

Wuthering Heights

Wuthering Heights is a novel by Emily Brontë published in 1847. It was her only novel. The story is about a passionate but hopeless love between Catherine Earnshaw and Heathcliff, a dark mysterious hero. The book describes how this passion destroys them and the people around them. The novel has also given rise to many film adaptations, such as the one starring Ralph Fiennes and Juliette Binoche in 1992.

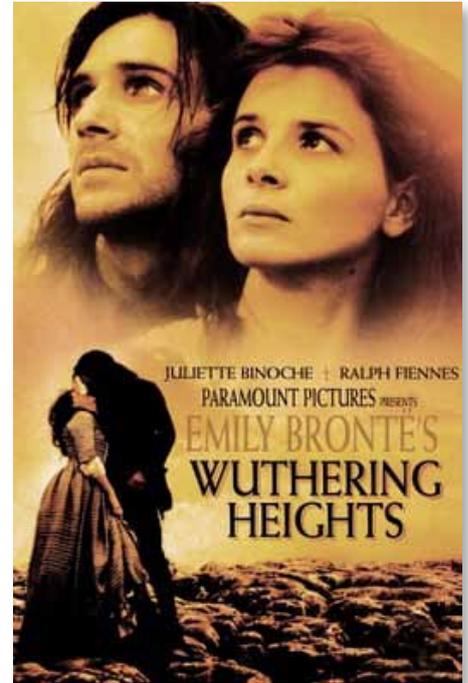
Before you read

1 Look at the pictures from the film *Wuthering Heights* and answer the questions.

- 1 What is the relationship between the characters?
- 2 Do they belong to the same social class?
- 3 Where does the story take place?

Reading

2 Read the summary of the plot and check your answers to exercise 1.



The Earnshaw family live at Wuthering Heights. The children of the family are the teenager Hindley and his younger sister Catherine. Their father, Mr Earnshaw, adopts a homeless gypsy boy, Heathcliff. Hindley becomes very jealous of Heathcliff but Catherine grows very fond of him. Soon, Catherine and Heathcliff spend hours on the moors together and hate every moment apart. They are madly in love.

After Mr Earnshaw dies, Hindley becomes master of Wuthering Heights and forces Heathcliff to become a servant instead of a member of the family.

One day, Catherine goes to stay with her brother for a few months; when she returns to Wuthering Heights she behaves differently, she is a changed woman: she looks and behaves like a lady. She laughs at Heathcliff's appearance and at his lack of education.

After a quarrel, Hindley locks Heathcliff in the attic. Catherine visits him there and tries to comfort him, but Heathcliff wants to get revenge on Hindley.

Catherine becomes close friends with Edgar Linton, a conventional young man, and becomes more distant from Heathcliff. Although she doesn't really love Edgar, she says she could never marry Heathcliff because of his poor position in society and lack of education. So she marries Edgar. Heathcliff is heartbroken; he runs away and disappears.

Six months later, Heathcliff returns as a gentleman, he is now rich and strong. Edgar's sister, Isabella, falls in love with Heathcliff, seeing him as a romantic hero. He doesn't like her but encourages her love: he wants to use Isabella to get revenge on Edgar so he marries her. Then Catherine falls ill. Heathcliff visits her in secret. Catherine gives birth to her daughter, Cathy, and then dies.

The day after Catherine's funeral, Isabella runs away from Heathcliff; she escapes to the south of England where she gives birth to Linton, Heathcliff's son. Six months later, Hindley dies and Heathcliff becomes the master of Wuthering Heights...

3 P Read the text again and choose the correct answer (✓).

- Hindley...
 - is friends with Heathcliff.
 - spends a lot of time with Heathcliff.
 - doesn't get on with Heathcliff.
- When Mr Earnshaw dies...
 - Heathcliff's life gets worse.
 - Heathcliff and Hindley get closer.
 - Heathcliff leaves the house.
- How does Catherine's attitude to Heathcliff change?
 - She thinks he looks funny.
 - She stops loving him.
 - She thinks he is clever.
- Why does Catherine marry Linton?
 - Because he is very romantic.
 - Because she falls in love with him.
 - Because of his social position.
- Heathcliff marries Isabella because...
 - he is in love with her.
 - he wants to punish Edgar.
 - he wants her money.
- When Hindley dies...
 - Heathcliff gets Wuthering Heights.
 - Isabella runs away from Heathcliff.
 - Heathcliff goes to the south of England.

Listening

4 You are going to hear an extract from the book about Heathcliff's childhood. The servant, Nelly, tells the story. Before you listen, guess whether these statements are true (T) or false (F).

- Heathcliff was a naughty boy. _____
- He had no friends in the house. _____
- He was Mr Earnshaw's favourite. _____
- He used to steal things. _____
- He was quiet and patient. _____
- He never fell ill. _____

5  **5** Now listen and check your answers.

6  **5** Listen again and answer these questions.

- How did people in the house treat young Heathcliff?
- What did Heathcliff use to do when Hindley hit him?
- What was Catherine like as a child?
- How did Hindley feel about his father?
- When did Nelly change her mind about the children?
- How did Heathcliff behave when he was ill?

Speaking

7 Tell the story of *Wuthering Heights* or another book you know. Use these questions to help you. Then take it in turns to tell the story.

- Where does the story take place?
- Who are the main characters in the story?
- What is the relationship between them?
- How does the book begin?
- What are the most exciting events in the story?
- How does the story end?
- What are the main themes of the story?
- Which character do you like/dislike most? Why?

STUDY SKILLS

Writing a blurb

A blurb is a short summary or some words of praise accompanying a creative work, usually a book or DVD. The blurb:

- sums up the story of the book
- does not give away the ending of the book
- says something about the author
- praises the book, using positive adjectives
- includes extracts from positive reviews of the book

Here are some blurbs for *Around the World in Eighty Days* by Jules Verne:

This is the exciting story of Phileas Fogg and his journey around the world in eighty days.

Fogg believes he can travel around the world in eighty days: can he do it?

A marvellous adventure story for all ages.

A masterpiece by the master of adventure, Jules Verne.

Jules Verne at his best!

Writing

8 Write the blurb for the back of *Wuthering Heights* or another book you like. Use the blurbs above as a model.

