

Analysis

Mr. Lockwood's nightmare and Cathy's first appearance as a ghost in the novel raise questions: Who is Cathy? How did she die? Did she indeed have three last names, signifying two marriages? She terrifies Lockwood who thinks she is demonic. From her first appearance in the novel, Cathy's identity is fragmented, foreshadowing how she will be associated with shifting identities and allegiances as she is torn between her family, her husband's family, and Heathcliff. Cathy's appearance as a ghost adds another Gothic dimension to the story. She crosses the boundary between the living and the dead. *Wuthering Heights* is a haunted house both literally and metaphorically. Characters throughout the novel are haunted psychologically by brutal childhoods, lost love, illness, or other factors. Heathcliff's unusual response to Cathy's ghostly visitation, for example, demonstrates how deeply she haunts his existence years after her death. Cathy's ghost is a child, suggesting how deeply events in the novel are rooted in a traumatic past.

Cathy's diary reveals a childhood full of repression, cruelty, and rebellion that will haunt her and Heathcliff all their lives. These incidents cause the children to become allies against their cruel mistreatment and against religion. The wild landscape mirrors the characters' emotions as the children seek an escape on the moors, where they feel free to be themselves, unmediated by authority: "We cannot be damper, or colder, in the rain than we are here." Mr. Lockwood's first nightmare of enduring a "four hundred and ninety" part sermon reflects the way in which Cathy and Heathcliff shunned Joseph's type of religious instruction. It is significant that Mr. Lockwood wrestles Joseph, as the Biblical character Jacob wrestled with an angel, foreshadowing religious struggles for many characters. Heathcliff succumbs to tears as he begs Cathy's ghost to stay, rousing pity and compassion in readers even after Mr. Lockwood has

asserted Heathcliff's "genuine bad nature." The explanation for how he came to be so "inhospitable" and angry will be rooted in the story of his childhood and relationship with Cathy.

Chapter 4

Summary

Back at Thrushcross Grange, Mr. Lockwood finds out that Mrs. Dean, a servant, has lived there for eighteen years and knows about Heathcliff and Cathy's past. He entices her to keep him company and gossip about their neighbors at Wuthering Heights. Mr. Lockwood really wants to find out more about Cathy.

Mrs. Dean begins at the point in the past when Heathcliff, a homeless orphan, is brought home by Mr. Earnshaw from a trip to Liverpool. Before he leaves for his trip, Mr. Earnshaw asks his children, Cathy and Hindley, what gifts they would like him to bring back from Liverpool. Cathy wants a whip, and Hindley wants a fiddle. Remembering the young servant in training, Mrs. Dean—called Nelly or Ellen at that time—he promises to bring her apples and pears. However, Mr. Earnshaw loses the whip, and the fiddle is crushed on the long walk home with Heathcliff. Exhausted when he arrives, Mr. Earnshaw says the trip nearly killed him. He tells his family to take Heathcliff as "a gift of God ... though it's as dark almost as if it came from the devil." Mrs. Earnshaw calls Heathcliff "a gipsy brat," but agrees to take him in. Cathy and Hindley, disappointed at losing their gifts, treat Heathcliff badly, even spitting on him, but Cathy eventually befriends him, and he becomes Mr. Earnshaw's favorite. Ellen, the future Mrs. Dean, despises Heathcliff too, until Hindley, Cathy, and Heathcliff get the measles. Ellen then steps wholly into her position as a servant and cares for the sick children. Heathcliff's sweetness

during his illness changes her feelings toward him. Still, she wonders what Mr. Earnshaw loves so much about Heathcliff to favor him over Hindley. Then she recalls when Mr. Earnshaw bought two horses, one for Hindley and one for Heathcliff. Heathcliff picks "the handsomest," but when it falls lame, he demands Hindley's horse. Hindly refuses to trade, so Heathcliff picks a fight, provoking Hindley to violence, so he can use his bruises as proof to make Mr. Earnshaw beat Hindley. Hindley gives Heathcliff the horse, saying, "I pray that he may break your neck" and calls Heathcliff "imp of Satan." Ellen persuades Heathcliff to take the horse and not tell on Hindley. Since he takes her advice, she mistakenly believes him "not vindictive."