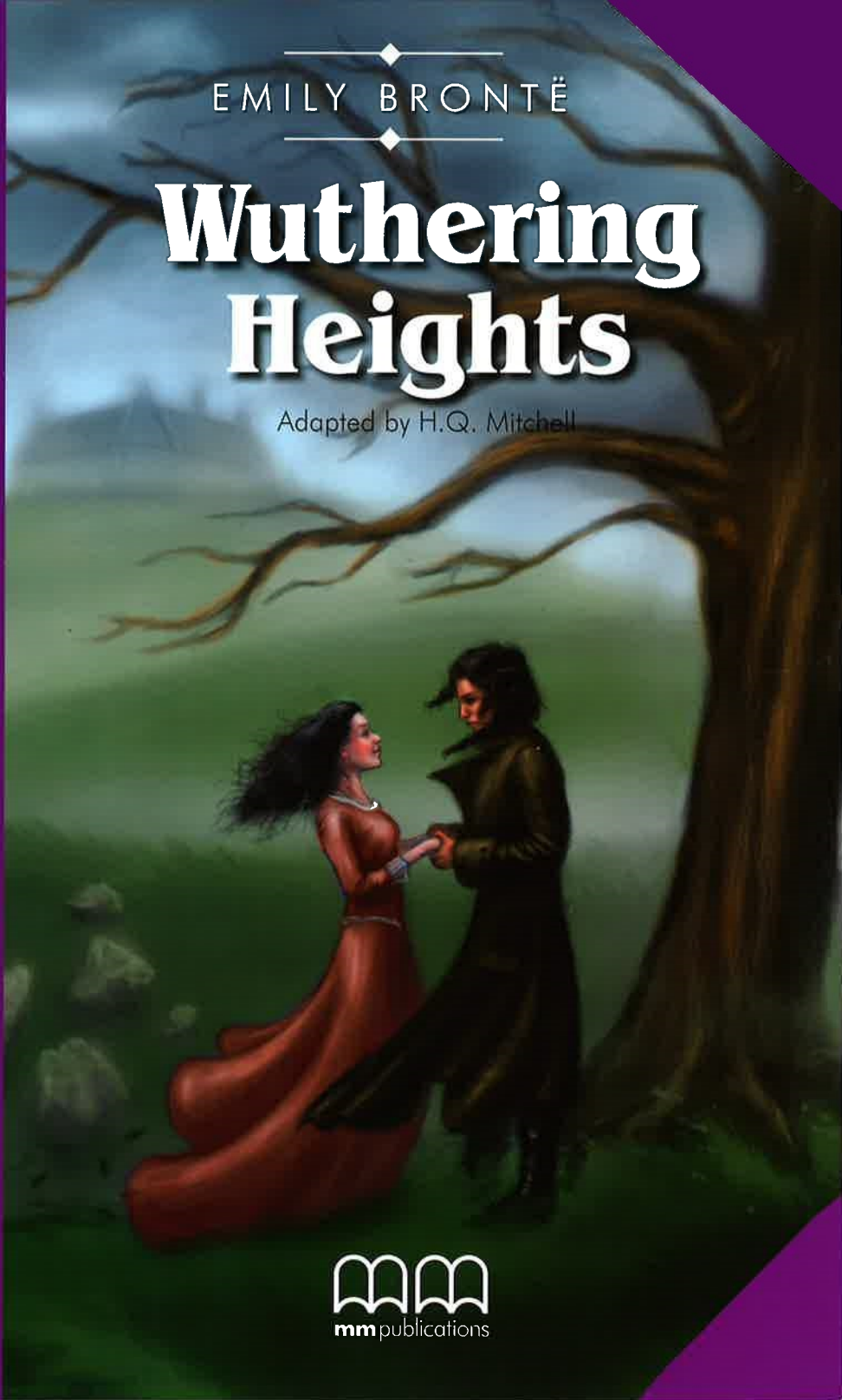
TOP READERS

EMILY BRONTË

Wuthering Heights

Adapted by H.Q. Mitchell



level 4

mm publications

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CHAPTER 1

THE DIARY OF JOHN LOCKWOOD

Wednesday, 4 December, 1801 – I have just moved into my new home, a manor house called Thrushcross Grange, which is situated in a remote part of the Yorkshire moors. My closest neighbour is my landlord, Heathcliff. He lives about four miles away from me, in a house called Wuthering Heights. The word 'wuthering', I am told, is a local word which is used to describe the strong winds that sometimes blow across the moors.

On Monday, I decided to ride to my landlord's house to introduce myself to him. I must admit, Heathcliff is not at all what I had expected: he has long, curly, black hair, green eyes and dark skin, and though he dresses and talks like a gentleman, looks very much like a gypsy.

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Heathcliff did not seem particularly pleased to see me, but he invited me in for tea, nonetheless. A servant showed me into the parlour, and Heathcliff and I spent the next hour talking about a range of subjects. He's a surprisingly intelligent man, and, when I left Wuthering Heights, I made up my mind to pay my landlord another visit soon.

***

Yesterday afternoon, I decided to take a walk to Wuthering Heights. It was a misty and windy day, and by the time I reached my destination, I was shivering and exhausted. As I pushed open the gates of the Heights, it started to snow, and I quickly made my way to the front door. After several minutes of knocking, a young man answered the door and informed me that Heathcliff was out. I asked him to let me wait for Heathcliff inside and he showed me to the kitchen. The burning wood in the fireplace was a welcoming sight, and I quickly sat down in front of it.

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There was a girl in the kitchen preparing supper. She was quite young and remarkably beautiful and I wondered if she was Heathcliff's wife.

"Awful weather!" I said to the girl as I rubbed my frozen hands together.

The girl glanced at me. "Yes," she agreed.

I tried to start a conversation with the girl, but she seemed reluctant to answer my questions. An hour or so later, my landlord arrived.

"Here again, Mr Lockwood?" said Heathcliff as he shook the snowflakes from his coat. "You shouldn't be wandering around in the middle of a snowstorm. You could get lost in the marshes."

"Hello, Mr Heathcliff," I said, standing up. "Don't worry, I'll leave once the storm has passed.

"This storm will probably last the whole night," said my landlord. "You'll never find your way back in this."

"Well, perhaps one of your servants could walk back with me?" I said. "Or maybe I could stay here for the night?"

Heathcliff shot me an angry look. "There's no one to take you back, and I have no room for visitors! You really shouldn't have come here today, Mr Lockwood!"

I was quite surprised by Heathcliff's rudeness. "Well then," I said coolly, "I'll just have to find my own way home."

I was about to leave, when Heathcliff suddenly changed his mind. I think that, since I am his only tenant, he probably felt responsible for me and he agreed to let me stay the night. Once we'd eaten supper, Heathcliff's housekeeper, Zillah, showed me to a room. "Mr Heathcliff doesn't usually allow guests to stay in this room," she said as she unlocked the door. "So don't make any noise."

With a heavy sigh, I sat down on the bed and placed my candle on the wooden table next to it. I noticed that three names had been scratched onto the table: *Catherine Earnshaw*, *Catherine Linton* and *Catherine Heathcliff*. Some books lay on the shelf above the bed and I picked one up and started to read it. It was the diary of Catherine Earnshaw. Most of the diary entries described events in the girl's childhood as well as her close relationship with my landlord, Heathcliff. Soon, I fell asleep and I began to dream. A little later, I heard the sound of tapping at my window.

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Believing that a tree branch was the reason for the noise, I opened the window carefully. I reached out to break the branch, and then, to my horror, felt a small, icy hand grip my wrist! I screamed and drew my arm back, but the hand wouldn't let me go!

"Let me in! Let me in!" said a voice.

"Who are you?" I cried.

"Catherine Linton," it replied. "I lost my way on the moors, but I'm home now."

Suddenly, a child's face appeared in the window. I screamed again and shouted in horror "Go away!" This time, the hand let me go, and I quickly shut the window.

Minutes later, Heathcliff burst into my room, carrying a lamp.

"Who's there?" he asked.

"It's me, Lockwood. I had a horrible nightmare," I said, breathing heavily.

Heathcliff held up the lamp to examine my face. "Mr Lockwood?" he exclaimed. "What are you doing in here?"

"Zillah said I could sleep here," I said. "But this room is haunted!"

Heathcliff narrowed his eyes. "What are you talking about?"

"I-I saw a ghost at the window…" I said. "The ghost of Catherine Linton… She wanted to come inside!"

Heathcliff looked surprised. He was quiet for a moment, then he ordered me to take the lamp and go downstairs. I did as I was told, and, as I began to go down the staircase, I saw Heathcliff open the window and calling out to the ghost: "Come in, come in, my darling Catherine! Can you hear me, Catherine? Please come in!"

But nothing happened. I quickly walked to the kitchen where I waited until daybreak. To my surprise, Heathcliff offered to accompany me back to the Grange after breakfast. We did not discuss the events of the night before, in fact, we hardly spoke at all. When we reached the gates of the Grange, Heathcliff said farewell and I quickly made my way to my warm parlour.

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