

5

THE VICTORIAN AGE

22. Rebels – Emily Brontë

Emily Brontë *Wuthering Heights* (1847)

A ghost 80

In this passage Mr Lockwood is hosted at the Heights and he has a frightening experience that triggers his curiosity about the mysterious carving 'Catherine Linton, Earnshaw, Heathcliff'.

This time, I remembered I was lying in the oak closet¹, and I heard distinctly the gusty wind, and the driving of the snow; I heard, also, the fir bough repeat its teasing² sound, and ascribed it to the right cause: but it annoyed me so much, that I resolved to silence it, if possible; and, I thought, I rose and endeavoured to unhasp the casement³. The hook was
5 soldered into the staple⁴: a circumstance observed by me when awake, but forgotten. 'I must stop it, nevertheless!' I muttered, knocking my knuckles through the glass, and stretching an arm tout to seize the importunate branch; instead of which, my fingers closed on the fingers of a little, ice-cold hand! The intense horror of nightmare came over me: I tried to draw back my arm, but the hand clung⁵ to it, and a most melancholy voice sobbed,
10 'Let me in – let me in!' 'Who are you?' I asked, struggling, meanwhile, to disengage myself. 'Catherine Linton,' it replied, shiveringly⁶ (why did I think of Linton? I had read Earnshaw twenty times for Linton) – 'I'm come home: I'd lost my way on the moor⁷!' As it spoke, I discerned, obscurely, a child's face looking through the window. Terror made me cruel; and, finding it useless to attempt shaking the creature off, I pulled its wrist on to the broken
15 pane, and rubbed it to and fro till the blood ran down and soaked the bedclothes: still it wailed⁸, 'Let me in!' and maintained its tenacious gripe, almost maddening me with fear. 'How can I!' I said at length. 'Let me go, if you want me to let you in!' The fingers relaxed, I snatched mine through the hole, hurriedly piled the books up in a pyramid against it, and

1. **oak closet:** it. stanza privata, interamente rivestita di legno di quercia
2. **teasing:** that tormented
3. **unhasp the casement:** it. aprire la finestra (a battenti)
4. **hook ... staple:** it. il gancio era saldato nel legno

5. **clung:** it. rimase aggrappata
6. **shiveringly:** it. in modo tremulo
7. **moor:** it. brughiera
8. **wailed:** cried

stopped my ears to exclude the
 20 lamentable prayer. I seemed to keep
 them closed above a quarter of an hour;
 yet, the instant I listened again, there
 was the doleful cry moaning on⁹!
 ‘Begone¹⁰!’ I shouted. ‘I’ll never let you
 25 in, not if you beg for twenty years.’ ‘It is
 twenty years,’ mourned the voice:
 ‘twenty years. I’ve been a waif¹¹ for
 twenty years!’ Thereat began a feeble
 scratching outside, and the pile of books
 30 moved as if thrust forward. I tried to
 jump up; but could not stir a limb; and
 so yelled aloud, in a frenzy of fright. To
 my confusion, I discovered the yell was
 not ideal: hasty footsteps approached my
 35 chamber door; somebody pushed it
 open, with a vigorous hand, and a light
 glimmered through the squares at the
 top of the bed. I sat shuddering yet, and
 wiping¹² the perspiration from my
 40 forehead: the intruder appeared to
 hesitate, and muttered to himself. At
 last, he said, in a half-whisper, plainly
 not expecting an answer, ‘Is any one
 here?’ I considered it best to confess my
 45 presence; for I knew Heathcliff’s accents,
 and feared he might search further, if I
 kept quiet. With this intention, I turned
 and opened the panels. I shall not soon
 forget the effect my action produced.



9. **doleful cry moaning on:** it. *triste lamento che continuava a gemere*

10. **Begone:** it. *Vattene*

11. **waif:** it. *un animale smarrito*. She has been wandering alone as a spirit

12. **wiping:** taking away