

NAXOS
AudioBooks

**CLASSIC
FICTION**

Charlotte Brontë **Jane Eyre**

Read by **Emma Fielding**



NA308612D

1	The house of the Reeds	8:35
2	Punishment in the red room	3:51
3	The soothing presence of Mr Lloyd	11:52
4	An interview with Mr Brocklehurst	10:31
5	I travelled to Lowood	4:23
6	My first days at Lowood – Helen Burns	17:05
7	Advertising for a position	5:20
8	To Millcote, Mrs Fairfax and Adèle Varens	13:05
9	Out for a walk	1:39
10	The first meeting with Mr Rochester	13:40
11	Direct conversation	6:09
12	Dramatic past and present	13:04
13	The party arrives – with Miss Ingram	9:58
14	A stranger arrives	4:04
15	A savage cry in the night	14:15
16	Leave of absence	5:01

17	More deception by my aunt	4:02
18	I return to Thornfield	1:30
19	A proposal	7:46
20	The day of the wedding	10:38
21	Back to Thornfield	5:41
22	Mr Rochester pleads	8:53
23	I leave Thornfield to wander	4:45
24	A new home with Mr St John Rivers	4:17
25	A surprise fortune	11:32
26	A proposal	4:55
27	An impulse drives me back to Thornfield	13:47
28	A glass of water	8:30
29	Reader, I married him	6:03

Total time: 3:55:09

Charlotte Brontë

Jane Eyre

Charlotte Brontë was born in 1816 in Thornton, near Bradford in Yorkshire. The daughter of a Northern Ireland-born Church of England clergyman – Patrick Brontë – and the Cornish-born Maria Branwell, Charlotte and two of her four siblings (Emily and Anne) have long been recognised as among the greatest novelists in the English language, and **Jane Eyre** as perhaps the most important of their works.

The experience of *Jane Eyre* is partly modelled on Charlotte's own life. Her father moved to Haworth in 1820, the year before his wife's death, when Charlotte was still a small child. The bleakness of the moorland surrounding Haworth, the relative poverty of the family's existence, and the sense of early personal loss – all features that are to be found in **Jane Eyre** – must all have coloured Charlotte's upbringing. Moreover, a harsh aunt – Elizabeth Branwell – soon came to live with the Brontës, after the death of her sister. It is evident that Mrs Reed, in the novel, is a very lifelike figure.

Perhaps the most influential episode in Charlotte's brief life – she died when just 39

– was her time in Brussels between 1842 and 1844, where she stayed in a pension in order to improve her French and German, and to develop her skills as a teacher of English. There she developed what seems to have been an unrequited passion for the married owner of the hotel, Constantin Heger.

By 1845, back in England, Charlotte was encouraging her sisters Emily and Anne in their writing, both poetry and fiction. She tried to publish her novel, **The Professor**, but it was rejected and did not appear until 1857 after her death. But her publisher encouraged her, and **Jane Eyre** appeared in print in October 1847 under the pseudonym Currer Bell. She published **Shirley** in October 1849 and in 1853 **Villette**, a novel which drew heavily upon her life in Brussels.

Jane Eyre, the novel, is a remarkable exploration of the mind and emotions of a passionate, strong-willed woman who is determined to live by her own principles and ethics. If that sounds a remarkably contemporary summary of a novel published almost 150 years ago, that is to

the credit of Charlotte Brontë's astonishing maturity and lasting genius. Although the core of the novel is Jane Eyre and her own internal life, the other characters – Mr Rochester in particular – are wonderfully depicted. The tale is also a splendid debunking of earlier nineteenth-century gothic fiction, yet manages to tingle the spine and stir the hairs on the back of the neck. It is unbeatable, both as pure entertainment and as a lasting example of subtle imagination. We should not forget, of course, that it is also one of the greatest love stories ever written. Mr Rochester and Jane Eyre will last for ever.

Notes by Gary Mead

**The music on this recording is taken from the
NAXOS and MARCO POLO catalogues**

BENNETT PIANO SEXTET OP. 8 Various	8.223304
BRAHMS PIANO TRIOS NO. 2 OP. 87 Vienna Piano Trio	8.550746
SPOHR PIANO TRIO NO. 4 Hartley Piano Trio	8.553205

Music programmed by Nicolas Soames

Cover picture: *A Young Widow* by Edward Killingworth Johnson (1825–1923)
Courtesy of The Bridgeman Art Library, London.

Charlotte Brontë

Jane Eyre

Read by **Emma Fielding**

One of the greatest love stories ever written, *Jane Eyre* is the tale of a young woman entangled with the powerful Mr Rochester. What lurks in the attic at Thornfield, the ancestral home of the surly Mr Rochester? Will the governess Jane Eyre discover his secret – and having discovered it, live to regret that knowledge? Battling inside Jane are passion and prudence; she struggles to survive the turmoil they cause.



Emma Fielding trained at RSAMD. She has worked for the Royal National Theatre in Tom Stoppard's *Arcadia* and the RSC in *Twelfth Night* and John Ford's *The Broken Heart*, for which she won the Dame Peggy Ashcroft Award for Best Actress. Emma Fielding has appeared in numerous radio plays and also reads *The Turn of the Screw* for Naxos AudioBooks.

“Emma Fielding realises Jane Eyre is not just an exciting narrative but an exposure of primal feelings, which she conveys with alarming directness.”

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