

# Jane eyre, the red room incident



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Charlotte Bronte uses the red room incident as a turning point in the novel for the young Jane Eyre. The incident sets the momentum for the rest of the novel; it determines how Jane's character is going to develop. Besides if it hadn't happened then most, if not all of the novel would not have taken place. Jane Eyre, a nine year old orphan, on a rainy, sombre, bitter day curls up with a book in the window bay; is discovered and stuck by her cousin John Reed; fights back then is locked up in the terrifying red room as her punishment by her aunt Mrs Reed.

It was Mrs Reed's dead husband's wish she should keep his niece Jane. As a result John Reed thinks of Jane as an outsider and has no remorse for Jane. He often exerts his authority and power over her" say...

Master Reed", he also demands that he was addresses as Master Reed by Jane. He feels that its unfair that Jane the outsider should be a burden upon his mother "...You are a dependant, mamma says; you have no money; your father left you none; you ought to beg, and not live with Gentlemen's children like us.

.. at our mamma's expense". He also believes that Jane has no Heritage and that everything in the house belongs to them the Reeds, " you have no business to take our books".

He bullies her and puts her down telling her " you have no right to be here". The reader can now safely assume that John Reed thinks of himself on a higher rank than Jane is and that he is worth more than her. It is this felling of Johns that makes him and his sisters have an aggressive and mean attitude towards Jane. The beginning of the novel is a narrative of power and

conflict. The red room incident presents the reader with an imagery of hierarchy within the household. John treats Jane as a sort of slave or servant, although she is neither but actually a family member (or used to be one before her uncles death).

This scene represented the way in which the lower class are treated and addressed to by the upper class. It punctuates classism during the Victorian time, it is in this scene the two different classes Clash with unexpected results. John Rees caught her reading one of “ their” books; slapped her across the face and immediately after hits her on the head with a book. He provokes and antagonises her so much that she could no longer bear it. This also can be associated to the Victorian era. The upper class normally mistreats and provokes the lower class abusing their position of authority as well.

John sparks Jane’s Fire when he flung the book at her, he abused her so much that Jane’s “ terror had passed its Climax” and that other feelings succeeded. As she starts retaliating using insults and calling him “ wicked” and “ cruel” John attacks her; at the moment he launched at her , her fire is ignited into a blazing inferno as she retaliates by striking back. It was this spirit of fighting back which punctuates Jane’s expressions that she had , had enough and that she was no longer going to allow those in privileged positions to treat her with disrespect. She is indeed different from her stereotype ( lower class). She “ resisted all the way a new thing for her. She had noticed that she was already liable to penalisation, so there for she wanted to give it her all, to resist against the Reeds (the upper class) “ the fact is I was a trifle besides my self; or rather out of my self, as the French would

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say, I was conscious that a moments mutiny had already rendered me liable to strange penalties and, like any other rebel slave, I felt resolved, in my desperation, to go all lengths”.

Jane compares her self to a “ rebel slave” this shows her real feelings towards the Reeds, she feels as if she is treated as a slave this makes the reader feel a sense of unfairness for Jane. Charlotte Bronte portrays Jane as a young orphan, with a history of unfortunate events and that she is being abused mentally and physically. This however makes Jane want to fight back more to gain respect and to be treated fairly. However John seizes the opportunity to get Jane into Hot water.

Mrs Reed is called by her two Daughters. Mrs. Reed is furious that her son has been attracted by Jane the outsider. Mrs Reed completely over sees Jane’s account of the event and orders her to be taken to the Red Room. This scene symbolises the favouritism of the upper class by the society during the Victorian era. at this particular moment the reader can imagine the venomous tone of Mrs Reed and the anger which rages inside her.

Already Jane is not in her good books and now this? If you put yourself in Mrs. Reeds shoes Jane must have been getting on her last nerves. The reader can literally feel the tension in the atmosphere between Mrs Reed and Jane tension which can almost be cut with a knife. First the tension was between John; now it’s between Jane and Mrs Reed. Jane puts up a fight and resists all the way as she is dragged to the red room by Bessie and Miss Abbot.

Keeping in mind that the two Servants represent the Lower Class like Jane, you can see that they have come to accept their subservient role to serve the upper class( The Reeds), they even do what they are told by the Reeds even though they truthfully know its unfair. This shows the authority the upper class have over the lower classes. It's this power that the upper class uses to keep together the hierarchical class structure in the Victorian society. Jane still resisting (to the amazement of miss Abbot and Bessie because she is fighting against her status in life she's not sticking to the status quo).

) she then Demands for a reason why John didn't get punished the two Servants reply " Boys will be boys" and that her behaviour was not " lady like" this shows that they expected her to just do nothing against the abuse John Reed and his sisters Afflicted on her. That statement the two servants made also bring up the fact that favouritism of a certain gender or gender discrimination was common and at the heart of the Victorian society. As she is forced into the red room the reader at this point feels the stress and unfairness of the situation. The reader even feels for her as she is told by the servants that she is unworthy to address John Reed as ' John' or even as her cousin but as ' Master' " Your young master"(ch2).

Jane replies in astonishment " Master! How is he my master? Am I a servant?" Bessie and Abbot Reply No. instead they tell her that she even less valuable than a servant although she is a family member. They both try to explain to her that she ought to be humble and grace full for the privilege of even being at Gateshead hall. Jane is left in the red room to think about her actions. It was Mrs Reed's orders not to let her out till she had learnt a lesson.

The style and narrative of Bronte in Jane Eyre employs a simple rather than complex grammar as its stylistic basis. Whose short, emphatic words are linked by verbal and grammatical echo. The effect of this is spontaneous intensity and emotional naturalness. The reader is gripped by the vivid narration techniques used by Bronte for the red room, as a scary, spooky and mind playing area. While in the room Jane observed the structures and design of the room it was then she questioned her self the need for her suffering. She now started to reflect and think of her situation. She realizes that all she wants is to just be treated as the same way her cousins are treated.

She wants to receive the same love and equality as them, but as the servants said to her earlier, “ don’t think of yourself of equal to the Reeds”. So she knew that her desires were not possible she noticed that she could never be loved by Mrs Reed, for Jane was not if her ‘ race’ (class; ranking) she was an interloper; unconnected in any way with Mrs Reed since her uncle had died, she was an intruder on Mrs Reeds family group. This made Jane fell down and depressed and even suicidal. She had no scene of Belonging.

The reader feels her pain as if they were in the Room with her. As she thinks about her life, she sees a ghost; tries to escape but the door was locked. She frantically begins banging on the door, screaming. Bessie and Miss Abbot came to see what was happening she tells them what has happened but then her aunt Mrs Reed comes n orders her back into the room.. Jane was petrified thinking that there’s a ghost in the room .

she faints. There is no doubt all her ill-feelings and accounts were at Gateshead hall was shown in the red room incident. She realises that her mental and emotional survival is at stake. She wishes that she had not gone through such dreadfulness. She also wishes her uncle was alive probably then she would gain some respect around the house.

Charlotte Bronte writes about the red room incident to show us how Jane's personality changes once she was placed in the red room and before she was placed there. This episode in her life affected the way she was going to relate to people around her, later on in life. Jane had lost her trust in people around her. This experience made her into a self dependant character which is good.

Jane's experience in the red room opened a new chapter within her and without it she wouldn't have made the advances she achieved in her life. It galvanised within her a steely resolve not to be put down by others, especially if they are those in positions of power like Mrs Reed and John Reed who abused their inferiority, power and authority instead of helping the vulnerable Jane (the lower Class) they delight in her humiliation, pain; and suffering. Bronte is against such exploitation of the hierarchical class structures of the Victorian traditions.