

WUTHERING HEIGHTS

Original by Emily Brontë

Retold by Pauline Francis





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Introduction

Emily Brontë was born in 1818 in Yorkshire, in the north of England, the fifth of six children. When she was two years old, her father became the vicar of Haworth, a small town on the Yorkshire Moors. A year later, Emily's mother died and their aunt came to look after the children.

Emily was sent away to school with her sisters, Charlotte, Maria and Elizabeth. Maria and Elizabeth both died, and the surviving sisters were taught at home.

Wuthering Heights was Emily Brontë's only novel. It was published in 1847 under the name Ellis Bell, as novels by women were not often published. It tells the story of an orphan boy, Heathcliff, who is brought up by the Earnshaw family at Wuthering Heights, a house high on the Yorkshire Moors. He falls in love with their daughter, Cathy Earnshaw. This love obsesses him and brings him into conflict with the Linton family, who live close by at Thrushcross Grange. It leads Heathcliff to commit wicked acts of revenge for many years.

This novel has been made into many plays and films, and is studied widely in schools and colleges.

Emily Brontë did not marry. She lived happily at Haworth until her death in 1848, at the age of only thirty.

CHAPTER ONE

The Orphan Boy

My name is Mrs Ellen Dean, although some people call me Nelly, and I worked as housekeeper to Mr and Mrs Earnshaw, who lived at Wuthering Heights. The story I'm about to tell began when Miss Cathy Earnshaw was just six years old and her brother Hindley was fourteen.

One fine summer morning, Mr Earnshaw travelled to Liverpool for a few days.

'What shall I bring you back?' he asked his children.

Master Hindley asked for a fiddle and Miss Cathy said, 'Please may I have a whip for my horse?'

My master came back late on the third day. He sank exhausted into a chair and opened his warm overcoat to reveal a small child. It was a ragged and dirty boy, just old enough to walk and talk.

His wife was angry. 'Why have you brought this child *here*?' she cried. 'Are you mad?'

'I found him alone and starving in the streets of Liverpool', her husband replied. 'How could I leave him there?'

The boy stayed. He was given the name Heathcliff, the name of an Earnshaw son who had died in childhood. This name has been both his first and family name ever since.