Jane Eyre Study Guide

Jane Eyre by Charlotte Brontë

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Contents

Introduction

Published in 1847, *Jane Eyre* brought almost instant fame to its obscure author, the daughter of a clergyman in a small mill town in northern England. On the surface, the novel embodies stock situations of the Gothic novel genre such as mystery, horror, and the classic medieval castle setting; many of the incidents border on (and cross over into) melodrama. The story of the young heroine is also in many ways conventional—the rise of a poor orphan girl against overwhelming odds, whose love and determination eventually redeem a tormented hero. Yet if this all there were to *Jane Eyre,* the novel would soon have been forgotten. In writing *Jane Eyre,* Charlotte Brontë did not write a mere romantic potboiler. Her book has serious things to say about a number of important subjects: the relations between men and women, women's equality, the treatment of children and of women, religious faith and religious hypocrisy (and the difference between the two), the realization of selfhood, and the nature of true love. But again, if its concerns were only topical, it would not have outlived the time in which it was written. The book is not a tract any more than it is a potboiler. It is a work of fiction with memorable characters and vivid scenes, written in a compelling prose style. In appealing to both the head and the heart, *Jane Eyre* triumphs over its flaws and remains a classic of nineteenth-century English literature and one of the most popular of all English novels.

Author Biography

Jane Eyre is subtitled *An Autobiography.* It is, however, a novel. Yet critics have discerned a number of autobiographical elements in the book.

Charlotte Brontë was born on March 31, 1816, in the village of Thornton in the West Riding of Yorkshire (now West Yorkshire), England. She was the third child in a family that soon consisted of five girls and a boy. Only seven years separated the eldest, Maria, from the youngest, Anne. Her father, the Reverend Patrick Brontë (originally Brunty), came from an impoverished Irish family; he had immigrated to England in the late 1700s and studied at Cambridge University before being ordained as a clergyman in the Church of England. Charlotte's mother, Maria Branwell, was originally from Penzance, Cornwall, at the southwest tip of England. In 1820 the family moved to Haworth, an isolated mill town on the edge of the Yorkshire moors. They took up residence in the small parsonage next to the local parish church where Reverend Brontë was minister. Mrs. Brontë died of cancer the following year.

In 1824 Reverend Brontë sent his four eldest daughters to the Clergy Daughters School at Cowan Bridge, Yorkshire, run by a Reverend Carus Wilson. Conditions at the school were strict and physically harsh. The two eldest Brontë sisters, Maria arid Elizabeth, both developed tuberculosis and died the following year. More than twenty years later, Charlotte's experiences at the school would form the basis of several characters, incidents, and settings in *Jane Eyre.* Reverend Wilson became the model for the character Mr. Brocklehurst, while Maria Brontë served as the model for Helen Bums. Lowood Institution in the book was based largely on the Clergy Daughters School.

Charlotte and Emily returned to Haworth, where they remained for the next six years with their father and their surviving siblings, Branwell and Anne. During this time the children escaped into a world of imagination and creative fantasy. Charlotte and Branwell collaborated in writing romantic stories, in tiny hand-made books, about a fictional kingdom called Angria. The hero of these stories was a character known as the Duke of Zamorna—a character to whom Mr. Rochester in *Jane Eyre* bears much resemblance.

In 1831 Charlotte went away to Roe Head school. Although she remained only a year, she made two life-long friends, Ellen Nussey and Mary Taylor. The school's principal, Margaret Wooler, would be the model for Ms. Temple in *Jane Eyre.* In 1839 Charlotte took her first job as a governess. She also received, and turned down, proposals of marriage from two ministers, one of whom was Ellen Nussey's brother. She was not in love with either of these men, and did not feel that she could enter into this kind of marriage. This situation was to be recounted fictionally in the relationship between Jane and Reverend St. John Rivers. Several years later Charlotte and Emily went to Brussels, Belgium, to attend a school run by Constantin Heger. Charlotte evidently formed a passionate attachment to Heger, an older, married man who did not return (and probably was not even aware of) her affection.

Returning to Haworth, Charlotte wrote poetry and was surprised to find that Emily also wrote poetry—as did Anne and Branwell. In 1846 the three women published a joint volume of their poems, using the pseudonyms Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell. The collection, produced at their own expense, sold only two copies. Undaunted, the three women each wrote a novel, which they submitted to a London publisher, again using the same pseudonyms. Emily and Anne's manuscripts— *Wuthering Heights* and *Agnes Grey*—were accepted, but Charlotte's—*The Professor—was* turned down. Almost immediately, Charlotte began writing *Jane Eyre.* She completed the book quickly and sent it off to the publishing firm of Smith, Elder & Co., the same company who had rejected *The Professor.* The publishers reacted with great enthusiasm, and *Jane Eyre* was published just three months later, in October, 1847. So good were the sales that within a year the book was Issued in its third edition. Whereas her sisters had earned advances of fifty pounds for their novels, Charlotte received five hundred pounds for hers—a considerable sum of money at that time. However, her publisher and the reading public still knew the author only as "Currer Bell." There was even speculation that the three "Bells" were in fact a single author writing under three different pseudonyms. In July, 1848, Charlotte and Anne took the train to London to visit their publisher, who was astonished but delighted to learn that Currer Bell was a woman.

In the midst of their literary success, more tragedy struck the Brontë family. Branwell, who had become a hopeless alcoholic, died of tuberculosis in 1848, followed in December of that year by Emily. Anne died of the same disease the following year, leaving Charlotte the sole survivor among the original six Brontë children. She went on to write two further novels, *Shirley* (1849) and *Villette* (1853). In 1854 she married the Reverend Arthur Nicholls, her father's curate Charlotte Brontë died less than a year later, apparently from complications during pregnancy. However, her reputation, and that of *Jane Eyre,* continued to grow.

Plot Summary

Jane Eyre by Charlotte Brontë is a coming of age story told in the style of Gothic fiction. It is a story of an underprivileged, unloved orphan, who at the end of her story finds love and family as well as personal riches. At the time it was published in 1947, Brontë issued her book under the alias of Currer Bell. The novel is presented as an autobiography of a girl, snatches of which mirror Brontë's own life. It can be separated into five distinct parts: Jane's time with her aunt at Gateshead, her time as a pupil and teacher at Lowood Institution, Jane's time as a governess at Thornfield Hall, the time she spends as a teacher at St. John's school, and finally, Jane's reunion with Mr. Rochester.

The opening section of the novel tells of the time Jane spends with her relatives at Gateshead Manor. The novel begins as ten-year-old Jane recalls an incident where her cousin, John Reed, throws a book at her and hits her. Jane retaliates and Mrs. Reed, her aunt, assumes Jane has begun the dispute. As a punishment, Jane is locked in a room the children think is haunted. Jane is fearful but holds out well until she sees a strange light on the wall of the room. She screams and bangs on the locked door for someone to let her out. Mrs. Reed orders her to remain locked in the room. Jane is later found passed out from fear. Mr. Lloyd, the apothecary who looks after Jane following this episode recognizes how miserable Jane is living with her relatives. Mr. Lloyd convinces Mrs. Reed that Jane should be sent to school. Even as Jane looks forward to school, Mrs. Reed attempts to skew the school benefactor's opinion of Jane by telling him Jane is a lying and deceitful child.

The next section of the book tells about Jane's time at Lowood Institution, a charity school. Here, Jane has the unfortunate experience of meeting Mr. Brocklehurst face-to-face. Although Jane tries to hide from Mr. Brocklehurst she accidentally drops and breaks her slate. Mr. Brocklehurst not only reprimands Jane for breaking her slate, but also remembers her as the girl whom Mrs. Reed named as a liar. For these two faults, Mr. Brocklehurst makes Jane stand on a high stool in front of all the students. Miss Temple, however, allows Jane to tell her side of the story of her former life with the Reeds. After hearing Jane's story, Miss Temple helps Jane clear herself of her disgrace.

Later, Jane's best friend Helen dies of consumption in Jane's arms. Along with Helen, many other students die in a typhus outbreak. Although unfortunate, the outbreak at Lowood Institution draws public attention to the school's poor conditions. As a result, the school is relocated to a more suitable, healthier location. Jane stays at Lowood a total of eight years, six as a student and two as a teacher. A change comes over her, however, when her friend and mentor Miss Temple marries and leaves the school. Jane decides she wants to experience life outside of Lowood Institution and hires herself out as a governess.

Jane is hired by Mrs. Alice Fairfax of Thornfield Hall to teach a young French girl by the name of Adèle Varens. By chance one evening when she is out walking, Jane encounters a horse and rider who have had an accident. She offers her assistance and

then goes on her way. In a twist of events, however, the rider turns out to be Edward Rochester, owner of Thornfield. Mr. Rochester seems to take a fancy to Jane and calls her often to talk with him. In him she finds a friend and companion of equal intelligence. One night Jane is wakened from her sleep by smoke. She leaves her room to find Mr. Rochester's bed on fire. A servant, Grace Poole, is blamed for the fire in Mr. Rochester's room.

Directly after the episode with the fire, Mr. Rochester invites a group of people for an extended stay and party at Thornfield. With these people comes the beautiful but hateful Blanche Ingram, a lady whom Jane suspects Mr. Rochester is courting. One evening, a strange man from the West Indies arrives at Thornfield to visit Mr. Rochester. Again during the night Jane is awakened by screams and sounds of a struggle. Mr. Rochester blames the noises on a servant having a nightmare. Later, however, he calls for Jane's assistance as the man from the West Indies, named Mr. Mason, has been bitten and cut in the attic.

About this same time, Jane receives word from Gateshead that her cousin John has committed suicide. This deed causes his mother, Jane's aunt, to suffer a stroke. While at Gateshead Jane learns she has an uncle who contacted Mrs. Reed several years past about adopting Jane. Out of her spite and dislike for Jane, Mrs. Reed wrote the uncle, John Eyre, telling him Jane had died at Lowood.

After Mrs. Reed's death, Jane returns to Thornfield to find the party has broken up and she is again alone with Adèle, Mrs. Fairfax and Mr. Rochester. Mr. Rochester's feelings toward Jane seem to have deepened. Finally, the two profess their love for each other and a wedding is arranged. As the time for the wedding approaches, Jane is tormented by strange occurrences and dreams. Finally, two nights before her wedding, a strange person sneaks into her room and tears her wedding veil in two. Mr. Rochester again blames this action on Grace and tells Jane she has nothing to worry about.

The wedding day arrives and Mr. Rochester appears ill at ease and impatient to have the service finished. As they enter the church, Jane notices two strange men are there. The preacher begins the service and as he asks for objections, one of the men steps forward. He indicates Mr. Rochester is already married and cannot marry Jane. Mr. Rochester admits to the allegations and invites the wedding party to meet his wife. It turns out his first wife, Bertha Mason, is insane and for this reason he keeps her locked in the attic at Thornfield. All along Bertha has been responsible for the vicious acts of violence, not Grace. Grace is merely Bertha's nurse and keeper.

Mr. Rochester begs Jane to forgive him and travel with him to France where they can live together. Jane forgives her lover, but refuses to become his mistress. She chooses instead to run away. After spending several days looking for work, Jane collapses from fatigue and hunger on the doorstep of the Moor House. The inhabitants of the house, a preacher by the name of St. John and his two sisters, take Jane in.

In an ironic turn of events, it is learned that Jane is actually related to St. John and his sisters. Their mutual uncle passes away and leaves his wealth to Jane. During this time,

St. John begins courting Jane. Although he appears to feel no love for her, he believes she would make an excellent missionary's wife. Jane refuses to be married to a man who does not love her and declines his proposal. At this same time, Jane's thoughts begin to return to Mr. Rochester. She decides to travel to Thornfield to see if all is well.

Upon arrival at Thornfield, she finds it has been burned to the ground. Jane learns it was Bertha who set the fire and the woman was killed when she jumped off the roof of the house the same night as the blaze. Mr. Rochester risked his life making sure all of the servants escaped the home safely. He also went back for his wife, Bertha, but instead of coming to him, she jumped from the roof. Mr. Rochester is badly injured when part of the house collapses on him as he tries to leave. As a result of the injury, one of his hands is amputated and he loses his vision. After Jane learns of the tragedy that took place at Thornfield, she sets out to find Mr. Rochester at Ferndale. Jane convinces Mr. Rochester that she is not married and has no intentions to marry anyone but Mr. Rochester. He proposes again and she accepts. Two years into their marriage Mr. Rochester regains partial sight in one eye, and the couple has their first child, a boy. Ten years into their marriage Jane writes that she realizes exactly how wonderful life can be.

Chapter I

Chapter I Summary

The novel opens as Eliza, John and Georgiana are with their mother Mrs. Reed in the drawing room. Jane is not allowed to join the group as Bessie has lied, saying Jane is not a happy child and should not be allowed to associate with the other children. Jane spends her time reading a book and daydreaming while hiding. John disturbs Jane's peace and she is afraid of John, so she comes out from behind the curtains. John abuses Jane both physically and emotionally. John throws the book at her, and she falls and cuts her head. Jane calls John a wicked boy. Mrs. Reed punishes Jane by having Bessie and Miss Abbot carry Jane to the red room.

Chapter I Analysis

In this first chapter, the strained relationship between Jane and the Reeds is introduced. Jane is an orphan who is disliked by the family with whom she lives. She is abused and resented by the other children. Jane, however, appears to be an intelligent and imaginative child who loves to read and be alone. Note even in this first chapter the language and atmosphere typical of a Gothic novel. The day is cold, somber and rainy, giving the opening a sad and desolate tone.

Chapter II

Chapter II Summary

Jane fights against the two, which is uncharacteristic of her. The two maids sit Jane on a stool and Jane promises to sit still. The two maids discuss Jane's temperament between themselves, then chide Jane for her "bad" behavior. They say Mrs. Reed is not obligated to care for Jane and could turn her out. The maids tell Jane she is not on the same social level with the Reed children. They end with the threat that God will punish the child for her evil ways, then shut and lock the door. The red room is the grandest room in Gateshead Hall. The room is decorated in red and is used very little because Mr. Reed, Jane's uncle, died there nine years prior.

Jane muses over how well loved the Reed children are despite the fact they are so badly behaved. Jane tries to please her adoptive family but is disliked and suffers constantly. Years later, Jane understands she was at odds with the temper of the Reed house; had she been a beautiful, careless child, she would have been accepted.

As the room grows dark and cold Jane wonders if she does deserves her punishment. She wonders if things would be better if she were dead. Jane thinks of her uncle, who on his deathbed asked his wife to look after Jane. Jane worries that the wrongs done to her might wake Mr. Reed's soul and his ghost might visit her. She sees a light and thinks it is the ghost of Mr. Reed and beats on the door until the two maids come. Mrs. Reed demands Jane be locked back in the room and Jane passes out in fear after the door is locked again.

Chapter II Analysis

In this chapter Brontë gives a deeper glimpse into the relationship between the Reeds and Jane. Jane is the orphaned niece of Mr. Reed. Mrs. Reed takes care of Jane only because Mr. Reed made her promise to do so as he was dying. It is also portrayed in this chapter that Jane is a much different type of person than the Reeds. While the Reeds are beautiful people who are highly sociable and free of care, Jane is a serious child who is portrayed as being physically unattractive and not very social. In one section of the chapter, the grown up Jane writes that it is these personality differences that caused Mrs. Reed and the children to dislike her so badly.

This chapter begins the theme of injustice. There is no doubt Jane has already been dealt a cruel blow by life in the death of her parents. While she is adopted by a loving uncle, this uncle also dies and Jane is left only with her aunt to take care of her. Through no fault of her own, Jane is disliked by her adoptive family and treated cruelly.

Chapter III

Chapter III Summary

Jane awakes in her own bed in the nursery. Jane cries herself sick, but feels comforted by the small concern shown her by Bessie; however, her spirit is broken. Mr. Lloyd talks with Jane privately and learns of her situation—that she only has some other poor relations who cannot afford to keep her. Mr. Lloyd asks if she would like to go to school, to which Jane replies yes. Mrs. Reed agrees to the proposal. Jane's mother married against the will of her wealthy family to Jane's father, a poor pastor. Both parents died of typhus with a month of each other. According to the maids, Jane's plain looks make it more difficult to gain much sympathy.

Chapter III Analysis

In this chapter, Brontë adds to the reasons for the Reeds' dislike for Jane and her family. Jane's other characteristics are also learned. For instance, Jane loves learning and the idea of going to school. She dislikes the idea of living with poor relatives even if they are kind because she does not want to act or talk like a poor person.

In one portion of this chapter Jane switches from the perspective of Jane the child to Jane the adult. The adult Jane realizes that Mrs. Reed was trying only to rid Jane of what she saw as a tendency to act badly by locking her in the red room. Note in Jane's statement the words which indicate Mrs. Reed did not know what she was doing. These words echo the words of Jesus Christ on the cross.

Chapter IV

Chapter IV Summary

While waiting to go to school, Jane's cousins do not speak with her and her bed is moved from the nursery to a closet. She is forbidden to go to most of the social rooms of the house. Once, John approaches her and Jane punches his nose. Mrs. Reed admonishes Jane and Jane asks if Mr. Reed would have treated her thus. Jane is then excluded from all of the holiday festivities of November and December. She has a toy doll and Bessie for company. However, Bessie is kind to Jane during this time, often kissing Jane as she tucks her into bed.

On January 15 Jane is called to the breakfast room, which she fearfully enters to find herself in the company of Mrs. Reed and a Mr. Brocklehurst, who asks her religious questions and lectures her. Mrs. Reed slanders Jane's character, which angers Jane because she will start school with a bad reputation. Mrs. Reed says that Jane will spend any vacation at the school. She is told to leave the room, but before leaving, she asserts herself and relates her side of the treatment she has received at Gateshead. Mrs. Reed almost seems afraid and asks Jane if there is anything she needs and Jane says just to leave right away. Jane briefly feels triumphant, but knows she should never have talked as she did to her aunt. Jane meets up with Bessie, who advises her about how to act at school, and the two tell each other of their gratitude for their friendship.

Chapter IV Analysis

Chapter 4 is a transitional chapter between Jane's old life at Gateshead and her new life at Lowood School. However, even as Jane looks forward to a new life at school, Mrs. Reed attempts to portray Jane as a bad child to the schoolmaster. For the first time, Jane speaks openly against Mrs. Reed, telling her exactly what she thinks of the treatment she has received while in Mrs. Reed's care. Jane's question of how Mr. Reed would have treated her seems to bring fear to Mrs. Reed, as does Jane's threat to tell anyone who asks how unfair Mrs. Reed has been to her.

Mr. Brocklehurst is a character based on a person from Brontë's real life. Mr. Brocklehurst is based on the man who founded the school which Brontë and her sisters attended. Two of Brontë's sister's died from tuberculosis at the school, a situation for which she holds the school's founder responsible.

Chapter V

Chapter V Summary

Jane wakes early on January 15 and is offered breakfast, but cannot eat for excitement. She is sent alone in a coach the 50 miles to Lowood School. At Lowood, she is shown to a room. Two women, one named Miss Miller, question Jane about her skills and educational background, then escort her to a room of girls who are studying. They put their books away and have a meager dinner, say prayers, then go to bed, two to a bed. The next day, Jane cannot eat the burnt porridge and overhears one of the teachers say how bad it tastes. They go to classes from breakfast. They receive a break and chat among themselves, mostly about the horrible breakfast and Mr. Brocklehurst. Miss Miller seems to disapprove but does not stop them. Miss Temple enters and the children have academic classes. Miss Temple says she is purchasing lunch since breakfast was so bad.

During fresh air and exercise, Jane talks with a girl who is reading and learns the school is a charity school. Jane questions the girl briefly about the teachers, and then the students are called for dinner, which is rancid meat and potatoes. During evening lessons, the girl Jane talked to is punished by being forced to stand in the middle of the school room. Jane is impressed by how calmly the girl endures her punishment and wonders how she can act in such a way. After lessons are finished at 5pm, the girls have another scant meal of bread and coffee, then an hour of free time before it is time to study. As on the night before, bedtime is preceded by prayers and a meal of water and oat cake.

Chapter V Analysis

In this chapter Brontë lays down the schedule of a typical day in the life of a student at Lowood Institution. Much of the day is spent studying, but there is also much emphasis placed on prayer and Bible reading. Conditions in the school are poor and there appears to be few funds available for proper food. During this chapter Jane befriends an older girl who appears to be the epitome of a Christian young lady; however, even she is punished during one of her classes. Her reaction to this punishment gives Jane a glimpse into her character and Jane marvels at her strength of spirit. In this chapter, however, there is foreshadowing that all is not well at Lowood School. During recreation time there is often heard a hollow cough, a sign of tuberculosis or consumption.

Chapter VI

Chapter VI Summary

Winter has set in and the school is frigid, even indoors. Jane is somewhat lost in her classes and is happy to be given sewing to accomplish. She listens to other girls recite their lessons. Jane is placed in the lowest academic class. Helen Burns, the girl Jane befriended the day before, is unfairly picked on by the teacher, but again, Helen meekly accepts the punishment and shows no emotion, although Jane notices a tear on Helen's cheek when she puts away the switch she is hit with. When Jane asks Helen about her patience with punishment, Helen replies that she deserved it and must accept her fate for doing wrong. Jane thinks maybe Helen is right. They talk about Christ and how one should bless those who persecute them. Jane tells Helen about her life with the Reeds and Helen encourages Jane to let go of the memories and anger they elicit.

Chapter VI Analysis

Jane begins her formal education at Lowood. What seems more of interest to Jane, however, is the remarkable behavior of Helen. Although the girl is constantly ridiculed by teachers and other students alike, the girl refuses to retaliate. The only sign of emotion Jane ever sees is the trace of a tear on Helen's cheek. Also, Helen introduces to Jane her own Christian creed, the same one held by the Brontë sisters. It should be noted here that Brontë modeled the character of Helen after her sister Maria, who also died of consumption after having lived at a boarding school similar to Lowood.

Chapter VII

Chapter VII Summary

Conditions at the school are deplorable: the girls are not clothed nor fed adequately. The older, larger girls, take food and spaces by the fire from the younger ones. Sunday is a four mile round trip walk in freezing temperatures, although the girls do receive a piece of buttered bread instead of plain bread.

Mr. Brocklehurst and his family pay a visit and Jane dreads the possibility that he will pass on the information he learned from Mrs. Reed. Mr. Brocklehurst's main concern, however, is what he considers to be wasteful spending of the school's money. Mr. Brocklehurst chastises Miss Temple for spoiling the girls. Mr. Brocklehurst demands all girls receive short haircuts because long hair does not adhere to his rules of modesty. Mr. Brocklehurst's own family are richly dressed in fashionable clothes with curled hair. Jane accidentally drops and breaks her slate and Mr. Brocklehurst proclaims Jane a liar to the whole school and encourages the teachers and students to shun her. Jane is commanded to stand on a stool 30 minutes longer and she is almost at the point of breaking, but Helen walks past and gives Jane a look that gives Jane courage. Jane marvels that all Helen's teachers see are her imperfections instead of the beauty of her nature.

Chapter VII Analysis

Jane's worst nightmare has come true. Mr. Brocklehurst has unveiled her "true" character and has made an example of her in front of the school. Also note the example Helen makes by encouraging Jane even when she herself is being punished.

Chapter 8

Chapter 8 Summary

Jane feels she will never achieve her goal of being liked and gaining her peers' respect. Helen brings Jane's bread and coffee from the refectory then sits down on the floor next to her. Helen says the other girls feel pity toward her because of Mr. Brocklehurst's actions. Jane is calmed by Helen's words, although she does not believe the parts about spirits watching over her from another realm. Miss Temple calls the two to her private room and asks Jane for her side of the story. Miss Temple says she believes Jane and will also write Mr. Lloyd for verification, so to make it more believable. The three talk, and Jane notices that Helen is quite lively and believes Helen's beauty reflects off that of Miss Temple. Helen is punished for being sloppy and has to wear a sign, which Jane burns later. Miss Temple reads the letter from Mr. Lloyd vindicating Jane and the school embraces her. Jane begins learning new things and feels content and secure.

Chapter 8 Analysis

This chapter is another turning point for Jane. She has been accused falsely by Mr. Brocklehurst and has been brought down, she believes, forever. With the help of friends Helen and Miss Temple, however, the injustice is righted and Jane begins her studies again with renewed energy and faith in the love of her fellow students and teachers.

Miss Temple seems to be the only one at Lowood, besides Jane, who understands and appreciates Helen for her beautiful nature. As Miss Temple and Helen talk, this inner beauty illuminates Helen's usually pale, lifeless face. Miss Temple also takes a special interest in Helen's cough. This cough is a sign or foreshadowing that Helen is becoming sick.

Chapter IX

Chapter IX Summary

In spring, it is pleasant, with lots of flowers and pleasant weather, but typhus breaks out and many girls sicken. Those who are healthy are left to fend for themselves. Helen is quite ill, but with consumption, not typhus. Jane does not understand the seriousness of the disease. Jane learns of how ill Helen is, which shocks Jane into thinking about death and what it means to die. Jane visits Helen and they talk about Helen's death and what she expects to find after death. As the two sleep, Helen passes away. She is buried in Brocklebridge Churchyard.

Chapter IX Analysis

The grim atmosphere of Lowood has turned deadly as typhus overtakes the campus and more than half of the students there become sick. This tragedy and grimness of death is contrasted with the brightness of the spring and coming summer. However it is in this chapter that Jane again learns the reality of death and the pain of losing someone she loves. Helen dies of consumption, not typhus like the other students. Even in death she is different and set apart from them. Jane sneaks out to see Helen one last time and her friend dies in Jane's arms.

Chapter X

Chapter X Summary

Jane skips ahead in her biography ten years, noting only that after the typhus outbreak at Lowood, things improved greatly there because the sickness brought the school's poor conditions to the attention of the public. Not only was a new school built on a more healthy site but the student's food quality and quantity improved as well and Mr. Brocklehurst was relieved of his duties as sole administrator. After six years as a student at Lowood, Jane graduates to a teaching position where she works for two years until her friend and mentor Miss Temple gets married and moves away. Jane receives permission to place an ad and then to accept a position as a governess. She is hired by a Mrs. Fairfax. Bessie comes to visit Jane and tells her that she has married, has two children, one named Jane. Bessie tells her that the Reed family is all out of sorts; John fails college exams and the girls fight constantly. Bessie said that a man, who appeared to be a gentleman, came to the Reed house asking after Jane, saying he was a relative. He was about to leave on a business trip to Africa.

Chapter X Analysis

This is another transitory chapter in which Jane decides to leave behind her life at Lowood. Miss Temple, who until this time has been a stabilizing factor in Jane's life, gets married and leaves the school. While this chapter acts as a conclusion for Jane's life at Lowood, there are also ties to her past. Bessie, Jane's friend from Gateshead, visits Jane on her last day at Lowood bringing news of the Reeds and also of Jane's father's relatives. Ironically the rich and privileged Reeds are not as accomplished as Jane is, even in her disadvantaged state. Also, it appears Jane's living relatives from her father's family are not as poor and despicable as Mrs. Reed depicted them. Jane however, is not as physically developed as the Reed children, perhaps because of the scanty diet she has received at Lowood. This fact reflects Brontë's own life, as she claimed her years at boarding school stunted her growth and impaired her health.

Chapter XI

Chapter XI Summary

After a sixteen hour journey, Jane arrives in Millcote. She finds no one to meet her and waits at an Inn until a person is located who drives her to Thornfield, where her governess position is. Mrs. Fairfax greets her as a guest, rather than employee. Jane settles into a comfortable room and learns of her charge, Adèle Varnes, a dependent of Edward Rochester, the owner of Thornfield. Mrs. Fairfax is the housekeeper. Jane meets Adèle, who only speaks French and who tells her of her mother's death. She shows off her ability to sing and dance.

Jane finds her pupil eager to please but not accustomed to regular study. Mrs. Fairfax gives Jane a tour of the house and Jane questions Mrs. Fairfax about their employer. Mrs. Fairfax's answers vaguely and Jane gives up trying to learn of Mr. Rochester. After touring the home, the two climb on the flat roof and view the entire grounds of Thornfield. As they return inside, Jane hears an eerie laugh coming from one of the rooms. Jane asks about the sound and Mrs. Fairfax explains the noise comes from Grace Poole, one of the servants who often becomes too noisy in her talking and laughing.

Chapter XI Analysis

Note that the overall atmosphere of the house is cold and church-like with few of the rooms being used or inhabited. The oddity associated with the servant Grace is a theme which will recur. While the tone of the chapter is generally pleasant, the eerie nature of the attic, the hint of a ghost, and the odd laughter are signs there is a sinister secret at Thornfield. Also Jane is not given any substantial information about her current employer, a figure in whom she shows an interest.

Chapter XII

Chapter XII Summary

Jane feels an emptiness and boredom with her new occupation, though she likes her student. She feels restless and unchallenged in her profession and her life and longs for something new. Jane offers to carry a letter to town and stops on her way to sit on a stile where she watches the horse and rider and large dog pass. The horse slips on the ice and both rider and horse on down. Jane goes and offers assistance, though the man declines her assistance or her fetching help. He asks who she is and why she is out at night. She helps him to his horse and they part with his admonishments to complete her errand quickly. She mulls over the man on her walk and when she returns, she is hesitant to enter the house and return to the dreariness of her life. Once inside, she finds the dog, Pilot, and inquires about it. She is told that the dog belongs to Mr. Rochester, who is being cared for at the moment by the doctor.

Chapter XII Analysis

The lukewarmness Jane shows toward her pupil is similar to Brontë's feelings toward the students she taught. It was generally well known that the writer did not have any special liking for her pupils. Jane's life has dissolved into a dull monotony. Although her surroundings and job are comfortable, there is no one and no way for her to exercise her mind. This leaves her feeling restless and unfulfilled.

The chance meeting with Mr. Rochester, however, signals a change is about to come in Jane's life. She helps the man after he falls from his horse, at which point she does not know who he is. She returns home, however, to find the owner of the house has indeed returned. Jane is curious about the man, first because he is one of the few men with whom she has ever had contact. She also notes she feels no fear of him, as she would have if he were attractive or heroic looking. His grim nature and stern look somehow puts her at ease. This relates to her earlier description of her own looks. Though she wishes she were a natural beauty, she finds her own face unattractive and not proportional. For this reason she feels no one of exceptional beauty would ever be attracted to her.

Chapter XIII

Chapter XIII Summary

Mr. Rochester's presence at Thornfield brings a stream of visitors. Jane and Adèle are forced to move their studies from the library to an upstairs room. Adèle is interested only in seeing Mr. Rochester and what gifts he may have brought her. Adèle and Jane are invited to dinner and Jane is encouraged to wear something other than black. When they enter the dining room, Mr. Rochester acknowledges Jane rather gruffly, which oddly, makes Jane feel more comfortable than if he had been overly polite.

Mr. Rochester does not attempt to join the small talk but asks Jane if she liked the gifts. They quietly verbally spar, each trying to sum up the other. Mr. Rochester comments that Jane has done well with Adèle, to which Jane replies that the compliment is the best gift he could give. Mr. Rochester quizzes Jane about her family and educational background, has her play the piano, which seems offensive to him, then asks to see her artwork. He calls her work "peculiar" and her thoughts "elfish" and then scolds Jane for allowing Adele to stay up so late.

When Jane remarks to Mrs. Fairfax that Rochester was peculiar, a fact Mrs. Fairfax had denied, she says she has gotten used to him. There were family squabbles and he only gained Thornfield after his father and brother died. Mrs. Fairfax consoles Jane by saying he only stays a few days at a time.

Chapter XIII Analysis

Jane becomes acquainted with the man who is to be her soul mate. Although he is coarse and gruff, Jane is not offended or hurt by his attitude. Instead the two carry on a type of intellectual banter which Mrs. Fairfax does not understand. It is interesting to note that when he comes upon Jane sitting on the stile in the lane, his thoughts turned to those of fairy tales; just as Jane's had when she heard his horse coming up the lane. With a twist, however, he accuses her of putting a spell on his horse, causing it to fall and giving him the sprain.

Chapter XIV

Chapter XIV Summary

Jane and Adèle are again called to Mr. Rochester's presence several days later. Rochester sets Mrs. Fairfax to entertaining Adèle while he talks to Jane, who is studying his face. He asks if she finds him attractive and she says no. Mr. Rochester presses her for an explanation. They discuss whether he has the right to make Jane listen to a litany of his faults and mistakes. Jane becomes irritated by the conversation and attempts to go. He asks Jane to stay until Adèle models the dress he bought and adds that he wishes he were not responsible for Adèle's care, but he does so to make up for past "sins."

Chapter XIV Analysis

This chapter does not add to the action of the novel as much as it pours the foundation for the relationship between Mr. Rochester and Jane. He is evidently impressed by Jane's intelligence, but as yet does not trust her enough to share his secret, wrong deeds with her.

Mr. Rochester's attitude towards Adèle draws a comparison between Jane and the child. Neither were particularly liked by their guardians, only raised out of feelings of duty and responsibility. However, Mr. Rochester is doing his best to care for Adèle whereas Jane's aunt did not try to provide the best for Jane.

Chapter XV

Chapter XV Summary

Rochester tells Jane that Adèle's mother was his mistress until he found she was cheating on him. He asks Jane if she has ever experienced jealousy. He changes the subject, saying he chooses to accept the challenge of liking Thornfield. Jane brings him back to the subject of Celine, Adèle's mother. Rochester describes walking in on Celine with her lover. He tells Celine to move out and later shoots the lover in the arm. Celine abandons Adèle, whom she had claimed was Rochester's child. Rochester asks if Jane will now leave knowing Adèle's history, to which Jane says it only endears Adèle to her more. Rochester and Jane talk often and Jane begins to see him as handsome.

Jane is awakened by demonic laughter and discovers smoke coming from Mr. Rochester's room. She enters his room and finds him fast asleep and his bedclothes on fire. She cannot awaken him, so dumps water on the flames, which then wakes him. She tells him what she heard and assumes it was Grace. He leaves and returns shortly, saying to himself, "It is as I thought." He thanks her deeply for her saving his life and asks that she not talk of this to anyone.

Chapter XV Analysis

Here the mystery surrounding the person of Grace deepens. She has been portrayed as being odd, but here it appears that she attempts to murder Mr. Rochester. Mr. Rochester does not seem to be angered by her actions, only saddened. He also does not share with Jane why exactly Grace might have set the fire. The secrecy deepens as he also asks Jane not to tell anyone about the events of the fire.

Chapter XVI

Chapter XVI Summary

Rochester told everyone he was reading in bed, fell asleep and the fire was started by a candle. Jane tries to question Grace Poole, but gets nowhere. Jane does not understand why Grace is allowed to stay and why there is so much secrecy around the event. Rochester leaves Thornfield for a party and to see Blanche Ingram, a beautiful, talented woman. Jane asks if the two might marry, but Mrs. Fairfax discounts the possibility due to age differences. Jane forces herself to draw a plain, critical picture of herself, then to draw a picture of the beautiful Miss Ingram. The two portraits make a striking contrast. Jane uses the differences to prove to herself that Mr. Rochester would never choose her over Blanche.

Chapter XVI Analysis

In an attempt to satisfy her curiosity, Jane attempts to question Grace about the events that occurred in Mr. Rochester's bed room the night before. Jane interprets Grace's responses as cool and calculated. By her responses, Jane suspects the woman is covering for herself and perhaps even planning an attack on Jane.

Here is also the beginning of a love triangle which involves Jane, Blanche and Mr. Rochester. Jane already shows signs of being emotionally attached to Mr. Rochester and when a second female appears in Mr. Rochester's life, she does her best to suffocate those feelings which she believes are improper.

Chapter XVII

Chapter XVII Summary

After two weeks absence and Jane considering finding a new position, Mr. Rochester writes saying he is coming back in three days and bringing guests. Jane notices that Grace does not join the flurry of preparations, staying mostly on the third floor. Mr. Rochester and Blanche lead the party of guests. While the guests freshen up, Jane goes down and gets dinner for her and Adèle. Jane is forced to attend a party that evening. Although Blanche is beautiful she is prideful and full of herself. Jane studies the face and actions of Mr. Rochester. The ladies speak poorly of governesses. Jane stays to hear Rochester sing, then slips from the room. Mr. Rochester meets her in the hall, questioning why she did not speak to him at the party and asking if she is all right. He insists she join the party each night in the drawing room.

Chapter XVII Analysis

After the midnight fire, Jane both dreads and looks forward to her next encounter with Mr. Rochester. However, he chooses this time to take an unexpected trip. When he returns, he brings with him a party of friends including the prideful Blanche. Jane believes Blanche to be a competitor for Mr. Rochester's attention. In fact, she goes so far as to suggest to Mrs. Fairfax that Mr. Rochester may be considering marrying Blanche. With this introduction of a third female, Jane's interest in Mr. Rochester seems to deepen. However, as is shown by the broken off farewell at the end of the chapter, suspicions arise that Mr. Rochester has feelings for Jane also. It is already known that he called Celine by the affectionate name "my angel"; is this perhaps what he almost called Jane?

Chapter XVIII

Chapter XVIII Summary

Jane enjoys guests in the house. She observes how bland the relationship between Mr. Rochester and Blanche seems. Jane is surprised Mr. Rochester would be interested in a mate only for looks and money, instead of as a companion. One evening, a man named Mr. Mason appears asking for Rochester; additionally, an old gypsy woman arrives offering to tell fortunes, who will only see the guests one by one. Blanche returns from her reading seemingly disbelieving what she heard, but Jane can tell she is quite disturbed. After all are through, the gypsy says there is one more lady who has not had her fortune read. Jane agrees to meet with the gypsy.

Chapter XVIII Analysis

Chapter 18 begins with a joyful tone. Jane enjoys the festive nature of Thornfield Hall. Much of the chapter is taken up with Jane's impressions of Blanche and Mr. Rochester's interactions. However, at the end of the chapter, the text takes on a mysterious tone with the appearance of two strange guests. The first, a man from the West Indies, claims to be a friend of Mr. Rochester. The next is an old, unattractive gypsy woman who wants to tell the young, unmarried ladies their fortunes. Blanche insists on having her fortune told first. She emerges with a look of coldness in her eyes. Although she does not appear to be terribly affected by the woman's words, it is implied that the gypsy tells Blanche something she does not want to hear.

Chapter XIX

Chapter XIX Summary

Jane tells the woman she has no faith in the gypsy art. The gypsy then looks at Jane's palm which she can make nothing of, so decides to read Jane's face.The gypsy asks Jane about her aspirations and whether or not she has interest in any gentlemen. The gypsy brings to mind Jane watching Mr. Rochester and Blanche during the evenings in the drawing room. The gypsy questions Jane about how she feels about Blanche and Mr. Rochester and their possible marriage. As Jane is about to leave, she notices the gypsy's finger and realizes it is Rochester. Jane tells Mr. Rochester about Mr. Mason's arrival and he is shocked the man has come to visit. Rochester asks what Jane would do if everyone snubbed him and Jane promises she would stand by him, which seems to please him.

Chapter XIX Analysis

In an amusing twist, it turns out the gypsy is Mr. Rochester in disguise. This light mood is broken, however, when Jane tells Mr. Rochester that Mr. Mason has come to visit. Mr. Rochester's line of questioning foreshadows that Mr. Mason may have some information about Mr. Rochester that might be considered taboo by average society. Identity is a theme in this chapter. Note how the use of disguise allows Mr. Rochester to interview Jane concerning her feelings for him without having to give away his identity. Jane is also torn about the identity of the gypsy. While she doubts the woman is a gypsy, she thinks the woman may be Grace in disguise. While the identity of the gypsy is revealed by the end of the chapter, Mr. Mason's identity, and the news he brings, remains cloaked.

Chapter XX

Chapter XX Summary

Jane awakes and hears a ghastly cry for help from the third floor. Mr. Rochester tells the guests that a servant was having a nightmare, which Jane disbelieves. Mr. Rochester asks Jane to bring a sponge and volatile salts. Before leading her into a room, he asks if she is sickened by the sight of blood. They enter a third floor room and there is a creature making a snarling, dog-like sound which ends in what Jane recognizes as Grace's laughter. Mr. Mason is there, soaked in blood. Rochester is going for a doctor and asks Jane to sit with Mason and not to talk. Jane wonders how Mason fits into the puzzle. The doctor attends to Mason while Rochester tells Mason he can leave and forget this time. Rochester and Jane walk in the garden the next morning, but she learns nothing more except that Mason knows a secret that could destroy Rochester's happiness. He also asks Jane's opinion of Blanche.

Chapter XX Analysis

The mystery that defines this Gothic novel deepens as the sleeping guests at Thornfield are awakened by screams and sounds of a struggle. Mr. Rochester calms and sends the guests back to their rooms. Jane, however, he calls into his confidence and asks to help in the emergency. Mr. Mason, it seems, has somehow been bitten and cut by a woman on the third floor. The mystery of the third floor deepens to include Mr. Mason.

Also introduced here is the theme of love, as Mr. Mason breaks into tears as he leaves, asking that the woman who injured him to be treated kindly—it is obvious the person who hurt him is someone he loves. Also, Mr. Rochester again treats Jane in a way that could give mixed messages. He praises her for her help and speaks to her tenderly and kindly. The next moment, however, he changes the topic to speak of his love for Blanche.

Chapter XXI

Chapter XXI Summary

Jane writes of premonitions, which she believes in. Once after Bessie has a dream about a baby, her younger sister dies. For a week now, Jane has been dreaming of a baby. Bessie's husband, Robert, arrives at Thornfield to say that Robert has killed himself and Mrs. Reed has had a stroke from the shock and is asking for Jane. Rochester elicits a promise that she will return. She asks that he send Adèle to a school if he marries Blanche. The parting is awkward.

Jane arrives at Gateshead and is greeted coldly by one sister and sarcastically by the other and told Jane cannot see Mrs. Reed that evening. Bessie shows Jane to Mrs. Reed's room anyway. Mrs. Reed rambles, saying that Mr. Reed loved Jane more than his own children. Ten days pass before Jane can visit Mrs. Reed again. She passes her time drawing. The sisters take notice of her drawings and open up some to Jane. One wants to marry well and the other to join a convent. When Mrs. Reed realizes Jane is in her room, she directs her to a letter from an uncle John who wished to adopt Jane and leave her his estate. Mrs. Reed told him Jane had died. Jane tries to reconcile with Mrs. Reed, but she is unwilling and passes away in the night.

Chapter XXI Analysis

Despite the injustice served her by the Reeds, Jane returns to Gateshead at Mrs. Reed's request where she conducts herself in a mature and loving manner. In her last moments alive, Mrs. Reed refuses to forgive Jane for the wrongs she believes Jane committed. During her time with her aunt, however, Jane learns she does have an uncle who cares for her and at one point wanted to adopt her.

During the time she is at Gateshead again, Jane also gets a chance to know the grown up versions of Eliza and Georgiana Reed. The two are a study in opposites. Eliza is religious but cold and uncaring. Georgiana, on the other hand, cares only for having fun and going to parties. Neither seems to have much grief for their dead brother or their dying mother.

Chapter XXII

Chapter XXII Summary

Jane helps her two cousins for a month and finally leaves for Thornfield. She hears rumors that Blanche and Rochester will marry soon and Jane wonders about her fate. As she walks to the house, she sees Mr. Rochester sitting on a stone writing. He is pleased Jane has returned and lets Jane know that fact. Jane also admits she is glad to be back at home with Mr. Rochester. Later that evening Mr. Rochester seems strangely pleased at seeing Jane, Adèle and Mrs. Fairfax together. During the next two weeks, there are no signs of an upcoming marriage.

Chapter XXII Analysis

Here Jane transitions from Gateshead back to Thornfield. This peaceful, happy chapter is tinged only with the possiblity that the peace of Thornfield will be broken up by the marriage of Mr. Rochester to the hateful but beautiful Blanche.

Chapter XXIII

Chapter XXIII Summary

Jane and Mr. Rochester inadvertently meet in the garden and sit and talk. He tells her he will be marrying Blanche and Adèle will go to school and Jane will need to find a new position. Indeed Rochester has already found her one in Ireland. Rochester says Jane will forget him and she sobs, confessing her feelings for him and her belief that Blanche is beneath him. He tries to embrace her, but she does not allow it. He asks Jane to marry him, explaining that he has found out that Blanche is just after his money. Jane says yes to the proposal. They part, but not before Mrs. Fairfax sees them kissing. The next morning, Adèle tells Jane the horse-chestnut tree in the orchard was hit by lightning the night before, splitting it in half.

Chapter XXIII Analysis

This chapter is the turning point in Jane and Mr. Rochester's relationship. It is here they profess their love for each other. Jane finally understands Mr. Rochester has the same feelings for her that she has for him. Mr. Rochester explains that he tricked Blanche into showing her true nature by starting a rumor that he was not worth nearly as much money as originally thought. Blanche took the bait and treated him coldly, causing the relationship to be broken off. Despite the joyous tone of this chapter, there is trouble lurking. This trouble is foreshadowed by the splitting of the horse-chestnut under which Mr. Rochester proposes to Jane.

The politics of love is discussed in this chapter. Jane tells Mr. Rochester that she is a better person than he because she would not allow herself to be trapped in a loveless, companion-less marriage. She feels this is what Mr. Rochester will be doing if he continues with his plans to marry Blanche. Although Blanche is beautiful and rich, Jane knows the two are not equals and the match is not a good one. After becoming acquainted with Mr. Rochester and learning to converse with him as an equal and almost as one person, Jane truly knows what love is.

Chapter XXIV

Chapter XXIV Summary

Jane wakes the next morning in a jubilant mood and greets Rochester, who says they will be married in four weeks. He wants her to wear the family jewels, and she declines. He asks her what she expects of him and she says he will love her for a while and then like her. He denies that, saying he has found a treasure he will always cherish. When Jane asks about Blanche, Mr. Rochester said he hoped to make Jane jealous and discover her true feelings for him; he reassures Jane that Blanche was not hurt and chose to end the engagement.

After Rochester explains the situation, Mrs. Fairfax warns Jane not to be too trustful of Mr. Rochester. They go shopping and Rochester tries to get Jane to buy lots of colorful gowns; she settles for one black and one grey. She decides to write her uncle and tell him she is marrying. She insists on retaining her salary and position as governess until they are married. She maintains this reserve up to the wedding date.

Chapter XXIV Analysis

Again, the tone of this chapter is happy and loving. There is only a slight bit of discord when Mr. Rochester insists on dressing Jane up and covering her with jewels, but Jane soon convinces him she is not happy being treated this way. The only foreshadowing in this chapter comes from Mrs. Fairfax's warning that Jane needs to be careful of Mr. Rochester's intentions. Although it is uncertain exactly to what Mrs. Fairfax is referring, it can be assumed she knows something about his character or position Jane does not know. As a result, Jane does hold Mr. Rochester at a distance throughout their four week engagement period.

The politics of love and marriage are addressed by Mrs. Fairfax in this chapter. When Mrs. Fairfax talks to Jane about the unusual nature of their marriage, she stresses the need for equality of position and fortune in a marriage. However, Mr. Rochester and Jane are not on equal terms in their positions or fortunes. Jane believes, however, it is more important the two have an equality of intelligence and feeling than possessions.

Chapter XXV

Chapter XXV Summary

It is now the day before the wedding and Jane is ill at ease because of a strange happening. Jane finds Rochester and tells him of her dream. She is outside on a dark, stormy night walking on a road trying to catch up to Mr. Rochester. In her arms is a crying infant. In a second dream, Jane is walking around the ruins of Thornfield. All that is left is the high, front wall. Again, she carries a child. She hears hoof beats galloping away and somehow knows it is Mr. Rochester leaving on a long journey. She climbs to the top of the wall to see him one last time, but the wall gives way and she falls. Jane wakes and a tall dark-haired woman is in the room. The woman tears up Jane's wedding veil and then Jane passes out. When Rochester tries to tell her that Jane imagined it, Jane points out the torn veil. Rochester says it was probably Grace Poole and directs Jane to sleep in the nursery.

Chapter XXV Analysis

Gloom and doom return in this chapter as the weather becomes dark and stormy with eerie, gale-like wind. Jane has two nightmares, both of which involve Bessie's dreaded infant, an omen of bad fortune. If these signs were not enough, Jane also has a midnight visitor who rips her wedding veil in two. Note that the veil is torn from top to bottom, just as the veil in the temple at Jerusalem at the crucifixion of Christ.

Bertha is described by Jane as a dark, ominous woman who, by trying on the veil, seems to be attempting to take Jane's place. In reality, and unknown to Jane, however, it is Jane who is trying to take Bertha's place. Mr. Rochester puts blame for the incident on Grace, telling Jane that one year and one day from their wedding day he will explain to her why he keeps Grace around.

Chapter XXVI

Chapter XXVI Summary

Jane dresses and Rochester practically drags her to the church, which is on the grounds of Thornfield. As they go inside, Jane notices two strangers pacing in the graveyard. At the point where the minister asks if anyone knows of an impediment to the marriage, a man named Briggs steps forward and states that Mr. Rochester has a wife. After offering solid evidence, Rochester admits that he has a wife who is insane and takes them to meet Bertha, who acts like a rabid animal.

Mr. Briggs tells Jane she will not be held responsible and her uncle will be glad to hear she is unharmed. Her uncle, upon learning of the upcoming nuptials, investigated Rochester. He is dying, so suggests Jane remain in England. She goes to her room and is calm as she changes dresses, but then grief overwhelms her.

Chapter XXVI Analysis

Here Mr. Rochester's secret is out. The woman whom he has kept in the attic is indeed his wife. Grace is not responsible for setting Mr. Rochester's bed on fire, biting Mr. Mason or tearing Jane's veil. All of this mischief has been done by his wife. Many questions surround Mr. Rochester's decision to keep Bertha locked in the attic instead of sending her to an asylum. It is known from reading the book that Bertha was mad before he married her, but this fact was hidden from him. Also, in this time period, one could not divorce a spouse without approval from the government. This procedure was often slow and expensive and divorce was usually not granted to those married to an insane person. Ironically, it is Jane's letter to her uncle that starts the process which leads to the interruption of Jane and Mr. Rochester's marriage.

Chapter XXVII

Chapter XXVII Summary

Jane finally calms down a bit and decides she will leave. She opens her door and finds Rochester sitting outside the door. He apologizes, although Jane has already forgiven him. She knows he loves her and she does not want to leave him. He discusses options—he wants to send Adèle to a school and then travel with Jane. He says he could have put Bertha in a mental home, but it would have meant an early death, and he did not feel it was right for him to do. Rochester explains that Bertha was an arranged marriage and he did not learn of the insanity in her family until later. His father knew of it beforehand, but only wanted the large dowry that came with Bertha. She became more and more insane and Rochester could not divorce her because she had been diagnosed as insane and according to the laws, one could not divorce an insane spouse.

He moves Bertha to Thornfield and hires Grace to care for her. He then decides he will find a second wife. He describes his search up until the point that he met Jane, whom he observed at great length. Jane stops him at this point and says she must leave Thornfield and she wants to hear no more of the past. She wakes in the middle of the night to a voice telling her to leave, and she does.

Chapter XXVII Analysis

In this chapter Mr. Rochester attempts to explain himself and his plan to Jane. The tone and mood of the chapter are one of quiet resolution. Although Mr. Rochester begs her to run away with him, Jane knows she must leave him. Jane forgives Mr. Rochester for his crime and feels he is truly remorseful for what he has done to her. Despite his unhappiness and the lack of fulfillment he finds with Bertha, he is too kind to put her in a living situation that will be harmful to her, a characteristic that is in his favor. Further, Mr. Rochester commanded his employees not to tell Jane about his wife in the attic. This may perhaps explain the servants' and especially Mrs. Fairfax's unusual behavior when Mr. Rochester and Jane's plan for marriage is announced. Again Jane's true nature and her respect for herself shines through as she chooses to accept her pain and leave, despite her desire to stay with the one she loves.

Chapter XXVIII

Chapter XXVIII Summary

After two days, Jane stops in Whitecross, famished and with no money, having left her belongings on the coach by accident. She tries to find work and has no success. Jane walks out of the city and walks toward a house that is lit. She looks in the window and sees three women knitting in mourning clothes. She asks a servant to speak to the ladies, but is refused entrance. Jane collapses on the doorstep.

Unknown to both Hannah and Jane, St. John has been listening to their discussion. He asks admittance for both he and Jane. The two younger women are his sisters and they invite both in. They feed Jane and lead her to a bed upstairs.

Chapter XXVIII Analysis

Despite the hardships she has endured, Jane is determined to make a life for herself away from Thornfield and Mr. Rochester. Even in her weakened and fatigued state she will not reduce herself to begging. She instead tries to find work. Almost in a state of death she falls down at the doorway of a house. Compassionate people take her in and care for her.

Chapter XXIX

Chapter XXIX Summary

In several days, Jane is strong enough to move about and she learns she is at Moor House or Marsh End. The man's name is St. John Rivers, a clergyman in the nearby village of Morton. He is home only to be with his sisters, Diana and Mary, at the recent death of their father. The three siblings arrive and insist Jane join them in the parlor for tea. Jane refuses to give many details of her life and says she wishes to find work. The sisters insist that she stay with them until then. St. John agrees to help her find work.

Chapter XXIX Analysis

Things are looking better for Jane in this chapter. She has found the sympathy of caring people who promise to help her find work and a means of caring for herself. She is at last strong enough to explain her situation to the family more fully. She leaves out only the part of her heartbreak caused by Mr. Rochester.

Chapter XXX

Chapter XXX Summary

Jane finds she likes the people of Moor House. They enjoy learning together and Jane becomes close to the two sisters, but not so much to St. John, who is moody. Jane says his sermons are both powerful, but indescribable. After a month at Moor House, the siblings make plans to shut up the home; Hannah, the housekeeper, will go with St. John and the two sisters will return to their governess positions. Jane accepts an offer as mistress of a school for girls that St. John is starting. Before they leave, they learn their wealthy uncle John has died, but left his money to another relative. They are not resentful, but talk of how a little money could have eased their lives.

Chapter XXX Analysis

Jane finds she fits in well with the people at Moor House. She dreads the day when they will part. However, Diana and Mary must go back to their jobs, so the house is closed up. St. John creates a position for Jane as the mistress of a school for country girls which she readily accepts. Meanwhile news comes that St. John, Mary and Diana's Uncle John has died and has left them nothing. It is ironic that Jane has an uncle by the same name who one month earlier was near death himself.

Chapter XXXI

Chapter XXXI Summary

Jane settles into her new home and job. She does not particularly enjoy her job, but is content to stay. St. John comes by one day with supplies and chats with Jane, telling her of his desire to be a missionary. He is, in fact, preparing to leave for the mission field. Rosamond Oliver, a lovely woman of a wealthy merchant family, comes by and flirts with St. John, who does not respond.

Chapter XXXI Analysis

Even in her misery and depression, Jane realizes she made the right choice in leaving Mr. Rochester. Her faith in God and his direction deepens as she begins to see God's hand in the path of her life. In this chapter Jane also meets Rosamond, the daughter of the school's benefactor. Although it appears to Jane that Rosamond has a distinct liking for St. John, he does not return this liking. It is uncertain whether he does not like the girl, or if he simply pretends he does not like her.

Chapter XXXII

Chapter XXXII Summary

The community befriends Jane and she is still content except with the grief of Rochester always present below the surface. Rosamond visits the school and Jane often, though St. John pays her no mind. Rosamond asks Jane to do a portrait for her father, which she does. They are so impressed, they invite Jane to their home.

On a following holiday Jane is finishing the portrait of Rosamond when St. John knocks on her door. They talk about his feelings for Rosamond and how she is not the type to be a missionary's wife. Jane offers to do a portrait of Rosamond for him, but he declines. Just as he is about to leave, he notices something, tears off a piece of writing from her book and leaves quickly.

Chapter XXXII Analysis

Although St. John loves Rosamond and she loves him also, he refuses to marry her or even show any interest in her. Despite the fact they love each other, St. John is looking for a mate who will be able to serve him as a missionary's wife.

Chapter XXXIII

Chapter XXXIII Summary

As darkness falls, Jane is surprised when St. John arrives. He tells a story, which turns out to be Jane's life story, then indicates he received a letter from Mr. Briggs looking for Jane. The bit of paper he had torn off earlier was her name, Jane Eyre. St. John tells her that her uncle passed away and left her 20,000 pounds. He implies he has more news, but wants one of his sisters to give it. Jane presses him and he relates that his full name is St. John Eyre Rivers and his mother was the sister of both Jane's father and her uncle John, the same who left the three siblings nothing. Jane is excited and tells St. John to write his sisters and bring them home as she will open Moor House and share the fortune equally with them.

Chapter XXXIII Analysis

Here Jane's entire fortune changes in one day. She now has the things she has always desired. Jane has three new cousins whom she enjoys and sees as kindred spirits. She also has a fortune of her own, enough to keep her comfortable for her entire life. Despite their history, Jane is still in love with Mr. Rochester. This is shown by her insistent questioning of St. John concerning Mr. Rochester.

Chapter XXXIV

Chapter XXXIV Summary

St. John urges Jane to reconsider retiring to Moor House and rather to stay teaching and doing good in the world. Jane says she wants to do what she desires for a while. Diana and Mary return to Moor House and love the changes Jane has made. St. John urges Jane to learn Hindostanee and to visit the school no matter the weather. One day he finds her crying because neither of her letters to Thornfield have been answered. He asks her to walk with him and while they are walking, he proposes. Jane knows St. John only proposes because she would be a good missionary's wife and he does not love her in a wifely way. Jane says she will go with him, but not as his wife. He says that arrangement will not work.

Chapter XXXIV Analysis

For the second time in her life, Jane is proposed to. This time she declines, knowing she cannot allow herself to married to a man she does not love and who does not love her. Notice that while around St. John, Jane feels as if she is being suffocated and is not allowed to be herself. These are the opposite feelings Jane has when she is around Mr. Rochester. Unlike St. John's love which causes Jane to feel trapped, Mr. Rochester's love makes her feel free.

Chapter XXXV

Chapter XXXV Summary

St. John treats Jane with an icy reserve, asking her several more times to reconsider, but she is unwilling to marry a man who does not love her. When she tells Mary of the conversations she has been having with St. John, Mary is sad that he does not love Jane and marry her and stay there. The evening before St. John leaves, he reads the book of Revelations, looking straight at Jane, implying she will go to hell if she does not marry him and become a missionary. After the reading, he gently urges her to reconsider once more, but she thinks she hears Rochester's voice and runs outside.

Chapter XXXV Analysis

Tension builds as St. John continues to pressure Jane to accept his proposal. St. John doles out his punishment emotionally as he uses Jane's need for acceptance against her. At times he drives Jane to tears because of his icy silence. After an unusually trying day, Jane is almost at the point of saying yes to the man when she hears the voice of Mr. Rochester call her name. Hearing this beloved voice both breaks the spell St. John holds over Jane and also reminds her of the reality of love.

This chapter builds on the theme of love with its discussion of the relationship between St. John and Jane. St. John does not love Jane and Jane is aware of this lack of love. While St. John does not understand how a marriage with no love could kill a person, Diana understands and sympathizes with Jane. Meanwhile, the mysterious voice that keeps Jane from saying yes to St. John adds to the Gothic feel of the novel.

Chapter XXXVI

Chapter XXXVI Summary

St. John leaves Jane a message hoping she will recognize God's will for her to be his wife and a missionary. Jane leaves a message with good wishes. Jane tells the two sisters she is going to be taking a journey and leaving the next day. She catches a coach to Thornfield, recognizing the area as they draw close. Jane gets off in town and walks to Thornfield, deciding she wants to approach the home from the front. She is shocked to see the place burned to the ground. Jane returns to the Inn and learns Rochester is still alive. The blaze was started by Bertha. Mr. Rochester got all the servants out, but when he went for Bertha, she jumped to her death. Rochester was blinded in the fire and lost his left hand. He is living at Ferndean, thirty miles hence.

Chapter XXXVI Analysis

This chapter is one of tense anticipation as Jane searches for news of Mr. Rochester. Jane at first fears Mr. Rochester has left England on another trip, but after she sees the ruin at Thornfield, fears he is dead. Note the chilling illustration of the dead lover which Bronte includes to make her readers understand what a shock it was for Jane to find Thornfield burned and uninhabited. Jane's view of the ruins of Thornfield brings to mind a dream she had several days before her intended wedding to Mr. Rochester. In this dream she tries to climb the ruined wall of Thornfield while carrying a small child.

In this chapter Bronte also explores the theme of love. It is out of Bertha's deep hatred for her husband that she sets fire to Thornfield. Since the bed in Jane's old bedroom is also set on fire by Bertha, we know she was also communicating her rage toward Jane for winning the heart of Mr. Rochester. However, as the house burns and Bertha stands on the roof of the house, Mr. Rochester could have just let her die there. Her death would have given him the freedom to marry Jane. Instead, Mr. Rochester attempts to coax Bertha down from the roof and to safety.

Chapter XXXVII

Chapter XXXVII Summary

When Jane arrives at Ferndean, she watches as Rochester comes out of the door and stands there, though a servant urges him back inside. He stumbles around in the yard a while and then returns inside. Jane knocks and is admitted, though Mary, John's wife, says Mr. Rochester will see no one. Jane takes his tray of food to him and they talk. She cleans up Rochester and the room and tells him briefly of her life and says she will tell him more in the morning. She promises him more of her story the next day.

The next morning Jane tells Mr. Rochester everything that has happened since she left Thornfield. He says she would not want a cripple, but proposes and Jane accepts. Rochester says he has begun to see the hand of God in the path of his life. As proof, he relates an experience he had a few days before, on a Monday night. Mr. Rochester said he had been longing for Jane, and finally called out for her out loud. He then heard the response, "I am coming: wait for me," and "Where are you?" Mr. Rochester believes these responses strange because no voice could penetrate the deep woods surrounding Ferndale. He expresses the belief that perhaps Jane unconsciously comforted him even from her distance. Although Jane does not speak, she realizes that she had her strange experience of hearing Mr. Rochester's voice at the same time on the same day that he had his.

Chapter XXXVII Analysis

Although Ferndale is described as being dark and mouldy, and Jane's initial reaction to her walk down the lane that leads into the woods is that she is lost and the home must be uninhabited, the tone of this chapter begins to lift as Mr. Rochester realizes his beloved Jane is home to stay. The most supernatural part of the chapter occurs with Mr. Rochester's description of the events of Monday night when he felt as if Jane were answering him when he called for her. Also note how Jane hides the knowledge of her similar experience that same night in her heart.

Chapter XXXVIII

Chapter XXXVIII Summary

Jane writes of her marriage to her three cousins, and though St. John never mentions her marriage, they do resume their friendship. Jane takes Adèle home to Ferndean and enrolls her in a more appropriate school and keeps a close eye on her. As Adèle matures, she and Jane become great companions. After 10 years of marriage, Jane reflects that her married life has been the greatest blessing of her life. Two years after their marriage Rochester recovers partial sight in one eye, so he is able to see his first-born son. Diana and Mary are married also and happy in their unions. St. John is steady and firm on the missionary path he has set for himself. From the news in his last letter, however, Jane feels St. John will not live on earth much longer. Jane is happy St. John will soon be with his Maker in eternal paradise.

Chapter XXXVIII Analysis

The light, happy tone of this final chapter differs greatly from the dark tone of the rest of the book. It is here that Bronte departs from her Gothic timbre. Jane has finally found happiness in marriage with Mr. Rochester. Those she knows and loves are also happy, making her joy complete. Through all that Jane has suffered in her life and all that she has lost, these losses have finally been repaid. Note the use of biblical phrases in this last chapter, specifically that the final lines of the novel echo the final lines of the book of Revelation in New Testament.

Characters

Bessie

A woman who is the "nurse" at Mrs. Reed's house, Gateshead Hall, Bessie helps take care of the Reed children and young Jane Eyre. Jane regards Bessie as the most sympathetic figure in the Reed household, although Bessie seems somewhat aloof. In her narrative, Jane recalls Bessie as "pretty" and "a slim young woman, with black hair, dark eyes, very nice features, and good, clear complexion." Jane also remarks on Bessie's "capricious and hasty temper, and indifferent ideas of principle or Justice." Bessie helps Jane prepare for her departure to Lowood Institution. Bessie shows up again about eight years later as Jane is leaving Lowood for Thornfield Hall. She has married, and she tells Jane what has happened to the Reeds in the intervening years. She also says that Jane's uncle had come to Gateshead Hall searching for Jane but had gone back to his home on Madiera when Mrs. Reed told him that Jane was dead. Jane meets Bessie again when she (Jane) returns to Gateshead to visit the dying Mrs. Reed.

Mr. Brocklehurst

Mr. Brocklehurst is the proprietor of Lowood Institution—the boarding school for orphans that Jane Eyre attends. He is introduced in chapter 4, when he comes to Gateshead Hall (Mrs. Reed's home) to examine Jane before admitting her to Lowood. He is described as "a black pillar! The straight, narrow, sable-clad shape standing erect on the rug." Mr. Brocklehurst is one of the novel's hypocrites. Although he professes to run Lowood as a charitable institution, he is more concerned with making a profit than he is with educating the girls who live at the school. He criticizes Miss Temple for giving the girls a special lunch of bread and cheese, saying that the girls' bodies should be starved to help save their souls. He also denounces some girls for having naturally curly hair and orders it to be cut off. (However, he does not seem to object to his own daughters' elaborate curls.) When Jane drops her slate and breaks it, Mr. Brocklehurst makes her stand on a stool in front of the class as punishment. The character of Mr. Brocklehurst is based partly on William Carns Wilson, an evangelical clergyman who founded the Clergy Daughters' School at Cowan Bridge. Wilson mismanaged the school and many of the girls (including Charlotte Brontë and her sisters) suffered from the resulting poor conditions. However, Wilson was evidently well intentioned, unlike the hypocritical Brocklehurst.

Helen Burns

Helen Burns is a girl who becomes Jane Eyre's best friend at Lowood Institution—the boarding school for orphans that Jane attends. Jane meets Helen in chapter 5, during an outdoor exercise period. Jane notes that Helen is reading Samuel Johnson's

Rasselas; the book's name strikes Jane as "strange, and consequently attractive." Jane has earlier heard "the sound of a hollow cough" but does not immediately identify Helen with this cough. (The cough foreshadows Helen's fatal bout of consumption, or tuberculosis). Four years older than Jane, the fourteen-year-old Helen helps the newly arrived orphan adjust to the school and teachers. Helen embodies the virtues of patience, forbearance, humility, forgiveness, and Christian love. She conveys the importance of these qualities to the more worldly Jane. As Helen lies dying of tuberculosis, she tells Jane that she is not afraid: she is going to a better world. Jane gets into bed with Helen; the next morning, Helen has died. The character of Helen Burns is modeled after Charlotte Brontë 's eldest sister Maria, who died of tuberculosis in 1825.

Jane Eyre

The narrator, central character, and eponymous heroine of *Jane Eyre,* Jane is both a fully realized fictional creation in the novel and, in many ways, a voice for the author, Charlotte Brontë. In a book that makes use of many of the stock situations and characters of the Gothic genre, Jane stands out as a woman who runs against the Gothic stereotype of the submissive woman in distress. Physically plain and slight, Jane is acutely intelligent and fiercely independent. She is also a shrewd judge of character. Throughout the novel, she relies on her intelligence and determination to achieve self-fulfillment. Yet her strength of character does not make her immune to suffering; on the contrary, she suffers because she is so keenly aware of the difference between how things are and how they might be. Jane believes that "we were born to strive and endure." Her nature is passionate, but she also recognizes the dangers of uncontrolled passion. Although she is rebellious when rebellion is called for, she is inherently conscious that actions must be tempered by reason. When she refuses to become Rochester's mistress, she cites a higher moral law as her justification: "Laws and principles are not for the time when there is no temptation; they are for such moments as this, when body and soul rise against their rigor.. .." In this action, as well as in refusing to marry St. John Rivers, she proves her unwillingness to compromise her principles. She wants to achieve her goals on the right terms, not on any terms. Utterly opposed to hypocrisy, she nonetheless is capable of recognizing that goodness exists with flawed human beings. Because she is secure in herself, she is able to give herself fully to Rochester as his equal. At the end of the novel, writing about her marriage in language reminiscent of the Song of Solomon, she says: "I hold myself supremely blest —blest beyond language can express; because 1 am my husband's life as fully as he is mine." Intellectual, faithful, loving, Jane Eyre is one of the most original, vivid, and significant characters in the nineteenth-century English novel.

Mrs. Fairfax

The housekeeper at Thornfield Hall, Mrs. Fairfax replies to Jane's advertisement and offers her the position of governess at Thornfield. Jane initially assumes that she is the owner of the house. An older woman, Mrs. Fairfax is a widow, and is a distant relation of

Mr. Rochester by marriage. Jane finds her "a placid-tempered, kind-natured woman, of competent education and average intelligence." Although she treats Jane in a friendly manner, she cannot provide the kind of intellectual stimulation and companionship that Jane Craves.

Jack

See John Reed

Blanche Ingram

Blanche Ingram is a young woman, the daughter of a local aristocrat who spends some time in the company of Mr. Rochester. Mrs. Fairfax tells Jane that Rochester is expected to marry her. Blanche is very tall but has a proud, haughty manner, a "mocking air," and a "satirical laugh." Her speech is affected, especially when she speaks to her snobbish mother, Lady Ingram. In short, Blanche is "very showy" but "not genuine." She treats Jane with extreme condescension and exhibits a "spiteful antipathy" toward Adele. Although she herself is in love with Rochester, Jane seems to stoically accept that he will marry Blanche. Ironically, this apparent certainty makes Jane more passionate toward Rochester, who in turn reveals that he had no intention of marrying Blanche. As well as serving the plot function of bringing Jane's passion for Rochester to a head, Blanche serves as a character foil to Jane: her artificiality makes Jane's frankness all the more evident and attractive.

Lady Ingram

The mother of Blanche Ingram, Lady Ingram makes rude, condescending remarks about governesses during a social visit to Thornfield Hall. She reminds Jane of Mrs. Reed, with whom she has certain parallels.

Mr. Lloyd

An apothecary who examines and treats young Jane Eyre in chapter 3, Mr. Lloyd is a sympathetic figure. He notes that Jane is profoundly unhappy at Gateshead Hall (Mrs. Reed's home) and asks Jane if she would like to go away to school. He apparently broaches this subject with Mrs. Reed, although it is some months before Jane is sent away to Lowood Institution.

Bertha Mason

Bertha Mason, the insane wife of Edward Rochester who has been hidden away in an attic room at Thornfield Hall, is one of the more exotic figures of nineteenth-century fiction. Yet she ap pears on only a few pages of the book and never speaks. (Indeed,

she is not capable of rational conversation; the noises she makes are scarcely human). She is not so much a character as a symbol, although critics do not agree on exactly what she symbolizes. She may be an embodiment of violence, unbridled sexuality, or the animal nature that lies behind the veil of civilization. She also suggests Rochester's dark side. It has been suggested, too, that she is Jane's darker double. (Indeed, Bertha's confinement in the attic may be seen as an echo of Jane's earlier confinement in a locked room at Gateshead Hall.) In more immediate terms of the plot, Bertha functions as an impediment to Jane's marriage to Rochester. Her Gothic existence is felt long before it is revealed. Shortly after her arrival at Thornfield, Jane hears a strange laughter that is attributed to Grace Poole, the woman who in fact looks after Bertha. Bertha subsequently instigates several violent acts that disrupt the calm of Thornfield, setting fire to Rochester's bed and later attacking her brother, Mr. Mason. On both occasions, Jane intervenes, respectively rescuing Rochester and tending to Mr. Mason's wounds. On both occasions, Rochester tells Jane that Grace Poole was responsible for this violence. On the eve of Jane and Rochester's intended wedding, Bertha enters Jane's room and tears Jane's wedding veil; Jane tells Rochester what she has seen, but Rochester dismisses the vision as a nightmare. Once Bertha can no longer be denied, Rochester shows her to Jane and tells Jane the sordid story of his arranged marriage, years earlier in Jamaica, to this woman whom he barely knew. Bertha ultimately dies when she sets fire to Thornfield—an act that also results in terrible injury to Rochester; but this action sets up Jane's return and Rochester's redemption.

Mr. Mason

Mr. Mason is the brother of Mrs. Rochester (Bertha Mason). Mason's sudden arrival at Thornfield Hall during Rochester's social party clearly upsets Rochester, though Jane is not aware of its significance. That night, Jane hears a horrible sound and discovers that Mason has been attacked and is bleeding badly. On Rochester's instructions, she tends to Mason, whose true identity she does not know. Mason is spirited away early the next morning. He returns to interrupt Jane and Rochester's wedding and reveals that Rochester is already married. Mason, who resides in the West Indies, is conventionally handsome, but Jane notes that his face lacks character. Rochester suggests to Jane that Mason shares the Mason family congenital feeblemindedness.

Miss Miller

An "under teacher" at Lowood Institution—the boarding school for orphans that Jane Eyre attends—Miss Miller is introduced in chapter 5 when Jane arrives at Lowood. She receives Jane and helps to orient her. Miss Miller is described as "a tall lady with dark hair, dark eyes, and a pale and large forehead." Jane's narrative also describes her as "ruddy in complexion, though of a careworn countenance; hurried in gait and action, like one who had always a multiplicity of tasks on hand." Miss Miller disapproves of Mr. Brocklehurst and of the way he runs the school, but is powerless to do anything about it. Jane notes that she looks "purple, weather-beaten, and over-worked."

Rosamond Oliver

The daughter of a wealthy landowner who lives near the home of St. John Rivers, Rosamond Oliver is very pretty, kind, and high-spirited. Jane finds her "elfin" and fairy-like. However, she is essentially vacuous. Jane initially assumes that Rosamond and St. John will marry, but St. John is un-interested in Rosamond, preferring to consider Jane as his potential wife.

Grace Poole

Grace Poole is a mysterious servant who works at Thornfield Hall. When Jane hears strange laughter coming from the attic, Mrs. Fairfax tells her that it is only Grace Poole, who occasionally works there as a seamstress. Grace is "between thirty and forty; a set, square-made figure, red-haired, and with a hard, plain face." She is also fond of alcohol. Rochester initially tells Jane that Grace is responsible for the mysterious incidents at Gateshead. Jane later learns that Grace is actually employed to look after Mrs. Rochester (Bertha Mason), who is insane and who is kept locked in the attic.

Blanche Ingram

Blanche Ingram is a young woman, the daughter of a local aristocrat who spends some time in the company of Mr. Rochester. Mrs. Fairfax tells Jane that Rochester is expected to marry her. Blanche is very tall but has a proud, haughty manner, a "mocking air," and a "satirical laugh." Her speech is affected, especially when she speaks to her snobbish mother, Lady Ingram. In short, Blanche is "very showy" but "not genuine." She treats Jane with extreme condescension and exhibits a "spiteful antipathy" toward Adele. Although she herself is in love with Rochester, Jane seems to stoically accept that he will marry Blanche. Ironically, this apparent certainty makes Jane more passionate toward Rochester, who in turn reveals that he had no intention of marrying Blanche. As well as serving the plot function of bringing Jane's passion for Rochester to a head, Blanche serves as a character foil to Jane: her artificiality makes Jane's frankness all the more evident and attractive.

Georgiana Reed

Georgiana, Jane Eyre's Cousin and the younger daughter of Mrs. Reed, is introduced early in the novel when the young orphan Jane is living at Gateshead Hall as a ward of Mrs. Reed. Young Georgiana has "pink cheeks and golden curls" as well as "a spoiled temper, an acrid spite, a capricious and insolent carriage." She is "universally indulged" by her mother. When Jane returns to Gateshead some nine years later, Georgiana has grown into a frivolous, self-centered woman. Jane eventually learns that Georgiana has married a wealthy man.

John Reed

Jane Eyre's cousin John, the son of Mrs. Reed, is introduced at the beginning of the novel when the young orphan Jane is living at Gateshead Hall as a ward of Mrs. Reed. John, or Jack, is fourteen years old at this time. He bullies and torments Jane behind his mother's back. Jane finds him "disgusting and ugly," but Mrs. Reed indulges the boy and blames Jane for causing trouble while overlooking John's sadistic behavior Some years later, Jane hears that John has been expelled from college. When Jane is summoned to Gateshead to attend the dying Mrs. Reed, she learns that John had become even more dissolute and has committed suicide.

Mrs. Reed

Mrs. Reed is Jane Eyre's aunt, the widow of Jane's uncle Mr. Reed (who was the brother of Jane's mother and who died nine years before the novel begins). She is also the mother of John (Jack), Eliza, and Georgiana. Mrs. Reed is introduced at the beginning of the novel, when the young orphan Jane is living at Gateshead Hall as her ward. When Mr. Reed was on his deathbed, Mrs. Reed promised him that she would "rear and maintain" the orphan Jane. However, Mrs. Reed resents Jane and treats her as an unwanted burden rather than as a dependent child. She continually belittles Jane and punishes her for what she regards as Jane's rebellious nature, while overlooking the faults of her own children. She arranges for Jane to be sent away to Lowood Institution, a boarding school for orphans. In chapter 4, Jane defies Mrs. Reed and tells her what she really thinks of her. This incident is Jane's first moral victory. Jane returns to Gateshead just before Mrs. Reed dies, but is unable to effect reconciliation.

Diana Rivers

The sister of Mary and St. John Rivers; Diana Rivers also turns out to be Jane Eyre's cousin. When Jane arrives at Moor House, hungry and penniless, seeking shelter after she has fled Thornfield Hall, Diana and Mary help restore her to health. Skilled, talented, and well read, the Rivers sisters develop a close friendship with Jane. Like her, they are both governesses, and Brontë portrays them in a favorable light.

Mary Rivers

The sister of Diana and St. John Rivers; she also turns out to be Jane Eyre's cousin. When Jane arrives at Moor House, hungry and penniless, seeking shelter after she has fled Thornfield Hall, Mary and Diana help restore her to health. Skilled, talented, and well-read, the Rivers sisters develop a close friendship with Jane. Like her, they are both governesses, and Brontë portrays them in a favorable light

St. John Rivers

A handsome young clergyman who is the brother of Diana and Mary Rivers; St. John also turns out to be Jane Eyre's cousin. When Jane arrives at Moor House, hungry and penniless, after she has fled Thornfield Hall, St. John offers her shelter. Although Jane becomes close friends with the Rivers sisters, she finds that St. John has "a reserved, an abstracted, and even... a brooding nature"; he is also restless and does not feel at home in England. He tells Jane that she is "intelligent" and that "human affections and sympathies have a most powerful hold on you." Listening to him preach a sermon with Calvinist overtones, she realizes that he has not found peace in his religious faith. He offers Jane the post of schoolmistress at a girls' school he is establishing. It is Rivers who reveals to Jane that they are cousins and that she has inherited a fortune of twenty thousand pounds from their mutual uncle, John Eyre. He persistently asks Jane to marry him and accompany him to India as a missionary—an offer she declines because she realizes that the marriage would be loveless. Although St. John is intelligent, he is austere and inflexible and is unable to appreciate Jane for herself; he would lead her into a life (and death) of martyrdom. In this, he is a complete contrast to the passionate Mr. Rochester.

Mr. Rochester

Mr. Rochester is the central male character and hero (or perhaps antihero) in *Jane Eyre.* He is generally considered to be one of the most memorable romantic characters in nineteenth-century English fiction. A wealthy landowner, Rochester is the master of Thornfield Hall. Jane gradually falls in love with him after she arrives at Thornfield to tutor his ward Adele, the daughter of an earlier mistress. When Mr. Rochester is introduced, he is somewhere between age thirty-five and forty, and thus is as much as twenty years older than Jane. Jane first meets him when she is walking from Thornfield to a nearby town to mail a letter. When his horse slips on the ice he is thrown and injured slightly; Jane helps him to remount. She only learns his identity when she returns to Thornfield and finds him there He is described as having "a dark face, with stem features and a heavy brow" and is not considered handsome. The frequent references to his supposed ugliness help to underscore the fact that he is not a conventional hero; they suggest both secret troubles and hidden strengths that are more than skin-deep. Also, by deliberately making him physically unattractive, (at least by a conventional definition of attractiveness), Brontë wants the reader to know that Jane is not attracted to him because of his looks but because she recognizes something good in his soul. Rochester may be considered a Gothic hero. He is haunted by his guilty knowledge and by a past of which he is ashamed. Like the typical Gothic hero, he is prone to bouts of depression and to seemingly irrational behavior; he also possesses a macabre sense of humor. However, he is much more complex than a stereotypical Gothic hero and has more humanity. His treatment of his insane wife may seem cruel by modem standards, but in his eyes it is the best that can be done for her and is preferable to abandoning her. Yet he also acts selfishly in wishing to keep her existence a secret. He considers himself the victim of a cruel hoax: His marriage to Bertha was an

arranged one, and he was not told that insanity ran in her family. His subsequent wanderings in Europe and his taking of three successive mistresses are perhaps a stock reaction to the restrictions imposed on him by his sham marriage. His relationship with Jane springs from a different motive. He recognizes Jane for what she is, and realizes that he can find salvation in her love. However, in knowingly planning to enter into a bigamous marriage, and then suggesting that she become his mistress, he transgresses moral law. He must lose Jane and suffer punishment and penance (in the form of losing his eyesight and his right hand, as well as his home) by fire before Jane can be fully restored to him. His marriage to Jane is the meeting of true minds, a marriage without secrets or locked doors.

Mrs. Rochester

See Bertha Mason

Miss Scatcherd

A teacher at Lowood Institution—the boarding school for orphans that Jane Eyre attends Miss Scatcherd is the most severe of the teachers. Jane's friend Helen Bums tells Jane that "you must take care not to offend her." Miss Scatcherd punishes Helen for some minor infraction by flogging Helen on the neck with a bunch of twigs, and she verbally abuses Helen. However, Helen accepts her punishment meekly

Miss Temple

The superintendent of Lowood Institution the boarding school for orphans that Jane Eyre attends—Miss Temple is introduced in chapter 5 when Jane arrives at Lowood. Jane describes her as "tall, fair, and shapely," with "a stately air and carriage." She is also kindly, perceptive, well educated, and genuinely concerned with the welfare of her students After the schoolgirls are fed an inedible breakfast, Miss Temple orders that they receive a special lunch of "bread and cheese." Later, she invites Jane and Helen Bums to her room, where she offers the two girls some seedcake and converses with them. She recognizes that both Helen and Jane are exceptional, and acts as their mentor. When Miss Temple eventually marries and leaves Lowood, Jane (who is by then age eighteen, and who with Miss Temple's help has become a teacher at the school) decides to leave the school herself and take a position as a governess.

Adele Varens

Mr. Rochester's young ward, about seven or eight years old, Adele is the daughter of a French opera-dancer with whom Mr. Rochester has had an affair. The woman had claimed that Mr. Rochester was the father, but there is some ambiguity as to whether this is really the case. Adele has lived most of her young life in France and speaks a mixture of French and English. When her mother abandons her, Mr. Rochester has her

brought to England, where he intends to raise her. On Mr. Rochester's instructions, Mrs. Fairfax hires Jane to be Adele's governess at Thornfield. Adele 18 lively and talkative and likes to sing and dance. Jane finds her somewhat coquettish behavior disconcerting, but she comes to feel affection for Adele in spite of the girl's flaws. By contrast, Blanche Ingram regards Adele with distaste.

Jane Eyre

Jane Eyre is the main character of this fictional autobiographical novel. She appears first at the age of 10 years old, later at about age 18 or 19, then again at about 29. Jane becomes an orphan as an infant when her parents die of typhus. She is adopted by her uncle Mr. Reed. According to Mr. Reed's wife, Jane's uncle cared more for her than for his own children. At his death he made his wife promise to continue to care for Jane, however, Mrs. Reed was cruel and hateful to the girl. After an incident in which Jane passed out from fright after being locked in a "haunted" room, Jane requests to be sent to school.

Jane is described as an unattractive child who is fearful of the condemnation of those whom she wishes to please. This desire to please makes her an easy prey for those, such as St. John, who want to manipulate Jane. Although he does not love her, St. John wants Jane to marry him and accompany him as a missionary's wife. She refuses and he punishes her by being withdrawn and icy.

During her time as a governess at Thornfield, Jane meets the love of her life Mr. Rochester. Since Mr. Rochester has a wife still living Mr. Rochester and Jane cannot be married. Mr. Rochester tries to convince Jane to run away with him and live with him as his mistress. Jane's morals, however, will not allow her to live with a man to whom she is not married.

Throughout the novel, Jane develops into a person of excellent moral character and proper behavior despite the fact she had few role models to show her this behavior. Those who influenced her life most deeply were her friend Helen, who died at Lowood, and Miss Temple, Jane's teacher and mentor. Although she acts properly, Jane admits to feeling different from other women. Jane is not happy to simply bake and sew as some women, she must have some outlet and exercise for her active mine.

Mrs. Sarah Reed

Mrs. Reed is Jane's aunt by marriage. Mrs. Reed promises her husband on his deathbed that she will care for Jane. Although she does give Jane food and shelter, Mrs. Reed is cruel to the girl and treats her unfairly. For instance, Mrs. Reed locks Jane in a room Jane believes to be haunted and leaves her there until Jane passes out from fear. Even when Jane requests to be sent away from Mrs. Reed's home to school, Mrs. Reed attempts to mar Jane's school career by telling the headmaster Jane is a liar and a deceitful child.

Later when Mrs. Reed is on her deathbed, she admits to Jane that she was jealous of Jane because Mr. Reed preferred Jane to his own children. Mrs. Reed, on the other hand, hated Jane from the first time she saw the child. At this same time Mrs. Reed tells Jane she had also lied to Jane's other uncle, John Reed. Mrs. Reed told Jane that John had written her wanting to adopt Jane. Mrs. Reed, however, writes the man back telling him Jane is dead. Her reason is that in her dislike of Jane she could not stand to see her in a position where she would be loved and cared for. Mrs. Reed does, however, give Jane the letter from her Uncle John. Once she receives the letter Jane is able to write to her uncle and let him know she is still alive. Ultimately it is this connection with her uncle that keeps Jane from marrying Mr. Rochester while he is still married. John also leaves Jane enough money when he dies that she is independently wealthy. Before Mrs. Reed dies, Jane forgives her for her hatefulness. Even on her deathbed, Mrs. Reed refuses to forgive or be reconciled with Jane.

John Reed

John is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Reed and cousin to Jane. While living together at Gateshead, John is continually provoking Jane as well as being verbally and physically abusive with her. Jane admits she is scared of the boy who is four years her senior and much larger than she. As an adult John spends his life living with bad friends and spending money recklessly. In fact, his lifestyle nearly bankrupts the Reed family. John also spends time in jail for his debts. John ends his life in suicide at his home in London.

Eliza Reed

Eliza is the eldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Reed. She is Jane's cousin. As a child she is not kind to Jane. As an adult Eliza is a rigid, unfeeling person. Although religious, she does not appear to have any care or feeling for other people. After the death of her mother, she joins a convent.

Georgiana Reed

Georgiana is the youngest and most beautiful daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Reed. Georgiana is also Jane's cousin. Like the other Reed children, Georgiana is not kind to Jane as a child. As an adult, however, Georgiana seems to enjoy taking Jane into her confidence. Georgiana's favorite topic of discussion is the winter she spends in London when she is almost married to a titled suitor. Apparently, Georgiana's sister Eliza gets wind of the couple's plan to be married and tells of the plan. This action successfully ends Georgiana's love affair. As a result of this situation, the sisters do not get along with each other and fight often.

Bessie Lee

Bessie is the nanny at Gateshead Hall who is the closest thing Jane has to a friend while Jane lives at Gateshead. At some point after Jane leaves Gateshead, Bessie marries Robert Leaven, the coachman at Gateshead and has three children, one of which she names after Jane. Bessie visits Jane at Lowood right before Jane leaves for Thornfield. Bessie is highly complementary of Jane and her accomplishments, saying Jane is doing much better than any of the three Reed children. Jane meets Bessie again when she visits Gateshead during Mrs. Reed's illness and death.

Mr. Lloyd

Mr. Lloyd is the apothecary who is called to examine Jane after she passes out while she is locked in the red room. Mr. Lloyd is the equivalent of a modern day pharmacist. He is called to treat the servants of Gateshead Hall while the Reeds are treated by a true medical doctor. During a private conversation with Mr. Lloyd, Jane reveals how badly she is treated by the Reeds and how miserable she is living with them. Mr. Lloyd speaks to Mrs. Reed on Jane's behalf about the possibility of Jane being sent to school.

Mr. Robert Brocklehurst

Mr. Brocklehurst is a minister and the benefactor of Lowood School. Although he preaches humility and poverty, he and his family do not abide by his teachings. They are reserved for the students of the school which he manages in a miserly way. After the outbreak of sickness draws attention to the poor conditions at the school, Mr. Brocklehurst is relieved of some of his duties as sole administrator of the school's funds. After this, conditions improve dramatically. It is assumed Mr. Brocklehurst had been stealing funds from the school and using them for personal reasons.

Helen Burns

Helen is Jane's first and truest friend at Lowood. Although she is dealing with her own faults and problems, Helen becomes a source of strength and comfort to Jane. It is Helen who first explains to Jane the meaning of religion and true faith in God. During the typhus outbreak at Lowood, Helen is one of the casualties. Instead of typhus, however, Helen suffers with consumption. She dies in Jane's arms.

Miss Maria Temple

Miss Temple is the superintendent of Lowood Institution while Jane is a student there. After Mr. Brocklehurst calls Jane a liar in front of the entire school, Miss Temple comforts Jane and helps clear Jane of the disgrace. As Jane matures and later

becomes a teacher at Lowood Institution, Miss Temple becomes both Jane's friend and mentor. It is after Miss Temple is married that Jane decides to leave Lowood.

While the other teachers at Lowood are described as being unattractive and unkind, Miss Temple stands out because of her graceful ways and sympathetic nature. When the students are unable to eat their meals because the quality of the food is so poor, Miss Temple provides substantial food out of her own funds. When the girls walk from church in the cold, Miss Temple works to keep their drooping spirits high. Finally, when Helen is sick with consumption, Miss Temple nurses the girl in her own room.

Mrs. Alice Fairfax

Mrs. Fairfax is the housekeeper or manager of Thornfield Hall. She is described as a neat, elderly woman. Mrs. Fairfax hires Jane for her position of governess at Thornfield. At first meeting, Jane believes Mrs. Fairfax is the owner of Thornfield, but later learns Mrs. Fairfax is only the housekeeper. Although Jane finds Mrs. Fairfax's company pleasant, the older lady does not offer the stimulating conversation that Jane desires. After Jane runs away from Thornfield Hall when the truth about Mr. Rochester's first wife comes to light, Mr. Rochester sends Mrs. Fairfax away from her job. However, he gives her lifetime wages.

Adèle Varnes

Adèle is the charge of Mr. Rochester. She lives at Thornfield with her nurse, Sophie, and Mrs. Fairfax. Adèle is the daughter of Celene Varnes, a dancer with the French opera, who was formerly Mr. Rochester's mistress. Although Celene has told Mr. Rochester Adèle is his daughter, he does not believe he is truly the child's father because he sees no similarities between himself and Adèle. Adèle has been told her mother died when in reality Celene abandoned the child to run away with another man. It is because of Adèle that Jane comes to Thornfield Hall. Jane is hired to be Adèle's governess, a task Jane finds pleasant. Adèle's status as an abandoned orphan endears her to Jane. After Jane is reunited with Mr. Rochester at the end of the novel, Jane removes Adèle from boarding school after she learns the child is unhappy there because the rules are too strict.

Edward Rochester

Mr. Rochester is the owner of Thornfield and the legal guardian of Adèle. As a result of a marriage arranged for money, Mr. Rochester finds himself married to an insane woman. Tired of the abuse he receives from her and the public scorn he encounters in their hometown, he decides to move his wife to Thornfield. He keeps her in a third floor room where she is cared for by a private nurse. Few people know the wife even exists. Mr. Rochester hopes this lack of knowledge will allow him to enjoy life with another woman.

Mr. Rochester is an example of the Byronic hero, a character regularly found in Gothic novels. Mr. Rochester is described as being physically unattractive, in fact, Jane even tells him at one point that he is ugly. Despite his ugliness, Jane is comfortable with his gruff nature and his habit of foregoing politeness. Mr. Rochester is also extremely intelligent, a characteristic Jane finds more attractive than physical beauty.

In addition to his marriage to Bertha, Mr. Rochester has also had several mistresses, one of whom is the mother of Adèle. Mr. Rochester discovered this mistress was cheating on him and left her. Later he was informed the mistress gave birth to his daughter. Although Mr. Rochester does not think the child is his, he still takes care of her. Because of his former bad experiences with love, Mr. Rochester appreciates Jane's uniqueness and good moral character.

Grace Poole

Grace is the servant woman hired to care for Bertha, first wife of Mr. Rochester. It is rumored among the servants Grace is paid more than any other servant in the house. However, it is unclear if the other servants are really aware of her duties. On occasion Grace drinks too heavily and passes out, allowing Bertha to sneak out of her room. It is on one of these occasions that Bertha starts the fire that burns Thornfield to the ground. When Jane initially hears eerie laughter coming from a third floor room, Mrs. Fairfax blames this noise on Grace. Jane also initially believes Grace is responsible for starting the fire in Mr. Rochester's bedroom and wonders why the servant is allowed to remain on staff.

Blanche Ingram

Blanche Ingram is a very beautiful, yet very shallow admirer of Mr. Rochester. Although she is haughty and hateful to Jane whenever she has a chance, Jane believes Mr. Rochester truly loves Blanche. It is almost as if Mr. Rochester uses Blanche as a pawn to toy with Jane's emotions. When Mr. Rochester disguises himself as a gypsy lady, he apparently tells Blanche something about himself she is unhappy with and the relationship comes to an end.

Mr. Richard Mason

This man is the brother of Mr. Rochester's first wife Bertha Mason. Mr. Mason pays a visit to his sister at Thornfield where he tries to talk to her one night by himself. As a result, Bertha both bites him and cuts him with a knife she has hidden in her room. Mr. Mason reappears at Jane and Mr. Rochester's wedding where he tells the clergyman that his sister Bertha, who is also Mr. Rochester's wife, is still alive.

Bertha Mason Rochester

Bertha is Mr. Rochester's first wife. She is described as being very attractive and is of Creole descent. Her marriage to Mr. Rochester is arranged by Mr. Rochester's father and older brother. Mr. Rochester spends little time with Bertha before their wedding and does not get to know her until after the two are already married. After the wedding, Mr. Rochester learns that Bertha is the daughter of a mad woman and that Bertha is indeed insane herself. Bertha's mental status deteriorates as the marriage progresses and soon she is almost entirely separated from reality.

Despite her insanity, Bertha is intelligent and plans times to sneak out of her cell at Thornfield. During these times she performs mischief such as setting Mr. Rochester's bed on fire, biting and cutting her own brother and tearing Jane's wedding veil. Finally, Bertha sets fire to the house, burning it to the ground. As the house burns, she jumps from the roof to her death.

St. John Eyre Rivers

St. John is Jane's cousin and brother to Diana and Mary. St. John is the one who encourages the servant Hannah and his sisters to care for Jane when she turns up on their doorstep. St. John also arranges for Jane to work as the mistress of a school in the village where he is the parson. St. John loves Rosamond, daughter of the wealthiest man in town, but will not marry her because he feels she would not make him a fitting wife. He proposes to Jane, whom he does not love, because he feels she fits his purposes. Unlike Mr. Rochester who is described as being physically unattractive, St. John is described as a model of male attractiveness. Although St. John is a highly religious person, Jane indicates she does not believe he has found the true peace of God. In accordance with what he believes is his calling, St. John becomes a missionary in Africa. It is understood that he dies while in the missionary field.

Diana and Mary Rivers

Diana and Mary are the sisters of St. John and the cousin of Jane. Even before they realize they are related, Jane and the sisters get along fabulously. They enjoy teaching and learning from each other. Even after all the girls marry, they still remain in touch with each other and visit each other often.

John Eyre

John Eyre is Jane's uncle on her father's side. At one point after Jane has already gone to school, John writes to Mrs. Reed voicing his desire to adopt Jane as his own child. As a result of her jealousy and unforgiving spirit, however, Mrs. Reed tells him Jane died during the typhus outbreak at Lowood. Later in the novel, it is John who saves Jane

from marrying Mr. Rochester who at the time still has a wife living. Also, upon his death, John leaves twenty thousand pounds to Jane.

Objects/Places

Red Room

The red room is the grandest room in Gateshead Hall. This grand room is rarely used, however, because it is the room in which Mr. Reed died. After Jane's incident with John Reed, she is locked in this room until she passes out from fear.

Gateshead Hall

Gateshead is the name of the house in which Jane lives with the Reeds for the first 10 years of her life.

Painted China Plate

This brightly painted china plate is one that Jane often wanted to hold and look at more closely but was never allowed to do so. After Jane's episode in the red room Bessie brings Jane a snack on this plate but in her misery Jane finds the plate, and the snack, unappealing.

Lowood Institution

Lowood is the charity school to which Mrs. Reed sends Jane when Jane decides she would rather go to school than continue to live in misery with the Reed family.

Brocklebridge Chruchyard

This churchyard is the place where Helen is buried.

Thornfield

Thornfield is the manor where Jane serves as a governess to Adèle. It is here that she meets and falls in love with Mr. Rochester. After Jane learns Mr. Rochester is still married, she flees Thornfield. However, when she finds she can no longer stay away, Jane returns to Thornfield to find the house burned to the ground by Bertha, Mr. Rochester's first wife.

The leads

The leads is the name given to the flat lead roof of Thornfield. It is from this roof that Bertha jumps to her death after she sets the house on fire.

Signpost at Whitecross

It is at this post that Jane's coach fare runs out when she first runs away from Thornfield Hall. Also at this post, nearly one year later, Jane catches a coach that will take her back to Thornfield to find news of Mr. Rochester. This time, however, she has full fare to pay for her trip.

Moor House

Moor House is the house where St. John, Diana and Mary Rivers grow up. After the death of their father, they leave the house closed up. When Jane receives her inheritance from their mutual uncle, she chooses to have Moor House reopened and refurbished so she can live in it and the rest of the family can enjoy the home while on vacations.

Jane Elliott

Jane Elliott is the alias Jane assumes after she runs away from Thornfield.

A sheet of paper used as a cover sheet

This piece of paper that Jane uses when drawing has her real name scribbled on the edge of it. When St. John sees the name Jane Eyre written on the paper and he realizes her true identity, he tells Jane their mutual uncle left Jane 20,000 pounds in his will.

Ferndean

The house, often used as a hunting lodge, where Mr. Rochester retreats after Thornfield is burned and his sight is lost. It is at Ferndean that Jane and Mr. Rochester are reunited.

Chestnut tree in Thornfield orchard

It is under this tree that Mr. Rochester proposes to Jane. The night of the proposal, however, lightning from a thunderstorm splits this tree in two. Later, in his state as a blind cripple, Mr. Rochester compares himself to this dead tree saying a live flower, such as Jane, should not grow near him.

Themes

Coming of Age

This novel tells the story of Jane Erye's growing up and maturization. Although the novel does not tell all the details of Jane's growing up, it does address the main events that help her develop into the person she becomes. These events include her unhappiness with the Reeds, her underprivileged schooling at Lowood, the disappointment she feels when she learns Mr. Rochester is already married, and finally her ability to begin a new life for herself in a new area.

Despite Jane's lack of love from her adoptive family and her lack of opportunities, Jane makes the best of what she is given. She learns all she can while at Lowood. In fact she does so well that she obtains a teaching position at the school. When Bessie visits Jane at the school, she marvels that Jane had done better even than the Reed children who have had many opportunities to better themselves.

In a time when independence in females was generally not a good trait, Jane uses her own abilities to find herself a job as a governess. While performing her job, she catches the attention of her employer, Mr. Rochester, who falls in love with her. When she learns that Mr. Rochester is already married, however, Jane knows she must leave her job. Even though Mr. Rochester begs her to leave the country with him and be his mistress, Jane knows this is morally unacceptable. Therefore, she runs away.

Jane's final moral test comes after she has run away from Thornfield. She is alone with no friends, no family and no money. From these circumstances, however, she again finds a job and makes friends. It is at this point that luck changes for Jane. Her Uncle John dies and leaves her a fortune. Through his death Jane also learns the new people she has befriended are actually her cousins. Jane also remains strong in declining the marriage proposal of a man who does not love her in favor of Mr. Rochester, her one true love.

Injustice

Injustice is another theme repeated often in this novel. For instance, Mrs. Reed's treatment of Jane is completely unjustified. Not only does Mrs. Reed punish Jane for an incident that was not her fault, Mrs. Reed also tries to convince the headmaster of the school where Jane attends that Jane is a liar. However, Jane is able to overcome the injustice of being called a liar as Miss Temple allows Jane to tell her side of the story and also contacts Mr. Lloyd to determine the real story.

Conditions at Lowood School, including treatment of the students, are another example of an unjust situation. Mr. Brocklehurst skimps on the school budget. Students are not given enough to eat or proper clothing. As a result, many students die from sickness.

This wrong is righted when control of the school's money is taken away from the miserly Mr. Brocklehurst. After this conditions at the school improve.

The requirement that Mr. Rochester stay married to a woman whom he does not love and who does not love him is also unjust. Since Bertha has been diagnosed as insane, Mr. Rochester is not allowed to divorce her. His choices are to either care for Bertha himself or put her in an asylum. At this point in time, asylums were both cruel and inhumane to their inmates. Despite these injustices, however, Mr. Rochester is wrong for not telling Jane he was already married when he proposed to her.

Politics of love

The politics of love, or the idea that love is not merely based on the emotion itself, is a theme seen often in Jane Erye. For instance, this is seen first in the novel when Jane tries to earn affection from her aunt and cousins. They do not love Jane merely because she is a relative and they should love her for this reason. Instead they prove by their actions how unworthy they think Jane is of their affection. This feeling follows Jane throughout her life. At Lowood she feels that unless she is a particular type of person, her friends and teachers will not like her. This is why Mr. Brocklehurst's open dislike of Jane hurts her so badly.

The politics of love are also seen in the love between men and women later in the novel. First, Mr. Rochester marries Bertha only because his family arranged the marriage and also because he finds Bertha attractive. He does not bother to get to know Bertha first to see if they are compatible mates. Again, Mr. Rochester woos the beautiful Blanche. Like Bertha, however, Blanche is beautiful but is not an equal to Mr. Rochester's intelligence. In this time period, however, it is not unusual for people to marry for reasons other than love. They often marry for convenience or simply for the benefit of having a wife or husband. This is seen by St. John's proposal to Jane. Although he does not love her, St. John desires Jane because he believes she would be a good missionary's wife. Likewise, St. John refuses to marry Rosamond whom he does love because she would not be a good fit for the mission field.

Style

Point of View

The story is told from the first person point of view. It is Jane's story told from her own point of view. As a result of this point of view, the reader only experiences what Jane experiences and knows only what she knows. As she is telling her own story, Jane takes the opportunity to address her readers personally, a technique that adds impact to certain portions of the novel.

This story is told through a combination of dialogue and descriptive passages. It is through the dialogue sections of the novel that the reader is allowed to know the thoughts and feelings of other characters in the novel. It is through Jane, however, that the reader learns about the passage of time in the action, the conditions under which she lives and the feelings she has.

Setting

Although this entire novel is set in the country of England, there are many different locations in this country that are included in the novel. First, Jane lives at Gateshead, the home of her aunt, Mrs. Reed. Jane then moves fifty miles away to Lowood School. Next, Jane goes to Thornfield, which is near the English town of Millcote. Finally, she flees Thornfield to the village of Morton.

Perhaps more important than where the action is set is the time period in which it is set. Jane, a highly independent woman, lives in a time when women were supposed to be submissive and obedient. Jane, however, will not conform to this mold. She keeps her independence and refuses to do things that she knows to be morally wrong, such as marrying a man she does not love.

Language and Meaning

The language of this novel is the language of the Gothic novel. The story is written in a way so as to make the reader feel the eeriness and the dark nature of the story and surroundings. The Gothic language includes stormy weather, darkness, eerie laughter, unexplained secrets, dreams and signs. The novel is written in a way that makes it very easy and enjoyable to read and understand. The language draws the reader into the story and keeps them interested in what will happen next.

Structure

The novel is divided into thirty-eight chapters each of which is headed simply with a Roman numeral. Each chapter ranges in length from ten to twenty pages. There is one

main plot to Jane Eyre. This is the story of Jane and Mr. Rochester. There are a variety of sub-plots, however, which include Jane's relations with the Reeds, her schooling at Lowood and her time with St. John. There is little of this book that could be seen as unnecessary information. There are no parts of the action that could be left out without harming the integrity of the story. The novel is extremely interesting to read and tends to move rather quickly.

Historical Context

Jane Eyre is set in the north of England sometime in the first half of the nineteenth century. During this period, British society was undergoing slow but significant change. Perhaps most apparent was the transition from a rural to an industrial economy. The Industrial Revolution had begun in Britain in the late 1700s, and by the time of Jane Eyre, it was running full steam. Although Charlotte Brontë wrote about some of the effects of the Industrial Revolution in her 1849 novel *Shirley,* she touches on three areas of social concern in *Jane Eyre:* education, women's employment, and marriage.

Victorian attitudes toward education differed considerably from those prevalent in modern America. For one thing, the level of one's schooling was determined by social class and also by gender. At all levels of society and in virtually all levels of the education system, boys and girls were taught separately. The children of poor or working-class families were taught in local schools, such as' the one in which Jane Eyre is a schoolmistress. Such children would rarely progress beyond learning basic skills; most learning was by rote. Most of these children would have left school by their early teen years to work on farms or in factories; boys would often leave to join the army or navy. Upper and upper-middle-class families, on the other hand, sought to enroll their sons in exclusive private schools (known paradoxically as public schools). In truth, however, conditions in these schools were often as harsh as those in schools for orphans and the poor such as Lowood Institution in *Jane Eyre.* But a public school education would serve as an entree into good society; the graduates of public schools staffed the higher ranks of government and the professions. Virtually all young men who went on to university (Le., college) first attended public schools. Women were excluded from universities until the 1870s. The first women did not graduate from an English university until 1874, when four women received degrees from Cambridge University.

Young children in upper-class and upper-middle-class families—both boys and girls—would often receive their earliest education from governesses. Governesses were women who were hired to serve as live-in tutors; they provided their charges with ongoing lessons in a variety of subjects until the child was old enough to be sent away to school. For the most part these women were daughters of the middle classes and the professional classes who had attained a certain level of education. Although the profession of governess was not financially rewarding, it was respectable. Working conditions for governesses varied, depending upon the particular family for which a governess might work. Some parents treated their hired governess with respect, as a professional, while others considered governesses little more than servants who were expected to keep in their place.

In the traditional curriculum of the time, girls and young women did not study such "serious" subjects as mathematics, science, or classics. However, they were taught grammar, history, geography, and French. Art, music, and sewing or embroidery were also considered appropriate subjects, and young women were all expected to have a knowledge of the Bible and basic Christian teachings. These subjects were taught both by governesses and at school. Jane Eyre may not be a typical governess, but clearly

she has an excellent command of most of these subjects. By the middle of the nineteenth century, some twenty-five thousand women in England worked as governesses.

Jane Eyre depicts several views of marriage. The marriage of Rochester and Bertha owes more to the Gothic imagination than to reality, while the marriage of Rochester and Jane may also have been more the exception than the norm. Perhaps the most historically accurate view of marriage in early Victorian England is suggested by those marriages in the novel that might, but do not, take place. The anticipated marriage of Rochester and Blanche Ingram, for example, would seem an appropriate one to many Victorians because the two partners come from the same social class. A marriage such as the potential one between Jane and St. John Rivers would also not have been unusual. A husband such as Rivers would secure a "helpmeet" to share his burdens, while the woman in such a marriage would be given an opportunity to establish her own home and family and to do good works.

Critical Overview

When it was published in October, 1847, *Jane Eyre* attracted much attention, and the novel became an almost instant commercial success. So high was demand for the book that the publisher issued a second edition within three months, followed by a third edition in April, 1848. The influential novelist William Makepeace Thackeray was one of *Jane Eyre's* earliest admirers. He wrote to the publisher, saying that he was "exceedingly moved & pleased" by the novel. He also asked the publisher to express his admiration to the author.

Brontë subsequently dedicated the second edition of the book to Thackeray.

Jane Eyre was reviewed in some of Britain's leading newspapers and literary journals. Most early reviewers were enthusiastic. The *Edinburgh Review* pronounced it "a book of singular fascination." The critic for the London *Times* newspaper called it "a remarkable production" and noted that the story "stand[s] boldly out from the mass." The *Westminster Review* noted that the book's characters were astonishingly lifelike (However, a reviewer in *Spectator* took the opposite view, saying that the characters did not behave like people In real life.) *Fraser's Magazine* gave a resounding endorsement and helped to spur sales by encouraging readers to "lose not a day in sending for it."

Contrary to this general praise, a handful of reviewers professed to be shocked by the passions expressed in the novel. A writer in the *Christian Remembrances* regarded the book as an attack on Christianity and an example of "moral Jacobinism." Elizabeth Rigby (Lady Eastlake) denounced it in her unsigned notice in the *Quarterly Review,* calling it "pre-eminently an anti-Christian composition" and an attack on the English class system. Perhaps unconsciously echoing Mrs. Reed, she condemned the title character as "the personification of an unregenerate and undisciplined spirit." The identity of *Jane Eyre's* author was still unknown, but Rigby commented that if it was a woman, she "had forfeited the society of her sex." However, unknown to Brontë and to the public, the book received' the ultimate Victorian seal of approval: Queen Victoria privately referred to *Jane Eyre* as "that intensely interesting novel" and read it to Prince Albert.

Of Brontë 's four novels, *Jane Eyre* has continued to be the most popular and has received the most attention of critics and scholars. Writing in the mid-twentieth century, the critic M. H Scargill noted in the *University of Toronto Quarterly* that *Jane Eyre* marked a turning point in the English novel, away from external concerns and toward personal experience Scargill called the novel "a profound, spiritual experience" in which fiction approaches the condition of poetry. Modern feminists see *Jane Eyre* as one of the first feminist novels. In her biography of Brontë, entitled *The Brontë s: Charlotte Brontë and Her Family,* Rebecca Fraser remarks that it was "Charlotte's protest against the stifling convention society imposed, which never allowed true feeling to be voiced." However, Scargill notes that *"Jane Eyre* may speak for women, but it speaks also for all humanity..."

Much discussion centers on just what makes *Jane Eyre* such a compelling work. Critics have noted that the book succeeds in spite of some obvious weaknesses, particularly its episodic structure and a plot that in places defies credibility. In the hands of a less talented author than Brontë, the story might have amounted to little more than a conventional Gothic romance. What makes the work so memorable, say most modern critics, is the sharp delineation of the characters, the vivid realization of the settings, and the powerful theme of redemption through love Mark Schorer is one critic who takes the book to task. "The action is pitted with implausibilities, indeed, absurdities," notes Shorer, yet "somehow the whole of the novel is compelling and strong even though so much of it is composed of ... silly, feeble parts." Ultimately, however, Schorer finds that this novel has a "visionary quality" that makes it more akin to dramatic poetry than to conventional realistic fiction. Similarly, Margaret Lane, in her *Introduction to "Jane Eyre* ", remarks that "It is ... this rare capacity for emotional feeling, expressed in a singularly musical, pure, and moving prose, which gives [Brontë] her unique place as a writer. Her prose is so compelling that It has at times an almost hypnotic quality; we lose touch with our surroundings and are swept along on the strong current of her imagination." In a similar vein, Rebecca Fraser has argued that while Brontë lacked the creative scope of Dickens, George Eliot, and Tolstoy, "the incandescent power of her writing gives *Jane Eyre...* a uniquely flavoured niche in the affections of the reading public." The novel's grip on the imagination is further confirmed by the numerous film, television, and stage adaptations that have been produced over the years. A century and a half after it was written, many readers of all ages continue to name *Jane Eyre* as one of their favorite novels.

Criticism

- Critical Essay #1
- Critical Essay #2
- Critical Essay #3

Critical Essay #1

In the following essay, Markley, an assistant professor of English at Pennsylvania State University provides an general overview of the many aspects of Jane Eyre, *portraying the novel as unique, both for its time and even for contemporary literature*

Charlotte Brontë 's *Jane Eyre* was first published in England in October, 1847, and it made a huge splash among the Victorian reading public

The novel was subtitled, "An Autobiography," and readers through the years have been charmed by the strong voice of the heroine who tells the story of her life. The narrator's habit of addressing the reader directly throughout the book, making statements such as "Gentle reader, may you never feel what I then felt," and "reader, forgive me for telling the plain truth!" are quite effective in drawing the reader into the action of the novel.

Jane Eyre is a character whose strength and individuality are remarkable for her times. As a model for women readers in the Victorian period and throughout the twentieth century to follow, Jane Eyre encouraged them to make their own choices in living their lives, to develop respect for themselves, and to become individuals. But the early readers of *Jane Eyre* were not all charmed by the heroine's bold personality. Many readers objected to the novel because they felt that it was "unChristian," taking offense at Brontë 's often bitter attacks on certain aspects of religion and the church in contemporary England. The character of Mr. Brocklehurst, for example, a deeply religious but highly hypocritical figure, was based on a well known clergyman alive at the time, and many readers recognized the characterization right away.

Other Victorian readers felt that the novel was "coarse" because it addresses issues and incidents that were not "proper" for a female narrator to discuss. When Edward Rochester tells Jane of his past history with women, for example, and his possible fathering of Adele Varens, many readers found it highly improper to imagine a man speaking of such matters to a young girl of eighteen. Moreover, Mr. Rochester's plans to marry Jane even though he was married already was a rather shocking situation for a novel to explore. Many readers believed that the writer of the novel was a man, not able to imagine that a woman could possibly write such a story. Brontë 's use of the pen-name, "Currer Bell" encouraged this assumption for some time. Many women writers like Brontë chose to publish under a man's name because publishers, critics, and readers were much more likely to respond well to a work by a man, and because the general belief was that it was Improper for ladies to write at all.

The issue of female independence is central to *Jane Eyre.* Much of the strength of Jane's character comes directly from Brontë who was able to voice a lot of her own thoughts and feelings concerning the life of women in the nineteenth century. Additionally, Brontë based a fair amount of the material in the story on actual events from her own family's life. The Lowood School, for example, is closely based on an actual boarding school for the daughters of clergymen that Brontë and several of her sisters attended as children. Her depiction of the horrors of life in such a place is not

exaggerated; the conditions were such that two of Brontë 's sisters died from illnesses they contracted while living at the school.

In the nineteenth century women had far less personal freedom, and there were few options available for them to support themselves outside of choosing to marry and raise children. Jane's work as a governess represents one of the only respectable ways in which a woman could employ herself if she lacked personal wealth. Even so, governesses were typically treated only a little better than servants, as seen when Mr. Rochester brings his wealthy houseguests to Thornfield and they disdain to interact with Jane at all.

Many readers have noted the strong relationship between Jane Eyre's story and fairy tales. Her descriptions of her early life are very similar to the story of "Cinderella," for example. Her aunt, Mrs. Reed, is akin to the archetypal evil stepmother, and Jane is mistreated while the other children of the house are indulged in every way. The story of Jane's relationship with Mr. Rochester also reflects a few details of the story of "Beauty and the Beast." Mr. Rochester is, after all, described as a rather unattractive man with a gruff exterior, yet Jane gradually grows to love him despite his exterior, much as Beauty grows to love the Beast.

Despite the story's roots in traditional fairy tales, however, it is quite modem and unusual in its description of a woman's search for self and for the life of her choice. Sandra Gilbert has discussed the novel as the story of a woman's coming of age that is accomplished through several important psychological stages. The story begins with Jane's first home, the Reeds' Gateshead, where Jane learns to stand up for herself when she is wrongfully accused of being a hard and a bad child. The story then moves to the grim setting of the Lowood School where Jane gains an education and "becomes a lady" as her old nurse Bessie declares when she visits Jane at the end of chapter I0. Here she is given the model of the saintly Miss Temple, and here she encounters the equally saintly Helen Bums, who responds to her irrational abuse at the hands of Miss Scatcherd with calm acceptance. Helen is in many ways a model Christian who always turns the other cheek, but Jane cannot respond to such treatment in the same way, and her resolve to demand fair treatment in her life is solidified by her relationship with Helen.

Jane then moves on to a new life at Thornfield, whose name suggests some degree of the troubles she will endure there before fleeing to a new chapter in her life with the Rivers family at Moor House, or Marsh End, which Gilbert sees as the end of Jane's journey to adulthood, and where she finally finds a family to replace the awful Reeds of her childhood Finally, Jane chooses to return to Mr. Rochester, at a new place, Ferndean, hidden deep in the woods. Ferndean represents a separation from the rest of society which is appropriate, since her relationship with Mr. Rochester is to be a new kind of relationship—one between equals, and based on spiritual love, a concept of marriage quite unusual for its time.

One of the most unusual aspects of *Jane Eyre* is the depiction of Jane's relationship with Mr. Rochester. From the beginning, the novel defies contemporary conventions of

the romance in its emphasis on Jane as a plain woman, lacking the physical beauty which usually characterized fictional heroines. As mentioned previously, Mr. Rochester is also described as being physically unattractive, dark, and sullen. At one point soon after their meeting, Mr. Rochester asks Jane if she finds him attractive, and she surprises him and the reader with a firm "No." Jane and Mr. Rochester's early conversations also progress in unusual ways; characteristically with his questioning her in terms of her beliefs and opinions, and her honest, if restrained, answers to his unusual questions. As the relationship progresses, Mr. Rochester tests Jane more and more. His first test is with statements desired to provoke a certain response Then he tests her with his manipulative disguise as the old gypsy woman to try to discover her feelings for him, and with his cruel manner of proposing marriage by first allowing Jane to believe that he intends to marry Blanche Ingram. If Jane is not the typical Victorian heroine, Mr. Rochester is certainly not the typical Victorian hero.

In addition to these unusual conversations, Brontë gives readers a number of glimpses of Jane and Mr. Rochester in various positions that are unusual for literary depictions of Victorian couples. For example, we frequently see her, a small girl, giving physical support to the older and stalwart Mr. Rochester. When he falls off of his horse upon first seeing Jane, it is Jane who helps Mr. Rochester. When Mr. Rochester's bedroom is set aflame, Jane rescues him. Later, when he is shocked to learn of Mr. Mason's arrival at Thornfield after the gypsy incident, Jane is there for him. And at the end, when he is crippled and blind Rochester depends entirely on Jane to guide him. Moreover, when Mr. Rochester finally does propose marriage to her, Jane reacts with restraint and strongly refuses his wishes to give her jewels and fine new clothes.

Jane is able to gain a new perspective on her relationship with Mr. Rochester when she meets her cousin, St. John Rivers. Unlike Mr. Rochester, Rivers is a strikingly attractive man, but Jane finds his piety and coldness very unattractive. As cruel Mr. Brocklehurst tried to control Jane by telling her that bad girls go to hell, Rivers gradually begins to impose his will on Jane by using religion to subdue her, telling her that she will deny God if she does not accept his proposal of marriage and accompany him as a missionary to India. Just as she is about to break under the strain of this latest male oppressor, Jane psychically hears Mr. Rochester's voice calling her back to him.

Another fascinating aspect of *Jane Eyre* is Mr. Rochester's mad wife, Bertha Mason Rochester. Some critics, including Sandra Gilbert, interpret Bertha as a double of Jane —representing her "dark side" in psychological terms. Bertha can be said to represent Jane's anger and rage at society's attempts to control her and imprison her in a particular role. Perhaps Bertha's imprisonment at Thornfield can be related to the horrible fear of imprisonment that Jane suffered at being shut up in the terrifying red room at the Reeds' house as a child. Moreover, Bertha appears or is heard laughing at times that mark developments in the relationship between Jane and Mr. Rochester. She even acts out at least one of Jane's unconscious wishes when she comes into Jane's room on the night before Jane's wedding and rips up the wedding veil that Jane felt uncomfortable about wearing. Many readers feel that the treatment of the pathetic Bertha in the novel undercuts any effort on the author's part to provide an encouraging story for women in presenting Jane as a woman who insists on her own independence.

The novelist Jean Rhys reacted to the novel in this way, and responded by writing her own "prequel" to *Jane Eyre,* entitled *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), in which she develops Bertha's own personal story, and the story of her relationship with Edward Rochester before the events of *Jane Eyre.*

All in all, *Jane Eyre* is the story of an unusual woman who finds a family, who finds a lover, and who finds herself in a world that has not made her growing into adulthood an easy process in any way. Jane progresses from being an unwanted member of a cruel family of cousins who are forced to help her, to finding the ideal family of cousins in the Riverses, who *she* is able to help when she comes into her inheritance from her uncle John. It is this inheritance that gives Jane the freedom to make her own choices and to choose never to be dependent on anyone again. But the choice she makes is to return to the man she loves, who, chastened by his symbolic injuries in the burning of his old home and freed from his earlier marriage by the death of his first wife, is at last able to enter into the kind of spiritual relationship of equality that Jane desires as an independent woman and a strong woman who has always managed to remain true to herself.

Source: Arnold A Markley, in an essay for *Novels for Students,* Gale, 1998.

Critical Essay #2

In the following excerpt, Ashe follows Jane's deprived childhood experiences and connects them to her relationship with Rochester later in life.

Critics have traditionally endowed the heroine and eponym of Charlotte Brontë 's romantic masterwork, *Jane Eyre,* with a prodigious free will. According to various commentators, Jane draws on her knowledge either of good and evil or of her own nature in choosing between a series of conventional literary oppositions—reason and passion, absolute and relative morality, and, finally, love without marriage and marriage without love. Such a reading, however, Judges the actions of Jane the young woman without allowing for the extraordinary childhood forces that largely determine her adult personality, thus essentially ignoring the first quarter of the novel. While many have celebrated Brontë ' s carefully wrought description of her protagonist's first eighteen years for its vivid pathos, no one has as yet accorded this childhood its deserved weight in the novel's ultimate resolution. When viewed from the vantage of modern child psychology, Jane's background—ten years spent at Gateshead barren of affection or adult encouragement, and eight years at Lowood School marked by severe physical privations, public humiliations, and exposure to the cheerless philosophy of Helen Burns —can only exempt Brontë 's heroine from common standards of morality or human incentive. The Jane Eyre who emerges from this past of injustice and mental depression is an odd mixture of pride and insecurity. She is saddled with a tenacious pessimism concerning her prospects for happiness, and it is *this mentality* against which she must struggle, and *this* over which she triumphs in the end.

It is hard to imagine anyone learned enough to read *Jane Eyre* who would consider her first ten years emotionally healthful ones. Orphaned in her first year, Jane is given up to her resentful Aunt Reed, whose husband (Jane's mother's brother) also dies within the year. Jane's life to age ten is one of ostracism by the Reed family and unrelenting anxiety over the chidings of the servants, the violence of her cousin John Reed, and the punishments and beratings of Mrs. Reed Though we as readers do not meet Jane until her tenth year, we may deduce from Mrs. Reed's deathbed admission that Jane's situation has been destitute since infancy—"I hated it the first time I set my eyes on it—a sickly, whining, pining thing"—and her declaration that her children could never bear to be friendly to Jane. The older Jane, who narrates the novel, makes a characteristically self-deprecating excuse for the Reeds' behavior, claiming, "I know that had I been a sanguine, brilliant, careless, exacting, handsome, romping child—though equally dependent and friendless—Mrs. Reed would have endured my presence more complacently" But we cannot admit this statement as "the more sober judgment of the mature Jane, that as a child she brought much of her punishment upon herself." For a child in such circumstances as Jane's at Gateshead to develop the traits that the "mature Jane" enumerates would be unimaginable.

Susan D. Bernstein, in ["Madam Mope: The Bereaved Child in Brontë 's *Jane Eyre],* uses Brontë 's depiction of childhood in *Jane Eyre* to illustrate the effects of grief and loss on children. Bernstein concentrates or the novel's first few chapters, which describe

a typical afternoon of melancholy and exclusion for the ten-year-old Jane, culminating in her traumatic banishment to the Red Room—which Jane has supposed to be haunted Since her uncle lied there years earlier—for defending herself against an attack by her John. The medical implications of the Red Room incident run perhaps even deeper than Bernstein allows, as Jane's emotional reaction provides a textbook example of mental depression. Jane in this scene quite clearly demonstrates five of the eight identifiable symptoms of adult or child depression cited by the American Psychiatric Association. First, she manifests a loss of appetite in her inanity to eat either the night she is locked in the Red Room or the 'following day. Secondly, she is unable to sleep: "For me, the watches of that long night passed in ghastly wakefulness." Third, she displays a lack of interest in usual activities, as she is unable to muster enthusiasm over her favorite engraved dinner plate or over *Gulliver's Travels.* Fourth, Jane experiences feelings of guilt and worthlessness: "All said I was wicked, and perhaps I might be so." Finally, Jane indulges in suicidal fantasy in her thoughts of forsaking food or drink. It is now widely agreed that most childhood disorders can be traced to either a faulty relationship with the child's parents or to anxiety—provoking experiences that the child cannot understand. Aside from the antagonistic relationship with her guardian, the ghost in the Red Room constitutes for Jane a frightening experience, and as an older narrator she attributes to the incident "some fearful pangs of mental suffering."

Only hope enables human beings to endure such adverse conditions as those Jane endures at Gateshead, and it is the hope of leaving the Reeds that revives Jane's spirits following her fright in the Red Room. This initial experience with hope, however, proves a negative one; the young Jane is learning early the futility of optimism. The change that delivers her from Gateshead is a move to Lowood School, where onto her life of emotional privation is grafted one of physical hardship. At a critical stage in her development Jane is subjected to severe cold and near starvation, conditions that claim the lives of many of her classmates. Her bad luck with adults remains constant as well, as she is almost immediately singled out in front of her classmates by Mr. Brocklehurst, the school's headmaster. Brocklehurst christens Jane a deceitful child, and warns her classmates to "shun her example: if necessary, avoid her company, exclude her from your sports, and shut her out from your converse." Lowood School can be seen as Brocklehurst's project for infusing orphan girls with an ascetic abhorrence of worldly pleasures, and the fire-and brimstone religion he imposes proves ideal for instilling in his pupils a sense of fear and guilt about happiness on earth.

At Lowood Jane also meets Helen Burns, a character whose acceptance of fate has led critics to read her as a positive model for Jane. But while Helen's calm stoicism later helps Jane to accept hardship, it does little to prepare her for human happiness. Helen lives only for death and the reunion it will bring with her savior. Her reliance on "an invisible world and a kingdom of spirits" may signify a venerable religious faith, but it also serves as a defense mechanism against the sufferings she has found life to hold for an orphan child. Jane finds "an alloy of inexpressible sadness" in Helen's stance—only as Helen dies does Jane see her happy. To Jane, Helen's death represents yet another defeat of hope, as it cuts short what would have been Jane's first real friendship. Jane longs for happiness in *this* life, and Helen Burns provides one more affirmation that such longing is for naught.

Although Jane does finally find friendship and encouragement at Lowood in the person of Miss Temple, it is not enough to counteract the effects of her gloomy childhood. Miss Temple is rarely able to abate the physical severity of the school, and nothing can erase the damage wrought by Jane's miserable first decade. The Jane of Lowood is the product of an absolute lack of love and affection, qualities critical to the healthy development of a growing child. While Brontë seemed to sense this truth, modem child psychology has codified it. A loving family atmosphere and a favorable emotional climate in the home are today widely held to be the most important factors in the healthy mental development of the growing child. Parents or adult guardians who deprive their children of warmth or affection risk having their child become withdrawn and depressed, and, like Jane, devoid of any sense of optimism or security. Moreover, such over strictness as Jane suffers at the hands of Mrs. Reed and Mr. Brocklehurst is today seen as a major source of childhood anxiety and low self-esteem, qualities which well describe the Jane Eyre of Gateshead and Lowood.

Not only does Jane's early life provide an accurate portrayal of childhood depression, but the subsequent emotional development of Brontë 's character possesses astonishing psychological verisimilitude as the natural extension of a rocky youth. John Bowlby has done extensive work in the area of childhood loss of or separation from the mother, and has determined such events to have a profound effect in later life. Bowlby claims that the most important factor in the development of mental health is the infant or young child's "warm, intimate, and continuous relationship with his mother or a permanent mother-substitute—one who steadily 'mothers' him." The effects of an unsatisfactory maternal relation, such as Jane's with her Aunt Reed, may extend to the child's later capacity to make and sustain relationships with others. Jane's pessimism is, moreover, a natural result of her maltreatment by the Reeds, who reinforced in her the notion of her own inadequacy and unlovability, a notion, says Bowlby, that may lead the child when grown to develop "a model of attachment figures as likely to be unavailable, or rejecting," and will likely "confirm in [her] the belief that any effort [she] might make to remedy [her] situation would be doomed to failure." *Jane Eyre* bears out this observation. The mature Jane's need for romantic love is matched by her assurance that such love does not exist for her.

This is not to suggest that Charlotte Brontë was versed in psychological literature, or that *Jane Eyre* is a calculated illustration of how an abnormal childhood might affect one's later development. Brontë 's understanding of the Bowlby pattern was an experiential one, and, literature being the outgrowth of an author's imagination and experience, it is not surprising that Jane Eyre should follow that pattern. While the critic is well-advised to retain a degree of skepticism towards the narrative patterns necessarily imposed by biographers on the retrievable facts of their subjects' lives, and while one must be careful when using biographical evidence not to reduce imaginative art to mere mimesis, readers cannot ignore the verifiable pattern of Brontë 's life in interpreting *Jane Eyre,* which was originally subtitled An *Autobiography* and was published under a pseudonym. The most basic facts of Brontë 's life reveal a history of loss quite similar to Jane's, and it is safe to assume from her later correspondence that Brontë responded to her experience by developing a pessimistic attitude towards her

own prospects, an attitude her biographers have characterized variously as a "lack of hope" and a "skeptical incredulity about good fortune." ...

Jane's habitual mistrust of good fortune manifests itself perhaps most strongly when she finds herself developing amorous feelings toward Rochester. She refuses to succumb to her will because she cannot imagine his returning the love she cannot allow for a happy ending. In her conviction that "sense would resist delirium: judgment would warn passion," Jane endeavors to punish her own presumptuousness by juxtaposing an idealized bust of Blanche Ingram with an unflattering portrait of herself—a constant reminder that Rochester could never love "a Governess, disconnected, poor, and plain." In this poignant scene Jane berates herself violently for her own giddy idealism. A more optimistic character with a more realistic self-image could not but read Rochester's many signs of affection, and accept his inability to love the haughty Blanche. But Jane refuses any insight that favors herself, and as a result she suffers greatly before Rochester's proposal.

The proposal again piques Jane's mistrust. *Af* ter her characteristic initial response—"I was silent: I thought he mocked me"—she tempers her bliss by insisting on casting the future in the most unflattering light. Her response upon hearing pronounced for the first time the name "Jane Rochester" is consistent with her refusal to accept joy: "The feeling, the announcement sent through me, was something stronger than was consistent with joy—something that smote and stunned: it was, I think, almost fear." It is the pessimist—the product of Gateshead, where human attention meant Criticism, and of Lowood, where life was taught as a struggle and where Jane's first friend died only months after they met—who says to Rochester:

"It can never be, Sir, It does not sound likely Human beings never enjoy complete happiness in this world. I was not born for a different destiny to the rest of my species' to imagine such a lot befalling me is a fairy tale—a daydream. for a little while you will perhaps be as you are now,—a very little while, and then you will turn cool; and then you will be capricious, and then you will be stem, and I shall have much ado to please you' but when you get well used to me, you will perhaps like me again,—like me, I say, not love me I suppose your love will effervesce in SIX months, or less" It is fitting that a Brontë character will not view even her opportunity to marry the man she loves as more than a new servitude

Jane's refusal during the courtship to be pampered or flattered does not betoken pride, but instead a belief that she does not deserve to be treated well. Her incredulity is stoked both by Bertha Rochester's mysterious pre-nuptial antics and by her own portentous dreams. As she awaits Rochester's return on the night before the wedding, she muses, "I feared my hopes were too bright to be realized; and I had enjoyed so much bliss lately that I imagined my fortune had passed its meridian, and must now decline." Jane still sees happiness as a fluke, which will always be ephemeral. In this instance such does indeed prove to be the case, and when Rochester's first marriage and his technically bigamous intent are exposed, Jane is patently unsurprised. She blames herself for her shattered hopes, and instantly forgives Rochester.

"Real affection, it seemed, he could not have for me; it had only been fitful passion, that was balked, he would want me no more. I should fear even to cross his path now: my View must be hateful to him. Oh, how blind had been my eyes! How weak my conduct." Her pithy declaration as she leaves Rochester, "we are born to strive and endure," sums up the philosophy that Gateshead and Lowood have fostered. Jane's every adult decision has been biased by the belief that the happiest alternative always is the least realistic.

Jane's departure from Thornfield marks a new stage in her psychic development. She exhibits a sustaining pride during her destitute wanderings on the way to Moor House, and even allows herself to believe that the horrible fate of wandering penniless and friendless through the countryside is not for her In Diana and Mary Rivers she finally meets two people whose company she can enjoy. When a genealogical quirk brings her a large inheritance, she views it as something that will have only positive effects. It is during this year that Jane begins psychologically to outgrow the effects of her childhood —to realize that life can be at least pleasant, even for her. But she still has one obstacle to overcome.

Though Jane learns at Moor House that life can be bearable, she also realizes that it cannot be *happy* unless she spends it with Rochester St. John Rivers' pragmatic proposal to marry Jane and take her along for missionary work in India awakens in the heroine a struggle between her natural pessimism and her deep-rooted desire for Rochester and happiness in England. We never believe that Jane would be happy in India, but her guilty sense of religious duty coupled with her doubts about happiness in England come quite close to making her accept Rivers' proposal Towards the novel's end Jane's inner battle gathers in narrative intensity, climaxing in her famous discernment of Rochester's mystical voice in the night. This voice represents a triumph of Jane's true desires. She truly wants to be with Rochester, and she truly believes that "the best things the world has" are the "domestic endearments and household joys" that she might enjoy as Mrs. Rochester. The voice she hears convinces Jane to reject Rivers and a pessimistic sacrifice of future happiness, and to gamble on recovering Rochester and bliss. The voice represents the defeat of the pessimist in *Jane Eyre.*

Jane's world is an even smaller one than Maggie's [Tulliver's in George Eliot's novel *The Mill on the Floss]—she* progresses from a barely tolerated dependent in a household of unloving relatives, through a charity child in a charity institution among similarly deprived children, to a governess of a foreign born child of questionable birth in a strange environment, Thornfield. The first two main phases of Jane's life are spent almost exclusively in the two houses or establishments—Gateshead Hall and Lowood—which form the background for her early development. Through these experiences and vicissitudes Jane's personality becomes more and more withdrawn, so that from the solitary child she grows into the "quaint, quiet, grave" young woman whose cool exterior nevertheless conceals "a heart hungering for affection [suggests Kathleen Tillotson in her book *Novels of the Eighteen-Forties,* 1956]." It is [as Eliot writes in, *The Mill on the Floss]* "this need of love, this hunger of the heart" that precipitates the emotional and moral crisis in the novel.

Jane Eyre's dilemma is very much like George Eliot's own—whether to live with Rochester as his unmarried wife or sever all relations with him—and George Eliot's strong condemnation of Jane's renunciation is understandable. Perhaps a quotation from George Eliot's own novel will throw light on her reaction to Jane's decision. Near the end of *The Mill on the Floss,* in a passage that comes nearest to George Eliot's own conception of the moral problem at the heart of the novel, we find this authorial comment: "Moral judgements must remain false and hollow unless they are checked and enlightened by a perpetual reference to the special circumstances that mark the individual lot." This is central to George Eliot's notion of morality and explains in large measure her censure of *Jane Eyre.* George Eliot obviously thinks that Jane's "special circumstances" justify a defiance of conventional morality and social laws. Her dissatisfaction arises from what she interprets as Jane's misplaced good faith and good intentions. What George Eliot fails to see is that Jane's renunciation of Rochester is made not in the interests of a law, diabolical or not, but in self-interest. And the motivation of Jane's action is not self-sacrifice, but rather self-protection.

Rochester tries to appeal to Jane's judgement of the balance of consequences:

Is it better to drive a fellow-creature to despair than to transgress a mere human law, no man being injured by the breach?—for you have neither relatives nor acquaintances whom you need fear to offend by living with me.

By ignoring the deterministic role of Jane's childhood and her adult struggle against it, traditional criticism has in essence reduced *Jane Eyre* to the status of a clever vehicle for the restatement of conventional literary formulas. To see the adult Jane as the crippled but determined product of an unhealthy childhood is to re-establish the novel as the very plausible portrait of a full human life. Jane's happy ending must not be viewed merely as a proper or improper choice between right and wrong, but as the resolution of an intense psychological drama, wherein the degree of free will needed to make such a happy choice is finally attained.

Source: Frederick L. Ashe, *"Jane Eyre:* The Quest for Optimism," in *Studies in the Novel,* Summer, 1988, pp. 12130.

Critical Essay #3

In the following excerpt, Yuen demonstrates how Jane refuses to accept that she is socially and sexually inferior to Rochester and others because of her class situation and gender.

When Jane is emancipated from the thralldom of her aunt's family, she moves on to a larger social unit, the community of Lowood, exchanging moral oppression for the religious oppression of Mr. Brocklehurst. But Jane has by now built up her defenses: "I stood lonely enough, but to that feeling of isolation I was accustomed: it did not oppress me much." By nature antipathic to Brocklehurst's hypocritical Evangelicalism, Jane is nevertheless drawn towards two other representatives of religion at Lowood. Helen Bums represents a Christian ideal that Jane admires but does not aspire to. Jane, with her intense awareness of self and her fierce sense of justice, could never adopt Helen's attitude of resignation and forgiveness. Again, with her passionate longing for life, Jane could not subscribe to Helen's calm acceptance of death. Miss Temple, on a more human level, embodies the religion of love, goodness and kindness which provides the inspiration and motivation for Jane through her eight years at Lowood. But with the departure of Miss Temple, all Jane's old hunger for life, for experience returns in force: "I tired of the routine of eight years in one afternoon. I desired liberty; for liberty I gasped... For change, stimulus." "I longed to go where there was life and movement." Jane is formed not for religion, but for love. Her repressed nature now reasserts itself as she prepares to embark on a new adventure in life.

Jane's world is an even smaller one than Maggie's [Tulliver's in George Eliot's novel *The Mill on the Floss]-she* progresses from a barely tolerated dependent in a household of unloving relatives, through a charity child in a charity institution among similarly deprived children, to a governess of a foreign born child of questionable birth in a strange environment, Thornfield. The first two main phases of Jane's life are spent almost exclusively in the two houses or establishments—Gateshead Hall and Lowood—which form the background for her early development. Through these experiences and vicissitudes Jane's personality becomes more and more withdrawn, so that from the solitary child she grows into the "quaint, quiet, grave" young woman whose cool exterior nevertheless conceals "a heart hungering for affection [suggests Kathleen Tillotson in her book *Novels of the Eighteen-Forties,* 1956]." It is [as Eliot writes in, *The Mill on the Floss]* "this need of love, this hunger of the heart" that precipitates the emotional and moral crisis in the novel.

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individual lot." This is central to George Eliot's notion of morality and explains in large measure her censure of *Jane Eyre.* George Eliot obviously thinks that Jane's "special circumstances" justify a defiance of conventional morality and social laws. Her dissatisfaction arises from what she interprets as Jane's misplaced good faith and good intentions. What George Eliot fails to see is that Jane's renunciation of Rochester is made not in the interests of a law, diabolical or not, but in self-interest. And the motivation of Jane's action is not self-sacrifice, but rather self-protection.

Rochester tries to appeal to Jane's judgement of the balance of consequences:

Is it better to drive a fellow-creature to despair than to transgress a mere human law, no man being injured by the breach?—for you have neither relatives nor acquaintances whom you need fear to offend by living with me.

Jane is almost convinced as she tries to reason within herself:

Think of his misery, think of his danger, look at his state when left alone, remember his headlong nature' consider the recklessness following on despair soothe him, save him, love him, tell him you love him and will be his Who in the world cares for *you?* or who will be injured by what you do?

And then comes the reply from the depths of Jane's soul: Jane is almost convinced as she tries to reason within herself:

I care for myself. The more solitary, the more friendless, the more unsustained I am, the more I will respect myself

In the crisis, she can only fall back on herself, on her sense of self-protection, on her instinct for self-survival. If Jane is adhering to a principle, it is the principle of self-respecting personal integrity. As she said: "I still possessed my soul" Rochester in his saner moments would have understood the motivation of her decision, as is shown by his penetrating analysis of Jane's character in the guise of a gypsy woman on an earlier occasion:

That brow professes to say—"I can live alone, if self-respect and circumstances require me so to do. I need not sell my soul to buy bliss... Reason sits firm and holds the reins, Judgement shall have the casting vote in every decision. . I shall follow the guiding of that still small voice which interprets the dictates of conscience."

This is of course ironic in the light of later events, for it is precisely these same self-respect, reason, judgement, and conscience that combine to frustrate Rochester.

Jane Eyre's painful decision to leave Rochester is in line with her magnificent outburst in the moonlit garden on Midsummer's eve

Do you think, because I am poor, obscure, plain, and little, I am soulless and heartless? You think wrong!—I have as much soul as you—and full as much heart! And If God had gifted me with some beauty and much wealth, I should have made it as hard for you to

leave me, as it is now for me to leave you. I am not talking to you now through the medium of custom, conventionalities, nor even of mortal flesh it is my spirit that addresses your spirit; just as if both had passed through the grave, and we stood at God's feet, equal—as we are'

In a further demonstration of spirit before she understands Rochester's intentions, she declares proudly: "I am a free human being with an independent will, which I now exert to leave you" She might have said the same at the later crisis of emotion and event in which she actually leaves him. In this outburst of pent-up emotions, Jane is assuming for herself and her sex a position and an attitude never before granted to heroines in English fiction—equality in love. Charlotte Brontë believes that love between man and woman is an all-consuming passion shared not only physically, but mentally and spiritually—"to the finest fibre of my nature," as Jane says. What Charlotte Brontë is asking for is a recognition of the emotional needs of a woman—the right to feel, to love unreservedly. In a way, Jane is an... unconventional heroine. She claims independence and rejects subservience. She will consent only to a marriage which is the union of equals in independence Charlotte Brontë sees the relationship between man and woman as one of mutual need, a kind of equal partnership in which the woman is not just the object of pursuit or desire, but is recognized as an active contributor—unafraid to love with all-consuming passion, willing to devote herself to the man, and yet exacting respect and a recognition of her rights as an individual. Charlotte Brontë does not advocate an absolute union, a complete merging of man and woman—this would mean the dissolution of the self. Unlike Catherine Earnshaw who declares' "I *am* Heathcliff," Jane asserts; *"J* care for myself." Instead of losing herself in some "otherness," Jane fights to preserve her own identity. The relationship between Catherine and Heathcliff involves a fusion of personalities and leads towards mutual annihilation. The relationship [as suggested by Ruth Bernard Yeazell in her essay "More True Than Real: Jane Eyre's 'Mysterious Summons'," *Nineteenth-Century Fictions,* 1974] between Jane and Rochester is grounded on the equality and integrity of two independent selves and leads towards life. In the "Eden-like" garden of Thornfield, Jane appears to have secured both love and independence (of spirit, at least); but when it turns out to be a Paradise Lost, Jane must flee temptation and her lover, in order to preserve the integrity of her self against an overwhelming passion.

In a curious passage earlier on, Charlotte Brontë expresses what could well be taken as the manifesto of the Women's Liberation Movement:

Women are supposed to be very calm generally, but women feel Just as men feel, they need exercise for their faculties, and a field for their efforts as much as their brothers do; they suffer from too rigid a restraint, too absolute a stagnation, precisely as men would suffer, and It is narrow-minded in their more privileged fellow-creatures to say that they ought to confine themselves to making puddings and knitting stockings, to playing on the piano and embroidering bags It is thoughtless to condemn them, or laugh at them, if they seek to do more or learn more than custom has pronounced necessary for their sex.

Charlotte Brontë's concern with the "condition of women" question in her day is revealed here. She herself has struggled for independence and equality not as an exhilaration dreamed of but as a necessity, and the feminist attitude expressed here is assumed by her heroine□Charlotte Brontë really prepares the way for.. other "rebel" heroines by showing her heroine overcoming social and sexual inferiority with moral, emotional, and intellectual superiority. Jane first encounters Rochester not as his equal but as his subordinate. She escapes the confines of Lowood to enter into a "new servitude," a servitude not just in terms of work but also in terms of love. The relationship between Rochester and Jane is that of master and servant, just as the relationship between hero and heroine in all the other Charlotte Brontë novels is that of teacher and pupil. But the master-servant relationship between Rochester and Jane is essentially one of mutual admiration and respect. Rochester loves Jane for her superiority of mind and heart, and Jane feels "akin" to Rochester and has, in her own words, "something in my brain and heart, in my blood and nerves, that assimilate me mentally to him." F. A. C. Wilson [in an essay "The Primrose Wreath: the Heroes of the Brontë Novels," *Nineteenth-Century Fiction,* 1974] suggests that for Charlotte Brontë , the ideal relationship between man and woman is an extremely flexible one "by which both partners freely alternate between 'masculine,' or controlling, and 'feminine,' or responsive roles" and that "Jane, for her part, enjoys her sexual status as a subordinate, but this is only insofar as it is a role in a game." Jane has no feeling of inferiority at all: she is only conforming outwardly to the Victorian concept of the prescribed roles for men and women, while in reality she believes in equality between the sexes, as evidenced in her vehement assertion of equality in the garden of Thornfield, and Rochester's response "My bride is here, ... because my equal is here, and my likeness" testifies to his agreement. Her sexual status as a subordinate may be more apparent than real, but her social status as an employee makes her dependent on her master for her livelihood. Jane's sensitive feelings about her position and her strong sense of individuality and independence make her resent any attempt to encroach on her personality. Just before their marriage, when Rochester wants to shower her with fineries and to deck her out in jewels and satin and lace, Jane feels "a sense of annoyance and degradation," partly because her aesthetic sense tells her she looks better as "plain Jane,"_ partly because her moral taste finds such extravagance abhorrent, but mainly because she feels this is a violation of her sense of self and a reflection on her essential dependence. Refusing to play the pampered slave to Rochester's benevolent despot of a sultan, she tells him: "I will be myself' and "I only want an easy mind, SIT; not crushed by crowded obligations." She prefers to be herself and to .be loved for what she is. It is in a state of reaction against what she construes as Rochester's attempted violation of her sense of self that immediately after this Jane writes to inform her wealthy Uncle John in Madeira of her impending marriage with the underlying motive of perhaps obtaining what she terms an "independency,"' thereby bringing about the chain of events that leads to the interrupted wedding. So Jane unwittingly incurs her own unhappiness through her desire for independence, which means more than just economic and social status—independence means personal identity and self-esteem.

Source: Mana Yuen, "Two Crises of Decision in *Jane Eyre,* m *English Studies,* June, 1976, pp 215-26.

Quotes

"With Bewick on my knee, I was then happy; happy at least in my way. I feared nothing but interruption, and that came too soon," Chapter I, p. 11.

"No severe or prolonged bodily illness followed this incident of the red-room; it only gave my nerves a shock, of which I feel the reverberation to this day. Yes, Mrs. Reed, to you I owe some fearful pangs of mental suffering. But I ought to forgive you, for you knew not what you did; while rendering my heart-strings, you thought you were only uprooting my bad propensities," Chapter III, p. 25.

"Well might I dread, well might I dislike Mrs. Reed; for it was her nature to wound me cruelly: never was I happy in her presence. However carefully I obeyed, however strenuously I strove to please her, my efforts were still repulsed, and repaid by such sentences as above. Now, uttered before a stranger, the accusation cut me to the heart: I dimly perceived that she was already obliterating hope from the new phase of existence which she destined me to enter," Chapter IV, p. 41.

"Probably, if I had lately left a good home and kind parents, this would have been the hour when I should most keenly have regretted the separation: that wind would then have saddened my heart; this obscure chaos would have disturbed my peace: as it was, I was derived from both a strange excitement, and reckless and feverish, I wished the wind to howl more wildly, the gloom to deepen to darkness, and the confusion to rise to clamour," Chapter VI, p. 65.

"A great deal; you are good to those who are good to you. It is all I ever desire to be. If people were always kind and obedient to those who are cruel and unjust, the wicked people would have it all their own way; they would never feel afraid, and so they would never alter, but would grow worse and worse. When we are struck without a reason, we should strike back again very hard; I am sure we should—so hard as to teach the person who struck us never to do it again," Chapter VI, p. 68.

"Such is the imperfect nature of man! Such spots are there on the disc of the clearest planet; and eyes like Miss Scatcherd's can only see those minute defects, and are blind to the full brightness of the orb," Chapter VII, p. 80.

"Women are supposed to be very calm generally: but women feel just as men feel; they need exercise for their faculties, and a field for their efforts as much as their brothers do; they suffer from too rigid a restraint, too absolute a stagnation, precisely as men would suffer; and it is narrow-minded in their more privileged fellow creatures to say that they ought to confine themselves to making puddings and knitting stockings, to playing on the piano and embroidering bags," Chapter XII, pp. 129-130.

"But the last singularity explains the first, as I intimated once before: you, with your gravity, considerateness, and caution were made to be the recipient of secrets," Chapter XV, p. 168.

"And was Mr. Rochester now ugly in my eyes? No, reader: gratitude, and many associations, all pleasurable and genial, made his face the object I best liked to see; his presence in a room was more cheering than the brightest fire," Chapter XV, p. 172.

"'I knew,' he continued, 'you would do me good in some way, at some time;—I saw it in your eyes when I first beheld you: their expression and smile did not'—(again he stopped)—'did not' (he proceeded hastily) 'strike delight to my very inmost heart so for nothing. People talk of natural sympathies; I have heard of good genii: there are grains of truth in the wildest fable. My cherished preserver, good-night!'" Chapter XV, p. 177.

"True, generous feeling is made small account of by some; but here were two natures rendered, the one intolerably acrid, the other despicably savourless for the want of it. Feeling without judgment is a washy draught indeed; but judgment untempered by feeling is too bitter and husky a morsel for human deglutition," Chapter XXI, p. 272.

"I am not talking to you now through the medium of custom, conventionalities, nor even of mortal flesh;—it is my spirit that addresses your spirit; just as if both had passed through the grave, and we stood at God's feet, equal—as we are!" Chapter XXIII, p. 293.

"I wrestled with my own resolution: I wanted to be weak that I might avoid the awful passage of further suffering I saw laid out for me; and Conscience, turned tyrant, held Passion by the throat, told her tauntingly, she had yet but dipped her dainty foot in the slough, and swore that with that arm of iron he would thrust her down to unsounded depths of agony," Chapter XXVII, p. 343.

"I was sure St. John Rivers—purelived, conscientious, zealous as he was—had not yet found that peace of God which passeth all understanding: he had no more found it, I thought, than had I with my concealed and racking regrets for my broken idol and lost elysium—regrets to which I have latterly avoided referring, but which possessed me and tyrannized over me ruthlessly," Chapter XXX, p. 403.

"As for me, I daily wished more to please him; but to do so, I felt daily more and more that I must disown half my nature, stifle half my faculties, wrest my tastes from their original bent, force myself to the adoption of pursuits for which I had no natural vocation," Chapter XXXIV, p. 460.

"Of late, Jane—only—only of late—I began to see and acknowledge the hand of God in my doom. I began to experience remorse, repentance, the wish for reconcilement with my Maker. I began sometimes to pray: very brief prayers they were, but very sincere," Chapter XXVII, p. 514.

"On that occasion, he again, with a full heart acknowledged that God had tempered mercy with judgment," Chapter XXXVIII, p. 520.

Adaptations

Jane Eyre has been the subject of numerous adaptations for other media. During the silent film era, there were at least three silent movie versions. The first talking picture adaptation was released in 1934. Written by Adele Comandini (based on Charlotte Brontë 's book) and directed by Christy Cabanne, it starred Virginia Bruce, Colin Clive, Beryl Mercer, Aileen Pringle, Jameson Thomas, David Torrence, and Lionel Belmore. Produced by Monogram Studios.

The most famous film version of *Jane Eyre* was adapted by John Houseman, Aldous Huxley, and Robert Stevenson and released ill 1944. Directed by Stevenson, it starred Joan Fontaine, Orson Welles, Margaret O'Brien, Sara Allgood, Agnes Moorehead, and Elizabeth Taylor.

Franco Zeffirelli and Hugh Whitemore wrote the script for the 1996 film version of *Jane Eyre,* directed by Zeffirelli. This version starred Charlotte Gainsbourg, William Hurt, Anna Paquin, Joan Plowright, Billie Whitelaw, Elle Macpherson, Geraldine Chaplin, and John Wood.

The first adaptation of *Jane Eyre* for television was broadcast in 1939 on the NBC network. Produced and directed by Edward Sobol, this version starred Flora Campbell, Dennis Hoey, Effie Shannon, Daisy Belmore, and Ruth Mattheson.

While there have been other adaptations of *Jane Eyre* for television since 1939, critics have noted that the most faithful one is the BBC's television mini-series adaptation of *Jane Eyre* produced in 1983. Directed by Julian Aymes, it starred Zelah Clarke and Timothy Dalton.

Jane Eyre has lent itself to numerous adaptations for the stage. A recent version included one for a 1996 regional touring production ill England, adapted and directed by Charles Vance.

The book was recorded, unabridged, in a series of four sound cassettes, read by Juliet Stevenson. Available from BBC Enterprises Ltd., New York, NY, 1994.

An abridged recording read by Dame Wendy Hiller is available on two cassettes from Listen for Pleasure, Downsview, Ontario, Canada.

Topics for Further Study

In her preface to the second edition of *Jane Eyre,* Charlotte Brontë wrote: "Conventionality is not morality. Self-righteousness is not religion.... Appearance should not be mistaken for truth." What are some examples of these precepts in *Jane Eyre?*

Research the treatment of mental illness around the time of *Jane Eyre.* What ideas did doctors of Charlotte Brontë ' s time have about the causes of mental illness? How did society in general regard people with this kind of disease? How might someone like Bertha Mason be treated today?

As a younger son, Rochester would not have in herited his father's estate; the estate would first have gone to Rochester's older brother. Under English law at the time of *Jane Eyre,* property passed only to the oldest son; therefore, younger sons were usually left little money and had to make their own livings. What professions did younger sons in such a family usually follow? Also, how did this custom affect the daughters in a family?

The early twentieth-century English novelist Virginia Woolf once Said that "in order for a woman to write, she must have money and a room of her own." Do you think that this maxim applies to Charlotte Brontë as an author? Also, consider the ways in which money and a "room of her own" (that is, a home) are important to the character Jane Eyre.

Compare and Contrast

1840s: Like other creative and intellectual pursuits, novel writing is considered a male preserve. Women such as the Brontë sisters, George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans), and in France, George Sand (Amandine-Aurore Lucille Dupin), write under male pseudonyms in order to have their work taken seriously.

Today: Many of the leading novelists in Britain are women, and they are regarded as the equals of their male counterparts. Major British women novelists include A. S. (Antonia) Byatt, P. D. (phyllis) James, Iris Murdoch, and Muriel Spark.

1840s: Many well-to-do families employed women as governesses to educate their children at home and to supervise children's activities. By 1851, some twenty-five thousand women worked as governesses in Britain. Although being a governess was regarded as respectable, opportunities for governesses to move into other positions were limited.

Today: Some young women take temporary jobs abroad as "au pairs,"_ supervising a family's children in return for room, board, and wages. Although these jobs are low-paying, they allow young women to travel and gain life experience before going into another profession or continuing their education.

1840s: A typical English governess or school teacher might make from fifteen to thirty pounds per year.

Today: The standard salary for teachers in England rose to 420 pounds per week in 1995.

1840s: Pre-schooling is virtually nonexistent.

Today: Nearly two-thirds of three and four year olds in Britain attend nursery school.

1847: College admission is limited to young men, most of whom come from the upper class.

Today: Almost one out of every three teenagers goes on to college. Higher education is free for all students in Britain, therefore, young people do not have to work their way through college.

1840s: Haworth was a small, isolated hilltop town. Textile mills provided the local industry.

Today: Haworth thrives on tourism, with more than 250,000 tourists visiting Haworth every year. Many tourists go to the Brontë Parsonage, which houses a museum displaying original manuscripts and drawings by Charlotte Brontë and her siblings. The museum also includes other interesting Items, such as Charlotte's wedding dress and her tiny gloves.

What Do I Read Next?

Anne Brontë is the least well known of the three Brontë sister novelists. Written at the same time as *Jane Eyre,* her first novel, *Agnes Grey* (1847), is the story of an unhappy governess. Her second novel, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848), is considered a more ambitious and passionate work. Charlotte Brontë was disturbed by Anne's depiction of the heroine's alcoholic husband, who was based on Branwell Brontë .

The Life of Charlotte Brontë , by Elizabeth Gaskell, was commissioned by Reverend Patrick Brontë Just after Charlotte's death and was originally published in 1857. Gaskell, one of the best-known English novelists of her time, had met Charlotte in 1850, and the two became close friends. Gaskell's frank biography caused *some* controversy and passages were cut from it in subsequent editions. However, the first edition of the work remains in print and is today considered a classic of English literary biography.

The poetry of Charlotte Brontë is represented in a modern Everyman edition of the Brontë's *Selected Poems,* along with poems by Emily, Anne, and Branwell Brontë . Published in 1985, tills edition was edited by Juliet Barker, curator and librarian of the Brontë Parsonage Museum in Haworth. Barker is also the author of a family biography, *The Brontës.*

The Brontës (1969), by Phyllis Bentley, is an illustrated biography of the three Brontë sister-authors (Charlotte, Emily, and Anne) in Thames and Hudson's "Literary Lives" series. This book is especially good in depicting the conditions in which Charlotte Brontë lived, and in relating the places where she lived *to* her life and work.

Readers have noted some similarities between *Jane Eyre* and Daphne du Maurier's classic 1938 romantic suspense novel *Rebecca.* A young woman recounts the early days of her marriage to a wealthy widower, Maxim de Winter. The first Mrs. de Winter—Rebecca—died mysteriously, and her memory casts a chilling spell over large English manor house where the new Mrs. de Winter has come to live.

Wide Sargasso Sea (1966) is a novel by Jean Rhys that might be considered a "prequel" *to Jane Eyre.* In this novel, Rhys imagines the life of young Edward Rochester and the first Mrs. Rochester in Jamaica some years before the action of *Jane Eyre.*

Brontë (1996) is a novel by Glyn Hughes, a young British writer who lives in West Yorkshire. The book is a fictional account of the inner and outer lives of the members of the Brontë family, including Charlotte.

Topics for Discussion

Compare and contrast the characters of Helen and Jane. Although the two girls are drastically different, there is something that draws them together. What is it?

Consider the similarities and differences between the situations of both Jane as a child and Adèle. What do they have in common? What are their differences?

Explore the way Mr. Rochester plays with Jane's emotions. Is his cruelty intentional? Is he merely trying to protect himself or is he really considering marrying Blanche?

Do you think the servants at Thornfield know about the existence of Mr. Rochester's mad wife in the attic, or are he and Grace the only ones who know she is there?

Consider the person of Mr. Rochester. Was he wrong for trying to marry Jane? What about his treatment of his first wife? Was he cruel or kind to her? Consider your answer based on the conditions for that time period. For instance, most insane asylums at that time were cruel and inhumane places. Would Bertha have been better off there, or locked in the attic with personal care?

Compare and contrast the death of Helen with the death of Mrs. Reed. How can Helen be so forgiving of those who have mistreated her? In the same sense, why does Mrs. Reed refuse to forgive Jane, even though Jane has tried to make amends with her?

Trace the path of God in Jane's life. She begins a disbeliever and ends believing wholeheartedly that God has miraculously brought herself and Mr. Rochester back together. When and how did this faith develop?

Discuss the role of money and wealth in marriage as addressed in the novel. There are several examples both of marriage based on love and marriage based on wealth. Compare and contrast both Brontë's view of the subject as well as the popular opinion of the day.

Discuss love as portrayed in the novel. For instance, compare and contrast the love Jane finds with Mr. Rochester with the love of St. John. How can love from one person free a person while love from another commits them to bondage?

Consider the Gothic elements of the novel. Discuss how Jane Eyre fits the description of this type of work.

Discuss beauty and ugliness as these properties are presented in the novel. For instance, there is the idea that beauty hides a shallow and ugly personality such as seen in Blanche.

Further Study

Miriam Allott, editor, *The Brontë s: The Critical Heritage,* Routledge, 1974

An excellent resource for studying contemporary reviews and critiques of Charlotte Brontë 's works

Juliet Barker, *The Brontë s,* St. Martin's Press, 1994.

An unusually detailed and comprehensive biography with a wealth of information on Charlotte Brontë , her parents, and her brother and sisters and their writings

Margaret Howard Bjorn, *Charlotte Brontë ,* Twayne, 1977 Includes sections on Brontë 's life and on *Jane Eyre,* and assesses Brontë 's achievement in the novel

Miriam Allen deFord, "Charlotte Brontë " in *British Authors of the Nineteenth Century,* edited by Stanley J. Kumtz and Howard Haycraft, H. W. Wilson, 1936, pp. 74-6

An overview survey of Brontë and her work, written in a somewhat dated prose style.

Richard J Dunn, editor, *Jane Eyre,* Norton, 1971, updated, 1987.

Includes important background information, contemporary criticism, and useful interpretive articles on a variety of aspects of the novel.

Barbara and Gareth Lloyd Evans, *Everyman's Companion to the Brontë* s, J M. Dent and Sons, 1982

Includes both commentaries and synopses of the Brontë s' novels, including *Jane Eyre*

Barbara Timm Gates, editor, *Critical Essays on Charlotte Brontë ,* G K Hall, 1990

Includes a collection of both contemporary and modern reviews of and Critical responses to Brontë 's novels.

Lyndall Gordon, *Charlotte Brontë: A Passionate Life,* W W. Norton, 1995.

The definitive biography of Charlotte Brontë.

Q. D Leavis, Introduction, in Charlotte Brontë 's *Jane Eyre,* Penguin Books, 1966, pp. 7-29.

An exceptionally insightful discussion of the novel, and an Important source for understanding how the novel breaks with Victorian literary tradition

Pat MacPherson, *Reflecting on "Jane Eyre",* Routledge, 1989

Provides some useful background for a study of the novel, including a discussion of Jane as a governess and a discussion of Jane's personal progress from one stage in her life to another

Pauline Nestor, *Charlotte Brontë 's "Jane Eyre",* St Martin's Press, 1992

Includes material on the historical and cultural context of the novel and an interpretation of its themes of motherhood, sexuality, and identity.

Beth Newman, editor, *"Jane Eyre", by Charlotte Brontë ,* Bedford Books of St Martin's Press, 1996.

Contains the text of the novel, an essay on its Critical history, and a collection of five insightful critical essays from the perspectives of psychoanalytic, feminist, deconstruction, Marxist, and cultural Critics includes the article by Sandra Gilbert mentioned in the essay

Francine Prose, "The Brilliance of the Brontë s," in *Victoria,* Vol 11, No 3, March, 1997.

Prose discusses the enduring appeal of *Jane Eyre* in the context of a general consideration of the Brontë's particular genius prose points out that although readers remember the vivid, melodramatic aspects of the novel, much more of the book is devoted to describing the sufferings of children and the poor.

Herbert J Rosengarten, "Charlotte Brontë ," in *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume* 21' *Victorian Novelists Before* 1885, edited by Ira B Nadel and William E. Fredeman, Gale Research, 1983, pp 24-54

A comprehensive overview of Brontë 's life and works.

Elaine Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own British Women Novelists from Brontë to Lessing,* Princeton University Press, 1977.

Interprets the novel as an Important document for providing a view of the female experience in the mid-nineteenth century.

Cathy Smith, "Moors and Mansions' *Jane Eyre* Country," in *Los Angeles Times,* October 20, 1996, P L13

Smith Identifies real places in Derbyshire, England, believed to be models for some of the 10cations depicted in *Jane Eyre* She also discusses the Origin of the name "Eyre" and Identifies a historical precedent for Bertha Mason.

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Rebecca Fraser, *The Brontë s Charlotte Brontë and Her Family,* Crown Publishers, 1988.

Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic. The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination,* Yale University Press, 1979.

Margaret Lane, Introduction to *Jane Eyre,* Dent/Dutton, 1969.

M H. Scargill, "All Passion Spent. A Revaluation of 'Jane Eyre'," in *University of Toronto Quarterly,* Vol. XIX, No 2, January, 1950, pp. 120-25.

Mark Schorer, "Jane Eyre," in *The World We Imagine' Selected Essays,* Chatto & Windus, 1969, pp. 80-96.

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Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Novels for Students (NfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's□For Students□ Literature line, NfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on □classic□ novels

frequently studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of NfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of NfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of □classic□ novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members□educational professionals□ helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized

Each entry, or chapter, in NfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- Introduction: a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed□for instance, the narrator in Invisible Man-the character is listed as □The Narrator□ and alphabetized as □Narrator.□ If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. □ Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name □Jean Louise Finch□ would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname □Scout Finch.□
- Themes: a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- Style: this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- Historical Context: This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- Critical Overview: this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- Criticism: an essay commissioned by NfS which specifically deals with the novel and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work (if available).

- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an □at-a-glance□ comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author's time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

NfS includes □The Informed Dialogue: Interacting with Literature,□ a foreword by Anne Devereaux Jordan, Senior Editor for Teaching and Learning Literature (TALL), and a founder of the Children's Literature Association. This essay provides an enlightening look at how readers interact with literature and how Novels for Students can help teachers show students how to enrich their own reading experiences.

A Cumulative Author/Title Index lists the authors and titles covered in each volume of the NfS series.

A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the NfS series by nationality and ethnicity.

A Subject/Theme Index, specific to each volume, provides easy reference for users who may be studying a particular subject or theme rather than a single work. Significant subjects from events to broad themes are included, and the entries pointing to the specific theme discussions in each entry are indicated in boldface.

Each entry has several illustrations, including photos of the author, stills from film adaptations (if available), maps, and/or photos of key historical events.

Citing Novels for Students

When writing papers, students who quote directly from any volume of Novels for Students may use the following general forms. These examples are based on MLA style; teachers may request that students adhere to a different style, so the following examples may be adapted as needed. When citing text from NfS that is not attributed to a particular author (i.e., the Themes, Style, Historical Context sections, etc.), the following format should be used in the bibliography section:

□Night.□ Novels for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 234-35.

When quoting the specially commissioned essay from NfS (usually the first piece under the □Criticism□ subhead), the following format should be used:

Miller, Tyrus. Critical Essay on □Winesburg, Ohio.□ Novels for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 335-39.

When quoting a journal or newspaper essay that is reprinted in a volume of NfS, the following form may be used:

Malak, Amin. □Margaret Atwood's □The Handmaid's Tale and the Dystopian Tradition,□ Canadian Literature No. 112 (Spring, 1987), 9-16; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 4, ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski (Detroit: Gale, 1998), pp. 133-36.

When quoting material reprinted from a book that appears in a volume of NfS, the following form may be used:

Adams, Timothy Dow. □Richard Wright: □Wearing the Mask,□ in Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography (University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 69-83; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 1, ed. Diane Telgen (Detroit: Gale, 1997), pp. 59-61.

We Welcome Your Suggestions

The editor of Novels for Students welcomes your comments and ideas. Readers who wish to suggest novels to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to contact the editor. You may contact the editor via email at: ForStudentsEditors@gale.com. Or write to the editor at:

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