Book report Jane Eyre

General information:

Title: Jane Eyre

Writer: Charlotte Brontë

Year of first edition: 1847

Edition read: 1996

Publisher: Penguin

Summary:

Jane Eyre grows up as an orphan with her aunt Reed and cousins at Gateshead. Her aunt doesn’t like her at all and when Jane has a quarrel with her cousin John, she is sent to Lowood school. School at first isn’t very nice, the teachers and especially the headmaster Brocklehurst are very strict and the living environment is bad. After an outbreak of typhus the situation gets better. Jane completes her education and works 2 years as a teacher at Lowood. When she is 18 years old, she is going to work as a governess for the little pupil Adèle. Her ward and master of Thornfield Hall is Mr. Rochester. He has a very capricious character. Jane hears sometimes a strange laugh, she thinks it is the servant Grace Pool. At one night, Jane notices a fire in mr. Rochester’s bedroom. She rescues him.

Mr. Rochester leaves Thornfield for two weeks and comes back with a company of several people, including a beautiful young woman, Blanche Ingram. Jane notices that miss Ingram likes mr. Rochester and that there could be a marriage between them. She also notices that she loves mr. Rochester, although she won’t admit it. The guests stay a while and another person, mr. Mason, arrives. In the middle of the night, Jane hears a cry for help. It appears that mr. Mason is attacked by a stranger.

A couple days later gets Jane a letter from her aunt Reed. Her cousin John committed suicide and her aunt wants her to come to Gateshead. She still thinks that Jane is a bad girl, but she says that Jane has a uncle in Madeira. She dies soon and Jane returns to Thornfield after a month. Jane thinks mr. Rochester loves miss Ingram, but he doesn’t and he proposes Jane. She accepts. At the day of the wedding, a stranger interrupt the ceremony saying that mr. Rochester can’t marry because he already has a wife. Mr. Rochester takes everyone to the attic of Thornfield. There is his first wife Bertha Mason. She is a lunatic and she was the one who made all those strange things happen. Jane runs away.

She is exhausted and with no money or possessions she comes to a little house. The owner, the clergyman St. John Rivers, and his sisters Diana and Mary are taking care of her. She says her name is Jane Elliott. She gets a job as a teacher of a little school for farmer’s daughters. St John finds out that Jane’s real name is Eyre. He tells her that an uncle left her 20.000 pounds and also that she and St. John and his sisters are actually cousins. Jane divides her money between them.

St. John wants to go to India as a missionary and he wants Jane to be his wife. Jane wants to go to India, but not as his wife because she doesn’t love him like a wife. St. John tries to persuade her, but at the moment she maybe accepts, she hears the voice of mr. Rochester calling her. Jane immediately goes to Thornfield Hall, but she sees only a ruin. She ask a innkeeper about what happened. He tells her that Bertha set de place on fire, jumped from the roof and that mr. Rochester is alive, but blind. Jane goes to Ferndean, where mr. Rochester lives. He still loves Jane, but doesn’t want to marry her because he thinks he is too old, ugly and moreover disabled. Jane persuades him and they marry soon. At the end of the book they are married for ten years and mr. Rochester’s sight comes back.

Analyse:

Setting: Jane Eyre takes place in the mid-19th century in North and Middle England. It is important to know how the 19th century society works, because all their traditions are for us very strange. It is for example very normal in that time that a woman, when she is married, aren’t working, or that Jane calls Mr. Rochester sir, even when she says she wants to marry him.

In the story the place where it is set is also very important. It is noticeable that the writer grew up in the Yorkshire Moors. The nature in which Thornfield Hall is set, is very wide, wild and surrounded by moors. The different places where the story is set are very vivid and extensively described. Thornfield Hall is for example big and dark, which is a reflection of Mr. Rochester’s secret. Also the weather turns when some big things happen. When Jane runs away from mr. Rochester, it starts to rain, but when she proposes him, it gets sunny.

Characters:

Jane Eyre: the main character in the book, a round character. You know a lot about her, about her youth and how she grew up till an adult. Her aunt Reed and mr. Brocklehurst say that she has a bad character, but throughout the book you get to know that she is not, but that she is only cynical and doesn’t know much about love (because she didn’t get much love in her live). Her goal in live is to be free and to do the right thing. She is also shy and unpretentious and she doesn’t think herself to be the best in the world. She grows up to an woman who knows what she wants and wants to be happy.

Mr. Edward Fairfax Rochester:Mr. Rochester is the owner of Thornfield Hall and Jane’s employer. He has a pupil called Adèle Varens, he might also be the father. He is near 40 years old and for 15 years married to the lunatic Bertha Mason, who he has hide on the third story of his house. Mr. Rochester is a little strange kind of person. Sometimes he is a very kind nice man, but a second later he is cold, unsocial and cynical. He is rich, but it seems like he doesn’t care much for it. He hasn’t have a very clear goal in his life, but in his hart he wants true love, which he find in Jane. At the end of the book is he blind, missing one hand and having long, wild haircut.

St. John Rivers: St. John is a clergyman in a small village. He and his sisters Diana and Mary appear to be cousins of Jane. St. John might seem like a nice man, but actually he isn’t. He believes he does everything for God, he wants to be a missionary. He ask Jane to be his wife and come with him to India, but he doesn’t marry her for love. At the moment things don’t go as he wants them to go, he changes to a cold, nasty person.

Perspective: the book is written in the I-view from the main character Jane Eyre. By using that, the reader get a good look on what Jane thinks and why she does the things she does.

Title: the title is just called Jane Eyre, after the name of the main character.

Theme: one theme is the search for reaching luck and happiness, something that not so easy is for Jane, but what she in the end still gets. Another theme is unreachable love. Jane wants love, but she doesn’t get it in her youth. She wants mr. Rochester’s love, but he is married and she doesn’t want to be his mistress, so she goes away from him. In the end she find it .

Personal reaction:

I actually really liked Jane Eyre, although I didn’t expect that when I choose a book to read. I had to read another 4-point-book and I liked the story of Jane Eyre when we talked about it in Literature class, so I chose this book to read. Although I liked the story, I expected it to be very difficult to read cause it was written in the 19th century. But everything fortunate me. It wasn’t as hard as I had expected to read, I did understand the most important things and happenings. I liked Jane’s character. She isn’t a very average woman, she has her own will and is independent. I was curious during reading the book how the story would end. I saw when I was on the half of it, the movie, so I knew how it would end, but when I went on reading, I still enjoyed that. I was also curious about the somewhat strange, handsome but unattainable man as mr. Rochester, because in the movie, he remains a strange man to me, but in the book his character is more explained.

The only disadvantages I had, were that the book is very thick, about 500 pages, and that the story and thoughts of the characters are sometimes hard to understand, because the 19th century people had a lot other customs than I do. But I didn’t really though the book as bad, I actually think it is a recommendation for everyone who likes romantic storylines.