

Synopsis

Jane Eyre is the story of a mistreated orphan who learns to rise above her adversities by relying on God's grace and the intelligent and independent spirit He has given her. The path of Jane's life is lined with temptations and difficulties: her desires war with her conscience and her faith is sorely tested. But though Jane sorrows, she is not broken. She learns and grows, and she rises above life's storm.

Jane's first ten years are unhappy ones. She is raised in the home of her aunt where she is unloved and despised. After a passionate outcry against her condition, Jane is sent to a charitable institution where she spends eight years. She moves up through the classes and eventually becomes a teacher. At 18, Jane's desire for expansion calls her to move on.

Jane finds a position as governess at Thornfield Hall, where her employer takes a lively interest in her. Jane's vigor and purity answer some yearning of his soul. Just when it seems that bliss is within Jane's reach, a dark secret is uncovered that causes her to flee from the one that is precious to her. It seems Jane is doomed to be forever separated from her love; but, after a year of suffering, God's providence and a familiar voice call her to return to the one she loves.

About the Author

Charlotte Brontë was born in Thornton, England, on April 21, 1816. She had two younger sisters, Emily and Anne, and a younger brother. Her father was a pastor of an Anglican church. He was a talented man who had four books and several other smaller works published. When Charlotte was four, her mother died and her aunt moved in to help care for the children. The children, however, were left very much to themselves for both their father and their aunt had rather reclusive habits.

During her early life, Charlotte was educated at home except for one year spent at a clergy daughters' school—a very poorly run, unhealthy institution. Her experiences at this school were later described in *Jane Eyre* under the name of Lowood. When Charlotte was 15, she was sent to school at Roe Head, Dewsbury. In her classes, Charlotte was noticeably deficient in math but far ahead of her classmates in English and composition. After a year, she returned home to teach her sisters.

In 1835, Charlotte took a teaching position, which she held for three years. She then became a governess but found the occupation hateful. Discontented, she and her sisters decided to start a school of their own. Their aunt agreed to fund the operation. In preparation for this undertaking, Charlotte and Emily went to Brussels to study French and German. There Charlotte fell in love with a married professor, an attachment whose only fruit was literary. She grew lonely and depressed. In later years, Charlotte described this phase of her life in her novel *The Professor*.

Back at home, Charlotte and her sisters published a collection of poems. Only two copies sold. Not to be discouraged, they decided to look for publishers for novels each of them had written. The year 1847 brought Charlotte news from her publisher. Although they rejected *The Professor*, *Jane Eyre* was accepted. It was published in August and met with immediate success. Both Emily and Anne found publishers for their novels: *Wuthering Heights* and *Agnes Grey*. All three sisters' books appeared under their pen names: Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell. For a time, not even their publishers knew their identity.

In 1848 and 1849, death swept the Brontë household. Charlotte's brother died, having been weakened by drug and alcohol abuse. Emily died three months later. Her death was soon followed by Anne's. Both girls died of tuberculosis.

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Charlotte continued to put her time and energy into writing. Her novels *Shirley* and *Villette* were published in 1849 and 1853, respectively. In 1854 Charlotte married Arthur B. Nicholls, a pastor. She died less than a year later of an illness following childbirth. She was 39.

Background Information

Charlotte Brontë wrote her novels during the early part of what is known as the Victorian Age. In 1837, Victoria succeeded her uncle, William IV, to the throne of England; she reigned until her death in 1901. During most of Victoria's reign, Britain was a vast empire that included Canada, Australia, New Zealand, India, South Africa, and many other parts of Africa and Asia. It was said that the "sun never set on the British Empire." Britain's power rested on her formidable military force and her navy, which acted as a kind of police force throughout the world.

The material progress of this age was tremendous. Britain was far ahead of other nations in the Industrial Revolution. She had a world market for cotton goods, wool, and metal products. A network of railroads covered the isle; British capital helped fund the construction of railroads elsewhere. Industrial cities with their factories sprung up; there was plenty of employment. Science and invention went forward at a rapid pace. Two prominent scientists of this time were Michael Faraday, who experimented with electricity, and Charles Darwin, who conducted research in the area of biology.

The pervasive mood of the Victorian Age was one of self-confidence and optimism. However, beneath the prosperity of the growing empire, all was not well. Crammed into dark, unsafe factories, men, women, and children worked from dawn to dusk earning barely enough on which to live. The countryside was ravaged to produce the raw materials to feed the factories. The factories spewed forth smog and slag. While part of Britain was happy and affluent, the rest was poorly nourished, uneducated, and impoverished.

Much of the writing of the Victorian Age was a protest against the social injustices of the time and an attempt to stir the wealthy and complacent. Other literature of the period was "family" literature. There was a great deal of reading aloud in the evenings. A popular novelist was expected to provide something of interest for each member of the family. *Jane Eyre* seems to qualify as this kind of family book.

It is interesting to note a few things about Victorian taste. Victorians were preoccupied by death and disease. Most novels or poems of this time feature sick rooms,

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death bed scenes, a cemetery, or all three. (Note the plague at Lowood, and Helen Burns' and Mrs. Reed's death beds.) Victorians also appreciated a touch of humor or absurdity. Charles L. Dodgson (Lewis Carroll) produced masterpieces of this kind.

And finally, during this time the United States suffered through the Civil War. A number of inventors arose: Thomas Alva Edison, Alexander Graham Bell, Samuel F. B. Morse, and Cyrus McCormick, to name a few. Also during this time Nathaniel Hawthorne was writing his novels and stories, Herman Melville was writing *Moby Dick*, Thoreau was living at Walden, and Edgar Allan Poe was weaving his tales, as were Stephen Crane and Mark Twain.

Chapters 1–5

Vocabulary:

A *synonym* of a word is a word with a similar meaning. Match each of the words in the column on the left to its synonym in the column on the right.

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. _____ diffident | a. abhorrence |
| 2. _____ bilious | b. break, lapse |
| 3. _____ indemnity | c. compensation |
| 4. _____ wanton | d. conference |
| 5. _____ opprobrium | e. coward |
| 6. _____ parley | f. disgrace |
| 7. _____ transient | g. imitation |
| 8. _____ emulation | h. incite |
| 9. _____ poltroon | i. irascible |
| 10. _____ foment | j. passing, fleeting |
| 11. _____ execration | k. timid |
| 12. _____ hiatus | l. willful, capricious |

Characterization:

1. An author develops characters through their actions, their words, and what is said about them. In chapter 1, Jane exclaims in rage that her cousin John is “like the Roman emperors.” What does John have in common with them?

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2. In chapter 2, when Jane sits alone in the red-room, how does she describe Eliza and Georgiana?

3. What were Eliza's and Georgiana's activities on the morning Mr. Brocklehurst came to see Jane (chapter 4)? What do these activities reveal about each girl's character?

As you read further in the novel, note whether the early propensities of the Reed children have any bearing on their adult lives.

Romantic and Gothic Literature:

Jane Eyre is an example of the *romantic* novel. A *romantic* novel upholds individualism and emphasizes the emotional and the imaginative. *Jane Eyre* also contains elements of the *gothic* novel. A *gothic* novel deals with the mysterious and supernatural.

1. List several examples from this first section of reading in which the author uses mysterious or supernatural images.

2. How does the author emphasize the emotional and the imaginative in this first section of reading?

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3. The *mood* of a novel is the feeling or atmosphere an author creates for her readers. Mood is communicated by the use of sensory language, images, and connotative words. What mood is set almost immediately in the opening paragraphs of *Jane Eyre*? Give some examples of words, phrases, or images the author uses to communicate this mood.
4. What might be the author's reason for using this mood at this point in the story?

Questions:

1. What is Mrs. Reed's relationship to Jane Eyre?
2. What is the primary message of the song Bessie sings in chapter 3?
3. What does Jane learn about her heritage at the end of chapter 3?

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4. List the questions Mr. Brocklehurst asks Jane. Describe Jane's answers and Mr. Brocklehurst's reactions.
5. What "gleam of sunshine" brightens the end of chapter 4?

Analysis:

6. At the beginning of chapter 1, Jane is reading a description of the bleak Arctic regions in *Bewick's History of British Birds*. How might these descriptions parallel the emotional and spiritual climate in which Jane finds herself in the house of Mrs. Reed?
7. Compare and contrast the actions of the Reed children to those of Jane. Compare and contrast the ways in which they were treated. What do you conclude about the principles of Mrs. Reed?
8. In what way does Jane begin to change in chapter 4? Write a brief paragraph describing this change.

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9. When Mr. Brocklehurst tells Mrs. Reed about the quiet, plain girls at Lowood Institution, Mrs. Reed declares,

This is the state of thing I quite approve, . . . had I sought all England over, I could scarcely have found a system more exactly fitting a child like Jane Eyre. Consistency, my dear Mr. Brocklehurst; I advocate consistency in all things.

Mr. Brocklehurst replies, "Consistency, madam, is the first of Christian duties." What does Mrs. Reed mean by "consistency"? Does Mr. Brocklehurst mean the same thing? If not, what *does* he mean by "consistency"?

10. Compare Lowood Institution to a modern high school. In what ways, if any, are they the same? In what ways are they different?
11. When the girl Jane spoke to on the verandah is punished, how does Jane expect her to react? How does the girl react to her punishment?

Jane says the girl looked "as if she were thinking of something beyond her punishment—beyond her situation: of something not round her nor before her." Read 2 Corinthians 1:3, 4, and 2 Corinthians 4:16–18. What lesson might Jane learn from these verses?

Chapters 6–10

Vocabulary:

Substitute each underlined word in the sentences below with its synonym found in the Word Box. You may use a thesaurus.

Word Box

portion	unkempt	demonstrate	humiliating
treacherous	drowsy	impeding	improved
vegetation	fierce	professed	

1. “Hardened girl!” exclaimed Miss Scatcherd; “nothing can correct you of your slatternly (_____) habits . . .”
2. Bitter and truculent (_____) when excited, I spoke as I felt, without reserve or softening.
3. . . . a double ration of bread I generally contrived to reserve a moiety (_____) of this bounteous repast for myself; but the remainder I was invariably obliged to part with.
4. I had my own reasons for being dismayed at this apparition [Mr. Brocklehurst]: too well I remembered the perfidious (_____) hints given by Mrs. Reed about my disposition, . . .

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5. Should any little accidental disappointing of the appetite occur, . . . the incident ought not to be neutralised by replacing with something more delicate the comfort lost, thus pampering the body and obviating (_____) the aim of this institution; it ought to be improved to the spiritual edification of the pupils, by encouraging them to evince (_____) fortitude under the temporary privation.
6. . . . the frosts of winter had ceased; its snows were melted, its cutting winds ameliorated (_____) .
7. . . . this pleasure consisted in prospect of noble summits girdling a great hill—hollow, rich in verdure (_____) and shadow; in a bright beck, full of dark stones and sparkling eddies.
8. . . . the discovery produced a result mortifying (_____) to Mr. Brocklehurst, but beneficial to the institution.
9. My ostensible (_____) errand on this occasion was to get measured for a pair of shoes. . . .
10. . . . fortunately, however, the heavy supper she had eaten produced a soporific (_____) effect: she was already snoring before I had finished undressing.

Questions:

1. According to Miss Scatcherd, what are Helen's faults? How does Miss Scatcherd attempt to correct these behaviors in Helen? How might you go about correcting these faults in a student?

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2. Who arrives to inspect Lowood? What three things does this person criticize? On what grounds?

3. What does Mr. Brocklehurst tell the children about Jane, when Jane is punished for dropping the slate? How is Jane consoled and able to endure her punishment?

4. By the end of chapter 8, how does Jane feel about Lowood? What causes this change in Jane's feelings?

5. What "fog-bred pestilence" strikes the students at Lowood? What effect does the plague have on the future of Lowood?

6. Who pays Jane a visit before her departure from Lowood? What news does she bring of Jane's aunt and cousins? What news does she bring of a previously unmentioned relation of Jane's?

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Analysis:

7. Both Jane and Helen have experienced unjust treatment—Jane from Mrs. Reed and Helen from Miss Scatcherd. For what reasons were they treated unjustly—similar reasons or different reasons? How do each of the girls react to their situations?
8. How do you react when you are treated unjustly? How do you react when you see others being treated unjustly?
9. Mr. Brocklehurst says, “My mission is to mortify in these girls the lusts of the flesh.” Is there any evidence that the stringent codes at Lowood are transforming the pupils’ sinful nature? Is there any evidence that they are having a contrary effect? Explain in a short paragraph.
10. What three visitors enter in the middle of Brocklehurst’s “sermon”? How do they expose his hypocrisy?
11. How does Helen describe God? Describe the manner in which Helen faces death.

Chapters 11–12

Vocabulary:

Explain the meaning of the underlined word in each sentence below based on its context. You may consult a dictionary.

1. . . . she ushered me into a room whose double illumination of fire and candle at first dazzled me, contrasting as it did with the darkness to which my eyes had been for two hours inured. . . .
2. . . . they flew over the lawn and ground to alight in a great meadow, from which these were separated by a sunk fence, and where an array of mighty old thorn trees . . . at once explained the etymology of the mansion's designation.
3. The enigma then was explained: this affable and kind little widow was no great dame, but a dependent like myself.
4. There are people who seem to have no notion of sketching a character, or observing and describing salient points either in persons or things: the good lady evidently belonged to this class. . . .
5. . . . with wrought old English hangings crusted with thick work, portraying effigies of strange flowers, and stranger birds, and the strangest human beings. . . .

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6. “You live just below—do you mean at that house with the battlements?”—pointing to Thornfield Hall, on which the moon cast a hoary gleam

7. What good it would have done me at that time to have been tossed in the storms of an uncertain struggling life, and to have been taught by rough and bitter experience to long for the calm amidst which I now repined!

Questions:

1. What assumption does Jane make about Mrs. Fairfax that she later discovers to be false?

2. Who is the owner of the manor? Who is to be Jane’s student? What is the relationship between the student and the owner of the manor?

3. What unsettling noise does Jane hear while touring the manor with Mrs. Fairfax? How does Mrs. Fairfax explain the noise? Is there any evidence to the contrary? If so, explain.

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4. As Jane, walking alone at night, hears something approach, what jumps to her mind?

5. What is it about the stranger that makes Jane bold to approach him? What does Jane discover about the stranger when she reaches Thornfield?

6. During chapters 11 and 12, Mr. Rochester is absent from Thornfield. Yet, his presence, his spirit, dominates. What have we learned about Mr. Rochester before we even meet him?

Analysis:

7. When Jane discovers Mrs. Fairfax's identity, she says, "I felt better pleased than ever. The equality between her and me was real; not the mere result of condescension on her part: . . ." Explain what Jane means by this. Why does this mean that Jane's position is, as she says, "all the freer."

8. What things about Thornfield seem strange or unexplained?

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9. An *allusion* is a reference to an historical or literary person, place, or event with which the reader is assumed to be familiar. *Jane Eyre* contains many allusions, some of which will probably be lost on the modern reader.

Jane refers to one corridor in the manor as looking “like a corridor in some Bluebeard’s Castle.” What might the author be suggesting by the use of the allusion to Bluebeard?

10. What things occupy Jane’s thoughts when she is by herself?

11. Summarize Jane’s thoughts about the role of women in English society. Would you agree with Jane? Why or why not?

Dig Deeper:

12. It is obvious even thus far into the book, that Britain, in the 1800s, had a distinct, fairly rigid social structure. What roles have others, thus far, expected Jane to fill?

Chapters 13–16

Vocabulary:

Define the underlined word as it is used in each sentence below. Then write down the grammatical function or part of speech (noun, verb, adjective, adverb) of that word.

1. . . . harsh caprice laid me under no obligation; on the contrary, a decent quiescence, under the freak of manner gave me the advantage. Besides, the eccentricity of the proceeding was piquant: I felt interested to see how he would go on.

caprice

Definition: _____

Part of Speech: _____

piquant

Definition: _____

Part of Speech: _____

2. . . . but fortune has knocked me about since: she has even kneaded me with her knuckles, and now I flatter myself I am hard and tough as an India-rubber ball; pervious, though, through a chink or two still, and with one sentient point in the middle of the lump.

pervious

Definition: _____

Part of Speech: _____

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sentient

Definition:

Part of Speech: _____

3. "... Oh yes, I had forgotten the salary! Well then, on that mercenary ground, will you agree to let me hector a little?"

Definition:

Part of Speech: _____

4. "I have plenty of faults of my own: I know it, and I don't wish to palliate them, I assure you. . . ."

Definition:

Part of Speech: _____

5. "How was your memory when you were eighteen, sir?" "All right then; limpid, salubrious: no gush or bilge water had turned it to ferid puddle."

Definition:

Part of Speech: _____

6. "The human and fallible should not arrogate a power with which the divine and perfect alone can be safely entrusted."

Definition:

Part of Speech: _____

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7. "... I keep it and rear it rather on the Roman Catholic principle of expiating numerous sins, great or small, by one good work."

Definition:

Part of Speech: _____

8. I started wide awake on hearing a vague murmur, peculiar and lugubrious, which sounded, I thought, just above me.

Definition:

Part of Speech: _____

9. But he still retained my hand, and I could not free it. I bethought myself of an expedient.

Definition:

Part of Speech: _____

10. To much confabulation succeeded a sound of scrubbing and setting to rights. . . .

Definition:

Part of Speech: _____

Questions:

1. How would you describe Mr. Rochester's first conversation with Jane in chapter 13? What seems to be the purpose of his questions?

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2. What feelings or themes are evoked by Jane's watercolor paintings? What, if anything, do they reveal about Jane's character?

3. What does Jane learn about Mr. Rochester from her conversation with Mrs. Fairfax at the end of chapter 13? What mysteries are introduced by this conversation?

4. Mr. Rochester offers Jane more information about himself in chapters 14 and 15. Briefly, what is the explanation for Adele's presence at Thornfield?

5. At the end of chapter 15, what strange event occurs in the middle of the night? Who seems responsible for this event?

6. How do Mr. Rochester's feelings for Jane appear to have changed by the end of chapter 15? How have Jane's feelings for Mr. Rochester changed?

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7. *Foreshadowing* is a literary device by which an author gives the reader clues or hints about events that will happen later in the story. At the end of chapter 15, Jane has a troubled sleep:

Till morning dawned I was tossed on a buoyant but unquiet sea, where billows of trouble rolled under surges of joy. I thought sometimes I saw beyond its wild waters a shore, sweet as the hills of Beulah; and now and then a freshening gale, wakened by hope, bore my spirit triumphantly towards the bourne: but I could not reach it, . . .

What might the author be foreshadowing with this image?

8. Why is Jane startled when she discovers Grace Poole cleaning up Mr. Rochester's room the following morning?
9. Over tea with Mrs. Fairfax, Jane is told that Mr. Rochester has left for a party at the Leas. What particular aspect of this news disturbs Jane? What does Jane realize about herself at this point?
10. What does Jane do at the end of chapter 16 to punish herself for her wild, foolish thoughts?

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Analysis:

11. Mr. Rochester speaks in a tone of command through habit, but he claims only such superiority as results from what two things? On what condition does Jane allow that he may hector her a little? Do you agree with Jane? Why or why not?

12. In chapter 15, Rochester pauses in his tale to gaze up at Thornfield:

Lifting his eye to its battlements, he cast over them a glare such as I never saw before or since. Pain, shame, ire—impatience, disgust, detestation—seemed momentarily to hold quivering conflict in the large pupil dilating under his ebon eyebrow.

Explain Rochester's struggle with his "destiny," as revealed in this scene. What do you think it is about Thornfield that Rochester abhors?

Dig Deeper:

13. What, in part, does Mr. Rochester blame for his faults?
14. What does Jane say is the "cure" for remorse? Does Rochester agree? According to him, what is its cure? What does he intend to do about it?

Chapters 17–20

Vocabulary:

Write down the definition of each of the following words. Then use each word in a sentence of your own.

1. **exonerate**

Definition:

Sentence:

2. **chimeras**

Definition:

Sentence:

3. **contumacy**

Definition:

Sentence:

4. **extirpate**

Definition:

Sentence:

5. **pith**

Definition:

Sentence:

6. **clement**

Definition:

Sentence:

7. **aquiline**

Definition:

Sentence:

8. **taciturn**

Definition:

Sentence:

9. **propitious**

Definition:

Sentence:

10. **dissolution**

Definition:

Sentence:

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11. **volatile**

Definition:

Sentence:

Questions:

1. In chapter 17, Jane overhears a conversation concerning Grace Poole. What does she learn about Grace Poole from this conversation? What does she conclude?
2. On the second evening of the festivities, Mr. Rochester requests that Jane be present among the guests. Is she eager or reluctant to be included? Why do you think Rochester wishes her to be there?
3. What does Jane begin to admit to herself as she describes the party?
4. Why does Jane say that she is not jealous of Blanche Ingram? In what way is Blanche “beneath” Jane?

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5. What does Jane conclude about the relationship and impending marriage of Rochester and Blanche Ingram?

6. On what subject does the gypsy woman seem to be quizzing Jane? How does Jane respond to the gypsy woman's questions?

7. How does Rochester react when told of Mason's arrival? What might be concluded from his reaction?

8. What mysterious nighttime occurrence wakens Jane? How does Jane respond to the requests made of her during this incident? How has Jane proven herself to be a friend to Mr. Rochester?

Analysis:

9. As Jane describes the festivities in the drawing room, the author frequently switches the narrative from past tense to present tense. What effect does this have on you as you read? What might be the author's reason for doing this?

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10. In the game of charades, what three scenes do Rochester and his group present? What might the author be foreshadowing by presenting these images to the reader?

11. Rochester has a long and peculiar speech near the end of his masquerade. "I have formed my plans—right plans I deem them. . . ." To whom is he directing these thoughts? What do you think he means? What do you think was the purpose of Rochester's masquerade?

12. What are Mason's parting words? What is Rochester's response? Who do you think is the subject of their discussion?

13. After Mason has left, Rochester seeks Jane's advice and presents her with a question in the form of a long parable. Summarize Rochester's question. What is the hidden meaning of Rochester's parable? What is Jane's counsel?

Chapters 21–22

Vocabulary:

Looking closely at the context of the following sentences, determine the meanings of the underlined words. Compare your definitions with the dictionary definitions.

1. A certain superciliousness of look, coolness of manner, nonchalance of tone, express fully their sentiments on the point, without committing them by any positive rudeness in word or deed.

Your Definition:

Dictionary Definition:

2. I had left this woman in bitterness and hate, and I came back to her now with no other emotion than a sort of ruth for her great sufferings, and a strong yearning to forget and forgive all injuries—to be reconciled and clasp hands in amity.

ruth

Your Definition:

Dictionary Definition:

amity

Your Definition:

Dictionary Definition:

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3. Eliza sat cold, impassable, and assiduously industrious.

Your Definition:

Dictionary Definition:

4. . . . here were two natures rendered, the one intolerably acid, the other despicably savourless for the want of it. Feeling without judgment is a washy draught indeed; but judgment untempered by feeling is too bitter and husky a morsel for human deglutition.

acid

Your Definition:

Dictionary Definition:

deglutition

Your Definition:

Dictionary Definition:

5. . . . the very servants paid her but a remittent attention. . . .

Your Definition:

Dictionary Definition:

6. . . . and Mr. Rochester looked on with his arms folded—smiling sardonically, as it seemed, at both her and me.

Your Definition:

Dictionary Definition:

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7. I suppose I do come on; though in what fashion I know not being scarcely cognisant of my movements. . . .

Your Definition:

Dictionary Definition:

8. Mr. Rochester had sometimes read my unspoken thought with an acumen to me incomprehensible. . . .

Your Definition:

Dictionary Definition:

Questions:

1. Robert Leaven brings Jane news about the Reeds. What calamities have befallen the Reeds of Gateshead?
2. What “matter of business” does Jane discuss with Rochester before she leaves for Gateshead? Why do you think Rochester is reluctant to part with Jane?
3. What emotions prevail in Jane as she sees her aunt for the first time in many years? Has the passage of time dulled Mrs. Reed’s animosity toward Jane?

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4. What two wrongs does Mrs. Reed admit to Jane?

5. What does Jane dream about on the night before her return to Thornfield? And yet, what sentiments arise in Jane as she approaches Thornfield?

6. How would you describe Jane's meeting with Rochester at the stile? What does Jane say on "impulse" and "in spite of" herself as she leaves Mr. Rochester at the stile? What change might this indicate in Jane?

Analysis:

7. Using some of the author's own descriptions, characterize Eliza and Georgiana. How are the attributes we saw in them as young girls manifest? What is each sister's future?

8. Compare and contrast the two death-bed scenes we have seen in this book: Helen Burns' (chapter 9) and Mrs. Reed's.

Chapters 23–25

Vocabulary:

For each of the vocabulary words below, select the word that comes closest in meaning.

1. fervid
 - a. clever
 - b. impassioned
 - c. cold
 - d. exhausted

2. slur
 - a. insult
 - b. falsehood
 - c. intention
 - d. explanation

3. deprecate
 - a. ignore
 - b. esteem
 - c. belittle
 - d. inquire

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4. harlequin
 - a. jester
 - b. idiot
 - c. politician
 - d. robber

5. effervesce
 - a. warm
 - b. sleep
 - c. ponder
 - d. bubble

6. requisite
 - a. obtuse
 - b. formal
 - c. necessary
 - d. rare

7. hypochondriac
 - a. maniac
 - b. philosopher
 - c. imaginer of ailments
 - d. one subject to hysterics

Questions:

1. Facing the prospect of being separated from Rochester forever, Jane makes a desperate confession of her devotion to him. How does Rochester respond?

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2. How did Rochester test Blanche Ingram's love for him? What was the result?

3. What emotion stuns Jane when Rochester mentions that she will soon be "Jane Rochester"?

4. What is it about Rochester's lavishness that both annoys and degrades Jane? How does Jane assert herself?

Analysis:

5. After Jane agrees to marry Rochester, take note of some of the things he says aloud—to no one in particular—while they sit together in the garden. (For example, "God, pardon me!" and "It will atone—it will atone.") What is suggested by these things?

6. Look at the scene at the end of chapter 23 after Rochester proposes to Jane. What do you think the author is foreshadowing?

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7. Why had Rochester led Jane to believe that he would marry Blanche Ingram? What is your opinion of this reason?

8. Mrs. Fairfax is surprised that Jane has agreed to marry Rochester. What counsel does Mrs. Fairfax give to Jane? Why do you think she gives this counsel?

9. As Jane examines the wreck of the chestnut tree, she speaks to the two halves “as if the monster-splinters were living things.” Summarize her words to the tree. What is the author hinting at with this image?

10. As Jane awaits Rochester’s return, what other words or images does the author use to affect the mood?

11. Relate the details of Jane’s two disturbing dreams.

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12. What is the final, bizarre event that Jane relates to Rochester? How does Rochester respond? What convinces Rochester of the event's authenticity?

Dig Deeper:

13. Look at the end of chapter 24. Describe Jane's spiritual state at this time in her life. What has happened to Jane's view of God?

Chapters 26–27

Vocabulary:

Write down the definition of each of the following words. Then use each word in a sentence of your own.

1. **tarry**

Definition:

Sentence:

2. **surplice**

Definition:

Sentence:

3. **impediment**

Definition:

Sentence:

4. **aver**

Definition:

Sentence:

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5. **poignant**

Definition:

Sentence:

6. **vicinage**

Definition:

Sentence:

7. **antipathy**

Definition:

Sentence:

Questions:

1. What is Rochester's mood on his wedding morning? Cite examples from the text.
2. Who are the two strangers who appear at the wedding? What effect do they have on the ceremony?

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3. Describe Jane's emotional state at the end of chapter 26. What simile does she use here to describe her love for Rochester? What is the significance of this comparison?

4. What is the one idea that Jane says "still throbbed life-like within me"?

5. Describe Rochester's manner toward Jane in chapter 27?

6. Outline the circumstances of Rochester's former marriage.

7. What does Rochester attempt to convince Jane to do about their future? What does Jane decide to do?

Analysis:

8. List at least four mysteries that are resolved for the reader in this section of the novel. Choose one and give an example of how the author had foreshadowed the solution earlier in the novel.

9. When Rochester admits the truth and presents his wife, what does Mr. Rochester have to say in defense of his actions? Rochester ends his speech with these words: “. . . judge me, priest of the Gospel and man of the law, and remember, with what judgment ye judge ye shall be judged!” (See Matthew 7:1–5 and Matthew 19:9) In your opinion, do you think Rochester was justified in his actions? Why or why not?

10. Jane tells Rochester, “All is changed about me, sir; I must change too. . . .” In what ways does Jane change outwardly and inwardly?

11. What do you think of Rochester’s appeal to Jane? Of his solution to the problem his former marriage presents? In a situation similar to Rochester’s, what might be your reaction?

Chapters 28–30

Vocabulary:

Substitute each underlined word in the sentences below with its definition found in the Word Box below.

Word Box

saturation
paradise

beggarly
current officer

trouble
facial features

harmony
abundance

1. She seemed tired of my questions: and, indeed, what claim had I to importune () her?
2. I dared to put off the mendicant ()—to resume my natural manner and character.
3. “She has a peculiar face; fleshless and haggard as it is, I rather like it; and when in good health and animated, I can fancy her physiognomy () would be agreeable.
4. When she left me, I felt comparatively strong and revived: ere long, satiety () of repose and desire for action stirred me.
5. There was a reviving pleasure in this intercourse, of a kind now tasted by me for the first time—the pleasure arising from perfect congeniality () of tastes, sentiments, and principles.

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6. In her animal spirits, there was an affluence (_____) of life, and certainly of flow, such as excited by wonder, while it baffled my comprehension.
7. I . . . with my concealed and racking regrets for my broken idol and lost elysium (_____).
8. "I believe you will accept the post I offer you . . . and hold it for a while: not permanently, though: any more than I could permanently keep the narrowing—the tranquil, hidden office of English country incumbent (_____). . . ."

Questions:

1. At night, alone on the heath, what brings Jane comfort?
2. How is Jane first received at the Rivers' cottage? Who intercedes on her behalf?
3. Describe the initial reactions of each of the household members toward Jane. How do their attitudes toward Jane change by the end of chapter 30?

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4. What has brought the three Rivers children back to Marsh End?

5. Describe the demeanor of St. John Rivers. What does St. John's sermon reveal to Jane?

6. Explain the contents of the letter St. John, Mary, and Diana received and their reactions to it.

Analysis:

7. Do you think Jane pursued the wisest course by leaving Thornfield so abruptly and taking practically nothing? What else could she have done?

8. Does the job of pastor seem in any way incongruous with St. John's nature? Explain your answer, telling why you think he would or would not make a good pastor.

Chapters 31–33

Vocabulary:

A synonym of a word is a word with a similar meaning. Match each of the words in the column on the left to its definition in the column on the right.

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| 1. ____ austerity | a. banal |
| 2. ____ inanition | b. benumbed |
| 3. ____ votary | c. drug |
| 4. ____ torpid | d. exhaustion |
| 5. ____ trite | e. fairness |
| 6. ____ opiate | f. gain |
| 7. ____ alias | g. pseudonym |
| 8. ____ accrue | h. religious devotee |
| 9. ____ equity | i. severity |

Questions:

1. St. John tells Jane “I hope you feel the content you express: at any rate, your good sense will tell you that it is too soon yet to yield to the vacillating fears of Lot’s wife.” Explain St. John’s allusion to Lot’s wife. What does St. John advise?

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2. What does St. John reveal about himself and his calling? What is the “last conflict with human weakness” that St. John is trying to overcome?

3. What is Mr. Oliver’s opinion of Jane? Of St. John?

4. St. John comes to visit Jane on a stormy night. What news does he bring to Jane? How has he discovered Jane’s identity?

5. What excites Jane most about this new turn of affairs? What does Jane intend to do with her inheritance?

6. What does Jane’s decision about her inheritance reveal about her character and what she values? What does St. John’s failure to understand Jane’s decision reveal about his character?

Analysis:

7. Jane still wonders if she made the right decision in leaving Thornfield and Rochester:

Which is better? . . . to be a slave in a fool's paradise at Marseilles—fevered with delusive bliss one hour—suffocating with the bitterest tears of remorse and shame the next—or to be a village-schoolmistress, free and honest, in a breezy mountain nook in the healthy heart of England?

Which to you seems better: the life Jane has chosen or the one she could have had? Explain why you feel this way. How does Jane answer her own question?

Chapters 34–35

Vocabulary:

Define the underlined word as it is used in each sentence below. Then write down the grammatical function or part of speech (noun, verb, adjective, adverb) of that word.

1. Good fortune opens the hand as well as the heart wonderfully; and to give somewhat when we have largely received, is but to afford a vent to the unusual ebullition of the sensations.

Definition:

Part of Speech: _____

2. Well may he eschew the calm of domestic life; it is not his element: there his faculties stagnate—they cannot develop or appear to advantage.

Definition:

Part of Speech: _____

3. And while I smothered the paroxysm with all haste, he sat calm and patient, leaning on his desk and looking like a physician watching with the eye of science an expected and fully-understood crisis in a patient's malady.

Definition:

Part of Speech: _____

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4. While earnestly wishing to erase from his mind the trace of the former offense, I had stamped on that tenacious surface another and far deeper impression: I had burnt it in.

Definition:

Part of Speech: _____

5. What struggle there was in him between Nature and Grace in this interval, I cannot tell: only singular gleams scintillated in his eyes, and strange shadows passed over his face.

Definition:

Part of Speech: _____

6. He addressed me precisely in his ordinary manner; or what had, of late, been his ordinary manner; one scrupulously polite.

Definition:

Part of Speech: _____

Questions:

1. St. John chastises Jane for throwing herself so completely into making Moor House livable again. What is St. John trying to stir up in Jane's restless spirit?

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7. A more resolute, indefatigable pioneer never wrought amidst rocks and dangers.

indefatigable

Your Definition:

Dictionary Definition:

wrought

Your Definition:

Dictionary Definition:

Questions:

1. What does Jane see when she finally looks upon Thornfield again? Where had the author foreshadowed this earlier in the story?
2. What does Jane learn at the inn about the events at Thornfield and the fate of Rochester?
3. How does the weather reflect the mood of the novel at the beginning of chapter 37?

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4. How does Jane approach Rochester?

5. When Jane begins to tell Rochester about St. John, Rochester compares himself to Vulcan. Explain Rochester's use of this allusion.

6. Besides the physical changes he has gone through, how else has Rochester changed?

7. Jane concludes her story by revealing the fates of several characters. What has happened to the following characters in ten years' time?
 - a. Edward Rochester

 - b. St. John Rivers

 - c. Diana Rivers

 - d. Mary Rivers

 - e. Adele

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Analysis:

8. Why is Jane's conscience completely at ease with her decision to return to Thornfield? Is she, as St. John suggested, behaving like Lot's wife?

9. Why do you think the author chooses to close her novel with the words of St. John?

Dig Deeper:

10. What specific event caused Rochester to begin to experience remorse and repentance? What second event causes Rochester to praise God for his mercy?

11. At the end of chapter 37, Rochester speaks of God:

“He sees not as man sees, but far clearer: judges not as man judges, but far more wisely. . . . I thank my Maker, that in the midst of judgment he has remembered mercy. I humbly entreat my Redeemer to give me strength to lead henceforth a purer life than I have done hitherto!”

Read Psalm 25:4–6, Psalm 28:6–9, and Romans 8:28. Compare these verses with what Rochester says. Do they support his renewed beliefs? In what way?

