

Revenge in wuthering heights

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Revenge is the poisonous sentiment which drives all human beings to commit injustice upon those who have done so upon them. This desire is one that all people feel and are susceptible to. In Emile Bronte's Wuthering Heights, revenge can be seen as the most visible theme, as it is the factor which leads our characters to their bleak future. Through the actions committed by the characters of Wuthering Heights, we see how no one can achieve peace through their vengeful acts and in fact these undertakings further add to the decline of the character. In Wuthering Heights, the feeling of revenge can be seen through the actions of many of the characters but it is more significantly seen through the actions of our main protagonist, Heathcliff. Maybe one the darkest character in all of English literature, Heathcliff is indisputably brutal, cruel, malicious and outright ruthless. From the onset of his arrival at Wuthering Heights he begins to show spitefulness as he is seen blackmailing his older brother, Hindley, into giving him his desired horse. Also the description given of Heathcliff as a child describes him with dark features which could indicate what his character will develop into later on in the book. Yet despite the ghastly qualities of Heathcliff, it can be seen that his great strength of character earns him some decency in the eyes of the reader thus making him the hero and villain of Wuthering Heights. Heathcliff begins his ploy for revenge from the beginning of the novel. This is due to the mistreatment he endured at Wuthering Heights from his older brother, Hindley. The moment Heathcliff came to Wuthering Heights Hindley began to loathe him because he was jealous because of the attention Mr. Earnshaw bestowed upon Heathcliff. This jealousy sparked into hatred and once Mr. Earnshaw passed away and he returned from boarding

school, Hindley's abuse of Heathcliff began. He forced Heathcliff to work amongst the servants of Wuthering Heights, denied him rights to education and forbid him and Catherine to socialize. During his degradation Heathcliff became fixed upon the idea of bestowing the same amount of humiliation upon Hindley and his children as he had received from them. Heathcliff plans revenge not only on Hindley but on Edgar Linton and his family. The seed of hatred between Heathcliff and Edgar Linton was planted when Edgar and Catherine had married when Heathcliff was away. The hurt that Heathcliff feels from this incident is by far the greatest pain, as Catherine was the one thing he adored. The pain was even more unbearable given he heard Catherine affirm her feelings of love for him, but nevertheless she married Edgar. This also ties back with his feelings of hate for Hindley as it was him who tainted Heathcliff to the point where even Catherine's love for him could not make her stay with him. Once Heathcliff returns from his time away, he returns with a mindset to destroy the lives of those who had destroyed his preceding his leave. His first task of revenge is to destroy the already devastated life of Hindley. He first begins by taking advantage of Hindley's constant drunken state and begins gambling on the property of Wuthering Heights with him knowing that Hindley's sense of good judgement is all but gone. Once Heathcliff has possessed all of Wuthering Heights he only lets Hindley stay as a guest and no longer an owner of Wuthering Heights taunting the former owner. Also, now in full control of Wuthering Heights, Heathcliff denies Hareton, Hindley's son, any education and forces the boy to work as a slave. These actions parallel the ordeals Heathcliff faced by the hands of Hindley. The second of Heathcliff's actions shows just how sadistic

this man was. Hareton was a child who was far removed from the issues that Heathcliff and Hindley shared, however despite this, he was forced to work off the debt of his father due to Heathcliff's overwhelming hate for his Hindley. Once finished taking revenge upon the Earnshaws, Heathcliff moves his focus upon the Lintons, and ponders what destruction he will cause upon this respectable and pleasant household. The reason again to why Heathcliff hated the Lintons is because of the marriage between and Edgar and his only true love, Catherine. Also, once Catherine passes away, Heathcliff's hate is resurrected because he begins to blame Edgar for her death. His first step in the destruction of the Linton house is seducing Edgar's younger sister Isabella. This seduction led to marriage between the both of them and a child. However, this union was by no means blissful given it was only a ploy to steal one of Edgar's most precious possessions, his sister. This parallels Heathcliff's view as he sees that Edgar stole Catherine from him. The manner in which he treated, Isabella a young fragile woman who had married him out of sincere love and his deathly ill son, was horrible and at often times he would beat the both of them. This is evidence of a man who was thoroughly perverted in nature and had not a speck of humanity in him. The malevolence of Heathcliff does not just end with the exploitation of Isabella but he even takes advantage his son. Heathcliff does not look at Linton as his son, rather as another tool to help him create his masterwork of retribution. He forces Linton to seduce Edgar's daughter, Catherine, and marry her. Not only does the matrimony ensure that Heathcliff will one day own all of Edgar's land but it is the final ploy of Heathcliff to rob Edgar of his final possession, his daughter. This further shows the wickedness of our

protagonist as he was willing to even destroy the life his enemy's daughter. During the conclusion of the book we see that Heathcliff has sullied into an aged mordant man. His addiction to the mortification of his foes had finally caught up with him and he himself had ultimately degraded into a lonely haunted man. It is not until Heathcliff is upon his deathbed that he realizes that it is no longer useful to destroy any more lives and that what is, should be left alone. It is at this epiphany that Heathcliff finally achieves peace. Only once his ploys for revenge are broken and he passes on, does he live a life of happiness and prosperity with his lover, Catherine, in death. In Bronte's Wuthering Heights she demonstrates how revenge is not only a vicious and vile desire but it is destructive to the person. She displays this through the steady decline of our protagonist illustrating how damaging it is to the character of a person. She also proves that there are more efficient ways to solve our issues. Bronte guides us to see that there are no good outcomes from vengeance and instead of avenging what injustices we believe to be bestowed upon us we should accept them, and progress from there.