

Wuthering heights: frame narrative

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Wuthering Heights: Frame Narrative

Frame narrative is described as a story within a story. In each frame, a different individual is narrating the events of the story. There are two main frames in the novel Wuthering Heights. The first is an overlook provided by Mr. Lockwood, and the second is the most important. It is provided by Nelly Dean, who tells the story from a first-person perspective, and depicts the events that occur through her life at Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange.

Nelly Dean is a native of the moors and has lived all her life with the characters whose story she tells. Although she is an uneducated woman, Emily Bronte manages to express Nelly as a capable storyteller in two explanations. The first is how Lockwood comments on her intelligence and expression, and believes she is one of the more intelligent minds of the moors: Excepting a few provincialisms of slight consequence, you have no marks of the manners which I am habituated to consider as peculiar to your class. I am sure that you have thought a good deal more than the generality of servants think. You have been compelled to cultivate your reflective faculties for want of occasion for frittering your life away in silly trifles. The second explanation of Nelly's thought and expression is through the wisdom she has achieved through the harsh discipline she has endured over her life, and through the good libraries at the Heights and Grange that have given her knowledge and a wide vocabulary. Miss. Dean never mentions anyone else besides the people that the story focuses on. This demonstrates her commitment to the people she serves, and her loyalty and disapproval towards them. She has lived all her life in the moors, has grown up with Hindley and Catherine, and has helped the Earnshaw family since her childhood. There were only a few small details

mentioned about her own family. She was blessed to be an extraneous element in the story, which gives her the ability to live at either Wuthering Heights or Thrushcross Grange. This ability proves to be useful when she must move to the Grange with the first Catherine after her marriage to Edgar Linton. Throughout the story she creates an intimate relationship with all the main characters, whether a nurse, housekeeper or servant, she manages to produce an emotional link of friendship with these characters. One of the most obvious examples of this is when Heathcliff tells her, near the end, that she is the only person he feels comfortable speaking with, saying that the pressure within his mind is, "so eternally secluded in itself".

As a person of dignity, Nelly keeps secrets; as a nurse or servant, she reveals any unnatural or wrong acts. As a witness, she must take part in every scene of the book. We become familiar with her interference from when she admits putting young Heathcliff on the landing, to encouraging him to run away.

One of the most symbolic instances of her interference is when she interweaves Heathcliff and Edgar's hair for Catherine's locket. Indeed, I shouldn't have discovered that he had been there, except for the disarrangement of the drapery about the corpse's face, and for observing on the floor a curl of light hair, fastened with a silver thread; which, on examination, I ascertained to have been taken from a locket hung round Catherine's neck. Heathcliff had opened the trinket and cast out its contents, replacing them by a black lock of his own. I twisted the two, and enclosed them together. Nelly is also believed by some to be a villain in the novel. Probably one of the most appalling instances of her cruel behavior directed at Heathcliff after Hindley hits him with an iron weight after their argument

about the horses: " and, " says Nelly " had I not prevented it, Heathcliff would have gone just so to the master, and got full revenge by letting his condition plead for him, intimating who had caused it.... I persuaded him easily to let me lay the blame of his bruises on the horses: he minded little what tale was told since he had what he wanted. " Her criticism of the other characters and her loyalty towards them not only make her a good narrator, but also an excellent servant and a confidant to the characters. Even though she is a servant, her intelligence and knowledge of self-worth create equality between her and the other characters, giving her the ability to speak her mind. Nelly's narration comes from being closely and privately involved in the lives of the characters in the story. She not only acts as a witness to the events in their lives, but also as somewhat of a judge and critic to their actions. Nelly is our guide through the story, and without her voice, we would never be aware of the strange and amazing events that occurred in Wuthering Heights.