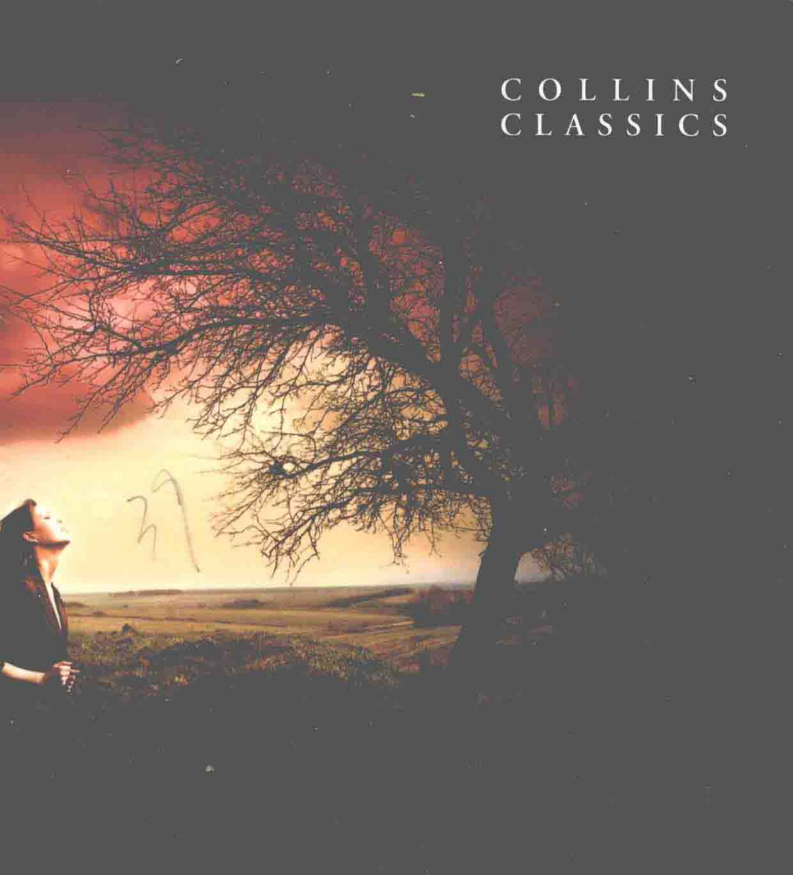


COLLINS  
CLASSICS



EMILY BRONTË  
Wuthering Heights

# WUTHERING HEIGHTS

Emily Brontë

COLLINS  
CLASSICS

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# History of Collins

In 1819, Millworker William Collins from Glasgow, Scotland, set up a company for printing and publishing pamphlets, sermons, hymn books and prayer books. That company was Collins and was to mark the birth of HarperCollins Publishers as we know it today. The long tradition of Collins dictionary publishing can be traced back to the first dictionary William published in 1824, *Greek and English Lexicon*. Indeed, from 1840 onwards, he began to produce illustrated dictionaries and even obtained a licence to print and publish the Bible.

Soon after, William published the first Collins novel, *Ready Reckoner*, however it was the time of the Long Depression, where harvests were poor, prices were high, potato crops had failed and violence was erupting in Europe. As a result, many factories across the country were forced to close down and William chose to retire in 1846, partly due to the hardships he was facing.

Aged 30, William's son, William II took over the business. A keen humanitarian with a warm heart and a generous spirit, William II was truly 'Victorian' in his outlook. He introduced new, up-to-date steam presses and published affordable editions of Shakespeare's works and *Pilgrim's Progress*, making them available to the masses for the first time. A new demand for educational books meant that success came with the publication of travel books, scientific books, encyclopaedias and dictionaries. This demand to be educated led to the later publication of atlases and Collins also held the monopoly on scripture writing at the time.

In the 1860s Collins began to expand and diversify and the idea of 'books for the millions' was developed. Affordable editions of classical literature were published and in 1903 Collins introduced 10 titles in their Collins Handy Illustrated Pocket Novels. These proved so popular that a few years later this had increased to an output of 50 volumes, selling nearly half a

million in their year of publication. In the same year, The Everyman's Library was also instituted, with the idea of publishing an affordable library of the most important classical works, biographies, religious and philosophical treatments, plays, poems, travel and adventure. This series eclipsed all competition at the time and the introduction of paperback books in the 1950s helped to open that market and marked a high point in the industry.

HarperCollins is and has always been a champion of the classics and the current Collins Classics series follows in this tradition – publishing classical literature that is affordable and available to all. Beautifully packaged, highly collectible and intended to be reread and enjoyed at every opportunity.

# Life & Times

## The Brontë Family

Following in the footsteps of Jane Austen, The Brontë sisters, Charlotte, Emily and Anne, were the next generation of female writers. Unlike Austen, they were northerners, born and raised in West Yorkshire, England. There were also two other sisters, Maria and Elizabeth, who sadly died young from tuberculosis, and a brother, Branwell, who became an artist and poet, fuelled by his opium and alcohol addiction.

Emily Brontë (1818–48) is lauded for her only novel *Wuthering Heights* (1847) – a complex Gothic tragedy, spanning two generations that expresses the mess people can make of their lives when needs and desires are allowed to control their actions and reactions, as opposed to common sense and restraint.

Charlotte Brontë (1816–55), the most well-known of the Brontë sisters, had three novels published in her lifetime, but it is for *Jane Eyre* (1847) that she is most celebrated. Anne Brontë (1820–49) is the lesser known of the sisters. She published two novels, *Agnes Grey* (1847) and the *Tennant of Wildfell Hall* (1848). Unlike her sisters, Anne's style was one of realism rather than romanticism, making her the more contemporary writer at the time.

All three sisters used pen names, Ellis Bell, Currer Bell, and Acton Bell respectively, as it was quite usual at that time for female novelists to adopt male pseudonyms in an effort to be taken more seriously. Indeed, another well-known female author, George Eliot (1818–80), had the real name Mary Ann Evans. The reputation of the female novelist at the time was uncertain and it seems that Jane Austen herself may have prompted this practice.

The surname Brontë wasn't wholly genuine either. Their father, Patrick, had originally been known as 'Brunty', a name he claimed, it is widely thought, for reasons of insecurity and vanity. An unusual name gave the illusion of continental sophistication and heritage, in much the same way that some people today settle on double-barrelled surnames to align themselves with the aristocracy.

Unfortunately for the Brontë sisters, they were all rather short-lived. Two years following the death of Charlotte, her friend and fellow novelist Elizabeth Gaskell published a biography of the elder Brontë. Gaskell's biography created the impression of a family beset by misfortune, which was to all intents and purposes rather true, as their mother, Maria, had passed away in 1821 and even Branwell had died in 1848. Patrick outlived his entire family, dying at the impressive age of 84, in 1861.

### Emily Brontë

It was her older sister, Charlotte, who recognised Emily's talent for writing poetry and in 1846 the sisters published a collaborative poetry book under their pen-names. Although Emily attended school in 1824 and again for a short time in 1835, she was plagued by homesickness and largely educated at home. That exposure to the lonely surrounding landscape of the Yorkshire moors at Haworth undoubtedly influenced her writing and in 1847 her first novel, *Wuthering Heights* was published. Intense, passionate and dark, it did not immediately garner the success or acclaim that Charlotte's *Jane Eyre* achieved, however, it is now considered the great English Gothic novel. The story is so fragmented and powerful that at the time of publication, some sceptics thought that her brother, Branwell had written the book. This was based on the notion that women of that era were living closeted, circumscribed lives and therefore would never have been able to construct a story that contained the kind of passion, drama and characters that feature in *Wuthering Heights*.

### Common Themes

Today, the novels of the Brontë sisters are as much a part of English literary history as the works of any other. There is a singularity about their collective way of viewing the world that speaks volumes about the relative isolation they experienced during their upbringing. Their father was a bookish and scholarly man who, by his very nature, was not given to worrying about the effects of solitude on his children.

The result was that his children grew to be quite introverted, which was probably why they found company in each other and in their imaginations. It was considered highly unusual then, as it would be now, for three sisters to devote their lives to writing novels.

Like Jane Austen, before them, they existed on the fringes of polite society, where they could observe people and capture their personalities in prose, but were not necessarily thought of as eligible for marriage or inclusion in certain social circles. That marginalization, in itself, gave rise to frustrations, desires and needs that must have fuelled their creative drive. Their novels act as vehicles for self expression, alluding to their misgivings about life and providing them with strong voices for the plight of females in the 19th Century.

## The Brontë Legacy

For the three sisters, Charlotte, Emily and Anne, writing was clearly a way of living vicariously. Their social environment, their milieu, was such that they had rather limited experience of the outside world. Fragile health characterized the family, so that their mother and two other sisters had already died of illness by the time the three were teenagers. Their father was a teacher and clergyman, who kept a tight rein on his daughters and one son, for fear of losing them also. Tragically, he did lose them all before any had reached the age of forty, but not before his three daughters had tasted success as published novelists.

Their styles as novelists were quite individual, but there is a detectable thread of commonality in them, in the sense that the sisters were using prose as a means of communicating with the world beyond the sanctuary of home. They were well educated intellectuals, though with relatively little by way of fiscal wealth and somewhat reserved in nature. This made them well suited to writing, but unattractive as potential spouses for most eligible young men.

Charlotte and Emily used their novels to effectively live other lives, and they are often described as romanticists as a result. Anne did the same, but in a less imaginative frame, so that her scenarios were not too far removed from reality. The year 1847 was the most eventful period of time for the Brontë sisters, as it saw all three of



their aforementioned novels published – *Jane Eyre*, *Wuthering Heights* and *Agnes Grey*.

The fictitious character Jane Eyre, of the eponymous novel, could easily be translated as Charlotte imagining herself in a scenario where she comes from a background far worse than her own, but ends up living a life that is more rounded and fulfilled than the one she leads, reinventing herself in prose.

Emily goes even further than Charlotte with *Wuthering Heights*. She imagines different versions of herself living through an epic story of tragedy. She must have longed for more adventure and excitement in her life, and therefore acted it out in the theatre of her imagination.

In Anne's *Agnes Grey* there is obvious overlap between Anne and Agnes, so that a blend of fact and fiction is evident. Ann was more concerned with using her prose to express the real trials and tribulations of her life as a governess, as opposed to using them as a form of escapism, like her sisters.

In a way the cumulative result of the Brontës's work is to demonstrate three depths to which fictional prose can be used as a form of self expression. All three sisters transposed themselves into their imagined worlds, but to differing extremes from Anne to Charlotte to Emily. This might be interpreted as an indication of their different personality types, but as they all lived very short lives it is impossible to know how their individual preferences might have adapted and matured over time.

The social impact and legacy of the Brontës work was that it dared to be truthful and self indulgent in an age when polite society was rather reserved and reticent about emotions and desires. While Jane Austen's work had described the lives of people somewhat removed from an environment most people would consider familiar, the Brontës described the lives of people who were more *human*, in that they were not nearly so bound by rules of etiquette and prescribed ways of behaving. It wasn't necessary to read between the lines to understand the allegory, because the Brontës wrote from the heart in an exposing and honest way that was so new that it heightened people's idea of the very purpose of literature as an art form.

# WUTHERING HEIGHTS

# VOLUME I



## CHAPTER 1

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 Thruscross Grange: I heard, yesterday, you had had some thoughts –’

‘Thruscross 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!’ Even the gate over which he leant

manifested no sympathizing movement to the words; and I think that circumstance determined 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 did pull 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 hedgecutters.'

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' pre-eminently. It includes kitchen and parlor, 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 fire-place; 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, in 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 armchair, 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 gypsy 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 snarl.

'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-à-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 roused 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 dispatch; 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 could have had no worse spirits in them than those animals