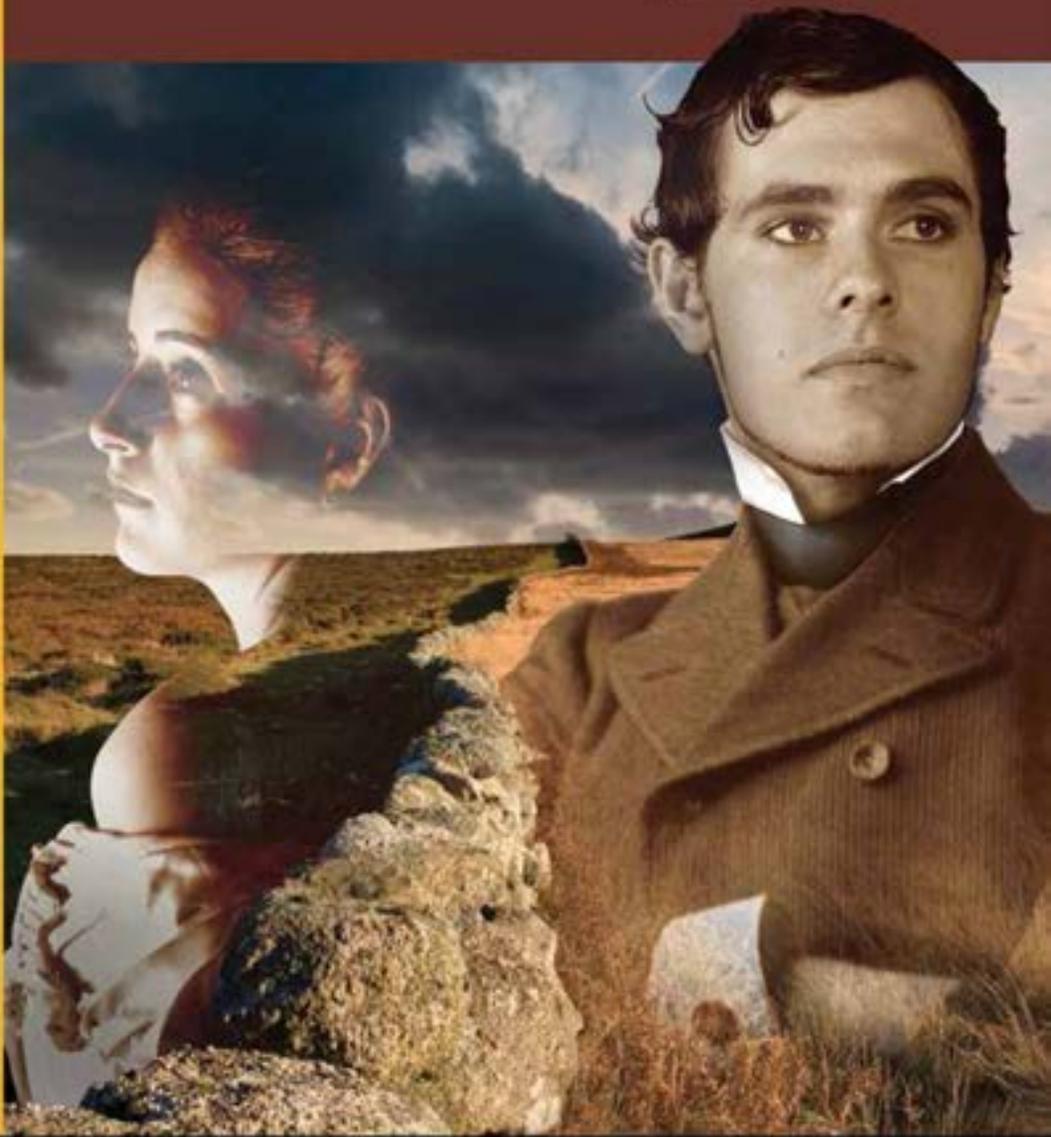


PRESTWICK HOUSE LITERARY TOUCHSTONE CLASSICS

# WUTHERING HEIGHTS

by Emily Brontë



UNABRIDGED WITH GLOSSARY AND NOTES

# WUTHERING HEIGHTS



Emily Brontë



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# WUTHERING HEIGHTS

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# Notes

## N O T E S

**What is a literary classic and why are these classic works important to the world?**

A literary classic is a work of the highest excellence that has something important to say about life and/or the human condition and says it with great artistry. A classic, through its enduring presence, has withstood the test of time and is not bound by time, place, or customs. It speaks to us today as forcefully as it spoke to people one hundred or more years ago, and as forcefully as it will speak to people of future generations. For this reason, a classic is said to have universality.

Emily Brontë was born on July 30, 1818, in England. She was one of six children—five girls and one boy. The Brontës moved to a village near the Yorkshire moors, a wild and desolate area of England and also the inspiration for the setting of some of the sisters' books. Theirs was a difficult and tragic existence, with the specter of disease and death a constant presence. Before Emily turned ten, her mother had died after a short bout with cancer, and two sisters had succumbed to tuberculosis. Elisabeth Branwell, an aunt, raised the remaining children. Although she was an authoritarian and imposing figure, Elisabeth did not stifle the children's imaginations; they read many books from the large family library and constructed their own worlds of imaginary people and situations.

In 1846, Emily and her two sisters published—using male names—a collection of their poems; it was titled *Poems by Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell*, pseudonyms for Charlotte, Emily, and Anne Brontë. The book, despite some of Emily's poems being singled out by a critic as excellent, sold only two copies. This disappointment did not discourage them, however, and they each began writing a novel.

Emily and her sister Charlotte went to Brussels in 1842 to learn foreign languages, but Emily soon returned home, where she lived for the remainder of her life.

Emily wrote only one novel, *Wuthering Heights* (1847), but it did not become an instant success like her sister Charlotte's *Jane Eyre* did. As with Charlotte's book, critics were reluctant to admit that a woman who lived a sheltered life could have written such a passionate book, especially one filled with "such vulgar depravity."

Emily Brontë died on December 19, 1848, only three months after the death of her brother, Branwell; she had caught a serious cold at the funeral and refused any medical treatment.

# Pointers

## READING POINTERS

### Reading Pointers for Sharper Insights

As you read *Wuthering Heights*, be aware of the following:

1. themes:
  - the dangers of neglecting one's true self in favor of material gain
  - the consequences of self-deception
  - the conflicts between society and the individual
  - the idea that people must change and adapt or be destroyed
  - the ongoing battle between intellect and passion
2. motifs and symbols:
  - revenge
  - the supernatural
  - paired opposites (see *Romanticism* below)
  - nature as a reflection of human emotion
3. tools the author uses:
  - frame narrative (the telling of a story within a story)
  - a shifting point of view
  - dialogue
  - dialect
4. elements of Romanticism:
  - the idea of nature as a powerful spiritual force
  - the descriptions of the English countryside
  - a constant elevated emotional level and passion
  - a desire to rise above the limitations of ordinary human existence
  - a strong interest in death
  - a portrayal of opposites, including escape and pursuit, calmness and turbulence, upper and lower classes, suffering and peace
  - isolation, both emotional and geographical
5. the role of women in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, especially within a patriarchal society



# C H A P T E R I

1801.—I HAVE JUST returned from a visit to my landlord—the solitary neighbour that I shall be troubled with. This is certainly a beautiful country! In all England, I do not believe that I could have fixed on a situation so completely removed from the stir of society. A perfect misanthropist's heaven: and Mr. Heathcliff and I are such a suitable pair to divide the desolation between us. A capital fellow! He little imagined how my heart warmed towards him when I beheld his black eyes withdraw so suspiciously under their brows, as I rode up, and when his fingers sheltered themselves, with a jealous resolution, still further in his waistcoat, as I announced my name.

“Mr. Heathcliff?” I said.

A nod was the answer.

“Mr. Lockwood, your new tenant, sir. I do myself the honour of calling as soon as possible after my arrival, to express the hope that I have not inconvenienced you by my perseverance in soliciting the occupation of Thrushcross Grange: I heard yesterday you had had some thoughts—”

“Thrushcross Grange is my own, sir,” he interrupted, wincing. “I should not allow any one to inconvenience me, if I could hinder it—walk in!”

The “walk in” was uttered with closed teeth, and expressed the sentiment, “go to the deuce:”<sup>†</sup> even the gate over which he leant manifested no sympathising movement to the words; and I think that circumstances determined

<sup>†</sup>Terms marked in the text with (†) can be looked up in the Glossary for additional information.

me to accept the invitation: I felt interested in a man who seemed more exaggeratedly reserved than myself.

When he saw my horse's breast fairly pushing the barrier, he put out his hand to unchain it, and then sullenly preceded me up the causeway, calling, as we entered the court—"Joseph, take Mr. Lockwood's horse; and bring up some wine."

"Here we have the whole establishment of domestics, I suppose," was the reflection suggested by this compound order. "No wonder the grass grows up between the flags, and cattle are the only hedge-cutters."

Joseph was an elderly, nay, an old man: very old, perhaps, though hale and sinewy. "The Lord help us!" he soliloquised in an undertone of peevish displeasure, while relieving me of my horse: looking, meantime, in my face so sourly that I charitably conjectured he must have need of divine aid to digest his dinner, and his pious ejaculation had no reference to my unexpected advent.

Wuthering Heights is the name of Mr. Heathcliff's dwelling. "Wuthering" being a significant provincial adjective, descriptive of the atmospheric tumult to which its station is exposed in stormy weather. Pure, bracing ventilation they must have up there at all times, indeed: one may guess the power of the north wind blowing over the edge, by the excessive slant of a few stunted firs at the end of the house; and by a range of gaunt thorns all stretching their limbs one way, as if craving alms of the sun. Happily, the architect had foresight to build it strong: the narrow windows are deeply set in the wall, and the corners defended with large jutting stones.

Before passing the threshold, I paused to admire a quantity of grotesque carving lavished over the front, and especially about the principal door; above which, among a wilderness of crumbling griffins and shameless little boys, I detected the date "1500," and the name "Hareton Earnshaw." I would have made a few comments, and requested a short history of the place from the surly owner; but his attitude at the door appeared to demand my speedy entrance, or complete departure, and I had no desire to aggravate his impatience previous to inspecting the penetralium.

One step brought us into the family sitting-room, without any introductory lobby or passage: they call it here "the house" preëminently. It includes kitchen and parlour generally; but I believe at Wuthering Heights the kitchen is forced to retreat altogether into another quarter: at least I distinguished a chatter of tongues, and a clatter of culinary utensils, deep within; and I observed no signs of roasting, boiling, or baking, about the huge fireplace; nor any glitter of copper saucepans and tin cullenders on the walls. One end, indeed, reflected splendidly both light and heat from ranks of immense pewter dishes, interspersed with silver jugs and tankards, towering row after row, on a vast oak dresser, to the very roof. The latter had never been underdrawn:

its entire anatomy lay bare to an inquiring eye, except where a frame of wood laden with oatcakes and clusters of legs of beef, mutton, and ham, concealed it. Above the chimney were sundry villainous old guns, and a couple of horse-pistols: and, by way of ornament, three gaudily-painted canisters disposed along its ledge. The floor was of smooth, white stone; the chairs, high-backed, primitive structures, painted green: one or two heavy black ones lurking in the shade. In an arch under the dresser reposed a huge, liver-coloured bitch pointer, surrounded by a swarm of squealing puppies; and other dogs haunted other recesses.

The apartment and furniture would have been nothing extraordinary as belonging to a homely, northern farmer, with a stubborn countenance, and stalwart limbs set out to advantage in knee-breeches and gaiters. Such an individual seated in his arm-chair, his mug of ale frothing on the round table before him, is to be seen in any circuit of five or six miles among these hills, if you go at the right time after dinner. But Mr. Heathcliff forms a singular contrast to his abode and style of living. He is a dark-skinned gipsy<sup>†</sup> in aspect, in dress and manners a gentleman: that is, as much a gentleman as many a country squire: rather slovenly, perhaps, yet not looking amiss with his negligence, because he has an erect and handsome figure; and rather morose. Possibly, some people might suspect him of a degree of under-bred pride; I have a sympathetic chord within that tells me it is nothing of the sort: I know, by instinct, his reserve springs from an aversion to showy displays of feeling—to manifestations of mutual kindness. He'll love and hate equally under cover, and esteem it a species of impertinence to be loved or hated again. No, I'm running on too fast: I bestow my own attributes over-liberally on him. Mr. Heathcliff may have entirely dissimilar reasons for keeping his hand out of the way when he meets a would-be acquaintance, to those which actuate me. Let me hope my constitution is almost peculiar: my dear mother used to say I should never have a comfortable home; and only last summer I proved myself perfectly unworthy of one.

While enjoying a month of fine weather at the sea-coast, I was thrown into the company of a most fascinating creature: a real goddess in my eyes, as long as she took no notice of me. I "never told my love" vocally; still, if looks have language, the merest idiot might have guessed I was over head and ears: she understood me at last, and looked a return—the sweetest of all imaginable looks. And what did I do? I confess it with shame—shrunk icily into myself, like a snail; at every glance retired colder and farther; till finally the poor innocent was led to doubt her own senses, and, overwhelmed with confusion at her supposed mistake, persuaded her mamma to decamp. By this curious turn of disposition I have gained the reputation of deliberate heartlessness; how undeserved, I alone can appreciate.

I took a seat at the end of the hearthstone opposite that towards which my

landlord advanced, and filled up an interval of silence by attempting to caress the canine mother, who had left her nursery, and was sneaking wolfishly to the back of my legs, her lip curled up, and her white teeth watering for a snatch. My caress provoked a long, guttural gnarl.

"You'd better let the dog alone," growled Mr. Heathcliff in unison, checking fiercer demonstrations with a punch of his foot. "She's not accustomed to be spoiled—not kept for a pet." Then, striding to a side door, he shouted again, "Joseph!"

Joseph mumbled indistinctly in the depths of the cellar, but gave no intimation of ascending; so his master dived down to him, leaving me *vis-a-vis* the ruffianly bitch and a pair of grim shaggy sheep-dogs, who shared with her a jealous guardianship over all my movements. Not anxious to come in contact with their fangs, I sat still; but, imagining they would scarcely understand tacit insults, I unfortunately indulged in winking and making faces at the trio, and some turn of my physiognomy so irritated madam, that she suddenly broke into a fury and leapt on my knees. I flung her back, and hastened to interpose the table between us. This proceeding aroused the whole hive: half-a-dozen four-footed fiends, of various sizes and ages, issued from hidden dens to the common centre. I felt my heels and coat-laps peculiar subjects of assault; and parrying off the larger combatants as effectually as I could with the poker, I was constrained to demand, aloud, assistance from some of the household in re-establishing peace.

Mr. Heathcliff and his man climbed the cellar steps with vexatious phlegm: I don't think they moved one second faster than usual, though the hearth was an absolute tempest of worrying and yelping. Happily, an inhabitant of the kitchen made more despatch: a lusty dame, with tucked-up gown, bare arms, and fire-flushed cheeks, rushed into the midst of us flourishing a frying-pan: and used that weapon, and her tongue, to such purpose, that the storm subsided magically, and she only remained, heaving like a sea after a high wind, when her master entered on the scene.

"What the devil is the matter?" he asked, eyeing me in a manner that I could ill endure after this inhospitable treatment.

"What the devil, indeed!" I muttered. "The herd of possessed swine<sup>†</sup> could have had no worse spirits in them than those animals of yours, sir. You might as well leave a stranger with a brood of tigers!"

"They won't meddle with persons who touch nothing," he remarked, putting the bottle before me, and restoring the displaced table. "The dogs do right to be vigilant. Take a glass of wine?"

"No thank you."

"Not bitten, are you?"

"If I had been, I would have set my signet on the biter." Heathcliff's countenance relaxed into a grin.

## Glossary

### Chapter I

“go to the deuce” – “go to the devil” a mild oath

gipsy – [gypsy]

herd of possessed swine – an allusion to Matthew 8:28, in which Jesus sends demons out of possessed men and into a herd of swine

### Chapter II

N.B. – [*Latin: nota bene*] note well; pay attention to

King Lear – the leading character in *King Lear*, a Shakespearean tragedy; Lockwood makes this reference to show his intelligence, which separates him from the lower class.

### Chapter III

Th’ **Helmet o’ Salvation** – from Isaiah 59:17, which reads: “For [the Lord] put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak.”

In Roman Catholic tradition, a piece of clothing, called an *amice* is worn around the priest’s shoulders as a representation of the helmet of salvation.

T’ **Brooad Way to Destruction** – from Matthew 7:13, which reads: “Enter ye in at the strait gait: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat”

“**Seventy Times Seven, and the First of the Seventy-First.**’ ” – a reference to the answer Christ gave when asked how many times a man should be forgiven

### Chapter IV

strike my colours – surrender

Liverpool – a large city in northwest England

the **three kingdoms** – a term used for referring to England, Scotland, and Ireland before the creation of the United Kingdom

### Chapter V

Pharisee – originally, a member of a Jewish religious and political party; the Pharisees’ main objective was to emphasize strict observance of Hebrew law. However, when Christians introduced the New Testament, the Pharisees were portrayed as people who were obsessed with man-made rules and were viewed as self-righteous; *Pharisee* is now used as a derogatory term for a hypocrite or self-righteous person.

## Vocabulary

Throughout *Wuthering Heights*, Brontë uses a great deal of complicated dialect. Most words can be defined easily by their context, but the meaning of others cannot be determined.

### Chapter I

- abode** – a home, dwelling  
**actuate** – to put into motion  
**advent** – arrival  
**alms** – gifts, charity  
**attributes** – qualities  
**auxiliary** – supporting  
**aversion** – a hatred, detestation  
**capital** – first-rate, excellent  
**causeway** – a road built up over water or marshlands  
**coat-laps** – [dialect] collars, lapels  
**conjectured** – judged  
**countenance** – an appearance  
**culinary** – relating to the kitchen or cooking  
**cullenders** – [*colanders*] bowl-shaped strainers  
**ejaculation** – a sudden, short exclamation  
**flags** – stones used to pave walkways; flagstones  
**gaiters** – a style of leg coverings that reach to the middle of the calf  
**gaunt** – thin  
**griffins** – mythical beasts with the head and wings of an eagle and body of a lion  
**grotesque** – an artistic style that involves distorting the human form, intermixing monstrous figures and fantastic elements  
**impertinence** – disrespect  
**laconic** – concise; brief  
**loth** – [*loathe*] reluctant  
**misanthropist** – [*misanthrope*] a person who hates or mistrusts humanity  
**penetralium** – the innermost part of a building  
**perseverance** – persistent effort despite discouragement  
**phlegm** – self control  
**physiognomy** – facial features  
**pious** – reverent  
**prudential** – using good judgment; sensible  
**recesses** – nooks, corners  
**reposed** – relaxed