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Charlotte Brontë: A Fiery Heart

Claire Harman



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Charlotte Brontë: A Fiery Heart Claire Harman On the two hundredth anniversary of her birth, a landmark biography transforms Charlotte Brontë from a tragic figure into a modern heroine.

Charlotte Brontë famously lived her entire life in an isolated parsonage on a remote English moor with a demanding father and siblings whose astonishing childhood creativity was a closely held secret. The genius of Claire Harman's biography is that it transcends these melancholy facts to reveal a woman for whom duty and piety gave way to quiet rebellion and fierce ambition.

Drawing on letters unavailable to previous biographers, Harman depicts Charlotte's inner life with absorbing, almost novelistic intensity. She seizes upon a moment in Charlotte's adolescence that ignited her determination to reject poverty and obscurity: While working at a girls' school in Brussels, Charlotte fell in love with her married professor, Constantin Heger, a man who treated her as "nothing special to him at all." She channeled her torment into her first attempts at a novel and resolved to bring it to the world's attention.

Charlotte helped power her sisters' work to publication, too. But Emily's *Wuthering Heights* was eclipsed by *Jane Eyre*, which set London abuzz with speculation: Who was this fiery author demanding love and justice for her plain and insignificant heroine? Charlotte Brontë's blazingly intelligent women brimming with hidden passions would transform English literature. And she savored her literary success even as a heartrending series of personal losses followed.

Charlotte Brontë is a groundbreaking view of the beloved writer as a young woman ahead of her time. Shaped by Charlotte's lifelong struggle to claim love and art for herself, Harman's richly insightful biography offers readers many of the pleasures of Brontë's own work.

From the Hardcover edition.

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