



## The Professor

*Charlotte Brontë*

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## **The Professor** Charlotte Brontë

The hero of Charlotte Brontë's first novel escapes a dreary clerkship in industrial Yorkshire by taking a job as a teacher in Belgium. There, however, his entanglement with the sensuous but manipulative Zoraide Reuter, complicates his affections for a penniless girl who is both teacher and pupil in Reuter's school. Also included in this edition is *Emma*, Charlotte Brontë's last, unfinished novel. Both works are drawn from the original Clarendon texts.

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## **The Professor Details**

Date : Published May 1999 by North Books (first published 1857)

ISBN : 9781582870953

Author : Charlotte Brontë

Format : Hardcover 269 pages

Genre : Classics, Fiction, Romance, Literature, 19th Century, Historical, Victorian

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## From Reader Review The Professor for online ebook

### Cheryl Kennedy says

This is Charlotte Bronte's first novel. She chose to write in a male voice with his concerns for a livelihood, his freedom to choose a vocation, authority to insist on compensation, and his refusal to accept and believe disrespectful pronouncements from others. His search for the employment that suited his soul continued his meager existence, but his freedom to persist was unlike the females of the time.

It is for these reasons that Bronte chose a male persona for her debut. In 1846 the antithesis was true for women, especially female authors. It was the Bronte Sisters view that women were treated differently from male authors by critics who flattered rather than praised their works. With success as the ultimate goal, Charlotte wrote in a gender that alluded her in life.

Her first outing as an author was about a young man without family financial support. Deaths of parents awarded his older brother the family business. With little education and knowledge of how to decide on a vocation, "he that is low need fear no fall".

But fall he did. The arc of his life is the story of "The Professor".

Recommended for the words, writing style, world view, and struggles different but somehow recognizable today.

"I am no bird; and no net ensnares me: I am a free human being with an independent will."

Charlotte Bronte

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### Ruth says

Entretenido.

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### Oziel Bispo says

William teve uma infância e adolescência conturbada; ficou órfão desde de pequeno, saiu de casa porque brigou com os tios, procurou ajuda de um irmão bruto, frio e agressivo que deu lhe um emprego, mas a convivência de ambos era insuportável, com isso William decide então sair da casa do irmão e recomeçar novamente indo para a Bélgica, tentar a vida como professor de inglês em uma escola para garotas. Nessa escola ele começa a se relacionar e ter amizades com várias pessoas, sendo as duas principais uma diretora, Zoraide Reuter e uma professora, Frances Evan Henri, que ele ajuda com a língua inglesa. É aí que sua vida até então solitária sem sentido começa a mudar...

Como sempre Charlotte Bronte cria personagens marcantes e fortes que refletem o mundo a sua volta e indagam a melhor maneira de se viver de se vencer os problemas cotidianos.

Charlotte Bronte também explora o tema do trabalho, onde só alguns privilegiados conseguem ter sucesso na

carreira, os demais dependem de uma força de vontade extraordinária para ter pelo menos um trabalho digno.

Charlotte Bronte não poderia estrear de maneira Mais brilhante como escritora , o livro é muito bom!!

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### **Skylar Burris says**

What if Jane Eyre had been written from the point of view of Rochester? Would he have seemed more manipulative, more self-centered? Would readers have allowed themselves to be swept away by Jane's passion, and to desire its fruition? In The Professor, Charlotte Bronte narrates the tale from the viewpoint of the male protagonist, and I must confess to finding him frequently unsympathetic. Without seeing this character from the eyes of his affection's object, it is difficult to appreciate him. He too often comes off sounding pious and condescending. There are moments when the narrator acknowledges his vulnerabilities, but this is usually in order to display his virtue in resisting temptation.

Like Jane Eyre, the professor insists on following the stern voice of conscience rather than the warm pull of passion, and the moral of both books is the same: flee temptation. The Professor, however, is more obviously evenagelical than Bronte's later work, and these scenes of moral struggle and victory appear more strained, more self-satisfied than in Jane Eyre. The difference may simply be one of narration; perhaps I am more inclined to accept didacticism from a female narrator than from a male, authoritarian voice. The professor's strength is less impressive, perhaps, because he is less vulnerable in 19th century society than a woman would be. The risks he takes for his values are smaller than the risks Jane Eyre assumes. More importantly, his resistance of temptation sometimes smacks more of pride than of virtue. He seems alternately dominering and liberal; indeed, the book as a whole contains a rather odd mixture of feminism and male authoritarianism.

Despite my inability to fully relate to and admire the protagonist, and despite the annoyance of repeated anti-Catholic thrusts, I found this book to be interesting. It does have many moments of penetrating insight, couched in almost poetic language. I was impressed by the way Bronte weaved scripture and literary allusion so constantly into her work. And the book is well enough written to keep me curious of the outcome, even if I do not precisely adore the narrator. The other primary character, Frances, appears at first docile and then suddenly seems transformed into a vocal feminist. She appears to feel her inferiority and then to assert her perogative. We do not get to know her as we know Jane Eyre, because we can only see her through the eyes of the professor, and his narration seems, at times, slightly unreliable. I do not know that Bronte intended it to be; but as a reader, I hesitate to accept fully the narrator's pronouncement on all matters.

The Professor, Bronte's first novel, was never published in her own lifetime. But it is, in fact, more concise and better structured than Jane Eyre. Nevertheless, the book is simply not as likeable as Bronte's later classic. It is an enjoyable and comparatively easy read, but it does not make as profound an impression on the mind. Indeed, there is a sort of feeling of incompleteness to the tale. As a reader, I got the impression that the narrator was, at the close of the novel, painting a happy picture of marital harmony, but underneath this seemed to course tiny hints of something darker. That something darker may have been a figment of my imagination, or it may have been an undeveloped theme. One of the most interesting characters in the book, however, is certainly undeveloped. Hundsen makes an appearance towards the beginning of the novel, disappearing from the tale for many chapters, before returning to capture the reader's interest once again. He is sometimes likeable, at others off-putting, depending on the lens of the narrator, and he seems to demand a book unto himself. This, however, we do not receive, and we are left instead with the story of the professor.

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## Joseph says

My first Charlotte Bronte book and again I wonder how I could have missed this book or ignored this author for so long. Although Anne is still my favorite in the early part of my reading, Charlotte's *The Professor* follows the same form of story telling. The major characters are well developed and likable or unlikable as the case maybe. Minor characters are not developed, such as William's friend Charles.

William is the main character, an Englishman with an education who rejecting going into the clergy to become a trades man. William, an orphan, is raised by close family and we discover he has a very unlikable brother. Persuaded by Hunsden to do something better with his life than be his brother's clerk, William leaves for Belgium.

The majority of the story takes places in Belgium and centers around William and his job as a professor, which simply means teacher. The story does contain more than a few lines of French, so a dictionary may be handy for non-French speakers. Luckily, no Flemish is spoken.

It is an enjoyable story even though it is not considered Charlotte's better works. She seems to stay away from many of the social themes that Anne wrote into her stories. Like other Victorian novels I have read, the book leaves you with a good and satisfying feeling All in all a very likable story.

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## Paul says

Very early effort which reads like a practice run for later novels like *Villette* and *Jane Eyre* (which reminds me, I must read *Villette* again). It is an engaging first person narrative in which William Crimsworth describes his young adulthood and his attempts to earn his living.

We learn about his grim family and Bronte uses her experience teaching in Brussels when Crimsworth moves there to teach. Most of the novel revolves around Brussels and the world of the small teaching establishments. The novel doesn't move at any great pace and we see Crimsworth through romance, dense pupils, and difficult employers to eventual independence, marriage and his own school. The last chapter packs a great deal into a short space of time and it feels like a sketch for extending the novel by another couple of hundred pages.

There are some interesting themes in the novel. Bronte clearly has issues with Catholics and Belgian youth. However, her view of an ideal marriage is noteworthy. When Crimsworth asks Frances Evans Henri to marry him, she is very clear that she will only marry him if she can be independent of him, earning her own money. Crimsworth readily agrees and keeps to the agreement (unlike many men of the time I suspect). This was quite radical for the time.

The ideas are roughly sketched and developed in later novels. It is also a bit reminiscent of the Victorian self help books; hard work and self-reliance win out over the bonds of family and community. It is an easy, pleasant enough read which I enjoyed for what it was; an early effort.

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## **Piyangie says**

The Professor is Charlotte Bronte's first written novel though not published till after her death. To me, it is ironical for I found a more interesting story here than in Jane Eyer.

The Professor tells the story of William Crimsworth whose circumstances turned him to a teacher and who with courage, perseverance and self control and by relying in his education, skills and intelligence lifts him up from poverty and dependency. Simultaneously it is also a sweet love story. Though this is a short novel, the reader can see Victorian themes of love, jealousy, envy, flirtation, ambition, tyranny, honesty, morality are all artfully included. It can be said that this book is almost a model Victorian Novel.

Written in Bronte's preferred first person narrative, William tells his story as plainly and unreservedly as possible. The narrative is strong, powerful and passionate; yet also controlled. And interestingly I found this writing style to suit the male voice very well. Virginia Woolf, in a Room of One's Own says that Charlotte Bronte writes in anger. There is some truth to Virginia's remark. Charlotte Bronte vents out her frustration, dissatisfaction, the social injustice that is caused by class and gender differences quite strongly in her writing. And while it might not suit to a Victorian female voice, it suits well a Victorian male when he is the narrative and the protagonist.

Imbued with beautifully written prose, precision in structure, smooth flow, the powerful and controlled narrative and the different yet interesting characters, the story was quite engaging. I found all aspects in the novel - writing, characters and the story line to be in perfect harmony. This would have easily been a five star rating to me had not Bronte willfully ventured in to a long and tedious final chapter to describe the marital bliss and the happy ending which kind of destroyed the controlled manner in which the story was unfolded and affected the perfect balance which was kept up until that point.

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## **J.G. Keely says**

This book starts off promisingly enough, but as the character grows less sympathetic and the plot draws out predictably, much of the charm is lost. Perhaps it was not unexpected that I would be drawn into the plight of a young, educated man thrust out alone into the world with no prospects, forced to work pointless jobs for frustratingly inept employers for subsistence. It mirrors not only my experiences, but that of most of my generation.

Unfortunately, our narrator becomes a rather stuck-up prig as the text goes on, which slowly killed off my sympathy. It wasn't merely that he conducted himself with pride and intelligence; it was his condescension and self-assuredness that soured the taste. He read into every word and expression, giving the reader an absurd amount of subtext about glances or pauses. He also professed that his certainty in psychology allowed him to manipulate others, by which he meant snide, callous remarks, a cold shoulder, and a childish inability to keep himself in check.

It was like people who write in their dating profile: "I'm interested in psychology, because I have always been really good at reading people" despite the fact that they are not good enough at psychology to recognize that this makes them sound naive and pretentious. So, there certainly was a comical aspect to his arrogant

ineptitude, but conceited prigs rarely make for very good romantic interests.

Sure, Austen did it with Darcy, but she knew that the secret was to make his prickly exterior an embittered defense to the false, superficial world around him and give him a good heart despite it all. It's not that The Professor was a bad man, merely that he wasn't interesting enough to overcome his defects.

Bronte's messages were also a bit underwhelming. I found delight in the unintentional humor of her mistrust of Continental ways and those devilish Papists in particular, but this was hardly a mark in her favor. Likewise, the feminist aspects were a bit confused. One female character is strong, but only inasmuch as she is a heartless manipulator. The main love interest is also strong, occasionally moving to defend herself and her ideas, but she is mainly characterized as being our protagonist's devoted subservient--she never argues with *him*, of course.

Now some of this I must chalk up to the narrator's unreliability. The case that the first woman is heartless and the second woman subservient are things we mostly have to take his word for. Given the circumstances as they are given, it seems more like he makes groundless assumptions, seeing the world in stark black and white and revolving around him.

He also meets a friend on the way, a man who is equally as stuck up and sure of himself, and throughout their dialogues they seem constantly to sneer superiority at one another's faults. That neither is capable of recognizing in himself what he laments in authors.

If tackled with a more satirical style, this could have been a very effective book, lampooning a world of naive, short-sighted people lost in ungrounded assumptions and misunderstandings. As it was, Bronte kept the sentimental, romantic heart of the book. Since we could not take the characters entirely lightly, we had to take them somewhat seriously, which resulted in a story of dumb, somewhat dull characters living out a standard romance plot.

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### **Nishat says**

*In the midst of life, we are in death.*

Charlotte Brontë died untimely, three weeks before her 39th birthday. The Professor, the first novel Charlotte had written, was published posthumously in 1857.

*“A man is master of himself to a certain point, but not beyond it.”*

Orphaned in infancy, William Crimsworth had been receiving meager support from his deceased mother's aristocratic brothers. Upon his graduation from Eton, William parts away, in contempt for his abhorrent uncles and seeks employment from his tyrannical brother. Enduring harsh blows of fate, William eventually departs for Brussels and accepts teaching as a career as Charlotte once did in her life. There he meets his future wife, Frances Henri and together they strive to render meaning to their shared lives.

The professor, despite repeated efforts of the author, is a poorly conceived, first attempt of a young novelist at telling a story from an unpolished, under developed male perspective. While the gender issues posed by this work allure the readers, Charlotte's characters are nevertheless unnatural both in speech and act. However Charlotte succeeds to an extent in understanding gender relations and portraying convincingly male

dominance and sexual suppression..

*"That to begin with; let respect be the foundation, affection the first floor, love the superstructure"*

While Charlotte's attempt at voicing an exemplary, conscientious man had been unsuccessful, she triumphed at drawing compelling, spirited female characters. The professor, not necessarily exhibiting the best of Charlotte Brontë, may serve as an introduction to Victorian literature.

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### **Dolors says**

The first novel by Charlotte Brontë, though not published until her death. It has been reviewed as a simple, unimaginative portrait of an English teacher's life in Brussels, an early attempt to what her best known novel *Villette* would later become.

I don't agree.

This work shines in itself, it's the only story in which Charlotte dares to talk through a man's voice. She talks about responsibility, about earning your own success through effort and sacrifice, to defy the strict clichés and the hypocrisy of the English Society and to stand up to your ideals.

In this novel, William Crimsworth can be seen as a mere strict teacher or as a revolutionary who chooses her wife-to-be because of her intellect and not because of her looks or her position. And later, he lets her grow professionally to work together as good companions, elbow by elbow, always treating her like an equal.

I loved the message the book tries to convey, that work, perseverance and fair values lead you to a happy outcome. As worthy as any other of Charlotte's works, even more so, as I think this book talks more about the writer's own view of life than any other of her novels.

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### **Dannii Elle says**

Actual rating 3.5/5 stars.

It's no *Wuthering Heights*, *Jane Eyre*, or *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, but is an enjoyable enough read and full of that Bronte knack for providing an in-depth societal examination without ever seeming to actually do so.

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### **Henry Avila says**

Mr. William Crimsworth, newly graduated from exclusive Eton College, writes a letter to his one and only friend Charles, about his adventures since both left the school ( Charles never receives it, having departed for parts unknown). William late mother was an aristocrat, but having married "beneath her," had been shunned by her family, something common in the unforgiving, mid 19th century England. His father was a wealthy businessman until going bankrupt, also deceased. What to do? William, has an older brother by ten years, Edward, a cold tyrant, but rich mill owner, he has little seen. Rejecting an offer from Lord Tynedale, and the Honorable John Seacombe, his maternal uncles, to become a man of the cloth, a rector in a church controlled by Seacombe and even marry one of his six unappealing daughters , young Crimsworth, does not like his cousins, they in turn cut loose the ungrateful boy, no longer supporting him. So the reluctant, distant Edward, gives him a job as a low paying clerk, in northern England, a dirty, polluted, ugly town, when you can see it,

through the thick, noxious fumes. Translating foreign language business letters, the jealous brother hates the better educated William, shows no love, the rich man, has little contact with the poor one, kept from Crimsworth Hall...

So proper etiquette must be maintained, between the two ... The letter ends but life continues, disaster, William is dismissed by his enraged brother, when an acquaintance, Mr. Hunsden, gossips about the ill treatment receives by the younger Mr. Crimsworth. To make amends Mr. Hunsden ( his nefarious plan successful), tells William to travel to Brussels, Belgium, seek better employment and gives him a letter of introduction. Since no other prospects are on the horizon, and always wanting to see the continent, he complies, receives an offer as an English teacher, from the seemingly affable, Monsieur Francois Pelet, a Frenchman who owns a boys school, in the Belgium capital, does well, and later teaches a class, next door at the girls school of charming, older, Mademoiselle Zoraider Reuter, a native of the country. But conflict appears, a love triangle, William and M.Pelet, are enamored of the fetching Mademoiselle Reuter, though not beautiful, neither is the professor, she does sparkle, during their romantic walks, in her institutes gardens, and enjoys being wanted by the suitors, playing a fun game of causing the men, pain...still the emotions are complicated more, when another enters, Frances Henri, a Swiss seamstress, living with her old aunt, employed by Mademoiselle Reuter, becomes a pupil in William's English class, the not well educated girl, somehow is brilliant, the best of his students, impossible... the mystery is solved, she had a English mother. The professor, starts to like the young, shy lady, and Zoraider, doesn't like this, she is not happy at all. And the school mistress can do much harm... The perplexing Mr. Hunsden arrives in town, curious to discover what his protege, has been up to, and the stories, revealed...they have not been dull. The inexperienced in life, William, learns ( even teachers must too), the mendacity of people ...The great writer Charlotte Bronte's first novel but not published ( you can see why) until she was no more, interesting view of her beginning, the talent is there... in some pages, but it just needed more polish and experience to blossom .

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### **Luís C. says**

It is a very nice novel who genuinely devours. I found again the pleasure of reading a book featuring young men up the sleeves facing adversity: I can not prevent me from read it something personal and soak up their energy and their hope. Brontë is probably more projected in his female heroine.

We finally found this vision of the boarding school as both a closed place subject to the tyranny of its leader and as an idyllic place.

### **3 & 1/2 Stars.**

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### **Barry Pierce says**

Charlotte's first attempt at a novel comes across as... well... an attempt. It can be clearly seen that elements from this novel reappear in both *Jane Eyre* and *Villette*. However this novel pretty much lacks everything that made both of those novels such classics. It's a basic 19th-century romance novel with Charlotte this time writing from a male POV. Even though this is the second shortest Brontë novel (Agnes Grey is the shortest) it still felt vastly overlong. While bits of humour seep in now and again, leaving you with a faint smile, they are not enough to save this somewhat boring misstep. On the plus side however, this is a fairly easy read and

won't trouble anyone who isn't familiar with Victorian literature. Reading it though will explain to you why this wasn't published in Charlotte's lifetime.

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## **K. says**

3.5 stars.

While this is the last of Bronte's novels to be published, it's the first one that she wrote, and it shows. There are hints in the writing of the wonderfulness to come in Jane Eyre, and there are plenty of typical Bronte touches (she really did love her phrenology, didn't she??) in the writing.

Really, I think the biggest problem with this is that it's really short. Like, 200 pages kind of short. And the first 50-ish pages is basically "MY LIFE IS SHIT, OKAY?". Once William gets to Belgium, we're treated to a hell of a lot of bizarrely detailed descriptions of how gross his female students are. They're either dressed like slobs or they're unattractive or they're conniving and not particularly bright. So OBVIOUSLY the one student that he's all "Huh. She's not so bad" about is the one that he ends up spending time with.

Frankly, for me? Zoraide and her manipulative nature were by far the most compelling part of this book, even though I ultimately enjoyed the relationship that develops between William and Frances.

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## **Kelly says**

I have always found Charlotte Bronte's anger to be subversive. The rage that drives the machine, her understanding of the particular being so needlepoint sharp that it becomes universal.

But she hasn't got it yet. Not here. It's all the same material, the same sentiments we're used to, but she is at once wearing too many masks to be truthful and speaking with the memory of slights too raw for them to be useful. She can't quite name and point to the root of her anger yet- whether that's because her publisher made her pull her punches (as is suggested in the forward) or because she isn't there yet as a writer, I don't know. But this felt like the thinly veiled diary of a particularly smart teenager who is still reliving her anger rather than being able to reflect on it and use it.

I found her use of a male mask to be particularly debilitating here. Her young professor, William, is not generally believable as a man in any way. It is, for instance, clear to me that she has not much idea of how men interact with each other (which of course is reflective of her own experience of the world). And beyond him, most of the rest of the cast are mere shadows of what's to come, in Jane and Lucy. I enjoyed Hunsden, deus-ex-smug-jackass that he was. It was also an interesting commentary that Bronte tried to resist using him that way, but couldn't do so and then deny the reality of what would have happened to William without him or someone equally unlikely coming along. Frances really came into her own with a few speeches just at the end that were glimmers of Lucy, though it had to peek out from behind lines like "it pleased her to make me the master in all things," after describing in detail her competence and utter lack of need for the protagonist to be any such thing. (PS on this theme though the "you're the master" stuff between them that's repeated just a littttlllee too much and goes just a littttleee too far for me not to read some kink into it, especially given the letters we \*know\* she wrote to that teacher she had a crush on. Don't @ me with your charges of anachronisms.)

I think we also have to mention that you'll need to endure a good deal of racist judgment of various ethnicities present during the character's stay in Brussels, with particular emphasis on the "Popish morals" of any character who happens to be Catholic (complete, I swear to God, with a line along the lines of "I'm the last person to be a religious bigot, but...."). I think it is not an accident that the woman our protagonist gets together with is ultimately Protestant and half-English. It's not just once, either. When I saw her start to describe new characters I'd sometimes flip a few pages ahead to when I thought she might have done with her thoughts one the national character of the Flemish. (The Flemish come in for the most insults by far, for some reason.) There's some attempt to indicate opposition to these views by both Frances and Hundsen late in the novel, so it may not be entirely editorial position, but it was rather too little, too late to fully convince me. While of course we know time and place, these sections made me think less of the young Charlotte. I don't remember any of this in *Jane Eyre* or *Villette* (other than the standard shorthand of "French lady" for "questionable morals" that is eyerollingly common for this period of Brit lit.)

The writing is earnest, the plot is just almost charmingly straightforward, it's all just... nice but not there yet. And I think Charlotte herself would have agreed. She's a fantastic example of the idea that writers often really only tell one story. They just get better at it.

Unless you are a completionist, hie thee to *Villette* and don't look back. You'll thank me later.

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### **La Petite Américaine says**

Every time I finish a Charlotte Bronte novel, my heart pounds and my mind is disoriented. After reaching the end of her stories, closing her pages for the last time, and remembering the long passages written out in long-hand, it's all like slowly surfacing from the depths of another world, and you're back home in reality, not quite sure you want to be there.

Although it doesn't have the exquisite tragedy of *Villette* or the kick-ass karate-chop combos of romance, ghosts, crazy ladies in the attic, religious nut-jobs, and true love found in *Jane Eyre*, *The Professor* is still one hell of a novel.

Its themes are common to Bronte's novels: Catholic wickedness (aka, "Romish wizardcraft" in this book -- HAHAHA!), relationships among the different social classes, social-restraint, and independence. Illustrating these themes are our upright, plain, poor, and virtuous narrator and his love interest, who are contrasted by the so-goddamn-evil-i-love-her Zoraide Reuter and her equally two-faced and back stabbing boyfriend, M. Pelet.

In many ways inferior to *Jane Eyre*, and in many other ways a "rough draft" of *Villette*, this novel is probably not the author's best. But I loved it. Why? Because Charlotte Brtome wrote it.

Bronte famously wrote that Jane Austen's writing was like "a carefully fenced, highly cultivated garden, with neat borders and delicate flowers: but no glance of a bright, vivid physiognomy, no open country, no fresh air, no blue hill, no bonny beck ... rather, comprehensive, measured, balanced, certainly "highly cultivated."'"

What is Bronte then? Her writing is wild, like weeds, growing out of control and wrapping around you eyes, heart, and mind, but she planted those weeds and cultivated them just as carefully as Austen cultivated her garden -- but with more skill. Bronte gets you in a snare from which you cannot break free. Her words, her writing, her storytelling are all overpowering in their savageness. When you try to release yourself (it's called

putting the book down) you'll find your heart beating from the rapid ride that she has taken you on ... and you want to jump right back in.

Seriously, I love this woman. Favorite writer EVER!!

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### **Michelle Curie says**

***"That to begin with; let respect be the foundation, affection the first floor, love the superstructure."***

I'm going to start this off saying that *Jane Eyre* is one of my favorite novels, and I was looking forward to reading more of Charlotte Brontë's work. It only took me a few pages to feel the comfort of her beautiful wordings and elaborate descriptions and the familiarity that came with indulging in it. It only took a few more pages, however, for that effect to wear off, and the issues I had with the plot took over my feelings towards this book.

*The Professor* is the author's debut novel, which was rejected repeatedly and only published two years after her death. Upon its first released, it received mainly unfavorable feedback and only much later gained approval and the status of a *classic*. We follow Williams Crimsworth, an English teacher who teaches at an all-girls' school in Brussels, where he falls in love with one of his pupils.

***"I sought her eye, desirous to read there the intelligence which I could not discern in her face or hear in her conversation; it was merry, rather small; by turns I saw vivacity, vanity, coquetry, look out through its irid, but I watched in vain for a glimpse of soul."***

The premise of this sounded way more interesting than the plot turned out to be - the characters never felt quite intricate enough to evoke any emotion in me and the twists and developments too annoying and clumsily played out to build up tension. In that respect, this is a proper debut novel and nothing I would recommend to anyone who isn't interested about Brontë's evolution as a writer.

For those who are though, *The Professor* gives an interesting glimpse into Charlotte Brontë's personal life. She, just like the protagonist in this, was a teacher of English at a Brussels boarding school. The school was run by Constantin Héger (and his wife), for whom she is suspected to having developed feelings.

I don't regret reading *The Professor* and even though I had to drag myself through it, it hasn't diminished my love for Charlotte's Brontë and I am still looking forward reading the of her work.

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### **Bookdragon Sean says**

I think the best way of approaching this book is to look at is a learning curve for the author. The prose in *Jane Eyre* is sophisticated and eloquent; it is developed and persuasive: it is powerful, and a points simply beautiful. Charlotte's writing in this just isn't at the same level.

Perhaps it is because she writes from the perspective of male, a rather bland one at that. The point is there is

little point to this book. *Jane Eyre* is rich in passion and argument. Charlotte was trying to make a point; she was trying to show her readership the corruptness of society and the failing of the governess role; she was trying to show how worthy women are and how the misogyny of the mid-nineteenth century chained up their faculties, and left them to rot in intellectual depravity. With the Professor we have a mundane little romance plot and that really is all.

There are no fiery exchanges of willpower and a mutual understanding of equal partnership on the basis of individuality. There is just simple, dry, love in all its ordinariness. And I don't care for it. Where is the passion? Where is the soul's persecution? Where is the mental haunting, the insane power of finding such a person you can be with on such a level? The story is weak, the writing is weak: the book is weak. This is best considered as an early attempt of writing by someone who would one day learn to write like a true artist.

It's only worth a read if you wish to track the author's literary progress.

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### **April (Aprilius Maximus) says**

DNF at 20%. The first 20% that I read didn't hold my attention and I'd rather read something that I know I'll enjoy rather than this which I already know won't get more than 3 stars from me, ya feel me?

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