

## Characters

**Heathcliff** is the central male character of the novel. An orphaned foundling raised by the Earnshaw family, he forms an early bond with his foster sister Catherine Earnshaw, and they both fall passionately in love with each other as they grow. Meanwhile he nurses a bitter rivalry with his cruel foster brother Hindley, who resents the attention their father shows Heathcliff. A brooding, vindictive man, his anger and bitterness at Catherine's later marriage to their neighbour Edgar Linton sees him engage in a ruthless vendetta to destroy not only his enemies but their heirs, a crusade that only intensifies upon Catherine's death.

**Catherine Earnshaw** is Heathcliff's adoptive sister. A free-spirited and somewhat spoiled young woman, she returns Heathcliff's love utterly, but considers him too far beneath her for marriage into poverty from both not having any money; instead choosing another childhood friend, Edgar Linton, through which marriage she hopes to advance Heathcliff. Later, after Heathcliff's return, she acknowledges to both men that Heathcliff is her true love. However her physical and mental health is destroyed by the stress of regretting her marriage to Edgar and the feud between them, and she descends into prophetic madness before dying during childbirth.

**Edgar Linton** is a childhood friend of Catherine Earnshaw's, who later marries her. A mild and gentle man, if slightly cold, cowardly and distant, he loves Catherine deeply but is unable to reconcile his love for her with her feelings for her childhood friend. This leads to a bitter antagonism with Heathcliff, and it is partly this which leads to Catherine's mental breakdown and death. Linton is incapable of competing with Heathcliff's guile and ruthless determination across the

**Hindley Earnshaw** is Catherine's brother and Heathcliff's other rival. Having rejected Heathcliff since childhood, Hindley delights in turning him into a downtrodden servant upon inheriting Wuthering Heights. However, his wife's death in childbirth destroys him; he becomes a self-destructive alcoholic and gambler and it is this that allows Heathcliff, upon returning to Wuthering Heights, to turn the tables and to manoeuvre the family property away from him.



**Northern Yorkshire. In the foreground *heaths*.**

**Ellen (Nelly) Dean** is, at various points, the housekeeper of both Thrushcross Grange and Wuthering Heights, and is one of the two narrators of the novel. She recognizes early on that Heathcliff is Catherine's true love and tries to dissuade her from the disastrous marriage to Edgar. Having been a disapproving witness and unwilling participant to many of the events between Heathcliff and both the Earnshaw and Linton families for much of her life, she narrates the story to Lockwood during his illness.

**Hareton Earnshaw is the son of Hindley Earnshaw**, who is adopted by Heathcliff upon Hindley's death. Even before this, he has waged a campaign of torment against the young man while living together at Wuthering Heights. Heathcliff spitefully turns Hareton into a downtrodden, illiterate servant, much as Hindley once did to him, but does not further mistreat him as Hindley had done. Despite this, Hareton remains strangely loyal to him, even adopting a superficially similar personality. Quick tempered and easily embarrassed, he falls in love with

Catherine at an early point, and despite her contempt for him is thus inspired to improve himself. He bears a strong likeness to his aunt and is the only person who mourns Heathcliff upon his death.