

Chapter 24 \ Summary

Michael, a servant who works in the stables, has been helping Catherine sneak out in exchange for books. Mrs. Dean catches Catherine returning from visiting Linton at Wuthering Heights. Catherine, distressed by lying, confesses all the details to Mrs. Dean. At first, the visits go well, and Zillah makes everything comfortable for Catherine and Linton. One night, Hareton tries to impress Catherine by showing her that he can read his name above the door, but Catherine laughs at him when he can't decipher the numbers. Then she goes inside to visit with Linton. Hareton, a while later, bursts into the room and throws Linton on the floor. Then he shoves him and Catherine into the kitchen. Linton screams that he'll kill Hareton for this, and then chokes so violently, blood comes out of his mouth. Catherine runs for Zillah, but when they return, Hareton is carrying Linton upstairs to his room. Joseph laughs at Catherine and Linton, happy to see justice served in Hareton's realization that he is the true master of Wuthering Heights. Catherine ignores Joseph and leaves on her pony soon after. Hareton catches up to her out on the moors, trying to apologize, but Catherine lashes him with her whip, and he curses and gallops away. Catherine also tells Mrs. Dean about a quarrel she had with Linton over their different visions of a perfect day. Then Catherine begs Mrs. Dean not to tell Edgar, so she can continue to see Linton. Mrs. Dean promises to consider it, and then goes directly to Edgar, telling him everything. Edgar forbids Catherine from visiting Wuthering Heights.

Analysis

Catherine's character has a unique relationship with the servants in the novel, and Brontë uses the difference between her and the other characters to explore how pride is destructive but humility overcomes class prejudices and leads to justice. Catherine *sees* the servants for who they are. She respects them, knows their hopes and aspirations, helps them, and calls them by their first names. Slowly but steadily, Catherine is becoming a character worthy of a happy ending. Giving Michael books from Catherine's personal collection, not just those from the library, "satisfied him better." This is a powerful clue for analyzing the meaning of Catherine's interactions with the servants. Zillah's kindness provides imagery of the good will that flows when class distinctions aren't interfering. Zillah prepares a "clean" room, a "good" fire, and warm "wine," all of which have religious associations, entwining the central theme

in this chapter with the theme of good versus evil. Mrs. Dean, who, at times, represents the moral compass and judge of the other characters' spiritual qualities throughout the novel, has found Catherine to be an apt pupil for her moral teaching. Later, in the kind of detail exemplifying Brontë's extraordinary craft, Catherine sweetly gives Mrs. Dean credit for supplying the song she uses to charm Linton. It is very rare for a servant to receive gratitude or credit in the novel. The contradiction found in Catherine's behavior toward Hareton—that she cannot give Hareton the kindness she gives to the servants—is the main point of the chapter, as well as the result: violence. Hareton attacks Linton, as a way to rechannel his violent feelings toward Catherine. Notably, developing the message about love in the novel, Hareton carries Linton upstairs and tries to apologize, matching Catherine's nature completely. Joseph supplies the idea of justice (his glee over Hareton getting the first inklings of it), which is always hidden nearby when ideas about pride, humility, judgment, and pity are being explored.

Chapter 25 \ Summary

In the present, Mrs. Dean encourages Mr. Lockwood to consider a romance with Catherine. Then she rewinds the story to a little less than a year ago when Edgar's death is imminent. Linton has been writing letters pressuring Edgar to allow him to marry Catherine. Edgar considers the marriage, and Mrs. Dean reassures him with the idea that Catherine will be rewarded in the marriage because she does her duty. He has set aside a yearly income for Catherine, but the only way for her to live permanently at Thrushcross Grange is through marriage with Linton, the male heir. Edgar agrees to let Mrs. Dean accompany Catherine weekly to see Linton out on the moors.

Analysis

Mr. Lockwood's romantic interest in Catherine is intended to throw the reader off the trail, as the novel toys, again, with the reader's expectation for a conventional happy ending. A core message for the theme of good versus evil comes from Mrs. Dean's comment: "People who do their duty are always finally rewarded." This connects to well-known religious ideas of the time about the virtue of being a humble servant, alluded to throughout *Wuthering Heights*. What the readers know, but the characters do not, is that all because of Edgar's insistence on

Thrushcross Grange going to a male heir—even though Edgar could make a clause in the will and leave it to his daughter Heathcliff is leveraging a race between Linton and Edgar's death and Linton and Catherine's marriage.

Chapter 26 \ Summary

Catherine sets out on her horse to meet Linton halfway between Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange, but Linton is so ill he only makes it a quarter of a mile away from his home. Catherine is concerned for Linton; he's grown thinner and paler than when she saw him last. He is withdrawn, confused, and snappish. He asks Catherine to lie to her father and say he is healthy, and to not provoke Heathcliff's anger against him. He begs Catherine to stay another half hour, and then falls asleep while she looks for berries with Mrs. Dean. Catherine, eager to leave his sour company, takes off on her horse as Heathcliff approaches.

Analysis

Continuing the loose and flowing dramatic irony in the novel, the reader knows that Heathcliff is forcing Linton to meet with Catherine; Linton is too ill to love anyone, let alone play the part of a romantic lover, and Catherine is too inexperienced to fully realize it—although she does notice it seems like Linton is being compelled. Their love is the opposite of the consuming, jealous love between Heathcliff and Cathy. However, Catherine and Linton have more tenderness and understanding between them. As Catherine tries to force a romantic interaction, she becomes blind to Linton's illness. Linton explains the reasons for his behavior, a major departure from Heathcliff and Cathy's inability to communicate with each other in the past