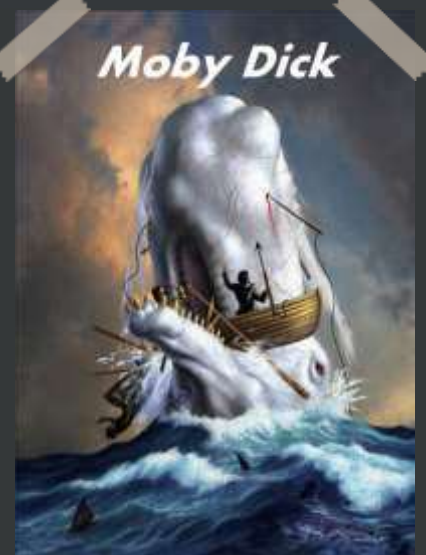




Great Novels

By DK Books



**The World's Most Remarkable Fiction
Explored and Explained**

Jane Eyre
1847 – Three
Volumes – UK





Charlotte Bronte

(1816 - 1855)



Jane Eyre, Charlotte Brontë's heroine, tells her own story, with great directness and candour, beginning with her childhood.

She is an orphan, in the care of an unloving widowed aunt, Mrs Reed, who has three pampered children of her own.

Aged 10, Jane is sent away to the brutal Lowood school, which is presided over by the hypocritical and sanctimonious Mr Brocklehurst.

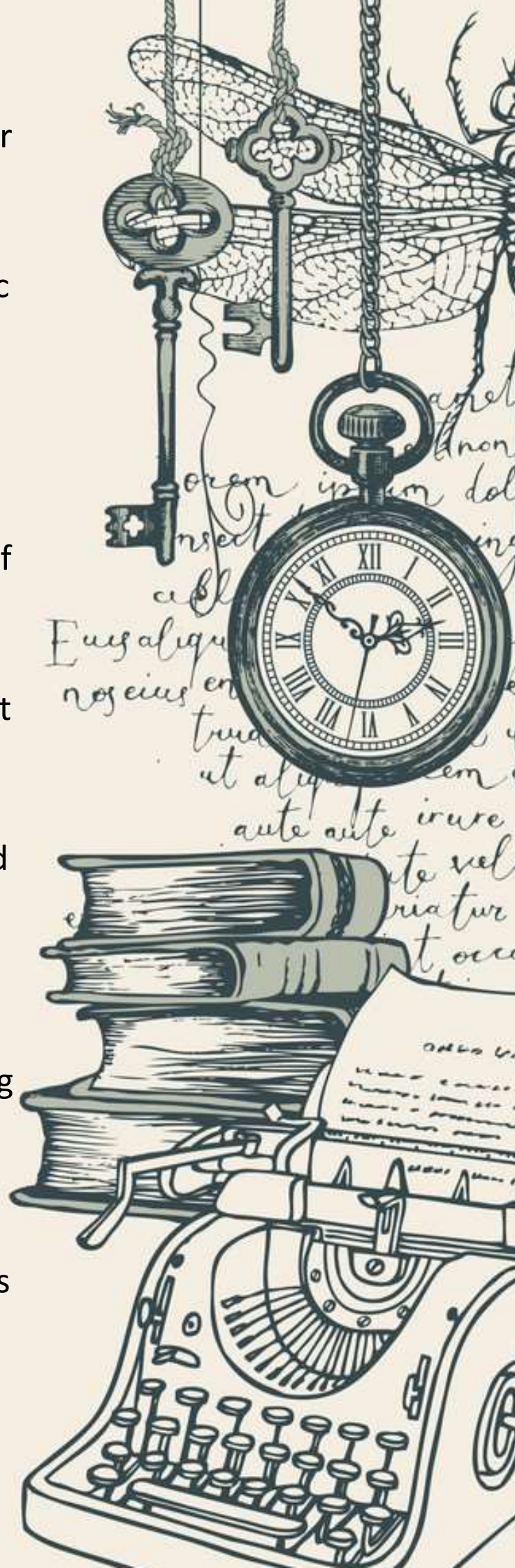
Jane's solace in this harsh environment is her friendship with another pupil – the saintly, bookish Helen Burns, who dies of consumption (like Charlotte's own sister Maria, on whom the character is based).



After a terrible typhus outbreak, Mr Brocklehurst is dismissed, and conditions at the school improve. Jane is befriended by a sympathetic teacher, Miss Temple, and eventually she becomes a teacher at Lowood herself.

She then travels to Thornfield Hall to be governess in the household of the irascible but fascinating Mr Rochester, with whom she falls in love. The pair become engaged, but Jane discovers that their marriage would be bigamous, because Mr Rochester already has a wife.

Despairing, Jane leaves Thornfield and travels blindly before collapsing on the doorstep of an isolated house. She is taken in by two sisters, Diana and Mary Rivers, whose brother, St John Rivers, finds her work as a teacher in a local school.



Admiring Jane's steely integrity, St John Rivers proposes marriage to her, but his coldness repels her – and she seems to hear the voice of Mr Rochester, calling to her. She returns to Thornfield to find the house burnt down, Bertha Rochester dead, and Mr Rochester badly injured. She also learns from St John Rivers that she has inherited a fortune from her uncle. Now, finally she and Mr Rochester can marry.



"I desired liberty; for liberty I gasped; for liberty I uttered a prayer; it seemed scattered on the wind then faintly blowing. I abandoned it and framed a humbler supplication; for change, stimulus: that petition, too, seemed swept off into vague space: "Then," I cried, half desperate, "grant me at least a new servitude!"





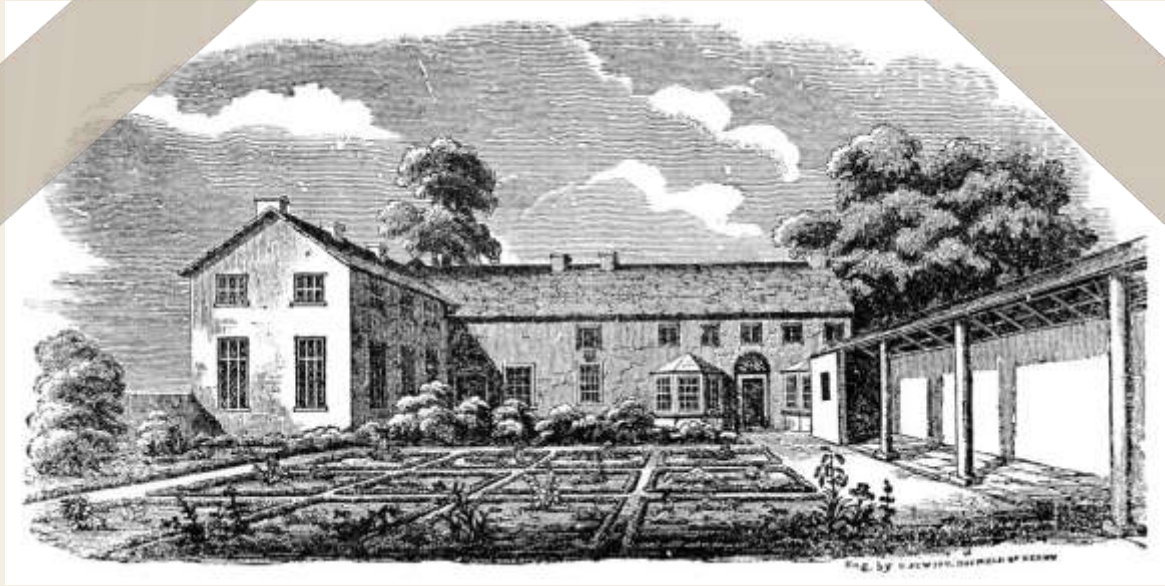
**Illustration of Jane Eyre and
Mr. Rochester**

In Context – Inspiration for Lowood School



The 19th-century wood engraving on the next page shows the Clergy Daughters' School at Cowan Bridge, in Lancashire, where Charlotte, aged 8, was sent with Emily to join their older sisters, Maria and Elizabeth.

Conditions were dire, and soon there was an outbreak of typhus. Dangerously ill, Maria was sent home, where she died of tuberculosis, aged 11. Elizabeth after, aged 10.



Clergy Daughter's Boarding School

Governess

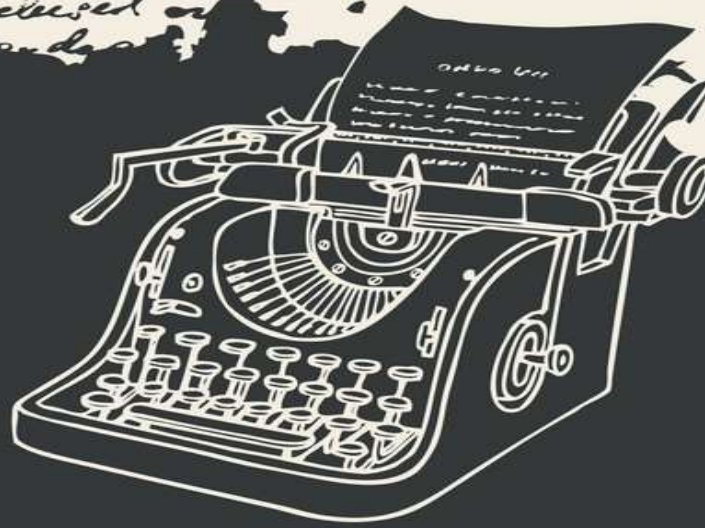


At the age of 18, Jane Eyre becomes a governess to Mr Rochester's ward, Adele. In the 19th century, affluent households often had governesses, who feature a good deal in fiction of the period. The role of governess, a kind of superior servant, was one of the few options open to an educated young woman with little moment.



Jean-Baptiste Jules Trayer's painting The Lesson (1861) shows a governess teaching a young lady

First Edition



The Bronte sisters used pseudonyms when they published their novels: Acton (Anne), Currer (Charlotte) and Ellis (Emily) Bell. In the first edition, Charlotte gave *Jane Eyre* the subtitle “An Autobiography”, but she removed this from later editions.

JANE EYRE.

An Autobiography.

EDITED BY

CURRER BELL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

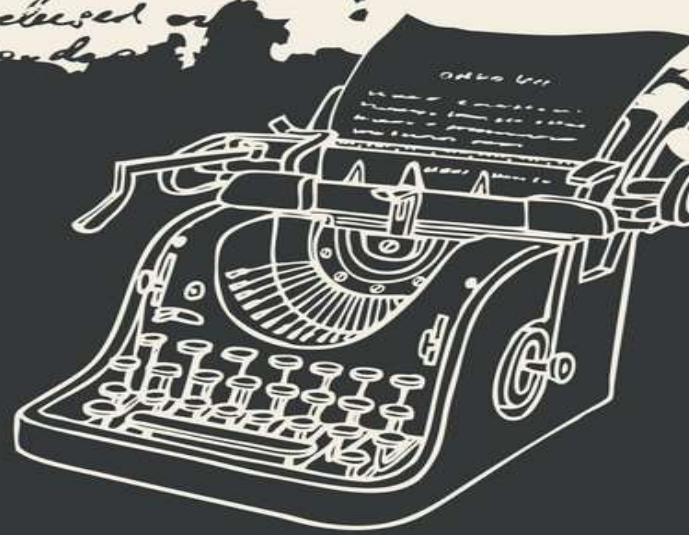
LONDON :

SMITH, ELDER, AND CO., CORNHILL.

1847.

Title Page of the First Edition

Manuscript



Only one manuscript of Jane Eyre still exists – the fair copy that Charlotte sent to the publisher, Smith, Elder and Co, in August 1847.

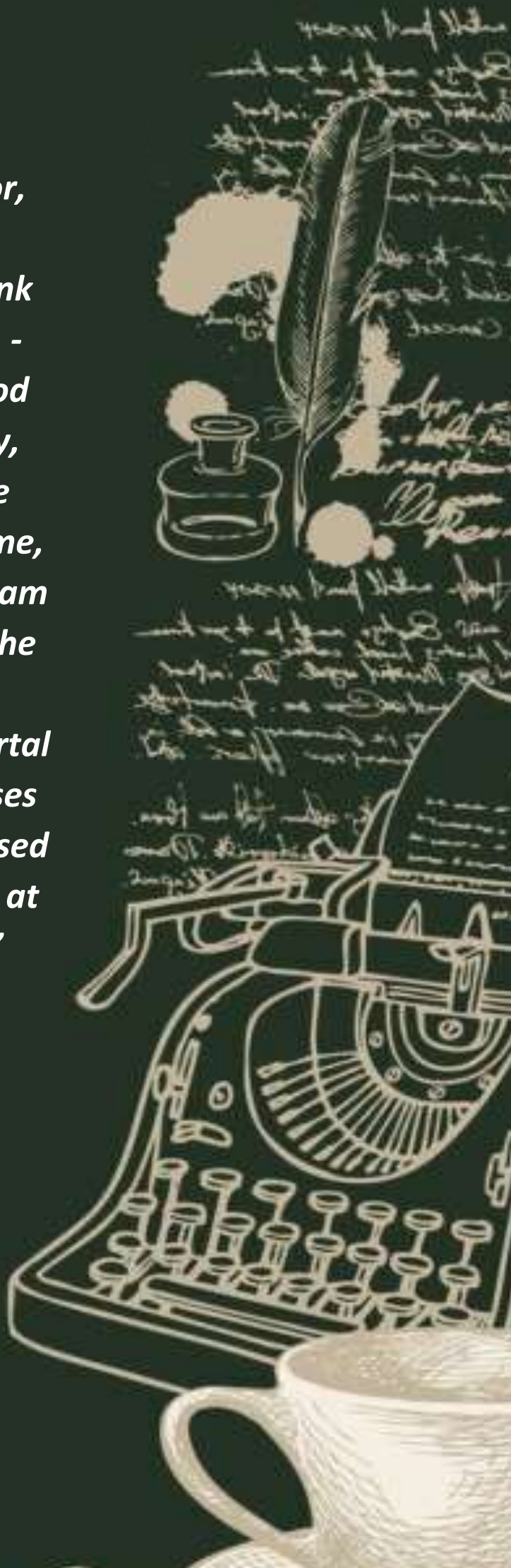
In the passage shown on the next page passage, Jane, mistakenly believing that Mr Rochester is going to marry Blanche Ingram, tells him that she is going to leave Thornfield and passionately describes the force of her feelings.

185

joy and analyze the species of pleasure brooding for me in the hour and situation. It was three o'clock; the church bell tolled as I passed under the belfry; the charms of the hour lay in its approach, approaching dimness; in the low-gliding and pale-beaming sun. I was a mile from Thornfield in a lane noted for wild roses in summer, for nuts and blackberries in Autumn, and even now possessing a few coral treasures in hips and haws, but whose best winter delight lay in its utter solitude and leafless repose. If a breath of air stirred, it made no sound here, for there was not a holly, not an evergreen to rustle, and the stripped hawthorn and hazel bushes were as still as the white, worn stones which causewayed the middle of the path. Far and wide, on each side there were only fields, where no cattle now browsed, and the little brown birds which stirred occasionally in the hedge looked only like single russet leaves that had forgotten to drop.

This lane inclined up-hill all the way to Hay; having reached the middle, I sat down on a stile which led thence into a field. Gathering my mantle about me and sheltering my hands in my muff, P²⁰⁹ I did not feel the cold, though it froze keenly, as was attested by a [sheet of ice covering the causeway where a little brooklet, now congealed, had overflowed after a rapid thaw some days since. From my seat I could look down on Thornfield; the grey and battlemented hall was the principal object in the vale below me; its woods and dark rocky rock against the West. I

*“Do you think, because I am poor,
obscure, plain and little, I am
soulless and heartless? – You think
wrong! – I have as much as you, -
and full as much heart! And if God
had gifted me with some beauty,
and much wealth, I should have
made it as hard for you to leave me,
as it is now for me to leave you. I am
not talking to you now through the
medium of custom,
conventionalities, nor even of mortal
flesh: - it is my spirit that addresses
your spirit; just as if both had passed
through the grave, and we stood at
God’s feet, equal, - as we are!”*



Frantic Bird



Even after Mr Rochester has kissed and embraced Jane, she still believes he will marry another woman. He tells her that she is struggling in his arms “like a wild, frantic bird” and she retorts that she is no trapped bird, but “a free human being with and independent will”. Even when he offers her his heart and hand, she cannot believe him.

“Jane, be still; don’t struggle so, like a wild, frantic bird that is rending its own plumage in its desperation. ‘I am no bird, and not net ensnares me: I am a free human being with and independent will; which I now exert to leave you.’ Another effort set me at liberty, and I stood erect before him. ‘And your will shall decide your destiny,’ he said: ‘I offer you my hand, my heart, and a share of all my possessions.’ You play a force, which I merely laugh at.’



Jane Eyre as Narrator



Passionate and forthright, there had never been a narrator like Jane Eyre before. She often addresses the reader directly, sharing thoughts and feelings of which other characters in the novel are unaware. She takes us into her confidence. The novel's most famous sentence, "Reader, I married him," which begins the last chapter, is typical of this. Plain and neglected, Jane hungers for love and for freedom.

The novel was indeed deplored by some contemporary critics because of its heroine's rebelliousness. Others, including fellow novelists, admired its original blend of blunt realism and fantastical, Gothic elements. These hark back to the elaborate tales of the imaginary lands of Gondal and Angria that Brontë and her sisters had composed in their youth.

Bronte, then 31, was unknown when the novel was published, but her unconventional love story rapidly became a bestseller. Her pseudonym, “Currer Bell”, tantalized readers, and there was much speculation about her true identity.

Bronte had hoped to remain anonymous, but had to reveal herself when Thomas Newby, the unscrupulous publisher of *Wuthering Heights* and *Agnes Grey*, also written under pseudonyms, tried to increase their sales by implying that they too had been written by the author of *Jane Eyre*.

Despite her reluctance, she became a literary celebrity, but the years that followed were marked by tragedy.



Her brother Branwell died at the age of 31, and within a year, her sisters Emily and Anne both died of tuberculosis. Charlotte wrote two more novels – Shirley (1849) and then Vilette (1853).

The year after Villetts publication, Charlotte married Arthur Nicholls, her father's former curate. The marriage was happy but short-lived: weakened by pregnancy, she died less than a year later.



“Who blames me? Many, no doubt; and I shall be called discontented. I could not help it: the restlessness was in my nature; it agitated me to pain sometimes. Then my sole relief was to walk along the corridor of the third storey, backwards and forwards, safe in the silence and solitude of the spot, and allow my mind's eye to dwell on whatever bright visions rose before it--and, certainly, they were many and glowing; to let my heart be heaved by the exultant movement, which, while it swelled it in trouble, expanded it with life; and, best of all, to open my inward ear to a tale that was never ended--a tale my imagination created, and narrated continuously; quickened with all of incident, life, fire, feeling, that I desired and had not in my actual existence.”



Inspiration for Thornfield Hall



It was three storeys high, of proportions not vast, though considerable: a gentleman's manor-house, not a nobleman's seat: battlements round the top gave it a picturesque look." Thornfield was probably based on North Lees Hall, near Hathersage, in Derbyshire. Charlotte Bronte knew this well from her visits to her closest friend, Ellen Nussey, who lived in Hathersage.



Illustration of Thornfield Hall

Berthe Rochester



On the point of marrying Mr Rochester, Jane finds out his secret. His wife, Bertha, depicted on the next page by Edmund Henry Garrett, lives confined in rooms on the third storey of Thornfield. Rochester met her, as Bertha Mason, in Jamaica and married her for her beauty and wealth, not knowing about the mental instability that ran in her family.



**Illustration of Berthe Rochester by
Edmund Henry Garrett**

The Bronte Family



Charlotte Brontë's family history seems tragic, yet her family was also her source of inspiration and encouragement. Her aunt Branwell, who moved in after Charlotte's mother died, was highly educated: both encouraged the bookish interests of his daughters.

From childhood onward, Charlotte wrote in collaboration and friendly competition with her siblings, including her brother Branwell.

Charlotte's first publication was a family one: in 1846, she, Anne and Emily published a collection of their poems, under the pseudonyms (Acton, Currer and Ellis Bell) that they later used for their novels.

Public awareness of the three sisters as an extraordinary creative group spread rapidly after the publication of Charlotte's "Biographical notice" at the front of the 1850 double-edition of *Wuthering Heights* (written by Emily) and *Agnes Grey* (written by Anne).

This gave a vivid picture of the three working alongside each other, sharing their love of reading and their literary ambitions. "We had very early cherished the dream of one day becoming authors."

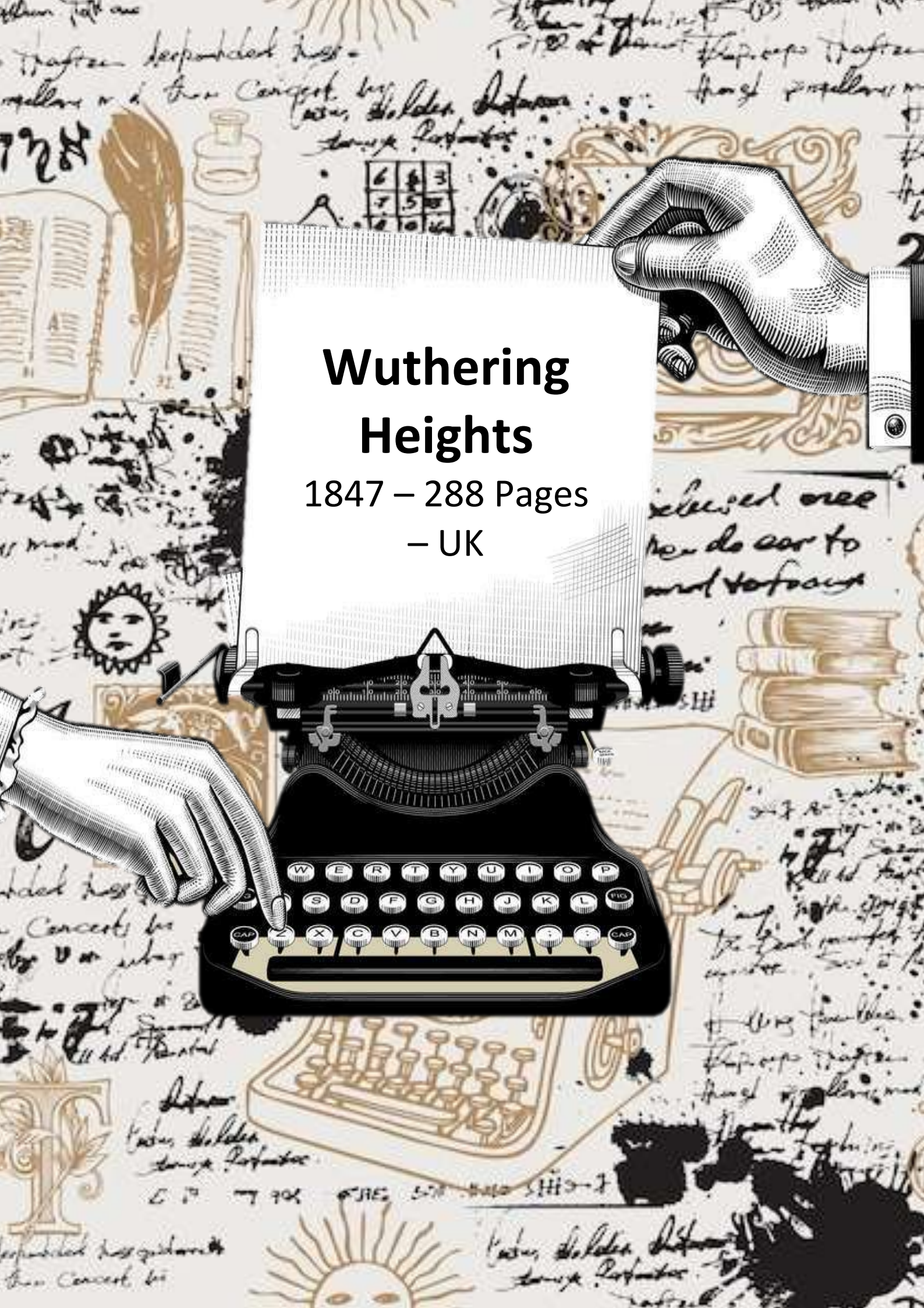




**Illustration of Charlotte Bronte
and Her Sisters**

Wuthering Heights

1847 – 288 Pages
– UK





Emily Bronte

(1818 - 1848)



“It is Moorish, and wild, and knotty as a root of heath.” This is how Charlotte Bronte described *Wuthering Heights* in the Biographical Notice that she wrote after her sister Emily’s death at the age of just 30, a year after the book’s publication. It was Emily Bronte’s only novel, although she also wrote a number of powerful, lyrical poems.

She spent almost her whole life in Haworth, Yorkshire, eventually taking up many of a housekeeper’s duties at her family home, having spent only brief period away at school, and a short and unhappy time working as a teacher in Halifax. From the dialect spoken by some of the characters to the telling details of weather and of the natural world, this a novel rooted in a particular setting, inspired by the moorland near her home.



For all the novel's wildness, the narrative structure of *Wuthering Heights* is elaborate and skilfully handled.

It opens in 1801, with the narration of Mr Lockwood, who has rented the isolated mansion of Thrushcross Grange. He visits his landlord, Heathcliff, who lives up on the moors at the even more remote hill farm of *Wuthering Heights*. Lockwood is then given the history of *Wuthering Heights* by his housekeeper, Nelly Dean.

Her narrative takes us back over the preceding three decades to tell a story of bitter rivalries and thwarted passions. Heathcliff was a foundling child, whom Mr Earnshaw brought to *Wuthering Heights*. He grew to love Earnshaw's daughter, Catherine, but was treated brutally by his jealous son, Hindley.



The Earnshaws become entangled with another family, the Lintons, who were the original owners of Thrushcross Grange. Entranced by their more refined existence, Catherine married Edgar Linton – and in a scheme of vengeance, Heathcliff wins the heart of Edgar’s sister, Isabella.

The clashed between these characters are violent and destructive. However, Bronte takes the narrative forward from Lockwood’s arrival, to see how a younger generation, Hindley’s son Hareton and Catherine’s daughter, named after her, are able to escape the furies of an older generation.





Mr. Lockwood Meets Heathcliff

In Context – Top Withens



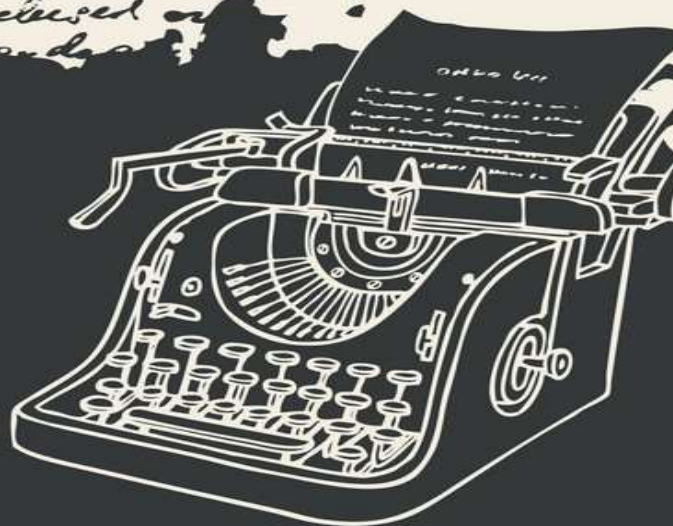
The ruined farmhouse on the moors above Haworth (shown on the next page) is said to have been the inspiration for Wuthering Heights.

Dating from the 16th century, it was still inhabited in the Brontes' day. It bears little resemblance to the house that Lockwood describes in the novel, but its age, remoteness, and exposed situation do match those of Wuthering Heights.



Top Withens

Emily Bronte's Diary



Drawn by Emily at the age of 18, the sketch in her diary shown on the next page show her working at a table opposite her sister Anne, who was then 17 (they are labelled “Anne” and “Emily”). Her entry for 26 June 1837 records that Charlotte is “working” in her aunt’s room, while Anne is writing a pome. Emily herself is writing a story about Gondal – an imaginary island, whose history the sisters chronicled.

Monday evening June 26 1839
 At 10 o'clock closed the writing in Anne's room. I went to my room to see Anne and I writing in the morning room. I began to write "Jane" was the evening and brightly the sun. I began to write like the 1st vol. - 4th page from the book. I have written a little but I was very busy. Anne was working in the little room. I was out. To be in the kitchen - the Empress and Empress of. I was and was preparing to depart from the house to go to the village for the emigration which will be on the 12th of July. I was with the school the house this month. Northampton in the morning etc. - 2 months at Evesham. All right and night in the condition it is to be hoped we shall all be in the day 4 years at the same time. Charlotte will be 25 and 2 months - I shall be 24 it being his birthday - myself 22 and 10 months and Anne 21 and nearly 3 half. I wonder where we shall be and how we shall be and what kind of a day it will be then. Let us hope for the best. Emily Jane Brontë - Anne Brontë

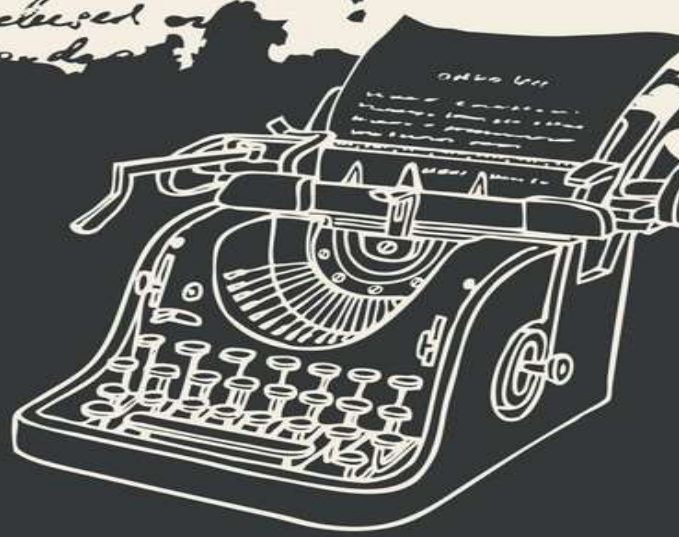


I hope that this day of parting shall be a day of parting from a comfortable home. I hope it may be so. Anne & I shall be gone some distance from home. I shall be in the morning.

And come Emily 10s part 4 o'clock you Anne
 Anne before intended to write in the (Emily)
 Emily will write think you
 I was glad to go out to write and if we

Sketch in Emily Brontë's Diary

Heathcliff



Depicted on the next page by Clare Leighton in 1931, Heathcliff is one of the most extraordinary characters in all Victorian fiction. Passionate, scornful and above all, vengeful, he has what Nelly Dean calls a “violent nature”. After being humiliated by Hindley Earnshaw and rejected by Catherina, he leaves Wuthering Heights, only to return three years later, mysteriously affluent, to wreak his revenge.



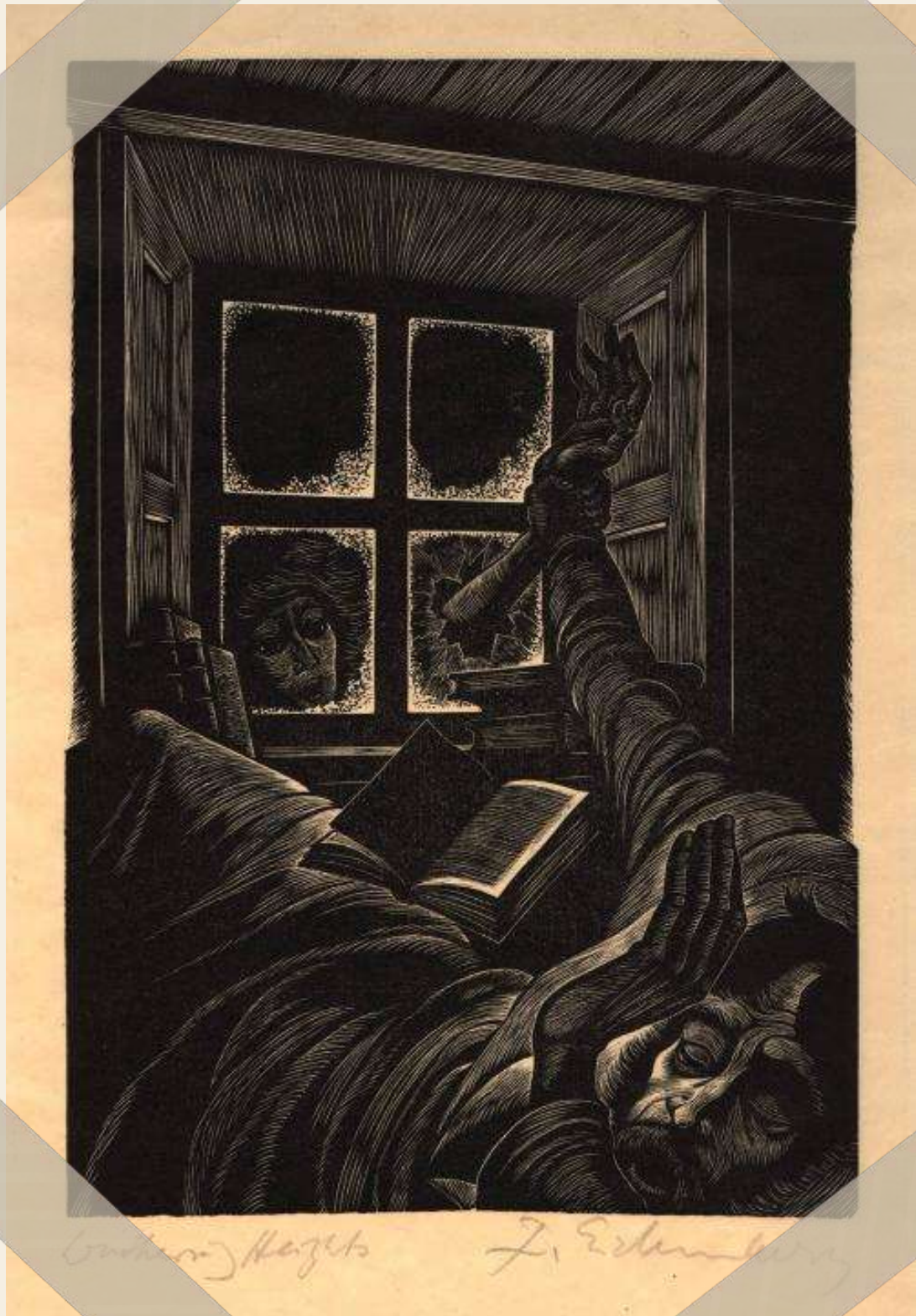
Illustration of Heathcliff by Clare Leighton

The Supernatural



“I have a conviction that they can, and do, exist among us!” Heathcliff exclaims to Nelly Dean. Several of the characters in *Wuthering Heights*, haunted as they are by the past, seem to share Heathcliff’s faith. Bronte uses the supernatural to dramatize her characters’ fears and desires, but leaves the reader free to find “natural” explanations for the book’s stranger events.

In the opening episode, the unimaginative narrator, Lockwood, has a ghostly vision that may be a nightmare. Likewise, the novel ends with him refusing to believe a shepherd boy’s report that he has seen the ghosts of Heathcliff and Cathy out on the moors.



The Apparition (1942), by Fritz Eichenberg, shows Lockwood seeing Cathy's ghost at his window

“My great miseries in this world have been Heathcliff’s miseries and I watched and felt each from the beginning: my great thought in living is himself. If all else perished, and he remained, I should still continue to be; and if all else remained, and he were annihilated, the universe would turn to a mighty stranger: I should not seem a part of it. – My love for Linton is like the foliage in the words: time will change it, I’m well aware, as winter changes the trees. My love for Heathcliff resembles the eternal rocks beneath: a source of little visible delight, but necessary.”



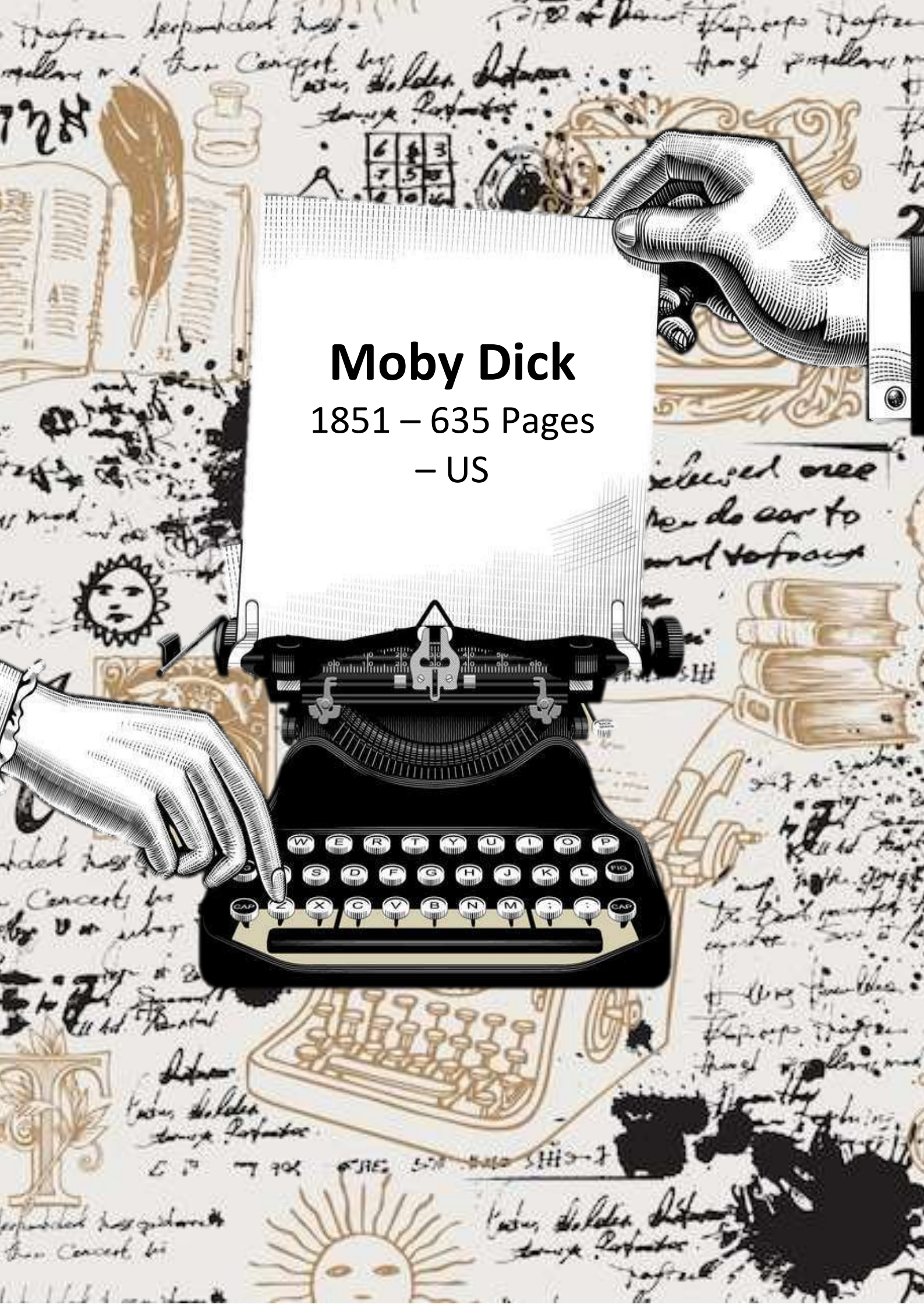
Nelly, I am Heathcliff! He's always, always in my mind: not as a pleasure, any more than I am always a pleasure to myself, but as my own being. So don't talk of our separation again: it is impracticable; and – she paused, and did her face in the folds of my gown; but I jerked it forcibly away. I was out of patience with her folly!"



Moby Dick

1851 – 635 Pages

– US





Herman Melville

(1819 - 1891)



Opening with one of the most famous lines in the history of the novel, “Call me Ishmael”, Moby-Dick follows the adventures of a wandering seaman who joins the crew of the Pequod, a whaling ship.

Its enigmatic captain, Ahab, is set upon a quest for personal vengeance against a white whale that had bitten off his leg in the past. Ishmael recounts meeting a Polynesian harpooner, Queequeg, in New Bedford, an important whaling centre on the east coast of the US, before the voyage began.

Ishmael and Queequeg cement their friendship after sharing a bed on a freezing night, and then join the crew of the Pequod, which is composed of singular characters, ranging from the American First Mate, Starbuck, to harpooners of various nationalities, including Daggoo, an African, and Tashtego, a Native American.



Captain Ahab himself, named after a wicked king in the Old Testament, stands in the shadows in the opening chapters. His appearance on deck unites much of the crew in his pursuit of the legendary whale, Moby Dick.

The voyage becomes Ahab's journey of obsession and the unfolding drama includes stories about the white whale itself, accounts of catching and slaughtering other whales (a more common practice at the time than today), encounters with other ships (both friendly and not), and the every day work of seamen aboard a 19th-century whaling ship.



After his first book, *Typee*, was published in 1846, Herman Melville became a popular and successful writer of exotic, fictionalized travel stories based on his own experiences as a sailor.

In the years leading up to *Moby-Dick*, however, Melville became increasingly frustrated with the demands of his publishers, who wanted him to keep producing more of the same kind of material.

As a result, his writing became increasingly philosophical and wide-ranging, as he tried to combine his need to write a compelling story with his desire to take a deeper look at what made the world work.



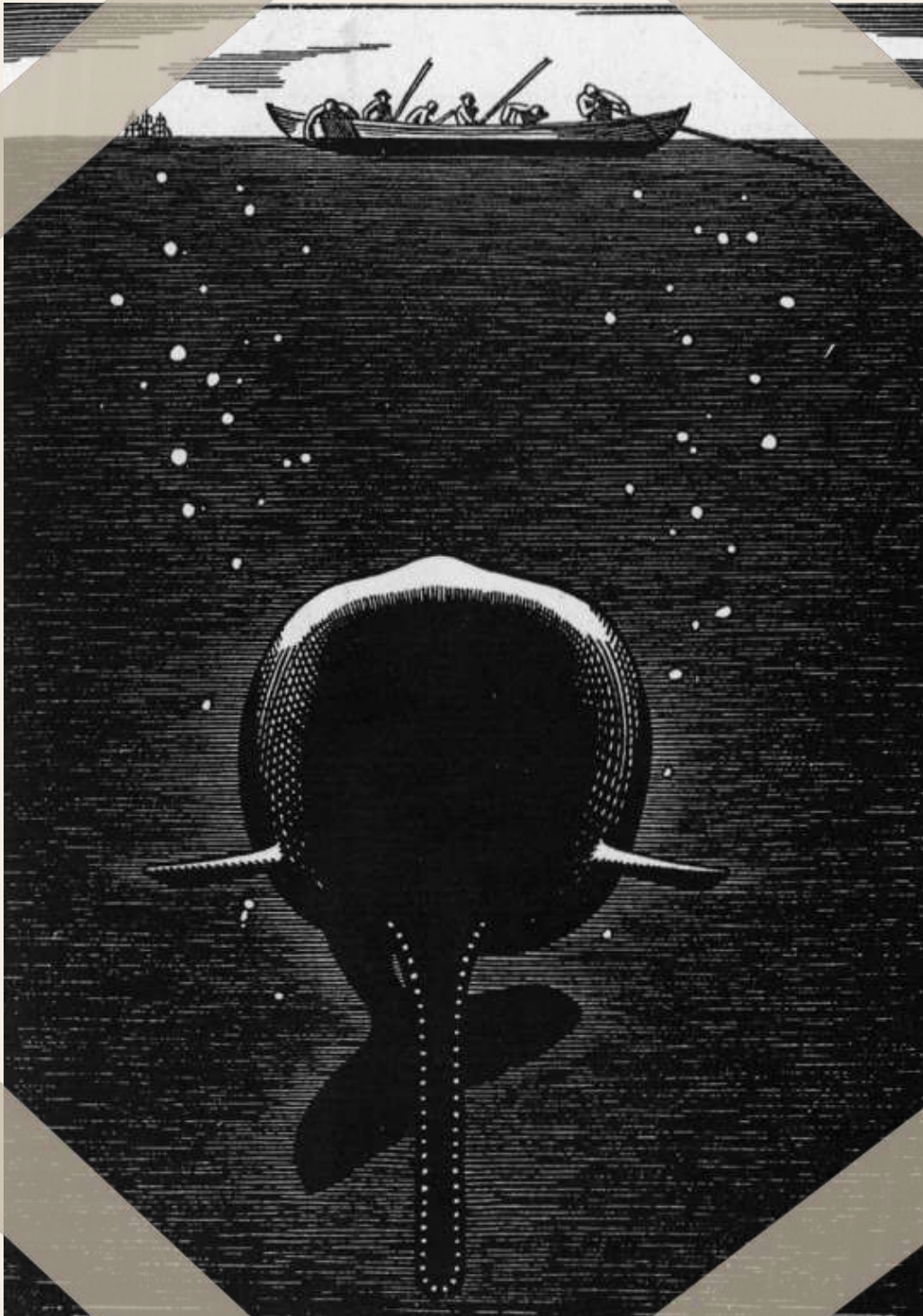
Stories of Vengeful Whales



Moby-Dick is a remarkable feat of literary imagination, but it was also inspired by several real-life cases of vengeful whales.

Legendary whale, an albino sperm whaled named Mocha Dick, developed a reputation for attacking ships off the coast of Chile, and in 1839 became the subject of an article by J.N. Reynolds entitled “Mocha Dick: or the White Whale of the Pacific: A Leaf from a Manuscript Journal”.

Melville read the article, which appeared in the New York monthly magazine *The Knickerbocker*. He also drew on a book called *Narrative of the Most Extraordinary and Distressing Shipwreck of the Whale-Ship Essex (1821)*, by Owen Chase, which described the sinking of a whaling ship by an irate sperm whale off the coast of South America.



Artist and sailor Rockwell Kent produced some of his finest illustrations for the 1930 American edition of Moby-Dick.

Hunting the Whale



Melville had his own personal experience of whaling ships, which were a profitable part of the American economy in the 19th century. He drew on his knowledge to provide a vivid portrait of life on board the *Pequod*, from harpooning whales to how they were butchered.

The 1875 painting by French sailor Ambrosie Louis Garneray on the next page depicts a whaling boat being destroyed by a sperm whale.



**Painting by French Sailor
Ambrosie Louis Garneray**

An Encyclopaedic Book



Moby-Dick as an encyclopaedic book, drawing on a wide range of historical, scientific and fictional sources, many of which are listed in the “Extracts” section at the beginning of the book. On one level, it is a straightforward adventure story that follows Captain Ahab on his quest to destroy a whale. However, it is also an exploration of the natural world, and Ishmael often interrupts the narrative to talk at length about biology, whales and whaling.

The book also has a visionary aspect, often suggesting that surface appearances conceal a spiritual reality. Both Ishmael and Ahab reflect upon what is real and what is perceived, questioning the role of the mind, the senses and their own experience.

Melville's language is highly literary and draws on a range of styles, from everyday conversation to Shakespeare's soliloquies. He also captures the tone of idiosyncratic 17th-century writers such as Thomas Browne and Robert Burton, giving the narrative a rich, sonorous quality that is both modern and archaic. These elements of the novel have given it a forbidding reputation among readers – like the white whale for the crew of the Pequod, it can seem both inscrutable and monstrous.

Following the mixed reception of *Moby-Dick*, which was praised for its power and yet criticised for its excesses, Melville carried on writing novels and short stories, but to an increasingly unresponsive public. It was only in the 1920s, long after Melville's death, that his work was rediscovered and *Moby-Dick* became acknowledged as the finest book of one of America's greatest writers.



“And then it was, that suddenly sweeping his sickle-shaped lower jaw beneath him, Moby-Dick had reaped away Ahab’s leg, as a mower a blade of grass in the field ... Small reason was there to doubt, then, that ever since that almost fatal encounter, Ahab had cherished a wild vindictiveness against the whale, all the more fell for that in his frantic morbidness he at last came to identify with him, not only all his bodily woes, but all his intellectual and spiritual exasperations. The White Whale swam before him as the monomaniac incarnation of all those malicious agencies which some deep men feel eating in them, till they are left living on with half a heart and half a lung.”



Melville's Contemporaries



Melville was one of a generation of great American writers whose work has come to define 19th-century American literature.

The poet Walt Whitman, the essayists Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau, and storytellers such as Edgar Allan Poe and Nathaniel Hawthorne, all produced masterpieces that were of their time, yet also went beyond it. Some of these writers, notably Emerson, were associated with a literary and philosophical movement known as America Transcendentalism, which promoted an idealistic and intuitive approach to literature and life, rather than one based on materialism.

At around the time he wrote Moby-Dick, Melville struck up a close friendship and correspondence with Nathaniel Hawthorne, author of The Scarlet Letter (1850), drawn to both the man and what Melville saw Hawthorne wrote to a friend: “What a book Melville has written! It gives me an idea of much greater power than his preceding ones.”





**Nathaniel Hawthorne, Author of
The Scarlet Letter (1850)**

Publishing Agreement



The picture on the next page shows the cover of a two-page contract between Melville and his American publishers, Harper and Brothers. It shows a last-minute change that Melville himself made to the book's title. "Moby-Dick" appears as a note beside "The Whale", which was the original title of the book and which was used for the first UK edition.

✓
Agreement. Copied

Between
Harper and Brothers
and
Herman Melville

Sept 12 1857.

The Whale. "Choby Slicks"

To be kept by
H & B —

Copied

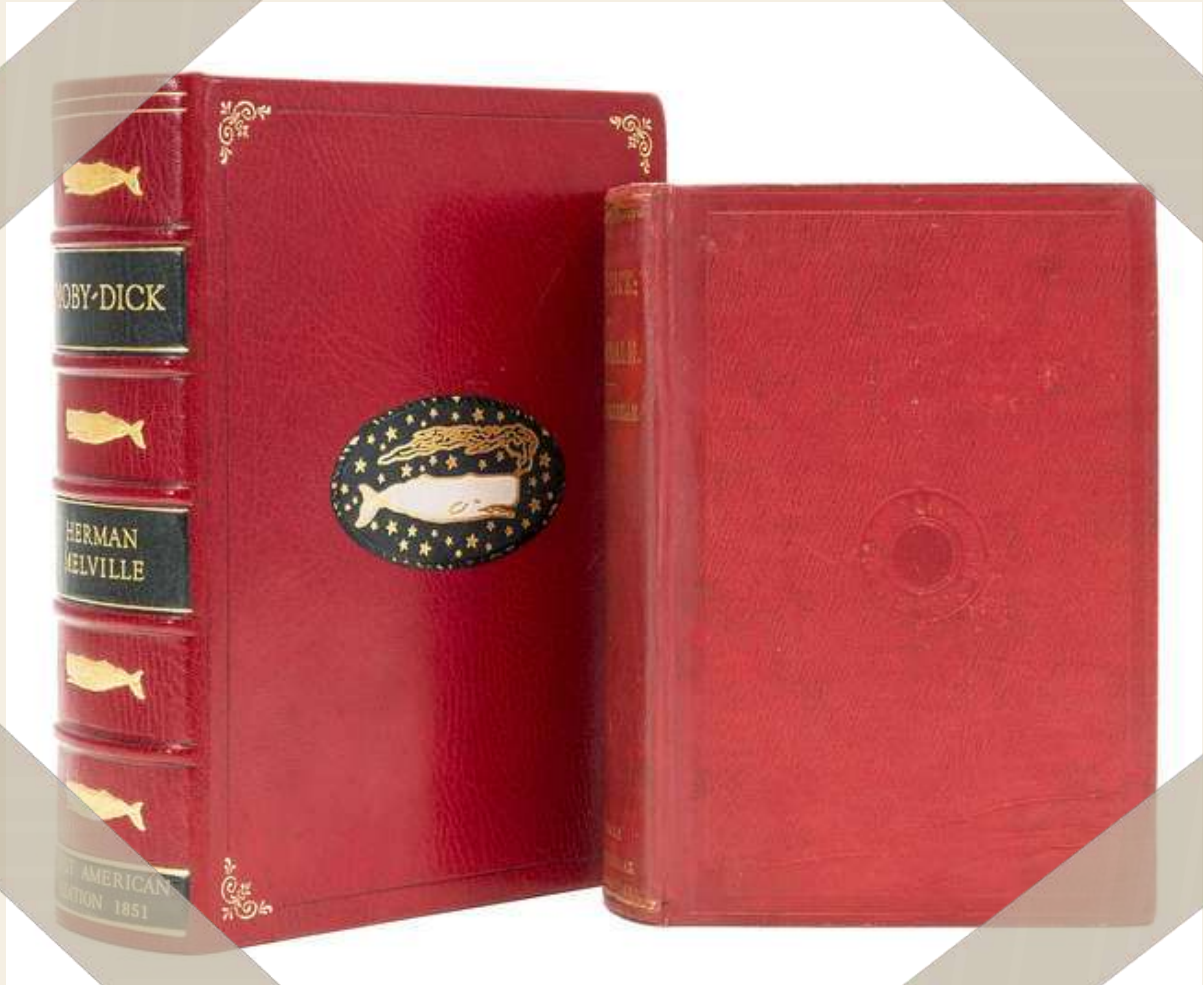
**Contract Between Melville and his
American Publishers, Harper and Brothers**

First US Edition



Melville's novel was first published in New York and London in 1851. The US edition, published by Harper and Brothers, had what may have been a mistake in the title. The whale is referred to as "Moby-Dick" throughout the novel – a name that is only hyphenated once in the text, presumably by mistake.

The UK edition, which was published by Richard Bentley, was simply entitled *The Whale*, and, owing to a printer's error, appeared without the final chapter in which Ishmael explains how he survived to tell the tale.



First US Edition of Moby Dick



THINK

DIGITAL ACADEMY

