

Intermediate



B2 (Vantage)

R A I N B O W S

Wuthering Heights

Emily Brontë



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Wuthering Heights

Adaptation, dossiers and activities
by Annabel Pope



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Wuthering Heights

Project editor: Raffaele Polichetti

Revisor: Stephan Cooper

Design: Manuela Piacenti

Illustrations: Emanuele Bartolini

Quality controller: Paola Ghigo

Page layout: Costantino Seminara

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Our email address: info@edisco.it

Our website address: <http://www.edisco.it>

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Via Pastrengo 28

10128 Torino (Italy)

Tel. (+39) 011.54.78.80

Fax (+39) 011.51.75.396

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The Author

Emily Brontë



Emily Brontë was born on 30th July 1818 in Thornton, Yorkshire, in the north of England. She was the fifth child of Maria Branwell, and Patrick Brunty, an Irish clergyman¹ who was such an admirer of Nelson that he changed his name from Brunty to Brontë after the King of Naples created Nelson “Duke of Bronte” (the diaeresis means that “e” must be pronounced). In 1820, he

became parson² of Haworth, a remote village on the Yorkshire moors³. Her mother died when she was only three, followed by her two elder sisters, Marie and Elizabeth, who both caught tuberculosis while at school. Emily and her elder sister Charlotte returned to the parsonage⁴, where their aunt had come to look after them, with their brother Branwell and their little sister Anne.

Here their education was the freedom of the wild, desolate moors and the intense, emotional contact with nature it gave them, as well as easy access to their father’s library, where they not only devoured books such as the Bible, Homer, Virgil, Shakespeare, Milton, Scott and Byron, but also magazines on current affairs. Their vivid imaginations were inspired by a box of toy soldiers that their father brought home to Branwell from Leeds. This gift and the lonely childhood they lived led to their invention of a magical, imaginary world in which they played, and about which they began to write plays and poetry. Charlotte and her brother created the island of “Angria” while, in 1834, Emily and Anne branched off⁵ into “Gondral”. Their writing was to find its inspiration in these make-believe⁶ worlds.

Most of Emily’s excursions into the outside world ended in disillusionment and retreat home. In 1835 she attended Roe Head

1. *clergyman*: a minister of the Christian church.
2. *parson*: a protestant clergyman who looks after a church and its parish.
3. *moor*: an open area of hills covered with rough grass.
4. *parsonage*: a parson's house (a parson is a member of the Protestant clergy).
5. *branched off*: left a path and took another direction.
6. *make-believe*: imaginary, like a child's game of pretending.

School but became ill and returned to Haworth. Two years later, in 1837, she spent six months as a governess⁷ at a girls' school near Halifax, but once again came back unwell.

Their independence, financial included, was of great importance to the sisters, so in 1842 Charlotte and Emily went to Brussels to learn French and widen their education with the view to opening their own school. However, their aunt died, and she came home after only a few months. The school was never opened.

Emily was often alone at home, where she took on the responsibilities of housekeeper after the death of her aunt. She was never without animals, and would never miss an opportunity to escape to the moors to which she was intensely attached and which were her solace⁸ in times of trouble.

In 1845, Charlotte happened to come across a book of Emily's early poems and was deeply impressed by them. With great difficulty she persuaded her to publish a volume of the sisters' joint poems, under the pseudonyms of Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell, which disguised their female identity. Its publication encouraged them to have faith in their ability to earn a living by writing, so each sister began to write a novel: Emily *Wuthering Heights*, Charlotte *The Professor* and Anne *Agnes Grey*.

In the meantime, their beloved, handsome, sensitive brother, Branwell, had become addicted to drink and drugs, unable to cope with personal problems. Emily and her sisters watched his tragic decline, until he finally caught tuberculosis and died on 24th September 1848. It was very probably at his funeral that Emily contracted the same disease, and not long afterwards it became clear that she too had the fatal cough and weakness.

Emily's stoicism and quiet, unspoken courage remained with her to the end. On the morning of 19th December 1848, Charlotte took a walk to find a sprig⁹ of heather¹⁰ to place on her sister's pillow. She was deeply moved¹¹ by Emily's "stern, simple, undemonstrative" death later that day, as she helplessly watched her "turning her dying eyes reluctantly from the pleasant sun"¹².

7. *governess*: a lady employed to educate the children of a wealthy family in their own home.

8. *solace*: something or someone which makes you feel better when you are sad or disappointed.

9. *sprig*: a very small stem with leaves

on it picked from a bush or plant.

10. *heather*: a wild plant with white or purple flowers which grows on open land and hills.

11. *moved*: had strong feelings of sadness.

12. from one of Charlotte's letters.



BEFORE READING

1 What kind of story do you expect *Wuthering Heights* to be? Choose from the following.

- A romantic love story
- A dramatic family saga
- A gripping adventure story
- A detective story
- A historical novel
- A passionate intrigue of human emotions
- A ghost story
- A legend

2 When do you think the story is set? Tick the correct box.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> In the Middle Ages | <input type="checkbox"/> In the 17 th century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> In the 18 th century | <input type="checkbox"/> In the 19 th century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> In contemporary times | <input type="checkbox"/> In the future |

3 Look at the picture of the Yorkshire moors. What kind of emotions do they inspire in you? Choose from the list below.

- | | | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> freedom | <input type="checkbox"/> power | <input type="checkbox"/> fear | <input type="checkbox"/> pleasure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> nostalgia | <input type="checkbox"/> sadness | <input type="checkbox"/> passion | <input type="checkbox"/> anger |
| <input type="checkbox"/> jealousy | <input type="checkbox"/> violence | <input type="checkbox"/> suffering | <input type="checkbox"/> peace |



Wuthering Heights

A Strange Household

Chapter 1

*“There is a spot, ’mid barren hills
Where winter howls¹ and driving rain;
But, if the dreary tempest chills
There is a light that warms again”*

(Emily Brontë, “A little While”, a poem from the collection published in 1846 by the three sisters under the pseudonyms of Currer, Acton and Bell.)

Lockwood kicked his horse into a gallop, the fresh, sharp air filling his lungs as he rode across the beautiful wild moors to meet his neighbour and landlord for the first time. How right he had been in choosing this magnificently remote spot of England to escape from society for a while.

He saw the farm from afar, indeed he could not have missed it, perched² as it was in isolation up on the hill, exposed to the elements. Its four high cornerstones were silhouetted against the sky, the rays of the sun catching the light on the deep-set³, high, narrow windows. The few trees and bushes that grew around it slanted⁴ sadly in the same direction, blown by the unforgiving, cold, north wind. Wuthering Heights was certainly a perfect name for the place, the term “wuthering” referring to the terrible storms which so frequently whirled⁵ over the hills, one of which, to a more expert eye, could have been seen to be approaching in the distance, in spite of the sunshine.

As he rode up to the gate, he caught sight of a lone, dark figure in the rather neglected yard behind it. He called out, cheerfully,

“Hello, Mr Heathcliff? I’m Lockwood, your new tenant from Thrushcross Grange.”

1. *howls*: makes a long, loud cry.
2. *perched*: placed in a high and / or dangerous position.
3. *deep-set*: set far back in the wall (usually used to describe eyes in a

person’s face).

4. *slanted*: leaned in one position.
5. *whirled*: moved around quickly in a circle or in one particular direction.



The cold welcome Lockwood receives when he steps into the house kitchen.
(from *Wuthering Heights*, by W. Wyler, 1939)



"Cathy, my love, where are you? Please Cathy, come back one last time..."
(from *Wuthering Heights*, by W. Wyler, 1939)

A Strange Household

He was not discouraged by the suspicious glance from coal black eyes and the lack of a welcoming reply, but pushed his horse up against the gate so that Heathcliff was obliged to open it. He was granted a curt⁶ nod,

“You’d better come in, there’s snow on the way” muttered from between closed teeth, and a rather grumpy⁷ old servant by the name of Joseph took his horse as he followed his landlord up the path through the yard. He noticed the inscription, “Hareton Earnshaw 1500”, over the doorway as he stepped into the large, open kitchen with its huge fire and white stone floor, dogs of various shapes and sizes lying asleep in the dark corners of the room.



Lockwood was agreeably surprised at Heathcliff’s conversation, and at how his dark-skinned, gipsy-like, unconventional looks were a complete contrast to his somewhat reserved, but gentlemanly manners and dress. The door opened again and a strong, healthy young man, though a little untidy and uncared for, came inside leaving a pitchfork⁸ on the doorstep and, saying half to himself, “There’ll be snow soon”, he sat at the table, quite ignoring both the newcomer and Heathcliff.

The table was laid for tea, and as Lockwood’s gallop over the moors had given him an appetite, he hoped he would be invited to share it, wondering vaguely why they spoke of snow when the sun was shining. He was startled⁹ when a voice came from a large armchair by the fire saying irritably, “Is he staying for tea?”, but smiled in surprise when an extremely pretty young lady stood up and reached for the tea caddy¹⁰ on the shelf.

“If he does, he won’t get home. He’ll never find his way through the marshes¹¹ in a snowstorm and there’s nowhere for him to sleep here”, replied Heathcliff impatiently.

6. *curt*: in a very quick, almost rude way.

7. *grumpy*: bad-tempered.

8. *pitchfork*: a farm tool in the shape of a large fork with a long handle and two or three sharp, metal points.

9. *startled*: surprised suddenly in a way that slightly shocked or frightened him.

10. *tea caddy*: a small box with a lid on it in which tea was kept.

11. *marshes*: an area of low land that is always soft and wet because there is nowhere for the water to flow away to.

WORKING ON THE TEXT

1 True or false? Tick the correct box.

- | | T | F |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Lockwood is Heathcliff's landlord. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Heathcliff is the owner of Thrushcross Grange. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Earnshaw is Heathcliff's son. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. Zillah is Heathcliff's wife. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e. Joseph is the servant. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f. Cathy is a ghost. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| g. Mrs Dean is Mr Lockwood's mother. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

2 Answer the following questions.

a. Why has Lockwood rented Thrushcross Grange? Tick the correct answer:

- He has business to do in the area.
- He is looking for a house to buy.
- He wants to have some time away from the pressures of London society.
- He is trying to forget an unhappy love affair.
- He is writing a book about beautiful landscapes in England.

b. Do you think the young lady is Heathcliff's wife? Give a reason for your answer.

.....

c. What does the term "wuthering" refer to?

.....

d. In what order does Lockwood meet these characters?

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Earnshaw | <input type="checkbox"/> Joseph | <input type="checkbox"/> Mrs Dean |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Zillah | <input type="checkbox"/> Heathcliff | <input type="checkbox"/> Mrs Heathcliff |

e. Why does Lockwood feel uncomfortable and ill at ease at Wuthering Heights? Tick the correct answers.

- The house is cold and dark.
- He is frightened of the dogs.
- He is treated coldly and made to feel unwelcome.
- The bed is uncomfortable.
- The window in the bedroom is broken.
- He feels trapped because he cannot leave due to the snowstorm.
- He feels homesick for Thrushcross Grange.

WORKING ON SKILLS

Writing

- 5 What was your first impression of Heathcliff as you read the text? Use your own words to describe how you imagine him to be, then compare your description with your partner's.

.....

.....

.....

.....

Listening



6 Listen to the dialogue and answer the following questions.

- a. Who do you think the little girl is?
- b. Is she a ghost or only Lockwood's imagination?
- c. Why is the little girl outside in the cold?
- d. Why can't she open the window?
- e. What does Lockwood ask her?
- f. What does she say her name is?
- g. What does she want?
- h. Why can't Lockwood open the window immediately?
- i. How long has the little girl been waiting to come home?

Speaking

- 7 *Nightmare or Ghost?* Have you ever had a nightmare that you have never forgotten? Have you ever seen a ghost? Tell your friends about it and listen to their own experiences.



The Nightmare
(J. H. Fuseli, 1781).