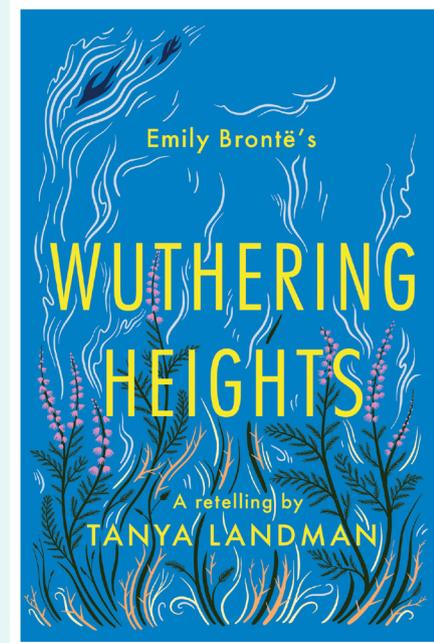


Barrington Stoke

CLASSROOM RESOURCES



WUTHERING HEIGHTS: A RETELLING

Tanya Landman

- PART 1** Synopsis and Themes
- PART 2** Character Study
- PART 3** Suggested Questions to Develop Reading Strategies
- PART 4** Creative Writing Exercises

PART 1 SYNOPSIS AND THEMES

SYNOPSIS AND THEMES

This guide has been produced to provide ideas for guiding readers through Tanya Landman's **Wuthering Heights**, a brilliantly accessible retelling of Emily Brontë's classic. The guide is written to be used after reading the full text in order to discuss the book and its overarching themes as a whole.

A synopsis is followed by quotes from the book with suggestions for discussion points designed to help readers engage with the complex topics the book covers. The questions assigned to each quote are intended to further understanding of the text and provide opportunities for classroom discussion or written work. There are also suggestions for creative writing exercises and a brief author biography.

We hope you enjoy using these resources with your students.

Wuthering Heights: A Retelling is a short novel that follows the story of Cathy as she tries to navigate a passionate but tumultuous love.

The story begins when Cathy's father brings a bedraggled orphan boy home to Wuthering Heights. His name is Heathcliff, and Cathy loses her heart to him. Growing up together, they develop an unbreakable bond.

But Cathy and Heathcliff live in a harsh, unforgiving world. After Cathy's parents pass away, the pair are left at the mercy of Cathy's selfish, brutish brother Hindley who is now master of the house. He does all he can to drive them apart. While Heathcliff is left to struggle against Hindley's relentless fight to cast him down, Cathy's life becomes entangled with the son of her wealthy neighbours, and she wonders if this could be a chance to escape the torment at Wuthering Heights ...

Surrounded by ill will, hardship and unhappiness, will Cathy and Heathcliff be split apart for good, or will love prevail and give them the happy ending they yearn for?

Wuthering Heights: A Retelling is written in a gripping, powerful and accessible style, remaining true to the themes, scenes and characters of the original plot while changing the perspective to that of Cathy's ghost, making it truly unique. The perfect stepping stone to Emily Brontë's original novel, this book is ideal for class discussions and offers a brilliant starting point for readers of all abilities.

Before starting the novel with the group ask them the following questions:

- Have you heard of Wuthering Heights before?

No:

- What impression do you get of the novel from its front cover and title?
- What do you think a retelling of the original novel will change?

Yes:

- What do you know about the original novel? (Try not to give away any of the plot!)
- What do you think a retelling of the original novel will change?



PART 2 CHARACTER STUDY

CATHY

I lived a kind of double life: there were two completely separate Catherine Earnshaws.

One went riding to Thrushcross Grange and bobbed and curtsied and was polite to Mr Linton and his wife [...] She was meek and obedient and loving: the ladylike creature her parents had longed for. The other Catherine Earnshaw lived at Wuthering Heights and witnessed daily scenes of such violence that she wondered if she would survive them. [page 37]

- What sort of character is Cathy? Do you like her?
 - Did you feel the same way about Cathy all the way through the book?
 - Were there any points in the book where your feelings about Cathy changed?
- Do you think Cathy is a sympathetic character? Why?
- What are Cathy's most prominent characteristics? List them and support with evidence.
- Throughout the book there is a strong link between Cathy and nature. Can you find two scenes that show examples of this?
 - What do you think this connection with nature says about her character?
- Cathy experiences conflict between different versions of herself and the different things she wants:
 - What causes this conflict? Give evidence from the book.
 - How does Cathy change from the start of the book to the end?

HEATHCLIFF

His arms and legs were stick thin, his cheeks hollowed, his eyes too big for his head. The boy stank to high heaven. I remember thinking that I was no Beauty, but Father had brought home the Beast. [page 7]

Heathcliff was no gipsy or ploughboy but a man as well dressed, as well groomed as Edgar was. He stood a whole head taller, with shoulders twice as wide. Heathcliff had become a gentleman and beside him Edgar looked like a schoolboy. [page 62]

- What sort of character is Heathcliff? Do you like him?
 - Did you feel the same way about Heathcliff all the way through the book?
 - Were there any points in the book where your feelings about him changed?
- What are Heathcliff's most prominent characteristics? List them and support with evidence.
- Compare the different descriptions of Heathcliff in the quotes above. What do they tell us about Heathcliff's character arc?
 - How does he change from the start of the book to the ending?
 - What causes him to change? Use specific scenes as evidence.
 - Heathcliff's appearance is transformed when he returns after his three-year disappearance – but how much do you think he changes internally?

Somehow she'd talked herself into believing that Heathcliff's rough exterior hid a noble mind, a poetic soul and a tender, loving heart. The silly girl had created a perfect fairy-tale out of a man I knew to be as hard as granite. [page 72]

- Consider the quotes above. Do you think Heathcliff can be viewed as a romantic hero?
 - Do you think that underneath his cold exterior, Heathcliff is a noble character? Give evidence to support your answer.

EDGAR

Edgar was so eager to please, he tried so hard to make me happy, he gave so much and asked so little. [page 48]

I could no more stand to see Edgar unhappy than I could bear to see a darling child weep. [page 66]

- Look at the quotes above. How do the descriptions of Edgar compare to the descriptions of Heathcliff?
 - Do you think the author sets Edgar and Heathcliff up as opposites to one another? Give evidence to support your answer.
 - What does the author's choice of language tell us about how Cathy views Edgar?
- What are Edgar's most prominent characteristics? List them and support them with evidence.
- Do you think Edgar is a sympathetic character? Why?

NELLY

Nelly was aghast. “You’ll use your husband’s money?” she said. “That’s as poor a reason to get married as I ever heard.” [page 50]

I might have lived had Nelly not been sure that I was imagining the brain fever that took hold of me that night. She thought my ravings were a wicked pretence to frighten my husband and bend him to my will. So Nelly did not inform Edgar I was sick, only that I was sulking in my room and would not come out. [page 83]

- What sort of character is Nelly? Do you like her?
- Look at the quotes above. What impression do these give you of Nelly?
 - Do you think she is cruel towards Cathy? Or is Nelly the voice of reason in the book? Give evidence to support your answer.
- Consider the language the author uses when Cathy speaks to Nelly and describes her. Do you think Cathy treats Nelly fairly?
 - How would you describe the relationship between Cathy and Nelly? Give evidence.
 - How much influence does Nelly have? Do you think her actions affect the way things turn out?

PART 3

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS TO DEVELOP READING STRATEGIES

Discuss Cathy and Heathcliff's relationship:

My soul was not confined in my body any more – it had spilled across to his. I was Heathcliff. He was me. And the two of us together were bigger than the sky and freer than the wind. [page 10]

“How cruel you’ve been – cruel and false,” Heathcliff said. “Why did you despise me? Why did you betray your own heart, Cathy? [...] You deserve this. You have killed yourself. [...] Why did you choose Edgar Linton? Nothing would have parted us – not misery nor degradation nor death – nothing that God or Satan could inflict. But you did it, of your own will. I have not broken your heart, you have broken mine.” [page 87]

- Do you like Cathy and Heathcliff's relationship? Why?
- How would you describe Cathy and Heathcliff's relationship in three words?
- Take Cathy and Heathcliff in turn. Find examples from the text that show how they feel about each other. What language does the author use to show and describe their feelings?
- How important is this relationship to each character's happiness?
 - Do you think Cathy and Heathcliff make each other happy?
 - Could their relationship be described as destructive? Give evidence from the book to support your answer.
- The bond between Cathy and Heathcliff develops when they are children, able to run wild on the moors and spend time together without the pressures of adulthood and society.
 - Do you think their relationship changes as they grow older? How?
- Do you think Cathy and Heathcliff are responsible for the way things turn out?
 - How much of what happens to them is the result of the choices they make, and how much is the result of events they cannot control? Use evidence from the book.

Examine the relationship between Cathy and Edgar:

It was as easy to love Edgar as it was to love a puppy. [page 48]

My love for Edgar is like leaves in the woods. Time will change it as winter changes the trees. [page 50]

- Do you like Cathy and Edgar's relationship? Why?
- How would you describe Cathy and Edgar's relationship in three words?
- Take Cathy and Edgar in turn. Find examples from the text that show how they feel about each other. What language does the author use to show and describe their feelings?
 - How does this compare to the language used to describe Cathy and Heathcliff's relationship?

If I married Heathcliff, we'd be beggars. We'd starve. But when I marry Edgar, I can help Heathcliff. [page 50]

- Look at the quote above. Do you think Cathy's reasons for marrying Edgar are justifiable?
 - Can you empathise with Cathy's actions?

Discuss the role of nature:

Heathcliff was banished out of doors. So what? We preferred the open air in any case. [page 17]

"Heathcliff and I walk the moor while my books crumble into dust. We watch from the crag while the names on the window ledge wear away to nothing" [page 96]

- How are nature and the natural landscape presented in the text?
 - What imagery and language does the author use to describe nature?
 - What characters do you think are most closely connected to nature? Give evidence.
- Do you think the moor is an important location in the book? Why?
 - What role does the moor play in Cathy and Heathcliff's relationship?
 - What sort of language does the author use to describe the landscape? What does this tell us about the characters who occupy it?

Discuss the role of culture and society in contrast to nature:

I was at Thrushcross Grange for five weeks [...] In those five weeks I was transformed from urchin to lady. When I returned to Wuthering Heights, I was dressed in finery, primed and preened, my hair curled and dressed to within an inch of its life. [page 28]

Heathcliff snatched his hand away and ran from the room, with Hindley's laughter ringing in his ears. I would have followed, had I not been in that stupid dress, with skirts so long I could not run in them. I'd not a hope in hell of catching him. [page 30]

- How are culture and society conveyed throughout the book?
 - Which characters do you think represent culture rather than nature?
 - What sort of language does the author use to describe these characters?
- What are the differences between Thrushcross Grange and Wuthering Heights?
 - In what ways does Thrushcross Grange represent a more cultured society than Wuthering Heights? Give two examples from the text that show how the two settings are different.
 - What do these differences tell you about the characters who live in each house?
- Look at the quotes above. What do these tell you about the link between nature and the influence of culture and society?
 - Do you think the author is suggesting that nature is more powerful than the influence of society? Give evidence to support your answer.



Examine the role of class and social mobility:

Hindley reduced Heathcliff from servant to labourer. Every stinking task that no one else would do fell to him [...] He became the very brute Hindley had always called him. [page 36]

Heathcliff did not say what he had been doing with himself and how he'd earned such money to effect his transformation. Yet it was evident that Heathcliff knew more, was better read and was more widely travelled than my husband. [page 63]

- How is social class presented in the novel?
 - Are there clear divisions between people in different social classes?
- How does social class impact Cathy's relationship with Heathcliff?
- How does social structure change throughout the novel?
 - Find two more examples of scenes in which a character's social position has changed either through their own actions or as result of someone else's actions.
 - Compare the social positions of the characters at the start of the novel to the positions of the characters at the end of the novel. Are there still clear divisions between them?
- Do you think the author supports the idea that, in this time period, a person could improve their social standing with enough money and education? Give evidence to support your answer.

PART 4

CREATIVE WRITING EXERCISES

Rewrite a scene from the book from the perspective of Heathcliff

Choose an important scene from the book that contains Heathcliff, like the moment when he first arrives at Wuthering Heights and meets Cathy, or when he overhears Cathy talking to Nelly about Edgar's marriage proposal.

Write a scene that takes place before or after the events of the book

Imagine and write a scene that takes place either before the start of the story or after it ends. Some ideas could include the moment Cathy's father finds Heathcliff, or a scene showing Hareton and Cathy's daughter in their life together at Thrushcross Grange.

Write Heathcliff's letter to Cathy in Chapter 16.

Heathcliff writes Cathy a letter just before she dies, but she never reads it. Imagine and write what Heathcliff might have said. Maybe he would have expressed regret for his role in the way things have turned out, or perhaps he would be angry at Cathy for choosing Edgar.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Tanya Landman is renowned for her thought-provoking, prize-winning novels including the beautifully “deft and dark”, Carnegie Medal-winning *Buffalo Soldier*. In 2019 she won the Scottish Teenage Book Prize for her critically acclaimed novella *One Shot*.

Tanya says that she loves how writing allows her to daydream – something she was always in trouble for at school! She lives in Devon with her sons, a Siamese cat and two Labradors.

ENJOYED WUTHERING HEIGHTS: A RETELLING?

WHY NOT TRY ...

“It takes a bold author to meddle with Jane Eyre ... faced with the task of turning a complex classic into an easy read, Landman has excelled”

TELEGRAPH

“Doesn’t put a word wrong ... Readers, I hope you devour it”

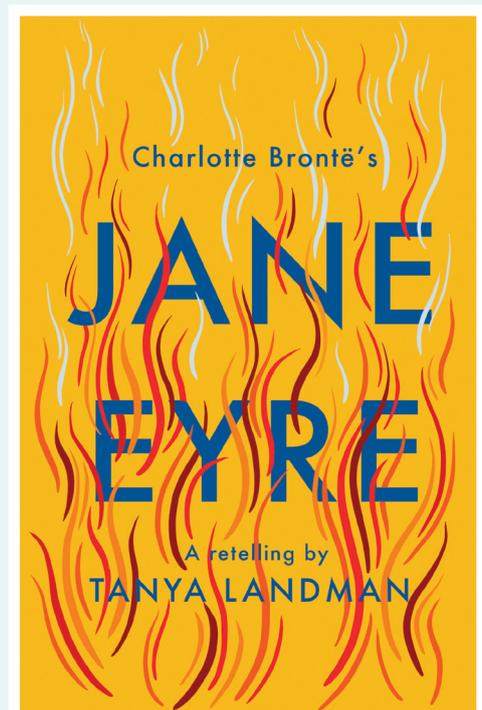
THE TIMES, CHILDREN’S BOOK OF THE WEEK

“Landman’s slim, enthralling retelling, published by ‘super-readable’ experts Barrington Stoke, feels true to Brontë’s defiant spirit, but is infinitely easier to digest”

GUARDIAN

“Poignant and powerful”

LANCASHIRE EVENING POST



JANE EYRE: A RETELLING | TANYA LANDMAN
978-1-78112-912-8 | £7.99