

Wuthering heights

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Wuthering Heights A Brief Summary Many people, generally those who have never read the book, consider Wuthering Heights to be a straightforward, if intense, love story - Romeo and Juliet on the Yorkshire Moors. But this is a mistake. Really the story is one of revenge. It follows the life of Heathcliff, a mysterious gypsy-like person, from childhood (about seven years old) to his death in his late thirties. Heathcliff rises in his adopted family and then is reduced to the status of a servant, running away when the young woman he loves decides to marry another. He returns later, rich and educated, and sets about gaining his revenge on the two families that he believed ruined his life.

Prologue (chapters 1 to 3) Mr Lockwood, a rich man from the south, has rented Thrushcross Grange in the north of England for peace and recuperation. Soon after arrival, he visits his landlord, Mr Heathcliff, who lives in the remote moorland farmhouse called " Wuthering Heights". He finds the inhabitants of Wuthering Heights to be a strange group: Mr Heathcliff appears a gentleman but his manners and speech suggest otherwise; the mistress of the house is in her late teens, an attractive but reserved, even rude woman; and there is a young man who appears to be one of the family although he dresses and talks like a servant. Being snowed in, he has to stay the night and is shown to an unused chamber where he finds books and graffiti from a former inhabitant of the farmhouse called " Catherine". When he falls asleep, his dreams are prompted by this person and he has a nightmare where he sees her as a ghost trying to get in through the window. He wakes and is unable to return to sleep so, as soon as the sun rises, he is escorted back to Thrushcross Grange by Heathcliff. There he asks his housekeeper, Ellen Dean, to tell him the story of the family from

the Heights. The Childhood of Heathcliff (chapters 4 to 17) The story begins thirty years before when the Earnshaw family lived at Wuthering Heights consisting of, as well as the mother and father, Hindley, a boy of fourteen, and six-year-old Catherine, the same person that he had dreamt about and the mother of the present mistress. In that year, Mr Earnshaw travels to Liverpool where he finds a homeless, gypsy-like boy of about seven whom he decides to adopt as his son. He names him " Heathcliff". Hindley, who finds himself excluded from his father's affections by this newcomer, quickly learns to hate him but Catherine grows very attached to him. Soon Heathcliff and Catherine are like twins, spending hours on the moors together and hating every moment apart. Because of this discord, Hindley is eventually sent to college but he returns, three years later, when Mr Earnshaw dies. With a new wife, Frances, he becomes master of Wuthering Heights and forces Heathcliff to become a servant instead of a member of the family. Heathcliff and Cathy continue to run wild and, in November, a few months after Hindley's return, they make their way to Thrushcross Grange to spy on the inhabitants. As they watch the childish behaviour of Edgar and Isabella Linton, the children of the Grange, they are spotted and try to escape. Catherine, having been caught by a dog, is brought inside and helped while Heathcliff is sent home. Five weeks later, Catherine returns to Wuthering Heights but she has now changed, looking and acting as a lady. She laughs at Heathcliff's unkempt appearance and, the next day when the Linton's visit, he dresses up to impress her. It fails when Edgar makes fun of him and they argue. Heathcliff is locked in the attic where, in the evening, Catherine climbs over the roof to comfort him. He vows to get his revenge on Hindley.

In the summer of the next year, Frances gives birth to a child, Hareton, but she dies before the year is out. This leads Hindley to descend into a life of drunkenness and waste. Two years on and Catherine has become close friends with Edgar, growing more distant from Heathcliff. One day in August, while Hindley is absent, Edgar comes to visit Catherine. She has an argument with Ellen which then spreads to Edgar who tries to leave. Catherine stops him and, before long, they declare themselves lovers. Later, Catherine talks with Ellen, explaining that Edgar had asked her to marry him and she had accepted. She says that she does not really love Edgar but Heathcliff. Unfortunately she could never marry the latter because of his lack of status and education. She therefore plans to marry Edgar and use that position to help raise Heathcliff's standing. Unfortunately Heathcliff had overheard the first part about not being able to marry him and flees from the farmhouse. He disappears without trace and, after three years, Edgar and Catherine are married. Six months after the marriage, Heathcliff returns as a gentleman, having grown stronger and richer during his absence. Catherine is delighted to see him although Edgar is not so keen. Isabella, now eighteen, falls madly in love with Heathcliff, seeing him as a romantic hero. He despises her but encourages the infatuation, seeing it as a chance for revenge on Edgar. When he embraces Isabella one day at the Grange, there is an argument with Edgar which causes Catherine to lock herself in her room and fall ill. Heathcliff has been staying at the Heights, gambling with Hindley and teaching Hareton bad habits. Hindley is gradually losing his wealth, mortgaging the farmhouse to Heathcliff to repay his debts. While Catherine is ill, Heathcliff elopes with Isabella, causing Edgar to disown his

sister. The fugitives marry and return two months later to Wuthering Heights. Heathcliff hears that Catherine is ill and arranges with Ellen to visit her in secret. In the early hours of the day after their meeting, Catherine gives birth to her daughter, Cathy, and then dies. The day after Catherine's funeral, Isabella flees Heathcliff and escapes to the south of England where she eventually gives birth to Linton, Heathcliff's son. Hindley dies six months after his sister and Heathcliff finds himself the master of Wuthering Heights and the guardian of Hareton. The Maturity of Heathcliff (chapters 18 to 31)

Twelve years on, Cathy has grown into a beautiful, high-spirited girl who has rarely passed outside the borders of the Grange. Edgar hears that Isabella is dying and leaves to pick up her son with the intention of adopting him. While he is gone, Cathy meets Hareton on the moors and learns of her cousin and Wuthering Heights' existence. Edgar returns with Linton who is a weak and sickly boy. Although Cathy is attracted to him, Heathcliff wants his son with him and insists on having him taken to the Heights. Three years later, Ellen and Cathy are on the moors when they meet Heathcliff who takes them to Wuthering Heights to see Linton and Hareton. His plans are for Linton and Cathy to marry so that he would inherit Thrushcross Grange. Cathy and Linton begin a secret and interrupted friendship. In August of the next year, while Edgar is very ill, Ellen and Cathy visit Wuthering Heights and are held captive by Heathcliff who wants to marry his son to Cathy and, at the same time, prevent her from returning to her father before he dies. After five days, Ellen is released and Cathy escapes with Linton's help just in time to see her father before he dies. With Heathcliff now the master of both Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange, Cathy has no choice but to leave Ellen and

to go and live with Heathcliff and Hareton. Linton dies soon afterwards and, although Hareton tries to be kind to her, she retreats into herself. This is the point of the story at which Lockwood arrives. After being ill with a cold for some time, Lockwood decides that he has had enough of the moors and travels to Wuthering Heights to inform Heathcliff that he is returning to the south. Epilogue (chapters 32 to 34) In September, eight months after leaving, Lockwood finds himself back in the area and decides to stay at Thrushcross Grange (since his tenancy is still valid until October). He finds that Ellen is now living at Wuthering Heights. He makes his way there and she fills in the rest of the story. Ellen had moved to the Heights soon after Lockwood had left to replace the housekeeper who had departed. In March, Hareton had had an accident and been confined to the farmhouse. During this time, a friendship had developed between Cathy and Hareton. This continues into April when Heathcliff begins to act very strangely, seeing visions of Catherine. After not eating for four days, he is found dead in his room. He is buried next to Catherine. Lockwood departs but, before he leaves, he hears that Hareton and Cathy plan to marry on New Year's Day.