

Wuthering Heights (Bronte)

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Wuthering Heights

Emily Bronte, 1847

~400 pp. (varies by publisher)

Summary

In early nineteenth-century Yorkshire, the passionate attachment between a headstrong young girl and a foundling boy brought up by her father causes disaster for them and many others, even in the next generation.

More

Considered lurid and shocking by mid-19th-century standards, *Wuthering Heights* was initially thought to be such a publishing risk that its author, Emily Bronte, was asked to pay some of the publication costs. A somber tale of consuming passions and vengeance played out against the lonely moors of northern England, the book proved to be one of the most enduring classics of English literature.

The turbulent and tempestuous love story of Cathy and Heathcliff spans two generations—from the time Heathcliff, a strange, course young boy, is brought to live on the Earnshaw's windswept estate, through Cathy's marriage to Edgar Linton and Heathcliff's plans for revenge, to Cathy's death years later and the eventual union of the surviving Earnshaw and Linton heirs.

A masterpiece of imaginative fiction, *Wuthering Heights* remains as poignant and compelling today as it was when first published in 1847. (From *Barnes and Noble*.)

Author Bio

- Birth—July 30, 1818
- Where—Thornton, Yorkshire, UK
- Death—December 19, 1848
- Where—Haworth, Yorkshire
- Education—Clergy Daughters' School at Cowan Bridge in Lancashire; Miss Wooler's School at Roe Head; Pensionnat Heger (Belgium, to study French and German)

Emily Bronte was born on July 30, 1818, in Thornton, Yorkshire, in the north of England, the third child of the Reverend Patrick Bronte and Maria Branwell Bronte. In

5. Discuss Bronte's use of twos: *Wuthering Heights* and Thrushcross Grange; two families, each with two children; two couples (Catherine and Edgar, and Heathcliff and Isabella); two narrators; the doubling-up of names. What is Bronte's intention here? Discuss.

6. How do Mr. Lockwood and Nelly Dean influence the story as narrators? Do you think they are completely reliable observers? What does Bronte want us to believe?


7. Discuss the role of women in *Wuthering Heights*. Is their depiction typical of Bronte's time, or not? Do you think Bronte's characterizations of women mark her as a pioneer ahead of her time or not?

8. Who or what does Heathcliff represent in the novel? Is he a force of evil or a victim of it? How important is the role of class in the novel, particularly as it relates to Heathcliff and his life?

(Questions issued by Penguin Classics edition—cover image, top right.)

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Emily Brontë

 *Encyclopedia of World Biography*, December 12, 1998
Updated: December 21, 2012

Born: August 30, 1818 in Thornton, United Kingdom
Died: December 19, 1848 in Haworth, United Kingdom
Other Names: Brontë, Emily Jane; Bell, Ellis
Nationality: British
Occupation: Novelist

The English novelist Emily Brontë (1818-1848) wrote only one novel, *Wuthering Heights*. A unique achievement in its time, this work dramatizes a vision of life controlled by elemental forces which transcend conventional categories of good and evil. It became an English literary classic.

Early Life

Emily Brontë was born in Thornton on August 20, 1818, the daughter of an Anglican minister. She grew up in Haworth in the bleak West Riding of Yorkshire. Except for an unhappy year at a charity school (described by her sister Charlotte as the Lowood Institution in *Jane Eyre*), her education was directed at home by her father, who let his children read freely and treated them as intellectual equals. The early death of their mother and two older sisters drove the remaining children into an intense and private intimacy.

Living in an isolated village, separated socially and intellectually from the local people, the Brontë sisters (Charlotte, Emily, and Anne) and their brother Branwell gave themselves wholly to fantasy worlds, which they chronicled in poems and tales and in "magazines" written in miniature script on tiny pieces of paper. As the children matured, their personalities diverged. She and Anne created the realm of Gondal. Located somewhere in the north, it was, like the West Riding, a land of wild moors. Unlike Charlotte and Branwell's emotional dreamworld Angria, Gondal's psychological and moral laws reflected those of the real world. But this did not mean that she found it any easier than her sister to submit herself to the confined life of a governess or schoolmistress to which she seemed inevitably bound. When at the age of 17 she attempted formal schooling for the second time, she broke down after 3 months, and a position as a teacher the following year proved equally insupportable despite a sincere struggle. In 1842 she accompanied Charlotte to Brussels for a year at school. During this time she impressed the master as having the finer, more powerful mind of the two.

The isolation of Haworth meant for Brontë not frustration as for her sister, but the freedom of the open moors. Here she experienced the world in terms of elemental forces outside of conventional categories of good and evil. Her vision was essentially mystical, rooted in the experience of a supernatural power, which she expressed in poems such as "To Imagination," "The Prisoner," "The Visionary," "The Old Stoic," and "No Coward Soul."

Writings

Brontë's first publication consisted of poems contributed under the pseudonym Ellis Bell to a volume of verses (1846) in which she collaborated with Anne and Charlotte. These remained unnoticed. Her novel, *Wuthering Heights* (1847), was unfavorably received. Set in the moors, it is the story of the effect of a foundling named Heathcliff on two neighboring families. Loving and hating with elemental intensity, he impinges on the conventions of civilization with demonic power.

Brontë died of consumption on December 19, 1848. Refusing all medical attention, she struggled to perform her household tasks until the end.

After Death

Wuthering Heights would go on to become a literary classic and make Brontë a revered author long after her death. Many television series, plays, and films were based on her novel. It was also studied in many English literature classes.

Further Readings

- Elizabeth Gaskell, *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* (2 vols., 1857), is a basic source. Charles W. Simpson, *Emily Brontë* (1929), is reliable and incorporates subsequently revealed material. See also Muriel Spark and Derek Stanford, *Emily Brontë: Her Life and Work* (1953). Critical interpretations of Brontë's work can be found in Steve Vine *Emily Brontë* (1998).
- "Emily Brontë," IMDb, <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0111577> (December 21, 2012).

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Gale Document Number: GALE|K1631000918

Author:**Bronte, Emily, 1818-1848****Adult Fiction****Description:**

Though she was also a poet, Emily **Bronte's** literary reputation rests almost entirely on her single Gothic novel, *Wuthering Heights*. **Bronte** and her sister Charlotte, with whom she is often grouped, built upon the burgeoning precepts of the Gothic novel, combining it with romanticism, and turned it into a high art form. Through elaborate prose and an extended, multi-generational storyline, Emily **Bronte's** is a tale of everlasting, obsessive love. Populated by the archetypical anti-hero and a dismal atmosphere (the Moors) which is a character in itself, **Bronte's** work explores themes of isolation, loss, and restoration. Start with: *Wuthering Heights*.

Book Appeal Terms: Definition of Appeal Terms**Genre:** Classics; Gothic fiction; Love stories**Character:** Brooding**Tone:** Atmospheric; Dramatic; Moody; Romantic**Persistent link to this record (Permalink):**<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=noh&fg=UI&an=1007582&site=novelist-live>**Database:**

Novelist

Author Characteristics:

Female

Great Britain

British

Web Sites:

Emily Bronte : The Bronte Society and Bronte Parsonage Museum website.

Genre:

Love stories

Classics

Gothic fiction

Character:

Brooding

Tone:

Atmospheric

Moody

Romantic

Dramatic

Subject headings:

Interclass romance

Jealousy