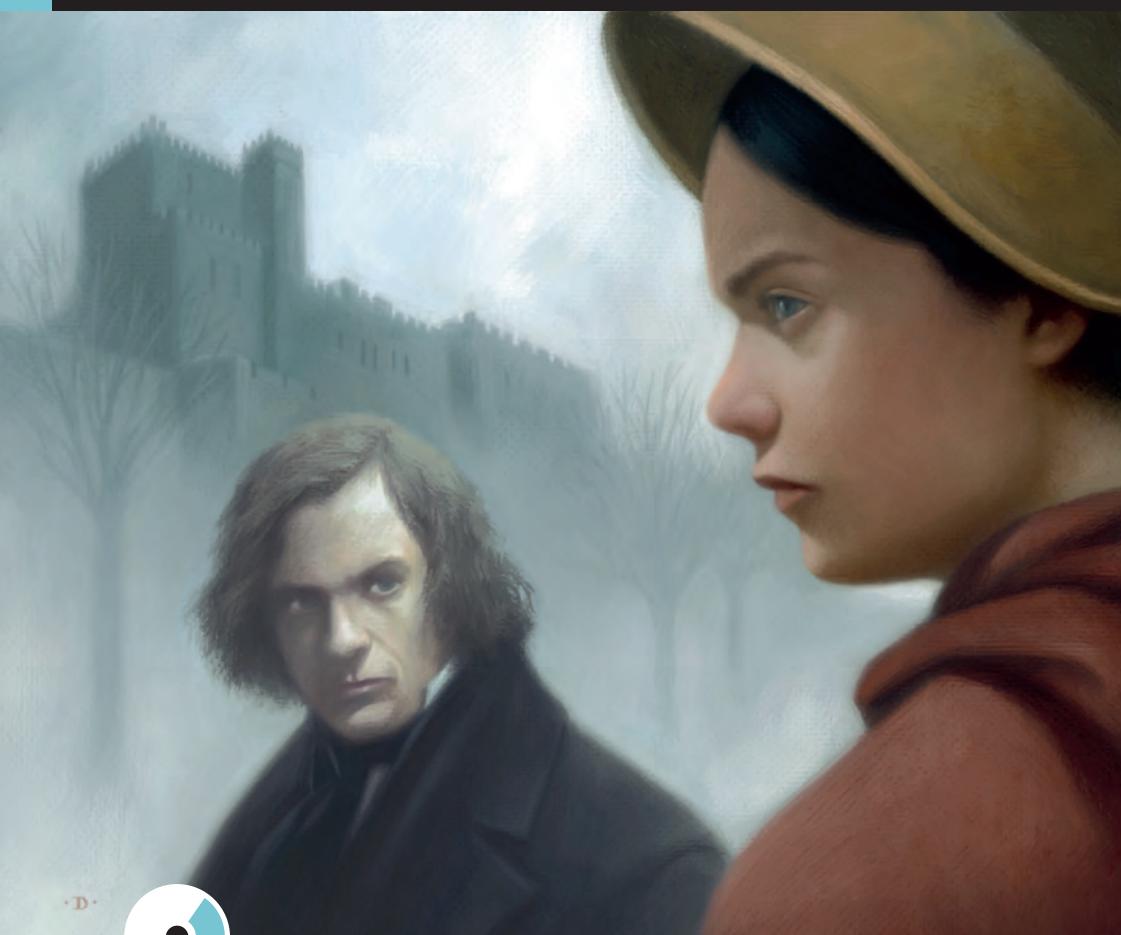


Charlotte Brontë

# Jane Eyre



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Audio CD



Charlotte Brontë

# Jane Eyre

Adapted by Andrea Shell

Activities by Stanley Roberts

Illustrated by Gianni De Conno



Editor: Daniela Penzavalle  
Design and art direction: Nadia Maestri  
Computer graphics: Simona Corniola  
Picture research: Laura Lagomarsino

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[info@blackcat-cideb.com](mailto:info@blackcat-cideb.com)  
[blackcat-cideb.com](http://blackcat-cideb.com)

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The text is recorded in full.



These symbols indicate the beginning and end of the passages linked to the listening activities.



**Charlotte Brontë** (1850) by George Richmond.

## *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*

Charlotte Brontë was born in Thornton, Yorkshire, in the north of England in 1816. She was the third daughter of Patrick Brontë, a clergyman,<sup>1</sup> and of Maria Branwell. The family moved to Haworth Parsonage<sup>2</sup> in North Yorkshire in 1800. The couple had five daughters and one son. When Charlotte's mother died in 1821, the children's aunt, Elizabeth Branwell, went to live with the family. The children had only each other for company. They all loved reading and they created a magical world of their own, based on the stories that they read. They took as a starting point their brother Branwell's toy soldiers, and they

1. **clergyman** : priest.

2. **parsonage** : house where the priest and his family live.

invented their own fantasy lands, called Angria and Gondal. They wrote histories and newspapers for these imaginary countries.

In 1824, the four eldest girls were sent to a boarding school<sup>1</sup> at Cowan Bridge, which Charlotte later used as a model for Lowood School in *Jane Eyre*. The severe conditions at the school were partly responsible for the deaths of Charlotte's sisters, Elizabeth and Maria, who both died in the same year, 1825. Charlotte herself was never completely healthy after her difficult time as a pupil at the school.

Charlotte was much happier at her second school, Roe Head. There she made one or two friends, who appeared in her novels in various forms. She later returned to the school as a teacher. She was, for a short time, governess<sup>2</sup> to two families, and then opened her own school at Haworth with her sister Emily (author of *Wuthering Heights*, published in 1847).

In 1842 Charlotte and Emily went to study languages at a school in Brussels, the Pensionnat Heger. During her stay, Charlotte fell deeply in love with Monsieur Heger, the director. He didn't return her love, and never replied to the letters that she sent him after she returned to Haworth. Charlotte later used this experience in her novel *Villette* (published in 1853).

Charlotte's first novel, *The Professor*, was not accepted by the publisher, but she then wrote *Jane Eyre*, which was a great success, and for which she is really famous.

Both Charlotte and her sisters, Anne and Emily, published their work under male pseudonyms,<sup>3</sup> as people did not respect women writers at that time. When the public realised that *Jane Eyre* was written by a

1. **boarding school** : school in which the pupils live during the school term.

2. **governess** : woman who taught small children privately.

3. **pseudonyms** : names which writers use instead of their real names.



**The Brontë Sisters** (about 1834) by their brother Patrick Branwell Brontë. From the left: Anne, Emily and Charlotte.

woman, some critics accused Jane of being coarse<sup>1</sup> and unfeminine.<sup>2</sup> Charlotte Brontë's family life was not happy. Her beloved sisters, Anne and Emily, both died while still young and her brother, Patrick, died of alcoholism after living an insignificant life. In 1854 she agreed to marry her father's curate,<sup>3</sup> Mr Nicholls, but the marriage was short-lived: Charlotte Brontë died in March 1855, at the age of thirty-nine, of an illness connected with childbirth.

*Jane Eyre* intrigues and gives pleasure to modern readers as much as it did when it was first published in 1847.

1. **coarse** : vulgar, unrefined.

2. **unfeminine** : with qualities not typical of women.

3. **curate** : assistant to the priest.

### 1 Comprehension check

Fill in the dates in the following sentences, then put them in the correct order to have a chronology of Charlotte Brontë's life.

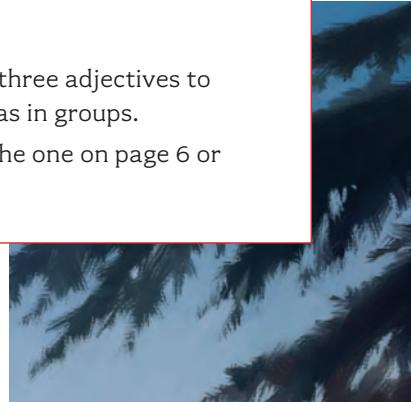
- 1  Elizabeth and Maria both died in .....
- 2  Charlotte fell in love with Monsieur Heger in .....
- 3  Charlotte died in March, .....
- 4  Charlotte was born in .....
- 5  *Villette* was published in .....
- 6  Charlotte and Emily went to Brussels to study languages in .....
- 7  Charlotte went to boarding school with her three sisters in .....
- 8  *Jane Eyre* was published in .....
- 9  Charlotte married Mr Nicholls, a curate, in .....

### 2 Answer the following questions.

- 1 Who were Charlotte Brontë's parents?
- 2 How did the Brontë children play together?
- 3 What did Charlotte use as a model for Lowood School?
- 4 What experience did Charlotte write about in her novel *Villette*?
- 5 Why did the Brontë sisters use men's names to publish their works?
- 6 Why did Charlotte's marriage to Mr Nicholls not last?

### 3 Reading pictures

- 1 Look at the portrait on page 6. Write down three adjectives to describe the sisters, then compare your ideas in groups.
- 2 Which portrait of Charlotte do you prefer, the one on page 6 or the one on page 4? Why?





A detail from **The Railway Station** (1862), by William Powell Frith.

## The Times of *Charlotte Brontë*

Charlotte Brontë was born at a time of great change in Britain. Although she died at the young age of thirty-nine, she lived through the reigns of four monarchs. The last of these was Queen Victoria, who became queen in 1837. During this time, Britain was a rich and very strong nation. It had many industries, great writers and artists and a large empire.

This was the great age of the railways. Their rise was rapid and changed the lives of many people who had previously been unable to travel far from home. Roads were dangerous and uncomfortable to travel on by horse and carriage, especially in bad weather.

As industry grew and the railways opened up the country, people moved from the countryside into the big cities such as London, Manchester, Birmingham and Glasgow to find work.

There were many rich families in Britain at this time. Some were landowners who owned great estates.<sup>1</sup> Others were owners of factories and mines, who made their money from the new, growing industries.

For poor people, life could be very hard. There was little help if you had no job or friends to help you. There were diseases like cholera because of poor living conditions. There were revolts against unfair taxes and against new machines which deprived people of their jobs. Most people during Charlotte Brontë's time had strong religious beliefs. Marriage and church-going were thought to be very important. Divorce was almost unknown.

In *Jane Eyre*, Charlotte Brontë used some of her own experiences of life and love and also reflected on some of the injustices of her time. Orphaned children often had a terrible life in institutions such as Lowood School. They were half-starved,<sup>2</sup> cold and easily became sick with diseases such as cholera. You may know the story of *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens (1838), in which Oliver is brought up in an orphanage even worse than the one described in *Jane Eyre*.

### 1 Reading pictures

Compare the scene in the painting on page 8 with what you see at a modern airport. What is different and what is similar?

1. **estates** : large areas of land.
2. **half-starved** : not given enough to eat.

## 2 Comprehension check

Decide if the following statements are true (T) or false (F). Correct the false ones.

	T	F
1 Very little happened in Britain during Charlotte Brontë's life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 The railways were replaced by major roads in this period.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 Many people left agriculture to work in industry.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 The poor did not fight against their bad conditions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 Religious institutions became a minor part of most people's lives.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 <i>Jane Eyre</i> is, in part, autobiographical.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7 Children without parents received a lot of help from the government.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8 Charles Dickens also wrote about the suffering of young children.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## 3 Match the sentences A-D with the sentences 1-4.

A  Britain was a prosperous nation.  
B  Travelling was difficult because roads were dangerous and uncomfortable.  
C  People began moving into the big cities.  
D  Life was very hard for the poor.

- 1 They lived in poor conditions and there were a lot of diseases.
- 2 It had many industries.
- 3 This was due to the railways which opened up the country.
- 4 The rise of the railways made people more mobile.

# *The Characters*



## Before you read

### 1 Reading pictures

Look at the picture on page 15 and discuss these questions.

- 1 Who are the people in the picture?
- 2 Where are they?
- 3 What do you think is going to happen next?



### 2 Listening

Listen to the first part of Part One. You will hear about Jane Eyre's childhood. For each question, fill in the missing information. There is an example at the beginning (0).

## Jane Eyre's Childhood

### Cousins

- 0 Jane's cousins were never kind ..... to her.
- 1 Jane was never happy because John ..... her.
- 2 Jane escaped from her cousins in .....
- 3 John decided to ..... because he had nothing interesting to do.

### A bad girl

- 4 John Reed hit Jane because she took .....
- 5 John became angrier because Jane called him .....
- 6 John called his mother after Jane .....
- 7 John's mother thought that her son was ..... to Jane.



## PART ONE

# Childhood

My name is Jane Eyre and my story really begins when I was ten years old. I was living with my aunt, Mrs Reed, because my mother and father were both dead. Mrs Reed was very rich and her house was large and beautiful, but I was not happy there. My three cousins, Eliza, John and Georgiana, were older than me. They teased<sup>1</sup> me, and never wanted to play with me. Sometimes they were very cruel. I was afraid of them.

Most of all, I was afraid of John Reed. He liked to frighten me and he made me very unhappy. I often hid from him in a small room. I liked to look at the pictures in the big books from the library there.

I felt happy and safe in my little room that day, because I knew that John and his sisters were with their mother. But then John got bored and decided to look for me.

1. **teased** : deliberately annoyed and embarrassed.

## Jane Eyre

‘Where’s Jane Eyre?’ he shouted. I kept very quiet and hoped he would not find me, as he was not a clever boy. But his sister Eliza soon found where I was hiding.

‘Here she is,’ she called, and I had to come out. John grinned<sup>1</sup> unpleasantly when he saw me.

‘What do you want?’ I asked him.

He made me stand in front of him. He stared<sup>2</sup> at me for a long time, and then, suddenly, he hit me. ‘Now go and stand by the door,’ he said.

Now I was really frightened. I knew that John was going to hurt me.

I went and stood near the door.

‘I’ll teach you to take our property,’ said John Reed, and he picked up a large, heavy book.

At first I didn’t know what he was going to do. Then he lifted his arm and I realised that he was going to throw the book at me. I tried to get out of the way, but I was too late. He threw the book straight at me; it hit me on the head, and I fell.

‘You wicked<sup>3</sup> and cruel boy,’ I shouted. ‘Why do you want to hurt me?’ I touched my head. There was blood on it. ‘Look what you have done!’ I cried.

My words just made John Reed angrier. He ran across the room towards me, and began to hit me again and again. I was very frightened, so I hit him back.

I don’t know what I did to John Reed, but it hurt him. He started to call for his mother.

1. **grinned** : smiled.

2. **stared** : looked for a long time.

3. **wicked** : very bad.



# Jane Eyre

'Mother! Mother!'

Mrs Reed heard the noise and hurried into the room. She didn't seem to see the blood which ran down my face.

'Jane Eyre, you are a bad girl!' she cried. 'Why are you hitting poor John, who is always so good to you?'



No one listened when I tried to say what John had done to me. Mrs Reed told two servants<sup>1</sup> to take me away.

'Take her to the red room and lock the door,' she told them.

The red room was cold and dark. A servant had told me that Mrs Reed's husband had died in the room. Nobody ever went there at night.

I was very frightened. I cried for help, but nobody came. 'Please help me!' I shouted. 'Don't leave me here alone!'

Nobody came. I cried for a long time. I was more terrified with every minute that went by. Then everything suddenly went black, and I think that I fainted. I remembered nothing after that.

When I woke up, I was in my own bed. My head was hurting. The doctor was sitting beside the bed. I felt very glad that someone who was not part of the Reed family was in the room with me. 'What happened to me?' I asked him.

'You are ill, Jane,' the doctor answered. 'The servant says that you have cried a lot. Why did you cry so much?'

'I cry because I am miserable,' I replied.

The doctor looked puzzled.<sup>2</sup> 'What made her ill yesterday?' he asked the servant.

1. **servants** : people who are paid to work in a house.

2. **puzzled** : confused, unable to understand.

‘She fell, sir,’ was the reply. I could not waste this opportunity. I wanted the doctor to know the truth about my life with Mrs Reed and my cousins. ‘I was knocked down,’ I said. ‘But that did not make me ill. I was shut up in a dark, cold room until after dark.’<sup>1</sup>

The doctor sent the servant away, and then he asked me, ‘Are you unhappy here with your aunt and cousins?’

‘Yes, I am,’ I told him. ‘I’m very unhappy.’

The doctor looked at me kindly. ‘I see,’ he said. ‘Would you like to go away to school?’

‘Oh yes, I think that I would,’ I answered.

The doctor looked at me again for a long time, and then went downstairs to speak to Mrs Reed. Much later, Mrs Reed came to see me and told me that she had decided to send me to school.

A few days later, I left my aunt’s house to go to school. I knew that Mrs Reed and my cousins were glad<sup>2</sup> to see me leave. They did not want me to go back for holidays. I had lived with them for as long as I could remember, but I was not really sad to leave. ‘Perhaps I’ll be happy at school,’ I thought. ‘Maybe there will be someone who likes me. I could find some friends there.’

1. **after dark** : night time.

2. **glad** : happy.



## The text and **beyond**

### 1 Comprehension check

For questions 1–6, choose the correct answer — A, B, C or D.

- 1 Why did Jane Eyre live with Mrs Reed?
  - A  Because she liked her.
  - B  Because she didn't like her own home.
  - C  Because her parents were dead.
  - D  Because she didn't have any brothers or sisters.
- 2 What were the names of Jane's cousins?
  - A  Eliza, George and Maria.
  - B  John, Eliza and Georgiana.
  - C  Joseph, Georgina and Lizzie.
  - D  Lisa, Jack and Georgia.
- 3 Why was Jane unhappy?
  - A  Because she couldn't go to school.
  - B  Because she was ill.
  - C  Because Mrs Reed and her children were cruel to her.
  - D  Because Mrs Reed was cruel to her.
- 4 What did John Reed do to Jane?
  - A  He locked her in a room.
  - B  He didn't give her any food.
  - C  He tore her book.
  - D  He hit her.
- 5 John Reed looked for Jane and then hit her because
  - A  he had nothing better to do.
  - B  Jane had his books.
  - C  Jane hit him.
  - D  his mother told him to do these things.
- 6 Jane became ill because
  - A  John Reed knocked her down.
  - B  she was always sad.
  - C  she spent a terrifying night in a cold closet.
  - D  she always read inside her room.

**2** Fill in the gaps

Poor Jane has no family or friend to write to, so she has to write to her diary. Read the diary entry below and choose the correct word for each space. For each question, mark the letter next to the correct word – A, B, C or D.

I am writing to you, dear diary, to (1) ..... you that I am very unhappy. I do not like (2) ..... here with Mrs Reed and (3) ..... children. Mrs Reed, (4) ..... is my aunt, does not like me and her children are often cruel to me. Here is what (5) ..... yesterday. I was reading quietly in the library (6) ..... my cousin, John, hit me (7) ..... my head started to (8) ..... . Mrs Reed did not care that I was hurt. She (9) ..... me in a cold, dark room. No (10) ..... came near me all night. I hope that I will leave here soon.

1 A say	B tell	C speak	D told
2 A live	B living	C lived	D to live
3 A her	B their	C your	D his
4 A which	B that	C who	D whose
5 A has happened	B happened	C hapened	D happens
6 A when	B as	C but	D until
7 A as soon as	B until	C when	D if
8 A blood	B bled	C bleed	D bloody
9 A lock	B brought	C locked	D bring
10 A where	B thing	C time	D one

### 3 Find the mistake!

The sentences below all contain a mistake. Sometimes the words are in the wrong order, sometimes a word is incorrect and sometimes a word is missing. Try and correct the sentences.

0 ..... : Where Jane Eyre is?  
**Where is Jane Eyre?**

1 ..... : Here is she.

2 ..... : What you do want?

3 ..... : Now go by and stand the door.

4 ..... : You wicked and cool boy.

5 ..... : Jane Eyre, you are bad girl.

6 ..... : Take her to the red room and locked the door.

7 ..... : Please help me! Don't live me here.

 Can you write in the name of the person who said the words above?  
 Check by listening to the recording.

### 4 Adjectives

Put the letters in order and find the correct adjective to fill the gaps in the following sentences.

chri ckdwie ralge ldoc rakd naltupnaseyl lcuer

1 Mrs Reed was very .....

2 Her house was ..... and beautiful.

3 My cousins were sometimes ..... to me.

4 John grinned ..... when he saw me.

5 'You ..... and cruel boy!' I shouted.

6 The red room was ..... and .....

**5 Discussion: bullies**

Discuss the following in pairs or small groups and then share your ideas in class.

- 1 A person who likes hurting or frightening a person who is younger or smaller or weaker is called a bully. Sometimes you find bullies at school. How do you say 'bully' in your language?
- 2 Can the members of the Reed family be defined as 'bullies'?
- 3 Why do the members of the Reed family treat Jane so badly?

**Before you read****1 Reading pictures**

Look at the picture on page 25 and answer the questions.

- 1 Where is Jane?
- 2 How are the girls dressed?
- 3 What do you think the school will be like?

**2 Listening**

Listen to the first part of Part Two and decide if each sentence is correct or incorrect. If it is correct, mark A. If it is not correct, mark B.

	A	B
1 Lowood School looked just like her aunt's house.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 There were nearly twenty girls in the room.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 Jane did not eat the bread.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 Each girl had her own bed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 Jane had a very small breakfast the next day.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 Miss Temple offered the students lunch.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>