

Sequel to Jane Eyre by Charlotte Brontë (1847)

A 'fictional autobiography'. Jane, an orphan, obtains a post at Thornfield Hall as governess to Adèle, Mr Edward Rochester's ward. Jane and Edward fall in love, but during the marriage ceremony it is discovered that he has a wife still living and Jane flees. She teaches at a village school many miles away, but returns to Thornfield after she hears him calling her name. Thornfield has burnt to the ground. His wife is dead, though Edward survives, maimed and blind. Jane meets him again and ... 'Reader, I married him.' [start of final chapter]

This sequel begins several years after these events. I have imagined a daughter Amelia born to them; their 'firstborn', a son, is mentioned in the novel.

Amelia Rochester – A Novel

Chapter 1

I wandered aimlessly, ignoring the damp and the chill wind whispering through the churchyard. The wind had dislodged my bonnet and now tugged at my hair, causing the escaped tendrils to tangle, and my skirts were hanging sodden around my ankles, but I was unable to care about my appearance. I could not bear to visit the grave again, to add yet another layer of grief, if that were indeed possible. Already it threatened to bow me down under its weight. But once more I was drawn down the slope from the church to the recently-erected gravestone, overlooking the ruins of Thornfield. My grief was raw, and my tears fell again as I knelt to brush the snow, which had fallen overnight, away from the simple, double inscription chiselled only two weeks past by the village stonemason.

Here lie

Edward Fairfax Rochester

October 1797 – 4 February 1855

and his Beloved wife

Jane

April 1816 – 12 January 1855

Resurgemus – We Shall Rise Again

It had been a hard, bitter winter. Mother had caught a chill as she trudged through the snowdrifts to bring relief to the poor of the village and she had taken to her bed soon after our Christmas celebrations, as her chill transformed into a fever. Our local doctor visited daily and Adèle (who had been visiting from her residence in Millcote) and I had nursed her as best we could. Father sat

with her endlessly, day and night, holding her hand, conversing with her, reciting from memory passages from her favoured books, as she drifted in and out of consciousness. But she failed to recover. Soon after, Father had taken ill himself and died not a month later.

I bowed my head further, my tears already rivulets and pools on the uneven grave. We were alone in the world now; orphans, James and I. My brother, older than me by two years, had already returned to the school where they were attempting to educate him and tame his recklessness before attending university.

I felt, rather than heard someone join me. I turned my head; Adèle was there, kneeling on the ground beside me. She must have known I would come here; in her kindness she had not wished me to be alone. I touched her hand and our eyes met. She took me in her arms, enveloping me in her gentle perfumed caress.

'Do not cry, ma chérie,' she said, brushing my tears away, 'believe they are together again in Heaven. You know they could not bear to be apart.'

I nodded slowly. 'Their love was so strong, Papa could do naught else but follow her.'

Adèle stood and helped me onto my feet and we looked over to the ruins of Thornfield. A few remnants of wall still stood, testament to their former glory, though rapidly becoming overwhelmed by Nature. It was now past three o'clock and the ruins were already in evening's shadow, silhouettes in the fading gloom.