

# Jane eyre mystery and suspense essay sample



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Discuss how Charlotte Bronte creates mystery and suspense in Jane Eyre. Mystery and suspense play a key part in creating an atmosphere for the reader and foreshadowing coming events. Bronte establishes an air of mystery and suspense throughout the book; from Jane Eyre and Mr Rochester's first meeting to the reveal of Bertha. She uses many techniques to create this atmosphere, engaging the reader and crafting a very effective plot. Bronte subtly uses aptronyms to generate a mysterious feel for the reader - for example, 'Thornfield'. A 'thorn' is the sharp projecting point on a plant, and by using this, Bronte foreshadows the difficult time Jane has at Thornfield. This name also makes the reader curious, as it is an unusual and quite negative name. Bronte sustains the reader's curiosity during the meeting between Mr Rochester and Jane Eyre. The setting of the hill top path with the 'rising moon' and 'absolute hush' builds a picture of a very quiet, isolated place in the reader's mind. This setting is usually used in other stories when something bad is about to happen, so the suspense is high here. Jane's memories of Bessie's tales about the 'Gytrash' add terror to the scene, where an onlooker would see none.

Bronte also connects with the reader's senses; 'a tramp tramp, a metallic clatter' and 'a rush under the hedge'. By not stating what the noises are made by, it produces a very mysterious and unnerving situation which the reader is drawn into. Bronte extends this idea with the structure of the sentences. In this paragraph, the sentences are long but with a lot of punctuation for pauses. For example, 'It was very near, but not yet in sight; when, in addition to the tramp, tramp, I heard a rush under the hedge.' This reflects Jane's thought process; she is nervous so her thoughts are broken

and fleeting. The description of Mr Rochester also adds mystery. He is 'enveloped in a riding cloak', 'had a dark face, with stern features' and 'considerable breadth of chest'. This suggests a secretive character, which Bronte also portrays through the dialogue between him and Jane.

Rochester's responses to Jane's questions are short and abrupt, "Can you tell me where he is?" "I cannot." This makes it seem like he has something to hide, which the reader later finds out is his identity. In addition, the fact that he responds with 'I cannot' may seem odd to the reader (a normal response may be more apologetic and less definitive.) When it is revealed, to Jane and the reader, that the traveller was Mr Rochester, it makes the reader intrigued as to why he would keep his identity secret when he met Jane earlier in the chapter.

This increases the mysterious atmosphere. Charlotte Bronte uses gothic features in her description of Thornfield, to enhance the readers feeling of suspense. The reader gets a sense of the building when Mrs Fairfax says 'no one ever sleeps here'. This is followed up by Jane's mention of any 'ghosts' 'legends or ghost stories'. This presents the building as a rather large, but empty, eerie place. In this description, Thornfield is also presented as almost a prison - 'trapdoor', 'attic... as black as a vault' and 'rows of small black doors all shut' compared to the 'sunlit scene of grove, pasture and green hill' that Jane views from the roof of Thornfield. This links with the reveal of Bertha Mason later on, as she was essentially a prisoner in Thornfield. Bronte also creates mystery and suspense through intertextuality. This gives the text multiple layers and foreshadows events later on in the novel. Firstly, Jane says 'after life's fitful fever they sleep well' which is a quote from

Macbeth. By linking the scene to the play, Bronte links Thornfield with the themes in Macbeth (deception, tragedy, murder etc.) and foreshadows happenings later in the book.

Secondly, Bronte relates the corridors in Thornfield 'like a corridor in some Bluebeard's castle.' The French folktale 'Bluebeard' (published 1697) tells the story of a violent nobleman, in the habit of murdering his wives, and the attempt of one wife to avoid the fate of her predecessors. This relates to Mr Rochester, keeping his wife Bertha Mason in the attic, while proposing to Jane. Readers who know of the folk tale will pick up on this reference and be interested as to how this relates to the 'Jane Eyre'. Towards the end of Chapter 11, Mrs Fairfax says to Grace Poole 'Remember directions!' By not expressing what the directions are, Bronte makes the reader wonder what they are, creating mystery. Possibly the moment containing the most suspense in the book, is the scene at the wedding of Rochester and Jane, in which Bronte slowly reveals the existence of Rochester's previous wife.

By having many characters speaking in the same scene, Bronte makes the event very dramatic and frantic. This keeps the reader engaged and it almost makes them read at the pace the scene would be happening. This gives them a real sense of how quickly the mystery is unravelling. The reveal of Bertha Mason is the chapter where all the mystery comes together. Bronte writes 'the low, black door' which relates to earlier on in the book, and shows how these black doors are actually a form of imprisonment for Bertha. She continues the suspense as 'he [Rochester] lifted the hangings from the wall, uncovering the second door'. This powerful description makes the reader feel like they are in the scene, and are also awaiting the reveal of

<https://assignbuster.com/jane-eyre-mystery-and-suspense-essay-sample/>

Bertha Mason. In conclusion, I feel that Charlotte Bronte creates mystery and suspense in Jane Eyre very effectively. By numerous techniques, she manages to bring the reader into the story, making for a truly captivating plot.