Judy Parfitt
Megan Gough	Mossie Smith
Diana Gough	Rebecca Bull
Trevor Lewis	Celyn Jones
Anthea Llewellyn Jones	Alexandra Staden

### Production Credits

Executive producer	Matthew Robinson
Writer	Catrin Collier
Adaptation	Matthew Baylis
Producer	Matthew Robinson
Director	Richard Laxton
Associate Producer	Helen Vallis
Director of Photography	Jens Schlosser
Costume Designer	Ffion Elinor
Make-up Designer	Pam Haddock
Editor	John Richards
Casting Director	Julia Duff
Script Editor	Natasha Phillips
Composer	Rob Lane

Developed with Davies Lowe Productions Ltd

## Jeremy Sheffield is Dr Andrew John



As one of the most effortlessly charming men one could hope to meet, Jeremy Sheffield is struggling with the idea that his character, Dr Andrew John, could be that most-mocked of British men, the cad.

"He is an interesting character, quite enigmatic," says Jeremy. "He is really ahead of his time and thinks in a liberal way. In a way, it's quite difficult to play him because he could easily come across as a cad. And I hope that he doesn't, because he is forced into some of the situations where that could be levelled against him."

This is Jeremy's third medical role. The actor first played a medic in *The Governor* and went on to play surgeon Dr Alex Adams in *Holby City*. As Dr Andrew John, serving a poor mining community, he abandons modern medical practices for a pre-NHS era in which matron ruled the roost and nurses weren't allowed to be married.

"I think Dr Alex [*Holby City*] would have found working conditions excessively formal and naïve at The Graig," he says. "Alex finds Holby practices too hierarchical and struggles with the formality of

being a heart surgeon; he certainly would have found the regime a problem. But that formality is what Andrew knows. He only questions it because of Bethan.

"Andrew comes from an educated, conservative background and doesn't fit the mould. His struggle, like Bethan's, is between what is predestined – what's expected of him by his social class and his family – and what his open mind and liberal thinking make him actually feel.

"Both Bethan and Andrew are really modern characters in their thinking and sensibilities. Andrew meets this girl who eclipses most people of his world, who challenges him intellectually and emotionally. First of all, she is attractive, but he has had many attractive liaisons before. What singles her out from the crowd is that she has a certain strength that challenges him, and this is what he falls in love with.

"Then his problem is whether he is able, despite all the social restrictions forced upon him, to continue with this romance and take it all the way. And, under huge amounts of pressure, he comes to consider that it's not possible. But, after all, it is a romance..."

The class system underpinning *Hearts Of Gold* is not something Jeremy is comfortable with.

"I'm quite aware of the class system in England and especially when you put it in the perspective of living in America, which has a system of its own but it is nowhere near as strong," he says. "Love across class boundaries is a classic subject – this is really a retelling of *Romeo And Juliet*. But I think it has a constant appeal because class is still there, people recognise it. It's clearer in this period because the lines are so starkly drawn but it still has echoes in modern scenarios."

However, Jeremy was quite at home in the less modern surroundings of the Thirties.

"The clothes were incredible and I had to learn how to drive this double-declutch car, which is quite an art," he says. "It's an interesting period, the Thirties, and we had long conversations about Andrew's behaviour and speech. When we were filming – with all these extraordinary costumes and old cars and sets – it was a bit like watching *The British Empire In Colour*. I like to feel in touch with the physicality of a character, so I studied old photos and listened to tapes of medicinal practices of that period to make it look truthful and honest."

And, when Jeremy found he could make his own period photos using his newly acquired digital camera and shooting the cast and sets in the sepia mode, he was delighted.

"It is extraordinary to see how accurate these costumes and sets are," he says. "My photos look like they were taken years and years ago. You really feel you are stepping back in time."

### Kate Jarman is Bethan Powell



Kate Jarman's first leading role for network television is one her family are delighted with; her aunts and cousins have been thrilling over Catrin Collier's books, including *Hearts Of Gold*, for years.

"They still don't quite believe it," says 23-year-old Kate, "especially now that my picture is on the cover of one of the books. When Richard Laxton [director] showed me a poster of the new *Hearts Of Gold* book jacket, I thought it was a mock-up that he'd had made to take the mickey. Then I walked into a book shop and saw it for myself. I was really embarrassed – especially when my sister pointed me out to the shop assistant!"

Kate confesses that she originally refused to read for the role of Bethan Powell because she thought it was too daunting. She had gone along to audition for the role of Bethan's friend and fellow nurse, Laura Ronconi, but was asked by Laxton if she would consider the larger part.

"I said no!" she exclaims. "I was quite anxious as to whether I'd be able to pull it off as it seemed really difficult."

But, when she was called back a second time, Kate read some of Bethan's part with leading man Jeremy Sheffield and loved it.

"I didn't get my hopes up though," says the modest actress. "I thought they would get someone well known."

However, Kate soon found herself working alongside Sheffield and Geraldine James, whose work she had admired for years.

"It was quite funny sometimes," she says. "If we were on location at one place for more than a day, people would cotton on that Jeremy was there and, the next day, we'd get them camped out at the end of the street. It made me really paranoid that I'd fall over in front of them and make a fool of myself."

Though initially daunted by the size of the role, Kate admits that she loved playing Bethan.

"She's really feisty, really clever and has lots of energy," she says. "She knows her place in society and it frightens her that she doesn't feel like she's supposed to in order to fit into that society."

Even so, Bethan does her best to keep the peace in the household, like a dutiful daughter.

"It was a sign of the times," says Kate. "Bethan didn't live in a world where parents and children tried to be friends, and where it was okay to be outspoken. I mean, you can divorce your parents these days! Then, you had to hide your feelings, and Bethan does because she feels she's unwanted by her mother and can only get comfort from her father."

But comfort was something Kate certainly didn't get from some of her Thirties costumes.

"The nurse's uniform was really stiff – it was all starched and I couldn't breathe," she says. "I don't know how they used to cope. I spent a lot of time

watching tapes – silent movies of nurses in the Thirties – and they look as though they couldn't even sit down. But everything had to be just so – Siobhan Flynn [Laura Ronconi] and I spent ages practising the 'hospital corners' on our beds.

"But the other costumes were great. It's the first time I've had things made to fit. Usually, you get something that's too loose and they have to pin it on – so this was a real change. I liked the hair too; it was just so different, though my boyfriend used to laugh at it when I went home. I'm sure that when my gran sees it she'll say I'm the image of her when she was that age."

Kate's grandmothers both come from the Valleys area, where *Hearts Of Gold* is set, so had an insight into the world that Bethan was born into.

"They didn't have a lot of money or food but there was a great sense of community," says Kate. "People would do things for each other... When people were on strike at the pit, or if one husband was ill, the others would help. We don't have that poverty now. But, sadly, we don't have that sense of community either."



## Geraldine James is Elizabeth Powell



Geraldine James admits romantic fiction is not something she would pick up off the bookshelf unless it was a Brontë or an Austen. But she was delighted to join the cast of *Hearts Of Gold* because it gave her the chance to tackle a new genre.

"It is about a poor girl who falls in love with a rich man," she says. "But it is more than just that. And it is a very popular aspect of TV."

Geraldine was prompted to take part after director Richard Laxton was signed up. He directed the second series of one of Geraldine's best-known series, *Band Of Gold*, in which she plays prostitute ringleader Rose Garrity.

"The first take on *Hearts Of Gold* went straight into the blood and guts of it," she says. "Richard was very interested in the human beings behind the faces. He's a real actor's director."

Geraldine's character, Elizabeth Powell, lives in a state of grinding poverty. She is married to a man who doesn't love her and is struggling to provide for her three children on what he brings home from the pit.

"I have never experienced anything like that but I can imagine it," says Geraldine. "I mean, you don't have to have murdered someone to play Macbeth. But my father's family all came from Wales – my family name is Thomas – so I do have roots in this story. They were farmers rather than miners but there is a connection there and I can delve back and know that I am going into something which is about my antecedents. My imaginings are rooted in a Welsh background."

Geraldine's grandfather left Wales to find work in London and, luckily, found employment as a draper.

"If there were five mouths to feed, the middle child would just leave," she says. "They always thought the grass would be greener. Evan, Elizabeth's husband, leaves the family when he hears there is work in England. But thousands of people were hearing that and there was probably work for only one in 20. There was a bitterness in those days and that is something which Elizabeth feels."

But, Geraldine says, despite her shortcomings, Elizabeth is not a bad person. She has just never had a chance to be anything other than bitter about her circumstances.

"She became pregnant at a time when it just wasn't a possibility to do anything other than marry," says Geraldine. "She wanted to be a teacher – she may have turned out to be a wonderful woman – but she married a man who didn't love her, and they have never had a good relationship. Elizabeth hasn't known love except for her children, and they are parsimonious in handing back that love."

"She looks absolutely ghastly – I do look very gaunt and haunted – and that's because she literally sacrifices herself for her family; she goes hungry so that they can eat. So, yes, she does feel bitter and upset, and it's justifiable. She has borne this man's children and he doesn't even fulfil his role as the breadwinner. Evan is sweet with his daughter, Bethan, but never with Elizabeth, because she knows that sweet doesn't put food on the table."

Though Elizabeth fails to bully Bethan into giving up her studies so she can have help around the home, she does succeed in persuading her to marry Alun (Andrew Howard), a man Bethan doesn't love.

"It's the knowledge that she didn't have any choices in life that makes her so worried about Bethan going out with Andrew," says Geraldine. "She knows what her daughter is like, because she was the same herself. And she thinks that history will repeat itself.

"That's why she insists that Bethan marry Alun. She believes the doctor will never marry her. So, when he writes, she hides the letter, for what she believes are the right reasons. She's not interfering, it's her saying this is the only option.

"The only other way acceptable to society would be for Bethan to give the baby up and that wouldn't make her daughter happier. Every time she has come back after working on the unmarried ward, Elizabeth has had to mop Bethan up. She's not being evil in forcing Bethan into a union she doesn't want, just realistic."

Though times and social mores have changed. "And thank God for that!" says Geraldine. The mother/daughter relationship still remains one of the most special bonds. But does mother really know best?

"I have been organising my daughter's 18th birthday party, and wondering about whether cousins should be bringing boyfriends or not," says Geraldine. "And Ellie has just taken it out of my hands. I'll always give my opinion, but that doesn't mean, like Bethan with her mother, that it's listened to!"

## David Troughton is Evan Powell



David Troughton loves getting into period costume for his parts. Last seen as drayman Fred Mills in *Born And Bred*, David dons another flat cap for *Hearts Of Gold* as miner Evan Powell – Bethan's upright father whose principles are set to cause his family grief.

"I do like working on period dramas," says David. "A different time, a different age, different people and different attitudes all combine to make the characters really interesting to play."

Evan Powell certainly has attitude. A striking miner whose principled stance isn't putting bread on the table, Evan feels humiliated by his wife for not bringing in wages, and by his son, who tries to take the supporting role from him.

"He is very strong on his rights. He's on the strike committee when the mine is under threat," says David. "Also, they were going to use blacklegs, and his best friend is badly beaten up on the picket line and he thinks it just isn't right. But the Powells are very poor. He has a very strong wife and she thinks that he is expecting her to do all the work with no money. So he is forced to give in."

The hatred of the blackleg is something that stood out for David when they filmed the strike scenes at Big Pit, a colliery turned visitor attraction in the South Wales Valleys, where the tour guides are former miners.

"Feelings do run deep. You only have to look at the miners' strike in the Eighties," he says. "We met some real miners at Big Pit and they still talk about the blacklegs. They really hated them and they were just cast out of society. You can still see the passion in their faces when the former miners talk about it, and they instilled that in us."

"Mining was a terrible job. But, of course, it was something that most boys in the Valleys would have been born into. And families like the Powells were very poor; they were on the poverty line – not able to eat enough. They had roofs over their heads but that's about all. As an actor, I have been out of work at times. But I could borrow money or use credit cards to get through those periods. Back then, I don't know how they lived."

While Evan strikes, daughter Bethan is the only one of the family bringing home a wage. Terrifically proud of his daughter, Evan encourages her to do more studying to improve herself, even if it means she can't help more around the home – a philosophy David has followed with his own three sons.

"Hopefully, they will all do what they like to do," he says. "Eighty per cent of people in this country do a job that they don't like, just for the money. I hope my sons get the same job satisfaction that I do as an actor."

David's eldest son, Sam, is already treading the boards, while the youngest, William, is taking a year out and may then follow his brother, father and grandfather, Patrick, into the profession. David's third son, Jim, plays cricket for Warwickshire.

"He is the odd one out," says David. "But I suppose he is still performing and people pay to watch."

One of those usually watching is David himself. A self-confessed cricket nut, he keeps his hand in by scoring for his local cricket club in Stratford-upon-Avon.

"I used to play a bit in London and I like to think I'm putting something back into the game," he says. "It's rather like fishing, just sitting there, concentrating on the game. It's very relaxing."

And David may be found putting up the scores through the summer. Having just finishing filming a new series of *Foyle's War*, he's hoping to be free for the season.

"I have a few windows in the diary," he says. "So I'm hoping for a good summer and a few good matches."

## Jonathan Floyd is Eddie Powell



Welsh actor Jonathan Floyd was delighted to be back in his home country to film *Hearts Of Gold*, which he says had a resonance from the moment he opened the script.

"It is truly Welsh," says Jonathan. "It has a Welsh setting and Welsh writer. But I mainly mean that the sort of relationships are typically Welsh and remind me a lot of my own family. I also like the romance side of it. Ultimately, it's a beautiful love story."

Jonathan plays Bethan's brother, Eddie, the only boy in the family, who feels that he has to try to be a breadwinner in the household when his father is caught in a miners' strike and is sacked for his principles.

"Eddie is very, very angry and aggressive. But, at the same time, it's obvious that he loves his family and can't bear to see them suffer," he says. "He is not a boy any more and needs to prove that to them."

Eddie tries to bring some income to the house by boxing for money, first becoming a sparring partner and later trying his hand at the annual Rattle Fair,

where he is pitted against the Panther of Porthcawl, Bad Billy Baker. And, for 24-year-old Jonathan, this meant he needed to be pretty handy in the ring to be convincing.

"I did some training first with guy from a local boxing club, who made me feel completely relaxed about getting into the ring," he says. "And the fight co-ordinator was great. The trick is to pull back quickly so you don't hurt anyone."

For Jonathan, the Rattle Fair boxing bout was exhausting. It was his first day of filming and having to fight for several hours – so cameras could cover his every angle – was very tiring and left him sporting a shiner.

"I clocked heads with the other guy at one point and got a black eye," laughs Jonathan. "It was very realistic. But make-up weren't impressed."

Jonathan can understand completely Eddie's need to do something for his family when they hit hard times.

"I come from a working-class background," he says. "For years, in the Eighties, my dad, who's a builder by trade, was out of work – sometimes for months at a time. It was a struggle. I'm one of six, so Christmas was quite often hard, and that struck a chord with me on *Hearts Of Gold*. I was too young to do anything like Eddie and go and get some work. But I remember how the family felt."

"And, for Eddie, that sours his relationship with his father. He doesn't want to replace his father in the role of breadwinner. But he sees his father's shortcomings and wants to rectify the situation."

Jonathan, who studied at the Rose Bruford College of Speech and Drama, has appeared in *Holby City* and Sky One's *Dream Team*.

## Catrin Collier

Catrin Collier says that the story of *Hearts Of Gold* – the first of eight books in a series about the intertwining lives of characters living in a Welsh mining town during the Thirties and Forties – came about by accident.

"I'd spent 10 years writing a book, set in Iraq, in the First World War, which made *War And Peace* look like a pamphlet," says Catrin, who now lives in Swansea. "My agent at that time sent it off to the legendary Rosemary de Courcey at Century and she came back saying: 'I love the characters. I love the story. I can't stand the setting! Can you put it in Thirties Wales?'"

Catrin, who was born in Pontypridd where *Hearts Of Gold* is set, discovered a wealth of knowledge within her own family when she started researching the area. Her father moved there from the Rhondda valley in the Twenties and had "a very rough time" during the Depression.

"There were things in our family which had never been spoken about," says Catrin. "But, once I asked him for stories, it was like lifting a lid."

Catrin discovered that her grandmother, who died when Catrin was just three, had been a nurse in a workhouse and had walked out on a violent and abusive husband, taking her two children with her. Her great uncle, a chapel minister, was appalled at her behaviour and told her: "The next time I see you, I hope you will be in your coffin."

"In those days, you were supposed to stay with your husband, no matter what," Catrin says. "Among many duties in the Graig Workhouse and Infirmary, she was, for a time, in charge of the "unmarried" ward. My father knew a lot of people who had worked with her and who gave me information about the sort of place that Bethan works in."

Catrin also scoured old newspapers from the area for information about the life and times of characters like those she would be writing about, finally presenting her publisher with 30 pages of characters and 30 pages of background.

"She said I had enough there for 10 books – I managed eight!" laughs Catrin. "You always get the impression that these were very drab times. And they were terrible for many people but there were also many characters around living complex lives."

"When I was young, I could never understand why my father had all these foster brothers who would come round with their wives and children. Then I found that they had been to the workhouse and put in the orphanage where they would stay till they were three, before being moved to another orphanage until the age of nine and again to a home until they were 16. They didn't have any contact with their parents and, by the age of 16, if no-one claimed them, my gran, who used to process them when they returned as 'adults' to the workhouse, would tell them to go up the house for a bowl of soup, and would help to find them jobs. Many of them stayed in touch. One seaman who took £1 from gran's purse sent her back a fiver to replace it."

Some of the characters Catrin pens, such as Bethan, Andrew, Evan and Elizabeth, are inspired by people in the old photographs which she collects.

"I do build characters on them and I have a lot to choose from," she says. "From about the age of 15, I collected Victorian photo albums. And I have some pictures on my laptop which I take around if I'm giving a talk. I gave a talk recently at Llandeilo Library and one lady in the audience, who was 93, told me that her husband had died six months before and asked me whether I wanted her photo albums, which she was just about to burn. They're

fascinating – pictures of things like donkey racing, in Poona, in 1903. One day, I think I'll have to pass them on to somewhere like Pontypridd Museum. They shouldn't just be lost!"

But, just because she has created the characters in her books doesn't mean that Catrin has to like them.

"I can't stand Andrew!" she says of her *Hearts Of Gold* leading man. "He is one of the most selfish characters. It never occurs to him to consider anyone else. He's typical of his class and of his time. Bethan is much more spirited and I like her. But sometimes I do feel sorry for her falling in love with him."