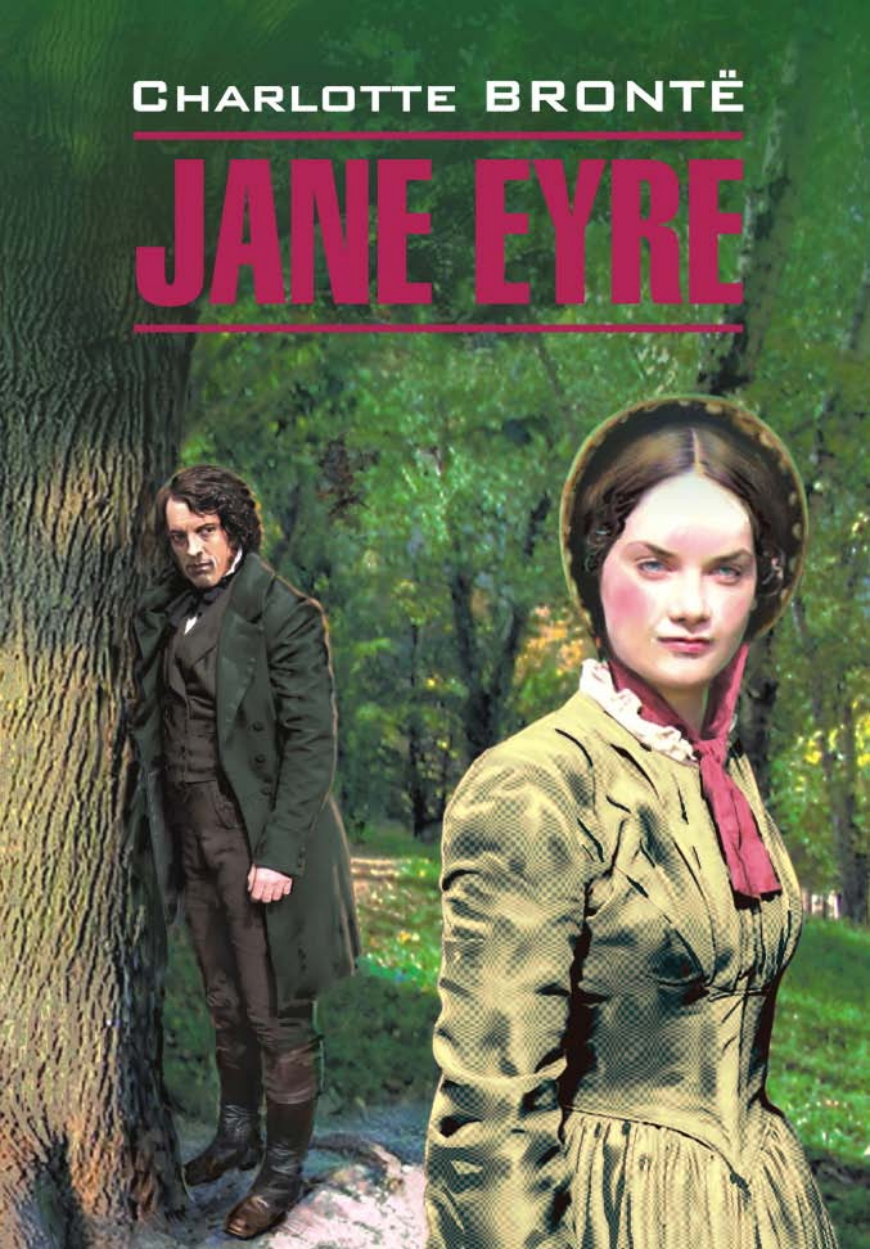


CHARLOTTE BRONTË

JANE EYRE



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ENGLISH

CLASSICAL LITERATURE

Подготовка текста, комментарии и словарь

Е. Г. Тигонен

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История страданий и обретения счастья бедной сиротки Джен Эйр, описанная замечательной английской писательницей Шарлоттой Бронте (1816–1855), известна всем. С невзгодами и лишениями героине романа помогли справиться сила духа, цельность характера, бескомпромиссность, смирение и бесконечное терпение. Добродетельность, чистая душа, верность и вера творят настоящие чудеса.

В книге приводится неадаптированный текст на языке оригинала с незначительными сокращениями, снабженный комментариями и словарем.

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Английская писательница Шарлотта Бронте родилась 22 июня 1816 года в семье сельского священника в Йоркшире. Ее мать умерла, оставив своему бедному мужу семью из пяти дочерей и сына. Шарлотте в ту пору было всего пять лет. Две ее старшие сестры в 1824 году поступили в школу в Ковен-Бридже, но год спустя вернулись больными и умерли одна за другой. Девятилетняя Шарлотта вынуждена была взять на себя обязанности хозяйки дома и заботу о младших сестрах и брате и продолжала образование дома, отдаваясь своей склонности к писательству.

Весной 1846 года Шарлотта и ее младшие сестры Эмилия и Энн решились выступить с первыми плодами своей литературной деятельности. Вышел в свет небольшой томик их стихов под мужскими псевдонимами Коррер (Шарлотта), Эллис (Эмилия) и Актон (Энн) Бель. К сожалению, книга осталась незамеченной публикой.

В 1849 году появился роман «Джен Эйр», завоевавший огромный успех и переведенный на многие европейские языки. Не много найдется книг с неизвестным именем автора на обложке, которые были бы встречены с таким беспорным одобрением. К автору возник всеобщий интерес, но скромная писательница не открывала своего настоящего имени.

На фоне трагических обстоятельств жизни писательницы (в сентябре 1848 года умер ее младший брат, в декабре того же года — Эмилия, в мае следующего — Энн) вышел в свет второй роман Шарлотты Бронте «Шерли» (1849), вызвавший к себе огромный интерес мастерски нарисованной картиной жизни рабочих в провинции. Перед Шарлоттой открылись двери лучших литературных кружков Лондона,

но привыкшая к уединению писательница тяготилась общественным вниманием, и почти все время Бронте проводила в своем старом доме. В 1853 году вышел в свет ее последний роман «Городок».

В следующем году Шарлотта вышла замуж за Артура Николса Бейлля, священника в приходе своего отца, но уже 31 марта 1855 года она скончалась, сильно простудившись во время одной из прогулок по своим любимым вересковым лугам. Простуда вызвала обострение туберкулеза, от которого умерли все ее сестры и мать.

Шарлотта Бронте считается одной из талантливейших представительниц школы Теккерея, ее любимого писателя. Обладая нервным и впечатлительным темпераментом, она владела тем, что Гёте называл секретом гения — способностью проникнуться индивидуальностью и субъективным настроением постороннего лица. Она с поразительной яркостью изображала все, что ей приходилось видеть и чувствовать. Если иногда чрезмерная яркость образов переходит в некоторую грубость красок, а излишний мелодраматизм в положениях и сентиментальный финал ослабляют художественное впечатление, то реализм, с которым изображены события, разворачивающиеся в ее романах, делает незаметными эти недостатки.

Chapter I

There was no possibility of taking a walk that day. We had been wandering, indeed, in the leafless shrubbery an hour in the morning; but since dinner (Mrs. Reed, when there was no company, dined early) the cold winter wind had brought with it clouds so sombre, and a rain so penetrating, that further outdoor exercise was now out of the question.

Eliza, John, and Georgiana were now clustered round their mama in the drawing-room: she lay reclined on a sofa by the fireside, and with her darlings about her (for the time neither quarrelling nor crying) looked perfectly happy. Me, she had dispensed from joining the group; saying, “She regretted to be under the necessity of keeping me at a distance; but that until she heard from Bessie, and could discover by her own observation, that I was endeavouring in good earnest¹ to acquire a more sociable and childlike disposition, a more attractive and sprightly manner — something lighter, franker, more natural, as it were — she really must exclude me from privileges intended only for contented, happy, little children.”

“What does Bessie say I have done?” I asked.

¹ **in good earnest** — (разг.) совершенно серьезно

“Jane, I don’t like cavillers or questioners; besides, there is something truly forbidding in a child taking up her elders in that manner. Be seated somewhere; and until you can speak pleasantly, remain silent.”

A breakfast-room adjoined the drawing-room, I slipped in there. It contained a bookcase: I soon possessed myself of a volume, taking care that it should be one stored with pictures. I mounted into the window-seat: gathering up my feet, I sat cross-legged, like a Turk; and, having drawn the red moreen curtain nearly close, I was shrined in double retirement.

At intervals, while turning over the leaves of my book, I studied the aspect of that winter afternoon. Afar, it offered a pale blank of mist and cloud; near a scene of wet lawn and storm-beat shrub, with ceaseless rain sweeping away wildly before a long and lamentable blast.

I returned to my book — Bewick’s *History of British Birds*: the letterpress thereof I cared little for, generally speaking; and yet there were certain introductory pages that, child as I was, I could not pass quite as a blank. They were those which treat of the haunts of sea-fowl; of “the solitary rocks and promontories” by them only inhabited; of the coast of Norway, studded with isles from its southern extremity, the Lindeness, or Naze, to the North Cape.

Nor could I pass unnoticed the suggestion of the bleak shores of Lapland, Siberia, Spitzbergen, Nova Zembla, Iceland, Greenland, with “the vast sweep of the Arctic Zone, and those forlorn regions of dreary space, — that reservoir of frost and snow, where firm fields of ice, the accumulation of centuries of winters, glazed in Alpine heights above heights, surround the

pole, and concentrate the multiplied rigours of extreme cold.” Of these death-white realms I formed an idea of my own: shadowy, like all the half-comprehended notions that float dim through children’s brains, but strangely impressive. The words in these introductory pages connected themselves with the succeeding vignettes, and gave significance to the rock standing up alone in a sea of billow and spray; to the broken boat stranded on a desolate coast; to the cold and ghastly moon glancing through bars of cloud at a wreck just sinking.

With Bewick on my knee, I was then happy: happy at least in my way. I feared nothing but interruption, and that came too soon. The breakfast-room door opened.

“Boh! Madam Mope¹!” cried the voice of John Reed; then he paused: he found the room apparently empty.

“Where the dickens is she!” he continued. “Lizzy! Georgy! (calling to his sisters) Jane is not here: tell mama she is run out into the rain — bad animal!”

“It is well I drew the curtain,” thought I; and I wished fervently he might not discover my hiding-place: nor would John Reed have found it out himself; he was not quick either of vision or conception; but Eliza just put her head in at the door, and said at once: “She is in the window-seat, to be sure, Jack.”

And I came out immediately, for I trembled at the idea of being dragged forth by the said Jack.

“What do you want?” I asked, with awkward diffidence.

“Say, ‘What do you want, Master Reed?’” was the answer. “I want you to come here;” and seating himself in

¹ **Madam Mope** — (уничижит.) мадам Плакса

an arm-chair, he intimated by a gesture that I was to approach and stand before him.

John Reed was a schoolboy of fourteen years old; four years older than I, for I was but ten: large and stout for his age, with a dingy and unwholesome skin; thick lineaments in a spacious visage, heavy limbs and large extremities. He gorged himself habitually at table, which made him bilious, and gave him a dim and bleared eye and flabby cheeks. He ought now to have been at school; but his mama had taken him home for a month or two, "on account of his delicate health." Mr. Miles, the master, affirmed that he would do very well if he had fewer cakes and sweetmeats sent him from home; but the mother's heart turned from an opinion so harsh, and inclined rather to the more refined idea that John's sallowness was owing to over-application and, perhaps, to pining after home.

Habitually obedient to John, I came up to his chair: he spent some three minutes in thrusting out his tongue at me as far as he could without damaging the roots: I knew he would soon strike, and while dreading the blow, I mused on the disgusting and ugly appearance of him who would presently deal it. I wonder if he read that notion in my face; for, all at once, without speaking, he struck suddenly and strongly. I tottered, and on regaining my equilibrium retired back a step or two from his chair.

"That is for your impudence in answering mama awhile since," said he, "and for your sneaking way of getting behind curtains, and for the look you had in your eyes two minutes since, you rat! Now, I'll teach you to rummage my bookshelves: for they *are* mine; all the house belongs to me, or will do in a few years. Go

and stand by the door, out of the way of the mirror and the windows.”

I did so, not at first aware what was his intention; but when I saw him lift and poise the book and stand in act to hurl it, I instinctively started aside with a cry of alarm: not soon enough, however; the volume was flung, it hit me, and I fell, striking my head against the door and cutting it. The cut bled, the pain was sharp: my terror had passed its climax; other feelings succeeded.

“Wicked and cruel boy!” I said. “You are like a murderer — you are like a slave-driver — you are like the Roman emperors!”

“What! what!” he cried. “Did she say that to me? Did you hear her, Eliza and Georgiana? Won’t I tell mama? but first — ”

He ran headlong at me: I felt him grasp my hair and my shoulder: he had closed with a desperate thing. I really saw in him a tyrant, a murderer. I felt a drop or two of blood from my head trickle down my neck, and was sensible of somewhat pungent suffering: these sensations for the time predominated over fear, and I received him in frantic sort. I don’t very well know what I did with my hands, but he called me “Rat! Rat!” and bel-lowed out aloud. Aid was near him: Eliza and Georgiana had run for Mrs. Reed, who was gone upstairs: she now came upon the scene, followed by Bessie and her maid Abbot. We were parted: I heard the words: “Dear! dear! What a fury to fly at Master John!”

“Did ever anybody see such a picture of passion!”

Then Mrs. Reed subjoined: “Take her away to the red-room, and lock her in there.” Four hands were immediately laid upon me, and I was borne upstairs.

Chapter II

“**F**or shame!¹ for shame!” cried the lady’s-maid. “What shocking conduct, Miss Eyre, to strike a young gentleman, your benefactress’s son! Your young master.”

They had got me by this time into the apartment indicated by Mrs. Reed, and had thrust me upon a stool: my impulse was to rise from it like a spring; their two pair of hands arrested me instantly.

“If you don’t sit still, you must be tied down,” said Bessie. “Miss Abbot, lend me your garters; she would break mine directly.”

Miss Abbot turned to divest a stout leg of the necessary ligature. This preparation for bonds, and the additional ignominy it inferred, took a little of the excitement out of me.

“Don’t take them off,” I cried; “I will not stir.”

In guarantee whereof, I attached myself to my seat by my hands.

Bessie answered not; but ere long, addressing me, she said, “You ought to be aware, Miss, that you are under obligations to Mrs. Reed: she keeps you: if she were to turn you off, you would have to go to the poorhouse.”

¹ **For shame!** — (разг.) Как не стыдно!

This reproach of my dependence had become a vague sing-song in my ear: very painful and crushing, but only half intelligible. Miss Abbot joined in: "And you ought not to think yourself on an equality with the Misses Reed and Master Reed, because Missis kindly allows you to be brought up with them. They will have a great deal of money, and you will have none: it is your place to be humble, and to try to make yourself agreeable to them."

"What we tell you is for your good," added Bessie, in no harsh voice, "you should try to be useful and pleasant, then, perhaps, you would have a home here; but if you become passionate and rude, Missis will send you away, I am sure."

They went, shutting the door, and locking it behind them.

The red-room was a square chamber, very seldom slept in, I might say never, indeed, unless when a chance influx of visitors at Gateshead Hall rendered it necessary to turn to account all the accommodation it contained: yet it was one of the largest and stateliest chambers in the mansion. A bed supported on massive pillars of mahogany, hung with curtains of deep red damask, stood out like a tabernacle in the centre; the two large windows, with their blinds always drawn down, were half shrouded in festoons and falls of similar drapery; the carpet was red; the table at the foot of the bed was covered with a crimson cloth; the walls were a soft fawn colour with a blush of pink in it; the wardrobe, the toilet-table, the chairs were of darkly polished old mahogany. This room was chill, because it seldom had a fire;

it was silent, because remote from the nursery and kitchen; solemn, because it was known to be so seldom entered. The house-maid alone came here on Saturdays, to wipe from the mirrors and the furniture a week's quiet dust: and Mrs. Reed herself, at far intervals, visited it to review the contents of a certain secret drawer in the wardrobe, where were stored divers parchments, her jewel-casket, and a miniature of her deceased husband; and in those last words lies the secret of the red-room — the spell which kept it so lonely in spite of its grandeur.

Mr. Reed had been dead nine years: it was in this chamber he breathed his last; here he lay in state; hence his coffin was borne by the undertaker's men; and, since that day, a sense of dreary consecration had guarded it from frequent intrusion.

My seat, to which Bessie and the bitter Miss Abbot had left me riveted, was a low ottoman near the marble chimney-piece; the bed rose before me; to my right hand there was the high, dark wardrobe, with subdued, broken reflections varying the gloss of its panels; to my left were the muffled windows; a great looking-glass between them repeated the vacant majesty of the bed and room. Superstition was with me at that moment; but it was not yet her hour for complete victory: my blood was still warm; the mood of the revolted slave was still bracing me with its bitter vigour; I had to stem a rapid rush of retrospective thought before I quailed to the dismal present.

My head still ached and bled with the blow and fall I had received: no one had reproved John for wantonly striking me; and because I had turned against him to

avert farther irrational violence, I was loaded with general opprobrium.

What a consternation of soul was mine that dreary afternoon! How all my brain was in tumult, and all my heart in insurrection! Yet in what darkness, what dense ignorance, was the mental battle fought! I could not answer the ceaseless inward question — *why* I thus suffered; now, at the distance of — I will not say how many years, I see it clearly.

I was a discord¹ in Gateshead Hall: I was like nobody there; I had nothing in harmony with Mrs. Reed or her children, or her chosen vassalage. If they did not love me, in fact, as little did I love them. They were not bound to regard with affection a thing that could not sympathise with one amongst them; a heterogeneous thing, opposed to them in temperament, in capacity, in propensities; a useless thing, incapable of serving their interest, or adding to their pleasure; a noxious thing, cherishing the germs of indignation at their treatment, of contempt of their judgment. I know that had I been a sanguine, brilliant, careless, exacting, handsome, romping child — though equally dependent and friendless — Mrs. Reed would have endured my presence more complacently; her children would have entertained for me more of the cordiality of fellow-feeling; the servants would have been less prone to make me the scapegoat of the nursery.

Daylight began to forsake the red-room; it was past four o'clock, and the beclouded afternoon was tending to drear twilight. I heard the rain still beating continuously

¹ I was a discord — (зд.) Я была чужой

on the staircase window, and the wind howling in the grove behind the hall; I grew by degrees cold as a stone, and then my courage sank. My habitual mood of humiliation, self-doubt, forlorn depression, fell damp on the embers of my decaying ire. All said I was wicked, and perhaps I might be so; what thought had I been but just conceiving of starving myself to death? That certainly was a crime: and was I fit to die? Or was the vault under the chancel of Gateshead Church an inviting bourne? In such vault I had been told did Mr. Reed lie buried; and led by this thought to recall his idea, I dwelt on it with gathering dread.

Shaking my hair from my eyes, I lifted my head and tried to look boldly round the dark room; at this moment a light gleamed on the wall. Was it, I asked myself, a ray from the moon penetrating some aperture in the blind? No; moonlight was still, and this stirred; while I gazed, it glided up to the ceiling and quivered over my head. I can now conjecture readily that this streak of light was, in all likelihood, a gleam from a lantern carried by some one across the lawn: but then, prepared as my mind was for horror, shaken as my nerves were by agitation, I thought the swift darting beam was a herald of some coming vision from another world. My heart beat thick, my head grew hot; a sound filled my ears, which I deemed the rushing of wings; something seemed near me; I was oppressed, suffocated: endurance broke down; I rushed to the door and shook the lock in desperate effort. Steps came running along the outer passage; the key turned, Bessie and Abbot entered.

“Miss Eyre, are you ill?” said Bessie.

“What a dreadful noise! it went quite through me!” exclaimed Abbot.

“Take me out! Let me go into the nursery!” was my cry.

“What for? Are you hurt? Have you seen something?” again demanded Bessie.

“Oh! I saw a light, and I thought a ghost would come.” I had now got hold of Bessie’s hand, and she did not snatch it from me.

“She has screamed out on purpose,” declared Abbot, in some disgust. “And what a scream! If she had been in great pain one would have excused it, but she only wanted to bring us all here: I know her naughty tricks.”

“What is all this?” demanded another voice peremptorily; and Mrs. Reed came along the corridor, her cap flying wide, her gown rustling stormily. “Abbot and Bessie, I believe I gave orders that Jane Eyre should be left in the red-room till I came to her myself.”

“Miss Jane screamed so loud, ma’am,” pleaded Bessie.

“Let her go,” was the only answer. “Loose Bessie’s hand, child: you cannot succeed in getting out by these means, be assured. I abhor artifice, particularly in children; it is my duty to show you that tricks will not answer¹: you will now stay here an hour longer, and it is only on condition of perfect submission and stillness that I shall liberate you then.”

“O aunt! have pity! Forgive me! I cannot endure it — let me be punished some other way! I shall be killed if — ”

¹ **tricks will not answer** — (разг.) ваши выходки никого не обманут

“Silence! This violence is all most repulsive:” and so, no doubt, she felt it. I was a precocious actress in her eyes; she sincerely looked on me as a compound of virulent passions, mean spirit, and dangerous duplicity.

Bessie and Abbot having retreated, Mrs. Reed, impatient of my now frantic anguish and wild sobs, abruptly thrust me back and locked me in, without farther parley. I heard her sweeping away; and soon after she was gone, I suppose I had a species of fit: unconsciousness closed the scene.

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