



Embargoed until 12:01am Friday 28th August

Wuthering Bites

Emily Brontë gets a new lease of life from the undead

London, 28th August 2009... The current influx of vampires into popular culture heralded by Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* sequence of books and movie adaptations have had a surprising side effect – it has sent the more than a century and a half old *Wuthering Heights* to the top of the classics charts, outselling traditional versions by two to one.

Named as *Twilight*'s lead characters Bella and Edward's favourite book, this teen-aimed edition of Emily Brontë's novel has become Waterstone's bestselling classic since a rejacketed version was published in May this year. The new *Wuthering Heights* sports an atmospheric, gothic cover that sits nicely alongside Meyer's *Twilight*, *Breaking Dawn*, *New Moon* and *Eclipse*, with a simple strapline "Love Never Dies..." at the bottom, and a red seal highlighting the book as the favourite of Meyer's hero and heroine.

Waterstone's Children's Books Buyer Sarah Clarke spotted the potential to bring the 1847 novel to a brand new audience. "We suggested to HarperCollins Children's Books that a new jacket would bring in new readers, and they came up with a brilliantly gothic and romantic design," says Clarke. Waterstone's Classics Buyer, Simon Robertson, agrees. "*Wuthering Heights* is of course a steady seller, but it's usually *Pride and Prejudice*, or whichever classic has recently been adapted for film or TV that is at the top. I don't think a vampire's recommendation has ever sent a book to number one before."

Since the newly jacketed version was launched in May 2009, it has sold over 10,000 copies nationwide, nearly twice as many as the traditional Penguin Classic edition. "Heathcliff and Cathy are as ageless as any vampires, and by highlighting *Wuthering Heights* in her novels, Stephenie Meyer has introduced Emily Brontë to the *Twilight* generation," says Clarke. The book will have a further uplift this weekend when a new adaptation is screened on ITV.

Sophie Collins, author of *How to Date a Vampire* (Spruce, Oct 19th), believes *Twilight*'s sensitive bloodsuckers have very obvious appeal to teenage girls; "Teenage girls love vampires because they cover all the rebellion bases, combining misunderstood leader-of-the-pack-style bad boy exterior with hidden depths of sensitivity. Not only do your parents not want you to go out with him, but he's also the epitome of teen angst."

Mario Santos, Managing Director of HarperCollins Children's Books is pleased the classics can benefit from such unexpected endorsement; "We are delighted that *Wuthering Heights* is seeing such a great uplift in sales more than 150 years after first publication. We are always looking for ways to reach children and young people and to make good books accessible, relevant and interesting for them, and this is clearly working at the moment with thousands of new readers drawn with interest to this wonderful classic novel."

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