

Chapter 47-The tenant of wildfell hall

Chapter 47 of "The Tenant of Wildfell Hall" by Anne Brontë begins with a disruptive visit from Eliza Millward to Gilbert Markham's house, where she shares unsettling news about Helen Graham, suggesting a reconciliation with her estranged husband. Gilbert, deeply troubled by these rumors, decides to seek the truth by visiting Helen's brother, Frederick Lawrence.

Upon his arrival, Gilbert learns that Helen has indeed returned to her husband, but not out of reconciliation; she has gone back to care for him during his illness. Lawrence provides Gilbert with a letter from Helen, which reveals her reasons and details of her current life at Grassdale Manor. Helen has taken on the arduous task of nursing her husband, Arthur Huntingdon, who suffers from injuries and illness exacerbated by his dissolute lifestyle. Throughout her letter, she describes her efforts to manage the household, the challenges of attending to her husband whose health has deteriorated significantly, and her struggles with his fluctuating acceptance of her presence.

Helen's narrative in the letter reveals her inner conflict and her strong sense of duty towards her husband, despite his past cruelty and neglect. She painstakingly describes her daily encounters with Arthur, who fluctuates between delirium and clarity, sometimes mistaking her for other women and at other times recognizing her with ambivalence or outright hostility. Yet, she perseveres, motivated by a combination of duty, maternal protectiveness, and perhaps a hopeful glimpse of his reformation.

Despite the emotional toll, Helen remains determined to fulfill her responsibilities, simultaneously ensuring the wellbeing of their son, little Arthur, by keeping him closely guarded from the negative influences within the household. She considers requesting help from Esther Hargrave to care for her son should Arthur's condition worsen.

Gilbert is moved by Helen's commitment and sacrifices, reframing his perspective on her actions. The chapter closes with him asking Lawrence if he can keep Helen's letter, noting that she has made no mention of him, which reflects her complete immersion in her immediate responsibilities and her efforts to shield her personal life from others, including Gilbert, whom she once considered close.