

### How does Charlotte Bronte present the character of Jane Eyre in chapters 1-4 of the novel?

From the first four chapters of the novel it is already evident that the character of Jane is an extremely complicated and rapidly developing one despite being just ten years old at this point. Charlotte Bronte employs a first person narrative and an abundance of emotive language in order to give the reader a truly insightful look into the mind of eloquent, feisty young Jane and her troubled life living with the abusive Reeds.

In chapter one we immediately learn of Jane's low status in the hierarchy of her middle class home, Jane herself being painfully aware of her 'physical inferiority' and how this has affected the interactions between her and her family. It is clear that Jane is more intelligent than the rest of the family, reading books such as 'Goldsmith's History of Rome' a title likely to be considered much too advanced of a girl of her age who had no access to education, in fact, this coupled with the fact that females were not encouraged to show academic interest at all in the 1800s and were denied paths into respected jobs (Bronte herself faced this when the novel lost popularity after it was revealed to have been written by a woman) may link to early signs of feminism due to Jane's devotion to academia.

The fearsome red room is introduced in the second chapter as well as an escalation in the level of abuse that Jane is subject to, in this scene the servants instruct each other to 'hold her arms' and use the derogatory simile of her being 'like a mad cat'. Even Bessie with whom Jane shares a sister-like bond does nothing to resist the young girl being taken away in total isolation for the entire night- she betrays Jane's trust completely and *helps* with the forcible methods of cruel Mrs Abbott. The reader feels more sympathy than ever for Jane in this chapter once Jane is confined in the room with its 'curtains of deep red damask' and 'pains to one'. This is a room which Jane automatically associates with fear and indeed the reader shares her dread during her terrifying time there in which she 'rushed to the door and shook the lock in desperate effort' after being confronted by what Jane believed to be Mr Reeds' ghost and becoming hysterical.

Nevertheless Jane is shown to be able to take initiative and seize opportunity despite us seeing her more naive, superstitious side in the red room when she meets Mr Lloyd, the apothecary. Orphan Jane immediately forms a strong bond with Mr Lloyd 'he departed, to my grief: I felt so sheltered and befriended while he sat in the chair by my pillow' and confides in him with details of her torment. It is here that she again looks for a way to better herself despite the harsh, patriarchal, Victorian era and plainly states 'I should indeed like to go to school' a huge decision to be made without the guidance of a parent figure although a pivotal point in which Jane takes fate into her own hands and seeks escape from her cruel guardians. This could also be an allusion to the narrative viewpoint of Bronte herself who owed much of her achievements to her boarding school years, therefore the reader can connote that it may impact Jane's life positively also.

By chapter four Jane is a completely changed character. The pathos of her existence is lost and she is revealed to be a strong, capable young woman who is able to keep her composure even under the unjustified scrutiny of Mr Brocklehurst who Jane first describes dauntingly with the metaphor of 'a black pillar!' Brocklehurst believes that Jane has a 'wicked heart'. Jane is not perturbed and, after revealing to