

Wuthering Heights

by *Emily Brontë* (1847)

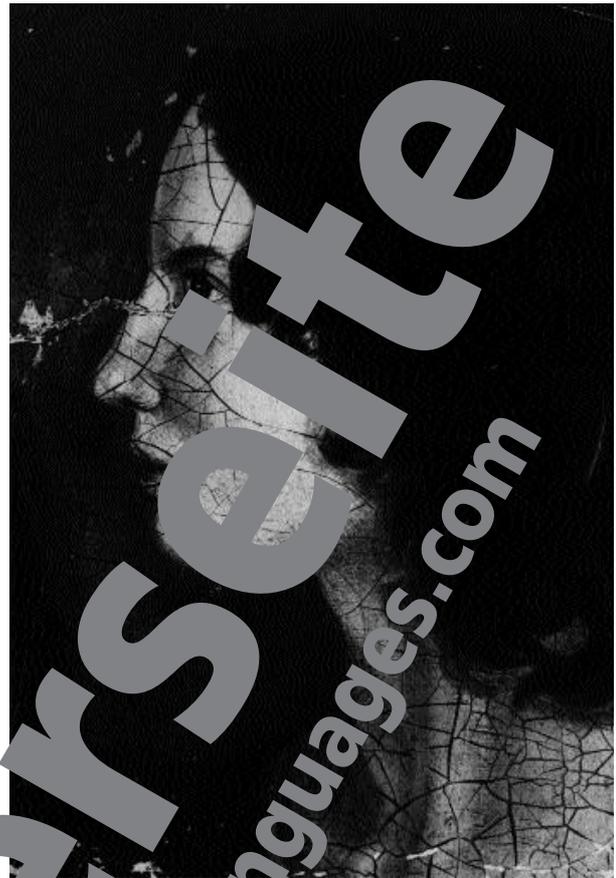
...Well, first of all it turned out that he hadn't got a car, so we had to go into town by bus. Then we only had chicken and chips in a pub instead of the promised three-course dinner at the new restaurant! To cap it all, we spent the rest of the evening at that broken-down old local cinema instead of going to see Pavarotti at the Opera House!

Discussion

Who is this letter from, and to?

What would you have done in this situation?

Can you remember a particularly disappointing incident in your childhood?



The extract

ONE FINE summer morning – it was the beginning of harvest, I remember – Mr Earnshaw, the old master, came down stairs, dressed for a journey; and, after he had told Joseph what was to be done during the day, he turned to Hindley and Cathy, and me – for I sat eating my pudding with them – and he said, speaking to his son,

5 'Now, my bonny son, I'm going to Liverpool to-day... What shall I bring you? You may choose what you like, but let it be little, for I shall walk there and back; sixty miles each way, and it's a long spell!'

Hindley named a horse, and then he asked Miss Cathy; she was hardly six years old, but she could ride any horse in the stable, and she chose a whip.

10 He did not forgive me; for he had a kind heart, though he was rather severe, so I was disappointed. He promised to bring me a pocketful of apples and pears, and then he kissed his children good-bye, and set off.

15 It seemed a long while to us all – the three days of his absence – and often did little Cathy ask when he would be home. Mrs Earnshaw expected him by supper-time, on the third evening; and she put off the meal hour after hour; there were no signs of his coming, however, and at last the children got tired of running down to the gate to look – Then it grew dark, she would have had them to bed, but they begged sadly to

be allowed to stay up; and, just about eleven o'clock, the door-latch was raised quietly and in stopt the master. He threw himself into a chair, laughing and groaning, and
 20 bid them all stand off, for he was nearly killed – he would not have another such walk for the three kingdoms.

'And at the end of it to be flighted to death!' he said, opening his great coat, which he held bundled up in his arms. 'See here, wife; I was never so flighted with anything in my life; but you must e'en take it as a gift of God; the night's work
 25 almost as if it came from the devil.'

We crowded round, and, over Miss Cathy's head, I had a peep at a dirty, ragged, black-haired child; big enough both to walk and talk – indeed, it looked older than Catherine's – yet, when it was set on its feet, it cowered round, and repeated
 30 over and over again some gibberish that nobody could understand. I was frightened, and Mrs Earnshaw was ready to fling it out of door. It did fly up – asking how he could fashion to bring that gipsy brat into the house, when they had their own bairns to feed, and fend for? What he meant to do with it, and whether he were mad?

The master tried to explain the matter, but he was really half dead with fatigue, and all that I could make out, amongst his coughs, was a tale of his seeing it
 35 starving, and houseless, and as good as hung in the streets of Liverpool where he picked it up and inquired for its owner. Not a soul knew to whom it belonged, he said, and his money and time, being limited, he thought it better to take it home with him, at once, than run into vain expenses there; because he was determined he would not leave it as he found

40 Well, the conclusion was that the mistress grumbled herself calm; and Mr Earnshaw told me to wash it and give it clean things and let it sleep with the children.

Hindley and Cathy contented themselves with looking and listening till peace was restored; then, he began searching their father's pockets for the presents he
 45 had promised them. There was a boy of four teen, but when he drew what had been a fiddle, crushed to morsels in the greatcoat, he blubbered aloud, and Cathy, when she learned the master had lost his whip in attending on the stranger, showed her humour by grinning and spitting at the stupid little thing, earning for her pains a sound blow on her forehead to teach her cleaner manners.

Glossary

bonny

stept (18): stepped (old spelling)

flighted (22): frightened

e'en (24): even

brat (31): child (a word used to show contempt)

bairns (31): children

blubbered (46): cried noisily



Summary writing

In a short paragraph of 60–80 words, explain (in your own words) why Hindley and Cathy were looking forward to their father's return, why they were disappointed, and how they reacted.

Vocabulary

'Peep' (line 26) means 'to look furtively, often through a narrow opening'. Choose the suitable word from the list below to describe the ways of looking in the following sentences (you may need to change the form of the word):

examine, gaze, glance, glare, glimpse, observe, peer, stare

- 1 The husband was so angry that he _____ at his wife for several minutes.
- 2 The driver _____ through the fog, trying to see his way.
- 3 The lawyer _____ the document carefully to see if there were any ambiguities.
- 4 I think I just _____ her coming out of the theatre last night.
- 5 The teacher _____ at his watch when he realised the students weren't looking.
- 6 He's so much in love with her that he just _____ at her photo for hours.
- 7 My mother always said that it was wise to _____ at strangers.
- 8 The private detective had spent a month _____ the movements of the suspect, and was now ready to make his report.

Phrasal Verbs (take)

Complete the following phrasal verbs using one of the following words:

aback, after, behind, down, out on, over, up.

- 1 The Earnshaw family was clearly taken _____ by the arrival of Heathcliff.
- 2 My boss _____ me to take _____ more.
- 3 Since his wife John has _____ golf.
- 4 Mary's daughter _____ her so much that it's difficult to tell them apart.
- 5 The teacher quarrelled with his wife, and then took his annoyance _____ his students.
- 6 The workers were worried in case their firm was taken _____ by a foreign company.
- 7 That song by the Beatles takes me _____ to my student days in the 1960s.
- 8 Don't be taken _____ by his smart appearance; he's really a dangerous criminal.