



# CALL ME CRAZY

*Cara Theobald on her new role in TV show, Crazyhead, acting alongside Maggie Smith and the joys of North London*

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**N**orth London resident and 26-year-old actor Cara Theobald burst onto our screens as Ivy Stuart in hit show *Downton Abbey*, before she'd even finished her drama studies at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. Since then, she's enjoyed appearances in *Call The Midwife* and acted opposite Rafe Spall in *Ghosthunter*. Now, she's landed a lead role as the 'kick-ass' heroine Amy in new hit show *Crazyhead*, which is set to spice up the festive season.

Scripted and directed by Howard Overman, the BAFTA-winning creator of *Misfits*, *Crazyhead* is billed as a bold new comedy horror series about friendship, love and facing your demons. Filled with Overman's signature brand of dark humour and plotted with unexpected twists, *Crazyhead* follows the angst and exorcisms of an unlikely duo of demon hunters, Theobald's Amy and Susan Wokoma's Raquel.

Amy has grown up seeing things that others can't see, and has gone through life treating her visions as a mental illness, says Theobald, but then Raquel comes along – and she realises that she isn't crazy, after all, and has no choice but to face up to her fears.

When we meet for our exclusive shoot in picturesque Highgate, she can't wait for the show to be screened. 'It's a very dark comedy,' she explains. 'The things these girls go through are terrifying and their world gets completely turned upside down. Amy goes from coasting along, not really doing anything at all with her life, to suddenly being forced to fight to save the people she loves.'

Playing Amy, the lead protagonist, is certainly a departure from her much meeker role as a servant below stairs in period drama *Downton*, and presented different challenges as a role. 'Playing the extraordinary within an ordinary world was the challenge,' she explains. 'Amy is essentially a normal girl in the modern world, but then she sees these extraordinary things that she has to adjust to and deal with.'



Theobald stars alongside Susan Wokoma (left) and Lewis Reeves (right), in *Crazyhead*

‘I don’t think you can compare [*Crazyhead* and *Downton Abbey*],’ she continues. ‘*Downton* was my very first job and it was such an amazing opportunity for a graduate. I was very grateful to be able to learn on the job. To be in a show with Dame Maggie Smith and Jim Carter meant getting to watch and learn from people whose work I looked up to growing up.’

The opportunity to work on her own stunts and fighting scenes was also part of the attraction of *Crazyhead*. ‘It’s amazing to be part of a show where the two main characters are girls,’ she enthuses. ‘It’s still rare as a female to play the hero rather than to just be someone’s girlfriend or someone’s daughter. I did a lot of stunts when I was training at drama school, but this is the first time I’ve done it for TV.’

Amy’s character development is something else that Theobald enjoyed. ‘She has no choice but to change,’ she says, ‘and then she suddenly finds herself. She goes on a journey through the series. Instead of playing safe, like she’s always done, she’s suddenly on the way to becoming her bad-ass self, and she comes into her own.’

Similarly to *Misfits*, the show feels fresh and different – although the inevitable comparisons to *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* are sure to be made. ‘*Misfits* was so special and so new, and I think this is the same. When I read the script I was so excited and I knew immediately that I wanted the role. It’s quite out there, and quite eccentric. I won’t say too much, but essentially the first scene of the entire series is an exorcism, and I have to do something quite ridiculous a couple of pages into the script. There’s lots of surprises.’ Theobald promises the show will be rich in a visual sense. ‘It’s got an element of Americana about it, and we have an incredible director of photography with a really great eye,’ she tells me.

Theobald says she loves watching Netflix’s *Stranger Things*,

*Instead of playing safe, she’s suddenly on her way to becoming her bad-ass self*



With the cast and crew of *Downton Abbey*

which she says is similar in that it ‘offers a whole new world to get involved with. There’s a supernatural element, but it’s also about friends and friendships being tested’.

Although she’s a Yorkshire girl at heart, originally from Wakefield, Theobald is most at home in north London. ‘Highgate is story book London in my eyes,’ she says. ‘It’s nice to be close to the Heath and the woods. I like Papa Del’s for pizza and we’re close to the Almeida in Angel, which is great. It’s funny – I live with friends and it’s a big house full of actors, so we’re all quite busy – but at the moment it’s one of the first times we’ve all been back at home together!’

Time’s up as she’s off to her next photo shoot at nearby arts space Jackson’s Lane, but looking ahead, she hopes to take part in a second series of *Crazyhead*. ‘Hopefully everyone will love it and we’ll get to do it again. There’s so much more to explore. If you watch the show you’ll understand, but it feels like it’s just beginning for the characters.’ We don’t doubt it.

***Crazyhead* is showing on E4, All4 and Netflix now**