

Wuthering Heights



INTRODUCTION

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF EMILY BRONTE

Born to a clergyman from Yorkshire, Brontë left home at age six to join her sisters at a harsh boarding school. After two of them died, Emily and her sister Charlotte (author of [Jane Eyre](#)) returned home, where, with their sister Anne and their brother Branwell, they created a complicated fantasy world; the children wrote a series of stories, plays, and poems, some of which they collected and published. Though Emily left home several more times, she always returned to the beloved moors of her childhood. She published *Wuthering Heights* the year before she died of tuberculosis.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The American Revolution, which often symbolizes the ability of the common man to prevail over old, established power, coincides with some of the action in *Wuthering Heights*. Heathcliff, the book's little guy (who may have actually come from America), stages a revolution of his own by trying to bring down two old, powerful families.

RELATED LITERARY WORKS

Like Mary Shelley's [Frankenstein](#), *Wuthering Heights* contains elements of Gothic literature as well as Romanticism, which focuses on people's natural goodness and imagination and favors "the sublime" of nature and spirituality over urbanity and technology. Yet Brontë's novel also has much in common with George Eliot's [Middlemarch](#) (1871), which realistically examines life in a provincial village.

KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** *Wuthering Heights*
- **When Published:** 1847
- **Literary Period:** Victorian
- **Genre:** Romanticism / Realism / Gothic (e.g., mysterious family relationships, vulnerable heroines, houses full of secrets, and wild landscapes)
- **Setting:** Yorkshire, England, late 18th to early 19th century
- **Climax:** Heathcliff and Catherine's tearful, impassioned reunion just hours before Catherine gives birth and then dies
- **Antagonist:** Heathcliff (we root both for and against Heathcliff)
- **Point of View:** Nelly Dean, a housekeeper, tells the story of the Lintons and Earnshaws to Mr. Lockwood, who passes

along her story to the reader.

EXTRA CREDIT

The Brontë Family: Two of Emily Brontë's sisters are also respected writers. Charlotte Brontë wrote [Jane Eyre](#), [Shirley](#), [Villette](#), and [The Professor](#), and Anne Brontë wrote [Agnes Grey](#) and [The Tenant of Wildfell Hall](#). Because the Brontës collaborated, critics love to analyze the whole family, not just the individual authors. The family also appeals to readers because it experienced so much tragedy: five of the six children died young (four daughters died of tuberculosis, or "consumption," as it was known at the time, and Branwell, the only son, turned to drugs and alcohol when his career as an artist failed).



PLOT SUMMARY

Mr. Lockwood, an out-of-towner renting an estate called Thrushcross Grange, twice visits his landlord, Mr. Heathcliff, who lives at a nearby manor called Wuthering Heights. During the first visit, Heathcliff is gruff but compelling. During the second, Lockwood meets other mysterious residents of Wuthering Heights, is attacked by dogs when he tries to leave, and endures a ghostly visitation overnight. Lockwood asks the housekeeper at the Grange, Ellen Dean (a.k.a. "Nelly"), to tell him about Heathcliff and Wuthering Heights. She recounts a complicated story of two families, the Earnshaws and the Lintons.

Mr. Earnshaw, a gentleman, owns Wuthering Heights. He has two children, Hindley and Catherine, and adopts a third, Heathcliff. Hindley is jealous of Heathcliff because both his father and his sister are very fond of the youngster. To avoid strife, Mr. Earnshaw sends Hindley away to college, during which time Catherine and Heathcliff become extremely close. Mr. Earnshaw dies, and Hindley, with a new wife, returns to claim Wuthering Heights. Still bitter, Hindley forces Heathcliff to give up his education and treats him like a servant. Hindley's wife dies soon after giving birth to a baby boy, Hareton, however. Hindley descends into alcoholism, though he continues to abuse and mistreat Heathcliff.

Meanwhile, Heathcliff and Catherine grow interested in the Lintons, a well-to-do family who live at Thrushcross Grange. The Lintons have two children, Edgar and Isabella, who seem very cultured and refined to the somewhat wild inhabitants of Wuthering Heights. After suffering an injury while spying on the Lintons, Catherine Earnshaw spends five weeks with the Lintons, becoming close to Edgar. She finds Edgar's wealth and blonde beauty enticing, yet her feelings for Heathcliff are far

more passionate. Even so, Catherine tells Nelly that she can't marry Heathcliff because of how Hindley has degraded him. Heathcliff overhears Catherine, and flees Wuthering Heights that night.

In Heathcliff's absence, a devastated Catherine marries Edgar Linton and moves to Thrushcross Grange. All is well—until Heathcliff returns, now rich and dignified, but just as wild and ferocious. Catherine is thrilled to see Heathcliff again. Edgar doesn't share her excitement. He tries to keep them apart, but Catherine continues to see Heathcliff despite her husband's disapproval. Heathcliff, meanwhile, moves into Wuthering Heights. Hindley, who has become a gambler, welcomes Heathcliff into his home because he lusts after Heathcliff's money.

Soon after, Catherine reveals to Heathcliff that Isabella has a crush on him. Not long after that, she observes the two of them embracing. The developing romance leads to a conflict between Edgar and Heathcliff, after which Edgar demands that Catherine choose between the two of them. Catherine responds by locking herself into her room and refusing to eat for three days. On the third day, she is frenzied and delusional and believes herself near death. That same night, Heathcliff elopes with Isabella.

Edgar nurses Catherine for two months. Her health improves somewhat, though not completely. She also discovers that she is pregnant. At Wuthering Heights, Heathcliff treats Isabella terribly from the moment after their wedding. Edgar, however, refuses to have any contact with Isabella, and fears that Heathcliff wed Isabella solely as a way to try to take Thrushcross Grange from the Lintons. Two months after the wedding, Heathcliff, concerned about Catherine's health, pays a surprise visit to Thrushcross Grange while Edgar is away. In a tearful reunion, Heathcliff and Catherine profess their continuing and eternal love for each other, but Edgar soon returns and Catherine collapses. That night, Catherine gives birth to a girl, Cathy, and dies a few hours later. Catherine is buried in a spot overlooking the moors where she used to play with Heathcliff as a child.

Two days later, Isabella escapes from Wuthering Heights and goes to town outside London, where she gives birth to Heathcliff's son, Linton. Hindley dies six months later, so deeply in debt to Heathcliff that Heathcliff becomes the owner of Wuthering Heights. Heathcliff then places Hareton into the same kind of servitude into which Hindley once placed him.

Twelve years pass. Cathy grows into a beautiful young woman, while Hareton grows into a rough youth. Isabella dies, and Edgar brings Linton back to Thrushcross Grange, but Heathcliff insists that Linton come to live with him at Wuthering Heights. Heathcliff then carefully and deliberately cultivates a friendship between the weak and spineless Linton and the strong-willed Cathy. Though Edgar at first forbids Cathy from seeing Linton at all, as his own health fails he relents and allows

her to meet with Linton at Thrushcross Grange or on the moors. One day, while meeting with Linton on the moors, Heathcliff forces Cathy and Nelly to return with him and Linton to Wuthering Heights. He confines Cathy and Nelly in the house until Cathy marries Linton, which she ultimately does. Cathy escapes from Wuthering Heights long enough to be with her father as he dies, but is soon taken back to Wuthering Heights by Heathcliff. Edgar is buried next to Catherine. Linton dies soon after that, and Heathcliff, because of careful legal maneuverings, now owns both Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange. Cathy reluctantly lives with Heathcliff and Hareton (whom she constantly mocks for his illiteracy) at Wuthering Heights. This brings the story up to the present, when Lockwood has rented Thrushcross Grange.

Lockwood goes back to London, but passes through the region six months later. Much to everyone's surprise, Cathy and Hareton have fallen in love. Cathy has realized Hareton's nobility and kindness beneath his lack of education. Heathcliff, who sees strong a resemblance in both Hareton and Cathy to Catherine, no longer feels the need for revenge. He dies and is buried beside Catherine (on the side opposite where Edgar is buried). Cathy and Hareton, at last free of interfering adults, plan to marry and move to Thrushcross Grange.



CHARACTERS

MAJOR CHARACTERS

Mr. Lockwood – A gentleman who rents Thrushcross Grange from Heathcliff. He is the narrator of the story; Nelly Dean tells him about all of the other characters, and he passes on her account to the reader. He is a somewhat smug and emotionally remote city boy who is not very involved in the action.

Ellen "Nelly" Dean – Housekeeper to the Earnshaws and Lintons. The novel is from her point of view; we see every character (aside from Lockwood) through her eyes. She grows up with Hindley, Catherine, and Heathcliff and works at both Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange. Nelly is confidante to many, including both Catherines, Isabella, and even Heathcliff. She cares for Hareton when he is an infant and is a mother-figure to the younger Cathy. Though a servant, she is educated and articulate. Frequently, she does more than observe; she becomes very involved in her employers' lives. Some might call her meddlesome, but most of the characters are so comfortable with her that they have intimate conversations in front of her.

Hindley Earnshaw – Son of Mr. Earnshaw, brother of Catherine, foster brother of Heathcliff, father of Hareton, husband of Frances. He inherits Wuthering Heights from his father. A hardcore drinker and gambler, he falls apart after his wife's death. He evolves from a fun-loving, good-natured boy into an angry, bitter, jealous, and self-destructive man.

Catherine Earnshaw Linton – Daughter of Mr. Earnshaw, sister of Hindley, foster sister and true love of Heathcliff, wife of Edgar, mother of Cathy. Gorgeous and fiery with dark curls and penetrating eyes, Catherine is a woman in conflict— she craves the luxury, security, and serenity of ultra-civilized Edgar, even as she runs wild across the moors with brooding and unkempt Heathcliff. She loves Heathcliff with a huge and overwhelming passion. She is impetuous, proud, and sometimes haughty.

Heathcliff – Foster son of Mr. Earnshaw; foster brother of Hindley and Catherine; husband of Isabella; father of Linton. Heathcliff is the conflicted villain/hero of the novel. Mr. Earnshaw finds him on the street and brings him home to Wuthering Heights, where he and Catherine become soul mates. He is the ultimate outsider, with his dark "gypsy" looks and mysterious background. Though he eventually comes to own Wuthering Heights, he never seems as fully home in the house as he does on the moors. His love for Catherine is gigantic and untamed and matters to him more than anything else, but it is never easy— it leads him to control and belittle and manipulate nearly everyone around him. Despite his many horrible deeds, Heathcliff is not a straight-out bad guy; he is a poor orphan who finds material success but not what he really wants— the love of Catherine.

Catherine/Cathy Linton Heathcliff Earnshaw – Daughter of Edgar and Catherine; wife of Linton Heathcliff and Hareton Earnshaw (both her cousins). Young, beautiful, and good-hearted, Cathy has the gumption and passion of her mother and the calm and blonde beauty of her father. She is a complicated teenager who is frequently kind and compassionate but often selfish and inconsiderate, too. Ultimately, she shows the capacity to see past superficial things to the nobility and beauty beneath, a trait her mother lacked.

Hareton Earnshaw – Son of Hindley and Frances; husband of young Cathy. Hareton lives and works at Wuthering Heights, where his father ignores him and Heathcliff tolerates him; he is shy, rough, illiterate, hard-working, and neglected. By birth, he should be a gentleman, but his guardians purposely neglect his education. Underneath his gruffness is a smart, kind, and sensitive soul.

Edgar Linton – Brother of Isabella, husband of Catherine, father of Cathy. Sweet, loving, and kind, Edgar is the picture of a country gentleman; he is very handsome and dotes upon both wife and daughter. He initially appears fragile, but, in fact, he is quite strong in a quiet, introspective way. He's not pure goodness, however: he despises Heathcliff and can be unforgiving.

MINOR CHARACTERS

Mr. Earnshaw – A gentleman farmer. He is father to Hindley and Catherine. Out of kindness, he takes in Heathcliff, an

orphan. He is stern. He alienates his biological son by showing interest in Heathcliff. By the time of his death, he has little control over any of his children.

Frances Earnshaw – Hindley's wife and Hareton's mother. Frances, a minor character, meets Hindley away from Wuthering Heights. She arrives at Wuthering Heights full of enthusiasm but dies soon after giving birth to her son.

Isabella Linton – Sister of Edgar, wife of Heathcliff, mother of Linton. Beautiful and fair, she is raised to be a dainty, delicate lady. She is no match for Heathcliff, who marries her for her claim on Thrushcross Grange rather than for love.

Linton Heathcliff – Son of Heathcliff and Isabella; husband of young Catherine. Though lovely looking, Linton is sickly, whiny, effeminate, and weak.

Joseph – Long-time servant at Wuthering Heights. He is very religious and judgmental. Joseph speaks in a very thick dialect.

Zillah – Housekeeper at Wuthering Heights.



THEMES

In LitCharts literature guides, each theme gets its own color-coded icon. These icons make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. If you don't have a color printer, you can still use the icons to track themes in black and white.



GOTHIC LITERATURE AND THE SUPERNATURAL

From beginning to end, *Wuthering Heights* is a novel full of ghosts and spirits. Dead characters refuse to leave the living alone, and the living accept that the deceased find ways of coming back to haunt them. In a departure from traditional Gothic tales, these hauntings are sometimes welcome. Heathcliff, for instance, repeatedly seeks out visitations from the ghost of his beloved Catherine. He even digs up her grave in order to be closer to her. Brontë uses otherworldly figures to emphasize the ferocity of Heathcliff's and Catherine's love; their connection is so powerful that even death can't stop it.



NATURE AND CIVILIZATION

Pitting nature against civilization, Emily Brontë promotes the Romantic idea that the sublime—the awe-inspiring, almost frightening, beauty of nature—is superior to man-made culture. She makes this point by correlating many of the characters with one side or the other and then squaring them off against each other. For instance, Heathcliff, whose origins are unknown and who roams the moors, is definitely on the nature side, while his rival, the studious Edgar Linton, is in the civilized camp. Other

pairings include Hareton Earnshaw vs. Linton Earnshaw; Catherine vs. Isabella; and Hareton vs. Cathy. In all of these cases, Brontë makes one character a bit wild (perhaps by showing them in tune with animals and/or the outdoors and/or their emotions), while portraying the other as somewhat reserved and often prissy or fussy.

But nothing is black and white in *Wuthering Heights*. Many of the characters exhibit traits from both sides. While Brontë argues that nature is somehow purer, she also lauds civilization, particularly in terms of education. Hareton Earnshaw personifies this combination of nature and civilization: Brontë associates the young orphan with nature (he is a coarse, awkward farm boy) as well as civilization (inspired by his desire for young Cathy, he learns how to read). This mixture of down-to-earth passion and book-centered education make him, arguably, the most sympathetic character in the book.



LOVE AND PASSION

Wuthering Heights explores a variety of kinds of love. Loves on display in the novel include Heathcliff and Catherine's all-consuming passion

for each other, which while noble in its purity is also terribly destructive. In contrast, the love between Catherine and Edgar is proper and civilized rather than passionate. Theirs is a love of peace and comfort, a socially acceptable love, but it can't stand in the way of Heathcliff and Catherine's more profound (and more violent) connection.

The love between Cathy and Linton is a grotesque exaggeration of that between Catherine and Edgar. While Catherine always seems just a bit too strong for Edgar, Cathy and Linton's love is *founded* on Linton's weakness—Linton gets Cathy to love him by playing on her desire to protect and mother him. Finally, there's the love between Cathy and Hareton, which seems to balance the traits of the other loves on display. They have the passion of Catherine and Heathcliff without the destructiveness, and the gentleness shared by Edgar and Catherine without the dullness or inequality in power.



MASCULINITY AND FEMININITY

Written when gender roles were far more rigid and defined than they are now, *Wuthering Heights* examines stereotypes of masculinity and femininity.

Emily Brontë constantly contrasts masculinity and femininity, but not all of the comparisons are simple; sometimes boys act like girls and girls act like boys. Edgar Linton and Linton Heathcliff, for instance, are men, but Brontë frequently describes them as having the looks and attributes of women. Likewise, Catherine Earnshaw has many masculine characteristics; even though she is outrageously beautiful, she loves rough, outdoor play and can hold her own in any fight. She

is a complex mix of hyper-feminine grace and loveliness and ultra-masculine anger and recklessness. Heathcliff, with his physical and mental toughness, has no such ambiguities—he is exaggeratedly masculine and scorns his wife Isabella for her overblown femininity.

Emily Brontë seems to favor masculinity over femininity, even in her women. In general, she portrays weak, delicate characters with contempt, while she treats strong and rugged characters like Heathcliff, both Catherines, and Hareton, with compassion and admiration, despite their flaws.



CLASS

Understanding the importance of class in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britain is essential to understanding *Wuthering Heights*.

Generally, at the time, people were born into a class and stayed there: if your parents were rich and respected (like Edgar's), you would be, too; if your parents were servants (like Nelly Dean's), you probably would be too. Social mobility—the idea that you can change your class status (usually for the better)—was not commonplace.

In Brontë's novel, however, class distinctions are constantly changing, much to the confusion of the characters. There are two primary examples of this: Heathcliff and Hareton. Because no one knows anything about Heathcliff's background, they all treat him differently. Mr. Earnshaw adopts him and treats him like a son, but the snobby Lintons refuse to socialize with him. When he disappears for a few years and comes back rich, the characters struggle even more over how to approach him—he now has money and land, but many of them still consider him a farm boy. Likewise, Hareton has a hard time gaining respect. The son of Hindley, Hareton should be the heir to *Wuthering Heights*. With land and standing, he ought to be a gentleman. However, Heathcliff refuses to educate him, and everyone else mostly ignores him, so his manners (a very important indicator of class status) are rough and gruff. Only when young Cathy helps educate him does he achieve the class standing to which he was born.



REVENGE AND REPETITION

Nearly all of the action in *Wuthering Heights* results from one or another character's desire for revenge. The result are cycles of revenge that seem to

endlessly repeat. Hindley takes revenge on Heathcliff for taking his place at *Wuthering Heights* by denying him an education, and in the process separates Heathcliff and Catherine. Heathcliff then takes revenge upon Hindley by, first, dispossessing Hindley of *Wuthering Heights* and by denying an education to Hareton, Hindley's son. Heathcliff also seeks revenge on Edgar for marrying Catherine by marrying Cathy to Linton.

Yet while Heathcliff's revenge is effective, it seems to bring him little joy. Late in the novel, Cathy sees this, and tells Heathcliff that *her* revenge on *him*, no matter how miserable he makes her, is to know that he, Heathcliff, is *more* miserable. And it is instructive that only when Heathcliff loses his desire for revenge is he able to finally reconnect with Catherine in death, and to allow Cathy and Hareton, who are so similar to Heathcliff and Catherine, to find love and marry.



SYMBOLS

Symbols appear in **teal text** throughout the Summary and Analysis sections of this LitChart.



WUTHERING HEIGHTS

The childhood home of many of the book's characters (Heathcliff, Catherine, Hindley, Nelly Dean, and Hareton), Wuthering Heights is a centuries-old farmhouse that symbolizes simplicity, wildness, and passion. Sturdy, substantial, and stubborn, the house is at one with the surrounding moors; it is fierce but unchanging. Its inhabitants share its characteristics—like it or not, they are in touch with their raw, natural, and animalistic instincts. Wuthering Heights stands for unfettered, primal emotions—it *is* nature.



THRUSHCROSS GRANGE

Thrushcross Grange, the house owned by the Lintons and then inhabited by Lockwood, is a symbol of tamed, refined, civilized culture. Even when Heathcliff owns it, he chooses to rent it rather than live in it, for its formality does not suit the likes of him. In contrast to Wuthering Heights, "The Grange" stands for manners and civility. It is an outpost of education and urbanity in the midst of the wildness of the northern English moors.



THE WEATHER

The frequent storms and wind that sweep through *Wuthering Heights* symbolize how the characters are at the mercy of forces they cannot control. For example, Lockwood, the city boy, thinks he can walk back to Thrushcross Grange through a storm, but the nature-respecting folks at Wuthering Heights tell him he's crazy; they know that the weather—nature—is far stronger than he is. Brontë uses the weather as a metaphor for nature, which she portrays as a magnificently strong force that can conquer any character. The strongest characters are those who give the weather the respect it deserves.



QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the Vintage edition of *Wuthering Heights* published in 2009.

Chapter 1 Quotes

☛☛ But Mr. Heathcliff forms a singular contrast to his abode and style of living. He is a dark-skinned gypsy in aspect, in dress and manners a gentleman, that is, as much a gentleman as many a country squire.

Related Characters: Mr. Lockwood (speaker), Heathcliff

Related Themes:  

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 4

Explanation and Analysis

Lockwood recalls arriving at Wuthering Heights for the first time, describing his initial impressions of the house and of Heathcliff, its owner. He remarks that based on the look of the house he would expect it to be inhabited by a "homely, Northern farmer," but instead he encounters Heathcliff, whom he describes in paradoxical terms. To Lockwood, Heathcliff simultaneously looks like a "dark-skinned gypsy" and a member of the English aristocracy. Even in his own home, Heathcliff seems to be an outsider, and the reference to his ethnic origin hints that, as Brontë later reveals, Heathcliff was adopted.

Immediately we know that there is something strange and otherworldly about Heathcliff. To 19th century white English readers, his depiction as a "dark-skinned gypsy" would signal that he was mysterious and potentially menacing. The fact that he blurs class boundaries is also significant, as it would have been highly unusual to meet someone who could not clearly be placed within the rigid class system of the time. Finally, there is a hint of irony in the fact that Lockwood describes Heathcliff as being at odds with his home. Although Heathcliff is more suited to the open moor than to the house, he comes to be closely associated with the rugged, sturdy Wuthering Heights, especially in comparison to Thrushcross Grange.

Chapter 3 Quotes

☞☞ Terror made me cruel; and finding it useless to attempt shaking the creature off, I pulled its wrist on to the broken pane, and rubbed it to and fro till the blood ran down and soaked the bedclothes.

Related Characters: Mr. Lockwood (speaker)

Related Themes:  

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 27

Explanation and Analysis

Having read Catherine's diary and fallen asleep, Lockwood dreams that he hears a tapping at the window and is grabbed by the "little, ice-cold hand" of Catherine's ghost. He attempts to pull away but the hand won't let him go, begging to be let in; terrified, Lockwood rubs the hand against the broken window pane until eventually it lets go. This disturbing sequence is one of the most obviously gothic moments in the novel. It is ambiguous whether Catherine's ghost is "real" or whether it is only a figment of Lockwood's imagination, conjured by the fact that he fell asleep reading her diary. However, when Heathcliff arrives in the room after hearing Lockwood's screams, it is clear that Catherine's ghost is a very real presence to him.

The graphic violence in the dream is made even more unsettling by the fact that Catherine's ghost is in the form of a child, with a "little" hand. Lockwood's willingness to viciously harm the child in his terror suggests that even highly "civilized" people have a capacity for brutality and passion beneath the veneer of good manners. Meanwhile, the ghost itself displays Catherine's contradictory qualities: it is simultaneously stubborn and powerless, threatening and vulnerable.

This passage also emphasizes the dividing line between Wuthering Heights and the moor outside. The ghost is desperate to be let in, but there is clearly a powerful force keeping it outside. This division between inside and outside is represented by the jagged glass of the broken window pane, which Lockwood makes violent use of in order to keep the ghost out.

☞☞ The ledge, where I placed my candle, had a few mildewed books piled up in one corner; and it was covered with writing scratched on the paint. This writing, however, was nothing but a name repeated in all kinds of characters, large and small—Catherine Earnshaw, here and there varied to Catherine Heathcliff, and then again to Catherine Linton.

Related Characters: Mr. Lockwood (speaker), Catherine Earnshaw Linton, Heathcliff, Edgar Linton

Related Themes:   

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 21

Explanation and Analysis

Having attempted to leave Wuthering Heights after an unsettling dinner, Lockwood is attacked by the dogs and suffers a nosebleed, forcing him to stay the night in a bedroom that Heathcliff does not normally let anyone use. Describing the room, Lockwood notes that it is damp and fairly empty, and on the window ledge he notices multiple versions of Catherine's name scratched onto the paint. The name signals that, as Lockwood will soon find out, the room is haunted by the ghost of Catherine.

The fact that there are three different versions of Catherine's name—with the different surnames Earnshaw, Heathcliff, and Linton—highlights the legacy of Catherine's passionate and fickle emotions. At the same time, the names also emphasize the fractured nature of women's identities in the 19th century. When a woman married, she gained not only a new spouse and lifestyle but also essentially became a different person, with a new name and identity. The decision of who to marry was thus of pivotal importance for women, and Catherine's conflict over who to choose was thus inevitably tied to an identity crisis about who she was. Lockwood's description of her handwriting—"all kinds of letters, large and small"—further conveys this sense of inner conflict and turmoil.

Chapter 8 Quotes

☞☞ Doubtless Catherine marked the difference between her friends, as one came in and the other went out. The contrast resembled what you see in exchanging a bleak, hilly, coal country for a beautiful fertile valley; and his voice and greeting were as opposite as his aspect.

Related Characters: Ellen "Nelly" Dean (speaker), Catherine Earnshaw Linton, Heathcliff, Edgar Linton

Related Themes:  

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 79

Explanation and Analysis

Catherine has been cruel to Heathcliff, calling him "foolish," and when Edgar arrives, Heathcliff leaves in a storm of anger. Nelly, narrating the story to Lockwood, frames the difference between the two men in terms of nature, a typical descriptive strategy in the novel. Heathcliff is compared to "a bleak, hilly, coal country"—not unlike the actual landscape of the Yorkshire moors. This underlines the close association between Heathcliff and the Yorkshire wilderness.

Edgar, meanwhile, is compared to a "beautiful fertile valley." Though "fertile" could be a reference to the Lintons' wealth, this description is also notably feminizing. This passage confirms the fact that Catherine is growing more and more attracted to the idea of a future with Edgar, and again, the notion of fertility is important, as it prefigures both a life of prosperity and the birth of Catherine and Edgar's beautiful daughter, Cathy.

Heathcliff, Heathcliff leaves, and thus does not hear her confess that she loves him and that their souls are the same. This passage is pivotally important in the novel, because if Heathcliff had chosen to leave even a moment later he and Catherine might have ended up marrying after all. Such timing adds to the tragic drama of the plot. It also provokes the question of why Nelly chose not to intervene and explain to Catherine that Heathcliff had been listening.

Catherine's words illuminate the mystical, uncanny nature of hers and Heathcliff's relationship. The statement that she loves him "because he's more myself than I am" has an eerie resonance considering they are technically brother and sister. It also illustrates the ways in which Catherine and Heathcliff's characters blur the boundaries of masculine and feminine, self and other.

Once again, nature is invoked to describe the fundamental differences between people. The suggestion that Catherine and Heathcliff's souls are made of "lightning" and "fire" indicates the fierce and destructive power of their love.

☝ Nelly, I see now, you think me a selfish wretch; but did it never strike you that if Heathcliff and I married we should be beggars? whereas, if I marry Linton, I can aid Heathcliff to rise, and place him out of my brother's power?

Chapter 9 Quotes

☝ I've no more business to marry Edgar Linton than I have to be in heaven; and if the wicked man in there had not brought Heathcliff so low, I shouldn't have thought of it. It would degrade me to marry Heathcliff now; so he shall never know how I love him; and that, not because he's handsome, Nelly, but because he's more myself than I am. Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same, and [Edgar's] is as different as a moonbeam from lightning, or frost from fire.

Related Characters: Catherine Earnshaw Linton (speaker), Edgar Linton, Heathcliff

Related Themes:    

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 91

Explanation and Analysis

Catherine confides her conflicted thoughts about Edgar and Heathcliff to Nelly, unaware that Heathcliff is listening. After Catherine admits that it would "degrade" her to marry

Related Characters: Catherine Earnshaw Linton (speaker), Ellen "Nelly" Dean, Heathcliff, Edgar Linton, Hindley Earnshaw

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 93

Explanation and Analysis

Catherine continues to reveal her thoughts to Nelly, explaining that she feels that she must marry Edgar in order to rescue Heathcliff from Hindley. This speech challenges the impression that Catherine has taken a liking to Edgar because she is fickle or drawn to his elegant lifestyle; at least according to her, she marries him because she hopes that it will enable her to help stop Hindley's vengeful treatment of Heathcliff. Such a choice illustrates the highly limited agency of women at the time. Without attaching herself to Edgar, Catherine is powerless to help Heathcliff. Indeed, the main part of what keeps Catherine and Heathcliff apart is the economic class system that restricts the freedom of certain people while giving others unlimited authority.

☝ My love for Linton is like the foliage in the woods; 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!

Related Characters: Catherine Earnshaw Linton (speaker), Edgar Linton, Heathcliff, Ellen "Nelly" Dean

Related Themes:   

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 93

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, one of the most famous of the novel, Catherine compares her relationships with Edgar and Heathcliff to different aspects of nature, concluding that her love for Heathcliff is permanent, and even declaring that she herself *is* Heathcliff. By comparing her feelings for Edgar to foliage, Catherine does not disparage these feelings, and the metaphor suggests that her relationship with Edgar will be more pleasant and prosperous than a marriage to Heathcliff could possibly be.

At the same time, Catherine's description of her love for Heathcliff as resembling "the eternal rocks beneath" hints that their union is essential and fated. This sense of inevitability implies that—despite all that keeps them apart—they are destined to be together, and Catherine's mention of the rocks beneath prefigures the ending of the novel when she and Heathcliff are buried in the same place, finally together and at peace.

The phrase "I am Heathcliff" is remarkable, and can be interpreted in a number of ways. On one level it might be considered the ultimate romantic statement, representing the absolute union of two people. On the other hand, it is also somewhat sinister and uncanny, especially situated in a novel that includes ghosts, doubles, and incestuous love. Such a declaration would have been especially alarming to Victorian readers, who would find it extremely strange for a woman to be saying that she *is* the man she loves.

Chapter 11 Quotes

☝ Well, if I cannot keep Heathcliff for my friend—if Edgar will be mean and jealous, I'll try to break their hearts by breaking my own. That will be a prompt way of finishing all, when I am pushed to extremity!

Related Characters: Catherine Earnshaw Linton (speaker),

Heathcliff, Edgar Linton

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 133

Explanation and Analysis

Edgar has broken up a fight between Catherine and Heathcliff by forcing Heathcliff to leave Thrushcross Grange, and in response Catherine throws a tantrum to Nelly, threatening to make herself ill if she is prevented from seeing Heathcliff. During this speech Catherine in many ways resembles a child, refusing to compromise or concede that her demands might be unreasonable and selfish. Also like a child, Catherine has very little authority or control over her life because she is a woman, and as a result she sees harming herself as the only way to influence the situation.

As it turns out, this strategy is highly effective, and Catherine does end up gaining power over the others through this tactic of manipulation. Her childishness and stubbornness in this section of the novel are reminiscent of the ghost's tiny hand, which will not let go of Lockwood until it gets what it wants.

Chapter 15 Quotes

☝ You teach me how cruel you've been—cruel and false. Why do you despise me? Why did you betray your own heart, Cathy? I have not one word of comfort. You deserve this. You have killed yourself. Yes, you may kiss me, and cry, and wring out my kisses and tears; they'll blight you—they'll damn you. You loved me—then what right had you to leave me? What right—answer me—for the poor fancy you felt for Linton? Because misery, and degradation and death, and nothing that God or Satan could inflict would have parted us, you, of your own will, did it. I have not broken your heart—you have broken it; and in breaking it, you have broken mine.

Related Characters: Heathcliff (speaker), Catherine Earnshaw Linton

Related Themes:    

Page Number: 184

Explanation and Analysis

Catherine, who is dying, has agreed to see Heathcliff for the first time since Edgar separated them and since she has grown ill. During their conversation, Catherine and

Heathcliff express both their anger and enduring love for each other. It is clear that they feel deeply resentful of one another, blaming the other for their separation. Heathcliff's words reflect one of the key themes in *Wuthering Heights*: that when people behave cruelly, there is usually a reason behind it. Bronte suggests that most of the time cruel behavior is motivated by pain, powerlessness, and the subsequent desire for revenge.

Heathcliff's speech also illuminates the eerie power of his and Catherine's love. This power is shown to be greater than "God or Satan," and in saying that even death would not have separated them, Heathcliff confirms the idea that his and Catherine's love is eternal, almost supernaturally disrupting the barrier between the dead and living. Furthermore, his comment that by breaking her own heart, Catherine has also broken his, emphasizes the notion that they are supernaturally connected to the point that they are the same person. Heathcliff's reference to Catherine's will is also important, as Catherine's stubborn willpower is a recurring motif within the novel. It is important to note, however, that Heathcliff misunderstands her actions; he cannot see that she chose to marry Edgar in order to help Heathcliff escape Hindley.

☝ I forgive what you have done to me. I love my murderer—but yours! How can I?

Related Characters: Heathcliff (speaker), Catherine Earnshaw Linton

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 185

Explanation and Analysis

On her deathbed, Catherine begs Heathcliff to forgive her; he responds by saying that he forgives what she has done to him but not what she has done to herself. It is due to Catherine's own willpower, after all, that she ended up falling ill by self-starvation. Heathcliff's dramatic language blurs the line between sentiment and reality; Catherine has literally murdered herself, but Heathcliff's murder in this passage is only figurative, because he does not wish to live without her. This ambiguity also confirms the eerie, supernatural idea that Catherine and Heathcliff are in fact one person.

Heathcliff's words reflect the complicated doubling between his character and Catherine, and a sense of Catherine's fractured personality. He says he loves his own

murderer—Catherine—but that he cannot forgive Catherine's murderer—who is, of course, also Catherine! The notion that Catherine has multiple identities is reminiscent of the moment when Lockwood discovers the three different versions of her name scratched into the wall. Bronte implies that, through Catherine's stubborn struggle against the limits imposed on her by society, her personality becomes fractured.

Chapter 16 Quotes

☝☝ Catherine Earnshaw, may you not rest as long as I am living! You said I killed you—haunt me, then! The murdered do haunt their murderers. I believe—I know that ghosts have wandered on earth. Be with me always—take any form—drive me mad! only do not leave me in this abyss, where I cannot find you! Oh God! it is unutterable! I cannot live without my life! I cannot live without my soul!

Related Characters: Heathcliff (speaker), Catherine Earnshaw Linton

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 191-192

Explanation and Analysis

Catherine has died giving birth to Cathy, and Heathcliff, devastated, demands that her ghost haunt him. Again, his speech is filled with a mix of love and resentment; he cries that he cannot live without her, yet selfishly does not want her soul to rest while he is alive, insisting that she haunt him until he dies. On one level, Heathcliff's despair can be interpreted as extremely romantic, as it is clear that Catherine meant everything to him ("I cannot live without my life!").

On the other hand, this passage shows Catherine and Heathcliff's relationship to be dark and disturbing in its intensity. Heathcliff's passion for Catherine is so fierce that he wishes to be driven mad by her. This presents a view of romantic love as a destructive, destabilizing force, and one that is ultimately rather selfish.

Finally, Heathcliff's claim to know that "ghosts have wandered the earth" emphasizes the supernatural, gothic side of *Wuthering Heights*. As the reader knows from the opening of the novel, Catherine's ghost does come to haunt Heathcliff and drive him mad; this speech can therefore be seen as a kind of conjuring, foreshadowing events that we know will come later in the story.

Chapter 17 Quotes

☞ I've recovered from my first desire to be killed by him-I'd rather he'd kill himself! He has extinguished my love effectually, and so I'm at my ease.

Related Characters: Isabella Linton (speaker), Heathcliff

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 197

Explanation and Analysis

Isabella, soaking wet and dishevelled, has arrived at Wuthering Heights in a crazed mood. She announces to Nelly that Heathcliff has "extinguished" her love for him and that she plans to run away from Thruschcross Grange, believing that Heathcliff wouldn't bother following her. The change Isabella has undergone is striking; introduced in the novel as a model of civilized, refined femininity, she now seems wild, fearless, and unhinged, highly reminiscent of Catherine. Isabella emphasizes this total transformation with the words "recovered" and "extinguished." Although she hardly seems happy, the phrase "at ease" suggests she has found a kind of freedom in relinquishing her emotional attachment to Heathcliff.

This passage is also striking for its mention of violence. It would have been strange to hear Isabella speaking of murder and suicide at an earlier point in the novel, but life at Wuthering Heights has clearly had a menacing effect on her. Once again, Bronte presents love and death as intimately connected, suggesting that passionate love inevitably leads to a desire for death.

Explanation and Analysis

Nelly has tried to reassure Linton that he shouldn't be afraid of his father, but Heathcliff turns out to behave incredibly cruelly towards his son, treating him in the same hateful way as he treated Edgar and Isabella. Linton resembles Edgar in his looks and demeanor, and doesn't seem to bear any similarity to Heathcliff at all. This makes it even more disturbing that Heathcliff is so insistent on the hereditary connection between him and Linton, emphasizing this relationship with the words "my son," "mine," "my descendent," and "my son." Clearly, Heathcliff wishes to enact his revenge through Linton; indeed, Heathcliff himself admits that this is the only reason why he tolerates Linton's presence.

This passage thus confirms the importance of vengeance in the novel, and specifically reveals how Heathcliff wishes to overcome the humiliation he experienced through his class position by seeing Linton become the owner of Thruschcross Grange. The fact that he describes Linton as belonging to him suggests that he sees Linton himself as property, akin to the properties of Thruschcross Grange and Wuthering Heights.

Chapter 20 Quotes

☞ My son is prospective owner of your place, and I should not wish him to die till I was certain of being his successor. Besides he's mine, and I want the triumph of seeing my descendant fairly lord of their estates: my child hiring their children to till their father's land for wages. That is the sole consideration which can make me endure the whelp: I despise him for himself, and hate him for the memories he revives!

Related Characters: Heathcliff (speaker), Edgar Linton, Linton Heathcliff

Related Themes:   

Related Symbols:  

Page Number: 238

Chapter 24 Quotes

☞ One time, however, we were near quarrelling. He said the pleasantest manner of spending a hot July day was lying from morning till evening on a bank of heath in the middle of the moors, with the bees humming dreamily about among the bloom, and the larks singing high up overhead, and the blue sky and bright sun shining steadily and cloudlessly. That was his most perfect idea of heaven's happiness: mine was rocking in a rustling green tree, with a west wind blowing, and bright white clouds flitting rapidly above; and not only larks, but throstles, and blackbirds, and linnets, and cuckoos pouring out music on every side, and the moors seen at a distance, broken into cool dusky dells; but close by great swells of long grass undulating in waves to the breeze; and woods and sounding water, and the whole world awake and wild with joy. He wanted all to lie in an ecstasy of peace; I wanted all to sparkle and dance in a glorious jubilee. I said his heaven would be only half alive; and he said mine would be drunk: I said I should fall asleep in his; and he said he could not breathe in mine.

Related Characters: Catherine/Cathy Linton Heathcliff Earnshaw (speaker), Linton Heathcliff

Related Themes:   

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 283

Explanation and Analysis

Cathy has confessed to Nelly that she secretly spends time with Linton and enjoys his company; in contrast to the bitter hatred between their parents, they get along well. She describes a mild disagreement they had over their respective visions of heaven: Linton dreams of a peaceful, summery day, while Cathy prefers the idea of a lively, blustery scene, similar to the Yorkshire moors. Once again, Bronte represents her characters' personalities through descriptions of the natural landscape. Linton is shown to be serene and quiet, reflective of his non-threatening, shy, feminine character. Cathy, on the other hand, resembles her mother in her love of the harsh Yorkshire outdoors, representative of her inner wildness.

This depiction of Cathy is also reminiscent of her mother Catherine's contrary beliefs about happiness and the afterlife. Earlier in the novel, Catherine tells Nelly that she has "no business being in heaven," with the parallel implication that she has "no business" marrying Edgar and adopting his pleasant, refined lifestyle. Instead, Catherine believes she ultimately belongs with Heathcliff; her version of heaven (like her daughter's) resembles the rugged, stormy moors, and indeed that is where she ends up after death—haunting *Wuthering Heights* and Heathcliff.

Chapter 27 Quotes

☞ Catherine's face was just like the landscape—shadows and sunshine flitting over it in rapid succession; but the shadows rested longer, and the sunshine was more transient.

Related Characters: Ellen "Nelly" Dean (speaker), Catherine/Cathy Linton Heathcliff Earnshaw

Related Themes:  

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 303

Explanation and Analysis

It is August, and Nelly and Cathy have ventured out onto the moors to meet Linton. Nelly describes the vibrant summer landscape before immediately moving on to describe Cathy's face, which matches the natural scene. Once again, Bronte draws a parallel between the weather and Cathy's personality, and the strong affinity between Cathy and the moors links her to her mother, Catherine.

Additionally, this description echoes Cathy's description of heaven, which she envisions as a wild, lively, blustery climate.

Note also that Nelly describes the sunshine as resting only a moment on Cathy's face, while the shadows last longer. This seems to be a description not only of Cathy's personality but also life and happiness in general. *Wuthering Heights* is a novel filled with conflict and suffering, which in many ways contains a rather dark, disturbing view of life. Cathy and Linton symbolize the best we can hope for in life, which is not—as Linton hopes—an entirely peaceful, pleasant existence, but rather moments of freedom and happiness within an otherwise turbulent world.

Chapter 29 Quotes

☞ I got the sexton, who was digging Linton's grave, to remove the earth off her coffin lid, and I opened it. I thought, once, I would have stayed there, when I saw her face again—it is hers yet—he had hard work to stir me; but he said it would change, if the air blew on it, and so I struck one side of the coffin loose, and covered it up—not Linton's side, damn him! I wish he'd been soldered in lead—and I bribed the sexton to pull it away, when I'm laid there, and slide mine out too. I'll have it made so, and then, by the time Linton gets to us, he'll not know which is which!"

Related Characters: Heathcliff (speaker), Catherine Earnshaw Linton, Edgar Linton

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 329

Explanation and Analysis

Edgar Linton has died, and Heathcliff tells Nelly that he bribed the sexton burying Edgar's body to open Catherine's coffin and promise to eventually bury Heathcliff beside her. This is one of the most morbid moments in the novel, where Heathcliff's desire to be with Catherine's dead body has somewhat necrophilic overtones. Heathcliff's longing for Catherine literally becomes a longing for death. This passage also confirms the importance of death as the moment when Catherine and Heathcliff's union will finally be unchallenged, and Heathcliff's hope is that their remains will literally become one, indistinguishable from each other.

This passage also shows again how Heathcliff's passion extends both towards love for Catherine and vengefulness towards those whom he feels have wronged him. Thus his tampering with Catherine's grave is not just a morbid desire

for union with his lost beloved, but also a spiteful gesture towards the recently-deceased Edgar.

Chapter 32 Quotes

☛☛ The task was done, not free from further blunders; but the pupil claimed a reward, and received at least five kisses; which, however, he generously returned. Then they came to the door, and from their conversation I judged they were about to issue out and have a walk on the moors.

Related Characters: Mr. Lockwood (speaker), Hareton Earnshaw, Catherine/Cathy Linton Heathcliff Earnshaw

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 351

Explanation and Analysis

Cathy has been taking care of Hareton while he recovers from a shooting accident, including teaching him to read. While previously Cathy has acted cruelly toward Hareton, making fun of his illiteracy, this part of the book represents a transformation in their relationship. (Indeed, the transformation is so total that at first Lockwood does not even recognize this "pupil" as Hareton, and only understands the situation once Nelly explains it to him.) The newly mature Cathy has seen that her previous behavior was unfair, and she and Hareton come to love each other in a way very unlike Catherine and Heathcliff's love; unlike the older generation, Cathy and Hareton's relationship is gentle, productive, and viable. There is, of course, still a major similarity between Cathy and Hareton's relationship and that of Catherine and Heathcliff, though: despite the stark differences between them, they are united by their love of the wild moors.

In many ways, this union is possible because Cathy stops looking down on Hareton and comes to see him as her equal. At the same time, she nonetheless remains in an authoritative position as his teacher and caregiver, and her dominance subtly reverses the expected power dynamic between a man and woman. Note the similarity between the love born in this situation and the story of *Jane Eyre*, written by Emily Bronte's sister, Charlotte: in that novel, Mr. Rochester is at first cruel to Jane, but when he becomes blind and Jane has to care for him, they fall in love.

Chapter 33 Quotes

☛☛ 'It is a poor conclusion, is it not?' he observed, having brooded awhile on the scene he had just witnessed: 'an absurd termination to my violent exertions? I get levers and mattocks to demolish the two houses, and train myself to be capable of working like Hercules, and when everything is ready and in my power, I find the will to lift a slate off either roof has vanished! My old enemies have not beaten me; now would be the precise time to revenge myself on their representatives: I could do it; and none could hinder me. But where is the use? I don't care for striking: I can't take the trouble to raise my hand! That sounds as if I had been labouring the whole time only to exhibit a fine trait of magnanimity. It is far from being the case: I have lost the faculty of enjoying their destruction, and I am too idle to destroy for nothing.'

Related Characters: Heathcliff (speaker)

Related Themes:  

Related Symbols:  

Page Number: 369

Explanation and Analysis

Heathcliff and Cathy have argued about her inheritance and her relationship with Hareton. Heathcliff almost hits her, but is stopped by the fact that Cathy's eyes remind him of his beloved Catherine. In this speech, he reflects on the fact that his violent thirst for vengeance is steadily dissolving. He expresses mixed feelings about this: he is frustrated that all the work he put towards revenge is for nothing, but can't deny that he no longer sees any point in destroying the lives of his enemies.

Here Bronte avoids presenting too neat a resolution or happy ending. Heathcliff himself maintains that he has not suddenly become "magnanimous"—indeed, this would contradict everything we know about his personality—but simply declares that he no longer cares about getting revenge. This sense of exhaustion foreshadows the fact that Heathcliff will soon die, and that both he and the other characters will finally be left at peace.

Chapter 34 Quotes

☛☛ Last night, I was on the threshold of hell. To-day, I am within sight of my heaven. I have my eyes on it: hardly three feet to sever me!

Related Characters: Heathcliff (speaker), Catherine

Earnshaw Linton

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 375

Explanation and Analysis

Nelly has brought Heathcliff his lunch, but he has refused it, saying that he wants to be alone. Nelly asks why Heathcliff is acting so strangely, and he tells her that he is "within sight of my heaven," meaning he knows he will soon die and be reunited with Catherine. Bronte's presentation of Heathcliff in his final days is more sympathetic than his depiction in the rest of the novel. For the first time, he experiences joy, and does not behave aggressively to the other characters (as long as they leave him alone). This highlights Heathcliff's contrary nature; while most people would approach their own death with feelings of sadness or

fear, Heathcliff is ecstatic. Such a paradox confirms that Heathcliff's only desire is to be with Catherine. Again, the themes of love and death are inextricably linked.

The fact that Heathcliff uses the phrase "*my* heaven" and not just "heaven" emphasizes the recurring idea that each person has their own idea of heaven, and what is heaven to one person might be hell to another. Though a fairly accepted principle in today's world, this notion would have been controversial in Bronte's time. Heathcliff's rejection of the concept of a Christian heaven in favor of simply being with Catherine would have seemed heretical. Within Christianity, death and heaven bring the opportunity to be united with God; thus Heathcliff's excitement at his impending death suggests that to him, Catherine has replaced God. This reflects the novel's gothic exploration of supernaturally powerful love.



SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

The color-coded icons under each analysis entry make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. Each icon corresponds to one of the themes explained in the Themes section of this LitChart.

CHAPTER 1

It is 1801. Mr. Lockwood writes in his diary that, wanting solitude after unintentionally hurting a woman he admired because he dislikes shows of emotion, he has rented a house called Thrushcross Grange in the Yorkshire countryside.

Lockwood hurt the woman because he sees himself as civilized and therefore does not like to show his feelings, his passion.



Soon after arriving, he visits his landlord, Mr. Heathcliff, whom he describes as a gruff yet noble "dark-skinned gypsy." Heathcliff lives in a manor called Wuthering Heights, which is named after the harsh **winds** that blow across the nearby moors. The house is strong and sturdy and has grotesque carvings around the front door. During the visit, Heathcliff is amused when Lockwood is nearly attacked after Heathcliff leaves him alone with a bunch of savage dogs. Yet Lockwood finds Heathcliff compelling, and, uninvited, announces that he will return soon.

Grotesque carvings, menacing dogs, and a general sense of menace are all staples of Gothic literature. Also notice how Wuthering Heights, and by extension its inhabitants, are directly connected to nature, and a wild nature at that—the house is named after the harsh winds of the moors.



CHAPTER 2

Lockwood returns to Wuthering Heights the next day. As he arrives, it begins to **snow**. No one answers his knock at the door, and an old servant with a heavy Yorkshire accent named Joseph tells him that Heathcliff is away.

Many plot points in the novel coincide with harsh weather, further building the story's Gothic feel. These plot events always occur at Wuthering Heights,



Eventually a rough young man lets Lockwood in and brings him to a sitting room. In the room also is a beautiful but rather rude and haughty young woman. Soon after, Heathcliff arrives—he scolds Lockwood for coming, then begrudgingly invites him to dinner.

More Gothic mystery. Note the contrast between the seemingly lower class rough (i.e. natural) young man and higher-class beautiful but haughty (i.e. civilized) woman.



During the meal, Lockwood learns that the young woman (whom he assumed was Heathcliff's wife) is the widow of Heathcliff's son and that the rough young man (whom Lockwood thought was Heathcliff's son) is Heathcliff's nephew.

Tangled family trees are another common feature of Gothic tales.



The meal is awkward—at one point the young woman threatens to use witchcraft on Joseph the servant. The snow also turns to a blizzard, and while discussing how Lockwood will get home, the woman tells Heathcliff that if he lets Lockwood leave alone, she hopes Lockwood's ghost will haunt him.

More Gothic elements. A ghost haunting Heathcliff foreshadows future events, as does the woman's hope for revenge on Heathcliff. Note how the storm intensifies along with the passions in the house.



Fed up with the bickering, and with no one willing to guide him home, Lockwood takes a lantern, promising to return it the next day, and leaves. But Joseph thinks he's stealing the lantern and sends the dogs after him. The dogs pin Lockwood down, which amuses Heathcliff and Hareton. Lockwood then gets a nosebleed and is forced to spend the night at Wuthering Heights. Zillah the housekeeper leads him inside.

In this scene, Lockwood comes off, quite simply, as a wimp. He can't handle the passions in Wuthering Heights, and also can't handle either the storm or the dogs. Heathcliff and Hareton are amused because they could easily handle such things. Nature vs. civilization.



CHAPTER 3

Zillah brings Lockwood to a room that Heathcliff usually doesn't allow anyone to stay in. Left alone, Lockwood notices three names scratched into the paint of the bed: Catherine Earnshaw, Catherine Heathcliff, and Catherine Linton. Lockwood also finds a 25-year-old diary, written by Catherine Earnshaw. He reads an entry from a time just after her father died, in which her older brother Hindley makes Catherine and Heathcliff listen to Joseph's dull sermons. From the entry it's clear that Hindley hated Heathcliff, but that Catherine and Heathcliff were close.

The mysterious room no one is allowed to stay in, the mysterious names carved into the bed, and the discovered diary are all Gothic elements. Through the diary, Lockwood gets his first glimpse into the story behind Wuthering Heights.



That night Lockwood has a nightmare in which he breaks a window to get some air, and a child grabs his hand. She says her name is Catherine Linton and begs to enter, claiming she's been trying to get in for twenty years. Lockwood fights her and frees himself. She continues to beg, and he cries out. His yell carries into the real world—Heathcliff hears it and comes running. He's upset to find Lockwood in the room, while Lockwood's upset over the ghost. Lockwood describes his nightmare to Heathcliff, who becomes livid when Lockwood says the dream-waif deserves to be punished. Heathcliff, sobbing, opens the window and shouts for Catherine to come in.

This scene contains the one truly supernatural event in the novel, with Lockwood dreaming of the real Catherine Linton. But it's Heathcliff's response to the dream which is most interesting, the way that he seems to want, or even need, this ghost to haunt him. Heathcliff's all-consuming love and passion for Catherine is made clear in this scene, and that love is connected to nature when Heathcliff throws open the window in order to speak with Catherine.



The next morning Heathcliff escorts Lockwood home. The servants of Thrushcross Grange are overjoyed to see Lockwood—they feared he'd died in the storm. But Lockwood, in no mood for company, locks himself in the study.

While Heathcliff opens the window to the storm to try to speak with Catherine, Lockwood locks himself inside to escape all that passion. Nature vs. civilization.



CHAPTER 4

Back at Thrushcross Grange, Lockwood starts feeling lonely and asks his housekeeper, Nelly Dean, to tell him about Heathcliff and Wuthering Heights. Nelly Dean says she grew up at Wuthering Heights with Hindley and Catherine Earnshaw, and tells Lockwood that Heathcliff has a dead son and is rich enough to live in a house grander than Wuthering Heights. She also explains that the young woman he met at Wuthering Heights is named Cathy, and is the daughter of Catherine Earnshaw and the previous tenant of Thrushcross Grange, Edgar Linton. Additionally, she says that Hareton is the last of the Earnshaws, a very old family.

The point of view shifts from Lockwood to Nelly as she tells her story. Mr. Earnshaw, the former master of Wuthering Heights, was a strict but kind man. When Nelly was little, he returned from a business trip to Liverpool with Heathcliff, an orphan boy he'd found on the street. Earnshaw's daughter, Catherine, took to her foster brother almost immediately, but Earnshaw's son Hindley hated him. Hindley was jealous of his father's affection for Heathcliff and expressed his jealousy by bullying him. Heathcliff responded with silence. Only Mrs. Earnshaw, Earnshaw's wife, took Hindley's side against Heathcliff, but she died just two years after Heathcliff arrived.

CHAPTER 5

Time passes. Mr. Earnshaw's health deteriorates, and he becomes even less accepting of Hindley's behavior toward Heathcliff. He sends Hindley away to college, allowing Catherine and Heathcliff to grow closer.

As Mr. Earnshaw nears death, he becomes interested in Joseph's harsh and rigid religious beliefs. Meanwhile, to her father's dismay, Catherine is constantly going on adventures with Heathcliff and getting into trouble. Though she teases her father about this, she loves him deeply and is the one holding him when he dies.

On the stormy night of Mr. Earnshaw's death, Catherine and Heathcliff console each other. They talk of heaven, imagining it as a beautiful place.

Thrushcross Grange and Wuthering Heights have been established as symbols of civilization and nature, respectively. Nelly now makes clear that the families that lived in the two houses are deeply entangled. The reference to Heathcliff's money and to Hareton's ancient family also brings up the question of class. If Heathcliff has so much money, why is he living in a weather-worn place like the Heights. And why is the high-class Hareton so rough?



Orphans are another common Gothic element. Heathcliff's status as an orphan also puts him in a peculiar position in regards to class—he is a low-class person brought into a higher class family. In other words, he's an outsider. And the fact that he was brought into the family, and in some ways stole Hindley's position, sets in motion the gears of revenge that will drive the rest of the novel—Hindley wants to regain his high position at the expense of Heathcliff, who (innocently, it must be said) took it from him.



Heathcliff has now completely taken Hindley's place at the Heights. In Hindley's absence, Heathcliff and Catherine can grow closer.



Fire and brimstone religion is another common feature of Gothic novels. As Mr. Earnshaw fades, Catherine and Heathcliff live in a kind of paradise, adventuring in nature. Also note Catherine's tomboy behavior. She doesn't fit the stereotype of a genteel girl.



Another storm during a major plot event. Yet the storm doesn't scare Catherine or Heathcliff. Note how they think about heaven in terms of beauty, as if it is like nature. Also note their obvious love for one another.



CHAPTER 6

Hindley returns for his father's funeral. He brings with him his somewhat silly and ineffectual wife, Frances. As his father's heir, Hindley is now master of Wuthering Heights and makes immediate changes, such as moving the servants to the back quarters. He also forces Heathcliff to give up his education and instead to work in the fields. Yet for the most part Hindley ignores both Heathcliff and Catherine, who escape their domineering brother by escaping to go play on the moors.

One day, Heathcliff and Catherine don't return from one of their adventures and Hindley orders that they be locked out. Nelly, though, waits up for them, and she is there when Heathcliff comes back alone. He tells Nelly that he and Catherine had been at Thrushcross Grange, spying on Edgar and Isabella Linton. Heathcliff was impressed by their house, but he thought the Linton children were "idiots." When he and Catherine laughed aloud at them, the Lintons realized someone was outside. As Heathcliff and Catherine tried to escape, the Linton's dog, Skulker, caught them and bit Catherine's foot.

When the Lintons realized that Catherine is from Wuthering Heights, they bring her inside and insist that Catherine stay with them while she heals. But they are shocked at Heathcliff's rough clothes and language and refuse to let him stay with Catherine. Before leaving, Heathcliff spies on them: he sees how the Lintons fuss over Catherine, and how much she likes the attention.

The next day, Mr. Linton goes to Wuthering Heights and berates Hindley for letting Catherine run wild. Ashamed, Hindley blames Heathcliff and says that Heathcliff may no longer see or talk to Catherine.

CHAPTER 7

Catherine stays at Thrushcross Grange for five weeks. Mrs. Linton spends the time teaching her how to be a proper young lady. Catherine returns around Christmas, wearing a beautiful dress.

Hindley allows Heathcliff to greet her "like the other servants." Catherine kisses Heathcliff hello, but teases that he's dirty compared to Edgar. Heathcliff walks out, growling that he'll be as dirty as he likes.

Hindley takes revenge on Heathcliff by using the rules of class (male inheritance) to assert dominance, and to use that dominance to deprive Heathcliff of an education and force him to work like a common laborer. Heathcliff, along with Catherine, find sanctuary from Hindley's vengefulness in nature.



Heathcliff and Catherine, who embody nature, discover Edgar and Isabella, who are more civilized. And just as Heathcliff and Hareton laughed at Lockwood in chapter 2, Heathcliff and Catherine's first instinct is to laugh at the civilized Linton's for being weak and silly. Yet at the same time they are impressed by Thrushcross Grange itself. In other words, they are impressed by the trappings of civilization, by what being civilized can get you.



By denying Heathcliff an education, Hindley forced Heathcliff into another, lower, class. And the civilized Lintons are very judgemental, and careful to keep out anyone of a lower class. Note also how Catherine has already learned that there are some pleasures to civilization.



Civilized people use shame as a weapon. And, ashamed, Hindley now takes further revenge on Heathcliff by trying to separate him from Catherine.



Until now, Catherine has been natural, a tomboy, and unaware of class. Her stay at the Linton's changes the first two as she's now a "proper" girl in a dress...



...and her comment to Heathcliff makes it clear that she's also been made aware of class, and sees being civilized as superior.



Edgar and Isabella come to Wuthering Heights for Christmas. Heathcliff allows Nelly to make him presentable, but it turns out that Mrs. Linton allowed her children to come only on the condition that they be kept away from Heathcliff. Hindley sends Heathcliff to the kitchen. Before he can go, Edgar makes a disparaging comment about Heathcliff's appearance, and Heathcliff throws applesauce in Edgar's face. Hindley locks Heathcliff in the attic.

The civilized higher classes assert their power by discriminating against the lower class, and they accomplish this discrimination through derogatory language. In contrast, the more "natural" Heathcliff expresses his resentment through violence.



Catherine, though, thinks that both Edgar and Hindley mistreated Heathcliff, and after dinner she slips away from the others to visit Heathcliff. Nelly also takes pity on Heathcliff and brings him down to the kitchen for some food. While eating, Heathcliff tells Nelly that he's going to get revenge against Edgar. Nelly then breaks into her story to say that it is late and she must sleep. Lockwood insists that she continue the story right then.

Catherine's actions show that even though she has been changed by her exposure to civilization, she still shares a yet deeper connection with Heathcliff. Heathcliff's vow is the first sign of his vengeful nature.



CHAPTER 8

Nelly continues her story: the following summer, Frances gives birth to a son, Hareton Earnshaw. But Frances dies just a week later—childbirth had aggravated a case of consumption that she had long suffered from. Hindley is devastated. He hands the baby over to Nelly to care for. He turns to alcohol for comfort, and takes out his grief on the servants, Catherine, and, especially, Heathcliff. For his part, Heathcliff delights in Hindley's decline.

The "civilized" characters in the novel are often weak or sickly. Hindley's grief is excessive, which at the time was a trait associated with women. Meanwhile, Heathcliff's own desire for revenge has made him almost coldblooded—he feels no sympathy for Hindley's loss and actually delights in his pain.



Catherine remains in touch with the Lintons. When she's with them she acts like proper lady. But when with Heathcliff, she acts just as she used to.

Catherine now bridges the gap between civilization and nature...



One day when Hindley is out, Heathcliff doesn't go to the fields and instead plans to spend the day with Catherine. But Catherine admits that she's invited Edgar and Isabella to come visit. Heathcliff comments on how much time Catherine has been spending with the Lintons, she retorts that it's because he, Heathcliff, is dull and dumb. Edgar arrives just then, alone. Heathcliff storms out.

...but it isn't possible to span this gap for long without causing some sort of conflict. And Catherine chooses civilization and class over her natural connection to Heathcliff. Edgar's arrival without Isabella signals that there is a romance between him and Catherine.



Catherine then tells Nelly to leave the room, since she wants to be alone with Edgar. Nelly refuses—Hindley had told her to chaperone Catherine. Furious, Catherine slaps and pinches Nelly, and even shakes the crying Hareton. Edgar tries to step in, but Catherine boxes his ears. Shocked and defeated by Catherine's wild behavior, Edgar rushes from the house. But as he leaves he catches a glimpse of Catherine, and captured by her beauty, he returns.

Yet it becomes clear right away that the civilized Edgar can't possibly stand up to the Catherine's fierce, natural passions. In fact, when they are together it is Catherine who takes on the stereotypical male role of power, and Edgar who accepts the more stereotypically passive role of a woman.



Nelly leaves Catherine and Edgar alone. When she does later enter to warn them that Hindley has come home, drunk and angry as usual, she has the sense that they have professed their love for each other.

It is interesting that Edgar must make his declarations of love quietly, in private. It's hard to imagine Heathcliff doing the same.



CHAPTER 9

That night, Hindley grabs Hareton from Nelly in a rage, but then accidentally drops the baby over the bannister. Luckily, Heathcliff is at the bottom of the steps to catch Hareton without harm.

This odd, almost grotesque scene adds to the Gothic menace of the novel.



Later, Catherine goes to Nelly in the kitchen. As Heathcliff listens, she tells Nelly that she has accepted Edgar's proposal of marriage, yet isn't sure she should have. Catherine describes a dream in which she was in heaven but didn't feel at home; when angels returned her to Wuthering Heights, she was relieved. She equates marrying Edgar to such a heaven.

The heaven of Catherine's dream is a pleasant, civilized place. But her dream implies that though she finds those things attractive, she'll never escape the wild, passionate part of her nature that is symbolized by Wuthering Heights—and which loves Heathcliff.



Yet she also says that she cannot marry Heathcliff because Hindley has so degraded Heathcliff that marrying him would be like degrading herself.

Hindley's revenge is a success: even Catherine is affected by Heathcliff's fall to a lower class.



Furious and ashamed, Heathcliff leaves, and therefore doesn't hear Catherine say that, though she must marry Edgar, she loves Heathcliff more than anything and that nothing could interfere in their relationship, not even marrying Edgar, because she and Heathcliff are, essentially, the same person.

Yet Catherine is at the same time so passionate about Heathcliff that she can't see how anything can come between them. She's wrong. She doesn't understand that nature (i.e. Heathcliff) won't be chained or denigrated.



That night, in a storm, Heathcliff runs away from Wuthering Heights. Catherine discovers his absence and, distraught, searches for him all night in the rain, catching a fever in the process.

Another storm, and more passionate plot points. Note that a fever is like a physical manifestation of wild passion.



The Lintons nurse Catherine through the fever at Thrushcross Grange, but Mr. and Mrs. Linton themselves come down with the sickness and die.

The civilized Lintons try to cure Catherine's fever (i.e. passion), but instead they are killed by it.



Three years later, Heathcliff has still not returned, and Edgar and Catherine get married. Nelly leaves Hareton with Hindley and Joseph at Wuthering Heights and moves to Thrushcross Grange.

The three year wait before Edgar and Catherine marry indicates Catherine's continued attachment to Heathcliff.



CHAPTER 10

Lockwood falls ill for four weeks.

Heathcliff visits him once during this time, after which Lockwood asks Nelly to tell him how Heathcliff made his fortune. Nelly doesn't know how Heathcliff made his money, but continues with her story.

For about six months after Catherine's wedding, everything is peaceful at Thrushcross Grange, largely because the Lintons do whatever the imperious Catherine wants.

Then one evening Heathcliff appears at the Grange. Catherine is almost frantic with excitement. Edgar is less pleased. He suggests they receive Heathcliff in the kitchen, but Catherine insists that they bring him into the parlor.

As Heathcliff enters the parlor, Nelly notes that he looks imposing, mature, and dignified, in contrast to his youthful roughness. Yet he still retains a kind of "ferocity" in his eyes.

As Edgar, Heathcliff, and Catherine talk, Heathcliff says that he returned hoping only to catch a glimpse of Catherine, exact revenge on Hindley, and then kill himself. But Catherine's joy at seeing him has changed his mind. Edgar, uncomfortable, interrupts to say that if they wait any longer the tea will get cold. As he leaves, Heathcliff shocks Nelly when he tells her that he is staying at Wuthering Heights at Hindley's invitation.

That night, Catherine awakens Nelly to tell her that she couldn't sleep from excitement. She says that she had praised Heathcliff to Edgar, but that Edgar had claimed to feel sick and even cried. Nelly advises Catherine to hide her feelings for Heathcliff and treasure her husband's love, but Catherine dismisses Edgar and Isabella as spoiled children. Nelly comments that it's actually the Lintons who humor Catherine.

Lockwood, like the Lintons, falls ill when exposed to nature.



As a man who earned his money, Heathcliff would be looked down upon by the old-money upper class who inherited their wealth.



Catherine's willfulness and Edgar's passive love means that Catherine takes on the dominant (i.e. typically masculine) role at the Grange.



Catherine's love for Heathcliff is immediately apparent. Edgar tries to denigrate Heathcliff by receiving him in the kitchen, which is where one would meet with people of a lower class.



Heathcliff has escaped the lower class "roughness" imposed on him by Hindley, but retains his wild nature.



Heathcliff is a man of grand, reckless, wild actions, such as revenge and suicide. Edgar is a civilized man of comfort, and when Heathcliff's wildness makes him uncomfortable he tries to impose civilization through the ritual of having tea. Heathcliff staying at the Heights reminds the reader of his promise to get revenge on Hindley.



Again Edgar takes on the weak, feminine role in his relationship with Catherine. Catherine, meanwhile, doesn't seem to understand the basics of love, and, like a child, also doesn't understand why she can't just have everything that she wants.



Catherine also tells Nelly how Heathcliff wound up staying at Wuthering Heights: he'd gone to Wuthering Heights to find Nelly and get information from her about Catherine. But instead he found Hindley in the middle of a card game. During the game it was clear Heathcliff had money, so Hindley invited him to stay. Heathcliff insisted on paying for the lodging.

In the following days, Catherine and Isabella often visit the Heights, and Heathcliff regularly comes to the Grange. Isabella soon develops a crush on Heathcliff. When she confesses it to Catherine, her sister-in-law warns her that Heathcliff is a fiend whom she should stay away from. Nelly seconds this advice, and adds that there are rumors that Heathcliff is lending Hindley money to support his gambling habit.

The next day, Catherine humiliates Isabella by revealing her crush to Heathcliff when he visits. Isabella rushes from the room. Heathcliff expresses disdain for Isabella, but notes that Isabella must be Edgar's heir. Nelly thinks Heathcliff is plotting something.

CHAPTER 11

Not long afterward, Nelly stops by Wuthering Heights as she is walking past on some other errand and encounters her former charge, Hareton, who curses and throws stones at her. Hareton tells her that it was Heathcliff who taught him to curse, and that Heathcliff also refused to allow Hareton to be educated. Heathcliff then appears, and Nelly flees.

The following day, Nelly and Catherine observe Heathcliff and Isabella embracing in the Grange's garden. Catherine confronts Heathcliff in the kitchen about his feelings for Isabella. She offers to convince Edgar to allow the marriage if Heathcliff truly loves Isabella. But Heathcliff answers that Catherine wronged him when she married Edgar, and that he plans to get revenge.

Informed of the confrontation by Nelly, Edgar rushes in and orders Heathcliff to leave. Heathcliff refuses. Edgar moves to get the servants to come and help him remove Heathcliff, but Catherine forces Edgar to confront Heathcliff alone by locking the door into the house and throwing the key in the fire. Edgar at first hides his face, but Catherine taunts him and he punches the larger Heathcliff in the neck. Then he runs from the kitchen into the garden to get the servants. Deciding he can't fight off Edgar and a bunch of armed servants, Heathcliff leaves.

It begins to be clear that Heathcliff plans to use his wealth to exact revenge on Hindley. This revenge also reflects the more general class struggle of the time, as the new money class was able to buy its way into high society by preying on the debts of the old money class.



When Catherine describes Heathcliff as a fiend, she might better call him a force of nature. He has no remorse and is relentless, and Catherine knows that someone as civilized and gentle as Isabella will be broken by him.



Heathcliff wants to use Isabella to take revenge on Edgar. He plans to use the rules that normally keep the classes separate—inheritance—to steal the Grange from the Lintons.



Heathcliff's revenge on Hindley includes doing to Hareton what Hindley did to him. As result, Hareton has become a kind of mirror image of Heathcliff as a boy—a wild child too ignorant even to know what has been taken from him.



Heathcliff, as a natural man, is concerned with what is right or wrong, not with how things appear. But once wronged, he becomes completely consumed by the need for revenge, and is willing to trample or hurt anyone (perhaps with the exception of Catherine) to get it.



The passionate Catherine wants the civilized Edgar to be more macho. She wants him to be more like the wild and passionate Heathcliff. Edgar's attempt to comply, after she forces him into it, is pitiful.



Once Heathcliff is gone, Edgar furiously demands that Catherine choose between him and Heathcliff. Catherine refuses to talk to him, and retreats to her room, where she stays for three days without eating. In the meantime, Edgar, distraught, tells Isabella to either stay away from Heathcliff or be disowned.

Like Heathcliff, Catherine is prone to wild, reckless actions that the civilized Edgar can't understand. Note also how Edgar treats Isabella for following her heart, when he did the same when he married Catherine.



CHAPTER 12

After three days, Catherine finally unlocks her door and allows Nelly to give her food. Catherine believes that she is dying, and is distraught that Edgar has buried himself in his books instead of coming to her.

Catherine again wants Edgar to act like Heathcliff, to be wild and passionate. But the civilized Edgar buries his grief in books rather than in actions.



Delirious, Catherine rambles about a time she spent on the moors with Heathcliff as a child, and obsesses over death.

Catherine, close to death, reveals her true nature and love.



Nelly refuses Catherine's request to open the window—she doesn't want Catherine to catch a chill. Catherine staggers to the window herself and opens it herself. She says that she can see Wuthering Heights and that, though she's going to die, she'll never be rest until she's with Heathcliff.

Like Heathcliff in chapter 3, Catherine opens the window to be close with nature, and with Heathcliff. She sees her connection to Heathcliff as an almost mystical force that will affect her even in death.



Edgar arrives and is appalled by Catherine's weak and frenzied condition. Nelly goes to get a doctor. When the doctor arrives and examines Catherine, he announces that he is optimistic that she'll recover.

Once again, the civilized Edgar is baffled by the wild excess that is a part of Catherine's essential character.



That same night, Isabella runs off with Heathcliff. Edgar, furious, refuses to attempt to get Isabella to come back. Instead he says that Isabella is now his sister in name only, "not because I disown her, but because she has disowned me."

Heathcliff has used Isabella's love of him to take revenge on Edgar. Edgar's response is characteristically passive—instead of disowning her, he says she has disowned him.



CHAPTER 13

For two months, Edgar nurses Catherine, and though she improves somewhat, she never fully recovers her health. During that time Catherine does learn, however, that she is pregnant. Edgar hopes the child is male, so that the baby, rather than Isabella and Heathcliff, will inherit Thrushcross Grange.

It's not the depth of Edgar's love that's less than Heathcliff's, it is its nature—his love is nurturing and passive, as opposed to wild and unruly. Note also how Edgar has again taken on the feminine role of nurse.



Six weeks after she ran away with and married Heathcliff, Isabella writes to Edgar, begging for forgiveness. Edgar doesn't answer the letter.

Isabella next writes to Nelly. She says that she is living at Wuthering Heights and that her experience has been awful. Heathcliff has told her that since he can't get to Edgar to punish him for Catherine's illness, he'll take it out on Isabella instead. Hindley, Hareton, and Joseph treat her just as badly. Isabella also writes that Hindley is completely unhinged and plans to kill Heathcliff and take his money. Isabella says that she has made a mistake, but knows it's too late to fix it. She begs Nelly to come visit her at Wuthering Heights.

CHAPTER 14

Nelly goes to visit Wuthering Heights. Edgar, however, refuses Nelly's request to send with her a token of forgiveness to Isabella.

At Wuthering Heights, Nelly barely gets to see Isabella at all. Instead, Heathcliff asks after Catherine's condition and then asks Nelly to help him see her, adding that were he in Edgar's place he would never stop Catherine from seeing someone she wanted to see.

Nelly refuses to help Heathcliff, who threatens to hold Nelly prisoner at Wuthering Heights and go to the Grange alone. Nelly gives in, and agrees to carry a letter to Catherine from Heathcliff.

CHAPTER 15

When Edgar goes to church four days later, Nelly delivers Heathcliff's letter to Catherine, who is so weak that she can hardly hold it. Heathcliff walks into the room almost as soon as Nelly delivers the letter. Upon seeing him, Catherine says that he and Edgar have broken her heart, and adds that she can't stand the thought of dying while Heathcliff is still alive, and wishes that the two of them will never be parted. Then she begs Heathcliff for forgiveness.

Heathcliff responds that he forgives her for what she has done to him, but that he can never forgive her for what she has done to herself. He says "I love my murderer—but yours? How can I?"

Isabella, who is the most feminine woman in the book, is also the worst treated..



Heathcliff's love for Catherine is all-powerful, and he isn't altogether incorrect to blame Edgar for her sickness. He wants revenge against Edgar, true, but he lets Catherine make her own decisions. In contrast, Edgar tried to "tame" Catherine, to make her choose a side rather than be herself, and this led to her sickness. Also note that Hindley now wants revenge on Heathcliff—revenge leads to revenge.



Edgar won't forgive Isabella because he holds her, as a woman, to a different standard



Heathcliff is telling the truth. His love for Catherine is so powerful, that neither jealousy, a need for propriety, or anything else would stop him from trying to give her what he thought she wanted.



Of course, Heathcliff is also willing to do anything to get what he wants. His actions are always powerful, whether noble or selfish.



Catherine wants everything. The conflict between Heathcliff and Edgar broke her heart because it made having everything impossible. Yet at the same time her love for Heathcliff seems deeper than her love for Edgar. She never tells Edgar that she wishes she would never be parted from him.



Heathcliff's response demonstrates that he not only loves Catherine more than anything else, he loves her more than he loves even himself.



Just then Edgar arrives home from church. Heathcliff gets up to leave, but Catherine begs him to stay and he does. As Edgar approaches, Nelly screams. Catherine collapses and Heathcliff catches her. Edgar rushes into the room. Heathcliff puts Catherine's body into Edgar's arms and commands Edgar that it is more important for him to take care of Catherine rather than get angry.

Nelly ushers Heathcliff from the room, promising to send news of Catherine's health in the morning. Heathcliff says he'll stay nearby in the garden.

Once again Catherine creates a confrontation between Heathcliff and Edgar. But while Edgar seems ready to fight, Heathcliff again demonstrates the full depth of his love for Catherine by saying that her care comes before any conflict they might have.



Another sign of Heathcliff's complete devotion to and love for Catherine.



CHAPTER 16

At midnight, Catherine gives birth to a daughter, Cathy, two months prematurely. Catherine dies two hours later. When Nelly brings Heathcliff the news, he seems somehow to already know. He curses Catherine for the pain she's caused, then begs her to haunt and torment him for the rest of his life, even if it drives him mad, just so they can be together.

Edgar keeps watch over Catherine's body, day and night, while Heathcliff stays out in the garden through the night. Eventually, exhaustion forces Edgar to leave Catherine's side for a few hours, and Nelly allows Heathcliff to see the body.

After Heathcliff leaves, Nelly discovers that Heathcliff has replaced a lock of Edgar's hair that Catherine kept in her locket with his own hair. Nelly finds Edgar's lock of hair and twines the two together in the locket.

Hindley does not attend Catherine's funeral, though he is invited. Isabella is not invited.

The nearby villagers are surprised when Edgar doesn't bury Catherine in the Linton tomb, but instead by a wall in the corner of the churchyard, with a view over the moors she loved. Nelly then tells Lockwood that Edgar is buried next to Catherine.

Heathcliff's love for Catherine seems to rise to a different plane, from powerful love to something supernatural. First, he seems to know already when she dies, and then he wishes for a life of torment rather than to be separated from her.



Another contrast with Heathcliff. While Edgar eventually succumbs to exhaustion, as any normal person would, Heathcliff never does any such thing.



The combined locks of hair mark the two sides of Catherine's personality, the natural and the civilized.



Once again, Isabella is treated terribly.



Linton's have been buried in their family crypt for generations. It's a "civilized," high-class place to be buried. But Catherine wants to be buried by the moors.



CHAPTER 17

Just a few days after the funeral, Isabella comes to Thrushcross Grange at a time when she knows Edgar will be asleep in his room. Disheveled and laughing hysterically, Isabella tells Nelly, who is taking care of the baby Cathy, that she knows Edgar won't allow her to stay, but that she needs Nelly's help.

Isabella tells Nelly that Hindley desperately tried to stay sober in order to attend Catherine's funeral, but fell apart the morning of the funeral and started drinking. Then, while Heathcliff was out standing vigil at Catherine's grave, Hindley locked the doors of Wuthering Heights to keep Heathcliff out and told Isabella that he planned to shoot Heathcliff.

When Heathcliff returned, Isabella warned him of Hindley's plans, but didn't let him into the house. Hindley then tried to shoot Heathcliff from a first floor window, but Heathcliff wrenched away the end of the gun and in the process wounded Hindley in the wrist with the blade of the gun's bayonet. Heathcliff then broke into the house through that window and beat Hindley. The next morning, Hindley did not remember what happened, but Isabella reminded him. The two men once again fell to fighting, at which point Isabella ran to Thrushcross Grange.

Nelly then jumps a bit ahead in her story to say that after leaving Thrushcross Grange, Isabella went to live near London, where she gave birth to a sickly boy, whom she named Linton. Heathcliff eventually learned where Isabella and his son were, but did not go after them. Isabella died when Linton was twelve.

Hindley dies six months after Catherine, and Nelly goes to Wuthering Heights to look after the funeral and to bring Hareton back to the Grange. But Nelly is shocked to learn that Hindley died deeply in debt to Heathcliff, who now owns Wuthering Heights. In addition, Heathcliff refuses to let Hareton leave Wuthering Heights, and implies that he eventually plans to bring Linton to Wuthering Heights as well.

Nelly then adds that Hareton, who should be the master of Wuthering Heights, now is forced to live as a dependant and servant to Heathcliff.

Isabella's poor treatment at the hands of Heathcliff have clearly unhinged her. Yet she also has the presence of mind to know that Edgar, always conscience of propriety, will never forgive her for running off with Heathcliff.



Note how Hindley's plan mirrors what he did when Heathcliff and Catherine, as children, were later to return in chapter 6. It is as if the characters are endlessly repeating the same pattern as they seek revenge on each other.



The endless back and forth of revenge and recrimination continues.



As a male heir to Isabella, the birth of Linton solidifies Heathcliff's claim on Thrushcross Grange into the next generation.



Heathcliff's revenge against Hindley is complete with the combination of Hindley's death and ownership of Wuthering Heights passing into Heathcliff's hands. Yet as his continued oppression of Hareton shows, and interest in Linton implies, his plans are far from finished.



Though born into a family of high class, Hareton has had his position stolen from him.



CHAPTER 18

Cathy grows into a beautiful, smart, inquisitive, and willful thirteen-year-old. Edgar doesn't allow her to leave Thrushcross Grange unattended however, so she is entirely unaware of Wuthering Heights or anyone who lives there. One day she hears of some fairy caves at nearby Penistone Crags and begs Edgar to take her, but Edgar refuses since to get there they would have to pass Wuthering Heights

Soon after, though, Edgar learns that Isabella is dying and rushes off to London to bring Linton back to the Grange. While he's gone, Cathy manages to escape Nelly and the grounds of the Grange. She heads off toward Penistone Crags, but meets Hareton along the way and immediately likes him. The two spend the day playing together.

Nelly chases after Cathy and soon finds her at Wuthering Heights. Cathy refuses to leave when Nelly tells her to, however—she wants to stay with Hareton. Cathy's interest in Hareton turn to contempt, though, when she learns from Nelly that Hareton isn't the son of the master of Wuthering Heights. Cathy starts to order Hareton around, who much to her surprise and indignation curses back at her.

A servant of Wuthering Heights then reveals that Hareton is actually Cathy's cousin. Catherine denies it with the argument that her father has gone to get her real cousin, who is the son of a gentleman, from London. Unhappy that the news of Edgar's trip to get Linton has been made public, Nelly hushes Cathy by saying that a person can have many cousins of all sorts of stations in life.

Finally Nelly and Cathy leave. On the trip back to the Grange, Cathy agrees not to tell Edgar about her trip to Wuthering Heights, since the news might anger Edgar so much that he would fire Nelly.

CHAPTER 19

Edgar and Linton arrive at the Grange. Linton resembles Edgar, but is weak and whiny. Cathy treats him like a pet or baby, kissing his forehead and stroking his hair.

Edgar tells Nelly that he believes that if Linton is allowed to stay at Thrushcross Grange, he will get stronger because in Cathy he has a playmate his own age. But that night Joseph arrives from Wuthering Heights, demanding Linton. Edgar says he will bring Linton to Heathcliff in the morning.

Cathy is nearly the spitting image of her mother, impulsive and wild. Yet just as Heathcliff has essentially imprisoned Hareton at the Heights to keep him un-civilized, Edgar keeps Cathy at the Grange to keep her civilized and a proper young woman.



Cathy and Hareton have a natural and mutual affection for each other, despite their opposite upbringing.



Yet Cathy also has been schooled in the ways of civilization, and just as Catherine was taught to look down upon the "rough" Heathcliff, Cathy is similarly disdainful of anyone who civil society says is beneath her.



Cathy seems to think that class is set-in-stone reality; that if you are in one class you cannot possibly be related to anyone of another. But as Heathcliff's and Hareton's lives show, this is not entirely true. Though you are born into a certain class, circumstances can change things.



As a member of a lower class, Nelly is dependent on Edgar's goodwill in order to keep her job.



All of the "civilized" Lintons in the novel are a bit weak and feminine. The character of Linton takes that to an almost grotesque extreme.



Edgar's concern for Linton is purely good-hearted. He wants nothing from the boy, other than to help him get stronger. In a way, Edgar wants to take in Linton just as Mr. Earnshaw once took in Heathcliff



CHAPTER 20

Nelly takes Linton to Wuthering Heights the next morning. To make the fearful Linton feel better Nelly assures him of Heathcliff's goodness. But Heathcliff proves Nelly is lying from the moment he appears—he refers to Linton as his "property," calls Isabella a "wicked slut," and admits he wants Linton not because he loves him but because he wants to use him to get Thrushcross Grange. Linton begs Nelly not to leave him with Heathcliff, but she can do nothing but ride away.

In contrast to Edgar, Heathcliff has no benevolent feelings toward Linton, even though the boy is his biological son. Heathcliff has become completely consumed by his need for revenge.



CHAPTER 21

At first, Cathy is despondent about Linton's departure. As time passes, though she asks about Linton less and less. Meanwhile, Nelly keeps tabs on Linton by questioning the Wuthering Heights housekeeper, and learns that Linton remains weak and whiny and that Heathcliff can't stand him.

Just as Catherine seemed to take on the "masculine" role in contrast to Edgar, Cathy is portrayed as strong while Linton is weak and "feminine."



One day, three years after Linton goes to Wuthering Heights, the sixteen-year-old Catherine and Nelly go bird-hunting on the moors. Cathy runs ahead of Nelly, and when Nelly catches up she finds Catherine speaking with Heathcliff and Hareton.

Like her mother, Cathy enjoys the moors. And it should come as no surprise that when she goes to enjoy nature, she encounters Heathcliff and Hareton.



Catherine says that she thinks she's met Hareton before, and wonders if he's Heathcliff's son. Heathcliff says no, but that he does have a son whom Catherine has met before and invites Cathy and Nelly to come back to Wuthering Heights with him. Nelly suspects Heathcliff's is plotting something, but Cathy is intrigued and Nelly has no choice but to go along with her to the Heights.

It should come as no surprise that Cathy would think that Hareton is Heathcliff's son. Because Heathcliff has treated Hareton just as Hindley once treated Heathcliff, Heathcliff and Hareton are extremely similar to each other.



At the house, Heathcliff tells Nelly that he hopes Linton and Cathy will one day marry. Yet Cathy and Linton don't even recognize each other when they meet.

Heathcliff's plot becomes clear: he wants to marry them in order to solidify his claim to Thrushcross Grange.



Linton, is now taller than Cathy. But he is still so sickly and weak that he can't even show Cathy around the house, so she goes off with Hareton instead. Heathcliff demands that Linton go after them. Before they move out of earshot, Nelly hears Cathy mocking Hareton for being illiterate.

Like Catherine before her, Cathy is caught between the worlds of nature and civilization. Linton is too sickly to keep up with her, but she is too judgemental and class conscious to regard Hareton with anything but contempt.



The next day, Cathy confronts Edgar about why he has kept her relatives at Wuthering Heights a secret from her. Edgar tries to carefully explain, and though Cathy doesn't entirely understand he does manage to get across how much he despises Heathcliff. Edgar also asks his daughter not to have any contact with Linton, but Cathy doesn't listen and she and Linton begin writing secret letters to each other. Nelly eventually finds Linton's letters and, over Cathy's objections, destroys them. Cathy ends the correspondence with Linton, and Nelly doesn't say anything about the letters to Edgar.

Yet there is something in Linton that clearly attracts Cathy. Looking back at the first time the two of them meet in chapter 19, when Cathy babies the sick Linton, it may be just that—by being so sick, Linton makes Cathy feel like a strong and powerful mother. Whatever the attraction, Heathcliff's plot seems to be working.



CHAPTER 22

That winter, Edgar falls ill and Nelly becomes Cathy's main companion. One day, as the two walk in the garden, Cathy climbs the wall in an effort to get some fruit. In the process, her hat falls over the wall. Cathy, with Nelly's permission, climbs down the wall to get it, but then finds herself unable to climb back.

The wall around the garden symbolizes the boundary between nature and civilization. Besides being tomboyish, Cathy's climbing over the wall shows her adventurous spirit and her connection to nature.



As Nelly searches for a key to the gate in the wall, Heathcliff appears. He admonishes Cathy for ending her correspondence with Linton, adding that he suspects she was cruelly playing with Linton. He then says that he will be away from Wuthering Heights for a week, and that she should visit Linton, who he thinks may be dying of a broken heart. Cathy feels so guilty that she decides to go to Wuthering Heights the next morning. Nelly agrees to go only because she thinks the sight of Linton will show Cathy that Heathcliff is lying.

Heathcliff further engineers the relationship between Cathy and Linton, not because he wants them to be happy together (they are clearly a terrible match), but simply to further his revenge.



CHAPTER 23

Cathy and Nelly ride to Wuthering Heights the next morning in the rain. There, they find Linton, who whines about the servants and complains about Cathy not coming to visit him before now. Linton then brings up the possibility of marriage.

Linton uses guilt, rather than love, to try to capture, or tame, the stronger Cathy.



Cathy gets annoyed at this, and shoves Linton's chair, which sends Linton into a spasm of coughing. Linton says that Catherine has assaulted him and worsened his already frail condition. Doing his best to make Catherine feel guilty, he then asks her to nurse him back to health herself.

Cathy, however, refuses to be tamed in this way. But when Linton's weakness becomes clear and Cathy is given a chance to mother and care for him, she becomes more amenable to Linton.



Nelly and Cathy return to Thrushcross Grange, where Nelly comes down with a cold from riding to Wuthering Heights and back in the rain. Catherine dutifully nurses both Nelly and her father by day; by night, she takes the opportunity to secretly go to Wuthering Heights to see Linton.

Once again the "civilized" characters are felled by illness arising from harsh weather, while the more "natural" character remains perfectly healthy. Meanwhile, Cathy's attraction to Linton mirrors Catherine's attraction to Edgar.



CHAPTER 24

When Nelly recovers, she quickly notices Cathy's suspicious behavior and soon catches Cathy sneaking into her room after a night out. After feebly trying to lie, Cathy admits that she's been going to Wuthering Heights to see Linton. In particular, Cathy tells Nelly of one trip to Wuthering Heights where Hareton stops her and proves to her that he could read the name "Hareton" written above the house's front door. Cathy, though, asks him if he can read the number next to the word (it says "1500"). When Hareton admits that he can't, she once again mocks him for his stupidity.

Furious, Hareton later barges in on Cathy's visit with Linton, and forces the weak, sniveling Linton to go upstairs. A bit later, Hareton feels remorse and apologizes to Cathy for his actions, but she refuses to speak to him and returns to Thrushcross Grange.

Cathy returns to the Heights three days later, but immediately leaves when Linton blames her for the humiliation Hareton forced on him. Cathy returns two days later to tell Linton she has decided never to visit him again. Distraught, Linton begs for forgiveness.

As soon as Cathy finishes her story, Nelly goes to Edgar and tells him everything. Edgar forbids Cathy from ever again visiting Linton at Wuthering Heights, but does agree to allow Linton to visit the Grange.

Cathy's classist, "civilized" contempt towards Hareton are here on display, just as Catherine's condescension toward Heathcliff were earlier in the novel. Also interesting is Hareton's desire to show Cathy that he can read, even if just a little bit. Hareton seems intent on bettering himself by learning to read. This sets him apart from all the other characters in the novel up to this point, who show less personal development.



Just as Heathcliff took revenge on the "civilized" people he felt had wronged him, so does Hareton overpower Linton. But unlike Heathcliff, Hareton shows remorse.



Whereas Hareton confronts Cathy directly, Linton is more sly, always trying to use guilt to keep Cathy from leaving him.



Edgar learned from his experience with Isabella that forbidding Cathy from seeing Linton entirely won't work. Instead, he tries to control the terms of those visits.



CHAPTER 25

Nelly pauses in her narrative to tell Lockwood that the events she's now describing took place a little over a year ago during the previous winter. She notes how odd it is to be telling the story to a stranger, though she wonders if Lockwood might fall in love with Cathy and thereby cease to be a stranger. Lockwood agrees that he just might fall in love with Cathy, but adds that she's unlikely to return the feeling and that, anyway, he'll have to leave soon because the moors aren't his home. He asks Nelly to continue the story. She does.

Obedying her father's wishes, Cathy ceases to visit Linton. But Linton also does not visit the Grange because he's too weak to make the trip. Eventually Edgar decides that his daughter's happiness is most important and he says that if she wishes Cathy may marry Linton, even though that would mean Heathcliff would definitely inherit the Grange.

The fact that the narrative has nearly caught up to the present makes the story feel much more immediate. Also important is that Lockwood recognizes himself as a man of the city rather than of the moors, and he sees this as an obstacle to any possible love he might share with Cathy. In other words, he sees that his civilized life has no place in the harsh moor country that is Cathy's home.



Edgar gives up fighting against Heathcliff, realizing that it brings only more misery.



As he falls further into illness, Edgar agrees to let Cathy visit Linton, though he asks that she meet him not at Wuthering Heights but on the moors. However, Nelly further explains to Lockwood, Edgar didn't know that Linton was almost as close to death as Edgar himself.

If Linton were to die before Edgar, then Thrushcross Grange would go to Cathy after Edgar died. But were Linton and Cathy to marry, Heathcliff would gain control of the Grange after Edgar died.



CHAPTER 26

Cathy and Nelly ride to the location on the moors where they are to meet Linton, but he's not there—instead they find him nearby Wuthering Heights. He appears even weaker than usual, but he insists that he is in fact getting stronger.

Linton is now so weak that he can barely stand nature at all. He needs the protection of a house, of civilization, to keep him alive.



Linton seems anxious during the entire visit and keeps glancing over his shoulder at Wuthering Heights. As the visit ends, Cathy promises to meet Linton in the same place the following Thursday. As they travel home, Cathy and Nelly discuss how much more ill Linton seems, but decide that they'll have to wait until the next visit to get a real sense of his health.

Linton's glances toward Wuthering Heights convey his nervousness about Heathcliff, and make it clear that meeting with Cathy is only partially his own idea.



CHAPTER 27

Edgar's health continues to fail over the following week. Though she doesn't want to leave her sick father alone, Cathy rides with Nelly to see Linton on the moors. Linton is even more nervous during this meeting than the last one, and admits that his father is pushing him to woo Cathy. He also says that he's frightened of what Heathcliff would do to him if she doesn't marry him.

Heathcliff's desire for revenge is so great that his own son fears what Heathcliff might do to him if he fails to help Heathcliff get what he wants.



As they talk, Heathcliff arrives. He asks Nelly that Edgar's health, and also tells her privately that he worries that Linton will die before Edgar does. Heathcliff then asks Cathy and Nelly to return to Wuthering Heights with him. Cathy tells him that she is forbidden by her father to go to Wuthering Heights, but agrees to go anyway because Linton is terrified to return to the house without her.

Linton's weakness is what most seems to attract Cathy. Just as when she first met him in chapter 6, what she most likes to do is to mother him. Their relationship is one that seems almost founded on its inequality.



At Wuthering Heights, Heathcliff locks Nelly and Cathy inside the house and says that they won't be allowed to leave until Cathy and Linton marry. He locks Nelly and Cathy in a bedroom that night. The next day he lets Cathy out of the bedroom (but not out of Wuthering Heights) and keeps Nelly locked in the room under the guard of Hareton. This continues for five days.

Note the parallels between Heathcliff's actions here and the time he was locked in an attic by Hindley. Revenge continues to cause events to almost exactly repeat themselves.



CHAPTER 28

On the fifth day, Zillah the housekeeper frees Nelly from the bedroom and tells her that the village is awash in gossip that Nelly and Cathy have been lost in the marshes. Nelly searches the house for Cathy, but instead finds Linton. He tells her that Cathy has been locked up in another room, and that he and Cathy are married. Then he exults that he owns all of Cathy's inheritance, since Edgar is close to death.

Nelly rushes from Wuthering Heights back to Thrushcross Grange. She tells the dying Edgar that Cathy is safe and will soon be back at the Grange. She then sends a group of servants to Wuthering Heights to get Cathy, but they fail and return without her. Meanwhile, in order to keep Cathy's inheritance from Heathcliff, Edgar decides to place the inheritance in the hands of trustees. He sends for his lawyer, Mr. Green, so he can change his will.

A while later, Nelly hears someone arrive. She thinks that it's Mr. Green, but it's actually Cathy who has escaped Wuthering Heights with the help of Linton. Cathy goes to Edgar and spends a few moments with him before he dies. Edgar dies content, believing that Cathy is happily married to Linton.

Mr. Green arrives that evening. He takes over the house, and dismisses all of the servants but Nelly. He also tries to have Edgar buried in the chapel, but Nelly intervenes, knowing that Edgar's states that he wanted to be buried next to his wife.

CHAPTER 29

After Edgar's funeral, Heathcliff comes to the Grange to bring Cathy back to Wuthering Heights. He says that he has punished Linton for helping Cathy escape, and that he expects Cathy to work to earn her keep at Wuthering Heights.

Cathy responds that she and Linton love each other, while Heathcliff is loveless and alone. She adds that "however miserable you make us, we shall still have the revenge of thinking that your cruelty arises from your greater misery."

Heathcliff's revenge appears to be complete. And the formerly pathetic Linton shows his less pleasant side as well.



Edgar tries to use the bedrock of civil society, the law, to try to thwart Heathcliff's efforts.



Linton's decision to help Cathy shows that he does love Cathy, in his way. Note that Edgar dies before changing his will, meaning that Heathcliff has gotten what he wanted.



In the end, Edgar's love for Catherine is stronger than his ties to his class or family. What he wants most of all is just to be near her.



Despite his triumph, Heathcliff seems to still want revenge.



Cathy's response shows that she recognizes that Heathcliff's quest for revenge has corrupted him. What he always wanted was to be with Catherine, and revenge didn't get him that.



As Cathy packs, Nelly asks Heathcliff to let her be the housekeeper at Wuthering Heights because she wants to stay with Cathy. Heathcliff doesn't answer, instead telling Nelly that while the sexton was digging Edgar's grave, Heathcliff bribed the man to dig up Catherine's grave and remove the wall of her coffin that faced away from Edgar's grave. He then says that when he dies he'll be buried on that side of Catherine's grave, with the facing wall of his own coffin also removed. He adds that Catherine's ghost has haunted him for the 18 years since she died, but that he could never reach her.

As they leave, Cathy asks Nelly to visit her at Wuthering Heights. But Heathcliff tells Nelly never to come to the Heights, and that if he needs her he'll come to her at the Grange.

CHAPTER 30

Nelly tells Lockwood that she hasn't seen Cathy since that day, and only gets news about her from Zillah. Heathcliff forbade anyone at the Heights to be kind to Cathy, and made her nurse Linton herself until he died. After Linton's death, Cathy refuses to spend time with Zillah or Hareton (though she and Hareton do often argue). Nelly wishes Cathy could come live with her in a cottage Nelly has taken, but knows it will never happen. She says that only another marriage could save Cathy, but such a thing seems impossible.

In his diary, Lockwood writes that Nelly has finished her story. He says that he has recovered from his illness and will soon ride to Wuthering Heights to tell Heathcliff that he will be leaving Thrushcross Grange and going to London, where he will be free of the strange people of the Grange and Heights.

CHAPTER 31

Lockwood goes to Wuthering Heights to tell Heathcliff of his decision to leave Thrushcross Grange. He also carries a letter to Cathy from Nelly, but Hareton intercepts it before he can give it to her. When Cathy starts to cry, Hareton returns the letter.

Lockwood also learns that Heathcliff has taken Cathy's books. Cathy adds that Hareton has gathered some of her favorite books and tries to read them, but she mocks his faulty efforts. Hareton, ashamed, gathers the books and throws them in the fire.

And Cathy's comment is clearly right. Heathcliff's love for Catherine remains the sole important thing for him. It is so important that he is willing to disturb her grave in order to find a way to be close to her, if not in life, then in death.



Heathcliff is still seeking revenge, though all who have wronged him are dead.



As a woman, Cathy is trapped without legal rights to defend herself from Heathcliff. At this point, the novel seems to be setting up the possibility that Lockwood will save Cathy from her fate. If only Lockwood would act boldly, recklessly, with passion...



...but Lockwood is a civilized city man who dislikes such shows of emotion. He finds them grotesque and strange, and so, rather than try to save the beautiful Cathy and win her love, he goes to London.



The incident with the letter gives a hint that Hareton's feelings for Cathy are not malicious. He gets angry at her, but also seems not to want to hurt her.



As future events show, Hareton has gathered Cathy's books because he wants to learn to read, to become more civilized.



Heathcliff returns, and says as soon as he enters that Hareton bears such a striking resemblance to Catherine that it causes him physical and emotional pain even to look at Hareton.

Heathcliff wished to be haunted by Catherine. Now he is.



After a rather dull and unpleasant meal, Lockwood leaves. On the way back to the Grange, he muses on how lucky Cathy would have been had she fallen in love with him and let him take her away to a more pleasant place than Wuthering Heights.

Lockwood's musings are delusional. The idea that Cathy would be happy with him, emotionless and "civilized" as he is, is ludicrous.



CHAPTER 32

Six months later, Lockwood returns to the area and pays a visit at Wuthering Heights. He finds, to his surprise, that Nelly now lives there. She tells him about what happened after he left: Two weeks after Lockwood left, Zillah finds a new job, and Heathcliff asks Nelly to take her place. Soon after Nelly arrives, Cathy admits to her that she feels guilty for mocking Hareton.

Hareton and Cathy are similar to Heathcliff and Catherine, with one crucial difference: Hareton and Cathy both learn to feel remorse for their aggressive or condescending actions.



One day, Hareton accidentally shoots himself while working, and Cathy has to tend to him. At first they argue often, but eventually they come to an understanding and start to get along. Cathy gives Hareton a gift of a book, and promises to teach him to read and not to mock him. Nelly says that the two have come to love each other, and looks forward to an eventual marriage between them.

Cathy has always been attracted to men she could nurse and mother. But unlike Linton, who was a sniveling weakling, Hareton is her equal. Cathy realizes this, as evidenced when she offers to teach Hareton to read. Rather than look down on him for the status that has been forced on him, she now sees him for his potential. She now sees beyond class, and together the two of them find a balance between nature and civilization.



CHAPTER 33

The morning after Cathy gives Hareton the book, she and Heathcliff get into an argument at breakfast over her inheritance. Hareton takes her side. Heathcliff grabs Cathy and nearly hits her, but then suddenly lets her go—her eyes remind him of Catherine.

In the past, Heathcliff would have just hit Cathy, but his visions of Catherine are changing him, blunting his need for revenge.



That same night, he sees Cathy and Hareton sitting together, and they both remind him of Catherine. All of these reminders of Catherine torment him, and he admits to Nelly that he no longer much cares about taking out his revenge on Cathy and Hareton.

Being haunted by Catherine torments Heathcliff, but it is also what he always wanted, and so he no longer feels the need for vengeance, breaking the cycle of revenge and allowing Cathy and Hareton to live in peace.



CHAPTER 34

Heathcliff withdraws from the world and eats just one meal a day.

Note the similarity to Catherine's own fast in chapter 11.



A few nights later, he spends the entire night walking outside. When he returns to Wuthering Heights, Cathy remarks that he is actually acting pleasantly. He tells Nelly that "Last night I was on the threshold of hell. Today, I am within sight of my heaven."

Heathcliff refuses all food and demands that he be left entirely alone. The next morning, at breakfast, Heathcliff terrifies Nelly when he seems to see an apparition. She can see nothing, but it seems to her that Heathcliff is communicating with it. That night, Heathcliff again seems to be speaking with a ghost—Nelly hears him say "Catherine." When Nelly speaks with Heathcliff, he reminds her of his burial wishes.

The next day Heathcliff locks himself into his room and refuses to even see the doctor. The next morning, Nelly uses another key to get into the room and finds Heathcliff dead and soaking wet—he had thrown open the window to let the rain come down on him.

Heathcliff is buried as he wanted, next to Catherine, while Cathy and Hareton are soon to be married and will move to Thrushcross Grange.

Lockwood leaves Wuthering Heights and walks through the moors to the churchyard where Heathcliff, Catherine, and Edgar are buried. He writes that though the local villagers say that they have seen Heathcliff's ghost and another spirit walking the moors together, he "wondered how any one could ever imagine unquiet slumbers for the sleepers in that quiet earth."

Note the similarity to Catherine's own night outside after Heathcliff left. Heathcliff's heaven, simply, is to be with Catherine.



Now Heathcliff's refusal to eat is identical to Catherine's. As his actions mirror Catherine's, he begins to actually see and speak with her. He is being haunted by her, just as he always wished.



In his final act Heathcliff opens the window, to connect with nature and with Catherine.



Heathcliff's death lets him be with Catherine, and allows Cathy and Hareton to also be together.



Lockwood now sees nature as "quiet," since nothing now stands in the way of Heathcliff or Catherine, who were themselves forces of nature in their incredible and all-consuming love for each other, from being together.





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