

Emily Brontë

An biography

a cura di Sarah Gudgeon

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1. Read

Emily Brontë had two sisters and a brother. She was born in Yorkshire, England in 1818 and lived there with her family. However, her mum died in 1821 and this meant that the children spent a lot of time at home alone or out playing on the moors. All four siblings were writers and each of the three sisters is famous in her own right, but it was Emily's one and only novel, *Wuthering Heights*, that gained the most recognition.

The story was about two families, the Earnshaws and the Lintons, who lived in Yorkshire, and a waif, Heathcliff. Heathcliff is in love with Cathy Earnshaw, but it is a love/hate relationship and the consequences for all are dramatic. Cathy marries the wealthy Edgar Linton and Heathcliff decides to get revenge... but then Cathy dies in childbirth. This is a true example of how love can lead to madness, and is considered a literary classic thanks to the way Emily manipulated the characters and the brilliant dialogue.

Apart from some of her poems and this one novel, we don't really have much else to help us try and understand who Emily Brontë was. We know that she was passionate yet reserved and that sadly, she died young from tuberculosis in 1848.

She wasn't the most prolific writer in the family but literary critics believe that she was the true literary genius out of the three sisters.

Glossary:

waif – *trovatello*

wealthy – *benestante/ ricco*

childbirth – *parto/nascita di un bambino*

lead to – *portare a*

2. List five themes that you can find in *Wuthering Heights*.
3. Why do you think love sometimes makes people do crazy things and why do novelists often write about 'love and madness'? Write your answer in no more than 100 words.
4. a. Have you ever read a really great book whose main theme was 'love and madness'? Tell your partner about it.
 - b. Write a plot summary of the book and say why you would recommend it to a friend.

Teacher's Notes

1. Before reading ask the students if they've ever heard of the Brontë sisters. Can they name any of their famous stories? Do they like the classics or do they prefer contemporary novelists?
2. Themes in *Wuthering Heights*:
 - a. Love
 - b. Death
 - c. Money
 - d. Hate
 - e. Madness
3. Sample answer:

Love sometimes makes people do crazy things for lots of reasons: there is a fine line between love and hate and sometimes people cross the line. Other people are so in love that they lose all sense of reason and can think only about making the person they love happy, regardless of the personal or financial cost.

Novelists often write about 'love and madness' because it is a timeless theme that offers lots of opportunities for plot twists and high drama.
4. Students could complete this task for homework.

* Sarah Gudgeon

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