



# Charlotte Brontë

*Jane Eyre*

# Tough Childhood

- One of six children
- Her mother died when she was 5.
- She was cared for by her mother's sister.
- Her two older sisters died from consumption after attending a boarding school.
- One sister is a model for Helen Burns.
- The 4 remaining siblings create imaginary worlds detailed in miniature books.

# The Good Years

- Charlotte and her two sisters publish a volume of poetry.
- While teaching in Belgium, she falls in love with a married man.
- 1847 sister Emily publishes *Wuthering Heights*.
- Charlotte's first novel, *The Professor*, is rejected.
- *Jane Eyre* is published the same year—1847—sales climbed and have never faltered.

# Hard Times Begin the Next Year

- Her brother dies, addicted to alcohol and opium.
- Emily has a cold at his funeral, gets T.B. and dies.
- Anne dies 6 months later.
- Charlotte, now all alone, cares for her aging father.
- Six years later she marries her father's curate.
- Beset by ill health, she died the next year, pregnant (1855).

# Overview of Bronte's Time

- Bronte lived & died in the Victorian age (1830-1900).
- Women viewed as ignorant or innocent.
- More men, so many women remained unmarried.
- The Victorian Age produced a large number of female writers who were forced to use pseudonyms. (Currer Bell)
- Women only learned needle point, foreign language, and music.
- Educated women had two career choices: the two Jane herself does.
- Industrialization created wealth for some and thus class distinctions.