

How does bronte
arouse sympathy for
jane eyre in the first
chapter of the novel



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

This essay is about the novel Jane Eyre, written by Charlotte Bronte. I am going to explain how Bronte makes the reader feel sympathy towards Jane using several different methods.

The novel Jane Eyre follows Jane's life from when she is a little girl through her unhappy childhood and into adult life. It is written through the eyes of Jane and informs us of her every emotion and exactly what is happening in immense detail. Chapter one of Jane Eyre The first chapter opens with the line ' There was no possibility of a walk that day. ' This immediately draws our attention. We wonder why there is no possibility of a walk and want to read on and discover the reason. We presume that Jane goes on walks and that something might be wrong or because she cannot go on one today.

It then goes on to say that they ' had been wandering' in the morning and still we wonder why she could go in the morning and not now. It then goes on and tells us about dinner so we get an idea of her usual routines. We feel more involved now knowing this. This scene is set in the house of the Reed family - Mrs Reed, her 3 children Eliza, John and Georgiana, the maids Abbot and Bessie and of course Jane. It is a miserable day outside, ' the cold winter wind had brought with it clouds so sombre, and a rain so penetrating'.

This is outside but inside the atmosphere reflects the weather, it is miserable and Jane certainly is feeling this. This is a prime example of pathetic fallacy and Bronte uses this in the first paragraph to emphasise the mood of the house and the mood of Jane especially. In the first few paragraphs we already know the main facts about Jane, we get a feel of her character and emotions - as miserable as the weather. We know that she lives with her

aunt and her three cousins as well as the two nurses Bessie and Abbot.

When dialogue is brought in we immediately realise that she is not treated as well as the other three children that are present in the room.

Her first line is 'What does Bessie say I have done?' which makes us think that she has done something wrong and again we want to read on and find out what has happened and if she is in trouble. Mrs Reed then replies and basically throws back in her face what was a perfectly reasonable question and tells her to and 'until you can speak pleasantly, remain silent'. We now realise that Jane is treated badly compared to her cousins; they are favoured above Jane, we know this because of the way she is 'reclined' on a sofa with her 'darlings' about her. Jane is excluded from the group. As soon as Mrs Reed talks we know that she is mean, the way she snaps and favours her children to Jane.

The whole family is described as bullying and we automatically feel for Jane, as she has to live with them and behave carefully to avoid further disfavour. Jane lives along with her cousins - Eliza, Georgiana and John Reed. Eliza and Georgiana are described as not being as horrible as John. He is 'a schoolboy of fourteen years old; four years older than I, for I was ten' so we recognize the fact that he is older than her and could pick on her if he wants.

We then find out what he looks like 'large and stout for his age, with a dingy and unwholesome skin; thick ligaments in a spacious visage, heavy limbs and large extremities. He gorged himself habitually at the table, which made him bilious, and gave him a dim and bleared eye and flabby cheeks. From this striking description he doesn't sound appealing to look at, he is fat and it

is obvious that he is spoilt with food and even though he is ugly, his mother still considers him beautiful. He is also a bully and picks on Jane but she is scared of him she 'wishes fervently' that he wouldn't discover her hiding place, she dreads him coming near her, afraid of what he might do.

He then attacks her, while Georgiana and Eliza stand there and do nothing to help. She then gets blamed for it even though we all know it wasn't her fault at all. When Jane is sitting in the window on her own, the weather is described as being particularly dismal. 'Afar, it offered a pale blank of mist and cloud; near a scene of wet lawn and storm-beat shrub, with ceaseless rain sweeping away wildly before a long and lamentable blast.' This especially descriptive passage paints a perfect picture in our mind so we can imagine just how gloomy it is. This dismal weather is reflected in the house and Jane's feelings; we picture the situation and get a feel of the atmosphere in the house.

While sitting in the window she is reading a very dark and mysterious book. It is a very dark and mysterious book, which again emphasises the mood and feelings of Jane. The pictures are described as quite scary and depressing which adds to the ambience, this could symbolise just how miserable her life is. As she is only a young girl we wonder why she is allowed to read such a book and then conclude that maybe no one cares enough about her forbid her to read unsuitable literature. She is 'shut in' by 'folds of scarlet drapery', which is an example of gothic horror writing, this makes the day seem even more ominous.

She is left out and wants to hide or get away from her troubles so sits inconspicuously in the window, the billowing curtain acts like a huge blanket to shield her from her worries. Bronte describes everything so clearly we get a perfect picture in our mind, which helps us become more involved and realise that she is very intelligent and a strong character. She needs to be clever to get on in her household; she needs to be able to stick up for herself. She is fully aware that she is not as important in the household as her cousins; she is a poor relation with no one close enough to call 'family'.

As we read on we realise just how miserable her life is and with the detailed description we can imagine how uncomfortable her situation is. We feel sympathy as she tries to fit in but does not succeed because everyone has already formed his or her opinion of her and she cannot change that. She is only ten years old and we are impressed by her maturity of thought and behaviour.