

Wuthering heights: the destructiveness of a love that never changes

[Literature](#), [British Literature](#)



Title: Wuthering Heights Author: Emily Bronte Authors Bio: Emily Brontë« lived an eccentric, closely guarded life. She was born in 1818, two years after Charlotte and a year and a half before her sister Anne, who also became an author. Her father worked as a church rector, and her aunt, who raised the Brontë« children after their mother died, was deeply religious. She died in 1848, at the age of thirty. Publication Date: Setting: 1847 Theme: The destructiveness of a love that never changes; the precariousness of social class Plot Synopsis: In the winter of 1801, a man named Lockwood rents a manor house called Thrushcross Grange in the isolated moor country of England. Here, he meets his dour landlord, Heathcliff, a wealthy man who lives in the ancient manor of Wuthering Heights, four miles away from the Grange. In this wild, stormy countryside, Lockwood asks his housekeeper, Nelly Dean, to tell him the story of Heathcliff and the strange denizens of Wuthering Heights. Nelly consents, and Lockwood writes down his recollections of her tale in his diary; these written recollections form the main part of Wuthering Heights. Nelly remembers her childhood. As a young girl, she works as a servant at Wuthering Heights for the owner of the manor, Mr. Earnshaw, and his family. One day, Mr. Earnshaw goes to Liverpool and returns home with an orphan boy whom he will raise with his own children. At first, the Earnshaw children—a boy named Hindley and his younger sister Catherine—detest the dark-skinned Heathcliff. But Catherine quickly comes to love him, and the two soon grow inseparable, spending their days playing on the moors. After his wife's death, Mr. Earnshaw grows to prefer Heathcliff to his own son, and when Hindley continues his cruelty to Heathcliff, Mr. Earnshaw sends Hindley away to college, keeping Heathcliff nearby. Three

years later, Mr. Earnshaw dies, and Hindley inherits Wuthering Heights. He returns with a wife, Frances, and immediately seeks revenge on Heathcliff. Once an orphan, later a pampered and favored son, Heathcliff now finds himself treated as a common laborer, forced to work in the fields. Heathcliff continues his close relationship with Catherine, however. One night they wander to Thrushcross Grange, hoping to tease Edgar and Isabella Linton, the cowardly, snobbish children who live there. Catherine is bitten by a dog and is forced to stay at the Grange to recuperate for five weeks, during which time Mrs. Linton works to make her a proper young lady. By the time Catherine returns, she has become infatuated with Edgar, and her relationship with Heathcliff grows more complicated. When Frances dies after giving birth to a baby boy named Hareton, Hindley descends into the depths of alcoholism, and behaves even more cruelly and abusively toward Heathcliff. Eventually, Catherine's desire for social advancement prompts her to become engaged to Edgar Linton, despite her overpowering love for Heathcliff. Heathcliff runs away from Wuthering Heights, staying away for three years, and returning shortly after Catherine and Edgar's marriage. When Heathcliff returns, he immediately sets about seeking revenge on all who have wronged him. Having come into a vast and mysterious wealth, he deviously lends money to the drunken Hindley, knowing that Hindley will increase his debts and fall into deeper despondency. When Hindley dies, Heathcliff inherits the manor. He also places himself in line to inherit Thrushcross Grange by marrying Isabella Linton, whom he treats very cruelly. Catherine becomes ill, gives birth to a daughter, and dies. Heathcliff begs her spirit to remain on Earth—she may take whatever form she will, she

may haunt him, drive him mad—just as long as she does not leave him alone. Shortly thereafter, Isabella flees to London and gives birth to Heathcliff's son, named Linton after her family. She keeps the boy with her there. Thirteen years pass, during which Nelly Dean serves as Catherine's daughter's nursemaid at Thrushcross Grange. Young Catherine is beautiful and headstrong like her mother, but her temperament is modified by her father's gentler influence. Young Catherine grows up at the Grange with no knowledge of Wuthering Heights; one day, however, wandering through the moors, she discovers the manor, meets Hareton, and plays together with him. Soon afterwards, Isabella dies, and Linton comes to live with Heathcliff. Heathcliff treats his sickly, whining son even more cruelly than he treated the boy's mother. Three years later, Catherine meets Heathcliff on the moors, and makes a visit to Wuthering Heights to meet Linton. She and Linton begin a secret romance conducted entirely through letters. When Nelly destroys Catherine's collection of letters, the girl begins sneaking out at night to spend time with her frail young lover, who asks her to come back and nurse him back to health. However, it quickly becomes apparent that Linton is pursuing Catherine only because Heathcliff is forcing him to; Heathcliff hopes that if Catherine marries Linton, his legal claim upon Thrushcross Grange—and his revenge upon Edgar Linton—will be complete. One day, as Edgar Linton grows ill and nears death, Heathcliff lures Nelly and Catherine back to Wuthering Heights, and holds them prisoner until Catherine marries Linton. Soon after the marriage, Edgar dies, and his death is quickly followed by the death of the sickly Linton. Heathcliff now controls both Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange. He forces Catherine to live

at Wuthering Heights and act as a common servant, while he rents Thrushcross Grange to Lockwood. Nelly's story ends as she reaches the present. Lockwood, appalled, ends his tenancy at Thrushcross Grange and returns to London. However, six months later, he pays a visit to Nelly, and learns of further developments in the story. Although Catherine originally mocked Hareton's ignorance and illiteracy (in an act of retribution, Heathcliff ended Hareton's education after Hindley died), Catherine grows to love Hareton as they live together at Wuthering Heights. Heathcliff becomes more and more obsessed with the memory of the elder Catherine, to the extent that he begins speaking to her ghost. Everything he sees reminds him of her. Shortly after a night spent walking on the moors, Heathcliff dies. Hareton and young Catherine inherit Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange, and they plan to be married on the next New Year's Day. After hearing the end of the story, Lockwood goes to visit the graves of Catherine and Heathcliff.

Character Descriptions: Heathcliff - An orphan brought to live at Wuthering Heights by Mr. Earnshaw, Heathcliff falls into an intense, unbreakable love with Mr. Earnshaw's daughter Catherine. After Mr. Earnshaw dies, his resentful son Hindley abuses Heathcliff and treats him as a servant. Because of her desire for social prominence, Catherine marries Edgar Linton instead of Heathcliff. Heathcliff's humiliation and misery prompt him to spend most of the rest of his life seeking revenge on Hindley, his beloved Catherine, and their respective children (Hareton and young Catherine). A powerful, fierce, and often cruel man, Heathcliff acquires a fortune and uses his extraordinary powers of will to acquire both Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange, the estate of Edgar Linton. Catherine - The daughter of Mr. Earnshaw and his

wife, Catherine falls powerfully in love with Heathcliff, the orphan Mr. Earnshaw brings home from Liverpool. Catherine loves Heathcliff so intensely that she claims they are the same person. However, her desire for social advancement motivates her to marry Edgar Linton instead. Catherine is free-spirited, beautiful, spoiled, and often arrogant. She is given to fits of temper, and she is torn between her wild passion for Heathcliff and her social ambition. She brings misery to both of the men who love her. Edgar Linton - Well-bred but rather spoiled as a boy, Edgar Linton grows into a tender, constant, but cowardly man. He is almost the ideal gentleman: Catherine accurately describes him as " handsome," " pleasant to be with," " cheerful," and " rich." However, this full assortment of gentlemanly characteristics, along with his civilized virtues, proves useless in Edgar's clashes with his foil, Heathcliff, who gains power over his wife, sister, and daughter. Nelly Dean - Nelly Dean (known formally as Ellen Dean) serves as the chief narrator of Wuthering Heights. A sensible, intelligent, and compassionate woman, she grew up essentially alongside Hindley and Catherine Earnshaw and is deeply involved in the story she tells. She has strong feelings for the characters in her story, and these feelings complicate her narration. Lockwood - Lockwood's narration forms a frame around Nelly's; he serves as an intermediary between Nelly and the reader. A somewhat vain and presumptuous gentleman, he deals very clumsily with the inhabitants of Wuthering Heights. Lockwood comes from a more domesticated region of England, and he finds himself at a loss when he witnesses the strange household's disregard for the social conventions that have always structured his world. As a narrator, his vanity and unfamiliarity with the story

occasionally lead him to misunderstand events. Young Catherine - The daughter of Edgar Linton and the first Catherine as " young Catherine." The first Catherine begins her life as Catherine Earnshaw and ends it as Catherine Linton; her daughter begins as Catherine Linton and, assuming that she marries Hareton after the end of the story, goes on to become Catherine Earnshaw. The mother and the daughter share not only a name, but also a tendency toward headstrong behavior, impetuosity, and occasional arrogance. However, Edgar's influence seems to have tempered young Catherine's character, and she is a gentler and more compassionate creature than her mother. Hareton Earnshaw - The son of Hindley and Frances Earnshaw, Hareton is Catherine's nephew. After Hindley's death, Heathcliff assumes custody of Hareton, and raises him as an uneducated field worker, just as Hindley had done to Heathcliff himself. Thus Heathcliff uses Hareton to seek revenge on Hindley. Illiterate and quick-tempered, Hareton is easily humiliated, but shows a good heart and a deep desire to improve himself. At the end of the novel, he marries young Catherine. Linton Heathcliff - Heathcliff's son by Isabella. Weak, sniveling, demanding, and constantly ill, Linton is raised in London by his mother and does not meet his father until he is thirteen years old, when he goes to live with him after his mother's death. Heathcliff despises Linton, treats him contemptuously, and, by forcing him to marry the young Catherine, and uses him to cement his control over Thrushcross Grange after Edgar Linton's death. Linton himself dies not long after this marriage. Hindley Earnshaw - Catherine's brother and Mr. Earnshaw's son. Hindley resents it when Heathcliff is brought to live at Wuthering Heights. After his father dies and he inherits the estate, Hindley

begins to abuse the young Heathcliff, terminating his education and forcing him to work in the fields. When Hindley's wife Frances dies shortly after giving birth to their son Hareton, he lapses into alcoholism and dissipation. Isabella Linton - Edgar Linton's sister, who falls in love with Heathcliff and marries him. She sees Heathcliff as a romantic figure, like a character in a novel. Ultimately, she ruins her life by falling in love with him. He never returns her feelings and treats her as a mere tool in his quest for revenge on the Linton family. Protagonists: Heathcliff, Catherine Symbols: The moors, ghosts Characteristics: Gloomy and misery; This a Gothic novel designed to both horrify and fascinate readers with scenes of passion and cruelty; supernatural elements; and a dark, foreboding atmosphere Response: I enjoyed this book despite the twisted end and though nothing turns out well. However, the book moved a long very well and I was interested to see how everything unfolded and concluded. Though I was some what disappointed with the death of nearly all the main characters, the novel in general was a good read.