



Theme of Love and Revenge in the Novel Wuthering Heights

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Emily Jane Bronte was an English novelist and poet who is best known for her only novel Wuthering Heights. Emily was the second youngest of the four surviving Bronte siblings. She published under the pen name Ellis Bell. She wrote a single novel, Wuthering Heights. It is a highly imaginative work of passion and hate set on the Yorkshire moors. It received terrible reviews when first published but came to be considered one of the finest novels in English literature.

Wuthering Heights, when published in December 1847, did not fare well; critics were hostile, calling it too savage, too animal-like, and clumsy in construction. Wuthering Heights's violence and passion led the Victorian public and many early reviewers to think that it had been written by a man.

Wuthering Heights is a novel written by an early Victorian novelist Emily Bronte. It has a well-knit and well-constructed plot. The story is compact and all the events are well arranged and inter-connected. It appears that Emily Bronte devoted a good deal of thought to the construction of the story. *It is a multigenerational story of love and revenge that revolves around the inhabitants of a desolate farmhouse called Wuthering Heights and its owner Heathcliff.*

It concerns two families of the landed gentry living on the West Yorkshire moors, the Earnshaws and the Lintons, and their turbulent relationships with Earnshaw's adopted son, Heathcliff. It was influenced by Romanticism and Gothic fiction. *Wuthering Heights* is now considered a classic of English literature. It was controversial for its depictions of mental and physical cruelty, and for its challenges to Victorian morality, and religious and societal values.

It is a love story of Heathcliff and Catherine. And it is also a story of Heathcliff's revenge. We can also see the revenge of Hindley. In the late winter months 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. But he is not satisfied with ruining the life of Hindley and he starts ruining Hindley's son Hareton. He stops his education and teaches him bad habits and corrupts his manners. Like Hindley he regards Edgar Linton, too as his enemy, for he married Catherine the woman he loved. So he begins to take revenge on him. 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. The extremely close and entirely sexless relationship is there between Heathcliff and Catherine. 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, 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.

In another sense, however, Cathy and Hareton resemble the earlier Catherine and Heathcliff, purified of their wilder and more antisocial elements. Their marriage could be an echo of the marriage that never took place between Catherine and Heathcliff. Catherine and Heathcliff belonged above all to the natural and immaterial world. The reunion in death of the two lovers constitutes their achievement of complete freedom and their love. Heathcliff's frustration in love as well as cruel and unjust treatment that he gets made him

destructive and revengeful. But he realizes at the end of the novel that he no longer cares about getting revenge.

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