

**GREAT ILLUSTRATED CLASSICS**

**JANE EYRE**

**Charlotte Bronte**

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They Made My Life Miserable.

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **My Sad Early Life**

I was an orphan and nobody ever let me forget it. My parents had died when I was just an infant, and my mother's brother, Uncle Reed, took me in to live with his family at their estate, Gateshead. He was kind to me, but when I was three, he died too. His wife, Aunt Reed, and their three children turned against me and made my life miserable.

My cousins, John, Eliza and Georgiana, blamed me for things I didn't do and told lies to their mother about me. When I tried to defend myself to Aunt Reed, she would never believe me and would order me out of her sight. She

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would punish me by not letting anyone talk to me for hours and sometimes even days.

So, I would often go off by myself to read in my own private world, a window seat with heavy drapes that I could wrap around myself and hide in. Here, I would escape... that is, until fourteen-year-old John would decide to look for me. He always managed to find me.

John spent a great deal of time at home rather than at school because, his mama said, he was in poor health. But it was because he ate too much candy and cake, which showed in his pimply face and many chins.

The worst time I can remember is the day I was reading on my window seat and he stormed into the room, shouting, "Come here!"

I obeyed, because I knew I had to. He then spent three minutes sticking his tongue out at me until I thought it would tear off from its roots. Then he suddenly smacked my face with all his strength.



My Own Private World