Charlotte Bronte

Today we're going to talk about Charlotte Brontë…in just a minute.

Born in England in 1816, Charlotte Brontë experienced tragedy early in life. Her mother and older sisters died before her 10th birthday. Charlotte found solace in her father's library and soon began writing pieces of her own.

In 1846, she and her younger sisters, Emily and Anne, published a poetry collection using pen names. The book sold poorly, but the sisters were undeterred. Emily went on to release Wuthering Heights, now considered one of the greatest works of English literature. Anne's The Tenant of Wildfell Hall was among the first feminist novels. And in 1847, Charlotte published her masterpiece, Jane Eyre, to critical acclaim.

The heroine of Jane Eyre is raised by her cruel aunt, attends a school for orphaned girls, and falls in love with her brooding employer. Charlotte's own experiences with unrequited love and familial loss are thought to have inspired much of the story. With themes of class, gender relations, and self-determination, the book also critiques the Victorian social constraints that shaped Charlotte's life.

Charlotte died at 38 years old, predeceased by both Emily and Anne. Though their lives were short, the Brontë sisters left a remarkable impact on the literary world in an era when few women were allowed to do so.

Where do you see the legacy of Charlotte Brontë today?