

How does charlotte bronte build up tension?

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Charlotte Bronte wrote Jane Eyre in 1847. Throughout this novel Bronte criticises and challenges some views and believes that she experienced herself within the injustice of the Victorian society. In this essay I am going to use chapter 23 to show how tension is built up in terms of language, feelings and symbols. Firstly, I'm going to include a brief summery of the plot and at the same time highlight the main characters I'll be working with. Secondly, I will include the history of the time the book was written in and comment on how it links with the story.

Finally, I am going to point out and explain the many different techniques Bronte uses to build up tension. Jane Eyre opens with the narrator, the adult Jane Eyre recalling herchildhoodexperiences growing up as an orphan at Gateshead, the home of her unfriendly aunt, and her children. Jane is always wrongly punished, she was even sent away to Lowwood charity school where pupils are treated appallingly. There she passes six years as a student, then two as ateacher. After that Jane becomes a governess at Thornfield, owned by Mr. Rochester.

Jane falls in love with her master and Rochester asks Jane to marry him, she agreed. On the day of their marriage Jane discovers that Rochester is already married, she then refuses to be Rochester's mistress and leaves Thornfield. Later she becomes a teacher at a new local school; she also meets her three cousins. St John [her cousin] proposes marriage to Jane; however she refuses as she still loves Rochester. Finally, she returns to her master to find out that he has been maimed and blinded when his first wife burned down Thornfield and killed her self.

The novel ends with Rochester's marriage to Jane and a description of the happy life ahead of them. The main characters I'll be mentioning in this essay are Jane Eyre and Edward Rochester. The heroine and narrator of the novel, Jane is an intelligent, honest, plain-featured young girl forced to compete with oppression, inequality, and hardship. She has also developed a sense of right and wrong from an early age. Despite being naive and innocent she is still able to look after her self and became very independent.

On the other hand, Edward Rochester is a passionate man with a dark secret that provides much of the novel's suspense. He was a very unhappy man when we first met him, however his pure love for Jane eventually changes him back to the man he was. By the end of the book his blinded and crippled state was used to metaphors his loss of arrogance and pride. Charlotte Bronte is attacking the social injustices that were present in the nineteenth century. She successfully does this and clearly portrays what life was like at the time the book is set.

Today, men and women are treated equally, which was certainly not the case in the nineteenth century. Women, in the nineteenth century were treated as if they were inferior to men, 'Seating himself in an armchair, he intimated by a gesture that I was to approach and stand before himi??. At that time also, very few occupations were open to those who had to support themselves. Marriage was too seen to be the only desirable goal for women, and was taken very seriously as a financial or a business deal. Poor girls such as Jane had very few options open to them apart from using their education as a source of strength.

Social status was very important in the nineteenth century. Class divisions were far more fixed and pronounced than they are today. In the novel, Jane is very conscious that, socially, she is inferior to many of those with whom she associates in spite of being a 'lady'. At that time, money only can determine where anyone can fit on the social ladder. Therefore, the theme of respect being earned and not deserved due to one's bank balance is important in this novel. In this novel Bronte uses many ways to build up tension particularly in chapter 23.

The most recurring and effective method is her use of 'Pathetic Fallacy', which is the use of natural description to convey inner feelings or the status of the character. For example, in chapter 23 she uses a lovely night for the proposal to echo and reinforce Jane's happiness "the nightingale's song was then the only voice of the hour". In contrast, Bronte uses a "heavy shower" in chapter 37 to convey Jane's pain and sorrow at seeing her master and loved one in that state. Yet, Charlotte Bronte used the sudden change in weather at the end of chapter 23 to signify that Jane and Rochester's union is not right.

One of the numerous ways in which Bronte builds up tension is her use of hints and clues which relates to things happening later in the novel. In the quote "the great horse-chestnut at the bottom of the orchard had been struck by lightning in the night, and half of it split away" Bronte used the chestnut tree which symbolises Jane and Rochester's future union in marriage separated into two by a bolt of lightning- a symbol of either God's unhappiness about Rochester's deed or Bertha coming between them- to

hint to us that something is going to stop the couple from getting married later on.

I think that this is very effective way to build up apprehension as the reader will wonder what kind of thing is going to break the great love between them; hence it is a good way to keep people reading until they find out. Later on in chapter 37 Mr. Rochester is comparing himself with the " the old lightning-struck chestnut tree" which reminds the reader that what happened was exactly as foreshadowed in chapter 23. The way Bronte uses questions to convey the status of power in both chapter 23 and 37 builds up a great deal of apprehension for the reader.

In chapter 23 Rochester is asking Jane many questions he very well know their answers, " you must have become in some degree attached to house? " and " we have been good friends, Jane; have we not? " These questions and many others show clearly that Mr. Rochester is using his powerful position as Jane's employer to tease her, and since she is dependent on him for her living she can't by any mean treat him in the same way he treats her.

This would draw the readers into the story by setting up expectations of what will happen later on, as they know that Jane had always refused to be dominated and that resulted in angry outbursts against people trying to control her. In the early chapters she returned the same bad treatment back to her cruel cousin. And in chapter 6, we see that again when she says: " when we are struck at without a reason, we should strike back again very hard", this shows Jane's strong believe in standing up to oppression and undeserved cruelty, which is what is happening again in chapter 23.

During their conversation, Rochester tells Jane she'll soon need to leave Thornfield forever because he's finally decided to marry Blanche Ingram. Teasingly Rochester also tells her of a governess position, undertaking the education of the five daughters of Mrs. Dionysius O'Gall of Bitternutt Lodge in Ireland, " indeed I have already, through my future mother-in-law, hearted of a place that I think will suit you..... you'll like Ireland , I think: they're such warm-hearted people there, they say" .

Here you can notice that Rochester is torturing Jane with the idea of marrying another. However, I personally think that his behavior could be interpreted in a different way; since Rochester is a proud man he forced Jane into confessing her real feelings in order to be sure that his suspicions are correct, still I think there are many other ways to do so which are not as unkind. Mr. Rochester tells Jane that he feels as though they are connected by a " cord of communion. "

Jane sobs-" for I could repress what I endured no longer," she tells us, " I was obliged to yield. Jane confesses her love for Rochester, and to her surprise, he proposes marriage. Yet she believes that Rochester may be still playing with her feelings, that he may see her as an automaton, " a machine without feelings"; because she is " poor, obscure, plain, and little," he may mistakenly think she is also " soulless and heartless. " At this point, she speaks to him beyond the " medium of custom, conventionalities," even flesh, and her spirit addresses his spirit in a relationship of equality.

Again, Jane creates equality by moving the relationship outside of the material world, and into the spiritual: At " God's feet," they can stand side-

by-side, rather than with Rochester leading, Jane following. This section of chapter 23 creates lots of tension for the reader as they will set up expectations as what reactions will Mr. Rochester make. Rochester convinces Jane that he only brought up marrying Blanche in order to arouse Jane's jealousy; when she reads the truth in his face she accepts his proposal. He then savagely declares that God has sanctioned their union, so he doesn't care what society thinks of the relationship.

However, it is also important to note that nowhere in Jane Eyre are society's boundaries bent, Jane is Rochester's intellectual, but not his social, equal; Jane is also hesitant to marry Rochester because she senses that she would feel indebted to him for "condescending" to marry her. Ultimately, Jane is only able to marry Rochester as his equal because she has almost magically come into her own inheritance from her uncle. After achieving independence by finding a family in the Riverses and wealth in her inheritance, Jane is now free to return to Rochester to complete her triumph.

Additionally, because Rochester has been blinded by the fire and has lost his manor house at the end of the novel, he became dependent upon Jane to be his "prop and guide." It is clear now that Mr. Rochester has become weaker while Jane has grown in strength-Jane claims that they are equals, but it is obvious that she is more powerful than him. This can also be seen noticeably in the way she teases Rochester with her answers in chapter 37. "his appearance-I forgot the description you gave me of his appearance; - a sort of raw curate..... To provoke him Jane answers:" St John dresses well.

He is a handsome man: tall, fair, with blue eyes, and a Grecian profile. " This is very entertaining and apprehensive for the readers in the same time. The reader will feel happy that Jane is now powerful enough to return the same teasing Rochester did in chapter 23, but at the same time the reader will be wondering about the Rochester's reaction. However, Rochester welcomes Jane back with open arms, realising that he will never possess her the way he once wanted to, but that she, in fact, will end up possessing him.

The opening of chapter 38 without a doubt will shock readers in the 19th century as well as readers nowadays. Jane says: " Reader, I married him". This proves how powerful and controlling Jane has become; she did not say usual stereotypes like " we got married" or " he married me", which illustrates that she did not only become more powerful financially but also on the gender bases. The fact that Jane is the narrator creates a huge amount of anxiety to the reader. This is because the reader will wonder where she is in the future and what happened to her. This as a result will make the reader more attached to the book to find out.

To conclude, I think that Jane Eyre is an interesting book that will appeal to readers both now and in the 19th century as some of the injustices are still occurring today. Bronte used many techniques in this book to build up tension. For example she uses the method of 'Pathetic Fallacy' as well as many symbols to create suspense. She also uses aspects from the history of her time like class boundaries, equality very effectively to make the reader more anxious. Another way in which Bronte creates tension is by using the shifts in power between Jane and Rochester.