

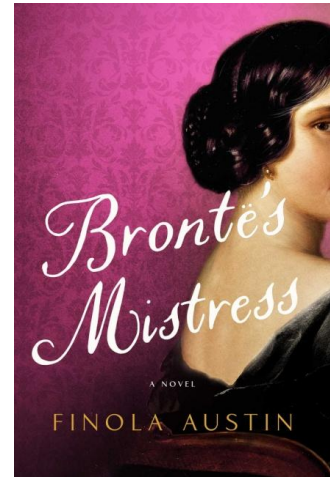
BRONTË'S MISTRESS

A Novel

By Finola Austin

Published by Atria Books (an imprint of Simon & Schuster),
August 2020; £20, Hardback; £11.99, e-book; £18.19 Audiobook

Finola Austin will be in the UK in mid-September and available for interviews and events



Yorkshire, 1843: Lydia Robinson - mistress of Thorp Green Hall - has lost her youngest daughter and her mother within the same year. Now, with her teenage daughters rebelling, her hateful mother-in-law breathing down her neck, and her marriage grown cold, Lydia finds herself yearning for something more.

Change comes with the arrival of her son's tutor, Branwell Brontë, brother of her daughters' governess, Anne Brontë, and her sisters, Charlotte and Emily. Handsome and romantic, a painter and a poet, Branwell is twenty-five to Lydia's forty-three. Soon Branwell's intensity and Lydia's loneliness find a dangerous match in each other. But, when Branwell's behaviour becomes increasingly erratic, and servants start to gossip, it is Mrs Robinson who must save her reputation before her secrets are revealed to the world.

In **BRONTË'S MISTRESS** debut novelist **Finola Austin** draws on her expertise in Victorian literature to re-imagine the scandalous affair - first revealed by Charlotte Brontë's biographer, Elizabeth Gaskell, in 1857 - that has divided Brontë enthusiasts for generations. According to Gaskell, Branwell was the victim, Mrs Robinson the predator, labelling her 'a wretched woman', who allegedly brought about the demise of the entire Brontë family. But was Lydia Robinson rightly vilified or could there be another version of events?

In **BRONTË'S MISTRESS** Austin gives voice to Lydia Robinson for the first time, offering a compelling portrait of a woman torn between expectation and the wish for more. With rich historical detail and incredible insight into gender and class dynamics at the time, Austin provides a riveting, persuasive and profoundly humanising portrait of a woman who, the author believes, has been maligned by history. It's an engrossing story that will delight fans of the Brontë sisters, and all who enjoy historical fiction.

About the Author: **Finola Austin**, was born in Gravesend, Kent, and brought up in Whitehead, County Antrim. After obtaining two degrees at the University of Oxford, including a Masters in nineteenth-century literature, she founded the *Secret Victorianist*, an award-winning blog dedicated to the culture of the period. She currently works in digital advertising for Facebook and lives in New York City. **BRONTË'S MISTRESS** is her first novel. Finola will be in the UK and available for publicity in mid-September. Find Finola online at www.finolaaustin.com.

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