



The Green Dwarf: A Tale of the Perfect Tense

Charlotte Brontë, Libby Purves (Foreword)

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Witty and engrossing, this early work displays the precocious intelligence, lively imagination, and flair for storytelling that Charlotte Brontë brought to perfection in her later fiction. Lady Emily Charlesworth is in love with Leslie, a struggling artist. Lord Percy, a fierce, arrogant aristocrat, will do anything to lay his hands on Leslie's chosen bride. As war breaks out between Verdopolis—Brontë's imaginary political state—and Senegal, the lovers do battle for control of Emily's heart. With its exotic melange of political intrigue, amorous subterfuge, and Gothic scenery, *The Green Dwarf* reveals the dynamic and experimental nature of Brontë's "long apprenticeship in writing." Charlotte Brontë is best remembered for her perennially popular novel *Jane Eyre*.

The Green Dwarf: A Tale of the Perfect Tense Details

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From Reader Review The Green Dwarf: A Tale of the Perfect Tense for online ebook

G. Lawrence says

Dreadful. Thought I was reading a parody for a while, like Northanger Abbey, but no... Overblown characters who all suffer from 1D portrayal, and a rambling, boring prose. Bronte wrote this when she was 17, and I have to wonder if she intended it to be published. If not, I feel sorry for her poor body, restlessly tumbling about in her grave. What is interesting is that amongst the cross you can discern shafts of gold. The beginning of her astounding talent is in here, but it's buried deep. That was the only interesting bit for me. I struggled through this book, and was thankful it was short.

Allie Riley says

An enjoyable curiosity, but the bonkers plot and occasional structure errors were sufficient to make me want it over as soon as possible. Impressive for a seventeen year-old, and interesting to read an early Bronte, but not, I don't think, a classic.

Phil Syphe says

I tend to find that in Charlotte Brontë's juvenilia everything and everyone is over described. The narrative pace is very slow as a result. I did find certain sections of "The Green Dwarf" engaging, and wouldn't state that I disliked the tale, but for the most part I found it too rambling.

But it's hardly fair to criticize a work of this nature, considering the author was not writing for the public, nor had she been taught how to improve her writing style at this stage of her life.

At the height of her success Charlotte Brontë would doubtless never have dreamed of "The Green Dwarf" being published. Here, aged 17, the genius she would become was very much waiting in the wings.

If you're a Brontë fan wanting to read everything the famous sisters ever wrote, check this out with no high expectations.

Linda Fallows says

Terrible!

Phil Vivian says

An interesting, at times enjoyable insight into a developing novelist's juvenilia.

Gina says

I enjoyed *The Green Dwarf*, it had an air of mystery about it and slight overtones of a De Maurier novel. It took me a while to get into, mainly because I have not read any Charlotte Bronte for a while and had forgotten how descriptive the chapters were, it was also slightly confusing at the start, because it was a story within another story, but once the main tale started, it made a lot more sense.

Kate says

I really liked this story. It has a fantasy medieval vibe at the start, but that changes to a Napoleonic feel. Charlotte Bronte creates a fantastic, vivid, quirky world, showing the beginnings of some interesting characters. The writing style is relatively pretentious, but it isn't out of place for the type of story Bronte has written. It is very readable. I thought it was a good little read.

Kirsty says

I was under the impression that I had read all of the wonderful Charlotte Bronte's work before spotting a copy of *The Green Dwarf* in the library. Bronte began the novella when she was just seventeen years old, thirteen years before the publication of *Jane Eyre*; despite this, it is measured and wise throughout, with a well structured plot, and wonderful descriptions. I began it immediately, and was presented with rather a fantastical, but fascinating, story. Whilst not as accomplished as *Tales of Angria* I felt, *The Green Dwarf*, still has a lot of merit, and any readers of juvenilia or Bronte's adult fiction will surely find it an interesting and memorable melodramatic tale.

Janille N G says

~ The End.

I have now finished reading every work by Charlotte Brontë that I can get my hands on. Her novels have been my old companions for years, her poetry took me no time to delve into at all, and now I have come to the end of my study of her juvenilia, the short stories and novellas she wrote in her teenage years. I've recently written detailed reviews of *The Secret*, *The Spell* and *The Foundling*, and today I'll be documenting my thoughts on *The Green Dwarf*, written down as I was in the process of reading.

I have to say, I had higher hopes for *The Green Dwarf*, probably because it's green. I really hoped that it would be my favourite of the four juvenile works I own, but unfortunately, it wasn't. I found that there were too many loose threads, too many moments of seemingly random narration that I couldn't make sense of. The plot jumps around a lot, and although everything is pretty clearly connected at the end, the process of reading isn't all that smooth because of the various stories that don't seem totally related initially. But, let's not forget that this is a novella by Charlotte Brontë, and so I loved it even if it wasn't my absolute favourite. The style is so totally Charlotte that I enjoyed the cadence of the sentences, and I appreciate that Charlotte puts such intricate detail into each of her characters. The novella tries to accomplish a lot, and it delivers a few surprises in the end, so overall, I did enjoy it. I just preferred her other novellas and stories to

this one.

Here are my notes, written while reading The Green Dwarf:

- Charles Wellesley is this story's narrator too (along with The Spell) = he has been sick and this explains why he has not written in awhile = mirrors CB's life because she was away at Roe Head School.
- a random and slow start = what does Charles' day have to do with the story the synopsis describes?
- reference to feud between Charles and Captain Tree (narrator of The Foundling) = CB writes as two enemies, depending on her mood I suppose.
- Marquis of Douro (Arthur, Charles' brother = also Zamorna) is featured! = antipathy between the two brothers.
- "Of course, Bud, according to the universal fashion of storytellers, refused at first..." = Wellesley is planning to tell story told to him by Bud, not "in the original form of words...but strictly preserving the sense and facts." = some artistic license to the narrator.
- conversation between Bud and Gifford is so random! I have no idea what it has to do with the story in the synopsis!
- Lady Emily Charlesworth has enormous potential and mental faculties BUT, as a woman, she is doomed to be married and focus on pretty, feminine accomplishments. "...that's the way of all women. They think of nothing but being married, while learning is as dust in the balance."
- anecdote about Napoleon is VERY random and out of place! So far, the structure and trajectory of this story confuses me immensely!
- Lady Emily = "Her form was exquisitely elegant, though not above the middle size..." = another small but beautiful woman.
- episode of boy selling his soul to the devil is very random (if that's even what's happening) and seems unnecessary = lots of moments in the story do not "fit" together!
- Lady Emily's lineage is confusing and inconsistent = is Lord Charlesworth her only relative or is Bravely her uncle, as CB indicates in the passage about the African Olympic Games?!
- S'death visiting Colonel Percy = another random, loose thread to the story.
- "Rogue – Percy, I mean..." = another narrator reveals a character's true identity = is Colonel Percy none other than Alexander Rogue (Marquis of Douro/Zamorna's enemy from The Foundling)?
- detailing of history of Ashantee tribes and prince Quashie is evidence of Charlotte's admirable commitment to creating vast backgrounds for each of her characters – and keeping them all straight! However, this divergence from the main plot seems very random and it is hard to tell where in chronology it belongs!
- "It may now be as well to connect the broken thread of my rambling narrative before I proceed further."
- details of Duke of Wellington's war with Ashantees seem so out of place in this "love story" = they could form a different work altogether!
- the threads tie up rather conveniently and too quickly...BUT then CB has some surprises in store!

[SPOILERS!] = Colonel Percy is in fact Zamorna's enemy Alexander Rogue! = and Andrew (main character's servant, the green dwarf) is Captain Tree (Charles Wellesley's enemy and the narrator of The Foundling).

To sum up my thoughts on the story, I have to say that the surprises at the end were worth the journey. It's a small text, amounting to just over 100 pages, and so it is definitely a fun and light ride that reveals much of Charlotte's experimentation and growth as a writer.

My final comment on Charlotte Brontë's juvenilia will be to rank the stories in order of my preference...

- 4) The Green Dwarf
- 3) The Foundling
- 2) The Secret
- 1) The Spell

I would definitely recommend any and all of these texts to true fans of Miss Brontë! It is fascinating to get into the mind of the young Charlotte, and it develops an intimacy between the reader and this formidable Victorian author that is valuable beyond words. ~

More reviews can be found on my literary blog!
[https://worldofmygreenheart.wordpress...](https://worldofmygreenheart.wordpress.com/)

Jennifer says

Wow, is this an over the top romance. It is VERY much like the pulp fiction of the 18th century. It reminded me the most strongly of *Love in a Maze*. There are cold-hearted villains and lovely, pure maidens and all the things you expect from a stock romance. It's just great juvenilia from C. Bronte. Well worth the time.

Nicola F (Bronte Babe Blog) says

Set in Verdopolis, the story concerns the beautiful Lady Emily and the battle for her heart and hand. Raised by her uncle, the Marquis of Charlesworth, he desires to find his niece the perfect suitor, and selects Colonel the Honourable Alexander Augustus Percy, however, Lady Emily is in love with a poor artist named Leslie. Nothing is ever simple in the Brontë juvenilia, and this tale is no exception. Percy will do anything to get his bride, however when war breaks out both Percy and Leslie are called upon to help to defend Verdopolis from the native Ashantees, however, the disappearance of Lady Emily further complicates matters. Throw in the African Olympic Games, a story within a story about Napoleon, the Duke of Wellington, and the appearance of a character named Bertha, and there is plenty to be enjoyed for fans of Brontë's adult works in addition to newcomers to the wonderful Brontë juvenilia.

The Green Dwarf is gothic, witty, funny, and engrossing. Give it a try.

A new edition is due to be published by Alma Books in November 2018 if you can't get your hands on the 2003 Hesperus Press edition.

For more details on this book, head over to my blog:

[https://brontebabeblog.wordpress.com/...](https://brontebabeblog.wordpress.com/)

Quirkyreader says

A very interesting piece of juvenilia. Charlotte was seventeen when she wrote this.

Some of the themes she used in her latter writing started to emerge in this piece of writing.

Juliaharied says

Getting into this book proved a little difficult. I forgot how much attention Charlotte's writing requires. I enjoyed how she told the story from her perspective, as a storyteller. She used first person in her writing, which I liked, it was a little breath of fresh air. The plot of this story made me happy and it was fun to see how things worked out for the lovers. I would definitely recommend this book to friends for a short summer read.

S'hi says

Written when she was seventeen years of age, Charlotte Bronte's The Green Dwarf combines the imaginative skills of childhood with the influences of available literature in an amusing and studious way. The rhythm and shape holds well, while some aspects could do with more polish. But given the circumstances and intent as mainly being for family consumption and challenge, it is still a considerable achievement of style. The enthusiasm of the writer (and probably also her audience) shows the development of confidence in this young writer who went on to become one of the most celebrated authors of her generation.

Aly says

One of Bronte's early writings, and a beautiful insight into her mind. Reading it I felt like I was one of her friends to whom she was telling the most recent creation of her brilliant imagination, and I loved it. I recommend to fans of her more popular writing.
