
Chapter 1

Identity and Characterization

1. Mrs. Reed wishes to keep Jane away from the other children. Why?

Ans: She allows only “contented, happy, little children” around her. Because Jane asks a question of her as an adult, she is considered to be a “caviler,” one who quibbles, criticizes, argues.

2. Does this attitude say anything about Mrs. Reed?

Ans: Mrs. Reed is cold, unloving and rigid, guarding her adult authority jealously. She seems to not care much about young Jane.

3. How does Jane escape her unfeeling and rude adjudicator?

Ans: She withdraws into a window seat with a book. She pulls the curtains, enclosing herself in the seclusion of her reading.

4. Where and when is Jane happy?

Ans: She is happy when immersed in her books.

5. What picture are we given of the relationship between Jane and Jack?

Ans: Jack is a bully who strikes Jane and acts the fool in front of her. She is forced to give in to him because he is the son of the people with whom she lives. The mother fails to notice the unfairness of the situation.

Setting and Perspective

1. Jane always takes note of the details of weather, scenery and all that makes up her surroundings. Even the weather conditions pictured in her book match the dreary tones outside her window. What is the view from her window?

Ans: It was a “drear November day” wintry, pale, blank mist and cloud over wet lawn and storm-beat shrub and ceaseless rain and the lamentable blast of wind.

2. What does this tell us about Jane's spirit? Have our spirits ever felt this way?

Ans: Jane's spirit is melancholy. She hides from the other children and from her step mother.

3. In what other ways is Jane's heart made plain to us?

Ans: The book she is reading, describing, among other things, the "forlorn regions of dreary space," the place of pensive and tragic birds. These lengthy descriptions reflect on the little girl, the memory of her solitary sadness.

4. Jane is looking back, remembering and interpreting for us her earlier thoughts and imaginings that "float dim through children's brains." As she relates her experience of reading the dismal text of her book and seeing its scary pictures, she recalls her own "undeveloped understanding and imperfect feelings" yet her profound interest, and we are able to identify with her in our present task.

* Jane is ten years old as the book begins, an orphan with an inquisitive mind and a quiet temper.

* John (Jack) Reed is fourteen, spoiled, overweight, dim and bleary-eyed with dingy skin.

5. What is the reason for Jane's reticence and quiet?

Ans: She is abused by the family, especially in having to endure the pummeling of the boy and the insults of Mrs. Reed. The boy is spoiled and allowed to punish Jane for things he has only heard about from his mother. She is fearful of coming out of herself and, thus, is considered to be dark and ungrateful.

Technique

1. What has the author presented to us? What is the particular question that is underscored in the first chapter?

Ans: Fairness. Most people think that they are treated unfairly, at least some time in their lives. Here we can observe the reaction of Jane, see just how she meets the challenge and gains her victory.

2. All aspects of fairness relate to God. Do you know how this is so?

Ans: God is sovereign, thus, things that happen to us are under His control. Nothing simply occurs in and of itself. We should look for purpose in all things.

3. Can you discern any purpose in the bad situation in which we find Jane?

Ans: She is forced to educate herself, think on her own and is far beyond the foolish children of the household who, by permission and design, torment her.

Chapter 2

Setting and Perspective

1. The matter of whether Jane could be sent to the “poor house” is mentioned by the servants. She is said to be obligated to Mrs. Reed, her aunt, and completely dependent. Further than this, she is called “inferior.” As an orphan, does Jane have any claim on the family? What rights are envisioned here?

Ans: She had no legal claim. Her moral claim perhaps would call for food and lodging, which she was receiving. She lived in the Reed house only by their permission. The fact that they were not gracious about their permission is not to the point.

2. Does this bring any current, social controversy to mind?

Ans: Everyone is accustomed to speaking of rights today. Men claim right and privilege as though the world were obligated to them. Indirectly, they think that God, Himself, is obliged to uphold these rights.
