

MACMILLAN READERS

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

EMILY BRONTË

Wuthering Heights

Retold by F. H. Cornish

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PART ONE

1

Mr Heathcliff

Lockwood's diary

The year is 1801 and it is now the end of November. Two days ago I came to live in this old house – Thrushcross Grange. The countryside here in Yorkshire is beautiful – the most beautiful in England! There is a park¹ around the house, and beyond the park there are the moors². I have come to this wild and lonely part of northern England because I want to be alone – away from everyone I know. The housekeeper here at Thrushcross Grange is a middle-aged woman called Nelly Dean. She looks after me well, but she is very quiet. So I shall have a peaceful time.

This is a lonely place and no one lives nearby. The village of Gimmerton is six miles away. I have rented³ Thrushcross Grange for a year from my nearest neighbour, Mr Heathcliff. He lives four miles away. I have just returned from a visit to Mr Heathcliff. He is an unfriendly man who likes to be alone.

He was standing by a gate as I arrived at his house, early this afternoon.

‘Are you Mr Heathcliff?’ I asked.

He nodded his head, but did not speak to me.

‘I’m Lockwood, your new tenant at Thrushcross Grange,’ I said politely. ‘I thought I should call on⁴ you.’

He leant on the gate and stared at me. At last he said, ‘Come in.’ Then he turned and walked away from me towards the house.

I had thought that Mr Heathcliff would look like a farmer, but I was surprised. His clothes are made of fine cloth. He is a handsome man but he looks like a gypsy⁵. His eyes are dark and his hair is black.

Mr Heathcliff's house is called Wuthering Heights and it is not a comfortable house like Thrushcross Grange. The house is on the top of the moors where the weather is often very bad. There are strong winds and fierce storms so the house has been built with thick stone walls and very small, narrow windows. Above the front door, the date 1500 is carved into the stone. There is also a name – Hareton Earnshaw – cut into the stone. Perhaps Hareton Earnshaw was the first owner of the house.

I only saw one of the rooms inside the house. It had a stone floor, a large wooden table, a settle⁶ and a few wooden chairs. And there were lots of dogs everywhere.

I decided that I liked my unfriendly landlord. But something unpleasant happened while I was at Wuthering Heights. Mr Heathcliff went out of the room to get some wine and I tried to make friends with one of the dogs. It immediately snapped and snarled at me. Then some of the other dogs attacked me too.

'You should never have left me alone with these dangerous dogs!' I cried to him as he came back into the room.

'Don't touch the dogs,' Mr Heathcliff said. 'They won't harm⁷ you if you leave them alone.'

I tried to forget about what had happened and I continued our conversation. I think Mr Heathcliff is a gentleman⁸ and an intelligent man, so I have decided to visit him again tomorrow. He was not very pleased when I said I would visit him again.

I have now decided that I do not understand my neighbour, Mr Heathcliff.

I visited Wuthering Heights again yesterday. It was a cold and misty afternoon when I left Thrushcross Grange after lunch

to walk across the moors. I did not know that the moors are dangerous if the weather becomes bad.

The moors were bleak⁹. I saw no one. A bitterly cold wind was blowing. By the time I arrived at my neighbour's house, snow was falling and I was very, very cold. I knocked loudly on the door but no one came to let me in. I went round to the farmyard¹⁰ at the back of the house and, at last, I found one of the servants in a barn. He spoke so strangely that it was difficult to understand what he said. But I did understand that he was a very rude, unpleasant old man.

'You'll find t'master behind t'barns¹¹,' he said. 'Go and find him if you want. He won't be pleased to see you. There's no one in t'house except t'missis. She won't let you in and I won't ask her to let you in.'

The snow was falling fast and I was angry now. I decided to go and knock loudly on the front door again. But suddenly a young man wearing dirty, untidy clothes came into the barn.

'You – come with me,' he said rudely. He took me into the house, to the room where I had been the day before.

There was a bright fire and there were plates and knives and forks on the table ready for a meal. Immediately I started to feel happier. Sitting near the fire was a young woman. She must be 't'missis' – Mr Heathcliff's wife – I thought.

She stared at me and said nothing.

'It's a very cold day,' I said politely.

The woman still said nothing.

I spoke again to her. 'I thought no one was in the house today,' I said. 'No one heard me knocking on the door.'

Then the young man spoke. 'Sit down – he'll be here soon.'

I sat down and there was silence.

The woman and the young man stared at me as if they hated me. Was the young man a servant or a relative of Mr Heathcliff? He was untidy and dirty, but he did not behave like a servant.

At last Mr Heathcliff arrived.

'Here I am,' I said cheerfully to him. 'I said I would visit you again. I will have to stay for a short time until it stops snowing.'

'It won't stop snowing today,' said my landlord. 'You were stupid to walk across the moors in this weather.'

'Oh. Could you ask someone to show me the way back to Thrushcross Grange?' I asked.

'No, I could not,' he replied.

Then he turned to the woman. 'Go and make the tea,' he said.

'Is he to have any tea?' she asked, pointing at me.

'Get the tea!' shouted Mr Heathcliff.

I now stopped believing that this savage, bad-tempered man was a gentleman. But I was polite to him. When the tea was ready and we were all sitting around the table, I spoke again.

'It must be difficult living in such a wild place,' I said to Mr Heathcliff. 'But you and your wife —'

'My wife is dead, sir,' he said.

He did not sound sad that his wife was dead.

'Oh!' I said, and I looked at the young woman.

'Mrs Heathcliff is my daughter-in-law,' said my landlord. He looked at her as if he hated her.

So she must be married to the young man who was sitting beside me, I thought. He was making loud noises as he drank his tea.

'I understand!' I said to the young man. 'This young lady is your wife.'

The young man's face went red with anger but he did not say anything.

'I said she was my daughter-in-law,' said Mr Heathcliff. 'She was married to my son.'

'But,' he went on, 'this young man is certainly not my son. My son is dead.'

He did not sound sad that his son was dead.

'My name is Hareton Earnshaw,' the young man said to me.