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***Wuthering Heights* plot Summary**

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Plot Summary of *Wuthering Heights*

Wuthering Heights opens in 1801 as Mr. Lockwood, a wealthy gentleman, rents Thrushcross Grange in the isolated Yorkshire moors and visits his brooding landlord, Heathcliff, at the nearby manor of Wuthering Heights. Perturbed by the hostile atmosphere and supernatural occurrences he experiences there, Lockwood returns to the Grange and asks the housekeeper, Nelly Dean, to recount the history of the families who inhabited both estates. Nelly begins decades earlier, when the former master of Wuthering Heights, Mr. Earnshaw, brought home a homeless foundling named Heathcliff. Earnshaw doted on the boy, provoking severe jealousy in his son, Hindley, while his daughter, Catherine, formed an intense, wild bond with Heathcliff that grew into an all-consuming love.

Following Mr. Earnshaw's death, Hindley inherits Wuthering Heights and immediately demotes Heathcliff to an uneducated servant, subjecting him to relentless abuse. Catherine remains devoted to Heathcliff until she visits the nearby Thrushcross Grange and is introduced to the polished, wealthy Linton family. Drawn to social status and refinement, Catherine accepts a marriage proposal from Edgar Linton. In a pivotal conversation with Nelly, Catherine admits that marrying Heathcliff would degrade her socially, despite her soul being fundamentally identical to his. Heathcliff overhears her statement about his low status and flees the moors, unaware of her declaration of love.

Heathcliff returns three years later as a wealthy, cultured man intent on systematically destroying those who mistreated him. He marries Edgar’s naive sister, Isabella, purely to torment the Lintons and secure legal rights to their fortune. The psychological strain of Heathcliff's return and her own torn loyalties drives a pregnant Catherine into mental and physical collapse; she dies giving birth to her daughter, Young Cathy, leaving Heathcliff devastated and begging her spirit to haunt him. Meanwhile, Hindley devolves into severe alcoholism following his wife's death, allowing Heathcliff to exploit Hindley's gambling debts and acquire legal ownership of Wuthering Heights. Upon Hindley's death, Heathcliff assumes guardianship over Hindley’s young son, Hareton, treating the boy as an uneducated laborer in exact reflection of how Hindley once treated him.

Years pass, and Isabella dies in London after escaping Heathcliff’s physical abuse, leaving behind their sickly son, Linton. Heathcliff claims the boy and forces a coercive marriage between Linton and Young Cathy, ensuring that upon Edgar Linton's and Linton's subsequent deaths, Heathcliff inherits Thrushcross Grange along with Wuthering Heights. Young Cathy is effectively imprisoned at Wuthering Heights, where she initially expresses bitterness and scorns the unrefined Hareton. However, as they spend time together, Cathy begins teaching Hareton to read, cultivating a gentle, mutual affection that transforms both of their temperaments.

Seeing the ghost of Catherine reflected in the eyes of both Hareton and Cathy, Heathcliff finds his drive for vengeance entirely exhausted. Consumed by visions of Catherine's spirit and a desire to be reunited with her, he neglects his health and starves himself to death in his chamber. The novel concludes with Hareton and Cathy preparing to marry on New Year's Day and unite the two estates, finally breaking the multi-generational cycle of cruelty and leaving the moors in quiet peace.