

## **Book Group Two**

### ***The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* by Anne Bronte**

Anne Bronte's novel of a woman trapped in a vicious marriage, with its oppression, domestic violence and betrayal, was our choice for this month. Written in 1847, at a time when women had no rights, the book was very controversial and considered shocking. 'Revolting, coarse and disgusting' were the words used. Indeed Charlotte, Anne's sister was so disturbed by it that she altered it for the second edition, following Anne's death.

The 'tenant' in the story is Helen Huntingdon, a young woman in hiding, who has left her brutal, alcoholic husband to protect her son from his influence. To begin with, she felt that it was her duty to try and reform her husband, being a deeply religious person and believing in universal salvation. However, she soon realises that the behaviour of Arthur and his equally obnoxious friends cannot be redeemed. In leaving him, she has flouted the conventions of the time as husbands had total control over their wives. Women who did leave their husbands did not get custody of the children and had great difficulty earning a living as any money they did have was again controlled by their husband.

This is a strong, brutally honest tale, told in a series of letters and diary entries. It is sometimes thought of as the first feminist novel. In one scene, she slams the bedroom door on her husband, unthinkable in those days. The group enjoyed this book very much, feeling it's themes were as relevant today as then. An excellent read, very powerful, with some of the group thinking it was as good as Jane Eyre or Wuthering Heights. Certainly worth reading.

We usually meet every two months in the summer and once a month in the winter, on the second Monday in the month, although this can vary.

Please contact Elizabeth Long on 01833 641494 or [book2@teesdaleu3a.org.uk](mailto:book2@teesdaleu3a.org.uk) for further details.

### **Future Meetings**

Monday, 9<sup>th</sup> March at 2pm when we will be discussing *The Choice* by Edith Eger

Monday, 11<sup>th</sup> May at 2pm when we will be discussing *Orphan Boys* by Phil Mews