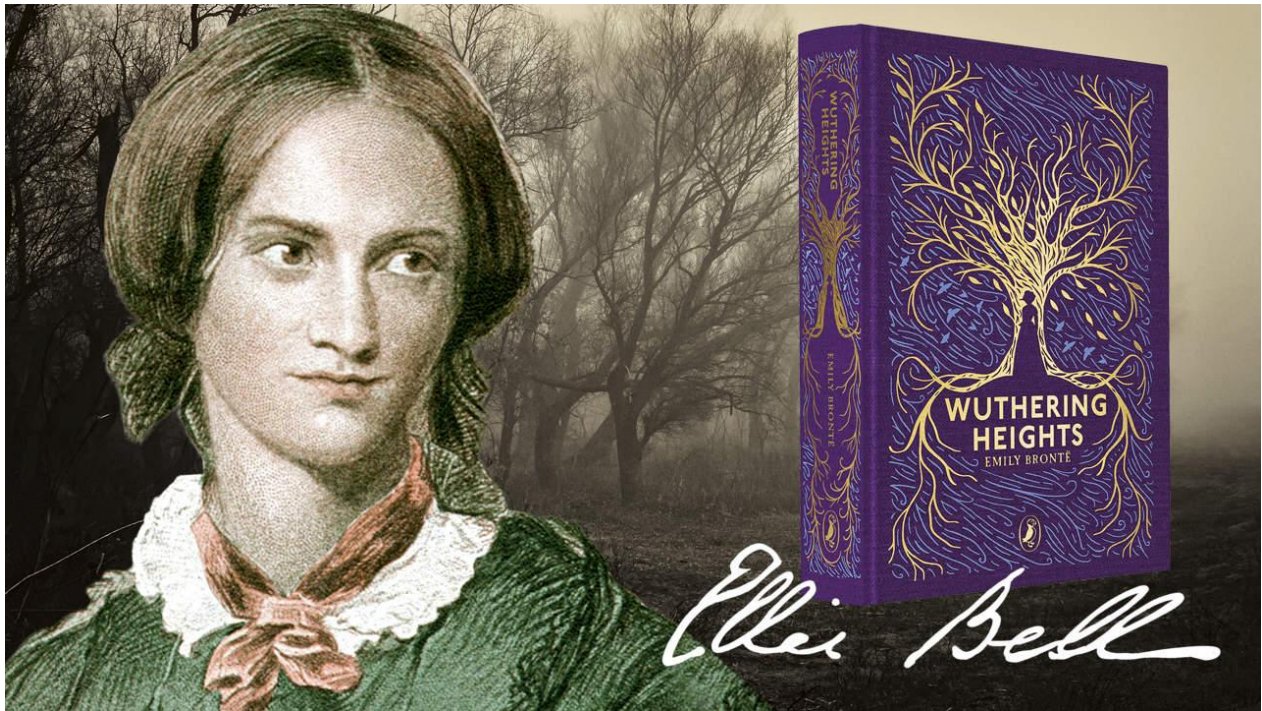


# Wuthering Heights by Emily Brontë [B2]

Capolavoro dell'età d'oro della letteratura inglese, questo dramma rappresenta in maniera eccellente l'amore appassionato, il tradimento e le punizioni, oltre alle allusioni a fenomeni soprannaturali.



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Published in 1847 under the pseudonym Ellis Bell, [Wuthering Heights](#) is Emily Brontë's only novel. It describes the [stormy](#) relationship between a man called Heathcliff and the love of his life, Catherine Earnshaw. [Their tale](#) is told through a complex narrative [comprising](#) the observations of an outsider, the reminiscences of an old [housekeeper](#), [excerpts](#) from a diary, [plus accounts](#) of dreams or [hauntings](#).

## A REVELATORY DIARY

Mr. Lockwood is a wealthy visitor to the Yorkshire [moors](#) who has rented a large house called Thrushcross [Grange](#). Lockwood decides to visit his [landlord](#), Heathcliff, at his home, [Wuthering Heights](#). The name 'Wuthering' is a Yorkshire term meaning 'characterised by strong, [blustery](#) winds'. Lockwood's reception is as [chilly](#) as the climate, but a wild [blizzard](#) forces him [to stay overnight](#). Unable to sleep, Lockwood reads an old diary he

finds near his bed. It is written by a young woman called Catherine Earnshaw and narrates some **harrowing** episodes of her life. When Lockwood at last **falls asleep**, he has a dream in which, disturbed by the **tapping** of a **branch** against his window, he **smashes** his **fist** through the glass **to snap the branch** off. “[...] stretching an arm to seize the importunate **branch**; instead of which, my fingers closed on the fingers of a little, ice-cold hand! The intense horror of nightmare came over me: I tried to draw back my arm, but the hand clung to it, and a most melancholy voice sobbed, ‘Let me in - let me in!’” “[...] stesi il braccio al di fuori per afferrare il ramo importuno, ma la mia mano strinse invece le dita di una piccola mano diaccia. L’intenso orrore dell’incubo m’invase; cercai di ritrarre il braccio, ma la piccola mano vi si aggrappava, e una voce malinconica ripeteva singhiozzando: — Lasciami entrare! Lasciami entrare!”

## **SUPERNATURAL THEME**

The child identifies herself as Catherine Linton, Catherine Earnshaw’s married name before she died. This suggests that, rather than a dream provoked by reading the diary, the girl might actually be a ghost. Apart from the theme of the supernatural, the theme of cruelty and sadistic violence is also introduced; Lockwood is so terrified that he **rubs** the child’s **wrist** on the broken glass of the **window pane** in an effort **to free himself**.

## **THE OUTSIDER**

When Lockwood returns to Thrushcross **Grange** he becomes ill, and, to pass the time, asks his **housekeeper**, Nelly, to tell him Heathcliff’s history. And so **unfolds** the **tale** of how Heathcliff was discovered as a child on the streets of Liverpool by old Mr. Earnshaw, who took him home and treated him the same as his own children Hindley and Catherine. At Earnshaw’s death, Heathcliff is reduced to living like a servant by Hindley, who hates him. But Catherine and Heathcliff become inseparable.

## FATE AND MONEY

A series of [twists of fate](#) leads Catherine to marry Edgar Linton, the [heir](#) to Thrushcross [Grange](#), but before she can do so, Heathcliff runs away to “better himself”. [In so doing](#), he misses what is possibly one of the most famous declarations of love in English literature: “My love for Linton is like the foliage in the woods: time will change it, I’m all aware, as winter changes the trees. My love for Heathcliff resembles the rocks beneath: a source of little visible delight, but necessary. Nelly, I am Heathcliff! He’s always, always in my mind.” “Il mio amore per Linton è simile al fogliame del bosco; il tempo lo muterà, ne sono sicura, come l’inverno muta gli alberi; il mio amore per Heathcliff somiglia alle eterne rocce che stanno sottoterra: una sorgente di gioia poco visibile, ma necessaria. Nelly, io sono Heathcliff! Lui è sempre, sempre nella mia mente.” When Heathcliff returns rich and powerful some years later, his vengeance is terrible. He becomes [master](#) of both [Wuthering Heights](#) and Thrushcross [Grange](#) until [their](#) occupants are either dead or living in virtual slavery.

## PSYCHOLOGICAL READINGS

The obsessive love between Heathcliff and Catherine, and [the latter’s](#) repeated attacks of violent emotion leading up to her death, have led some modern-day psychologists to diagnose both characters with bipolar disorder, post-traumatic stress or borderline personality disorder. How else to explain the fact that, nearly eighteen years after her death, when her husband is being [buried](#) next to her, Heathcliff opens Catherine’s [coffin](#) to see her face once more? “I thought, once, I would have stayed there: when I saw her face again – it is hers yet! [the sexton] had hard work to stir me; but he said it would change if the air blew on it.” “Quando ho rivisto il suo volto ancora intatto, ho pensato per un momento di rimaner là: il sacrestano ha durato fatica per farmi allontanare; mi ha detto che se l’aria l’avesse sfiorato si sarebbe alterato; così ho ricoperto subito la bara.”

## LOVE AND DEATH

In spite of Heathcliff's violence and Cathy's arrogance, they remain engaging and sympathetic characters, their love transcending life and death, like the violent weather of the moors. Wuthering Heights has been adapted many times for stage and screen, and famously inspired a 1978 song by recording artist Kate Bush. A recent British biographical drama film called Emily (2022) suggests a possible inspiration for Brontë's formidable novel.

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# Glossary

- **to snap the branch off** = staccare
- **window pane** = vetro della finestra
- **to free himself** = liberarsi
- **master** = proprietario
- **coffin** = bara
- **stormy** = tormentata
- **housekeeper** = governante
- **moors** = brughiera
- **blizzard** = tempesta
- **to stay overnight** = fermarsi per la notte
- **unfolds** = svilupparsi
- **engaging** = intriganti
- **tale** = storia
- **Grange** = fattoria
- **Wuthering Heights** = Cime tempestose
- **comprising** = includere
- **blustery** = burrascoso
- **branch** = ramo
- **excerpts** = passaggi, estratti
- **landlord** = proprietario, locatore
- **fist** = pugno
- **wrist** = polso
- **chilly** = gelida
- **tapping** = picchiettare
- **smashes** = spaccare
- **rubs** = sfregare
- **twists of fate** = scherzi del destino
- **In so doing** = nel farlo
- **the latter's** = di quest'ultimo
- **In spite of** = malgrado
- **accounts** = resoconti
- **heir** = erede
- **sympathetic** = che generano empatia

- **plus** = oltre a
- **hauntings** = fantasmi
- **harrowing** = strazianti
- **falls asleep** = addormentarsi
- **buried** = seppellire