Baker Street Readers

Great reads for all ages

I saw everything. They told me everything. I played a part in everything.

Nelly Dean has spent her life serving the inhabitants of Wuthering Heights. She has quite a tale to tell. She wants to tell it to you.

Nelly's story is as wild and stormy as the moors on which it is set. She talks of haunting, hatred, love, grief and the desire for revenge.

Her tale begins and ends with the mysterious Heathcliff. Where has this strange, silent boy come from? Will you fear him or pity him? What drives the adult Heathcliff to destroy others, even his own son, and to dig in dark graveyards? Is it love or vengeance, or both?

This famous story of Heathcliff and Catherine will thrill you and chill you to the bone.

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"Miniature masterpieces"
- BBC R4, Open Book

WUTHERING HEIGHTS

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TEACHER'S INSPECTION ONLY

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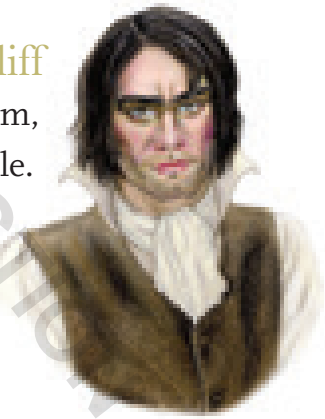
THE CHARACTERS



Nelly Dean

Nelly has been a servant at Wuthering Heights for many years. Does she simply observe events, or does she help to shape them?

Heathcliff



Nobody knows where he came from, but Heathcliff's arrival brings trouble. Is he naturally cruel? Is his anger justified? Who will he destroy in his quest for revenge?



Catherine Earnshaw

Can Catherine's wild, free and passionate spirit ever be tamed? Will her strong character lead to contentment or to tragedy?



Edgar and Isabella Linton

Edgar is wealthy, gentle and kind. Can he protect those he loves, including his sister Isabella, from Heathcliff's hatred?

Hareton Earnshaw



Hareton is the son of Heathcliff's greatest enemy. Will Heathcliff destroy him too?



Cathy Linton

Cathy is Edgar and Catherine's daughter. Can her father protect her from Heathcliff's desire for revenge?

Linton Heathcliff

Will Heathcliff's weak son live long enough to fulfil his father's plans for him?



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WUTHERING HEIGHTS

Do the souls of the dead roam the earth, yearning and mourning their lost lives, their lost loves? If you spend a little time here with us, on the bleak and lonely moors, you might soon believe so. Our position here at Thrushcross Grange is favourably sheltered, yet nature can still be wild and frightening. Four miles away, at Wuthering Heights, the atmosphere is altogether more violent, indeed sometimes treacherous.

Wuthering Heights stands alone on an exposed ridge. It is a wind-blasted, fate-blasted house. The country folk fear its mood of horror and darkness, a mood reflected in the lives of those who have loved, hated, suffered and died within its thick walls. If you care to visit, you will see that the trees have been bent by merciless strong winds, just as the souls of the generations within have been bent by strong passions.

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My name is Ellen Dean, but you can call me Nelly. I have served the families at Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange for more than thirty years without seeing any ghosts, but there are folk who tell different stories.



Just over a year ago, a city gentleman, Mr Lockwood, was renting Thrushcross Grange. I was positioned here to serve him. Lost on the moors one evening in a violent snowstorm, he was faced with the unwelcome necessity of seeking shelter at Wuthering Heights. The master of the house at the time, Mr Heathcliff, was a surly, intense and tormented man. Heathcliff and I had grown up together, so I knew him as well as anyone; well enough to know that he detested strangers, and was not a willing host.

That stormy evening, poor Mr Lockwood was savaged by Heathcliff's dogs and cursed

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by their master. Then he was shown to a dark, mildewed, oak-panelled closet in which, he told me the following day, he spent the most horrifying night of his life.

Alone in his dark room, with only a flickering candle for company, Mr Lockwood felt strangely drawn towards the window. Outside, the storm was still raging. Placing his candle on the windowsill, he noticed writing carved into the painted wood. He traced with his finger, in all kinds of characters both large and small, the names Catherine Earnshaw, Catherine Heathcliff and Catherine Linton, each repeated again and again. He retired to his bed, snuffed his candle, and fell into a fitful sleep. His mind and, it seemed, the room, were swarming with Catherines.

Alternately dozing and waking, Mr Lockwood became aware of a persistent tap-tapping of a branch against the window. In order to silence this relentless teasing, he felt his way to the window. It was locked. Driven by his desperation to sleep,

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best-known work. The third sister, Anne, wrote two novels, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* and *Agnes Grey*.

The Brontës would have been very aware of historical and political events in their lifetime. Victorian England was a period of great change, moving from an agricultural economy towards industrial nationhood. This disturbed the former rigid class structure. Part of the tension in *Wuthering Heights* arises from the fact that Heathcliff's social position is never certain, and he moves between the classes, therefore blurring the boundaries.

Emily Brontë's writing displays the influence of two literary traditions. The first, romanticism, values strong emotions, the wildness of nature and natural behaviour. Romantic writers often explored the relationship between nature and human emotion, and questioned the need for control and restraint. The second is the gothic tradition, portraying mysterious, dark and brutal characters, and exploring the world of ghosts and spirits.

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Finding out more

We recommend the following books, websites and films to gain a greater understanding of Emily Brontë and the world she lived in:

Books

- Kate Pennington, *Brief Candle*, Hodder Children's Books, 2004.
- Ann Dinsdale and Simon Warner, *The Brontës at Haworth*, Frances Lincoln, 2006.
- John Sutherland, *Is Heathcliff a Murderer? Great Puzzles in Nineteenth Century Fiction*, Oxford World Classics, 1998.
- Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, many editions available, including a *Baker Street Readers* version.
- Terry Deary, *Vile Victorians* (Horrible Histories), Scholastic, 1994.

Websites

- www.bronte.org.uk

Home of the Brontë Museum and the Brontë Society, based at the Haworth Parsonage in which the Brontës lived. The Museum is well worth a visit if you are visiting West Yorkshire.

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