
EXTRACTS

English Fiction for Advanced Students

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Nelson

Nigel Newbrook

For
Neil and Ralph

With Special Thanks To
Jacky Newbrook
for typing the original draft, and for
her constructive comments, which especially
contributed to the final format of the units.

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TEACHER'S INTRODUCTION

Aims of the book

The main purpose of the book is to introduce foreign students to some of the major works of English fiction in a clear, straightforward way, whilst providing the chance to practise reading skills at the advanced level. This practice is especially useful for those students aiming to take the Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English examination (C.P.E.). Related exercises also provide the opportunity for oral practice, summary and composition writing, and vocabulary work.

How the book is organised

There are fifteen units, based around fifteen novels taken in chronological order, with a separate introductory background section on the writers in the same order.

Each unit is based around a theme arising from the selected text. The book can therefore be used in two ways:

- a) chronologically: i.e. the teacher follows the order of the units. This is especially recommended for teachers of literature classes;
- b) thematically: i.e. the teacher selects units depending on the choice of themes. This may be preferred in general language classes, especially if a thematic approach is being used in class.

Either approach would be equally successful, since the units are self-contained, and are not arranged in order of difficulty. There is an answer section at the back of the book.

How the units are organised

There are seven sections in each unit, consisting of:

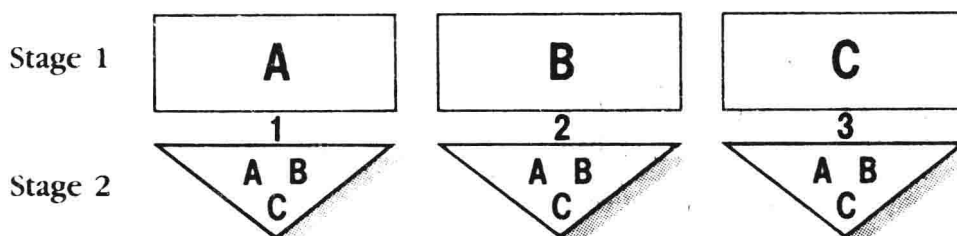
- 1 visual or textual prompts and discussion points, as 'pre-reading' activities;
- 2 a short paragraph setting the context of the selected text (sometimes with a contemporary or relevant illustration);
- 3 the text itself;
- 4 comprehension and appreciation questions, plus a summary exercise related to C.P.E. Paper 3 Section B. It is recommended that the questions are looked at before the text is read, thereby providing a 'while-reading' activity, in addition to the more obvious 'post-reading' one in which the questions are actually answered;
- 5 vocabulary work, often involving phrasal verbs or idioms;
- 6 a short role-play section, involving discussion of a point arising from one aspect of the materials in the unit;
- 7 a composition topic, similar to those set in C.P.E. Paper 2.

What each section contains

- 1 The visual or textual prompts and the discussion points provide a pre-reading activity; getting the students to start thinking of the central theme and anticipating various aspects of it should assist their eventual reading of the text.

Teachers need not necessarily use all the discussion points suggested, and may like to add some of their own.

These points could be discussed by the class as a whole, or by smaller groups, who could then report back to the others on their opinions. This could also be done as a 'jigsaw activity'; students could be in groups A, B, and C for the initial discussion, and then regrouped into groups 1, 2 and 3 (each containing students from the original A, B and C), as shown below:



This would then provide an exchange of information activity.

- 2 It is most important that the students understand the context of the selected extract, so the teacher should check this carefully, either by direct questions, or a short discussion. This will facilitate comprehension of the text.
- 3 Students will appreciate a clear and lively reading, giving appropriate stress, either by the teacher him/herself, or pre-recorded on a cassette tape if preferred. This will also help the students' comprehension of the text. As stated earlier, teachers should go through the questions in Section 4 first, in order to provide a focus for the students whilst the reading is taking place.
- 4 The questions could either be answered:
 - a) as homework (but remember there are answers in the back!)
 - b) by the students working individually in class
 - c) by the students working in pairs or small groups in class.

The three alternatives could be used as follows:

- a) to encourage self-study
- b) to provide 'mock exam' practice (if so, a maximum of 30 minutes should be allowed)
- c) to promote interaction and communication

Teachers may decide to vary their approach from unit to unit, depending on their requirements, or to provide variety. Alternative (c) could also be done as a 'jigsaw activity' (as explained in Section 1). If so, answers could be compared in stage 2, generating further discussion, if there are differences of opinion.

Whichever approach is adopted, students should always be encouraged to look out for inferences and implications, to try to deduce meaning, and also to try and see the writer's purpose in the choice of words used, which may be to convey a certain tone (e.g. sarcasm).

- 5 The three approaches suggested above could also be used in relation to the exercises in this section. Occasionally, they could be done at the end of the lesson as a team quiz; students often find this an enjoyable way to finish the lesson.

Some of the vocabulary exercises are intended to provide the opportunity for further practice of phrasal verbs and idioms. Others are intended to extend the students' grasp of vocabulary by focussing attention on the connotations of a word, and on words that are close, but different, in meaning, or that differ in intensity. Some exercises focus attention on particular words from the selected text, and one deals with the use of foreign expressions in English.

- 6 These suggestions for role-play activities are only intended to provide a short, oral activity based around a point arising from materials in the unit. The role-plays do not involve an 'information gap'; students should therefore read both role descriptions. The roles either place the student in the exact situation of the text, and ask him/her to be one of the characters, or else they involve a situation in a modern-day context related to one aspect of the unit.
- 7 Each unit contains a composition topic similar to the kind set in C.P.E. Paper 2. The main range of different topics offered in the exam paper (descriptive, discursive, narrative or task-based) is covered over the fifteen units of the book. However, there are no 'set book' questions, since the students have only read extracts and not complete novels.

Teachers will probably want to set these compositions for homework, but may find it useful to have a short, general discussion beforehand, to get students thinking of the subject matter. Students should also be encouraged to do an outline plan first, before writing the composition itself.

Related work

Teachers may like to encourage students to read the complete novel, once the extract has been studied, and/or another book by the same author, depending on student interest. This could form the basis of a mini-project, which could be done either individually or in pairs or small groups. The aim might be to write a book review, give a report to the class on the book as a whole, or show how the theme of the extract is developed throughout the book. Students interested in drama might like to write and act out short scenes based on central parts of the novel, using modern English.

Note about the units

- a) The order of the sections in Unit 11 has been slightly changed to maintain a logical progression throughout the unit.
- b) Units 9 and 15, whilst basically self-contained, both concern events at hotels. The composition topic in Unit 15 refers to the hotel in Unit 9, although this would not necessarily prevent the composition being written solely on a reading of Unit 15. However, teachers working thematically may like to link these two units, since they both call for responses to different types of hotels and holidays.

BACKGROUND TO THE AUTHORS AND EXTRACTS

Unit 1 *Emma* by Jane Austen (Published in 1816)

The early English novelists are usually considered to be Daniel Defoe (1660–1731), Samuel Richardson (1689–1761) and Henry Fielding (1707–1754). However, Jane Austen (1775–1817) brought the novel to the form we recognise today. She is concerned with everyday life situations, and both character and plot develop as the novel progresses. Her writing is sometimes referred to as 'a comedy of manners', since she portrayed in a humorous manner the behaviour of middle-class families in the Regency period (1812–1820).

Unit 2 *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë (Published in 1847)

The three Brontë Sisters, Charlotte (1816–1855), Emily (1818–1848), and Anne (1820–1849), lived in the small village of Haworth on the Yorkshire moors, where their father was the rector of the local church. The girls spent a lot of time by themselves, reading and writing and telling stories. Charlotte's famous novel is *Jane Eyre*, and Anne wrote *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*. *Wuthering Heights* is Emily's masterpiece, which is set on the wild and desolate Yorkshire moors.

Unit 3 *Vanity Fair* by William Makepeace Thackeray (Published in 1847–48)

Thackeray (1811–1863) was the son of an official of the British East India Company, and was educated at a famous public school and Cambridge University. He loved writing, and contributed many humorous, and often satirical articles to various literary magazines. *Vanity Fair*, published in monthly parts (like Dickens's novels) made him really famous and is considered his greatest work. Thackeray's plots tended to be more true to life than some of the melodramatic ones of his contemporaries. He felt the novelist had the right to moralise to the reader, and intersperses his narrative with comment on human behaviour, especially criticising hypocrisy, vanity and snobbery.

Unit 4 *The Woman in White* by Wilkie Collins (Published in 1860)

Wilkie Collins (1824–1889) was the son of a landscape painter. He worked in the tea trade before qualifying as a lawyer, but he was always more interested in writing, painting and acting. He is now recognised as one of the first authors to

write mystery stories, and is most well-known for *The Woman in White* and *The Moonstone*. He was a friend of Charles Dickens, and they often acted together in amateur theatrical productions.

Unit 5 *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens (Published in 1860–61)

Charles Dickens (1812–1870) was the most famous novelist in the Victorian period (1837–1901), when the British Empire was at its height, and Britain was the most prosperous industrial nation in the world.

However, the wealth and high standard of living of the upper classes were dependent on the hard work of the lower classes. Men, women and children worked long hours in the coal mines, cotton mills and factories, and families lived in squalid houses, crammed together in the industrial areas, with no proper sanitation. Some of these conditions are described by Dickens in *Oliver Twist* and *Hard Times*, and the source of wealth is a symbolic theme in his later novels, *Great Expectations* and *Our Mutual Friend*.

Great Expectations is considered to be Dickens's most technically perfect novel.

Unit 6 *Silas Marner* by George Eliot (Published in 1861)

George Eliot (1819–1880) was the pen-name of Mary Ann Evans, which she used in order that her work should be taken seriously. She spent her early years in the countryside in Warwickshire, and this gave her the knowledge of the everyday life of ordinary people, which plays a central part in her novels. In *Silas Marner*, in particular, she paints a vivid picture of what village life was like at the start of the nineteenth century (when this story takes place).

Unit 7 *The Return of the Native* by Thomas Hardy (Published in 1878)

Thomas Hardy (1840–1928) is famous for his novels portraying country life in the south-west of England, which he called 'Wessex'. These novels show the changing times in the countryside, as the old way of life is gradually taken over by industrialization. They are often pessimistic, revealing Hardy's sense of the inevitable tragedy of human life, as is often demonstrated by Hardy's use of fatal coincidences and misunderstandings.

Unit 8 *The First Men in the Moon* by H. G. Wells (Published in 1901)

H. G. Wells (1866–1946) is famous for his science-fiction stories foretelling future scientific inventions. He was a shopkeeper's son who eventually won a scholarship to study at what is now the Imperial College of Science in London. He became increasingly concerned with the dangers which lay in technological developments, and the outbreak of the Second World War convinced him that mankind had finally lost control over the forces it had created. His other famous

novels are *The Time Machine*, *The Invisible Man* and *The War of the Worlds*.

Unit 9 *A Room With a View* by E. M. Forster (Published in 1908)

E. M. Forster (1879–1910) had an upper middle class upbringing, and went to public school and Cambridge University. Four of his five novels were published in the period prior to the First World War, and are partly a comment on the social life of his class at the time, both at home and abroad. Personal relations are always important in his work, as is the problem of communication between different cultures and civilizations. His novels are written in a much more natural and colloquial style than those of the late nineteenth century.

Unit 10 *Sons and Lovers* by D. H. Lawrence (Published in 1913)

D. H. Lawrence (1885–1930) was the son of a coal-miner and grew up in the mining area of Nottinghamshire. His mother had been a teacher and had encouraged her son to have higher ambitions than to work in the local pit. He won a scholarship to Nottingham High School and, after going to university, became a teacher in London.

His novels show a concern for natural feelings and emotions and a dislike for the way modern industry destroys the basic, primitive qualities of life. *Sons and Lovers* is partly autobiographical, based on his upbringing and relationship with his parents, especially his mother.

Unit 11 *1984* by George Orwell (Published in 1949)

George Orwell (1903–1950) is the pen-name of Eric Blair, who was born in Bengal, the son of a British official in the Indian Civil Service. He attended Eton College, and worked for a time in the Indian Police, but began to resent imperialism and the fact that he was unable to mix with the local people. Consequently, he returned to Europe and lived for some time among the poor people of London and Paris. He was strongly against any kind of authoritarian government, as can be seen in his two most famous works, *Animal Farm* and *1984*.

Unit 12 *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding (Published in 1954)

William Golding (born in 1911) was educated at Oxford University and became a teacher. He served in the Royal Navy in the Second World War, and returned to teaching until becoming a full-time writer. His novels often reveal his interest in the nature and power of evil, and in 1983 he won the Nobel Prize for Literature for the way in which his writing deals with the human condition. *Lord of the Flies*, written in 1954 and made into a successful film in 1963, is possibly his most famous work, although a later novel, *Rites of Passage*, won the Booker McConnell Prize in 1980.

Unit 13 *Room at the Top* by John Braine (Published in 1957)

Writers in Britain in the late 1950s are often referred to as 'the angry young men'. (This is partly associated with John Osborne's play *Look Back in Anger* which was first produced in 1956.) They dealt with working class people who were dissatisfied with the class structure and their position in society. John Braine (born in 1922) was working as a librarian in Yorkshire when *Room at the Top* brought him instant fame. It quickly became a bestseller and was also made into a successful film.

Unit 14 *The Jewel in the Crown* by Paul Scott (Published in 1966)

Paul Scott (1920–1978) is particularly well-known for his novels about life in India, where he served in the army in the Second World War. In 1963 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, and in 1977 he won the Booker McConnell Prize for his novel *Staying On*. The novel *The Jewel in the Crown* is actually the first part of *The Raj Quartet*, the other three novels being *The Day of the Scorpion*, *The Towers of Silence* and *A Division of the Spoils*. Together they cover the last five years of British rule in India.

Unit 15 *Hotel du Lac* by Anita Brookner (Published in 1984)

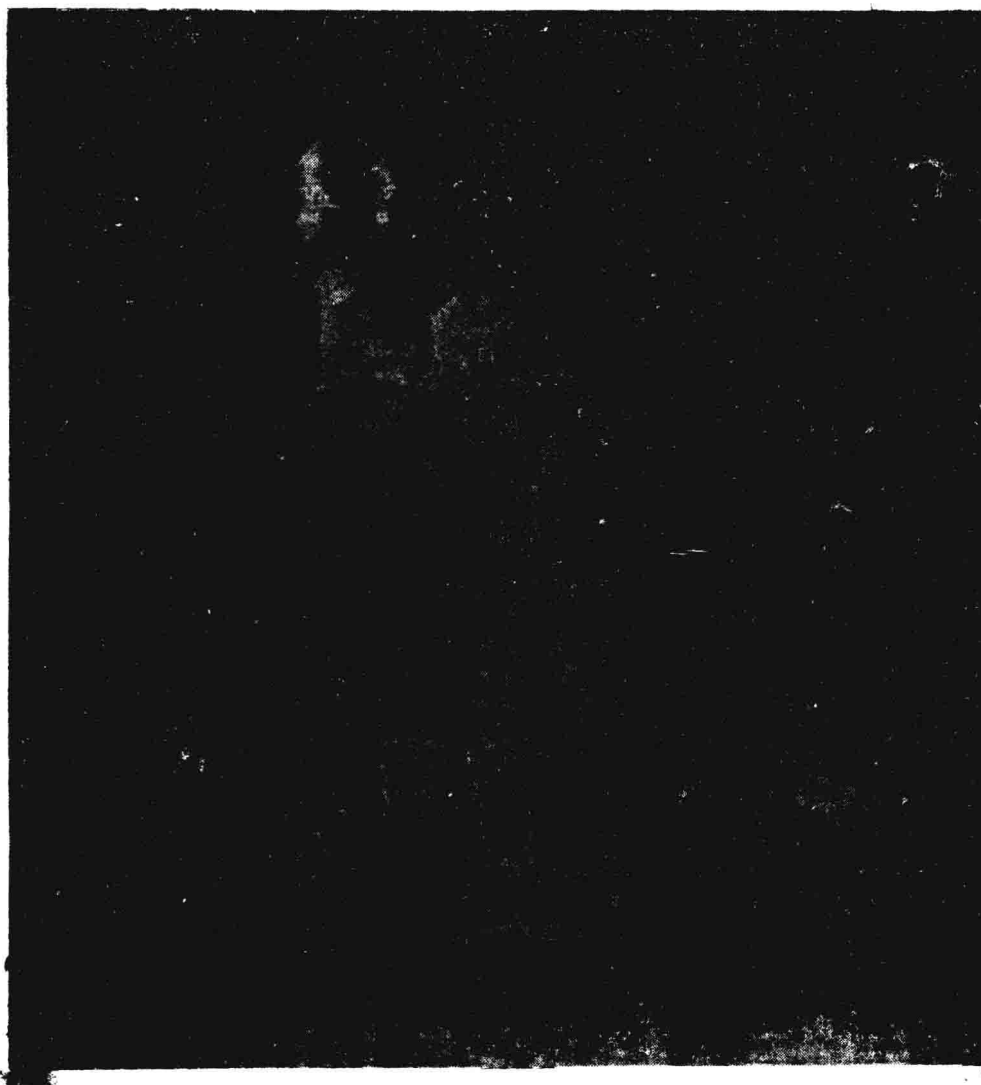
Anita Brookner was educated at the University of London, and at the Courtauld Institute, Paris. She is now an international authority on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century paintings, and has been Reader at the Courtauld Institute of Art since 1977. In addition to writing about art, she has written several novels including *A Start in Life*, *Providence*, *Hotel du Lac* (which won the Booker McConnell Prize in 1984), and *Latecomers* (published in 1988).

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Unit 1 SELFISHNESS

Emma by Jane Austen
(1816)



'All sensible people are selfish' Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882)

Discussion

- To what extent might it be sensible to be selfish? Give examples of particular instances or occasions.
- What examples of behaviour would you regard as 'selfish' in a negative sense?
- How would you deal with a friend who had selfish tendencies?

The Novel

Jane Austen's most well-known novel *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), centres around the relationship between Elizabeth Bennet and Mr Darcy. *Emma* is her most highly acclaimed work, however, and can be regarded as her technical masterpiece. It concerns Emma Woodhouse, who has every advantage in life and is used to organising the lives of others, getting her own way, and believing she is always in the right.

EMMA WOODHOUSE, handsome, clever, and rich, with a comfortable home and happy disposition, seemed to unite some of the best blessings of existence; and had lived nearly twenty-one years in the world with very little to distress or vex her.

- 5 She was the youngest of the two daughters of a most affectionate, indulgent father, and had, in consequence of her sister's marriage, been mistress of his house from a very early period. Her mother had died too long ago for her to have more than an indistinct remembrance of her caresses, and her place had been supplied by an excellent woman as governess, who had fallen little short of a
10 mother in affection.

- Sixteen years had Miss Taylor been in Mr Woodhouse's family, less as a governess than a friend, very fond of both daughters, but particularly of Emma. Between *them* it was more the intimacy of sisters. Even before Miss Taylor had ceased to hold the nominal office of governess, the mildness of her temper had
15 hardly allowed her to impose any restraint; and the shadow of authority being now long passed away, they had been living together as friend and friend very mutually attached, and Emma doing just what she liked; highly esteeming Miss Taylor's judgment, but directed chiefly by her own.

- The real evils indeed of Emma's situation were the power of having rather
20 too much her own way, and a disposition to think a little too well of herself; these were the disadvantages which threatened alloy to her many enjoyments. The danger, however, was at present so unperceived, that they did not by any means rank as misfortunes with her.

- Sorrow came – a gentle sorrow – but not at all in the shape of any
25 disagreeable consciousness. – Miss Taylor married. It was Miss Taylor's loss which first brought grief. It was on the wedding-day of this beloved friend that Emma first sat in mournful thought of any continuance. The wedding over and the bride-people gone, her father and herself were left to dine together, with no prospect of a third to cheer a long evening. Her father composed himself to sleep
30 after dinner, as usual, and she had then only to sit and think of what she had lost.

- The event had every promise of happiness for her friend. Mr Weston was a man of unexceptionable character, easy fortune, suitable age and pleasant
35 manners; and there was some satisfaction in considering with what self-denying, generous friendship she had always wished and promoted the match; but it was a black morning's work for her. The want of Miss Taylor would be felt every hour of every day. She recalled her past kindness – the kindness, the affection of sixteen years – how she had taught and how she had played with her

from five years old – how she had devoted all her powers to attach and amuse
 40 her in health – and how nursed her through the various illnesses of childhood. A
 large debt of gratitude was owing here; but the intercourse of the last seven
 years, the equal footing and perfect unreserve which had soon followed
 Isabella's marriage on their being left to each other, was yet a dearer, tenderer
 recollection. It had been a friend and companion such as few possessed,
 45 intelligent, well-informed, useful, gentle, knowing all the ways of the family,
 interested in all its concerns, and peculiarly interested in herself, in every
 pleasure, every scheme of her's; – one to whom she could speak every thought as
 it arose, and who had such an affection for her as could never find fault.

How was she to bear the change? – It was true that her friend was going only
 50 half a mile from them; but Emma was aware that great must be the difference
 between a Mrs Weston only half a mile from them, and a Miss Taylor in the
 house; and with all her advantages, natural and domestic, she was now in great
 danger of suffering from intellectual solitude. She dearly loved her father, but
 he was no companion for her. He could not meet her in conversation, rational or
 55 playful.

alloy (21): something that lowers the quality of the thing to which it is added.

Understanding and Appreciating

- 1 Explain why Emma had been 'mistress of his house' from an early age (lines 6–7).
- 2 Who does the word 'them' refer to in line 13?
- 3 Why is Miss Taylor's role as governess referred to as 'nominal' (line 14)?
- 4 Explain in your own words what the 'disadvantages' were that threatened to spoil Emma's enjoyment (line 21).
- 5 How does Jane Austen's use of vocabulary in lines 24–27 show that Emma sees the wedding more in terms of a sadder ceremony?
- 6 What kind of character do you expect Mr Weston to have from the use of 'unexceptionable' (line 33)?
- 7 What had made the 'last seven years' of Emma's relationship with Miss Taylor so special?
- 8 What do you understand to be the difference between 'a Mrs Weston only half a mile from them, and a Miss Taylor in the house' (lines 51–52)?

Summary Writing

In a short paragraph of 60–80 words, summarise (in your own words) Miss Taylor's behaviour towards Emma over the previous sixteen years.

Vocabulary

Discuss the following adjectives with a partner, and decide whether they indicate positive or negative characteristics, or are neutral. (There may be different views on some qualities!) The first four adjectives come from the text.

affectionate, indulgent, generous, gentle, sarcastic, sympathetic, vindictive, self-effacing, sensitive.

Positive	Negative	Neutral

Idioms

Match the idioms, based on colours, on the left with the correct definition on the right. (The first one comes from the text.)

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| 1 a black morning's work | a to become angry |
| 2 to be black and blue | b a detailed plan |
| 3 to blackmail someone | c to be depressed |
| 4 a red-letter day | d to owe the bank money |
| 5 to see red | e to be very bruised |
| 6 to be in the red | f a very important day |
| 7 to feel blue | g to have done something which had sad results |
| 8 a blue-print | h to obtain money by threatening to reveal discreditable secrets |

Role-play (Pairwork)

Student A: you are Miss Taylor. Explain to Emma that Mr Weston has asked you to marry him, and that you will have to leave soon.

Student B: you are Emma. Express your disappointment, and try to see how far Miss Weston has thought through what she is going to do.

Composition

Describe your best friend. (About 350 words.)

Unit 2 DISAPPOINTMENT

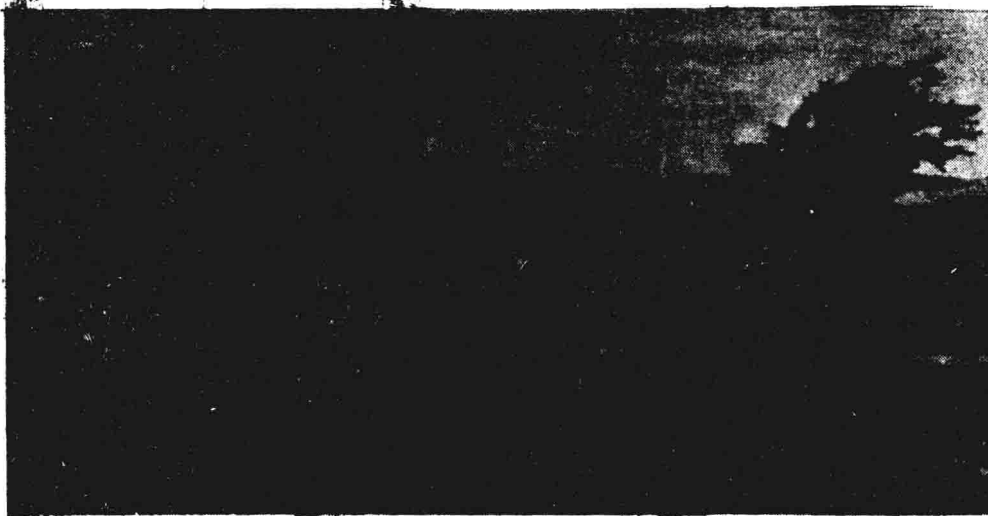
Wuthering Heights by Emily Brontë
(1847)

... Well, first of all it turned out that he hadn't got a car, so we had to go into town by bus. Then we only had chicken and chips in a pub instead of the promised three-course dinner at the new restaurant! To cap it all, we spent the rest of the evening at that broken-down old local cinema, instead of going to see Pavarotti at the Opera House!

Discussion

- Who is this letter from, and to?
- What would you have done in this situation?
- Can you remember a particularly disappointing incident in your childhood?

The Novel



The story is told (after it has happened) by Nelly Dean, the housekeeper, to Mr Lockwood, the new tenant of Thrushcross Grange. It concerns two families, the Lintons (of Thrushcross Grange) and the Earnshaws (of *Wuthering Heights*), and an outsider called Heathcliff.

The main plot concerns the obsessive love of Heathcliff and Catherine Earnshaw. Despite being in love with him, she marries Edgar Linton because she feels a marriage to Heathcliff would degrade her. After her death, Heathcliff attempts to avenge himself on the Linton family. In this extract Nelly Dean recalls the day Heathcliff was first brought home by Catherine's father, Mr Earnshaw.

One fine summer morning – it was the beginning of harvest, I remember – Mr Earnshaw, the old master, came down stairs, dressed for a journey; and, after he had told Joseph what was to be done during the day, he turned to Hindley and Cathy, and me – for I sat eating my porridge, with them – and he said, speaking to his son,

‘Now, my bonny man, I’m going to Liverpool to-day . . . What shall I bring you? You may choose what you like; only let it be little, for I shall walk there and back: sixty miles each way, that is a long spell!’

Hindley named a fiddle, and then he asked Miss Cathy; she was hardly six years old, but she could ride any horse in the stable, and she chose a whip.

He did not forget me; for he had a kind heart, though he was rather severe, sometimes. He promised to bring me a pocketful of apples and pears, and then he kissed his children good-bye, and set off.

It seemed a long while to us all – the three days of his absence – and often did little Cathy ask when he would be home. Mrs Earnshaw expected him by supper-time, on the third evening; and she put off the meal hour after hour; there were no signs of his coming, however, and at last the children got tired of running down to the gate to look – Then it grew dark, she would have had them to bed, but they begged sadly to be allowed to stay up; and, just about eleven o’clock, the door-latch was raised quietly and in stepped the master. He threw himself into a chair, laughing and groaning, and bid them all stand off, for he was nearly killed – he would not have another such walk for the three kingdoms.

‘And at the end of it to be flighted to death!’ he said, opening his great coat, which he held bundled up in his arms. ‘See here, wife; I was never so beaten with anything in my life; but you must e’en take it as a gift of God; though it’s as dark almost as if it came from the devil.’

We crowded round, and, over Miss Cathy’s head, I had a peep at a dirty, ragged, black-haired child; big enough both to walk and talk – indeed, its face looked older than Catherine’s – yet, when it was set on its feet, it only stared round, and repeated over and over again some gibberish that nobody could understand. I was frightened, and Mrs Earnshaw was ready to fling it out of doors: she did fly up – asking how he could fashion to bring that gipsy brat into the house, when they had their own bairns to feed, and fend for? What he meant to do with it, and whether he were mad?

The master tried to explain the matter; but he was really half dead with fatigue, and all that I could make out, amongst her scolding, was a tale of his seeing it starving, and houseless, and as good as dumb in the streets of Liverpool where he picked it up and inquired for its owner – Not a soul knew to whom it belonged, he said, and his money and time, being both limited, he thought it better to take it home with him, at once, than run into vain expenses there; because he was determined he would not leave it as he found it.

Well, the conclusion was that my mistress grumbled herself calm; and Mr Earnshaw told me to wash it, and give it clean things, and let it sleep with the children.

Hindley and Cathy contented themselves with looking and listening till peace was restored; then, both began searching their father’s pockets for the presents he had promised them. The former was a boy of fourteen, but when he