

Domestic Novel

The Domestic Novel depicts the trials and tribulations of a character, usually a young woman, who is abandoned or falls on hard times in some way and has to win her own way in the world. In doing so she becomes calmer, wiser and more independent and is able to provide for and look after herself. By the end of the novel she is rewarded for this development by finding the security, usually in the form of marriage, which she was denied as a child. One key theme is that by following your heart things will turn out for the best.

Reader, I married him. A quiet wedding we had: he and I, the parson and clerk, were alone present. When we got back from church, I went into the kitchen of the manor-house, where Mary was cooking the dinner and John cleaning the knives, and I said—

Comment [K1]: The symbol of security and ultimate success for most female characters is marriage

Comment [K2]: The lack of ostentation and celebration shows that Jane is a serious down to earth girl who has learnt not to be concerned with the superficial frivolity of wedding dresses, fancy cakes and the like

Comment [K3]: The understatement of this important event further enhances the reader's impression of Jane as down to earth. There is no sense of bragging or self indulgence

Comment [K4]: The disdainful tone in which this is said further attacks the accepted depiction of women as excitable gossip mongers who go crazy over emotional events such as weddings. Seriousness and calmness are the lessons Jane has learnt throughout the novel

"Mary, I have been married to Mr. Rochester this morning." The housekeeper and her husband were both of that decent phlegmatic order of people, to whom one may at any time safely communicate a remarkable piece of news without incurring the danger of having one's ears pierced by some shrill ejaculation, and subsequently stunned by a torrent of wordy wonderment. Mary did look up, and she did stare at me: the ladle with which she was basting a pair of chickens roasting at the fire, did for some three minutes hang suspended in air; and for the same space of time John's knives also had rest from the polishing process: but Mary, bending again over the roast, said only—

"Have you, Miss? Well, for sure!"

Comment [K5]: Mary's calm response continues the sense of serious down-to-earthness

A short time after she pursued—"I seed you go out with the master, but I didn't know you were gone to church to be wed;" and she basted away. John, when I turned to him, was grinning from ear to ear.

Comment [K6]: As does the calm continuation of her actions. Although the three minute delay does make the importance of this announcement clear

"I telled Mary how it would be," he said: "I knew what Mr. Edward" (John was an old servant, and had known his master when he was the cadet of the house, therefore, he often gave him his Christian name)—"I knew what Mr. Edward would do; and I was certain he would not wait long neither: and he's done right, for aught I know. I wish you joy, Miss!" and he politely pulled his forelock.

Comment [K7]: After many obstacles – for both of the married characters – they have finally managed to get together. Jane's decision to follow her heart and leave Edward after their initial engagement was broken off when she discovered he was already married has been rewarded by eventual marriage and happiness

"Thank you, John. Mr. Rochester told me to give you and Mary this." I put into his hand a five-pound note. Without waiting to hear more, I left the kitchen. In passing the door of that sanctum some time after, I caught the words—

Comment [K8]: Jane's positive qualities are emphasised by the fact that she does not wait around to be thanked as if she appreciates the servants' embarrassment at receiving such a big tip

"She'll happen do better for him nor ony o't' grand ladies." And again, "If she ben't one o' th' handsomest, she's noan faal and varry good-natured; and i' his een she's fair beautiful, onybody may see that."

Comment [K9]: Clearly reinforcing the popular moral that looks are not everything

I wrote to Moor House and to Cambridge immediately, to say what I had done: fully explaining also why I had thus acted. Diana and Mary approved the step unreservedly. Diana announced that she would just give me time to get over the honeymoon, and then she would come and see me.

"She had better not wait till then, Jane," said Mr. Rochester, when I read her letter to him; "if she does, she will be too late, for our honeymoon will shine our life long: its beams will only fade over your grave or mine."

Comment [K10]: A repulsively cheesy ending which once again reinforces that the characters trials and tribulations will be compensated for by their happy and lasting marriage. The ultimate goal to which all good girls (and successful men) must aspire.

Taken from 'Jane Eyre' by Charlotte Bronte