

“Jane Eyre” by Charlotte Brontë [B2]

La maggiore delle sorelle Brontë ha affascinato i lettori con la sua avvincente storia della ricerca di uguaglianza e libertà di una giovane orfana. Un capolavoro della letteratura romantica e un precursore del femminismo.

Jane Eyre is Charlotte Brontë's most-loved novel. Published in 1847 under the pseudonym Currer Bell, it tells the story of a young woman in Victorian Britain who shows extraordinary virtue and resilience despite her humble background. The novel challenges the notion of male privilege and power and is a study of childhood trauma, isolation, morality and the unpredictability of love.

A QUIET READ

The novel opens when Jane is a ten-year-old orphan who lives with her uncle's family. Small and “plain”, Jane is well-behaved, but can do nothing to please her aunt, Mrs. Reed. Jane is lonely and constantly bullied by young John Reed, especially when he finds her reading: ““You have no business to take our books; you are a dependent, mamma says; you have no money; your father left you none; you ought to beg, and not live here with gentlemen's children like us, and eat the same meals we do, and wear clothes at our mamma's expense.” “— Non hai diritto di prendere i nostri libri. Sei una dipendente, dice la mamma. Non hai denaro; tuo padre non te ne ha lasciato. Dovresti andar per elemosina, e non vivere con i ragazzi di famiglia signorile come noi, né mangiare, né vestire a spese della nostra mamma.”

NOT A LIAR

Falsely accused of lying, Jane confronts Mrs. Reed and is sent away to Lowood School, where the pupils are treated badly. Jane studies hard and later begins to teach at Lowood, before applying for a job as a governess at Thornfield Hall. There she meets her employer, the “brooding” Edward

Rochester. When Jane is invited to join him in the dining room, she cannot help but study his **looks**. ““You examine me, Miss Eyre,” said he: ‘do you think me handsome?’ I should, if I had deliberated, have replied to this question by something conventionally vague and polite; but the answer somehow slipped from my tongue before I was aware, ‘No, sir.’ ‘Ah! By my word! there is something singular about you,’ said he ...” “—Mi esamina, signorina Eyre, — disse—; Mi giudica bello? Se avessi prevista questa domanda, avrei dato una risposta convenzionale più generale e cortese, ma, non so come, le parole, mi uscirono dalle labbra prima che me ne rendessi conto. —No, signore. — Ah! Parola d’onore, lei ha qualcosa di originale,—egli disse.”

DEMONIC

Although Jane and Mr. Rochester are attracted to each other, romance is **unlikely**: he is much older and of a higher social class. Meanwhile, Jane is **haunted** by sounds that come from a locked room on the third floor at Thornfield. One night, her dreams are disturbed by someone, or something, outside her bedroom door. “This was a demonic laugh – low, suppressed, and deep – uttered, as it seemed, at the very keyhole of my chamber-door [...] I rose, looked round, and could see nothing; while, as I still gazed, the unnatural sound was reiterated: and I knew it came from behind the panels. My first impulse was to rise and fasten the bolt; my next again to cry out, ‘Who is there?’” “Era un riso demoniaco... smesso e profondo che pareva venire dal buco della serratura della mia camera. La testa del mio letto era vicina alla porta, e credetti dapprima che quel riso da demonio stesse al mio fianco, o meglio uscisse dal mio guanciale. Mi sollevai, mi guardai intorno e non vidi nulla, ma mentre stavo ancora in osservazione, la rista si ripeté, e compresi allora che proveniva da dietro la porta. Il mio primo impulso fu di alzarmi e di spingere la maniglia, ma invece gridai di nuovo: — Chi è?.”

TEMPTATION

One night, Jane finds Mr. Rochester’s bedroom on fire, and **bravely** rescues him. Will the flames ignite their passion? And who is the tragic figure **locked away** on the third floor of Thornfield **Hall**? When Jane discovers the

truth, she leaves. She rejects an offer of marriage and later [inherits](#) a fortune. While [drawn](#) to Thornfield and to Mr. Rochester, Jane remains true to her principles. “The more solitary, the more friendless, the more unsustained I am, the more I will respect myself. I will keep the law given by God, sanctioned by man. I will hold to the principles received by me when I was sane, and not mad — as I am now. Laws and principles are not for the times when there is no temptation: they are for moments as this, when body and soul rise in mutiny against their rigour; stringent are they; inviolate they shall be.” “Più sono sola, senza amici, senza appoggio e più devo rispettarmi. Voglio osservare le leggi di Dio, sancite dagli uomini, voglio serbare i principii imparati quando ero sana e non pazza come ora. Le leggi e i principii ci sono stati dati per preservarci dalle tentazioni, per i momenti come questi, quando il cuore e l’anima si ribellano contro la loro severità. Sono rigorosi, ma non debbono esser violati.”

PASSION AND DRAMA

Victorian readers were [enthralled](#) by the passion and drama of Jane Eyre but shocked by Jane’s [refusal](#) to serve the man she loved and her desire for equality and independence. Robert Southey, the [poet laureate](#), once [advised](#) Charlotte Brontë that “literature cannot be the business of a woman’s life.” Fortunately, she chose to ignore him.

Glossary

- **despite** = nonostante
- **to please** = compiacere
- **brooding** = pensieroso
- **enthralled** = affascinare
- **poet laureate** = poeta emerito
- **humble** = umile, modesto
- **applying** = candidarsi
- **governess** = governante, istitutrice
- **bravely** = audacemente
- **drawn** = attratta
- **refusal** = rifiuto
- **plain** = semplice, insignificante
- **well-behaved** = ben educata
- **Hall** = sala
- **looks** = aspetto
- **haunted** = perseguitare
- **inherits** = ereditare
- **advised** = consigliare
- **challenges** = sfidare
- **unlikely** = poco probabile
- **locked away** = rinchiudere