



Emily's Ghost

Denise Giardina

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“A convincing reimagining of the Brontë story, perfect for Brontë fans.”—Booklist

Enigmatic, intelligent, and fiercely independent, Emily Brontë refuses to bow to the conventions of her day. She is distrustful of marriage, prefers freedom above all else, and walks alone at night on the moors above the isolated rural village of Haworth. But Emily’s life is turned upside down by the arrival of an idealistic clergyman named William Weightman. A heart-wrenching love story, Emily’s Ghost plumbs the depths of faith, longing, and romantic solitude.

Emily's Ghost Details

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Author : Denise Giardina

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From Reader Review Emily's Ghost for online ebook

Ann says

As a Bronte lover, I was attracted to this rich piece of historical fiction. After I finished reading it, I went to my other Bronte books: why hadn't I remembered that Emily had a romance? Because there's no factual proof that she did. That hardly matters in the world of fiction, though, since Giardina creates the Brontes' world in a way that makes sense given the physical setting and the scant historical details which are known. As passionately as Emily wrote (Heathcliff! Catherine! the moors!) her relationship with a young curate makes as much sense as her love of animals, family loyalty, and need for the outdoors. If Emily didn't really have the life described in these pages, she deserved to.

Patrick, the Bronte sisters' father, comes off much better in this book than I had pictured him as he was in real life. Charlotte is used here as the foil for Emily's passion and goodness. She is petty and often unpleasant, which is unfortunate (though perhaps necessary in a literary sense). There is less of an edge to Branwell than he probably had, and Anne is a sweet dear in the background.

EMILY'S GHOST grabbed me more and more as I neared the last pages and proved that even when a reader knows a story and its sad ending, in the hands of a capable writer, she can be captivated by the possibility of a different future for the novel's characters.

Denise Spicer says

This 2009 novel is a 335 page fictional and highly romanticized account of Emily Bronte's life. It relates her relationships: to her father (a village pastor in Yorkshire, England), her siblings, and her supposed love for her father's assistant. Of possible interest to Bronte fans but the subject seems overdone and not particularly convincing.

Heather says

The cover of *Emily's Ghost* makes two misleading statements. First, the subtitle, *A Novel of The Bronte Sisters*: This book is not about the Bronte sisters. It is about Emily. Second, the quote from Booklist, which proclaims the book "A convincing imagining of the Bronte story, perfect for Bronte fans." If devotees of Charlotte and her *Jane Eyre* may be included among "Bronte fans," then this statement is a lie. Had this book been touted as an inside look at the underappreciated life of Emily Bronte, I might have enjoyed it more, but I was constantly at odds with it because it most certainly was not "a novel of the Bronte sisters."

Insofar as Charlotte and Anne (and even the short-lived Maria and Elizabeth) appear as characters in the book, it is a novel about the Bronte sisters and their whole household. However, the story is Emily's and Emily's alone. The perspective is hers, the tone is hers, and all the admirable attributes are hers, too. This last is the most disturbing characteristic of the book. In order to bring Emily to life, Ms. Giardina seems intentionally to make Anne a thin character and Charlotte a reprehensible one. In her "reading group guide" notes, she declares how the Brontes' story has always been Charlotte's, thus leading to her reimagining of Emily's story. What she does goes too far, though. Charlotte is cast as a discontented, prudish yet serially lovesick, selfish, vindictive older sister. Every word Ms. Giardina puts in her mouth reinforces one of these

characteristics. The semi-frequent reassurances of the author that the sisters of course love each other despite their differences ring hollow when coupled with such strong negative characterization.

Emily, then, becomes an embodiment of everything Charlotte is not. Emily achieves oneness with nature through her attachment to her animals and to the moors. Emily is sympathetic to the plight of the poor and sacrifices herself in quiet ways. Emily speaks to ghosts and adds more than a splash of old pagan beliefs to her Christianity. Most importantly, Emily can fall deeply into a love affair—a tortured, hopeless love affair—unlike anything this Charlotte could even imagine.

What all this proves is not that Emily was truly superior to her sisters, but that Ms. Giardina has an axe to grind, or several. She writes from the same old feminist revisionist viewpoint that most serious historical novelists today adopt. Emily Bronte is unashamedly made into a pinup girl for Feminism before its time. This is ridiculous. Not, perhaps, because Emily Bronte was not really something of a proto-Feminist, but because Charlotte could not possibly have been the staid, patriarchy-loving, Victorian prude portrayed here. Has Ms. Giardina read *Villette*? *Emily's Ghost* turns out to be not so much “A Novel of the Bronte Sisters” as a novel advocating social reforms, religious plurality, and unimpeded emotion ruling over every other human characteristic. In the novel, Emily is incensed by Charlotte’s basing a totally unlike character upon herself; how ironic that Ms. Giardina seems to have committed the very authorial sin against which she writes.

Despite these egregious flaws, the novel is engaging. The style repeatedly reminded me of Thomas Hardy novels, although I suppose it was intended to emulate *Wuthering Heights*. The love story was moving enough, despite the badly uneven characters. Every now and again Ms. Giardina aspires to punchy ambiguity through the frustrating habit of poorly placed sentence fragments, but overall the writing is good. It inspired thought as well as pleasure throughout, even if the thoughts did primarily fight against the book’s grain. Had I read extensively on the Bronte sisters’ lives, this book might have been a nice balance to my knowledge. Since I had not, I am now inspired to read more. That in itself may be the book’s most admirable quality for me.

Dora_C1 says

Emily's Ghost, Denise Giardina (non-fiction)

"It's not a bad book, it's just not good." -Mr. Errico 2018

I just kept on waiting for the spark...but it never came. I thought of abandoning it, but then I was at the last 50 pages...sort of hoped that something mind blowing could be at the ending. Not going to say I wasted my time, because there's always something you can learn from a book, whether it's bad or good in your opinion ;)

Carli says

This is a beautifully written fictional account of a portion of Emily Bronte's life. It is not written in the style of a Bronte sister, as, for some reason, I expected it would be. Instead, the author writes largely from Emily's perspective in lovely, descriptive prose about a relationship that may or may not have happened between Emily and her father's assistant, William Weightman. Because Emily's perspective is featured throughout the book, Charlotte's faults stand out much more than Emily's, which may put off those that love Jane Eyre and its author more than misunderstood Emily and her *Wuthering Heights*. However, as a tribute to wild Emily, this book is a delightful undertaking.

Autumn says

The Brontës'. Sigh. I haven't found a modern book to compare to their works. Their works are the real heartbeats of imaginative romantic worlds to me. I'll still search for something to come close to my love for *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre*. I attempt at reliving these favorite books of mine by reading about the Brontës' actual lives fiction or non-fiction such as in this novel. Just an FYI This book is solely about Emily. Don't be fooled by the title that suggests her sisters are a large part of this book.

I didn't mind because Emily is my favourite. She is independent and eccentric; a woman within her own head a lot. This book covered how her outlook on life provoked her novel, *Wuthering Heights*. There is also a man in the novel that gained her trust. He is a kind man, nothing like Heathcliff, although there are circumstances that keep the pair away from one another from time to time. I liked Emily and her friends. They know change will only arrive when they dissent from the norms of what is expected of them. I loved this because it what made *Wuthering Heights* so beautiful and beyond its' time. It was an unselfish work of rebellion.

Despite liking Emily, the portrayal of Charlotte took some enjoyment away from the book. In the novel Charlotte had superficial friends that fancied themselves on judging everyone around them. I am not sure it was fair to the real Charlotte for the author to have painted her so insensitive and stuffy. Maybe she loved her sisters? Maybe *Jane Eyre* was a tribute to them? Maybe she was the kindest (even though honestly I have a soft spot for Emily)? I don't know. Anyway, the artist's license about the Brontës' real lives made me uncomfortable, like it was a big fat lie meant to hurt someone, not an historical fiction novel (I know fiction is not the truth, yet this seemed more like *The Enquirer*). At any rate if Charlotte is your favorite Bronte, "Emily's Ghost" might offend you.

Their dad seemed like a huge softie in the novel. Charlotte seemed like the only character to be subjected to literary abuse. So it seemed even more unfair to the real Charlotte. I am torn. I loved Emily in this so much, her rebellious but unassuming way, but I felt bad for the other characters like they deserved a fair balance between antagonist and their time in the sun too. But I guess we can't all be good girls and boys can we? I feel guilt for liking it, yet I did.

Sheryl says

The Brontë sisters come vividly to life in this novel about their brief, impassioned lives as sisters, daughters, and writers. Intelligent, creative young women, they live with their father, Patrick, who is the pastor of the poor community of Haworth, Yorkshire. They prefer to keep their own company, but two of the sisters, Ann and Charlotte, leave to work as governesses. Emily stays home to be with her father and wander the moors that she loves so passionately. When a young clergyman, William Weightman, joins her father to help at the church, Emily's life is forever altered.

While I realize this was fiction, I felt close to the characters, and plan to learn more about each of them and their writings. The story suggests that a tragic love affair inspired *Wuthering Heights*, which may be totally fabricated, yet was deliciously haunting.

Karen says

"Jane Eyre," by Charlotte Bronte, is one of my favorite books of all time. I know this book is about her sister, Emily, but I am interested in learning (though this is a work of fiction) a little about their living circumstances, social lives, etc.

Later

A very interesting story about Emily Bronte (author of "Wuthering Heights") and her relationship with her sisters, her father, brother and a curate named Mr. Weightman (aka "Willie"). I always love reading stories about strong women - in this case, it is about a woman who tried to be true to herself, despite the strict protocol of her day.

The thing that I felt was missing at the end was an author's note. For some of us readers who don't know much about the Bronte sisters, it would have been nice to know what was fact, and what liberties the author took to make it a fictional book. Was there really a Mr. Weightman? Is that what happened to all of the sisters' original literature? What was the "asthma" that Anne had? Was Emily really that free-spirited? I felt like the story was cut off without any finality to it.

Linda says

I loved this book about the Bronte sisters. I thought it was well written, and the characters came to life for me. Having visited the area, I could picture in my mind their home and surroundings and the moors. Keep a box of kleenex handy. I can't imagine you all not loving this book.

Emily says

One of my (new) favorite books of all time! Now I have to read more Bronte literature.

Cynthia says

This is a piece of historical fiction that I saw reviewed in our local paper. Then my mom read it and recommended it as well. Based on the lives of the Bronte sisters, this novel focuses on the three surviving sisters, Charlotte, Emily and Anne. This novel had me hooked from the beginning. The author definitely favors Emily, as Charlotte is portrayed as a closed-minded, society climbing person and Anne is the quiet, steady sister. I found myself not liking Charlotte even though I strongly prefer Charlotte's "Jane Eyre" to Emily's "Wuthering Heights." After reading this book I would like to read both of these books again, and Anne's "Agnes Grey" which I have never read.

I enjoyed the complexities of Emily's romance in the book. I realize the love story comes from the author's imagination, but I liked the fact that it was a deep love and an unselfish love. I was also moved by the social problems that the Bronte family was faced with during this time. Working amongst the poorest of the poor

they certainly saw their fair share of social injustices. I liked this book a lot and if you like anything written from this time period you'll probably enjoy this work of fiction as well.

Tiffany says

I came to this novel with high expectations. As an avid fan of the Bronte sisters, I read criticism of the novel that claimed the novel to be well-researched, and "perfect for Bronte fans."

This novel is only perfect for the Bronte fans that are unfamiliar with the lives of the Bronte family. Although I have only read a few biographies on the family, I have written several research papers on their works, and I consider Denise Giardina's novel to grossly ignore the facts of the Brontes' lives, in favor of writing a historical romance. There's nothing wrong with historical romances--but if you must write one, please invent your own, rather than taking some of the greatest writers of all time as your characters.

The biggest fault I find with the novel, however, lies in its depiction of Charlotte as a man-hungry, cruel, vindictive, shallow little woman, who only wrote because she was too plain to be married immediately. Jane Eyre is dismissed not as a work of literary genius, but as a trivial method of personal revenge.

So I feel safe in saying that for the true Bronte fan--those that have studied the lives of the Bronte sisters and have read Miller's *The Bronte Myth*--this is not a "perfect read." For fans of historical fiction, it is a mediocre read at best.

Emily says

If you looking for an autobiography book about the Bronte sisters then this is not what your looking for, However if you willing to view this book as a fiction based on Real people then i would recommend this book. I've always had a fasination with the tragic lives of the bronte sisters and find their story beautiful and to me this story was no exception, I enjoyed roaming the moores with Emily and her trusty dog keeper, although this book is clearly fiction i enjoyed it emensly and would recommend it to anyone who is a fan of historial fiction, I believe that Denise Giardina did a beautiful job capturing the strength and spirt of Emily

graveyardgremlin says

She's an ordained deacon in the Episcopal Church?!? You've got to be freaking kidding me.

More information about her Author Behaving Badly status:

<http://www.amazon.com/review/R1OXFW5P...>

<http://www.amazon.co.uk/review/R3O7VP...>

Mlg says

I absolutely LOVED this book! What a brilliant idea, to take the broad details of the Bronte sisters' lives and

to fashion a novel around them. All of the details were accurate, right down to the animals. The characters were terrific, Emily is the main focus. This is a book for anyone who loves the Bronte's or Wuthering Heights. I couldn't put it down. And if you can get through the end without kleenex, you've a hard heart indeed!
