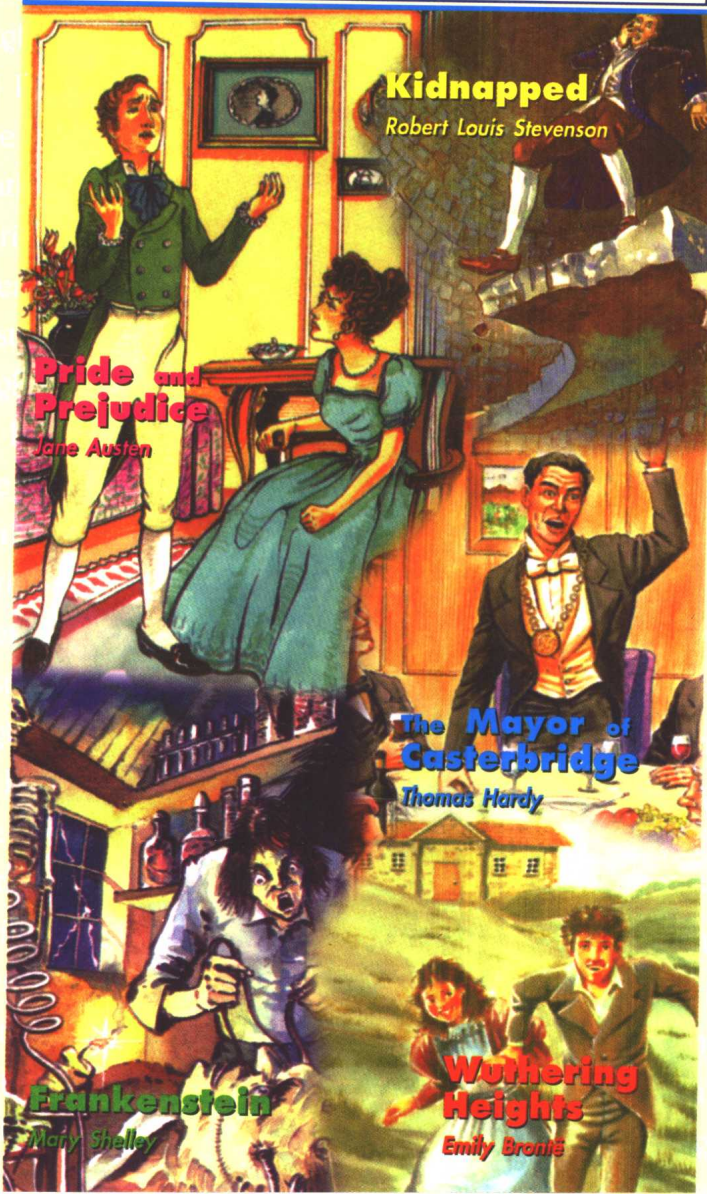


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Wuthering Heights

Emily Brontë



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Wuthering Heights

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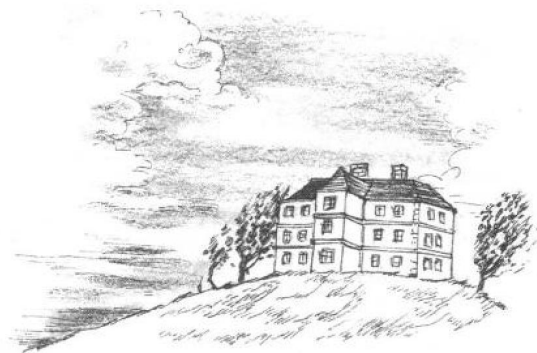
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THE EARNSHAW OF WUTHERING HEIGHTS

Heathcliff's arrival

Before I came to live here at Thrushcross Grange, I, Ellen Dean, was nearly always at Wuthering Heights. My mother was employed there as a children's nurse, and I was allowed to play with the two children, Hindley and Catherine. I liked to do small jobs, too, and waited around the farm, ready for anything that anybody would give me to do. 5

One fine summer morning at the beginning of the harvest, in 1771 I think it was, Mr Earnshaw, the old master, came downstairs dressed for a journey. First he told Joseph, the servant, what was to be done during the day. Then he turned to Hindley and Catherine. Speaking to his son, he said, 'Now, my young man, I'm going to Liverpool today. What shall I bring back for you? You may choose what you like, but it must be small, for I shall walk there and back. It's sixty miles each way, and that's a long distance.' 10 15

Hindley chose a toy violin. Then the master asked Miss Catherine. She was not quite six years old, but she could ride any horse in the stable, and so she chose a whip. He did not forget me, for, although he was rather strict sometimes, he had a kind heart. He promised to bring me some apples and pears. Then he said goodbye to his wife, kissed his children and set off. 20

It seemed a long time to us all — the three days that he was away. Little Catherine often asked when her father would be home. 25

Mrs Earnshaw expected her husband by supper-time on the third evening. Although we ate our meal late, there was no sign of him coming. The children asked if they could stay up and wait for him. Then, at last, at about eleven o'clock, the door opened quietly and the master stepped in. He threw himself into a chair. He looked happy, and glad to be home, 30

but he told the children to wait patiently, for his long walk had made him very tired.

- 'At the end of it, I was almost worried to death!' he said, opening his coat, which he held wrapped up in his arms.
- 5 'Look! I have never been bothered so much by anything before. But you must take him as a gift of God.'

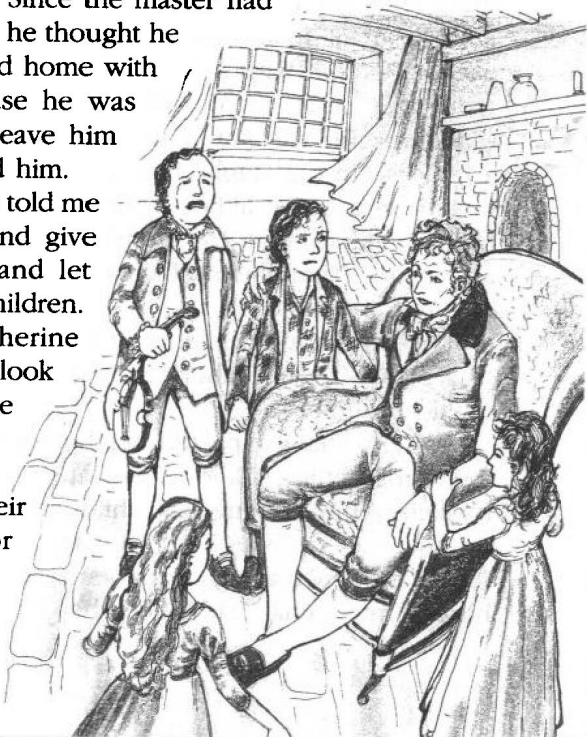
The strange child

- We crowded round. Looking over Miss Catherine's head, I saw a dirty, black-haired boy, big enough to walk and talk.
- 10 Indeed, his face looked older than Catherine's. When he was set on his feet, he only stared round, and repeated some words that nobody could understand. I was frightened. What would they do with such a wild, dirty child?

- The master tried to explain that he had pitied the child and decided to give him shelter under his own roof. He told us, quickly, that he had seen the child dying of hunger, homeless, and unable to speak any known language, in the streets of Liverpool. Since the master had
- 15 little money or time, he thought he should take the child home with him at once, because he was determined not to leave him where he had found him.
- 20

- Mr Earnshaw then told me
- 25 to wash the boy, and give him clean clothes and let him sleep with the children.

- Hindley and Catherine were content to just look
- 30 and listen until there was peace again. Then they both began searching their father's pockets for the presents he had
- 35 promised them.



Hindley was a boy of fourteen, but when he drew out what had once been a toy violin, now crushed to pieces in his father's coat, he cried loudly. When Catherine heard that the master had lost her whip while looking after the stranger, she made a nasty face at the boy and spat at him. Her father then hit her, to teach her better manners. 5

The children refused to share a bed with him, or even to allow him in their room. I did not want him either, so I put him near the top of the stairs, hoping that he would be gone by the next day. In the night, the child crept to Mr Earnshaw's door. The master found him there the next day and asked why he was there. I had to confess, and as a punishment for my cruel behaviour, I was sent out of the house. 10

I went back a few days later, for I thought Mr Earnshaw did not want me to stay away for ever. I found they had named the boy Heathcliff. It was the name of Mr Earnshaw's younger son, who had died when he was a baby. It was the only name they gave him, and it was used both as his first name and his last one. 15

Miss Catherine and he were soon very good friends, but Hindley hated him. I hated him too, and we treated him very badly. 20

The new child causes jealousy

He seemed a silent, patient child, perhaps because he was used to bad treatment. He never cried when Hindley beat him. If I pinched him, he would just breathe deeply and open his eyes, as if he had hurt himself by accident. Hindley's behaviour made old Mr Earnshaw very angry. When he discovered his son hurting Heathcliff, he always sympathized with Heathcliff and punished Hindley. It is true that Hindley was usually to blame. The master loved this little stranger far more than he loved his own daughter, who was too naughty and mischievous to be a favourite. So from the beginning, Heathcliff caused bad feeling in the house. 25 30

Mrs Earnshaw died, less than two years later, and by then Hindley had already learnt to think of his father as a stern, 35

unfriendly person. Heathcliff was treated like a favourite son, and Hindley hated him more and more. He thought that this strange child had stolen all his father's love. I, too, often wondered why my master admired this unfriendly boy so much. I never saw him show any sign of real love towards Mr Earnshaw, for all his kindness.

When the children all fell ill at the same time, I had to look after them. It was then that my feelings changed towards Heathcliff. He was dangerously ill, and I had to nurse him all the time. He was the quietest child anyone could have nursed, and he seemed grateful for my help. The difference between him and the others, who both gave me a great deal of trouble, made me like Heathcliff better.

Heathcliff recovered, and the doctor praised me for caring for him so well. This pleased me very much, and I became fond of Heathcliff, who had caused me to receive such praise. Now Hindley was alone in his hatred of Heathcliff.

Hindley is sent to college

In a few more years, old Mr Earnshaw began to grow weaker. He had been active and healthy, but his strength left him suddenly, and he had to spend all his time in a chair. This made him extremely difficult, and he always became very bad-tempered if anyone did or said anything against Heathcliff. Nothing and nobody could please him except for his favourite. He seemed to believe that, because he liked Heathcliff, everyone else hated the boy and wanted to hurt him.

Once or twice Hindley could not control himself and tried to injure Heathcliff in front of his father. The old man would become furious and try to beat Hindley with his stick, and when he found he was not strong enough to do so, he would shake with rage.

At last it was feared that if this continued, the old man would kill himself. So Hindley was sent away to college, though his father thought that Hindley would never do well at anything.

I hoped that when Hindley had gone, we should have some peace. We might have done, except for two people — Miss Catherine and the servant, Joseph.

Joseph and Catherine

Joseph was, and probably still is, the most unpleasant Bible-reading person alive. From the Bible he would find passages to prove himself always right and everyone else wrong. Because of his way with religion, old Mr Earnshaw liked Joseph. The weaker the master became, the more influence Joseph gained. He was always talking to the master about his soul and about treating the children firmly. He encouraged the master to think badly of his son, and night after night he told hundreds of tales against Catherine and Heathcliff. He was always careful to put the heaviest blame for these things on Catherine, knowing that the master would hate to hear him saying that Heathcliff was in the wrong.

Certainly Catherine behaved as I never saw a child behave before. She caused so much trouble every day, making us all lose our patience more often than I could count. From the time she came downstairs from her bedroom in the morning, until she went to bed at night, we had no peace. Her spirits were always high and she was always talking, singing, laughing and being a wild, naughty thing. She was wild and wicked, but she had the sweetest smile. And after all, I believe she meant no harm. When she really did make me lose all patience, she stopped her noise and quietly comforted me.

She was much too fond of Heathcliff. The greatest punishment we could invent for her was to keep her away from him. She got into more trouble over him than any of us.

In play, she liked more than anything else to act as a leader. She liked to command her companions, and would hit them if they did not obey her. She tried to do so to me, but I would not let her slap me or give me orders. She soon learned not to play this game with me.

She used to upset her father terribly, not realizing that his weakened health had changed him. She would do what he hated most, showing that she had more power over Heathcliff than he did, in spite of his kindness. The boy
5 would do anything she told him, but with old Mr Earnshaw he would only do what he himself wanted.

But the day came at last that ended Mr Earnshaw's troubles on this earth.

Mr Earnshaw dies

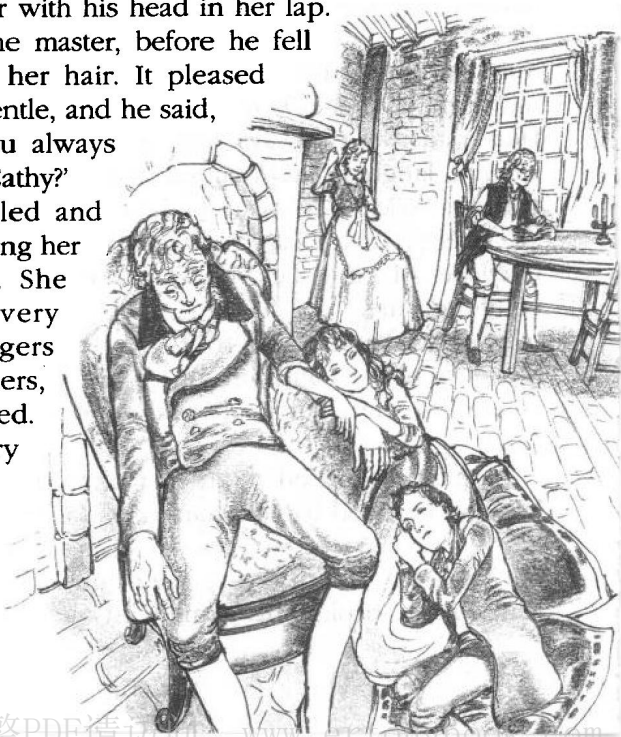
10 That day, a high wind was blowing round the house, and roaring in the chimney. It sounded wild and stormy, yet it was not cold. We were all together inside. I sat a little away from the fire, busy with some needle-work. Joseph was reading his Bible near the table, (for the servants generally
15 sat in the house then, after their work was finished). Miss Catherine had been ill, and that made her quiet. She was leaning against her father's knee, and Heathcliff was lying on the floor with his head in her lap.

I remember the master, before he fell
20 asleep, stroking her hair. It pleased him to see her gentle, and he said,

'Why can't you always be a good girl, Cathy?'

Catherine smiled and
25 said she would sing her father to sleep. She began singing very low, till his fingers dropped from hers, and his eyes closed.

30 We all kept very quiet for a full half-hour, and then it was time for Catherine to
35 go to bed.



'I shall say goodnight to father first,' she said, putting her arms round his neck. The poor child discovered her loss immediately. She screamed out, 'Oh, he's dead, Heathcliff! He's dead!'

And then they both started to cry, heart-broken. 5

Hindley brings home a wife

Mr Hindley, who had been away at college for three years, came home for the funeral. He did something that amazed us, and started the neighbours talking right and left — he brought a wife with him. 10

He never told us much about her. Probably Frances — that was her name — had no money of her own, or Hindley would surely have told his father about his marriage.

She was rather thin, but young and fresh. Her eyes shone like diamonds. She hated the funeral, and when I asked her what the matter was, she said, 'I don't know, but I am so afraid of dying!' 15

I did not think that she was likely to die. I did notice, however, that climbing the stairs made her breathe very quickly, and that she coughed badly sometimes. At the time I did not know what these things meant. I certainly did not intend to sympathize with her. We don't usually like strangers in this part of the country. 20

Young Hindley Earnshaw was now the master at Wuthering Heights. He had changed a lot in the three years of his absence. He had grown thinner, and spoke and dressed quite differently. 25

On the day of his return, he told Joseph and me that we must from then on live in the back kitchen, and leave the main room for him and his wife. Frances liked the room very much. She expressed great pleasure in the white stone floor and huge bright fireplace, and the wide space to move about in, for the room was very large. 30

She expressed pleasure, too, at finding a younger sister at Wuthering Heights. She talked to Catherine, and played with her, ran around with her and gave her presents from the very 35

beginning. Her enjoyment never lasted for long, however. She soon grew tired and then she became unpleasant. That would make Hindley angry with everyone, especially the person whom he blamed for her tiredness.

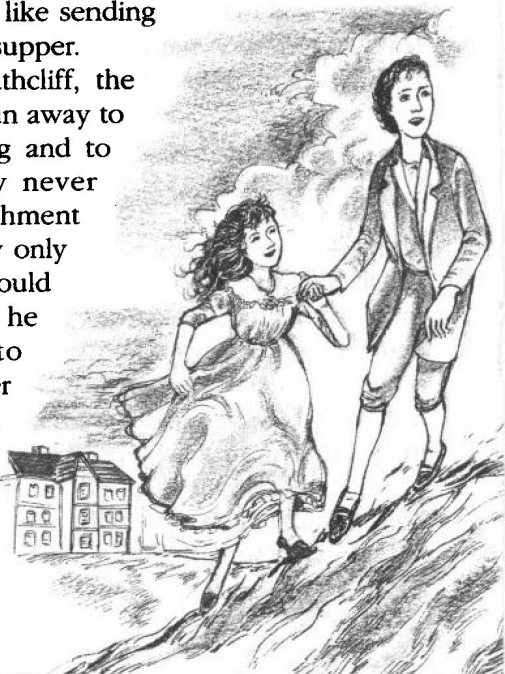
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Heathcliff must live with servants

Frances did not like Heathcliff, and when she told Hindley so, Hindley remembered his old hatred. He told Heathcliff that he must live with the servants. He stopped his lessons, and insisted that he must work on the farm instead, making
10 him work as hard as any other boy employed there.

Heathcliff accepted all this fairly well at first, because Catherine taught him what she learned, and worked or played with him in the fields. The young master Hindley did not seem to care how they grew up, how they behaved, or
15 what they did, so they became very wild. Nor did Hindley care whether they went to church on Sundays. But Joseph and the priest talked to him sternly about his duty to Catherine. When he did think about the children, he usually just ordered a beating for Heathcliff and some kind of
20 punishment for Catherine, like sending her to her room with no supper.

For Catherine and Heathcliff, the chief amusement was to run away to the moors in the morning and to
25 stay there all day. They never worried about the punishment that usually followed, they only laughed at it. The priest could set as many chapters as he pleased for Catherine to
30 learn by heart (he was her teacher), and Joseph could beat Heathcliff till his arm ached. They forgot everything the minute
35 they were together again.



One Sunday evening, they were sent from the sitting-room for making a noise, and when I went to call them to supper, I could find them nowhere. We searched all over the house, and the yard and the stables. They seemed to have disappeared completely. Hindley was very angry, and at last told us to lock the doors, and said that no one was to let them in that night. Everyone went to bed, but I was too anxious to lie down. I opened my window and put my head out to listen. It was raining hard, and I was determined to let them in when they returned, although my master had told me not to.

Heathcliff returns alone

After a while, I heard steps coming up the road, and the light of a lamp shone at the gate. I ran to the door to prevent them from knocking and so waking up Mr Earnshaw. Heathcliff was standing there by himself. It frightened me to see him alone.

Heathcliff told me that he and Catherine had run off to be free. Then they had noticed the lights of Thrushcross Grange, and thought they would go there to see how our neighbours, the Lintons, passed their Sunday evenings.

'We climbed over a broken wall,' said Heathcliff, 'and found our way up to the house. Then we stood on top of a flowerpot under the sitting room window, where the light came from. The curtains were not drawn, and we could see the two Linton children, Edgar and Isabella inside. They were having an argument about a small dog. We laughed at them for being so stupid.'

'The Lintons heard us and rushed to the door of the sitting room. We made terrible noises to frighten them still more, then we got down because someone was opening the front door, and we felt we had better run.'

But it seems they were not quick enough. A dog chased them, and seized Catherine by the ankle. She was in great pain. Then a man servant came. He picked Catherine up and carried her into the house, and Heathcliff followed.

When they were inside, Edgar Linton recognized Catherine. They did not know what she was doing there, but they treated her very kindly. They put her gently on the sofa. Mrs Linton took off the old grey coat which she was wearing.

5 Then the woman servant brought some warm water, and washed her feet. Mr Linton mixed her some kind of warm drink. Isabella gave her some cakes, and Edgar stood staring at a distance. Afterwards they dried her beautiful hair, and gave her a pair of enormous house-shoes. They put her in
10 front of the fire, where she happily combed her hair.

‘She was a young lady,’ said Heathcliff, ‘and so they treated her and me differently. I could see she was quite happy, so, when they said I had to go away, I left her and came back here.’

15 ‘More will come of this business than you think,’ I said. ‘You have behaved badly, Heathcliff, and Mr Hindley will punish you harshly for this.’

Hindley decided on a cruel punishment. Heathcliff received no beating, but he was told that if he ever spoke
20 to Miss Catherine again, he would be sent away from the house. Frances decided to look after Catherine more carefully than before.

CATHERINE AND EDGAR LINTON

A young lady comes home

Catherine stayed at Thrushcross Grange for five weeks, until Christmas. By that time, her ankle was completely healed, and her manners were greatly improved. Frances visited her often: She gave her fine clothes to wear and told her how pretty she looked in them. 5

When Catherine returned, we expected to see a wild, hatless little savage jumping into the house. Instead, stepping down from a handsome black pony, we saw a very dignified young person, with brown curled hair falling from the cover of a feather hat. 10

Hindley lifted her from her pony, exclaiming happily, 'Why Cathy, you are quite a beauty! I should hardly have known you. You look like a lady now. Isabella Linton cannot be compared with her, can she, Frances?' 15

'Isabella does not have her natural advantages,' replied his wife. 'But Catherine must be careful that she does not grow wild here again. Ellen, help Miss Catherine take off her things.'

I removed the hat, being careful not to spoil her hair, and took her coat. She looked lovely. Then the dogs ran up, but she hardly dared touch them, in case they should make her dirty. 20

She kissed me gently. Then she looked round for Heathcliff. Mr and Mrs Earnshaw watched anxiously for this meeting. They wanted to know if they would be able to separate the two friends. 25

Heathcliff has grown worse

Heathcliff was hard to find at first. He had become ten times more wild, and no one had cared for him while Catherine was away. 30

I was the only one who called him dirty, and told him to wash himself. Children of his age seldom have a natural pleasure in soap and water. His clothes had been worn for three months and were covered in mud and dust. His hair
5 was thick and dirty, and his face and hands were absolutely black. He hid behind some furniture when he saw a bright, graceful young lady enter the house instead of the rough playmate he had expected.

‘Isn’t Heathcliff here?’ she demanded, pulling off her
10 gloves and showing fingers wonderfully whitened with doing nothing, and staying indoors.

‘Heathcliff, you may come forward,’ cried Hindley. ‘You may come and wish Miss Catherine welcome like the other servants.’

15 Catherine saw her friend in his hiding place. She rushed towards him and gave him seven or eight kisses on his cheek. Then she stopped, and drawing back, burst into a laugh, exclaiming, ‘Why, how very black and angry you look!’
20 And how funny! But that’s because I’m used to Edgar and Isabella Linton. Well, Heathcliff, have you forgotten me?’

She had good reason to
25 ask the question. Shame and pride had made his expression very dark and serious, and kept him from moving to her.

30 ‘Shake hands, Heathcliff,’ said Hindley. ‘Sometimes it is permitted.’

‘I shall not,’ replied the boy, at last able to speak. ‘I
35 shall not stay to be laughed at. I shall not!’

He tried to escape from us, but Miss Catherine seized him again.

