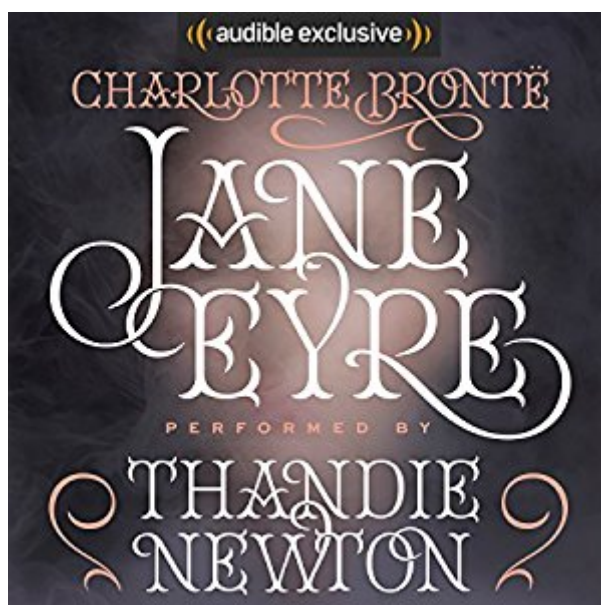


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Jane Eyre



Synopsis

Earphones Award Winner (AudioFile Magazine) "I think the reason we're so struck by [Jane Eyre] is how Charlotte Brontë manages to relate, expertly, what it means to be a human being...and that never changes." (Narrator Thandie Newton) Following Jane from her childhood as an orphan in Northern England through her experience as a governess at Thornfield Hall, Charlotte Brontë's Gothic classic is an early exploration of women's independence in the mid-19th century and the pervasive societal challenges women had to endure. At Thornfield, Jane meets the complex and mysterious Mr. Rochester, with whom she shares a complicated relationship that ultimately forces her to reconcile the conflicting passions of romantic love and religious piety. Performing the early Victorian novel with great care and respect, actress Thandie Newton (Crash, The Pursuit of Happyness) draws out Jane Eyre's intimacy and depth while conveying how truly progressive Brontë was in an era of extreme restraint.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I really liked Jane Eyre. I have watched several movies based on this book and thought I knew the story sort of well, but I couldn't have been more off the mark. I realized by reading the book that the movies overemphasize the love story and neglect the fact that Jane Eyre had a religious education borderline indoctrination almost since birth, which guided her through good and so-so choices. Thus, her education is essential to understand her belief system. Mr. Rochester was rich since birth and dispossessed due to a family dispute. He was basically a good man, a moral man who misplaced his moral compass temporarily by means of sheer bad luck.

It is then that we feel inclined to forgive Mr. Rochester his transgressions; his neglect to mention a secret that involves his life (past and present), one who may affect Jane for years to come. Of all the characters in the story, I liked Mr. Rochester the best. His awful secret, his passionate nature, his mood swings, his dark features all but help him come out of the pages in full form. *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë is a splendid example of a gothic novel; the sense of doom, of supernatural forces governing events permeates this timeless classic.

It is truly joyful to experience the mastery of language and the pure genius involved in the creation of these classics. Oh that anything written in our times would come close to the depth of feeling these books revealed. *Wuthering Heights* was so dark, however, that at times I struggled to keep reading even though it is masterfully written. *Jane Eyre*, on the other hand, has such a wonderful plot and depth of description that it compels you to keep reading. These are works to savor, especially the latter.

The Brontë sisters are magical writers. I feel that every young girl should read *Jane Eyre*. Jane, a plain girl from an unfortunate background, starts a new job as governess for a young girl who is ward to the elusive Mr. Rochester, who, once she meets him, she is quite surprised. I love their relationship from the first instance they meet. Mr. Rochester takes interest in Jane's opinion, something that not many people have done in the past. They are one of my favorite literary couples. If you loved reading this story, then I recommend watching the 2006 miniseries with Ruth Wilson. It's hands down my favorite movie version of this story and I think all elements from the story are well incorporated. I love the chemistry between Ruth Wilson's Jane and Toby Stephens' Rochester.

It does not seem appropriate to rate a piece of classical literature that has survived 200 years. One can not rate Charlotte Brontë. However, I do recommend viewing in my opinion the best 3 film versions of *Jane Eyre*: Jane Fontaine and Orson Welles; Ruth Wilson and Toby Stephens, Mia Wasikowska and Michael Fassbender... I personally prefer the Masterpiece Classic version w/ Stephens and Wilson. It remains closer to the author's original novel. The real question is why are we still drawn to this old-fashioned story after so many decades? Read it for yourself and most certainly view the films.

The first time I was introduced to this book was in college. Back then, I had the attention span of a gnat, so rather than give Jane Eyre a try, I opted for Cliffs Notes. (Yeah, I know ... sacrilege) Anyway, fast forward to now. I finally read it, and my God, what a beautiful piece of literature! The first part outlining young Jane's struggles had me flipping the pages till one in the morning. Then when she got to Thornfield Hall and Mr. Rochester, the page turning didn't stop till at least 3 A.M. I savored every paragraph, every word. It was like crack to me. I was so enthralled with this story that I wrote a post on it when I hadn't even finished reading the book! I'd reached a section that moved me so much I had to write about it because of its beauty. It showed the core of just who Jane was as a heroine. Here's a snippet: **WARNING SPOILERS....** Last night, I read something that really moved me, so much that I must've re-read it three times. It was an introspective passage that poignantly demonstrated the beauty and complexity of Jane's mind. Oh, how I wish my heroines were this self-aware and confident! In discussing her opinion of Blanche Ingram (the gold-digging skank who Mr. Rochester is using to make Jane jealous), our heroine goes into great detail about why she cannot bring herself to be jealous of Miss Ingram. Jane isn't a character in denial. She's a strong, logical, thoughtful and methodical woman, one who knows her own mind. After reading this passage, I realized that although I was over halfway through the novel, I never really knew Jane until that moment. Anyway, while this may be a long excerpt, it's well-worth the read:----- "I have told you, reader, that I had learnt to love Mr. Rochester: I could not unlove him now, merely because I found that he had ceased to notice me-because I might pass hours in his presence, and he would never once turn his eyes in my direction-because I saw all his attentions appropriated by a great lady, who scorned to touch me with the hem of her robes as she passed; who, if ever her dark and imperious eye fell on me by chance, would withdraw it instantly as from an object too mean to merit observation. I could not unlove him, because I felt sure he would soon marry this very lady-because I read daily in her a proud security in his intentions respecting her-because I witnessed hourly in him a style of courtship which, if careless and choosing rather to be sought than to seek, was yet, in its very carelessness, captivating, and in its very pride, irresistible. "There was nothing to cool or banish love in these circumstances, though much to create despair. Much too, you will think, reader, to engender jealousy: if a woman, in my position, could presume to be jealous of a woman in Miss Ingram's. But I was not jealous: or very rarely;-the nature of the pain I suffered could not be explained by that word. Miss Ingram was a mark beneath jealousy: she was too inferior to excite the feeling. Pardon the seeming paradox; I mean what I say. She was very showy, but she was not genuine: she had a fine person, many brilliant attainments; but her mind was poor, her heart barren by nature: nothing bloomed spontaneously on that soil; no

unforced natural fruit delighted by its freshness. She was not good; she was not original: she used to repeat sounding phrases from books: she never offered, nor had, an opinion of her own. She advocated a high tone of sentiment; but she did not know the sensations of sympathy and pity; tenderness and truth were not in her. "Too often she betrayed this, by the undue vent she gave to a spiteful antipathy she had conceived against little Adele: pushing her away with some contumelious epithet if she happened to approach her; sometimes ordering her from the room, and always treating her with coldness and acrimony. Other eyes besides mine watched these manifestations of character-watched them closely, keenly, shrewdly. Yes; the future bridegroom, Mr. Rochester himself, exercised over his intended a ceaseless surveillance; and it was from this sagacity-this guardedness of his-this perfect, clear consciousness of his fair one's defects-this obvious absence of passion in his sentiments towards her, that my ever- torturing pain arose."-----.....Jane's pain came not from any imagined self-deficiency ... because as far as she was concerned, the pretty Miss Ingram was an empty satin dress---not worthy of jealousy or anything else. Least of all Mr. Rochester. Hence Jane's pain. The mere fact that he would go for a vapid boob like Miss Ingram was the root of Jane's torment.Hard to be jealous of someone you feel is intellectually and spiritually beneath both you and the man you love. This is why I love Jane as a heroine! While not a raving beauty, she has a quiet and unshakable confidence that's very appealing. No wonder Mr. Rochester fell for her.Writers, if you want to see how to create a compelling heroine, look no further. The lesson is in this book!Suffice it to say, Jane Eyre is my all time favorite heroine.

I don't feel qualified to write a review of such a classic, but I will say I'm glad I finally read it. I have watched probably most of the film adaptations of the story, but even though some are very faithful to the text, they don't begin to capture all of the beautiful prose. It left me feeling somewhat illiterate because of the richness of the vocabulary, especially compared to what rudimentary language we use these days.The best take-aways for me were the redemptive elements of the story: Jane's poised beauty and strength rising out of cruelty and injustice, and the redemption of flawed Mr. Rochester through her steadfast, pure love, in addition to the contrast of St. John's somewhat Pharisaic character give the reader plenty of food for thought--in my most humble opinion. Worth the time it takes to read it, for sure!

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