

Name _____ Date _____

Charlotte Bronte

Learn more about this topic! Each section gives more detail on one of the lyrics from the song. Read each section, and then respond by answering the question or taking notes on key ideas.

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Notes

An excerpt from *Jane Eyre*, Chapter 4

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In *Jane Eyre*, a classic of **feminist** literature, the titular heroine displays her independent nature from the beginning. In this passage, young Jane lashes out at her aunt, with whom she has been living. Mrs. Reed is a wealthy, vicious woman who sees her orphaned niece as a burden. She confines Jane to a single room, punishes her for the smallest infractions, and makes negative statements about her character. Jane finds **solace** in reading books and using her imagination. Here, we see Jane's fiery nature on display for the first time.

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I am glad you are no relation of mine: I will never call you aunt again as long as I live. I will never come to see you when I am grown up; and if any one asks me how I liked you, and how you treated me, I will say the very thought of you makes me sick, and that you treated me with miserable **cruelty**. You think I have no feelings, and that I can do without one bit of love or kindness; but I cannot live so: and you have no pity. I will tell anybody who asks me questions, this exact tale. People think you a good woman, but you are bad, hard-hearted. You are deceitful!

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Ere I had finished this reply, my soul began to expand, to exult, with the strangest sense of freedom, of triumph, I ever felt. It seemed as if an invisible bond had burst, and that I had struggled out into unhopd-for liberty.

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An excerpt from Jane Eyre, Chapter 12

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In this passage, an adult Jane has taken a job as a governess at Thornfield Hall, working for the wealthy, aloof Edward Rochester. She is unsatisfied with her life and believes that her restlessness is a consequence of her social standing as a woman.

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It is in vain to say human beings ought to be satisfied with tranquillity: they must have action; and they will make it if they cannot find it. Millions are condemned to a stiller doom than mine, and millions are in silent revolt against their lot. Nobody knows how many rebellions besides political rebellions ferment in the masses of life which people earth. Women are supposed to be very calm generally: but women feel just as men feel; they need exercise for their faculties, and a field for their efforts, as much as their brothers do; they suffer from too rigid a restraint, too absolute a stagnation, precisely as men would suffer; and it is narrow-minded in their more privileged fellow-creatures to say that they ought to confine themselves to making puddings and knitting stockings, to playing on the piano and embroidering bags. It is thoughtless to condemn them, or laugh at them, if they seek to do more or learn more than custom has pronounced necessary for their sex.

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An excerpt from Jane Eyre, Chapter 38

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In this passage from the book's conclusion, Jane reflects on her relationship with Rochester. In her younger years, Jane was fiercely independent, fearing that marriage could mean losing her autonomy. Now, however, she is **undeterred** by this possibility. She is content to share her life and innermost thoughts with another person.

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I have now been married ten years. I know what it is to live entirely for and with what I love best on earth. I hold myself supremely blest beyond what language can express; because I am my husband's life as fully as he is mine. No woman was ever nearer to her mate than I am: ever more absolutely bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh. I know no weariness of my Edward's society: he knows none of mine, any more than we each do of the pulsation of the heart that beats in our separate bosoms; consequently, we are ever together. To be together is for us to be at once as free as in solitude, as gay as in company. We talk, I believe, all day long; to talk to each other is but a more animated and an audible thinking. All my confidence is bestowed on him, all his confidence is devoted to me; we are precisely suited in character perfect concord is the result.

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