

Jane Eyre by John Courtney

Act I

Scene 1

Schoolroom

Betty Bunce discovered

Betty: Dear me, what a life is mine – servant of all work to a charity school – for the Lowood Institution, as they calls it, ain't no better than a charity school – £15 won't pay the board and teaching of they poor girls, so they makes the rest up by subscriptions and such like – poor things. I'm afraid most of our scholars are not sent to be educated – they are sent out of the way by fathers and mothers that can't very well account for their being in the way – or else the poor things are orphans with cruel uncles and aunts who send them out of the way to be thumped, bumped and consumptionized – they none of them look half-fed and half-fed they are not either.

Enter Joe Joker

Betty: Well, Joe, how do you get on?

Joe: Not at all and it ain't very likely I shall, if I don't get out of this.

Betty: It's not very promising living here, is it?

Joe: You've heard of Buchan's Domestic Medicine haven't you? Well that tells you how to kill yourself without paying a doctor to do it; this is Domestic Transportation – visiting Botany Bay or Norfolk Island without crossing the herring pond.

Betty: What have you got there?

Joe: Oh this is the bread basket – here's slices, here's a breakfast for a growing girl after an hour's run in the grounds on a frosty morning, washed down too with a basin of burnt skilagilee.

Betty: Why it's horrid!

Joe: And yet Mr Naomi Brocklehurst, the manager and treasurer, calls himself a saint.

Betty: He's a tall, lanky, parchment-skinned, frowning old hunks.

Joe: I'll give warning – I can't stand it any longer. Look at this jacket and this waistcoat – would you believe that they were once a fit? They hang, Betty, and if I stay here another month I shall have to have a shirt covered with fish-hooks to hang em by. I shall cut the Lowood Institution – if I don't I shall die of domestic starvation – I shan't see the world. Therefore I'm determined to make a rush and get out before I go out like a rush light.
(Exit)

Betty: Hang me if I don't follow his example – what's £5 a year and no perquisites and half starved into the bargain? I like that Joe Joker – I wonder if he has ever thought of taking a wife? (*Bell*) Oh, there's the warning for breakfast and here comes the young girl Jane Eyre they made teacher of, because she had no friends to go to when she had done all her learning – good morning, Miss.

Enter Jane Eyre

Jane: Good morning. I see everything is ready.

Betty: Yes Miss, I've swept and dusted, and Jem has brought in the bread – Poor thing, how pale and serious she looks – ah, she has long borne a heavy heart.
(Exit)

Jane: Cold and chill, will my spirit bear on this bleak and cheerless fate? Infancy passed in a dull lethargy – girlhood encountering every day the frowns and scoffs of those who should have cherished and caressed me, and now womanhood dawns with a still darker prospect. Eight years have passed away since as a care-stricken child I quitted my aunt Reed for this place and from that hour, no friendly letter or inquiry has reached me – no mother's caress or father's kindly regard lives in my memory. I am as one dead to the world save that I live and move, for even my aunt sent with me evil reports, painted me in the blackest dye to Mr Brocklehurst. Oh, what hope have I but in flight – should my advertisement for a situation fail I must linger here till death shall end my suffering – they come – let me dry my tears.

Enter Schoolgirls – Miss Temple – Miss Scatchard

Miss Temple: Monitors, bring in the breakfast. (*The oldest girls bring in bowls and hand them round etc.*) Monitors, serve out the bread.

Girl: What horrible stuff!

Others: Dreadful!

Miss Scatchard: Silence, girls, or I'll report you to the Manager – how dare you, Miss, turn up your nose at such healthy and nourishing food!

Enter Betty

Betty: If you please, Miss Temple, Mr Naomi Brocklehurst is coming to visit the school – his carriage is at the door.

Miss Scatchard: Girls, finish your breakfast and prepare yourselves to greet your benefactor with propriety – teacher Jane Eyre, take your slate and note complaints with orders for amendment.

Enter Mr Brocklehurst

Brock: Good morning, Miss Temple – why does that girl turn out her toes like a profane and unhallowed dancer? turn ‘em in! Miss Scatchard! that girl in the dark hair squints – put her eye straight, Miss Scatchard!

Miss S: She squinted when she came, sir.

Brock: Nonsense, it’s all obstinacy, I’ll not allow squinting here, it’s a wicked habit. You got the packet of thread I sent you, Miss Temple? It struck me it would be just the quality for the calico chemises and I sorted the needles to match – you shall have some darning needles next week – mind on no account give more than one to each girl and if they lose them correct them accordingly – and I wish the woollen stockings to be better looked to – I just now examined the clothes drying in the kitchen garden – there was a number of black hose in a very bad state and from the size of the hole I should say they hadn’t seen a needle for a month!

Miss T: They shall be looked to.

Brock: Mind they are; and ma’am, the laundress tells me some of the girls have two tuckers in the week – it’s too many by half, the rules don’t allow of such extravagance – and there’s another thing which really astonishes me, shocks me – I find in settling accounts with the housekeeper that a lunch consisting of bread and cheese has twice been served out to the girls during the past fortnight – it’s a dangerous innovation on our rules.

Miss T: I must be responsible for that – the breakfast was so ill prepared that the pupils could not possibly eat it, and I dared not allow them to remain fainting till dinner time.

Brock: Madam, you will allow me to say, my plan in bringing up these girls, is to render them hardy, patient and self-denying, to encourage them to endure fortitude under temporary privations – madam, when you put bread and cheese into these children’s mouths, you may indeed feed their bodies but you little think how you starve their immortal souls – and, Miss Temple, what is that girl with curled hair, curled – curled all over!

Miss : It is Julia Severn.

Brock: And why has she or any other girl curled hair?

Miss : Her hair curls naturally.

Brock: That girl’s hair must be cut off entirely – I’ll send a barber to-morrow – and I see others have the same excrescence – that tall girl, tell her to turn round – tell em all to turn round. (*Girls do – stifling laughter*) All those top-knots must be cut off.

Miss T: Teacher, make a mem[orandum] of the aforesaid.

Jane has been lost in reverie – slate falls and is broken

Brock: Abominable carelessness – Junior Teacher, stand forth – I have long had something to say to you – girls attend to me: teachers and pupils, you all see this young girl – would you believe it, the evil [one] has found a servant and an agent in her – you must shun her example, avoid her company – teachers, you must watch her, keep your eyes on her movements, weigh well all her words, scrutinize her actions, punish her body to save her soul – for I have it from her best of friends, her dear kind and loving aunt, that she is a liar. I learned it from her whose generosity she repaid so ill, that this good aunt was compelled to separate her from her own young ones – she has sent her here to be healed and teachers, girls, I beg you not to allow the waters to stagnate around her – do you see that, she has the audacity to shed tears – crocodile tears!

Miss T: ’Tis really dreadful, sir.

Brock: It’s abominable – Junior Teacher, stand where you are the whole day without food – we must mortify the spirit – let no one speak to her.

Jane: I will not stand here, sir, as you desire!

Brock: You won’t? Miss Scatchard, do you hear that!

Miss S: I do, sir, and weep to hear it.

Brock: Why you ungrateful –

Jane: Stay, sir!

Brock: Silence, Miss –

Jane: I will be heard, for my pent-up feelings must have vent. For eight years I have endured all that falls to the lot of the poor orphan girl, discarded by those that should protect her and cast upon the cold care of an unfeeling world – all that I could do in patience, suffering, industry and obedience to those above I have done. You sir, by the munificence of others, are placed here as our protector. Instead of kindness from you, I and those around me meet but scorn. In place of the bland smile and mild reproof for our errors we meet but your continuous frown, your determined opposition. Charity! Oh, ’tis a monstrous mockery of it, ’tis persecution upon the helpless and unprotected – and I tell you, sir, that you should blush to own such feelings as inhabit your cold and uncharitable heart.

Brock: And dare you talk thus to your kind protector?

Jane: I do, and tell you too that the time will come when those who dispense their wealth for the instruction of their poorer fellow beings will see more closely into the conduct of those into whose hands they place their trust.

Some of the girls express joy etc.

Brock: Do you hear that, Miss Scatchard – put that girl with the curly hair upon the high stool.

Enter Joe Joker

Joe Joker: I say, governor!
Brock: Governor!
Joe: I've come to give you warning for this day month – Oh, Miss Jane! What's the matter – crying?
Brock: Don't approach that girl, sir.
Joe: I shall if I like.
Brock: Scoundrel!
Joe: Holloa, I say, don't that come again –
Brock: Dare you interfere with my authority?
Joe: Yours or anybody else's if he don't know how to use it – here, Miss Jane, here's a letter for you.
Brock: Here, coachman, John, come here and turn this scoundrel out!

Coachman and John enter

Joe: Oh, that's your game is it! (*Business*)
Jane: Nay, for my sake!
Brock: Seize him, lock him up! (*Scuffle*)

Enter Betty Bunce

Betty Stand off – if you lay hands upon him I'll lay this broom about your heads!
Jane: Nay, Betty, Joseph! (*General bustle etc.*)

Scene 2

Apartment

Enter Miss Scatchard

Miss S: What depravity – I must run for a constable – but I'm really so nervous that I can't go myself – here, Sally Suds, are you in the laundry?

Enter Sally Suds

Sally: No miss I'm in the washus, and them gals do make their clothes so dirty I really must have more soap.
Miss S: Never mind the soap now – put on your bonnet and run to Lowood for a constable – Joe Joker is murdering Mr Brocklehurst!
Sally: That's just what I've long longed to see, for his stingy ways – he says soda is better than soap – let him try it, that's all – I call him old save-soap.

Miss S: And you won't go for a constable?
Sally: Not a bit of it, my place is in the washus – he's a prying cross old hunks, and I've sworn if he comes into the washus again I'll dab some suds in his face – he shall [have] soap enough for once – Joe has given him a whacking and I'll give him a lathering (*Exit*)

Miss S: The house is turned upside down, and if I stay here much longer I shall be served the same. (*Exit*)

Enter Joe Joker

Joe: Well I don't think old Brocklehurst will like to tackle Joe Joker again! Where are you going to, Betty?

Enter Betty

Betty: To card my boxes, for I've discharged myself upon the spot.
Joe: Betty, you are a trump, you stood up manfully in my defence! Where are you going?
Betty: I don't care where I go so long as I go from here – Jane Eyre is going too.
Joe: Where, poor girl?
Betty: That letter you brought her from the post office was an answer to an advertisement she had put in the paper for a situation – it is a situation as governess at £25 a year, and Miss Temple asked Mr Brocklehurst to let her go and give her a recommendation.
Joe: Which, of course, he gave her.
Betty: He did, and was very glad to get rid of her, for fear his conduct to the poor girl should reach the ears of the subscribers – she goes in a few minutes as the coach comes by the gate.
Joe: I wish her success – poor girl, she's alone in the world.
Betty: So am I, it's very awkward, isn't it, Joseph?
Joe: What makes you call me Joseph, my dear?
Betty: What makes you call me my dear, Joseph?
Joe: Why, I don't know, but there has been an imperceptible something creeping over me, ever since you came to defend me – I say, how is your book? – do you take the field or the favourite?
Betty: I don't know what you mean, but I'd back you.
Joe: Then I'm the favourite.
Betty: You are my favourite.
Joe: And you'd back me through life?
Betty: That I would!
Joe: Come to my arms!

Enter Beadle and Constable

Joe: What do you want, old nob stick?
 Beadle: To take you up for an assault and battery of a worthy and respected man – constable, I charge you to aid and assist!
 Const: By virtue of my office and this here staff I does – prisoner, surrender!
 Betty: Now, Joseph! (*Business – Scuffle etc.*)
 Beadle and Const: Help, murder!
 Betty: Be quiet – here, this cupboard – no – the window – the cistern is beneath!
 Joe: Throw it up, Betty – they shall have a bath – now – out with you!
 Both: Mercy – murder!
 Betty: Silence! (*Business*)
 Both outside: Help, murder, robbery, drowning!
 Joe: Ha, ha – now, Betty, let's seek our fortunes together. (*Exeunt*)

Scene 3

Apartment in Thornfield Hall

Rochester discovered

Roch: The night is rough, and the wind shakes the gables of these old towers I love. Thornfield [is] still my boyhood's home – and yet staying by the old beech trunk, a hag stood by me and with a loud laugh, exclaimed – 'Like it if you can, like it if you dare!' – [Perhaps] 'twas my bewildered brain that pictured the wild form – no- I will like, I dare like it!

Enter Mrs Fairfax and Jane Eyre

Mrs F: Here is the new governess, Miss Eyre, sir.
 Jane: 'Tis the gentleman whom I assisted when thrown from his horse just now on my journey hither.
 Mrs F: You expect your guests tonight, I believe, sir.
 Roch: Yes – let the governess approach me – you will not find your pupil, Miss Adèle, very bright – you come from –
 Jane: From Lowood school, sir.
 Roch: Ah, I know – a charitable concern – how long were you there?
 Jane: Eight years, sir.
 Roch: Eight years and not dead – I know you again – when you assisted me on my way here I thought by that face of yours that you had bewitched my horse to throw me – who were your parents?
 Jane: I have none.
 Roch: And your home?

Jane: I have none.
 Roch: Where do your brothers and sisters live?
 Jane: I have no brothers or sisters.
 Roch: Who recommended you to come here?
 Jane: I advertised and Mrs Fairfax answered the advertisement.

Enter Sam

Sam: Sir, your guests have arrived. Mrs Ingram and her daughter, Colonel Dent and –
 Roch: I'll go – Mrs Fairfax, you can stay here with Miss Eyre – now sir – (*Exit with servant*)

Jane: Mr Rochester seems very abrupt.
 Mrs F: No doubt he appears so to you. He has enough to harass him – family troubles – he lost his elder brother a few years since.
 Jane: Was he so fond of his brother, as to be still inconsolable for his loss?
 Mrs F: Oh no, perhaps not – for he prejudiced his father against Mr Rochester to keep the estate wholly in his hands – so they both contrived to bring our master into a painful position, as he calls it, for the sake of making his fortune abroad. He brought the little girl Adèle with him from abroad – who she is I cannot tell you. I don't think he has resided at Thornfield a fortnight together since the death of his brother, and indeed I do not wonder he shuns the old place.

Jane: Why should he shun it?
 Mrs F: Why – because – come now – I must not talk any more or perhaps I may be saying too much. I must run and see after the lady guests – you can stay here till I return. (*Exit*)

Jane: I feel a thrill of fear, spite of the appearance of wealth and comfort that surrounds me. (*A distant scream and wild laugh*) Great heaven, what was that – what can it mean? This old house, the woman's mystery, the master's strange manner – he is here!

Enter Rochester

Roch: So, now I have played the part of a good host, put my guests into the way of amusing each other; I am at liberty to attend to my own pleasures. Miss Eyre, draw a chair and sit by me. Now look at me – do think me handsome?
 Jane: No, sir.
 Roch: Well – that's plain and blunt! What fault do you find with me – do you think me stern and unforgiving?
 Jane: Oh sir, far from it – that face bespeaks kindness I am sure.

Roch: But I am not kind – time and circumstances make us other than we would or should be. When I was your age I was kindly and feeling, but fortune has knocked me up and down since then. Ah, I might have been other than I am, I might have been as good as you, wiser, and almost as stainless.

Noise and enter Sam

Roch: What now, sir?

Sam: A stranger sir – a rough weather-worn looking man, has demanded entrance and is now sitting amongst your guests in the drawing room.

Roch: A stranger?

Sam: To me sir, but he said he had known you long.

Roch: His name?

Sam: He said he'd tell that to you – he comes, I think I heard him say, from Spanish Town in the West Indies.

Roch: Ha! should it be – go sir, I'll be with him soon – the West Indies –

Jane: You are ill, sir – take my hand.

Roch: Oh! this blow!

Jane: Lean on me, sir.

Roch: Jane, you offered me your hand, let me have it now. My little friend, would I were in a quiet island but with you and all trouble and hideous recollection banished from me.

Jane: Can I help you, sir – oh tell me how and with my life –

Roch: Jane, I have guests in the drawing room waiting my presence – were they all to spurn me, what would you do? Were they to leave me one by one, what would you do?

Jane: Remain more firmly by you, sir.

Roch: To comfort me?

Jane: Yes, sir, to comfort you.

Roch: Could you dare censure for my sake?

Jane: For any friends who merited my just regards, as I am sure you do now.

Mason (without): Don't tell me – I'll stay no longer – I must and will see him!

Roch: That voice!

Enter Mason

Mason: So, old friend, we meet again.

Roch: 'Tis he and all is over. (*A loud scream and wild laugh – picture*)

Scene 4

Corridor

Enter Sam

Sam: Well, this is a mysterious affair – this stranger has forced his way into Mr Rochester's presence, and there has been the deuce to pay in the drawing room – there's something very mysterious about our master.

Enter Mrs Fairfax

Mrs F: Sam, the gentlemen are all waiting to be conducted to their rooms.

Sam: Very well – this is a strange affair, Mrs Fairfax, with this mysterious stranger.

Mrs F: It's very mysterious that you can't mind your own business.

Sam: Mrs F, you are a crabbed old Guy as knows nothing and won't be teached. (*Exit*)

Enter Jane Eyre

Mrs F: Has Mr Rochester recovered his alarm?

Jane: He has, ma'am, and I believe has conducted the stranger to a sleeping apartment.

Mrs F: What – does he stay here?

Jane: Oh yes, I heard him say he came to visit Thornfield for some weeks. Tell me, pray pardon me the question, but twice tonight have I heard a wild scream that made me thrill with fear!

Mrs F: You must not heed that, 'tis merely the loud laugh of a vulgar woman who is kept here for needle-work in the upper part of the mansion. There is no harm in her but it sounds – by the bye here she comes.

Enter Grace Poole

Mrs F: Well, Grace, have you got your supper beer?

Grace: Yes.

Mrs F: Oh, Mrs Grace – I hope you will restrain that loud laugh of yours – it sounds so through the old galleries, that people imagine it some fiend's rather a woman's.

Grace: I can't help it sounding – people must laugh sometimes – or the devil's in it. (*Exit*)

Jane: A strange creature – why does Mr Rochester employ so odd a person?

Mrs F: She is useful and gets through a deal of work, but I must to the guests

to see to their rooms – you doubtless are tired and ready for bed – you know your room, good night. *(Exit)*

Jane: Good night – What airy vision floats around me? – in a short time a world has passed before me of hopes and fears surely never to be realized – oh no, kindly as Mr Rochester spoke to me, I am still his servant, no more – why then does his vision haunt me – and then the mystery of this stranger, his pallid cheek on his appearance. Then his questions to me – what can it mean – I am alone – I hear nothing but the footfalls of those who are retiring to rest. I seem spell-bound by a strange fear. *(Laugh and shriek)* Oh, let me fly to my room and there offer up my orphan prayer to him who ever shields the lone and unprotected!

Scene 5

Gallery – Stairs leading off R and L to sleeping rooms

Enter Sam

Sam: Well, I have shown the people to their rooms and now I'll show myself to my room – there's something uncommon mysterious about Master and his friend – eh, here come Master and his friend – I'll watch. *(Hides)*

Enter Rochester and Mason

Roch: Now we understand each other – you will not blab?
Mason: Oh no – she is safe, you say?
Roch: Perfectly, and attended to with care.
Mason: 'Tis well, now show me to my room.
Roch: This way. *(Exeunt)*

Sam comes down

Sam: Now what the devil can I make out of that? *(Shriek)* Oh lord, oh dear, I've lost all my curiosity, I don't want to know what that is! *(Exit)*

A tall female appears, above in the gallery, with dark hair, hanging loose behind, in a white dress. She makes various gesticulations – looks from landing on to stage – feels along wall as for an entrance then passes off – when off, shriek and laugh heard.

Enter Jane

Jane: Heavens, that shriek, it seemed at my very door, what can it be – again! *(Noise)*

Mason (without): Help – help – save me, save me!
Jane: My fears are true – there is murder doing!
Mason: Rochester – Rochester, come to me for heaven's sake!
Jane: Ha, I must give the alarm – help, help – murder is doing! Help, I say!

The figure rushes along gallery – unseen by Jane, with shriek. Enter Guests.

All: What is the matter?
Jane: There is murder doing – there!
All: What murder?

Mason runs on from entrance in gallery – wounded.

Mason: Help me – save me – Rochester, where are you?
Roch (following): Here – here, Mason!
Mason: I am dying, murdered by – *(falls)*.
All: By whom?

Rochester, to Jane, places his finger to his lips as if to entreat silence. Wild shrieks and laughter.

Tableau
End of Act I

Act II

Scene 1

Room in Thornfield Hall

Mason discovered faint and pale in a chair – Carter binding up his arm – Rochester and Jane Eyre by him

Roch: Now, my good fellow, how are you?
Mason: She's done for me, I fear.
Roch: Not a whit – in a few days you'll not be any the worse for it – Carter, assure him there's no danger.
Carter: I can do that conscientiously – only I wish I had got here sooner, he would not have lost so much blood – the flesh on the shoulder is torn as well as cut, the wound was not done by a knife but by teeth.
Mason: She bit me, worried like a tigress!
Roch: You should have grappled with her.
Mason: She said she'd drain my heart.

- Roch:* Be silent – you will soon be out of the country – when you are in Spanish Town, you may think of her as dead, or rather you need not think of her at all.
- Mason:* Impossible to forget last night.
- Roch:* Pshaw, have some energy, man. There, Carter has done with you. Jane, was anyone stirring just now, when I sent you to my room?
- Jane:* No sir, all was still.
- Roch:* Now get on your feet – come, try! Carter, take him under the other shoulder – be of good cheer, Richard, step out – Jane, place the cloak around him.
- Mason:* I do feel better.
- Roch:* I am sure you do. Now, Jane, unbolt that side door leading to back stairs and if you hear anyone about, come to the foot of the stairs and call. Now, Mason, we'll hand you to the chaise – take care of him, Carter, and keep him at your house till he is quite well – goodbye, Dick!
- Mason:* One word – let her be taken care of, let her be treated tenderly, let her –
- Roch:* I do my best, have done it, and will do it. *(Exeunt)*
- Jane:* What am I to think? Mr Rochester, to pacify his guests, said it was a mere dream and they retired – the female they speak of and who inflicted this wound, who and what can she be, and why was I employed by Mr Rochester to assist the night through in such a mystery? – he returns, I will to my room.

Enter Rochester

- Roch:* Would to heaven there was an end of this – Jane!
- Jane:* Sir?
- Roch:* You have passed a strange night and you look pale – very pale. Were you afraid when I left you alone with Mason?
- Jane:* I was afraid of some one coming out of the inner room, sir.
- Roch:* Ah – but I had fastened the door, I should have been a careless shepherd if I had left a lamb so near a wolfish den unguarded.
- Jane:* Will the strange woman, Grace Poole, live here still, sir?
- Roch:* Yes, yes, have no fear of her.
- Jane:* Yet your life is hardly safe while she stays – this Mason too.
- Roch:* He would not willingly injure me – ever since I have known him I have had but to say, do that, and the thing has been done – Jane, you are my little friend?
- Jane:* I like to serve you, sir, in all that is right.
- Roch:* Jane, listen, you have power over me and might injure me, yet dare I not shew you where I am vulnerable, lest faithful and friendly as you are, you bring me on to ruin.

- Jane:* Oh sir, this pains me – I would not be inquisitive, and should not seek to learn the secrets of my master – still the confidence you have placed in me this night emboldens me to ask – can I by any means, consistent with my sex, my station, or my means, relieve your griefs? for heavy they are, I can see.
- Roch:* Look at me and tell me, are you at ease – not fearing that I err in detaining you, or that you err in listening to me?
- Jane:* I do not fear.
- Roch:* Picture to yourself a well reared boy, but wild from childhood upward, then place him in a foreign land committing error – no matter of what nature – mark, I say not crime, I speak not of shedding blood – I speak of error, through which hope quits him. He wanders here and there seeking rest in exile, searching for happiness in pleasure, such pleasure as blights all feeling and makes the heart a sepulchre. Soul-withered he returns – after years of banishment he meets a being fair without soil or taint – he feels better days come back, his mind fills with purer thoughts. Tell me, is the wandering and sinful but now rest-seeking and repentant man justified in overleaping custom, in daring the world's opinion, to attach to him forever this gentle, gracious, genial stranger?
- Jane:* Oh sir, 'tis impossible for me, a simple girl, to answer. A wanderer's repose or a sinner's reformation depends not upon his fellow-creature, he should look higher for strength to amend and for solace to heal.
- Roch:* Jane, I have been a wordly, dissipated, restless – but no crime-stained man, yet I believe I have found the instrument of my cure in –
- Jane:* What, sir?
- Roch:* You – you do not curse me.
- Jane:* Sir – I – no sir.
- Roch:* Your hand in confirmation thereof – oh memory, memory *(rushes out)*.
- Jane:* He suffers heavily – has error led so near to crime as to – Oh no, let me at least hope that his soul is without stain.

Enter Joe Joker and Sam

- Sam:* Now you really can't come in here.
- Joe:* Oh, humbug!
- Jane:* Is that you Joseph?
- Joe:* Eh – Ah I said I was right, how do you do Miss Jane, Miss Temple told me where you had come to, and I came here on purpose, to see you, but this chap told me I mustn't come in.
- Sam:* We ain't none on us allowed no followers.
- Joe:* If his conduct to you, Miss Jane, requires licking into shape, I'm the man.
- Sam:* Vulgar wretch *(aside and exit)*.

- Jane:* I'm very glad to see you, Joseph, but what brought you here so soon?
- Joe:* Why, they sent the beadle and constable after me – however, with Betty's assistance, I pitched em both into the water-butt – after that we thought it best to take to our legs and off we came together.
- Jane:* And where is Betty?
- Joe:* She's got a place in the little Town of Millcote close by, and I'm not perticular, anything so long as it's honest. You see, Miss, a chap must not be too precise as has got no more independence than an independent spirit – but still I'm independent of father, mother, or relations, for I never knowed any of em, it seems to me I comed up all on a sudden – I never could make how it was, well hunger soon sharpened my wits and I got a job and it got me something to eat. From getting jobs I got a place, and from one place to another I got at last to old Brocklehurst's and if I hadn't dropped his acquaintance I should soon have dropped into my grave, for he starved body and smalls.
- Jane:* We have both need to thank the chance that sent us from such a home – come, you will breakfast with me – Mrs Fairfax will be glad to entertain one who, like you, has befriended me.
- Joe:* Do you mean, Miss, to introduce me as an acquaintance with such clothes as these – look at my jacket!
- Jane:* I introduce you, not your attire – 'tis your heart I estimate, your clothes I heed not – come.
- Joe:* Well I never! (Exeunt)

*Scene 2**Room at Mr Jehediah Piper's**Enter Betty Bunce*

- Betty:* Well, this is lucky, that as I got here I should get a place, and a very nice place too – nobody to attend to but the old gentleman and his shopman – he seems such a nice man, rather precise – I don't much like his not allowing any followers – oh, here he comes.

Enter Jehediah Piper

- Piper:* Now, my good girl, hear me, you are not aware of the onerous duties you have to perform here – in the first place my name is Jehediah Piper.
- Betty:* Yes sir, Jeddedidah Piper.
- Piper:* No, girl, Je-he-diah Piper, mark that.
- Betty:* Jee-he-di-ah – now I've got it – Mr Jee-hee-diah Piper.
- Piper:* Now there are two Pipers in this town – now Betty, mark me – we the two Pipers are of the same business, Grocers, Mealmen and Corn chandlers, and strange as it may appear we never can agree.

- Betty:* Two of a trade never can.
- Piper:* Betty, the other Piper's a scoundrel, for he not only set up in business against me, but succeeded, by scandal, to blacken my character and ruin my fortunes – by marrying the very lady I had intended to make an offer of my hand to, and how do you think he accomplished his base purpose Betty?
- Betty:* I can't tell sir.
- Piper:* I had a little shop-boy, an active, smart little fellow, no-one in the world to protect him but me, and the black-hearted villain informed the lady that this little boy – was a young Piper.
- Betty:* La sir, and did she believe it? I'm sure I shouldn't, to look at you.
- Piper:* It so happened, heaven knows how, but the poor boy did resemble me. From that hour the lady dropped my acquaintance and in a month became the wife of my mortal enemy. But I'll be revenged – he puts up for church-warden, so do I – I'll swamp him. I've made every voter dead drunk three times a week for this month past and I'll be at the head of the poll – he shall sneak home like a dog with a tin kettle to his tail.
- Betty:* Well, sir, I wish you may get it.
- Piper:* I will get it. Now, Betty, during my absence let the house be full of propriety for the least impropriety here would be my ruin should my enemies get hold of it.

Enter Tom

- Tom:* Please sir, the voters with the boards is ready and the drummer too.
- Piper:* Let them come in and we'll march to the Poll together.
- Tom:* You must come in.

Enter two or three queer-looking fellows – each bearing a board with a placard written on

- Piper:* Welcome, my friends – drummer, do you proceed before – can you play 'See the conquering hero comes'?
- Drummer:* Yes, sir, but we never plays that till we wins.
- Piper:* Damn it, sir, I'm sure to win, so play away – now march! (Exeunt)
- Betty:* Ha ha, so you are a nice old gentleman to allow no followers –

Enter Joe

- Betty:* Eh, what, I ought to know you, why what have you been about and where did you get that dress?
- Joe:* I'm a gentleman's coachman now, Betty.

Betty: But whose coachman are you?
 Joe: The gentleman's as keeps the house where Jane Eyre lives – I breakfasted with her and as he wanted a coachman, Jane popped the question, and I was coated, hired and breeched.
 Betty: Well, I declare, this is double luck, but you know I mustn't have anyone to visit me here.
 Joe: Oh yes, you must, besides I've had news of Daddy Piper, that rather raises my bilious apprehensions – I called at the Pig and Lollypop to wet my new livery and the first thing I heard was 'So old daddy Piper has got another new maid, poor thing'.
 Betty: What did they mean by poor thing?
 Joe: Ah, that's what I opened my eyes about, but I was soon satisfied for they said he never had a new maid but in a very short time he had a new young piper.
 Betty: Why, the old villain! (*Noise etc.*) Hark, what's that? why it's Mr Piper with a lot of people pelting him – you can't stay here.
 Joe: But I will!
 Betty: Nonsense, don't be silly, here he comes – here, get into this closet.
 Joe: Why, it's full of flour sacks, I shall spoil my new livery.
 Betty: Go in. (*Noise*)

Enter Piper

Piper: Defeated, outvoted, by the very scoundrels I had swilled to their throats, the same scoundrels too would have bonnetted my brains out if I hadn't taken to my heels – I can never hold up my head again. Is that you, Betty?
 Betty: Yes, sir, how have you got on?
 Piper: My enemy has triumphed, he is churchwarden and I am nobody.
 Betty: Well sir, don't fret.
 Piper: Go to that cupboard, you'll find a bottle of brandy – give me a glass – another, thank you, come here, my dear.
 Joe: His dear.
 Piper: You pity me, don't you, Betty?
 Betty: I do, sir.
 Piper: Come and sit by me, Betty – you are sure you have no followers? I saw an ugly fellow dressed like a coachman looking at the house as I went out.
 Betty: I don't know any coachman, sir.
 Piper: That's dear Betty – ah, you don't know what I felt when I first saw you – Oh, Betty, take pity on your wretched master, let me have one faithful heart to repose upon – smile upon him – oh, Betty, suffer him to take (*about to kiss her*)
 Betty: That (*a slap*).

Piper: Oh!
 Joe (*from cupboard*): And that as a plaister, Daddy Piper (*throws flour*).

Noise etc. – Piper's party enter with their placards torn and followed by successful party

Piper: Murder, thieves, robbery – Tom – Tom!

Enter Tom

Tom: Here I am, master!
 Mob: One cheer more and a groan for Daddy Piper! (*Business. General confusion*)

Scene closes

Scene 3

Room in the Hall

Enter Jane Eyre

Jane: How happy it has made me to be enabled to serve my good old Joe. Strange the kind interest my master takes in me. Oh, he has suffered much. How is it that I, a poor girl, a creature of his bounty, should feel his equal – I do so spite of myself – it is the confidence his kindness gives to me – to own it other, would be imprudence, nay madness.

Enter Rochester

Roch: Jane.
 Jane: Sir, I beg pardon, I did not see you.
 Roch: No matter, how like you this house?
 Jane: Oh sir –
 Roch: Your pupil, little Adèle, Mrs Fairfax, how feel you towards them?
 Jane: I can but love them sir – I have an affection for all here.
 Roch: For all, Jane?
 Jane: For all my equals, and respect for those above me.
 Roch: You would be sorry to part with them?
 Jane: I should indeed.
 Roch: Yes, 'tis this life's curse, no sooner do we find a resting place than some harsh voice calls aloud – arise and begone!
 Jane: Must I begone, sir?
 Roch: I fear you must.

Jane: Well sir, I shall be ready when you say the word.
Roch: Rumour no doubt has reached you that I'm about to be married?
Jane: The lady I have heard named sir – your visitor, Miss Ingram.
Roch: Yes – Adèle must go to school, and you must get another situation. In about a month I hope to become a bridegroom and in the interim I shall seek another asylum for you, I think in Ireland.
Jane: Ireland – 'tis a long way, sir – and then the sea is a barrier.
Roch: From what Jane?
Jane: From England and from Thornfield – and –
Roch: Well?
Jane: From you, sir – What have I said? – It is a long way, sir.
Roch: It is. I am sorry to send my little friend on such weary travels, but if I can't do better, how is it to be helped? – are you anything akin to me, think you Jane?
Jane: I cannot speak or answer him.
Roch: Because I sometimes have a strange feeling with regard to you, especially when you are near me as now. And if that boisterous channel and two hundred miles of land or so come between us I'm afraid that you'd forget me.
Jane: That I never should – Oh, that I had never seen Thornfield!
Roch: Because you are sorry to leave it?
Jane: Yes, because in it I have received the only kindness in my unhappy life – the necessity of departure is like looking on the necessity of death.
Roch: Where is the necessity?
Jane: You, sir, have placed it before me, in Miss Ingram, your bride.
Roch: I have no bride.
Jane: But you will have.
Roch: Yes – I will –
Jane: Then I must go – you have said it yourself.
Roch: No you must stay. I swear it and the oath shall be kept.
Jane: Oh sir, do you think I can stay to become nothing to you? Think you because poor, I am soulless, heartless? – I have as much heart as yourself and had fate graced me with wealth and beauty – I should have made it as hard for you to leave me, as 'tis now hard for me to leave you – forgive my boldness, but 'tis my spirit that addresses your spirit – as if both had passed through the grave and stood in heaven equal – as we are!
Roch: As we are indeed, Jane.
Jane: And yet not so, for you are going to wed one inferior to you, one with whom you have no sympathy, one whom you love not – I would scorn such a union – therefore I am better than you – let me go to Ireland.
Roch: Jane, be still, don't struggle like a wild frantic bird, rending its own plumage!

Jane: I am no bird, and no net ensnares me – my will is free, which I now exert to leave you.
Roch: And your will shall decide your destiny – I offer you my hand, my heart, the share of all I possess.
Jane: Your bride stands between us.
Roch: Jane, will you marry me? – you doubt me – have not faith in me.
Jane: No.
Roch: What love have I for Miss Ingram? none – what love has she for me? none. I caused a rumour to be whispered this morning that my fortune was not a third of what was supposed – in an hour her mother and herself quitted the hall – I could not, would not marry Miss Ingram. You – you I love – you, poor, obscure and friendless as you are – I entreat to accept me as your husband.
Jane: What, I? – do you truly love me, a poor mean girl – do you sincerely wish me to become your wife?
Roch: I do – I swear it.
Jane: Then I will marry you.
Roch: My wife!
Jane: My dear husband! (*They embrace*)

Enter Mrs Fairfax

Mrs F: Gracious me –
Roch: What is the woman staring at – Mrs Fairfax!
Mrs F: Sir.
Roch: Behold my future wife – I have proposed, she has accepted, we marry tomorrow.
Mrs F: Tomorrow – the man's moonstruck!
Roch: But why this sudden surprise – why came you here?
Mrs F: To tell you that Colonel Dent and your friends are waiting to take their leave.
Roch: Ah, they've heard the rumour of my poverty – I come – Jane, I shall not be long – till then, adieu, bless you. (*Exit*)
Mrs F: Ahem – I feel so astonished, I hardly know what to say to you, Miss Eyre. Mr Rochester has asked you to marry him, I think I heard him say so.
Jane: He did.
Mrs F: How it will answer I cannot tell – he might almost be your father. Is it really for love he's going to marry you?
Jane: Mrs Fairfax!
Mrs F: I hope all will be right in the end, but you cannot be too careful, believe me – keep Mr Rochester at a distance – distrust yourself as well as him. Gentlemen in his station are not accustomed to marry governesses – there, dry your eyes – heaven grant it may all happen for the best. (*Exit*)

Jane: Kind creature – yet how her very kindness chills my heart – why should he wed me as she says, a poor lone one – yet why should he not – may he not feel as I do? – I see that he has suffered – that his heart has throbbed for happiness in vain as mine has – may I not then be the ministering agent of his future happiness? Oh, let me chase away sad forebodings – he comes!

Enter Rochester

Roch: Halloo, what's the matter? – come, on with your bonnet, I have ordered the carriage, we'll be off to Millcote – buy your wedding array and tomorrow be married.

Jane: Oh pray, sir, let not such haste –

Roch: Pshaw, never let a good mind cool – come, put on your bonnet, take my arm – we'll have a love stroll to Millcote and buy the wedding dress and the ring too – don't blush, there's nothing to be ashamed of, come my future little wife. *(Exeunt)*

Scene 4

Outside Stabling

Enter Joe Joker

Joe: Well I'm jiggered if I ain't raising like a balloon – here's Miss Jane Eyre going to be Mrs Rochester and Betty's to be her maid – we are all to go to London together and then to France and foreign parts and I'm to drive em all the way!

Enter Dick Nisi

Dick: Oh, Joseph Joker, I believe?

Joe: Yes, that's my name.

Dick: Ah then, I have the very unpleasant duty to serve you with a writ of action and for assault of battery [sic] against her majesty's liege subject Jehediah Piper of Millcote to wit, take notice therefrom and appear in person.

Joe: Well, what's this bit of paper about? am I to go and wallop him again?

Dick: Very good – assault admitted to plaintiff's attorney – you'd better employ an attorney, for if this action goes against you, and as you have admitted the fact it's sure to do, the damages will be heavy.

Joe: What fact?

Dick: Why, throwing two handsfull of flour into the face of our worthy client Mr Piper.

Joe: To be sure I did and I'll smother him next time.

Dick: Very good *(writes)* 'Life in Danger' – 'threat of murder'.

Joe: What's all this about?

Dick: That you stand in danger of being cast in heavy damages for your treatment of the gentleman aforesaid – we have witnesses, which makes our action safe.

Joe: And if I pitch into a chap and nobody sees me do it, how do I stand then?

Dick: No writ of action without witnesses – can't succeed.

Joe: Then I should be in no danger.

Dick: Unfortunately not sir.

Joe: Then I'll have my fun out of you at once! *(Lashes him with whip)* Now dance to the rogue's march!

Dick: Oh Lord, murder!

Joe: Off you go! *(He runs off)* I say, old chap, my compliments to Daddy Piper! *(Exit)*

Scene 5

Sleeping Chamber

Jane and Betty discovered

Betty: What beautiful things, to be sure, and Mr Rochester bought all these!
Jane: Yes, and I had trouble in preventing him buying everything in the shop. I'll place the things on this chair that I may look on them the moment I awake.

Betty: I should take em to bed with me!

Jane: I am not so silly as that – why, the sun has risen, how these summer nights pass. Well, Betty, this will be our wedding day – he will have it so and I can't deny him.

Betty: La, no – I shouldn't attempt it for my part!

Jane: Well, then, I'll say goodnight to you. You must be stirring early.

Betty: Do you think I could lie abed when there was a wedding on? Why, I shan't sleep a wink, I know, for thinking of it. *(Exit)*

Jane: Now to rest – oh, what a change from the unprotected orphan girl to the mistress of this mansion – a wife too of one so far above me that my head turns dizzy at the thought – oh, I shall be so happy *(the laugh heard)* ha! that laugh again – oh, that horrid Grace Poole, her laugh is unearthly and at such times too – just as one feels so happy – I'll throw myself upon the bed, a few moments may recover me. Angels protect and guard me. *(Goes to bed and sleep)*

Bustle – Laugh – Closet door opens and the woman appears stealthily and wildly surveying the room

Jane (awakens): Oh, what a fearful dream. I thought too I heard a noise as of some one in the room. (*Rises*) Betty, is that you, no – yet the rustling I thought was here. (*Bustle – sees the woman*) Oh heaven! (*Tries to fly but is intercepted*) Help me, heaven, help – save – sa – sa (*falls*).

The wild woman laughs loudly as the scene closes

Scene 6

The Grounds

Enter Joe Joker

Joe: I think this is doing it with all these white favors, they are all getting up and in the bustle I see here's my Betty.

Enter Betty

Betty: Well, Joe, you are like me, up and dressed for the wedding.

Joe: Yes and when I got these favors about me I felt as though I should like to have had a wife myself.

Betty: Ah, that can't be yet, we have no money.

Enter Sam

Sam: Mr Joseph, you are to get the carriage, Mr Rochester and his bride are nearly ready – Miss Betty, master says how you are to dress yourself as you are to be bridesmaid.

Betty: Me – bridesmaid!

Sam: Yes, them's his orders. (Exit)

Betty: What do you think of that!

Joe: It stuns me – give me a kiss before you go.

Betty: That I will. (*Does so and Exit*)

Joe: That's nice – I wish old Brocklehurst could see me now! (Exit)

Enter Rochester and Jane

Roch: Come, Jane, look up – I'll explain to you this vision – it was half dream half reality – a woman did, I doubt not, enter the room and that woman was Grace Poole – you call her a strange being and not without reason. You will ask me why I keep such a woman in my house. When we have been married a year and a day, I'll tell you – are you satisfied?

Jane: I must perforce be on your assurance – but indeed the sight was dreadful.

Roch: Cheer up – we shall be away shortly from this dull home amidst gayer scenes where you will laugh at these sad fancies.

Enter Sam

Sam: The carriage is ready, sir.

Roch: We come. (*Exit Sam*) Now Jane, from this hour my wife! (Exeunt)

Scene 7

Outside of Village Church

Enter Briggs

Briggs: So our information is correct – the clergyman is robed and ready and the clerk stands by him. 'Tis well – I must inform him – ha! carriage – the wedding party. (Exit)

Enter Rochester, Jane Eyre, Betty and Sam followed by a few country people

Roch: Come, let us hasten in. I hate this vulgar gaze – what is the matter?

Jane: A cold fear, a strange presentiment seems to arrest my steps – the dream of last night – that wild woman standing as a barrier to our union!

Roch: Pshaw – we are at the church porch, where no impediment can stay our happiness – come – (*going off*).

Enter Briggs

Briggs: Stay! I forbid this marriage!

Roch: You – fool, stand by!

Briggs: Proud man – your wife still lives, I have a witness who can prove it.

Roch: Liar – produce him!

Briggs: He is here. (*Enter Mason*)

Roch: Mason.

Mason: I affirm that that man is the husband of my sister Bertha Antoinette Mason and that she is now living at Thornfield Hall. (*Jane falls*)

Roch: Villain, Traitor, reptile! (*flies at Mason – Bustle*) Ha ha ha, devils – foiled – her curse is on me!

Tableau

End of Act 2

Act 3

Scene 1

Chamber

Jane Eyre and Betty discovered

Betty: Now do, Miss Jane, look up – you have sat here the whole day alone and without food, I cannot bear to see you thus.

Jane: I care not for myself, it is for him, dire calamity has struck a noble soul and truly do I pity him – leave me, Betty, I am better when alone.

Betty: Ring if you want me – oh dear – I don't know how Joe may turn out, but I don't long half so much to be married as I did.

(Exit)

Jane: Shall I fly from Thornfield at once, since I have wakened from this dream and found all void and vain? – ah, I can bear that – but to quit him, the only one who ever tendered me the hand of kindness – yet reason, conscience tell me that I should – must!

Enter Rochester

Roch: Jane, I never meant to wound you thus. Oh, I know I am the husband of Bertha Mason and you are changed – Jane, listen to me – did you not know that I was not the elder son, and that my father was an avaricious grasping man?

Jane: Mrs Fairfax, sir, informed me so.

Roch: That father had resolved to give my elder brother the whole of his property – yet his imperious spirit could not see me poor. I must therefore be provided for by a wealthy marriage – accordingly I was married to the daughter of a rich planter of Spanish Town – fool that I was, her mother I had never seen, thought she was dead – my marriage over, I learned the truth, she was a maniac – there was a younger brother too, dumb and an idiot. My wife gave signs of incipient madness. I strove to repress the antipathy I felt towards her, but all in vain. Her malady increased with fearful rapidity, her vices sprang up fast and rank – how horrid were the curses they entailed upon me! Bertha Mason, the true daughter of an infamous mother, dragged me through all the hideous and degrading agonies which must attend a man bound to a wife at once intemperate and unchaste.

Jane: Pray sir, calm yourself!

Roch: Jane, for four years I suffered these agonies – I stood on the verge of despair – a broken-hearted, hopeless man. My father and my brother, who died soon after this fatal marriage, had not made it known to my

friends in England, to which country we soon sailed. Oh, 'twas a fearful voyage – she became a raving monster! I arrived at Thornfield, had her safely lodged in the third story and hired Grace Poole to tend her – she and Carter the surgeon who dressed Mason's wounds are the only two I have ever admitted to my confidence. Grace has been a good keeper but my wife is cunning and will sometimes elude her vigilance and commit those wild acts that become dangerous to my repose and safety. You have heard my story – do you pity me?

Jane: From my soul!

Roch: I felt assured you would. Oh, Jane you are my better angel – it was because I felt and knew your heart that I resolved to marry you, that I asked you to accept my pledge of fidelity and to give me yours. Say then, you will be mine?

Jane: Sir –

Roch: Jane, mean you go one way in the world and to suffer me to go another?

Jane: I do.

Roch: Would it then be sinful to love me?

Jane: It would be sinful to obey you, sir.

Roch: Jane, give one glance to my wretched life when you are gone. What then is left me – where shall I look for hope?

Jane: Where I do – there!

Roch: Then you will not yield?

Jane: No.

Roch: You condemn me to live wretched and die accu[r]sed!

Jane: I advise you to live sinless and to die tranquil.

Roch: Pshaw! 'tis false pride, fear of others – who in the world cares for you or will be injured by what you do?

Jane: I care, sir, for myself – that moral principle that sustained me when a poor friendless child is all I have at this hour to stand by and there I plant my foot.

Roch: You will leave me, Jane?

Jane: Yes – heaven bless you, my dear master, and keep you from harm – and still reward you for past kindness to me.

Roch: Jane –

Jane: Farewell – farewell for ever! (*Rushes out*)

Roch: Jane – Jane Eyre – oh lost – lost! (*Staggers back*)

Scene closes

Scene 2

Outside of Thornfield Hall

Enter Jane Eyre

Jane: I must fly temptation, even as the spirit bending over me last night instructed me, ‘Daughter, fly temptation’ – I will follow the instruction, and he, my kind master, he will seek me and find me gone. Ha! what will not he suffer. Oh, let me call down one blessing on him and now again the poor lone and friendless girl, conscious in integrity, seeks a home wherever heaven may direct her steps. (Exits)

Enter Joe Joker

Joe: This is a queer world – a fellow’s no sooner comfortable than it’s all up with him – I thought I was all right yesterday and now it’s all t’other way!

Enter Betty

Betty: Oh, Joe, I do feel so melancholy, I thought Miss Jane was going to be a lady and now she isn’t you see – oh, you men – you are all wretches – I wouldn’t have anything to do with a man after this!

Joe: Well, but you don’t mean to say, because this master of ours is a rum un, that I’m like him?

Betty: You are all alike, there never was a man yet that was worth a dump!

Joe: If you come to that, men and women’s much of a muchness, for you can’t make a good woman without cutting her head right off – what have you got to complain of – I’m doing the thing that’s right as a sweetheart and you’ll find me right as a trivet when we are married!

Betty: Well, I dare say I was wrong.

Joe: Lord bless you, I should never have two wives from one of the soundest principles in nature!

Betty: I should like to see that principle – what is it, tell me?

Joe: Well, among all the women as I seed, I never seed the woman yet, as was not a match for the best man alive and as couldn’t give him a little un into the bargain.

Betty: Oh Joe, you are a duck after all!

Joe: Well, woman is comfortable notwithstanding. (A window is thrown open discovering a glaring flame. The woman appears – laugh etc.) Holloa! what’s that, the hall is on fire!

Enter Rochester

Roch: Ha! the hall on fire – where is Jane – Jane Eyre! (Rushes up)

Joe: Stay, sir, for heaven’s sake!

Roch: Stand off – Jane, I come to rescue you! (Rushes in)

Betty: Oh, do not follow him!

Joe: He is our master and must not perish thus! (Follows)

Screams – Servants rush out etc

Roch (at window): She will perish – Jane – Jane Eyre! (The woman appear at top of roof etc.) The flames suffocate me!

Omnes: Ah, he will be lost!

Joe is seen bearing him off as the flames burst forth and part of Hall falls in – the female still laughing as she falls among the ruins

Tableau etc.

Scene 3

Country with Neat House

Enter Jane

Jane: What am I to do, where wend my way – oh that flash – the rain has chilled me – my limbs refuse their office – faint, cold – oh, here is shelter surely, they will not refuse me entrance till this storm shall pass away – courage, Jane! (Knocks)

Hannah (at door): What do you want?

Jane: I would see your mistress to beg a night’s shelter.

Hann: We can’t take in vagrants to lodge, it isn’t likely!

Jane: I shall die if I am turned away!

Hann: Not you – I’m afraid you have some ill plans agate – if you have any followers, housebreakers, or such like, you may tell em we are not by ourselves in the house (disappears).

Jane: What is to be my fate – oh, this hour is horror, hope leaves me – well, I can but die!

Enter St John

St J: All must die, my poor girl, but all are not condemned to meet a lingering doom such as yours would be were you to perish here – come let me assist you (knocks).

Jane: Oh sir, thank you!

Hann (at door): That you, master – there has been a beggar woman – oh dear me here she is!

St J: Take this poor girl and attend her kindly.

Hann: Yes, master – come in my dear – poor thing, why she’s quite faint, I declare. (Exeunt)

Room

Scene 4

Jane discovered, St John attending her – Diana and Mary St John on each side of her

- Diana:* Oh brother, how fortunate you saw her – the poor girl might have died at our very door had you not seen her.
- St J:* When you name to us the residence of your friends we can write to them and you can be restored to your home.
- Jane:* I am without friends or home, not one tie links me to any living being.
- St J:* Where did you last reside?
- Jane:* Pardon me but that must remain a secret.
- St J:* Yet if I know nothing of you I can not help you and help you need.
- Jane:* I need it and seek it so far that some generous person may put me in the way of getting work.
- St J:* What have you been accustomed to?
- Jane:* Sir, you have rescued me by your hospitality from death and I will tell you as much of my history as I dare – I am an orphan the daughter of a clergyman – my parents died before I could know them – I was brought up and educated at a charitable institution where I passed eight years as a pupil and teacher – you may have heard of the Lowood Orphan Asylum.
- St J:* I have.
- Jane:* I left Lowood to become a private governess – this place I was suddenly obliged to quit – the reason of my departure, I cannot, ought not to explain.
- St J:* Can it be? Lowood – you are the niece then surely of Mrs Reed of Gateshead who has died since you left her and your name Jane Eyre!
- Jane:* Oh sir, you a stranger – how know you this?
- St J:* By this letter which but yesterday I received – you had an uncle in Madeira who is dead and has left you rich!
- Jane:* Rich?
- St J:* Yes, your uncle's attorney and agent has been seeking you – your fortune is vested in the English funds – Briggs has the will and necessary documents.
- Jane:* Mock not a poor girl thus.
- St J:* 'Tis true and more, your father was related to my mother. Your uncle also – who disinheriting myself and sister leaves his fortune to his orphan niece – a fortune of £20,000.
- Jane:* It cannot be – 'tis some mistake!
- St J:* No mistake.
- Jane:* Your mother, then was my father's sister and my aunt!
- St J:* Yes.

- Jane:* You and your sisters, then, are my cousins, our blood flows from the same source – and I have some one to own and to love – oh heaven, for this great blessing accept my prayers – cousins, embrace me, come to my arms, my heart!

Group around her and Scene closes

Scene 5

Country near Thornfield

Enter Briggs

- Briggs:* Who would be a lawyer bothered with every body's business and troubles – here's my friend Mason become a raving madman and obliged to have a keeper – and here's the niece of my late client John Eyre, to whom he has left £20,000, not to be heard of. All I can gather is that an aunt at Gateshead, now dead, had discarded her and placed her at Lowood institution to get rid of her – on enquiring there, I find she had gone to Thornfield Hall – went thither and found that she had gone off and the house was burned down – where shall I find her? I must go to the St Johns, the next of kin, and notice them – who would be in the law! *(Exit)*

Enter Joe Joker

- Joe:* Here's a shut up to a fellow's ambition – burnt out – I threw off my coat in my hurry and never saw it again – my old Jacket went too and now I'm as badly off as ever!

Enter Betty

- Betty:* Oh dear, here's a pretty business – I've nothing left but what I stand in – and poor Jane, nobody knows whether she was burned or not for she can't be found anywhere!
- Joe:* Ah, that's the most shocking thing of the whole.
- Betty:* It is indeed – oh dear – boo-oo!
- Joe:* Now if you cry like that I shall bolt.

Enter Jane Eyre

- Jane:* Now that I am not dependent on him, I must see him once again – what do I see – Betty!
- Betty:* Oh, my dear Miss, how glad I am to see you!

Jane: Mr Rochester, tell me –
 Betty: Oh, poor gentleman!
 Jane: What has befallen him? – I left the hall without leave-taking –
 Joe: Lucky you did for the hall is burned to the ground!
 Jane: And Mr Rochester?
 Betty: Oh, miss he was in great danger but Joe saved him from the flames.
 Joe: Yes Miss, he's safe, but his senses, I fear, are gone and he is blind they say.
 Jane: This is a blow indeed – but do they know the cause of the fire?
 Joe: Why they do say it was Mr Rochester's wife that he kept confined upstairs – she was mad and the woman who watched her was fond of a drop – so they think she had taken a little too much and had fallen asleep, that the mad lady had escaped and set the house on fire, for when I first saw it, she was screaming and laughing at one of the windows – a short time after she gained the roof which soon fell in and she was never seen again.
 Jane: Alas, poor creature! and where is Mr Rochester?
 Joe: At a farm close by.
 Jane: Shew me to it instantly – Joseph – Betty droop not you shall not suffer – I will provide for you – for I am now rich and will reward you!
 Joe and Betty: This way, then, Miss Jane. (Exeunt)

Scene 6

Farm House

Enter John Dean and Rochester

Roch: It is dark – why do you bring me here – lead me to the light I say!
 Dean: Sir, I cannot give light to eyes that have it not – lean on my arm, sir.
 Roch: Let me alone, I can walk without it.

Enter Diana and Jane

Diana: There is the wreck of what he was.
 Jane: Edward!
 Roch: That voice – what sweet madness seizes me – where is this speaker is it Jane indeed?
 Jane: Yes, 'tis she who when fortune smiled upon you, fled, rather than encounter shame – because she could not meet you in equality and honor – but that bar removed she seeks you in your troubles, to bring you hope, peace and happiness. Now rich herself, she comes to share her riches with you, to tend you with care and love.
 Roch: What do I hear – Jane, will you – can you marry me?

Jane: I can – I will!
 Roch: And you will love me?
 Jane: Most truly, sir!
 Roch: And can you bear with my infirmities?
 Jane: They are monstrous – I love you better now – than in your proud state of independence when you disdained every title but that of giver and protector.
 Roch: Come, my own fond girl and give life and joy to him whose life had nearly left him – Ha –
 Jane: What's that?
 Roch: 'Twas like the lightning's flash – it is no fancy – I see – tree and flower the glorious light of day – what joy breaks upon me, 'tis she – she that I have idolised – do so still – my Jane – my wife!
 Jane: Oh, for this in gratitude I bow in thankful reverence!

Mason rushes in

Mason: Ha ha! I have you, I know you, give Bertha back to me or I'll tear her from your heart! (*Noise and cries of 'Follow – follow – this way'*)
 Jane: He is mad!
 Roch: Watch – stand back!
 Mason: Bertha – where is she – you have hidden her from me – I will have her (*flies upon Rochester*)
 Jane: Help – help – Mary – John – Help! (*They enter*)

Business – Rochester is weak and as Mason is dragging him down Jane swings him round – he staggers, recovers and makes another furious rush upon them both – at this Joe Joker enters and seizing Mason by the throat shakes him

Joe: No, you don't do anything of the kind, you rascal!

Carter with others arrive. Farm servants enter

Carter: Secure him – pinion him – he is mad (*they do so*).

Enter Briggs

Briggs: As a march hare, I'll affirm that fact – You, I believe, are Jane Eyre – I, as attorney for your late uncle John Reed, Merchant of the Island of Madeira, place into your hands a fortune of twenty thousand pounds, left you according to his will and testament.
 Jane: Edward, do you hear? – you are safe, and Jane Eyre the orphan girl your wife. Joseph, the preserver of my husband and myself, be happy; for I will make you so!
 Joe: Huzza!
 Omnes: Huzza!