

Wuthering heights –
describe and
comment on the
violent incidents in
the novel



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Wuthering Heights by Emily Bronte is one of the great classics of British literature. The book is set on the windswept moors of Yorkshire near a small village called Gimmerton. The basic plot is about how much disturbance and trouble a man named Heathcliff causes when the woman he loves marries another man. It is narrated by Mr Lockwood, a gentleman renting a house named Thrushcross Grange, and Nelly Dean who as his servant tells the story of what happened at his residence and another house 4 miles away. This essay will focus on the violence that is so regular in the novel.

The first occasions of violence that we are notified of in the novel are the regular thrashings doled out by the young Hindley Earnshaw to Heathcliff, when they were children.

Heathcliff was not the brother of Hindley but an orphan brought back from Liverpool by Hindley's father. Heathcliff's origins are not made clear in the novel but some in the novel brand him a "Lascar", hinting at Asian ascendance. He is often better treated than Mr Earnshaw's own children Catherine and Hindley, this becomes clear when Mr Earnshaw buys each of the boys a horse and Heathcliff is given the first choice and picks the most handsome leaving the other to Hindley. When his own handsome horse becomes lame Heathcliff orders Hindley to swap horses or he will tell Hindley's father of the three beatings he had received from Hindley earlier that week.

Unsurprisingly Hindley swapped rather than have Heathcliff show his father the bruises that Hindley had left him.

When later on in the novel Mr Earnshaw dies his house is left to Hindley.

<https://assignbuster.com/wuthering-heights-describe-and-comment-on-the-violent-incidents-in-the-novel/>

The new master returned with a wife and Heathcliff was treated as a servant instead of the family member he was and was sent out to work in Hindley's newly acquired fields without pay. Hindley also inflicted education on Catherine, which she loathes, and so a strong friendship grows between Cathy and Heathcliff. When the two rebelled against the "tyrant" and the two started dodging duties and sneaking out at night, Cathy was confined to her quarters every night and Heathcliff was beaten by another servant named Joseph on Hindley's orders as punishment.

The next violent incident took place one evening when Cathy and Heathcliff sneaked out one evening to Thrushcross Grange to spy on the two Linton children Edgar and Isabella. They were spotted looking through one of the windows and a servant's bulldog was let loose. The dog seized Cathy and she was held in its jaws until the Linton's came running with a servant. Heathcliff was cast away from Thrushcross Grange after they took him for a gipsy. Whereas Cathy was taken into the house and looked after for five weeks until the day before Christmas Eve. When Heathcliff returned home that evening alone Hindley was waiting up for him and he was told if his behaviour continued like it was and he kept leading Cathy astray he would be chucked out of the house for good. Hindley then ordered his servant, Joseph, to give Heathcliff the beating of his life.

Things changed a great deal when Cathy came home a spoiled but beautiful young lady. On Christmas Eve the Linton family were invited up to Wuthering Heights for a party and Edgar Linton insulted Heathcliff who then threw hot applesauce all over Edgar in retaliation. This incident started a feud that lasted a lifetime.

<https://assignbuster.com/wuthering-heights-describe-and-comment-on-the-violent-incidents-in-the-novel/>

Shortly after Christmas, Edgar started to visit Cathy regularly at Wuthering Heights and it at this point became clear that the two would marry. On one such visit Cathy pinches her servant Nelly because she would not leave herself and Edgar alone in the room together. When Nelly screamed aloud Cathy denied touching her so Nelly showed the mark to Edgar, Cathy then slapped her servant on the cheek. When Cathy's much younger nephew Hareton cried out for his aunt to stop he was shaken until Edgar Linton intervened, only for him too to be slapped! When the whole raucous finally calmed down, Cathy and Edgar pronounced themselves lovers to the world.

Before all this, Hindley's young wife had died during the birth of Hareton and since then Hindley had been a constant drunk. He became a danger to those around him and the servants had taken to hiding his small child from him incase he should cause him harm. On one evening Hindley came home drunk and caught Nelly in the act of hiding Hareton in a kitchen cupboard. He flew into a rage and held a fish knife to Nelly's throat and told her he would make her swallow it. But instead he turned his attention to his child and went to hold him, but when Hareton cried Hindley grew angry and carried the youngster upstairs and held him over the railing. Hindley dropped the child by accident but Heathcliff walked out at just the right time and caught Hareton before he hit the floor.

The other violence in the novel occurs in the form of two fights when Heathcliff is a grown man and returns to Wuthering Heights a rich man after three years away. Heathcliff ran away after hearing Cathy, who he loved, was to marry his foe Edgar Linton.

When on his return he goes to see Cathy in Thrushcross Grange and will not leave when Edgar tells him to, Edgar jumps from his chair and strikes him on the throat then summons his servants to force him out.

The other occurs one eve in Wuthering Heights where Heathcliff is lodging with Hindley. One evening Hindley aspires to kill Heathcliff with the aid of Isabella Edgar's sister and Heathcliff's unhappy bride. When she refused to be a part of it Hindley decided to carry out his plan alone, so when Heathcliff came home that night Isabella would not let her husband in for fear of him getting killed. When Hindley tried to strike Heathcliff from a window in his attempt at murder he missed and Heathcliff smashed the glass pane and knocked Hindley to the ground he then stamped on him severely before ordering the servants and his wife to attend to the beaten man.

The violent incidents described in Wuthering Heights are all inter entwined with most in some shape or form involving the very vicious and vengeful Heathcliff.