

Transcript

To Walk Invisible

Interview with the crew

Question on screen:

What inspired you to commission this drama?

Faith Penhale:

Sally and I have known each other, have known each other for years, 10, 15 years. And over the years, she's talked to me about the story of the lives of the Brontë sisters. And she grew up very near Haworth, and I think as a young child, was always inspired by the parsonage and excited by the home of these literary greats. And then read their material very, very young.

And so over the years, we've always talked about stories that Sally wanted to tell. And this was one that she kept coming back to, time and time again. And until in the end, we said, well let's do it. Let's tell the story of the lives of the Brontë sisters as Sally saw it, and based on extensive research, hopefully revealing some truths about their lives that will be new to the audience.

Question on screen:

How long did it take to make?

Faith Penhale:

Sally is incredibly busy, and obviously very successful, both as a writer, and now as a director. And so it meant that we probably started talking about the drama at least three to four years ago. And it was a question of there being a gap in Sally's schedule, which would allow her to write the script and then to direct it. So I would say, from the point at which we started talking about it through to where we are now, it's been yeah, at least four years, which for a single two-hour piece, is quite a long period of time.

Question on screen:

Have you read any of the Brontës work, and if so, can you describe your first or best experience of it?

Faith Penhale:

I remember reading Jane Eyre and Wuthering Heights when I was, I must have been at university, so late teenage, early 20s. And being so, Wuthering Heights just swept away with the epic sort of style of it. And Jane Eyre, just utterly drawn in to the psychological storytelling. I hadn't read any of the others.

When we started researching and talking to Sally about doing this, I read *Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, which I think is an underestimated novel. I think it's one of the best and should be up there with *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*. Anne Brontë wrote *Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, and it's extremely powerful storytelling. And I've since read, probably not all of them, but most of the others.

Grant Montgomery:

I read the-- it was mind-blowing. I remember when I read *Jane Eyre*. I think it was, I was on holiday in Cornwall. I remember it vividly. And it was a Penguin Classic, I remember the front cover. Had a quote from Churchill saying this is one of the best books ever. I remember it was on the back cover of it. And I was 15. And I just like, oh wow. It was like I was there. I mean, I thought it was-- along with *Jane Austen*, which I read at kind of, at the same time, it was really important. It was a really important book. And that's where my love of Brontës-- because I absolutely adored them. When I was at college doing theatre design, we had to do a costume project. I remember I decided I'd make Emily Brontë's-- no, it was Charlotte's costume. And I went and measured it. I went up to the parsonage and looked at it and got the measurements from a book, and then made this dress. I mean, how nuts is that? There we are. And then took photographs of a model in it walking across the moors. Crazy!

David Raedeker:

My first experience, I have to admit, was actually watching films. With, you know, different versions of *Wuthering Heights* or *Jane Eyre*. Then I started reading *Wuthering Heights*. So, yeah. I love the characters that are, which are kind of, very three-dimensional, and yeah, quite exciting I think. Especially the male characters, quite crazy, yeah.

Tom Pye:

I was a fan. In my 20s I think I read *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre*. I was keen on Thomas Hardy at the time, and that led me into Emily Brontë. And yes, I was, I'd been to the parsonage as well a few years ago. So it was, I'd known a bit about them, but nothing like what I needed to learn.

Jessica Taylor:

Wuthering Heights was the first book that I read, and I think again, I read it after I'd been on a trip to the parsonage as a teenager probably. And it does capture the whole excitement of the moors and the wildness and the bleakness of it. So of course, you come home, and then you want to start reading the books. And *Wuthering Heights* is just the most romantic, gorgeous, passionate novel.