

from Wuthering Heights dramatised by Charles Vance

Lockwood: [*Screams, off. Enters, plainly shaken and terrified. Speaks to Heathcliff*] Who put me in that room and in that bed? I'm damned if I know or care, that girl - your daughter-in-law; throw her out if you will, she deserves it. I suppose she wanted to get another proof that the place was haunted at my expense. Haunted! Swarming with ghosts and goblins. You have reason for shutting that room up, believe me. I'll not go back. I'll walk the yard till daylight. I'll not endure again the persecutions of your ancestors. Why, if the little fiend had got in, she would have strangled me. Wicked little soul - she deserves to walk the earth for twenty years!

I was awakened by - a fierce tapping on the window. It was the branch of a fir tree, rattling its cones against the panes, as the blast wailed by. For an instant I listened doubtingly, then turned and dozed - and dreamt. Again the noise. This time I did not wake - at least, I hope I didn't - Again I heard the gusty wind, again the driving of the snow - then again that devil's tattoo. It annoyed me so much I resolved to silence it. I struggled with the casement catch, to open it and break off that branch, but found the hook was soldered to the staple - "I must stop it nevertheless," I muttered, and knocked my fingers through the glass - no blood, you see! I stretched my arm through the hole to reach the branch, and my fingers closed - on the fingers of a hand! A little ice-cold hand - that grasped mine and would not let it go. The intense horror of nightmare came over me. I tried to draw back my arm but still the hand clung to it. And a most melancholy voice sobbed out: "Let me in! Let me in!" And still it clung on. "Let me in!" it cried, "I'm come home. I'd lost my way on the moor." Through the window I discerned dimly a child's face. Terror made me cruel. And, finding I could not shake the creature off, I pulled its wrist onto the broken pane and rubbed it to and fro till the blood ran down and soaked the bedclothes. And still it clung on and cried, "Let me in!" - almost maddening me with fear. "How can I?" cried I. "Let me go, if you want me to let you in." The fingers relaxed. I snatched mine through the hole, piled a pyramid of books against it and stopped my ears to keep out the lament. "Be gone!" I cried. "I'll never let you in, not if you beg for twenty years!" "It *is* twenty years," mourned the voice, "I've wandered the moors for twenty years." There was a feeble scratching and the pile of books began to move. I tried to jump up, but could not. "Who are you?" I cried. "I'm Catherine," it replied. "Catherine Linton."

Not three o'clock yet! Time stagnates here. I'll stay down here till daylight and then be off. And you need not fear a repetition of my intrusion. I am quite cured of seeking pleasure in society. I'm away!