

How does charlotte
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1816, a legend was born. A legend known as Charlotte Bronte, now considered as one of the greatest female writers of all time. Bronte was one of five sisters but also had one brother. She was born in Thornton and was daughter to an Anglican Clergyman who moved with his family to Haworth, part of the Yorkshire Moors in 1820. After Charlotte's mother and two eldest sisters died, she was left with sisters Emily and Anne and brother Branwell. Charlotte and her other siblings were left under the care of their father and strict religious aunt, Elizabeth Branwell.

Charlotte and her sisters had always been interested in reading and writing, even as small children. They would read each other short stories and poems and on occasions writing the smallest of novels on scraps of paper. All three sisters became successful novelists and poets and were forced to hide behind the pseudonyms, Curer, Ellis and Acton Bell due to the fact writing was not considered to be a career choice for women in Victorian times. Their true identities were revealed several years later. Some of Charlotte's novels included: Jane Eyre (1847), Vilette (1853) Shirley (1849) and The Professor (1857)

The novel Jane Eyre follows a young girls life into adulthood in Victorian England and introduces the cruelties of her life trying to survive and live. The novel starts by showing us her life at Gateshead where she lives with her strict aunt after being orphaned. Her aunt is portrayed as a cruel woman who is very deep and only cares for herself and her children, so Jane is made to feel like an outcast. Jane's parents were killed when she was little so she was

made to live at Gateshead. Gateshead is where she begins her journey, hence the name ' Gates-head'.

Throughout the novel, Bronte makes lots of references about her own life which makes us feel more sympathetic towards Jane because we know it was real and things like that actually happened back then to innocent people. Jane was made to live at Gateshead under the strict control of her aunt and her children or face the poor house. Jane's female cousins, Georgina and Eliza, tolerated her but did not love her. John, her other cousin was blatantly more hostile towards Jane, by reminding her all the time that she was a poor dependant and she shouldn't have be associating with them.

John was the complete opposite of Jane, he was over-indulged, thick, violent and dominant compared to Jane who was modest and small. One day, John discovered that Jane was reading one of his books and he got very angry, so he decided to take back the book then throw it at Jane. This makes the reader feel very sympathetic towards Jane due to the fact; John Reed should have been her peer, whereas he had virtual control over her. Jane had to call him ' Sir' otherwise she was punished. By making Jane say this, John thought he was in charge.

He used imperative verbs to command Jane for example; " Stand over there!" in this quote John made Jane stand still whilst he threw the book at her.

Jane felt intimidated by him and felt she must obey him, even if it caused her physical injury. John also compared her to animals such as a rat. John highlighted gender and class differences and this reflects Victorian times

extremely well because back then, punishments were very physical and <https://assignbuster.com/how-does-charlotte-bronte-make-us-feel-sympathetic-towards-jane-upon-her-treatment-at-gateshead-and-lowood-essay-sample/>

people with less money or of the female gender were considered socially lower compared to those who were richer and a male, so they were given less respect.

Jane was in no mans land between the upper- and servant classes plus she was a female. By calling John Reed a "murderer," "slave-driver," and a "Roman emperor," Jane emphasizes her views on the higher class and compares them to John. All these names have an essence of power about them and so does the higher class of people in Victorian times, just because they were born rich. When Jane is exiled to the red-room because of her fight with John, Miss Abbot told Jane off for striking her "young master," Jane then immediately questioned her terminology. Was she really his servant?

Bronte's use of language through Jane makes the audience aware that the middle classes were becoming more and more morally and intellectually powerful and she thought this was unjust. The red-room was where Mr. Reed died and Jane was extremely scared of the room. Jane was clearly very superstitious and probably believed in fate and fortune and of course religion and life after death, plus she had a very vivid imagination. The red-room had a dark, solemn and secret feel to it and Jane said, "solemn, it was known to be so seldom entered," which probably made it feel quiet, forbidden and secret.

Jane felt a presence in the room and thought that it would be Mr. Reed. Jane screamed, so the servants and Mrs. Reed came but did not believe her and had no sympathy for her. When they left, Jane fainted. We feel a lot of

sympathy for Jane at this point in the novel because she is trapped in a scary
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room for no reason, we would probably call this neglect nowadays. After a long chain of fights with her aunt and her children, Jane is sent off to a charity boarding school called Lowood Institution, which is for orphans. Jane suffered one of her lowest points here, hence the name Lowood.

She seemed to enjoy learning but didn't so much enjoy the conditions of the school. Many of Jane's classmates fell ill and died there after an epidemic of typhus. We first begin to feel sorry for Jane at Lowood is when she first arrives. The day of Jane's arrival is windy, rainy and dark and she is led through 'unfamiliar', 'labyrinthine' halls until she reaches a 'large' room. All these words suggest the unknown, and the unknown is what people fear most.

We sympathise with Jane because Mr. Brocklehurst, the financial manager of Lowood, returns to the school and he promised Mrs. Reed that he would warn the teachers about Jane's unsavoury character. Jane accidentally dropped her slate on the floor and Mr. Brocklehurst immediately made Jane stand up in front of the whole school and announced that she was a liar. No one was allowed to speak to Jane for the rest of the day, but Jane's friend, Helen, secretly supported her by smiling every time she passed Jane's stool. Charlotte had her own bad experiences at Cowan Bridge School, where she was often made physically ill by the poor conditions.

She describes her ordeal through Jane at Lowood and yet again makes us sympathise for her. Jane commented that it was cold and cramped in the dorm room by telling us it was 'bitterly cold' and there was 'one basin to six girls'. This shows us briefly how the conditions at the school made the girls

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physically ill. We can also see from the text that Lowood was very strict and extremely structured because it says 'again the bell rung: all formed in file, two and two, and in that order descended the stairs.'

This gives the impression on the reader that it was forced upon you that you were well behaved, disciplined and organised. The strictness of the school is presented again when commands are barked at the girls such as 'Silence!' and 'Order!' Jane describes the morning like a military operation, for example she says, 'business now began' and 'that exercise was terminated' and 'the classes were marshalled and marched into another room.' I think Bronte makes reference to the army in this paragraph because of the strictness of the routine.

The use of alliteration when she says, 'marshalled and marched' shows that Bronte wanted it to have a rhythm and to try to depict how organised and strict it was. Jane says, 'a long grace was said and a hymn sung.' So we can see from this that religion played a huge part in 19th Century England because the girls had to pray before and after meals and before bed. They had no choice in their religion; they were born into it. It seems that the girls were not allowed their own opinion and what they got was what they were given.

One of the girls said, "Disgusting! The porridge is burnt again!" which was hastily followed by 'Silence!' shouted by one of the teachers. Some of the girls at Lowood suffered day in and day out with starvation and malnutrition, which made them less immune to diseases and infections. The food was

often horrible and sometimes there was not enough. Jane comments by <https://assignbuster.com/how-does-charlotte-bronte-make-us-feel-sympathetic-towards-jane-upon-her-treatment-at-gateshead-and-lowood-essay-sample/>

saying, " burnt porridge is almost as bad as rotten potatoes; famine itself soon sickens over it" and " breakfast was over but none had breakfasted. " Whilst at Lowood Jane makes friends with a girl named Helen Burns.

They are quite alike in some respects but extremely different in others. Their views on life and how to react to certain situations are very different, for example, Jane is portrayed as angry and aggressive and hungry for retaliation and vengeance whereas Helen is more peaceful, she seems to believe that whatever happens for a reason, happens and she doesn't have a choice in the matter. She has an essence of strength, endurance and passion about her that Jane simply loves. Jane learns from Helen that she needs to change her behaviour and have more dignity and intelligence when dealing with a situation.

We can tell Helen changed Jane further on in the novel; she is more peaceful and political than rebellious, especially when she tells Miss. Temple about the Reeds. Later, during the term, disease sweeps the school and Helen falls ill. Jane sneaks in to Miss. Temple's room, where Helen is staying, to see her; later Helen dies in Jane's arms. Jane ponders about the contrast of death inside the school to the beautiful outdoors. Here, Bronte compares death and new life, which makes us come to terms with what has just happened, Bronte paints the picture that Jane is feeling lost but yet should look on the bright side.

We feel great sadness for Jane, especially when she was beginning to feel happier, yet again she is shot in the foot by the cruelties of life. The

language Bronte uses is almost in a sense poetic and thoughtful, she uses <https://assignbuster.com/how-does-charlotte-bronte-make-us-feel-sympathetic-towards-jane-upon-her-treatment-at-gateshead-and-lowood-essay-sample/>

beautiful adjectives to describe the wonders of spring such as ' free,' ' alone,' ' wild,' and ' majestic. ' Jane's life was stained by the impurities of existence. Neglect, illness, death, sadness, anger and vengeance, but also filled with those of courage, love, intelligence, dignity and most of all... passion.