



Solsbury Hill

Susan M. Wylar

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The windswept moors of England, a grand rustic estate, and a love story of one woman caught between two men who love her powerfully—all inspired by Emily Bronte’s beloved classic, *Wuthering Heights*. *Solsbury Hill* brings the legend of Catherine and Heathcliff, and that of their mysterious creator herself, into a contemporary love story that unlocks the past.

When a surprise call from a dying aunt brings twenty-something New Yorker Eleanor Abbott to the Yorkshire moors, and the family estate she is about to inherit, she finds a world beyond anything she might have expected. Having left behind an American fiance, here Eleanor meets Meadowscarp MacLeod—a young man who challenges and changes her. Here too she encounters the presence of Bronte herself and discovers a family legacy they may share.

With winds powerful enough to carve stone and bend trees, the moors are another world where time and space work differently. Remnants of the past are just around a craggy, windswept corner. For Eleanor, this means ancestors and a devastating romantic history that bears on her own life, on the history of the novel *Wuthering Heights*, and on the destinies of all who live in its shadow.

Solsbury Hill Details

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From Reader Review Solsbury Hill for online ebook

Anne (Booklady) Molinarolo says

I received an unedited readers copy/galley for an honest review.

My copy said A Wuthering Heights Novel so I had very high expectations for this novel. Wuthering Heights happens to be one of my 10 most favorite novels of all time and if this was supposed to be a retelling of the original story - it didn't quite measure up to the original. That being said, I did like Solsbury Hill: A Novel.

Eleanor Sutton Abbott travels to England to see her dying Aunt after she catches her life long boyfriend in bed with another woman. She discovers the Estate and its moors are the basis for Emily Bronte's masterpiece, *Wuthering Heights*. She is also shocked that her late mother had wanted Eleanor to visit Trent Hall with her. She starts seeing a young couple and a young woman while she walks the moors. She's even seen the young woman in her room. Yes, the ghosts of the real Catherine, Heathcliff, and Emily are present and have a message for Eleanor. And Eleanor may find out what she thought she knew about her late parents and her own life is in fact a lie.

At Trent Hall there is Mead - her Aunt's "surrogate" son. His name even means Heath and Cliff. He's handsome, intelligent, and wealthy in his own right. And Eleanor finds herself drawn to him, but there is the long time boyfriend. He's also traveled to England. He wants Eleanor back. But the most interesting story line is the ghost of Emily. She needs Eleanor to break the curse that has followed her family into the present day. And the ghosts of Catherine and Heathcliff play a role in the storyline.

For a debut novel Solsbury Hill: A Novel is worth reading. It's enjoyable and will keep the reader's interest. I'll admit that the writing is shaky in a couple of places and some of the dialogue was off. It just didn't read right in places and I was left scratching my head. But I did receive an unedited copy, so hopefully these minor problems will be corrected when the novel is actually released in April of this year (2014). The story lines intrigued me and when Susan M. Wyler was on her game - the writing was wonderful. I am so glad that I was given the opportunity to read this book by the publisher's publicity department.

Laura says

Thank you, Edelweiss, for providing this book from Riverhead Trade for review.

Eleanor Abbott arrives at a family estate in northern England after discovering her childhood friend and long-term boyfriend cheating on her. As her aunt's friends and family help Eleanor decide on matters regarding the future of the estate, she contemplates Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, the man she left behind in New York, and the man she meets on the moors.

I had such high expectations for this novel -- I can hardly write a summary for it because I'm so deeply disappointed.

My expectations were high because of the *Wuthering Heights* comparison. Marketed as a retelling, a romance as strong as Heathcliff and Catherine's, and other such similarities is false advertising. The romance is shallow -- if existent at all -- and it's certainly not a retelling. A retelling would be Margot Livesey's *The Flight of Gemma Hardy* -- new setting, new character names, but essentially the same core for motives or personalities. Forewarning, this is not a retelling, and the comparisons are...barely there.

The writing and the plot was not what I expected either. I thought descriptions and dialogue and plot would be fully developed, well-written, enticing, imaginative, lush. It fell completely flat. It was like reading a teenager's fanfiction, or a preteen's attempt at writing smut. And maybe this is because I'm not a romance reader -- the very first couple pages contain explicit yet poorly written sex scenes, and then for the rest of the novel the characters are one-dimensional, lacking in personality, and forceful in poor dialogue.

Maybe I'm harsh because I see the Brontës as untouchable. Maybe this just wasn't my book. Either way, I was disappointed.

Diane says

First book ever that I won on GR! I was so excited! This was a sweet story based somewhat on Wuthering Heights and Emily Brontë. So I think the book has a very targeted audience of appealing to only fans of that book. Otherwise, I don't think the reader would have an interest or get much of the story.

The writing was a bit simple for my tastes but I liked all of the characters - even Miles redeemed himself. Congratulations to Susan Wyler for getting her book published.

Carolyn says

Too much of a romance to suit my taste. A tradition/curse where each woman in a generation chooses the wrong one of two men to marry. It's clear halfway through the book which one the heroine will choose, and if that weren't enough, we have the ghost of Emily Bronte to give advice.

Tia says

Loved Mead and Gwen. A solid read. It was a relaxing experience due to the setting and atmospheric mood? I don't know what I'm saying. I enjoyed it.

karen says

let's call this a 2.5.

i really wanted to love this book, and it definitely has an audience, but it didn't work for my particular tastes.

this is like a romance novel version of Wuthering Heights. which is not a pejorative statement, but one of classification. the core of this book is a woman finding love, and coming to terms with herself and what she wants out of a relationship. it isn't deeply psychological, and while there is a central conflict to her relationship, as in any romance novel, it doesn't have a great deal of narrative tension. it's a frothy "retelling" of wh with some shaky writing, but as long as you read it in the spirit it is intended, you'll probably enjoy it as a little piece of escapist fun. me, i feel wh in my bones, so i have certain expectations when reading a book marketed as a wh companion, and my standards are sky-high, so this one just didn't do it for me.

wuthering heights is more than just a story of a woman torn between two men. living in an isolated region, in a time where women didn't have many options for financial stability and social status except through birth or marriage, catherine's decision to choose linton over heathcliff was never an emotional one. it was calculated in order to ensure stability both for herself, and in her position as linton's wife, for heathcliff as well. marrying for love was a luxury she didn't have. and she never actually did choose between the two. she manipulated the situation to her own best interests

but here, it's not like that. and the roles of the two men are not the roles from wh - they are mixed up, like stephenie meyer did in Eclipse. there's the childhood friend who has become her lover and then cheated on her, and a new man who is of the moors and should therefore be fulfilling the heathcliff role, but he is too "new" to become "her soul." it's just a regular love triangle, without all the gravity and emotional weight of the situation of wh. you can squint and see the wh in there, but it's a much more shallow situation, although it definitely does veer into the melodrama, like wh.

so it's not a real retelling, and i don't think it is intended to be, not really, so you should probably ignore all the above blather. it's more of a story *inspired* by wh, that uses the novel as a narrative prop while taking some real liberties with the facts of emily bronte's life.

i did not cotton to the main character at all. in the very first scene, where she is in a cafe and takes off her ballet flats to put her bare feet on the seat, she lost me. and it's totally unfair of me, i will grant you, but i hate both ballet flats and people who disregard the health code. i know that this is unreasonable, but it's not just that. she catches her man in bed with another woman, goes home and breaks a ton of dishes, and then leaves the country, angry enough to not answer his calls and emails, but not angry enough to not fall into his arms when they eventually get in a room together again, refusing to talk about the situation and pretending that everything is fine. she's over at someone's house, pours herself a cup of tea, and then leaves two seconds later, with no provocation. wasteful! and why does a woman who takes cabs everywhere and wears chanel live in a six-floor walk-up? and if you live in a six-floor walk-up, your leg muscles are probably developed enough to not be much affected by walking the moors, no matter how wild and broad. and who packs that many fancy clothes to go tend to a dying aunt in the middle of nowhere? i know - i am being unreasonable. this is a romance novel, so it is supposed to be a fantasy, but i just got caught up in questioning the details, which soured the experience for me. i do not understand this woman.

there's no tension in the book. eleanor goes around getting everything handed to her; nothing seems to touch her emotionally. yes, she breaks some dishes, but after that she just seems to coast. she isn't shocked by the discovery of ghostliness, she is so instantly loved and accepted by everyone she encounters, she inherits a house and jewels and lands huge business deals without batting an eye, and she is incredibly slow to understand things that are telegraphed right at her. it's just a little frustrating, but again - this is romance, this is fantasy, and i don't read widely enough in the genre to just lose myself in the fantasy. those muscles are weak in me.

i read the arc, so i assume some of the shaky bits of writing still have an opportunity to be fixed - like how a character who is described as wearing a t-shirt could have her bare shoulders covered in the next paragraph. or how the journey from one place to another seems to have such flexible driving-time estimations. and the british expressions and sentence cadence of both eleanor and miles.

it's not a disaster of a book or anything, it's just something that would appeal to someone more able to lose themselves in a story, who has a romance reader's fondness for the HEA. sadly, i am not that reader.

come to my blog!

Krys says

Solsbury Hill is an upcoming adult novel by Susan M. Wyler. It is a contemporary retelling of Wuthering Heights set in New York City and then Yorkshire, respectively. When you say the words Wuthering Heights and retelling together you are almost guaranteed to pique my curiosity. So, I requested and finally read this novel and enjoyed it quite a lot. It is, by no means, Wuthering Heights. But, it's a great homage to the original, beloved classic, and that's the best that a retelling can hope for.

Eleanor is a twenty-seven year old knit wear designer living in New York City. She's in a relationship with Miles, her best friend from childhood. One day a phone call, and a chance encounter in which Eleanor catches Miles cheating on her, forces Eleanor to uproot herself. Eleanor's Aunt Alice, from England, is dying and Eleanor makes the decision to leave New York, her budding career, and Miles behind.

In Yorkshire she travels to Trent Hall, her family's home for generations. Besides her Aunt, it is home to a number of people, including Mead, an orphan who spends his time sprucing up the place. Mead's current project is converting the ancient barn into a grand library to house all of the estate's precious books. While in Trent Hall, Eleanor grows closer to her Aunt who tells her some family secrets, including a curse handed down through the women of the family – a curse that always has a woman of the family divided in love. The curse dictates that the women always choose the wrong man. Between secrets, ghosts, and the inconsistencies of her own heart, Eleanor faces a lot of unexpected situations.

Solsbury Hill is not a direct retelling. It is a shadow of the original book, which is utilized to underscore this book's plot. There are elements that are very similar to the original, but overall the differences serve to divide one of the other. Much of the book surrounds an investigation of Emily Bronte's infamous book. This technique makes this novel seem more self-aware than it should be.

Wyler paints a beautiful portrait of the moors, of a visiting ghost, of a woman falling into herself while simultaneously falling in love with her own Heathcliff. She paints a book of subtle heartbreak and growth and finding one's place in the world. The biggest thing that Eleanor is searching for can be found anywhere, but she has to let herself understand what's she's looking for in order to become worthy of it – a true home; a hearth to warm herself by, and a heart by which to guide her life.

4 out of 5 stars.

- review courtesy of www.bibliopunkkreads.com

Andrea Ahn says

This book was a quick and easy read with a simple plot and a simple story. Eleanor, a designer in New York, has received a call about her dying Aunt and is asked to fly out to England before she passes. Eleanor decides to go and spend as much time as she can even though she is leaving behind her business and her boyfriend, she wants to ask her boyfriend to go with her and while trying to that find him cheating on her. So basically she decides it is the best time to get away and learn more about her family. While she is at the house with her land she encounters a new love, ghosts from the past, secrets about her family, and at times it can be overwhelming, but she finds a way to move on and continue her life.

This book was based off the story of Wuthering Heights and although I have never read it, it was not necessary to understand the book. They explained the story within the book and it was done simply and left

no confusion. It was a quick read all in all.

Colleen Turner says

I reviewed this book for www.luxuryreading.com.

I need to begin by saying *Wuthering Heights* is one of my top five favorite books of all time. So how could I not love a continuation of one of my favorite stories, one that placed a modern American woman back on the wild, windswept English moors struggling to choose between two very different men? Well, unfortunately, *Solsbury Hill* just didn't live up to the classic it compares itself to.

My main problem with the story is that, unlike the grand passions and emotions that run through *Wuthering Heights*, the relationships in *Solsbury Hill* fall somewhat flat. The situations infer intimate relationships between the characters, whether romantic or familial, but the actual dialogue and feel of the interactions doesn't go very far below the surface. I didn't feel the connections and found the responses to situations that should evoke grand emotions – your lifelong love betraying you, your newly discovered aunt dying before she can tell you all she needed to – lacked any real passion. The dialogue was also very stunted and jumbled at times and there was a lot of repetition of descriptions and statements for such a short story.

What saved the story for me and kept me turning the pages when I wasn't altogether sure I wanted to were the description of the gently deteriorating Trent Hall and the surrounding landscape. The moors were really their own character and by far my favorite. The author did a superb job of describing the varying terrain and the ever changing elements that make the moors of England the awe inspiring place it is. There is also this wonderful strangeness going on when you aren't always sure if the people Eleanor are encountering are alive or ghosts and this added a delightful chill. There is one ghost in particular who leads Eleanor on a grand yet abbreviated adventure that I really enjoyed and would have loved expanded.

Turning the last page of *Solsbury Hill* I was left somewhat confused about whether I enjoyed the book or not. I loved the descriptions of the setting as well as the haunting elements. However, these very elements as well as the characters and their relationships needed more development and what was discussed felt rushed. I think the story would be better served either expanded with more development or concentrating on one component (for example I would have loved if the story centered solely around Eleanor's search for Emily Bronte's secrets or concentrated on her struggle to choose between Miles or Mead). I also think trying to compare this story to *Wuthering Heights* does not do *Solsbury Hill* any justice. It just doesn't match up.

Betsey says

This is a very quick read. Very heavy on the fluff, a few eye-roll moments, but overall a pleasant summer read. I read it by the pool and it kept me entertained.

There are definitely plot issues, writing issues, and character development is lacking. This is not a literary masterpiece by any means, just a light read.

Brittany says

Solsbury Hill is a novel about a woman, Eleanor, who is content with her life in New York. She is dating a man, Miles, who she has known since she was a child and her clothing line is just taking off. Her life is shook-up, when she receives a phone call from England letting her know that her Aunt is ill and wants to see her before she dies. I wish I could write that I liked this book, but I would be lying. I wasn't able to connect with any of the characters; they felt like outlines of people, not whole individuals. That's not to say that the entire book was bad, parts of it were really good. The pieces of the story just didn't gel together. It is loosely based on Wuthering Heights, mainly on having to decide between two men, and trying to not make the choice that you will live to regret. I guess there are gothic elements in the book, an old house on a moor, a dying relative that Eleanor never really knew, and ghosts, but it didn't have the drive that most gothic novels have. I never felt a real turmoil in regards to Eleanor's choice between two men. I really did, however, enjoy the budding relationship Eleanor has while Trent Hall. The idea behind this novel is an interesting one, but it just wasn't the book for me.

This was originally published at:

<http://www.firststoread.com/Profile/Re...>

Melissa Wright says

I didn't like that the book was all over the place and at times confusing. Eleanor and Mead were good characters, but they weren't done justice with the writing style. It was a fast read, didn't have depth and lacked personality. .

Alexandra says

Although I am not normally a romance or romantic novel reader, I was excited to give "Solsbury Hill" a try as I love to support new women authors and I'm always intrigued to see new takes on the classics, in this case "Wuthering Heights". However, I was disappointed in the novel's execution. The novel started off strong, but went downhill quickly. I found many major holes in the plot, as if the author had forgotten to mention things, and many of the revelations seemed cliché and/or unbelievable. One of the plot twists I could have bought (Emily's ghost and letters, Eleanor's parentage, etc.), but altogether they made the novel feel like a gigantic cliché that had been done too many times. I was not at all compelled by the character of Miles, and I knew as soon as Eleanor met Miles that she would end up choosing him. Theirs was not an unpredictable romance.

One thing I did enjoy about the novel was the descriptions of the English moors and countryside-- they made my heart ache for England. Having spent a summer there, I miss it terribly and I found the picturesque details to be very accurate and inviting. However, they could not make up for the hackneyed conventions of the novel itself.

Many thanks to Goodreads First Reads and Riverhead Books for my free copy!

Elyse Rudin says

Oh my goodness, I can not believe this book was well reviewed and recommended to me. I am so glad it's over. So corny, predictable and silly story. A young woman living in NY just walked in on her long term boyfriend sleeping with another woman. She goes back to her apartment and low and behold gets a call that her aunt, that she hasn't seen in years, is dying and wants her to come to her English estate to say good bye. Well guess what, a handsome man works on the estate and well don't want to spoil it for you. I went back to look at the reviews and just can't believe how well received it was. Oh did I mention she has conversations with Emily Bronte's ghost??? Oy!!!

Cinta says

I got an ARC from Penguin Books in exchange for my honest opinion.

I love Wuthering Heights, so I thought that a book based on that story would be a great reading. It seems I was mistaken. The book has been quite a disappointment and it is not that much related to Wuthering Heights, except for making Emily Bronte appear as a ghost.

The book's pace is so slow that it makes you feel like it is dragging. And at some points it does. A New Yorker in her late twenties who gets a phone call from England to tell her that her aunt is seriously ill and wants to see her. That phone call leads to a maze of secrets, hidden family connections, and even ghosts. There were some issues with the parts where the ghosts made appearances; the main character doesn't get scared the first times that she sees these ghosts, but then she gets utterly scared when she sees them again almost by the end of the book. That doesn't make any sense to me. But the truth is that almost nothing in this book made a lot of sense to me. Like the matter with the hidden letters. That really made me roll my eyes.

I don't know if it is because I got an early copy, but I found typos, missing words, and at times it even felt as if there were paragraphs missing, because the plot kept changing without any logical transition, so I thought I was missing something.

So, overall, slow, nonsensical, and predictable story that I thought had potential but proved me wrong.
