

PROLOGUE

Mr. Lockwood seeks shelter at Wuthering Heights, the ancestral home of the Earnshaw family, as a storm rages outside. Nelly, the housekeeper, warns him to be quiet as the current owner of the manor, Heathcliff, will be angered if he discovers there is a visitor. Alone in an unused bedroom, Lockwood discovers an old diary of Catherine Earnshaw, a deceased former resident of the house. Once asleep, he begins to have nightmares about Cathy, whose ghost he envisions outside his window. Lockwood cries out, disturbing Heathcliff, who enters the room. Greatly agitated, Heathcliff anxiously looks out the window, but sees no one and is utterly devastated.

ACT I

*Scene one – It is twenty years earlier.* Cathy and Heathcliff enter Wuthering Heights after a walk in the moors. They are clearly in love and Cathy recalls the day he first came to their home after her father discovered him as a homeless boy in Liverpool and took him in. Cathy’s alcoholic brother, Hindley, is now master of their home and treats Heathcliff poorly. He is upset to find them in an embrace and orders Heathcliff to work in the fields



with Joseph, the groundskeeper. Joseph wishes to break for mass, but Hindley demands that he hold the ritual inside the house and keep an eye on Cathy and Heathcliff. As Joseph dozes off, the couple revels in the moonlight and escape through a window.

*Scene two – The following Christmas Eve.* The household awaits the arrival of their brother and sister neighbors, Edgar and Isabella, along with Cathy, who has been their guest for several weeks. Nelly plays with Hindley’s young son Hareton while observing the forlorn Heathcliff. She offers to smarten his disheveled attire for the impending visit, but he will have none of it – Cathy will like him as he is. Rushing toward the door, he is cuffed by Hindley, who insists on greeting his guests rather than the “stable boy.” Cathy remarks on his sulky demeanor while Heathcliff sizes up Edgar, a potential rival. Hoping to keep Heathcliff and Cathy apart, Hindley continues to bait him and the two scuffle, leaving the room. Carolers sing outside.

ACT II

The following spring, Cathy awaits another visit from Edgar. Heathcliff invites her for a walk, but she fears they will be discovered by Joseph. He berates her for spending so much time with the Lintons, and she rebukes him for being childish. Heathcliff rushes off as Edgar enters. Cathy asks Nelly to stop spying on them and leave the room as well. When she doesn’t, Cathy slaps her. Edgar intercedes and she strikes him too. The spat passes, and as Cathy and Edgar make up, Nelly feels a dreadful foreboding for Heathcliff, knowing that he and the young girl will never be together.

Hareton enters the room, frightened of his drunken father. Hindley stumbles in and picks up a carving knife, intending to harm the child. Nelly has seen this behavior before and plays along, putting herself between father and son. Hindley snatches the child and threatens to throw him down the stairs until Heathcliff stops him. Cathy returns, and unaware Heathcliff is in the room, confides in Nelly her intention to marry Edgar, as it seems her abusive brother has broken the now-sullen Heathcliff's spirit, even though they appear to be soul mates. He rushes from the room, and mortified that she has been overheard, Cathy runs outside into a raging storm, crying out his name.

### ACT III

It is three years later and Cathy is married to Edgar. She now resides in the Lintons' home at Thrushcross Grange, which is in view of Wuthering Heights. Their scene of domestic tranquility is interrupted when Nelly announces a visitor – Heathcliff has returned after a lengthy absence. He has become a fully grown, good-looking and perfectly groomed young man, with the face of experience. Cathy chides him for his silence, but Heathcliff counters that it has been a difficult period. Now flush with cash, he intends to buy Wuthering Heights from Hindley, who is financially mired with huge gambling debts. Cathy is once again enthralled by her childhood friend and Edgar can barely hide his jealousy. He asks for a moment alone with his wife.

Meanwhile, Isabella is also entranced by Heathcliff and confesses her attraction to his non-conforming ways back when they met at Christmastime. He hardly pays her much attention, even when she sings a song to him. Cathy returns, asking that they be left alone, but Isabel refuses, stating that she is now Heathcliff's friend. Cathy exposes all of his faults, claiming that he could never marry a Linton. Heathcliff sneers that if she could love a Linton, why couldn't he? He is not her husband and may do as he pleases. Upset, Cathy tries to leave the room and encounters Edgar. Seeing how distraught she has become, he orders Heathcliff to leave his house, and he does so while cursing them both. Now completely unhinged, Cathy admits she does not love Edgar and recalls the simplicity of her childhood. She longs for the grave and is hardly comforted by Nelly's feeble efforts to calm her nerves.

### ACT IV

The following March, Isabel writes a letter revealing her unhappiness. Her impulsive marriage to Heathcliff has been a failure, and the walls of Wuthering Heights have become a prison. A drunken Hindley wields a pistol, bemoaning the streetwise vagrant who robbed him of his father's love and his birthright. Isabel is jealous of the apparent affair she thinks Heathcliff is having with Cathy, and is ready to watch him die, only to scream out at the last minute, saving Heathcliff's life. He wrestles the gun out of Hindley's hand and scorns his unloved wife, who leaves the room in a wild frenzy.

Cathy enters, showing the effects of a long illness. She only wishes for peace, and Heathcliff asks why she betrayed her heart by marrying Edgar, which ultimately has caused them both so much pain. After they forgive one another, Cathy vividly envisions the afterlife and dies. Unable to face her mortality, Heathcliff challenges her spirit to haunt him forever and drive him mad.

