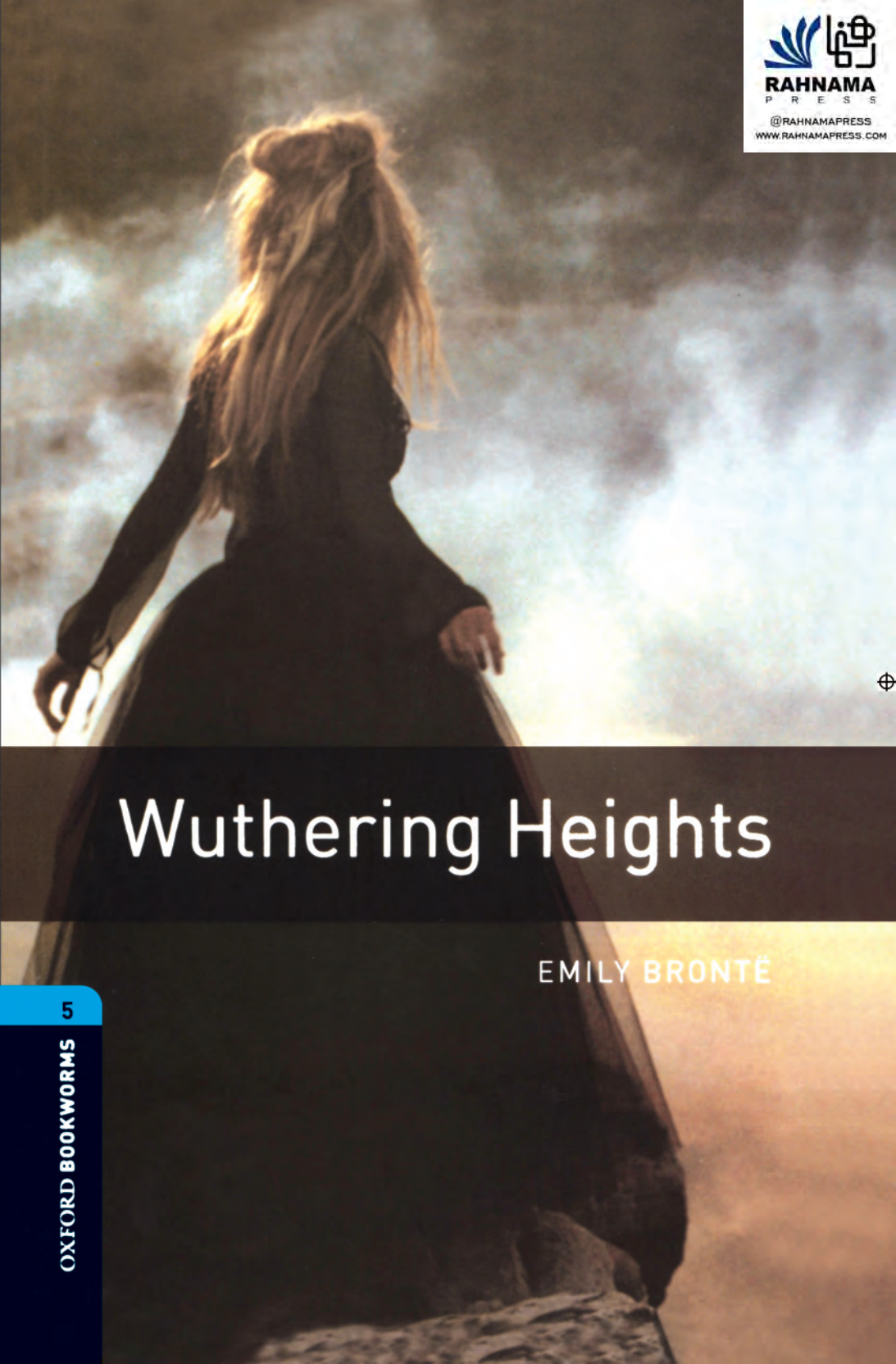




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Wuthering Heights

EMILY BRONTË

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OXFORD BOOKWORMS

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CHAPTER 1

Mr Lockwood visits Wuthering Heights

_____ I HAVE JUST returned from a visit to my landlord, Mr
1801 Heathcliff. I am delighted with the house I am renting
_____ from him. Thrushcross Grange is miles away from any
town or village. That suits me perfectly. And the scenery here in
Yorkshire is so beautiful!

Mr Heathcliff, in fact, is my only neighbour, and I think his character is similar to mine. He does not like people either.

'My name is Lockwood,' I said, when I met him at the gate to his house. 'I'm renting Thrushcross Grange from you. I just wanted to come and introduce myself.'

He said nothing, but frowned, and did not encourage me to enter. After a while, however, he decided to invite me in.

'Joseph, take Mr Lockwood's horse!' he called. 'And bring up some wine from the cellar!' Joseph was a very old servant, with a sour expression on his face. He looked crossly up at me as he took my horse.

'God help us! A visitor!' he muttered to himself. Perhaps there were no other servants, I thought. And it seemed that Mr Heathcliff hardly ever received guests.

His house is called Wuthering Heights. The name means 'a windswept house on a hill', and it is a very good description. The trees around the house do not grow straight, but are bent by the north wind, which blows over the moors every day of the year. Fortunately, the house is strongly built, and is not damaged even by the worst winter storms. The name 'Earnshaw' is cut into a stone over the front door.

Mr Lockwood visits Wuthering Heights

Mr Heathcliff and I entered the huge main room. It could have been any Yorkshire farmhouse kitchen, except that there was no sign of cooking, and no farmer sitting at the table. Mr Heathcliff certainly does not look like a farmer. His hair and skin are dark, like a gipsy's, but he has the manners of a gentleman. He could perhaps take more care with his appearance, but he is handsome. I think he is proud, and also unhappy.

We sat down by the fire, in silence.

'Joseph!' shouted Mr Heathcliff. No answer came from the cellar, so he dived down there, leaving me alone with several rather fierce-looking dogs. Suddenly one of them jumped angrily up at me, and in a moment all the others were attacking me. From every shadowy corner in the great room appeared a growling animal, ready to kill me, it seemed.

'Help! Mr Heathcliff! Help!' I shouted, trying to keep the dogs back. My landlord and his servant were in no hurry to help, and could not have climbed the cellar steps more slowly, but luckily a woman, who I supposed was the housekeeper, rushed into the room to calm the dogs.

'What the devil is the matter?' Mr Heathcliff asked me rudely, when he finally entered the room.

'Your dogs, sir!' I replied. 'You shouldn't leave a stranger with them. They're dangerous.'

'Come, come, Mr Lockwood. Have some wine. We don't often have strangers here, and I'm afraid neither I nor my dogs are used to receiving them.'

I could not feel offended after this, and accepted the wine. We sat drinking and talking together for a while. I suggested visiting him tomorrow. He did not seem eager to see me again, but I shall go anyway. I am interested in him, even if he isn't interested in me.

* * *

Wuthering Heights

Two days later Yesterday afternoon was misty and bitterly cold, but I walked the four miles to Wuthering Heights and arrived just as it was beginning to snow. I banged on the front door for ten minutes, getting colder and colder. Finally Joseph's head appeared at a window of one of the farm buildings.

'What do you want?' he growled.

'Could you let me in?' I asked desperately.

He shook his head. 'There's only Mrs Heathcliff indoors, and she won't open the door to you.'

Just then a young man appeared and called me to follow him. We went through the back door and into the big room where I had been before. I was delighted to see a warm fire and a table full of food. And this time there was a woman sitting by the fire. She must be Mrs Heathcliff, I thought. I had not imagined my landlord was married. She looked at me coldly without saying anything.

'Terrible weather!' I remarked. There was silence.

'What a beautiful animal!' I tried again, pointing to one of the dogs that had attacked me. She still said nothing, but got up to make the tea. She was only about seventeen, with the most beautiful little face I had ever seen. Her golden wavy hair fell around her shoulders.

'Have you been invited to tea?' she asked me crossly.

'No, but you are the proper person to invite me,' I smiled.

For some reason this really annoyed her. She stopped making the tea, and threw herself angrily back in her chair. Meanwhile the young man was staring aggressively at me. He looked like a farm worker, but seemed to be part of the family. I did not feel at all comfortable. At last Heathcliff came in.

'Here I am, sir, as I promised!' I said cheerfully.

'You shouldn't have come,' he answered, shaking the snow off

Mr Lockwood visits Wuthering Heights

his clothes. 'You'll never find your way back in the dark.'

'Perhaps you could lend me a servant to guide me back to the Grange?' I asked.

'No, I couldn't. There aren't any servants here except Joseph and the housekeeper. Get the tea ready, will you?' he added fiercely to the young woman. I was shocked by his unpleasantness.

We sat down to eat. I tried to make conversation with the three silent people round the table.

'How happy you must be, Mr Heathcliff,' I began, 'in this quiet place, with your wife and —'

'My wife! My wife's ghost, you mean?'

I suddenly realized I had made a serious mistake. So his wife was dead! Of course he was too old to be married to that young girl. She must be married to the young man next to me, who was drinking his tea out of a bowl and eating his bread with unwashed hands. Perhaps the poor girl had found no one better to marry in this uninhabited area. I turned politely to the young man.

'Ah, so you are this lady's husband!' This was worse than before. His face went red, and he seemed only just able to stop himself hitting me. He muttered something I could not hear.

'Wrong again, Mr Lockwood,' said Mr Heathcliff. 'No, her husband, my son, is dead. This,' he added, looking scornfully at the young man, 'is certainly not my son.'

'My name is Hareton Earnshaw,' growled the young man.

We finished our meal in silence, and when I looked out of the window, all I could see was darkness and snow.

'I don't think I can get home without a guide,' I said politely. No one answered me. I turned to the woman.

'Mrs Heathcliff,' I begged, 'What can I do? Please help me!'

Wuthering Heights

'Take the road you came on,' she replied without interest, opening a book. 'That's the best advice I can give.'

'Mr Heathcliff, I'll have to stay here for the night!' I told him.

'I hope that will teach you not to walk over the moors in bad weather,' he answered. 'I don't keep guest bedrooms. You can share a bed with Hareton or Joseph.'

I was so angry with them all that I could not stay there a moment longer, and rushed out into the darkness. I saw Joseph by the back door, caught hold of the lamp he was carrying, and ran with it to the gate. But the dogs chased after me and attacked me, and I was soon knocked to the ground. Heathcliff and Hareton stood at the door, laughing, as I shouted at the dogs and tried to get up. In the end I was again rescued by the housekeeper, Zillah, who ordered away the dogs and helped me to my feet.

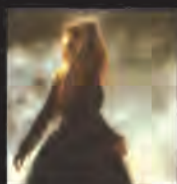
I was so bruised and exhausted that I did not feel strong enough to walk home, and although I did not want to, I had to spend the night at Wuthering Heights. Nobody wished me goodnight, as Zillah took me upstairs to find a bed for me.

CHAPTER 2

Catherine Earnshaw's room

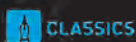
———— 'QUIETLY, SIR!' WHISPERED the housekeeper, as we
1801 climbed up the dark stairs. 'My master will be angry if
———— he discovers which bedroom you're sleeping in. For
some reason he doesn't want anyone to sleep there, I don't know

Wuthering Heights



The wind is strong on the Yorkshire moors. There are few trees, and fewer houses, to block its path. There is one house, however, that does not hide from the wind. It stands out from the hill and challenges the wind to do its worst. The house is called Wuthering Heights.

When Mr Earnshaw brings a strange, small, dark child back home to Wuthering Heights, it seems he has opened his doors to trouble. He has invited in something that, like the wind, is safer kept out of the house. (Word count 23,180)



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