

Characters in Prologue

Mrs Reed  
Georgina  
Jane Eyre  
John Reed  
Miss Abbot

} Children

Characters in Drama

Fairfax Rochester  
Mr Brocklehurst  
John Reed  
Colonel Dent  
Lord Ingram  
Mr Eshton  
Mr Mason

} Guests

Jane Eyre  
Blanche Ingram  
Mary Ingram  
Dowager Lady Ingram  
Louisa Eshton  
Amy Eshton  
Grace Poole  
Bertha Mason  
Mrs Fairfax  
Geogina Reed  
Adèle

Prologue

Mrs Reed, Georgina and Eliza discovered

Mrs Reed: It's of no use seeking a quarrel. I know Jane's temper well enough.  
Georgina: Little upstart. Having children of your own, I wonder how you could burden yourself with your husband's sister's child.  
Mrs Reed: My dear Georgina, all regrets now are useless. I have repented my promise ever since I made it. She was Reed's sister's child and a great favourite with him; in his last illness, he had it brought continually to his bedside; and but an hour before he died, he bound me by vow to

keep the creature. I would as soon have been charged with a pauper brat out of a workhouse: but he was weak, naturally weak. John does not at all resemble his father; I am glad of it: John is like me and like my brothers.

Georgina: She's always quarrelling and a regular little fiend of a temper. Look at her the other day when you put her in the Red Room for her impertinence; she waited until we were all asleep and then, shaking the door violently, screamed at the top of her voice – she had seen a ghost all on purpose to frighten us. If she had been in pain one would have excused it, but she only wanted to prevent our sleep. I know her wicked tricks.

Miss Abbot: I suppose you locked her up because she was a naughty girl.  
Mrs Reed: Exactly. You see I have a very difficult duty to perform, and not by any means a pleasant one in bringing up this girl – in my family. She has neither talents or application excepting for mischief. And she is always quarrelling with my own children – on the occasion Georgina was mentioning the little fury shrieked so loudly and worked herself into such a passion that she became delirious and we had to send for a doctor to her.

Miss Abbot: Your family physician?  
Mrs Reed: No, indeed – I sent to the apothecary who usually physicks the servants when any of them are ailing – I must have been mad to promise Reed to take care of her.

Miss Abbot: Mr Reed has been dead about nine years I think?  
Mrs Reed: Yes –

Georgina: And knowing how deeply Mamma feels his loss, that little wretched Jane would insist on saying that she had seen uncle Reed's ghost because the Red Room was the one in which he died. Oh, she is artful. That girl will come to a bad end, she's no gratitude in her.

Mrs Reed: Mr Lloyd the doctor has suggested me sending her to school. I have therefore communicated with Mr Brocklehurst of the Lowood Orphan Schools – and he has signified his attention of calling on me with respect to Jane – and I shall be sincerely pleased to see the back of her.

Miss Abbot: Well, I must say I have before told you, Mrs Reed, my opinion about the child – She's an underhanded little thing. I never saw a girl of her age with so much cover.

Mrs Reed: Why should she think herself on an equality with my daughters and my son because I kindly allowed her to be brought up with them? Miss Abbot, my children will have money at my death – she will be a beggar, a dependent on strangers as she now is on me – but her obstinate spirit and pride prevents her trying to make herself agreeable to her benefactress.

Miss Abbot: I wonder you don't beat her well.  
Mrs Reed: I have – I do – but it's no use trying to flog out of the body that which is born in the flesh – the girl is wicked and deceitful to the backbone.



*Jane looking in at back*

*Jane Eyre:* Please, Aunt Reed, may I come in the room?

*Mrs Reed:* Don't call me Aunt Reed until you have learned to behave yourself better.

*Jane (meekly):* I've been trying to be good.

*Georgina:* Don't tell lies, Jane. How do you know what my feelings are?

*Mrs Reed (strikes her):* Take that and that – don't be so pert – there is something truly forbidding in a child taking up her elders in that manner.

*Georgina:* Her elders and her betters.

*Jane:* My betters – Yes that story is always ding-donged into my ears – but Aunt Reed – Mrs Reed – I do try to be good – indeed I do, though it seems the more I try, the more often I'm called wicked.

*Mrs Reed:* No snivelling – be seated somewhere, and until you can speak pleasantly, remain silent – come Georgina and Miss Abbot, let us go into the drawing room. This girl's presence is hateful to me, I cannot brook deceit. *(goes out L.C. door)*

*Georgina (following):* And I hate liars. *(Jane looks at her.)* Oh, I don't mind your looks, we don't believe in crocodile's tears or vile tempers.

*Miss Abbot (follows):* Say your prayers, Miss Eyre, when you're by yourself, for if you don't repent something bad might come down the chimney and fetch you away.

*Jane:* If you're good people I shouldn't care to be fetched away by any thing good; Eliza and Georgy always do right and John calls his mother names and yet he's his mother's darling boy – but everything I do they call me naughty for however much I try to be good.

*Enter Dr Lloyd*

*Dr Lloyd:* Yes, certainly, I can find my way – so here you are. Well, missey, how are you today? Come here, Miss Jane. Your name is Jane is it not?

*Jane:* Yes, Sir, Jane Eyre.

*Dr Lloyd:* Well, you have been crying, Miss Jane Eyre; can you tell me what about? Have you any pain?

*Jane:* No, Sir.

*Dr Lloyd:* What made you ill yesterday? Did you have a fall? – fall – why, that is like a baby again!

*Jane:* I was knocked down, but that did not make me ill.

*Dr Lloyd:* The fall did not make you ill; what did then?

*Jane:* I was shut up in a room where there is a ghost, till after dark.

*Dr Lloyd:* Ghost! What – you are a baby after all! You are afraid of ghosts.

*Jane:* Of Mr Reed's ghost I am: he died in that room, and was laid out there.

*Dr Lloyd:* Nonsense! And is it that makes you so miserable? Are you afraid now in daylight?

*Jane:* No: but night will come again before long: and besides – I am unhappy – very unhappy, for other things.

*Dr Lloyd:* What other things?

*Jane:* For one thing, I have no father or mother, brothers or sisters.

*Dr Lloyd:* You have a kind aunt and cousins.

*Jane:* But John Reed knocked me down, and my Aunt shut me up in the Red Room.

*Dr Lloyd:* Don't you think Gateshead Hall a very beautiful house? Are you not very thankful to have such a fine place to live at?

*Jane:* It is not my house, Sir; and Abbot says I have less right to be here than a servant.

*Dr Lloyd:* Pooh! you can't be silly enough to wish to leave such a splendid place.

*Jane:* If I had anywhere else to go, I should be glad to leave it; but I can never get away from Gateshead till I am a woman.

*Dr Lloyd:* Perhaps you may – who knows? Have you any relations besides Mrs Reed?

*Jane:* I think not, Sir.

*Dr Lloyd:* None belonging to your father?

*Jane:* I don't know; I asked Aunt Reed once, and she said possibly I might have some poor low relations called Eyre, but she knew nothing about them.

*Dr Lloyd:* If you had such, would you like to go to them?

*Jane:* No; I should not like to belong to poor people.

*Dr Lloyd:* Not even if they were kind to you?

*Jane:* No.

*Dr Lloyd:* But are your relatives so very poor? Are they working people?

*Jane:* I cannot tell. Aunt Reed says if I have any, they must be a beggarly set; I should not like to go a begging.

*Dr Lloyd:* Would you like to go to school?

*Jane:* John Reed hates his school – but what he hates I might like – he hates me, he does – I should like to go to school.

*Dr Lloyd:* Well, well; who know what may happen? The child ought to have change of air and scene. *(To himself)* Nerves not in a good state.

*Enter Servant with John Reed*

*Dr Lloyd:* Is that your mistress, nurse? I should like to speak to her before I go. *(Exit)*

*Servant:* Miss Jane, come upstairs and take off your pinafore – Mrs Reed wants to see you directly – come.

*Jane:* But I want to read, please.



*John Reed:* Don't you hear, Ma' wants you, you have no business to take our books, you little rat, you are a dependent, mamma says: you have no money, your father left you none; you ought to beg, and not to live here with gentlemen's children like us, and eat the same meals we do, and wear clothes at our Mamma's expense. Now, I'll teach you to rummage my bookshelves: for they *are* mine; all the house belongs to me, or it will do in a few years.

*Jane:* Mercy – let me alone – I'll go quietly, I will. (Exeunt)

*Enter Mrs Reed and Mr Brocklehurst*

*Mrs Reed:* Then it is understood, Mr Brocklehurst – Miss Eyre joins your Establishment at Lowood.

*Mr Brock:* A patron of that noble institution. We will see to her moral and intellectual culture –

*Mrs Reed:* I should wish her to be brought up in a manner suiting her prospects, to be made useful, to be kept humble; as for the vacations, she will, with your permission, spend them always at Lowood.

*Mr Brock:* Your decisions are perfectly judicious, madam; humility is a Christian grace, and one peculiarly appropriate to the pupils at Lowood; I, therefore, direct that special care shall be bestowed on its cultivation amongst them. And, madam, I don't allow the principal even to thwart my pet theory. The other day I found two of the girls had dared to have one extra clean tucker each in the week – I severely reprimanded them – fancy the extravagance – two extra tuckers to be washed – but the greatest act of disobedience to orders, I have yet to relate. In settling accounts with the housekeeper I found a luncheon of bread and cheese had been served to the girls twice during a fortnight which the principal accounted for by saying, the porridge of the children's breakfast had been so dreadfully burnt they could not eat it. Now, Madam, as I have explained to you, my plan in bringing up these girls is, not to accustom them to habits of luxury and indulgence, but to render them hardy, patient, self-denying. Should any little accidental disappointment of the appetite occur, such as the spoiling of a meal, the under or over dressing of a dish, the incident ought not to be neutralised by replacing with something more delicate the comfort lost, thus pampering the body and obviating the aim of our institution, which ought to be the improvement of the spiritual edification of the pupils, by encouraging them to evince fortitude under any temporary privation. A brief address on these occasions should be substituted for the breakfast, wherein a judicious instructor would take the opportunity of referring to the sufferings of the primitive Christians, to the torments of martyrs. Ah, madam, if we put bread and cheese, instead of burnt porridge, into these children's mouths, we may indeed feed their little bodies – but what do we do for their little souls?

*Mrs Reed:* Won't you take a glass of wine?

*Mr Brock:* With pleasure; thank you, Madam, I feel rather weak; I will take a glass of wine. (*At luncheon*) I have studied also how best to mortify in them the worldly sentiment of pride and, only the other day I had a pleasing proof of my success. My second daughter, Augusta, went with her Mamma to visit the school, and on her return she exclaimed, Oh, dear Papa, how quiet and plain all the girls at Lowood look, with their hair combed behind their ears, and their long pinafores, and those little holland pockets outside their frocks – they are almost like poor people's children; they looked at my dress and mamma's, as if they had never seen a silk gown before.

*Mrs Reed:* This is the state of things I quite approve; had I sought all England over, I could scarcely have found a system more exactly fitting a child like Jane Eyre. Consistency, my dear Mr Brocklehurst, I advocate consistency in all things.

*Mr Brock:* Consistency, Madam, is the first of Christian duties, and it has been observed in every arrangement connected with the establishment at Lowood: plain fare, simple attire, unsophisticated accommodations, hardy and active habits: such is the order of the day in the house and its inhabitants.

*Mrs Reed:* Quite right, Sir. I may then depend upon this child being received as a pupil at Lowood, and there being trained in conformity to her position and prospects?

*Mr Brock:* Madam, you may: she shall be placed in that nursery of chosen plants – and I trust she will show herself grateful for the inestimable privilege of her election.

*Enter Jane*

*Mr Brock:* So this is the little girl respecting whom you have applied to me – What is her age?

*Mrs Reed:* Twelve –

*Mr Brock:* Your name, little girl?

*Jane:* Jane Eyre, Sir.

*Mr Brock:* Well, Jane – and are you a good girl?

*Mrs Reed (shaking her head):* Perhaps the less said the better, Mr Brocklehurst.

*Mr Brock:* Sorry indeed to hear it! She and I must have some talk. Come here – no sight so sad as that of a naughty child, especially that of a naughty little girl. Do you know where the wicked go after death?

*Jane:* They go to – a pit full of fire.

*Mr Brock:* And should you like to fall into that pit, and to be burned there for ever?

*Jane:* No, Sir.

*Mr Brock:* What must you do to avoid it?



- Jane:* I must keep in good health, and not die.
- Mr Brock:* How can you keep in good health? Children must die. I hope that sigh is from the heart, and that you repent of ever having been the occasion of discomfort to your excellent benefactress.
- Jane:* What is a benefactress, Sir? Everybody says that word to me – what does it mean, benefactress?
- Mr Brock:* Well, I cannot better explain the meaning of the word than by reminding you of yours – Mrs Reed to you has been a benefactress.
- Jane:* Oh, then benefactress means something disagreeable.
- Mrs Reed:* Mr Brocklehurst, I believe I intimated in the letter which I wrote to you three weeks ago, that this little girl has not quite the character and disposition I could wish: it will be necessary to guard against her worst fault, a tendency to deceit. I mention this in your hearing, Jane, that you may not attempt to impose on Mr Brocklehurst.
- Mr Brock:* Deceit is, indeed a sad fault in a child, it is akin to falsehood and all liars will go to – mustard, thank you – she shall be watched, Mrs Reed; I will speak to Miss Temple and the teachers. She shall return with me today. What say you, Madam – I myself will see her into the coach and give her into the care of the guard – and will write to Miss Temple to say she is to expect the new girl – in half-an-hour I will return for her – au revoir. Madam – little girl, here's a book called "The Child's Guide" – read it, especially the account of Martha Gibbs, a naughty child, addicted to falsehood and deceit.
- (Exit D.L.)
- Mrs Reed:* Now, Jane – get out of the room – put on your bonnet and shawl. I shall be rid of you this day, and Lowood School will have a worthy addition to the strings of paupers already there.
- Jane (goes R.H. burning with rage):* I want to speak to you aunt. (Exit Jane)
- Mrs Reed:* Don't Aunt me – go out of the room, return to the nursery.

*Re-enter Jane*

- Mrs Reed:* Go out of the room and return to the nursery until Mr Brocklehurst is ready to take you to school.
- Jane:* Speak I *must*. I am not deceitful: if I were, I should say I loved *you*; but I declare I do not love you: I dislike you the [worst] of anybody in the world except John Reed; and this book about the liar, you may give it to your own girl Georgina, for it is she who tells lies, and not I.
- Mrs Reed:* What more have you to say?
- Jane:* I am glad you are no relation of mine: I'll tell everyone that you treated me with miserable cruelty.
- Mrs Reed:* How dare you affirm that, Jane Eyre?
- Jane:* How dare I, Mrs Reed? Because it is the *truth*. You think I have no feelings, and that I can do without one bit of love or kindness; people

- think you a good woman, but you are bad; hard hearted. *You* are deceitful!
- Mrs Reed:* Out of my sight – unless you'd draw down a curse upon your head – Mr Brocklehurst, Mr Brocklehurst, take her away at once – I feel anxious to be relieved of a responsibility that has become unbearable.
- Mr Brock (shaking Jane):* The spirit of the evil one reigns in this little form. Ungrateful girl. It will be my duty to warn my scholars against you – to warn them you are a cast-away. The teachers will be required to watch you – keep their eyes on your movements – weigh your words, scrutinize your actions, and your fellow scholars must be warned to avoid your company – for you are worse than many a little heathen who says its prayers to Bramah – you are a liar.
- Jane:* Oh, pray don't say that.
- Mr Brock:* It is the truth – Heavens, would you try to corrupt me into telling a lie – my pupils must be prevented from associating with such an odious little viper – from one who has repaid the kindness and generosity of her benefactress by an ingratitude so bad, so dreadful that at last her excellent patroness was obliged to separate her from her own young ones lest she might by example contaminate their purity – we shall crush that spirit, we shall combat the demon – come Miss Eyre – you must be taught, you are a dependent, a pauper.
- Jane:* Goodbye, Aunt Reed – forgive me – I'm not a liar – I'm not deceitful, indeed I'm not – say goodbye once?
- Mrs Reed:* No – begone, ungrateful girl, and never let me see you more.
- Jane:* What would Uncle Reed say to you if he were still alive?
- Mrs Reed:* What?
- Jane:* My uncle Reed is in Heaven and can see all you do and think – So can my poor Mamma and Papa – though you have never loved me, Aunt Reed – and though you wish me dead and won't say good bye – I say it to you, Good Bye, and when I say my prayers – I'll still say, Heaven bless Aunt Reed.

## Act I

### Scene 1

*Thornfield Hall*

*Mrs Fairfax and Jane Eyre discovered*

- Mrs Fairfax:* How do you like Thornfield?
- Jane:* I like it very much.



*Mrs Fairfax:* Yes, it is a pretty place, but I fear it will be getting out of order unless Mr Rochester should take it into his head to come and reside here permanently – or at least visit it rather oftener – great houses and fine grounds require the presence of the proprietor – what do you think of Mr Rochester?

*Jane:* You said he was not strikingly peculiar.

*Mrs Fairfax:* Well –

*Jane:* I think him changeful and abrupt – an uneven temper – our first meeting three months ago did not greatly dispose me in his favour.

*Mrs Fairfax:* Oh, when you met him in the Hay Lane, when his horse had thrown him – I never heard all about that – at all events he, usually so reserved, said you showed great courage in holding his restive horse until he could remount – he seemed quite taken with your tact and presence of mind – said you were a woman of sense – and that's more than he ever said to me and it's six years I've been in his service.

*Jane:* And he thanked me by saying I was the cause of his accident – besides the coarse tone in which he asked my name and the sneer – when he learned I was only a governess – 'twas bitterness itself.

*Mrs Fairfax:* I believe that was put on – no doubt he may appear rude to a stranger but I am so accustomed to his manner I never think of it and then if he has peculiarities of temper – allowance should be made.

*Jane:* Why?

*Mrs Fairfax:* Partly because it is his nature and we can none of us help our nature – and partly he has painful thoughts, no doubt, to harass him and make his spirits unequal.

*Jane:* What about?

*Mrs Fairfax:* Family troubles for one thing.

*Jane:* But you told me my little pupil was his ward – has he any family?

*Mrs Fairfax:* Not now, but he has had – or at least relatives – well, his father had some misunderstanding and I believe was not quite fair to him – he is not very forgiving, he broke with his family, and now for many years he has led an unsettled kind of life since the death of his brother – I don't think he has ever been resident at Thornfield for a fortnight together, until you came here, when he seems suddenly to have found pleasure in talking French with you – his brother died without a will and left him master of the estate – (*with meaning*) he used to thoroughly shun the old place.

*Jane:* Why should he shun it?

*Mrs Fairfax (evasively):* Perhaps he thinks it gloomy –

*Jane:* There is some mystery there. I feel sure of it.

*Mrs Fairfax:* Why?

*Jane:* You either are ignorant or conceal the real nature and origin of Mr Rochester's trials – don't you remember when I first arrived, when you showed me over the mansion and how I was startled by a dreadful

laugh – that seemed to proceed from some demon – you told me it was Grace Poole – who is she? and why does she always live here? – you know her – you spoke to her – cautioned her to be quiet.

*Mrs Fairfax:* She was at Thornfield before I came – she is a person we have to sew and assist Leah in her housemaid's work – not altogether unobjectionable in some points, but she does well enough.

*Jane:* Does she get good wages?

*Mrs Fairfax:* Yes, I wish I had as good.

*Jane:* Is she a valuable hand?

*Mrs Fairfax:* Ah! – she understands what she has to do – nobody better and it is not every one could fill her shoes, not for all the money she gets. But Mr Rochester has written to say he will bring over some friends today – friends from the Leas, I believe there is quite a party assembled there; Lord Ingram, Sir George Lynn, Colonel Dent and others – when these fine fashionable people get together, they are so surrounded by elegance and gaiety, they are in no hurry to separate, and Mr Rochester is so talented and so lively in society, that I believe he is a general favourite with the ladies, and Mr Rochester well knows the ladies at the Leas. There are Mrs Eshton and her three daughters – very elegant young ladies indeed; and there are the Honourable Blanche and Mary Ingram; most beautiful women, I suppose – indeed Miss Blanche Ingram came here to a Christmas Ball and was considered the belle of the evening.

*Jane:* And this beautiful and accomplished lady you say is not married.

*Mrs Fairfax:* It appears not.

*Jane:* But I wonder – no wealthy nobleman or gentleman has taken a fancy to her – Mr Rochester for instance – he is rich is he not?

*Mrs Fairfax:* Yes, but then you see there is considerable difference in their ages. But between ourselves I expect marriage will be the end of Mr Rochester's visits to the Leas, and Miss Ingram – you've dropped your work Miss Eyre – but here's your pupil coming – I'm glad she has taken to you so kindly – her guardian Mr Rochester is very pleased with the progress she has made – dear me there's Miss Adèle she's running over the flower beds – oh, Miss Adèle, Miss Adèle –

*Jane:* Her guardian, Mr Rochester – my pupil's guardian – for some weeks I thought it might be his daughter – but he is not married – not even a widower – she calls him Mr Rochester. This is certainly an agreeable change from Lowood School – those eight years of servitude – an age seems to have elapsed since the day which brought me first to Lowood. I have never quitted it until now. All my vacations have been spent at School. I have had no communication by letter or message with the outer world, School Rules, School duties, School habits, notions and voices and places and phrases and costumes – This is all I know of existence after seven years of routine – I am now free – Mr Brocklehurst – that petty tyrant – that terror of the poor Children of Charity – he did



one good deed to tell against the years of misery he cost me – when he gave me my testimonials from the School – he has left since I did – and [to] think my advertisement for governess should have been so soon answered – Mr Rochester seems pleased with me – he is a strange man – absent, gluff – I thought him ugly when I first came here – but since his manners have changed, his features improved – Aunt Reed – can I ever forgive the wrong you did on a helpless, friendless child, one who was confided to your care and home – whilst the house you found her was amongst strangers – the bread she broke – provided by Charity. *‘A young lady accustomed to tuition (I had been a teacher two years) is desirous of meeting with a situation in a private family where the children are under fourteen. She is qualified to teach the usual branches of a good English education, together with French, Drawing and Music. Address J.E., Post Office, Lowood, Somersetshire.’*

*Adèle:* Well governess – ah ma gouvernante – my dear you speak my language as well as Mr Rochester does; I can talk to you as I did to him, on the ship that brought us to a huge city, with very dark houses and all smoky, not at all like the pretty clean town I came from.

*Jane:* Adèle, with whom did you live when you were in that pretty clean town you speak of?

*Adèle:* I lived long ago with mamma, but she’s gone to Heaven. Mamma used to teach me to dance and sing, and to say verses. A great many gentlemen and ladies came to see mamma and I used to dance before them, or to sit on their knees and sing to them; I liked it.

*Jane:* I wonder who her parents can be!

*Enter Rochester & Mason W.E.L.*

*Rochester:* I tell you Mason, it’s of no use. I know your anxiety – but think of the anxiety and responsibility in the matter if harm came to you.

*Mason:* Harm, fiddlesticks, besides I’ve been before – but, however, if you think it advisable – I’ll go to London and see my ship in and then return later on. I’ve some correspondence from Jamaica I think will interest you – devilish good bargains on hand.

*Rochester:* Not the first time I’ve made *good* bargains in Jamaica, eh – Mason?

*Mason:* Why? How you do run on the same string – you’re not the only victim in the world – Ha! Ha! Who is the Lady? Governess I presume, as I see her with your protégée – not a bit like you Rochester.

*Rochester:* What matters – you’ll stay tonight I hope, won’t you?

*Mason:* No, I’m for Town by the coach as early as possible – strange, Rochester, that governess of yours reminds me of some face I’ve seen abroad – where did you pick her up? Some poor relation perhaps?

*Rochester (R):* No! Mrs Fairfax advertised for a governess – she seemed a good sort of girl, known better days, superior sort of person.

*Mason (L):* Ha! Ha! – Rochester – no tricks – no more French opera dancers.

*Rochester:* By heavens, Mason – silence, she is here in a position of trust. Beneath any gentleman’s roof her dependence would and shall be her safety – what devil’s mission has brought you to England?

*Mason:* Pastime. To see how you were getting on – have you any money – eh? If not I shall look in again before I leave – I’m on a very special mission – Mr Brocklehurst, our new vicar here, has asked me to give him a call, and then I set sail for Jamaica.

*Rochester:* If, for the sake of appearance, one must keep in with the parson – by the bye – Brocklehurst – here – Miss Eyre?

*Jane:* Yes, Sir –

*Rochester:* Wasn’t Brocklehurst the name of the man who directed the School at Lowood?

*Jane:* Yes, Sir.

*Rochester:* And you girls probably worshipped him?

*Jane:* Oh, no.

*Rochester:* You are very cool! No, what, a novice not worship her priest! That sounds blasphemous.

*Jane:* I disliked Mr Brocklehurst, and I was not alone in the feeling. He was a harsh man, at once pompous and meddling; he cut off our hair; and for economy’s sake brought us bad needles and thread, with which we could hardly sew.

*Mason:* That was very false economy – but Rochester – how will your fashionable friends the Ingrams the Marmadukes and others relish a stingy parson? stingy brothers are bad enough – eh, Rochester – Ha! Ha! You like Thornfield – eh? *(Exit L.)*

*Rochester:* What is there in this young girl that so enthralls me – that so rivets me to her presence – is it her simplicity – her candour – I can’t say it’s her beauty – and there is the simple loving expression in her eyes tells me I am not repulsive to her – or is she indifferent to me – no – I seem compelled to draw her out – is it her dependence – her poverty – Fairfax you are getting foolish – yet somehow Thornfield has lost its gloom for me – since Adèle had a governess. You examine me, Miss Eyre, do you think me handsome?

*Jane:* No, Sir.

*Rochester:* Ah! By my word! there is something singular about you, you rap out a round rejoinder, which, if not blunt, is at least brusque. What do you mean by it?

*Jane:* Sir, I was too plain: I beg your pardon, I ought to have replied that tastes differ.

*Rochester:* Will you consent to dispense with a great many conventional forms and phrases, without thinking that the omission arises from insolence?

*Jane:* I am sure, Sir, I should never mistake informality for insolence: one I rather like, the other nothing freeborn would submit to, even for a salary.



*Rochester:* I envy you your peace of mind, your clear conscience – nature meant me to be, on the whole, a good man, Miss Eyre: one of the better sort, and you see I am not so – yet I am not a villain, but only hackneyed in all the poor petty dissipations with which the rich and worthless try to get on life. When fate wronged me, then I degenerated. I wish I had stood firm – Heaven knows I do – dread remorse when you are tempted to err – Miss Eyre: remorse is the poison of life.

*Jane:* Repentance is said to be its cure, Sir.

*Rochester:* It is not its cure. (*Jane going*) Where are you going?

*Jane:* To Miss Adèle.

*Enter Adèle*

*Adèle:* Monsieur, je vous remercie mille fois de votre bonté: – C'est comme cela que maman faisait, n'est – ce pas, monsieur?

*Rochester:* Pre-cise-ly, and comme celá, she charmed the English gold out of my British breeches pocket. You must know, Miss Eyre, that Adèle's mother was a French opera dancer – named Céline Varens, towards whom I once entertained a grand passion – and Céline returned it, at least she said so, with [such] superior ardour that I installed her in an Hotel – gave her a complete establishment of servants, carriages, cashmeres, diamonds – in short I began the process of ruining myself in the orthodox style – like any other spooney – I had or I deserved to have the fate of all other spoonies – strange that I should choose you for the confidante of all this – but you with your naivety were made to be the recipient of secrets.

*Jane:* You flatter me – am I so excellent a confidante?

*Rochester:* One of the best, because I believe the truest – well, one evening I happened to call when Céline did not expect me – she was out – I awaited her return on the balcony – I sat down; took out a cigar – I will take one now if you will excuse me – suddenly a carriage drew up at the door – I recognized it as the one given to Céline, she alighted – I was about to call out – when a figure jumped from the carriage after her, cloaked and with a spurred heel – (*pause*) you never felt jealousy, did you, Miss Eyre?

*Jane:* I, Sir – I –

*Rochester:* Of course not – I need not ask – because you *never* felt Love – your soul sleeps – the shock is yet to be given that shall awaken it. But to proceed. I closed the casement after recognizing the intruder – entered the chamber where the couple had gone – liberated Céline from my protection, gave her notice to vacate her Hotel – so ended, as I thought, my dream – but unluckily the Varens, six months before, had given me – this girl Adèle whom she affirmed was my daughter – I took the poor thing out of the slums of Paris, and transplanted it here – Mrs Fairfax

found you to train it – but now you know that it is the illegitimate offspring of a French opera girl, you may think differently of your post and protégée (*rises*). You will be coming to me with notice that you have found another place and beg me to look out for another governess.

*Jane:* No, Adèle is not answerable for either her mother's faults or yours – I have a regard for her – and now that I know who she is – in a sense parentless – as I am myself – forsaken by her mother – and owned only out of charity by you – I shall cling closer to her than before –

*Rochester:* But see our visitors – I must meet the ladies – bye the bye – look well at my choice – you will acknowledge – Fairfax Rochester has taste.  
*Exeunt L.U.E.*

*Jane:* It's true then – what is it to me? If true or false, what interest to me? Jane Eyre, fool – to think you are gifted with the power of pleasing him – a gentleman of family – a man of the world – and I a dependent, despised by my rich relations – a novice – I must not forget it – it does good to no woman to be flattered by her superior, who cannot possibly intend to marry her, and it is madness in all women to let a secret love kindle within them which if unreturned and unknown must devour the life that feeds it.

*Enter Misses Mary & Blanche Ingram, Lady Ingram, Amy & Louisa Eshton, Colonel Dent, Lord Ingram, Mr Eshton & other guests; Blanche Ingram on Rochester's arm, Mary on the other, Miss Eshton on John Reed's*

*Rochester (laughing):* Really, Miss Ingram, there's no denying you any request.

*Blanche:* I never take a denial. You see, I have been spoiled – been used to have my own way in anything and I flatter myself I know how to take my own part and enforce obedience to my slightest wish.

*John Reed (to Miss Eshton):* I must tell him.

*Miss Eshton:* No, pray don't – Mr Reed?

*Rochester:* What's that, a remark on me – well, let's hear it?

*John Reed:* A lady who shall be nameless, suggested Mr Rochester must be happy – a thorn between two white roses.

*Rochester:* Ha! Ha! Some ladies might have reversed the saying and call it a rose –

*Mary:* Certainly not, Mr Rochester, where would they expect to find thorns – but at Thornfield.

*Omnes:* Very good – very good. (*Miss Ingram retires & chats with J. Reed*)

*Adèle:* Bonjour M[es]dames, et vous messieurs, je vous souhaite une reception agreable.

*Blanche:* What an odious little puppet –

*Mary:* How came that brat here? Get out of the way.

*Lady Ingram (whispers to them):* My dears, that is Mr Rochester's ward, the French girl I was speaking of.

*Blanche:* Mr Rochester – what a charming little thing.



- Mary:* What a love of a child.  
*Jane:* And this is Miss Ingram, this is to be Rochester's bride. He doesn't look at me now, whilst surrounded by the halo of beauty and riches. Yet I feel pleasure in regarding him like the thirst [a] perishing man might feel who knows the well to which he has crept is poisoned, still he stoops and drinks the divine draught.
- Blanche (to Rochester):* Mr Rochester, I thought you were not fond of children.  
*Rochester:* Nor am I.  
*Blanche:* Then, what induced you to take charge of such a little doll as that – where did you pick her up?  
*Rochester:* I did not pick her up, she was left on my hands.  
*Blanche:* You should have sent her to school.  
*Rochester:* I could not afford it; schools are so dear.  
*Blanche:* Why, I suppose you have a governess for her: I saw a person with her just now – has she gone? Oh, no, there she is by that tree. You pay her, of course; I should think it quite as expensive – more so; for you have them both to keep in addition.
- Jane:* Will Mr Rochester glance my way; no, the magnet holds him – I am but the negative pole.
- Mary:* You should hear Mamma on the chapter of governesses – Blanche and I have had, I should think, a dozen at least in our day, half of them detestable and the rest ridiculous with their fallow half-starved look.
- Rochester:* I don't find Miss Eyre either ridiculous or half-starved – she has certainly a rather careworn look.
- John Reed:* How do you spell your governess's name?  
*Rochester:* Eyre. Jane is her Christian name.  
*John Reed:* I knew a Jane Eyre once, not much good of her, used to be at Lowood School, she is a distant relation of mine.
- Rochester:* That must be the same, she came from Lowood, will you see her?  
*John Reed:* Oh hang it, Rochester you haven't brought me here to meet all my poor relations, I'm not interested in the products of ragged schools.
- Blanche:* Oh do, please, change the subject; if governesses, ragged schools and paupers are your only topics of conversation – Why ta – ta –
- Mary (going):* Sooner than be plagued with a lot of poor people after me I'd emigrate to Timbuctoo.
- Jane:* So that is John Reed, bitter and spiteful as a boy, cruel and revengeful as a man.
- Blanche:* Mr Rochester, do you mind accompanying us to the next mothers' meeting; that clergyman is an old bore, makes us waste hour after hour stuck round a table with a lot of antiquated old cats making clothing for the widows and orphans, for some unfortunate people who had no business to have had widows or orphans – Ma makes us go, because it is fashionable, because the Wiltons, and the Greys, go and we can't be out of the swim.

- Rochester:* Mr Brocklehurst is going to leave us.  
*Blanche:* Good news for his congregation.  
*John Reed:* If I mistake not – Brocklehurst used to be at Lowood – oh, Miss Ingram – I left London to escape my creditors, and I arrive at Thornfield to meet my poor relations and a meddling idiot of a clergyman, who used to be my horror as a lad.

*Enter Mr Brocklehurst*

- Mary:* Oh – Mr Reed, you should see our clergyman on horseback –  
*John Reed:* Does he ride well?  
*Mary:* He falls off better.  
*John Reed:* Do you ride?  
*Mary:* Not much – Blanche does –  
*Rochester:* Yes, Blanche adores the Hunt –  
*Blanche:* Indeed I do love the stirring sport. It puts fire into the blood – to guide the steed and curb his temper is a trial worth undergoing – then as he urges on his wild career, the hedges seem to fly away – no brooks or obstacles can stay his course – the hounds are loosed – the huntsmen join the cry – Tally Ho – Tally Ho – there's music in the sound of the sturdy hoofs – there's fire in every sportsman's breast – as like a lightning's flash they clear the fields – the woods and streams, ne'er drawing rein or staying pace until the brush is taken and the prize is won.
- Mr Brock:* Good day, ladies, good day, gentlemen. Mr Rochester, I have accepted your offer for this evening as it may be the last I shall pass at Thornfield – after a blameless life, after the multitudinous reforms I have introduced at Thornfield I am to be superseded by a younger man, by some beardless boy, by some unfledged B.A. from College – all the societies I have started will lose their head, the meetings of mothers will lose their Father and the great Anti-Social, Grand Junction Temperance Society, will cease to exist and have the water cut off – (*brings out petition*) glad to have your name to this most deserving case, three wooden legs in one family and all owing to drink, mother deserving woman, only once convicted and that when in self defence, she put her youngest child on the hob, instead of the cradle, since becoming a teetotaler she is aware it was wrong. Miss Ingram, you might subscribe to this – a Society for supplying chignons to the ladies of Central Africa.
- Mary:* We are very sorry, Mr. Brocklehurst you are going to leave.  
*Blanche (to Lady Ingram):* Oh, Ma, didn't Mary say that as if she meant it.  
*Mr Brock:* And after the reforms I have introduced – when I came to this diocese I found the incumbent preached his sermons to meagre congregations whilst whenever his curate, a young man, ascended the rostrum, all the pews were occupied by the young ladies of the district. I reformed this. I discharged the young curate and I introduced an aged man, toothless



and spectacled, with an impediment in his speech. This effectually put a stop to the congregation of maidens, for I'll guarantee no church in the city of London is more deserted than Mr Brocklehurst's at Thornfield. I have subdued the vanity of the district. I have driven the poor beyond the boundary, I have forcibly extracted the tithes. I have raised the rents, I have lowered the revenues, I have done my duty in every station of life. I have had six children since I came to reside here, and yet I am superseded – excuse this tear –

*Rochester:* Sorry to see you so affected.

*Mr Brock:* The sympathy of the congregation is the chief stipend of the Vicar.

*Rochester:* Mr Brocklehurst, I find this subscription list is headed by you for five guineas.

*Mr Brock:* My duty –

*Blanche:* Mr Brocklehurst is down for five guineas.

*Mr Brock:* Clergymen must set the example.

*Mary:* And in mine!

*Mr Brock:* Charity begins at home.

*Lord Ingram:* Haw, in mine six little Brocklehursts and each supposed to have contributed sums from one guinea to one shilling.

*Mr Brock:* Train up a child in the way it should go – (*pause*) isn't Mrs Brocklehurst down?

*Rochester:* Let us look, my Lord? (*Shakes his head*)

*Mr Brock:* That's a mistake – would you kindly put it down for me – Mrs Brocklehurst – three guineas.

*Lord Ingram:* And alter the total.

*Mr Brock:* No – don't alter the total.

*Blanche:* Oh – I see – these lists will all be added up without Mr Brocklehurst's contribution.

*Mr Brock:* Yes – It looks well to head the list – I put my name down on everything as an example – on principle – but –

*Mary:* It looks charitable and it's cheap –

*Rochester:* Ladies, I'm afraid we shall have a wet evening. Do you see the clouds yonder – a storm is brewing – we had better seek the shelter of the house.

*Jane (to Adèle):* Come, Adèle – I will see you in – my poor heart will break.

(*Exit L.H.*) (*Noise of rain*)

*Lady Ingram:* Dear me, it's commencing to rain.

*Blanche:* We shall get wet through – and I've only got my thin shoes on.

*Rochester:* Stand under the trees, whilst we fetch some umbrellas from the house – come gentlemen, volunteers this way.

*Lord Ingram:* We'll go with you – haw! what a confounded nuisance having to get wet running after the ladies. (*Exit with Rochester & Eshton*)

*Mr Brock:* Rain – I never travel unprovided for (*Brings out oilskin mackintosh*) – ladies I require an umbrella. (*Exit R.H.*)

*Blanche:* Send the governess for our cloaks and umbrellas.

*Lady Ingram:* And the pattens.

*Mary:* And my goloshes.

*Blanche:* Oh, of course she's gone – like all the class thoroughly lazy – oh, Mr Rochester has sent her out. Come here –

*Enter Jane with cloaks & umbrellas*

*Blanche:* Here's my cloak, put it round me, make haste – do.

*Mary:* Do stir yourself – Mr Reed, how proud you must be of your relations – she moves like a tortoise.

*Blanche:* As lazy as she is high.

*John Reed:* What's bred in the bone you know –

*Lady Ingram:* Oh, there's a drop of rain down my neck – my umbrella.

*Mary:* One for me.

*Blanche:* Of course you've got one (*snatches it*) give it to me – rain will make you grow – I'm sure a few inches would be an advantage – don't stand staring there – come Mr Reed.

*John Reed:* Ah, Blanche, there's something nice in a shower of rain – it makes the girl on your arm cling all the tighter for it – as one umbrella for two –

*Blanche:* Plague on that girl, she's quite upset my collar – servants are dreadfully annoying. Where can Rochester loiter – he's a husband worth spooning for.

*Brocklehurst crossing from R. to L.*

*Mr Brock:* Confound it, took the wrong road. The idea of those ladies being frightened at a few spots of rain – I don't fear a shower – umbrellas are an useless expense. (*Exit L.U.E.*) (*All off*)

*Jane (sitting under tree):* Why do I sit here – why do I linger in this storm? – if I should die here Heaven knows I had not intended to love him – I have tried to forget his position and mine – oh, Mother – Mother – why is dependence branded as a crime and poverty as a reproach? – (*pause*)

*Lightning & Thunder*

*Music*

*Enter Rochester hurriedly with cloak & umbrellas*

*Rochester:.* What – all gone – just as well or they'd have been soaked – (*sees Jane*) – what, Miss Eyre – here alone – why, you'll catch your death of cold – here, take my cloak and umbrella, or better still, take my arm – and I'll hold the shelter.



- Jane:* Oh, Mr Rochester – what will your rich friends say – let me go in alone!
- Rochester:* They will say and think what they please, conscience shall be my guide, and that tells me Fairfax Rochester always treats a lady with the respect due to her sex, even if she is other fellows' – poor relation.

## Scene 2

*A Chamber in Thornfield House (doors R.H. & L.H.)*

*Enter Mason R.H.*

- Mason:* Yes, I must be satisfied, I have left my name below – Rochester knows how to treat his friends – and I don't see why I shouldn't be amongst them – this little business over and I'll return to the drawing room – Grace – Grace – one moment – High – (*Exits slowly L.H.*) (*Pause*)

*A fearful scream is heard off – scuffle off stage*

- Mason (without):* Help, Help, Help, Will no one come – Rochester for the love of Heaven.

*Rochester rushes on R.H*

- Rochester:* Heavens – what has he done – I'm coming, I'm coming. (*Noise etc.*)

*Enter hurriedly Jane, Miss Ingram and Omnes R.H.*

- Blanche:* What's the matter – where's Mr Rochester?
- Mary:* What awful event has occurred? Speak – let us know the worst!

*Rochester re-enters laughing & with a candle*

- Rochester:* Ha, Ha, – pray don't pull me down or strangle me, I'll – all right, a mere rehearsal of 'Much ado about Nothing' – ladies please keep off – return to the drawing room, remember the hour – Mrs Fairfax allowed some of the servants to ret[ire] earlier than usual, and one has had the nightmare, that's all – she's an excitable, nervous person – she construed her dream into an apparition or something of that sort – now then, come along and we'll get back to our concert – gentlemen, have the goodness to set the ladies the example – Miss Ingram, I am sure you will not fail in evincing superiority to idle terrors. Don't stay too long in the chill gallery – come – it makes me laugh to see how scared you all looked – you'll say there's a ghost at Thornfield next – allons mes amis. (*All exeunt excepting Jane*)

- Rochester (aside):* I want you – have you a sponge in your room – fetch it and return directly – come friends? (*Long pause*) (*Groan heard*)

*Jane returns with sponge & basin of water. A demoniacal laugh heard, Ha, Ha, Ha. Mason calls 'Grace – Grace Poole'.*

- Jane:* What mystery is this? – Grace Poole – someone calls her – who can it be? – How still all appears – Nothing stirring. (*Piano is heard very indistinctly as if a dance was going on in the drawing room – faint laughter now & again*) Dancing – joy on one floor – and a mystery – perhaps a crime, here – and I am an accomplice – innocent – but, who's there?

*Rochester (entering):* Have you any salts – volatile salts?

- Jane:* Here, Sir – and the sponge and basin. (*Rochester locks door R.H. then goes to L.H. door, brings out Mason, his coat off & bleeding from the throat, places him in a chair, bathes his forehead*)

*Rochester:* You don't turn sick at the sight of blood.

*Jane:* I think I shall not – I have never been tried yet.

*Rochester:* Hold the candle, now the salts. (*Sponges Mason's wound*)

*Mason:* Is there immediate danger?

*Rochester:* Pooh, no – a mere scratch – don't be so overcome man; bear up! You'll be able to be removed by morning I hope – Jane!

*Jane:* Yes, Sir

*Rochester:* I shall have to leave you in this room with this gentleman whilst I calm my guests below; you will sponge the blood as I have done, if he feels faint you will put the glass of water on that stand to his lips, and your salts to his nose – you will not speak to him on any pretext – and Richard – it will be at the peril of your life if you speak to her; open your lips – agitate yourself – and I'll not answer for the consequences – remember no conversation. (*Exit R.H. door*)

*Jane:* What crime is this, that lives incarnate in this sequestered mansion and can neither be expelled nor subdued by the owner? What mystery, that breaks out, in blood, at the deadest hours of night? What creature is it that, masked in an ordinary woman's voice and shape, utters the sound, now of a mocking demon, and anon of a carrion-seeking bird of prey?

*Rochester re-enters R.H.*

*Rochester:* Now, my good fellow, how are you?

*Mason:* She's done for me, I fear.

*Rochester:* Not a whit! – courage! You've lost a little blood; that's all, but how is this? The flesh on the shoulder is torn as well as cut. This wound was not done with a knife: there are marks of teeth here!



- Mason:* She bit me, she worried me like a tigress, when you got the knife from her.
- Rochester:* You should not have yielded – you should have grappled with her at once.
- Mason:* But under such circumstances, what could one do? (*Shuddering*) And I did not expect it: she looked so quiet at first.
- Rochester:* I warned you – be on your guard when you go near her – besides you might have waited till to-morrow, and had me with you – it was mere folly to attempt the interview to night, and alone.
- Mason:* I thought I could have done some good.
- Rochester:* You thought; yes, it makes me impatient to hear you, but, however, you have suffered, and are likely to suffer enough for not taking my advice; so I'll say no more.
- Mason:* She cursed me and said she'd kill me.
- Rochester:* Come, be silent, Richard, and never mind her gibberish, don't repeat it.
- Mason:* I wish I could forget.
- Rochester:* You will when you are out of the country; when you get back to Spanish Town, you may think of her as dead and buried – or rather, you need not think of her at all.
- Mason:* Impossible to forget this night!
- Rochester:* Now, Jane, go down stairs and see how the visitors are getting on. Apologize for my absence if any remarks are made – but not without – then return here.
- Jane:* Yes, Sir. (*Exit R.H.*)
- Rochester:* I'll see to this indiscreet young man – now, Mason – come, rouse up man – be of good cheer – you are better now, we shall have to get you off as quietly as possible, and it will be better, both for your own sake, and for that poor creature yonder. For your sake I have striven to avoid exposure, and I should not like it to come at last – where did you leave your furred cloak? You cannot travel a mile without that, I know, in this cold climate. Jane!

*Jane enters*

- Rochester:* Run down to Mr. Mason's room, the one next mine, and fetch a cloak you will see there. What a mercy you are shod with velvet, Jane! a clod-hopping messenger would never do at this juncture. Now, Jane, trip on before us away to the back stairs, unbolt the side door, tell the driver of the Post Chaise you will see in the yard – or just outside, for I told him not to drive his rattling wheels over the pavement – to be ready, we are coming: and Jane, if any one is about, come to the foot of the stairs and give me a signal. (*Exit*)
- Mason:* Fairfax!

- Rochester:* Yes, what is it?
- Mason:* Let her be treated as tenderly as can be for my sake!
- Rochester:* I do my best – I have done and will still – yet would to Heaven there was an end to all this! (*Exeunt L.H.*)

### Scene 3

*The Drawing Room at Thornfield Hall. Folding doors leading to supper room C. Door L.C. & Door 1st Entrance L.H. Window 1st Entrance R.H. with a recess – Piano 2nd Entrance R.H. Ottoman – Fireplace L.H. – Very beautifully furnished.*

*As scene opens someone is playing Piano & another finishing last verse of song – guests hanging about, some turning over music.*

- Omnes:* Thank you Miss Eshton.
- Lord Ingram:* Charming really.
- Mary:* What a thin voice.
- John Reed:* And how out of tune – but –
- Blanche:* Charming nevertheless.
- Mary:* Now it's over.
- Enter Rochester & Jane L. I. E.*
- Blanche:* Mr Rochester, I thought you had forgotten your guests.
- Mary:* There's that stupid governess again.
- John Reed:* Can't she be sent off, we don't care about our conversation going the rounds of the kitchen.
- Mary:* I noticed her, I am a judge of physiognomy, and in hers I see all the faults of her class.
- Rochester:* What are they Madam?
- Mary:* I will tell you in your private ear.
- Rochester:* But my curiosity will be past its appetite; it craves food now.
- Mary:* Ask Blanche, she is nearer to you than I.
- Blanche:* Oh, don't refer him to me. I have just one word to say of the whole tribe; they are a nuisance – not that I ever suffered much from them; I took care to turn the tables. Henry, do you remember those nursery days?
- Lord Ingram:* Ya'as, to be sure I do – and the poor old stick used to cry out – oh, you villains child! – and then we sermonized her on the presumption of attempting to teach such clever blades as we were – when she was herself so ignorant.
- Blanche:* I move the introduction of a new topic.
- Rochester:* Miss Ingram – deign to favour us with one song?
- Blanche:* Are you particular to my mother tongue?



- John Reed:* We prefer the daughter's tongue to her mother's.
- Blanche:* Here's a little thing I learnt in Germany (*plays*). No – its useless, I can't accompany myself – here, Mary – (*Mary plays, Blanche sings German song. After 1st verse*): Oh, bother, I've forgotten my German.
- Mr Rochester:* Try something – A la Mode de Paris.
- Blanche:* You help me then – Mr Rochester, your commands are law – what a splendid guide and counsellor you would make.
- Mary:* Oh, I am so sick of the young men of the present day! Poor puny things not fit to stir a step beyond papa's park gates: nor to go even so far without mamma's permission and guardianship.
- John Reed:* Ah, Blanche – there's one heart always ready to do you homage.
- Blanche:* You're a tease – (*aside*) now which is sincere? I always fail to grasp Rochester – when that charity-school governess is present – pshaw – but Mr Reed is – since report says he is a wild sort of fellow – but perhaps, it lies – and after all a reformed rake generally makes the most devoted of husbands – whenever I marry (*pause*) I am resolved my husband shall not be a rival, but a foil to me. I will suffer no competitor near the throne; I shall exact an undivided homage; his devotions shall not be shared between me and the shape he sees in his mirror. Who'll oblige by singing?
- Lord Ingram:* Dy'e think the governess can?
- Blanche:* Oh, no, she looks too stupid for that.
- Mary:* If this was an organ – she might blow the bellows, that's about the extent of her accomplishments.
- Jane:* He has hardly said a word to me – how can I ever rival beauty such as hers – vain hope.
- Rochester:* You don't seem happy, Miss Eyre – rather vexed?
- Jane:* No, Sir, none can be vexed – when admiring.
- Rochester:* My future bride, Miss Ingram – a man must love such a handsome noble, witty, accomplished lady.
- Jane:* Probably she loves you.
- Rochester:* Probably (*aside*) my person or my purse.

*Enter Mr Brocklehurst*

- Rochester:* Now, Mr Brocklehurst, we are all anxiety.
- Omnes:* Oh, Mr Brocklehurst will oblige us.
- Mr Brock:* Where'ere I take my walks abroad. Good evening, ladies.
- Blanche:* Try Dr Watts, or the 22nd Psalm – get your night caps ready.
- Rochester:* Cruel as beautiful, Blanche.
- John Reed:* Charming always.
- Mr Brocklehurst sings:* 'Village Blacksmith'.
- Omnes:* Very good –

- [Lady] Ingram:* Dear me – ladies, are you aware it's 12 o'clock – we must really say good-night, Mr Rochester, gentlemen are of later hours.
- Blanche:* Well, good-night, Mr Rochester.
- Mary:* Good night – good night, Mr Brocklehurst – no more ghosts, Mr Rochester – did you ever walk in your sleep?
- Rochester:* Not that I am aware of – besides – I sleep tonight at the bottom of yonder corridor, in this wing of the house.
- Mrs Fairfax rings bell – servants enter with lights & show off guests in different directions*
- John Reed (to Blanche):* Pleasant dreams to you, Miss Ingram –
- Blanche (bashfully):* Good night, Mr Reed. If it were a race between the two and love alone the stakes – Mr Reed might win – but as it is – Mr Rochester can turn the balance with his gold – I'm not well tonight. Mary.
- Lady Ingram:* What ails you, my pet.
- Blanche:* I'm jealous – can't you see it – awfully, madly, grievously jealous  
(*Exit C. door*)
- Rochester:* Good night – Miss Eyre – the guests have been merry – they are full of jests and gaiety.
- Jane:* Yes, Sir – Good night, Mr Rochester.
- Rochester:* If I ever require your services again like this evening?
- Jane:* I'll try at least to do all you wish.
- Rochester:* I will try you – if all these people came in a body and spat at me, what would you do, Jane?
- Jane:* Turn them out of the room, Sir, if I could.
- Rochester:* But if I were to go to them, and they only looked at me coldly, and whispered sneeringly amongst each other, and then dropt off and left me one by one, what then? Would you go with them?
- Jane:* I rather think not, Sir; I should have more pleasure in staying with you.
- Rochester:* To comfort me?
- Jane:* Yes, Sir, to comfort you, as well as I could.
- Rochester:* And if they laid you under a ban for adhering to me?
- Jane:* I should care nothing about it.
- Rochester:* Then, you could dare censure for my sake?
- Jane:* I could dare it for the sake of any friend who deserved my adherence as you, I am sure, do.
- Rochester:* Good night my – Miss Eyre – I feel I cannot rest tonight.  
(*Exit with light*)
- Jane:* What a beautiful night, and how hushed seems everything around – I can almost hear the beatings of my heart – why does it beat so loudly – am I happier than at Lowood? Yes – am I happier than at Gateshead – he, John Reed here – the libertine – his mother's hope. Mr Brocklehurst told me



he had been in prison for debt, a roué in society – and [I] find him here – a visitor in this house – does Miss Ingram know his true character? or does she waver between Mr Rochester and him – no – there is no choice. How strange it seems – tush – I am getting foolish again and, I declare, a tear – I'll stay here a little in the moonlight before going to rest – rest – and dream – of blighted hopes – ambition unfulfilled – a love rejected. (*Falls asleep*)

*Rochester's door opens carefully & the Maniac runs across – looks round, sees Jane Eyre, about to strike her with fire irons – then goes to folding doors & lights a brand from the fire & returns to door L.H. & disappears – Centre door opens*

*Grace Poole enters & rushes after her – brings her back, struggling – they go through Centre doors & slam them – the sound awakens Jane – who starts & listens –*

*Maniac laughs outside: Ha, Ha. Ha.*

*Jane:* Who's there – that cry – the same I heard this evening – merciful powers – protect me – (*kneels*) – ah, what a singular smell – Grace Poole's laugh too – is she possessed with an evil one – I'll seek Mrs Fairfax – ah – there's something wrong – (*Bursts door open L.H.*) Mr Rochester's door is open – and Heavens the bed is on fire – awake, Mr Rochester. Awake. (*Exits*)

*Jane runs back followed by Rochester*

*Rochester:* In the name of all the elves in Christendom, is that Jane Eyre? What have you done with me, witch, sorceress? Who is in the room besides you? Have you plotted to kill me?

*Jane:* I will fetch you a candle, Sir; thank Heavens you are safe. Somebody has plotted something: you cannot too soon find out who, and what it is.

*Rochester:* What has happened? Who has been in my room?

*Jane:* I saw your curtains in flames – who did it I cannot tell – but I heard that dreadful laugh – and I threw the water over the burning curtains.

*Rochester:* You heard an odd laugh? You have heard that laugh before – or something like it?

*Jane:* Yes, Sir: the woman who sews here, called Grace Poole – she laughs in that way. She is a singular person.

*Rochester:* Just so – Grace Poole – you have guessed it. She is, as you say – singular, – very. Well, I shall reflect on the subject – meantime, I am glad that you are the only person, besides myself, acquainted with the precise details of to-night's incident – say nothing of this to anyone – I ask you for secrecy – you can now retire.

*Jane:* Good-night, then, Sir.

*Rochester:* What, are you quitting me already, and in that way?

*Jane:* You said I might go, Sir.

*Rochester:* But not without taking leave; not without a word of acknowledgement, not, in short, in that brief, dry fashion – why – you have saved my life! saved me from a horrible and excruciating death! at least shake hands? I have a pleasure in owing you so immense a debt. I cannot say more: but you: it is different:– I feel your benefits no burden, Jane. My Jane –

*Jane:* Good-night again, Sir. There is no debt, benefit, burden, in the case.

*Rochester:* You would do me good in some way; I saw it in your eyes when I first saw you – my cherished preserver, good-night my – that is Miss Eyre (*pause*) Jane, I have something of importance to say to you – something that had better be said now – you'll remember, Jane, when rumour intimated to you that it was my intention to take Miss Ingram to my bosom, it was you who first said to me, that in case I married Miss Ingram – both you and little Adèle had better leave. In about a month I hope to be a bridegroom, and in the interim, I shall myself look out for employment, and an asylum for you.

*Jane:* Thank you, Sir – I grieve to leave Thornfield.

*Rochester:* I regret it, as I have known you and –

*Jane:* And I have known you. It strikes me with terror and anguish to feel I absolutely must be torn from you for ever. Yet I see the necessity of departure, it is like looking on the necessity of death.

*Rochester:* Where do you see the necessity?

*Jane:* Where? You, Sir, have placed it before me.

*Rochester:* In what shape?

*Jane:* In the shape of Miss Ingram; a beautiful woman – your bride.

*Rochester:* My bride! What bride? – I have no bride!

*Jane:* But you will have.

*Rochester:* Yes; I will! – And your will shall decide your destiny – I offer you my hand and heart, and a share of all my possessions.

*Jane:* Don't jest with a woman's heart.

*Rochester:* I ask you to pass through life at my side – Jane, I summon you as my wife: it is you only I intend to marry – Jane – consent to become my wife.

*Jane:* Your bride stands between us.

*Rochester (rising):* My bride is here. (*Clasping her*) Jane, will you marry me? I could not marry Miss Ingram – I love you more than life. Fashion I despise – you, poor and obscure, and small as you are – I entreat you to accept me as a husband.

*Jane:* What me, poor Jane! who has not a friend in the world but you – not a shilling but what you have given me.

*Rochester:* Will you be mine? Say – can you love me?



*Jane:* Can I? – Do you truly love me?  
*Rochester:* I do, and if an oath is necessary to satisfy you, I swear it –  
*Jane:* Then, Sir, I will marry you.  
*Rochester:* Come to my heart, my own darling one, make my happiness as I will make yours – it will atone – I will guard, cherish and solace you – I know my maker sanctions what I do – for the world's judgement, I wash my hands thereof – for man's opinion – I defy it – *she shall be my wife.*

## Act II

## Scene I

*Jane:* Now, Mrs Fairfax, tell me candidly, am I not carrying out your plan to the letter?  
*Mrs Fairfax:* And don't you find it advantageous? When Mr Rochester told me you were to be his wife – of course I was very much surprised.  
*Jane:* But that's so long ago now.  
*Mrs Fairfax:* Three months preparation is none too much for such a serious business.  
*Jane:* But, Mrs Fairfax, you must admit you were mistaken.  
*Mrs Fairfax:* No, I gave you good advice – try and keep Mr Rochester at a distance – I said – distrust yourself as well as him –  
*Jane:* Why did you say that?  
*Mrs Fairfax:* Because, you are young and so little acquainted with men – you cannot be too careful – besides – equality of position and fortune is often advisable in such cases – gentlemen in his station are not accustomed to *marry* their governesses – although I knew you were a pet of his – there are times when, for your sake, I have been a little uneasy at his marked preference, and have wished to put you on your guard – I knew such an idea would shock, perhaps offend you; and you were so discreet, and so thoroughly modest and sensible I hoped you might be trusted to protect yourself.  
*Jane:* Never mind that now – to-morrow sees the end of your anxiety.  
*Mrs Fairfax:* To-morrow makes the governess the mistress.  
*Jane:* I can hardly [believe?] the last hours of courtship are maintained – by this time to-morrow, we shall be far off on our way to London. Mr Rochester has written the labels for my boxes.  
*Mrs Fairfax:* I'll go now and see the finishing touch given them – bye the bye – your wedding veil is in the cupboard, there – I could never have thought it – he is a proud man – are you sure he is going to marry you for love? –  
*Jane:* Mrs Fairfax – for what else – he will *marry* me be sure of that.

*Mrs Fairfax:* It seems so strange – will he *marry* you – I am sorry to grieve you – but in this case I do fear there will be something found to be different to what either you or I expect.  
*Jane:* Why – am I a monster? Is it impossible that Mr Rochester should have a sincere affection for me?  
*Mrs Fairfax:* No, and I dare say Mr Rochester is very fond of you – but – ah well – time will show.  
*Jane (looking at labels):* Mrs Rochester. Wendover Hotel. London. Mrs Rochester! She does not exist: she would not be born till to-morrow, and I will await to be assured she has come into the world alive, before I assign to her all that property.

*Enter Rochester C. door*

*Rochester:* Well, my smiling pretty bride – how charming you look. Is this my pale, little elf? This little sunny-faced girl with the dimpled cheek and rosy lips – and the radiant hazel eyes?  
*Jane:* It is Jane Eyre, Sir.  
*Rochester:* Soon to be Jane Rochester – in a few hours, Janet – do you hear that? You blushed, and now you are white, Jane: what is that for?  
*Jane:* Because you gave me a new name – and it seems strange.  
*Rochester:* Yes, Mrs Rochester; young Mrs Rochester – Fairfax Rochester's girl-bride.  
*Jane:* I am your plain Quakerish governess.  
*Rochester:* You are an angel – a sylph – ten years since, I flew through Europe half mad, with disgust, hate, and rage, as my companions: now I shall revisit it healed and cleansed, with a very angel as my comforter.  
*Jane:* I am not an angel, and I will not be one till I die: Mr Rochester, you must neither expect or exact anything celestial of me – for you will not get it, any more than I shall get it of you: which I do not at all anticipate.  
*Rochester:* What do you anticipate of me?  
*Jane:* For a little while you will perhaps be as you are now, and then you will turn cool, and then you will be capricious. Yet after all, as a friend and companion, I hope never to become distasteful to my dear master.  
*Rochester:* Distasteful! and like you again! I think I shall like you again and yet again: and I will make you confess I don't only *like*, but *love* you – with truth, fervour, constancy.  
*Jane:* You are not capricious, Sir?  
*Rochester:* To women who please me only by their faces, I am the very devil, but you please me by your heart. Your influence is sweeter than I can express. Why do you smile, Jane?  
*Jane:* I was thinking, Sir, will you have the goodness to gratify my curiosity, which is much piqued on one point? –



- Rochester:* What? Curiosity is a dangerous petition: it is well I have not taken a vow to accord every request –
- Jane:* But there can be no danger in complying with this, Sir.
- Rochester:* Utter it, Jane: but I wish that instead of a mere enquiry into, perhaps, a secret, it was a wish for half my estate.
- Jane:* Why did you take such pains to make me believe you wished to marry Miss Ingram?
- Rochester:* Is that all? Thank Heaven, it is no worse! I may confess even though I should make you a little indignant Jane. Well, I feigned courtship of Miss Ingram, because I wished to render you as madly in love with me, as I was with you, and I knew jealousy would be the best ally I could call in for the furtherance of the end.
- Jane:* Did you think nothing of Miss Ingram's feelings, Sir?
- Rochester:* Her feelings are concentrated in one – pride: and that needs humbling – were you jealous, Jane?
- Jane:* Never mind, Mr Rochester: it is in no way interesting to you to know that – answer me truly once more. Do you think Miss Ingram will not suffer from your dishonest coquetry? Won't she feel forsaken and deserted?
- Rochester:* Impossible – Miss Ingram has both been forsaken and deserted – yet not through me – three months since, when she heard of our engagement – she flew into a violent temper and vowing vengeance on all my sex – determined to spite me by showing she was not in want of an admirer – the tempter found her, so I hear, in the shape of Mr John Reed – and three days after our engagement was made known – she left the Leas, and eloped with Mr Reed.
- Jane:* He married her?
- Rochester:* I hope so – Mr Reed was not a marrying man – I fear she has become his mistress and midst the gaiety and vice of a London life, her wayward and proud spirit will for a time have its sway – until he, tired of his plaything, will cast it aside in the gutter and seek a new love elsewhere.
- Jane:* That is very sad – Mrs Fairfax is right – men are not to be trusted.
- Rochester:* What, not I?
- Jane:* Seriously, I may enjoy the great good that has been vouchsafed to me, without fearing that anyone else is suffering the bitter pang of jealousy I myself felt a while ago?
- Rochester:* That you may; there is not another being in the world has the same pure love for me as yourself – for I lay that pleasant unction to my soul, Jane, a belief in your affection. I will attire my Jane in satin and lace, and she shall have roses in her hair – I will cover the head I love best with a priceless veil.
- Jane:* And then you won't know me, Sir; and I shall not be your Jane Eyre any longer, but an ape in a harlequin's jacket. You need not look in that way; if you do, I'll wear nothing but my old Lowood frocks to the end

- of the chapter. I only want an easy mind, Sir; not crushed by crowded obligations – do you remember what you said of Céline Varens? – of the diamonds and cashmeres you gave her? I will not be your English Céline Varens. (*Sits at table to eat*)
- Rochester:* You don't eat?
- Jane:* I cannot.
- Rochester:* Is it because you have the prospect of a journey before you, Jane? that takes away your appetite.
- Jane:* I cannot see my prospects clearly, Sir; I hardly know what thoughts I have in my head. Everything in life seems unreal.
- Rochester:* Except me: I am substantial enough: – touch me?
- Jane:* You, Sir, are the most phantom-like of all: you are a mere dream. Listen! you were from home last night? I had a dream last night, I dream't that Thornfield Hall was a dreary ruin – the retreat of bats and owls – I saw you like a speck on the white track lessening every moment, insuperable obstacles seemed to separate us.
- Rochester:* Now, Jane is that all?
- Jane:* All the preface, Sir; the tale is yet to come; on waking, a gleam dazzled my eyes: I thought – oh, it is daylight! but I was mistaken: it was only candle light. Sophie, I supposed, had come in. There was a light on the dressing table, and the door of the closet, where before going to bed, I had hung my wedding dress and veil, stood open: I heard a rustling there. A form emerged from the closet; it took the light, held it aloft. Mr Rochester, this was not Sophie, it was not Leah, it was not Mrs Fairfax: it was not – no I was sure of it, and am still – it was not even that strange woman Grace Poole.
- Rochester:* It must have been one of them.
- Jane:* No, Sir. The shape standing before me I had never seen at Thornfield Hall before; it seemed, Sir, a woman tall and large, with thick and dark hair hanging down her back. I know not what dress she had on: whether gown, sheet, or shroud, I cannot tell.
- Rochester:* Did you see her features?
- Jane:* They were fearful and ghastly to me – oh, Sir, I never saw a face like it! It was a discoloured face – it was a savage face. I wish I could forget the fearful look.
- Rochester:* Ghosts are usually pale, Jane.
- Jane:* This, Sir, was purple; the lips were swelled; the brow furrowed; the black eyebrows widely raised over the blood-shot eyes. Shall I tell you of what it reminded me?
- Rochester:* You may.
- Jane:* Of the foul German spectre – the vampire!
- Rochester:* Ah!
- Jane:* Sir, it removed my veil from its gaunt head, rent it in two parts and flung both on the floor, trampled on them. Afterwards, It drew aside



the window curtains and looked at me, the fiery eye glared upon me – she thrust up her candle close to my face, and extinguished it under my eyes. I became insensible from terror.

*Rochester:* Who was with you when you revived?

*Jane:* No, one Sir, but the broad day. Now, Sir, tell me who and what that woman was?

*Rochester:* The creature of an over-stimulated brain; that is certain.

*Jane:* I wish I could believe that, since you cannot explain to me the mystery of [my] awful visitant.

*Rochester:* And since I cannot do it, Jane, it must have been unreal.

*Jane:* But, Sir, on rising this morning, I saw what gave the distinct lie to my hypothesis, – the veil torn from top to bottom in two halves!

*Rochester:* Thank Heaven! That if anything malignant did come near you last night, it was only the veil that was harmed – oh, to think what might have happened! (*Pause*) Now, Janet, I'll explain to you all about it. It was half-dream: a woman did, I doubt not, enter your room: and that woman was – must have been – Grace Poole. When we have been married a year and a day, I will tell you more, but not now. Are you satisfied, Jane?

*Jane:* Yes – Yes.

*Rochester:* Your wedding morn. Just a nap, Jane, and then robe yourself for the day – the clergyman will be ready early – a trusty watchman is on guard – your husband – watching at your door.

*Jane:* He is my whole world – my more than world – my love – my life – almost my hope of Heaven. (*Exits R.H.*)

*Rochester:* How I love this day: how I love the sternness and stillness of the world under this frost. I like Thornfield now, its antiquity, its retirement; its old crow trees and thorn trees; and yet how long have I abhorred the very thought of it; shunned it like a great plague house! How I do still abhor – ah – what was that – I seemed to be arranging a point with my destiny. She stood there, by that beech trunk – a hag like one of those who appeared to Macbeth on the heath of Forres. You like Thornfield, she seemed to say – like it if you can! Like it if you dare! – But I will like it – I dare like it, – and I will keep my word: I wish to be a better man than I have been; than I am.

*Mrs Fairfax laying breakfast things*

*Rochester:* Is John getting the carriage ready?

*Servant:* Yes, Sir.

*Rochester:* Is the luggage brought down?

*Servant:* They are bringing it down, Sir.

*Rochester:* Go you to the church, see if Mr Wood (the clergyman) and the clerk are there: return and tell me. Jane!

*Enter Jane*

*Rochester:* Ah lingerer. My brain's on fire with impatience and you tarry so long – is the carriage ready?

*Servant:* The horses are harnessing.

*Rochester:* We shall not want it to go to church; but it must be ready the moment we return: all the boxes and luggage arranged and strapped on, and the coachman in his seat.

*Servant:* Yes, Sir.

*Rochester:* Jane, are you ready? There are no groomsmen, no bridesmaids, no relations to wait for marshal: none but Mr Rochester and his bride.

*Jane:* I haven't much appetite this morning.

*Rochester:* Nor I – this very day bid farewell to single life – after the ceremony, my angel – I shall bear my treasure to regions nearer the sun – to French vineyards and Italian plains.

*Jane:* Treasure – angel – no flattering.

*Rochester:* Forgive me – am I pardoned – one reconciling kiss. It is your time now, little tyrant, but it will be mine presently: and when once I have fairly seized you, to have and to hold, I'll just – figuratively speaking – attach you to a chain like this – (touching his watch guard). Yes, bonny wee thing, I'll wear you in my bosom, lest my jewel should tarnish – come Jane Eyre – now to become Jane Rochester.

*Scuffle without; Mason enters struggling with Maniac. She throws him down & brandishes knife. Rochester and Grace Poole throw themselves on her [and] pinion her. Jane in fright.*

*Mason:* Help – Rochester – Help!

*Rochester:* Thousand furies, Mason – take her hence – away – away.

*Mason:* It's too late.

*Jane:* Merciful Heaven – that fearful form – Edward, speak – who is this demon?

*Mason:* This demon is that man's wife!

*Jane:* His wife!

*Rochester:* Lost! Lost!

*Mason:* She is Bertha Mason.

*Maniac:* Ha! Ha! Ha!

*End of Act*



## Act III

## [Scene 1]

*A tract of snow*

*Enter Rochester hurriedly*

*Rochester:* She has gone – fled – fled from me – before I could explain – oh Heavens above – I did wrong not to tell her all beforehand but I was fearful my treasure would escape me – oh Jane, Jane – my wife – yes – yet I have a wife – a fiend, a demon – a scourge – Jane saw my wife – beheld the sole conjugal embrace I am ever to know – why did Mason release that fiend – just as my hopes were about to be realized – Jane – Jane – the echo of the hill alone answers me – I must find her, I cannot let her leave – I was told a female answering her description was on the road – for four whole days I have sought her in vain – she has taken nothing with her to protect her from the cold – her money, jewels all left behind, what can my darling do. Penniless, unprotected and alone, the thought is madness – Jane – Jane (*Rochester calls*) you must hear me.

*Enter Mason R.H.*

*Mason:* Rochester here – still seeking her? is it not enough you have blighted her life – but you must now seek the destruction of her soul? Rather let her leave and forget you and thank Heaven was in time to prevent the execution of your project in justice to your wife.

*Rochester:* My wife – your sister Bertha Mason – a lunatic – a frantic dangerous maniac's hate – the gambols of a demon – those are the endearments that are to solace my leisure hours. I feared the truth would be known and always will be – but I'll shut up Thornfield Hall: I'll nail up the front door, and board the lower windows; I'll give Mrs Poole two hundred a year to live here with *my wife*, as you term that fearful hag: Grace will do much for money and she shall have her son, the Keeper at Grimsby Retreat, to bear her company, and be at hand to give her aid, in the paroxysms, when *my wife* is prompted by her familiar to burn people in their beds at night, to stab them, to bite their flesh from their bones, and so on as you well know. Oh my experience has been heavenly if you only knew it – I had a charming partner – pure, wise, modest – you can fancy with *my wife* how happy I must have been but hence, let me never set eyes on her or you again; I have a right to deliver myself from if I can; of the fanatic's burning eternity I have no fear: there is not a future state worse than this present one – let [me] break away, and seek

a home in the grave – Jane – Jane – where are you? (*Exit*)  
*Mason:* I must follow or he may do himself a mischief; how he hates his lawful wife. Yet how he loves Jane Eyre! (*Exit*)

*Enter Brocklehurst*

*Mr Brock:* The golden fortune has deserted me – my living gone – my cash decreased – my family increased – my duties augmented, and still I cannot prosper, I am alone – £50 a year, with six huge mouths to feed, six graduating forms to clothe and six pairs of feet to be shod is not the most luxuriated stipend – yet I live – my poor wife is no more, my schools have lost their principal and with that loss £30 a year allowed by the Vicar has fled my house – ah, Where e'er I take my walks abroad –

*Jane outside*

*Jane (outside):* Oh save me!

*Mr Brock:* What's that, a woman's voice – (*goes & brings her on*). Poor young thing – you'll catch your death of cold sitting in the snow. –

*Jane:* Alas – Sir, I am starving.

*Mr Brock:* Starving – that's nothing – at my house we look forward to the time when we can get used to it and live on balmy breezes – why it's Miss Eyre – my teacher from Lowood.

*Jane:* You know me – Mr Brocklehurst – oh, thank heaven I have found a friend –

*Mr Brock:* How came you here – this is not the condition I expected to find Mr Rochester's bride – you don't look as if you were only four days married.

*Jane:* I am not married – I am not a bride – I was an ardent expectant woman almost a bride – but now a solitary girl again – my life a blight. My prospects desolate – my hopes dead – Mr Brocklehurst – Mr Rochester has deceived me – he has a wife living!

*Mr Brock:* And he wanted another – I always \thought/ that man had pluck – but tell me –

*Jane:* My love is shivered – Mr Rochester is not to me, what he has been, for he is not what I thought him – I do not ascribe vice to him – I will not say he has betrayed me – but he has lied to me, and I must go – he has a wife living. And my love would be a crime – I left Thornfield, hurried away I hardly knew whither – I slept on a stone last night, in the fields the night previously – where to go I know not – neither do I know where to get another meal.

*Mr Brock:* Well, we haven't much, Miss Eyre, but you shall have a meal if I have to go without myself.



- Jane:* Oh thanks, but cannot I work for you – anything – cannot I teach – haven't you a school – something that I can do – to earn my living.
- Mr Brock:* What can you do?
- Jane:* I will be a dressmaker. I will be a plain work-woman; I will be a servant, a nurse girl, if I can be no better.
- Mr Brock:* Mrs B is dead, so nurse girls I hope will not be required.
- Jane:* Then I shall have to – but I don't pay rates and taxes.
- Mr Brock:* No, not that – for I'm a rate payer – but Jane – a thought strikes me – you loved Lowood – the life there I mean.
- Jane:* No, Sir – and yet –
- Mr Brock:* You were a teacher.
- Jane:* Ah! –
- Mr Brock:* You were a good one too – well will you join my schools – teach the young Charity Children – poor cottagers' daughters – neither very large or clean – will you take the place of my defunct Araminta?
- Jane:* I will – I accept it with all my heart.
- Mr Brock:* It's not mentally degrading – but it is not elevating – the salary is £30 a year – and with my fifty – we may again hold up our heads – and swim clear of bread and water – come, Jane, I'll apply to the Vicar at once – testimonials from Lowood – oh, let us be joyful, joyful – that is, I'll be joyful. (Exit L.)
- Jane:* Oh, Rochester – why did you deceive me – he wished me gone – we are parted for ever now – I shall never cross his path again or be a barrier to his lawful love. (Exeunt L.H.)

## Scene 2

Interior of the Curate's house

Jane seated at table

Enter Mr Brocklehurst

- Mr Brock:* Then we will consider that settled. I have been down to the Incumbent and he has sanctioned the employment of my new governess – I hope you are better after your nap – and not to lose any time I have arranged [for] you to commence your duties today.
- Jane:* So soon, Sir. Well, I'm ready.
- Mr Brock:* I wouldn't hurry you, but the allowance does not begin until the duties –
- Jane:* I am deeply grateful to you, Sir. You have rescued me from starvation and offered me a roof to shelter – you shall find I am neither unmindful of your generosity or slow to acknowledge it. I will commence my school duties at once – (aside) it will serve to quiet this rising at my

- heart, to blot out the remembrance of sorrow, guide my thoughts from him – the one whom I so deeply love – the one who has so cruelly wronged me.
- Mr Brock:* There is my joy in the house – there is plenty in the hand – an extra £30 a year income. But is it not only a temporary increase? She may leave – yet who knows I am a widower – I am handsome. The roses are still on my cheeks and my limbs still rejoice in the suppleness of youth – were she of my mind we might unite the incomes – she might become Mrs Brocklehurst the 2nd – united incomes £80 a year – behold the joyful picture – on the other hand, a new wife might bring a new six mouths to feed, six extra suits of clothes to provide, six extra pairs of boots, and no extra income – behold the warning – I'll chance the wife – and trust to providence for the rest.

Enter John Reed door L.F.

- Mr Brock:* Mr Reed, this is indeed an honour. –
- John Reed:* I want you to serve me, Mr Brocklehurst.
- Mr Brock (aside):* Everyone seems seeking my services.
- John Reed:* I have travelled from London to see you – are you quite alone?
- Mr Brock:* Quite –
- John Reed:* You are surprised to see me?
- Mr Brock:* Yes, – and not pleased.
- John Reed:* How so? (Sits R.)
- Mr Brock:* Ugly stories were circulated about Miss Ingram and you –
- John Reed:* People indeed will gossip – what did they say?
- Mr Brock:* – That you had eloped with her.
- John Reed:* Ha, Ha, – that she had eloped with me you mean – well the fact is – the girl was spoony on me – clean gone and of course under those circumstances a man makes his own bargain.
- Mr Brock:* Bargain – (Sits L.)
- John Reed:* Yes – bargain.
- Mr Brock:* There's not much bargaining in taking a wife.
- John Reed:* Wife! – who's taken a wife?
- Mr Brock:* You haven't – you – Miss Ingram –
- John Reed:* Blanche Ingram's not my wife – why the village idiots didn't imagine I'd married the spoony girl?
- Mr Brock:* Well, I believed you had – don't call the village idiots because they in their ignorance perhaps, expected Mr John Reed to act as a gentleman – (rises).
- John Reed:* What does it matter to me, what they think – we'll change the subject – I have not seen Blanche Ingram (rises) for more than a month – I left her in London – she begins to have conscientious scruples about her conduct and because I remonstrated – she asked me to marry her – of



course I couldn't do that, so one word led to another and we parted. But my business with you is to put you in the way of earning money.

*Mr Brock:* Honestly?

*John Reed:* Yes – I want you to sign a paper for me – you must know I've nearly come to the end of my tether – funds are short – and there's about twenty thousand pounds left me by a relative – at least it comes to me providing we can prove the death of his niece; now this latter you can certify – now you can assist me – the relative's name is John Eyre, of Madiera and Jamaica, and the neice whose death I want to prove is Jane Eyre!

*Mr Brock:* Jane Eyre!

*John Reed:* Yes, she was at Lowood with you, some two years since. I sent to Madeira to say she died at Lowood and now they want proof of that – I found all the deeds amongst my mother's papers after her death. If she were alive and tried to prove her claim, I'd throw them in the fire before she should touch a penny – give me a pen and ink?

*Mr Brock:* But she is not dead!

*John Reed (giving notes):* Did Jane Eyre die at Lowood?

*Mr Brock:* Notes – money – it means freedom, independence.

*John Reed:* Here's the paper – I repeat – didn't Jane Eyre die at Lowood?

*Mr Brock:* What shall I do – she is alive still.

*John Reed:* Someone of that name may be – but the Jane Eyre – the one – didn't she die at Lowood – no-one will ever question you on the subject. *It is between ourselves*, there is £500 for your signature – didn't Jane Eyre die at Lowood?

*Mr Brock (timidly):* No! She's alive now!

*John Reed (papers all on table):* Come, sign – she's dead?

*Mr Brock:* She's dead – no, I can't – the lie sticks in my throat – Jane Eyre is now under this roof – take back your money – take back your pride – Jane Eyre, who was at Lowood, is living still – I accept my poverty and honour – at Lowood we were weak in victuals, but strong in morals.

*John Reed:* Fool – idiot – none will ever know it – none can prove against you.

*Mr Brock:* Yes, a conscience!

*Enter Jane: during this, seizes papers & stands C.*

*Jane:* And I have the papers also – Ah John Reed – Answer – Is Jane Eyre dead now?

*John Reed:* Fool – dupe – but you must have your claim – I am not defeated yet – I leave you (*aside*) but not for long – when that Parson's gone – be warned, Jane Eyre. (Exit L.H.D.)

*Mr Brock:* I can't speak to her now – I feel ashamed I could ever have entertained an idea of wronging her. Miss Eyre – I'm going to the schools – will you accompany me?

*Jane:* Not yet – I'll follow you.

*Mr Brock:* We ought to unite our incomes now – £20,000 and £30 pounds on her side and £80 per annum on mine – whenever I take my walks etc. (*Exit D.F.*)

*Jane:* My uncle dead? Left me rich – if not for me – why did John Reed keep the document back – what is this? Aunt Reed's handwriting – Eternity is before me – seek Jane – Jane Eyre – tell her all – all – A letter, with the Madeira mark, and dated three years back. 'Madam ... Will you have the goodness to send me the address of my niece, Jane Eyre, and to tell me how she is; it is my intention to write shortly and desire her to come to me at Madeira. Providence has blessed my endeavours to secure a competency; and as I am unmarried and childless, I wish to adopt her during my life, and bequeath her at my death whatever I may have to leave. I am, Madam &c &c John Eyre, Madeira.' What is this mystery? I cannot fathom it.

*Enter J. Reed*

*John Reed:* At last alone – Jane Eyre – you know me – as a boy you remember my temper – as a man I have not improved – I am less likely to be trifled with. I come to demand my property – those papers.

*Jane:* They are not yours – how is it this letter [is] dated three years back, and I have never heard of it?

*John Reed:* Because I disliked you too fixedly and thoroughly ever to lend a hand in lifting you to prosperity. I could not forget your conduct to my mother, Jane – the fury with which you once turned on her, the tone in which you declared you abhorred her the worst of anybody in the world. I could not forget it; and I took my revenge; for you to be adopted by your uncle, and placed in a state of ease and comfort was what I could not endure. I wrote to him; I said I was sorry for his disappointment, but Jane Eyre was dead: she died of typhus fever at Lowood.

*Jane:* You wrote that – knowing it was a lie.

*John Reed:* Yes, but it profited me – because I hate you – I sent also to Mr Briggs the solicitor – he wrote to me of a Jane Eyre – he enquired himself – he waited on me, to say that Mr Eyre of Madeira, your uncle, was dead – that he had left you all his property.

*Jane:* All?

*John Reed:* But you are dead – you cannot prove your identity – so it comes to me – my scheme is matured and do you think I will tamely submit to have my hopes blasted now – no.

*Jane:* They are mine.

*John Reed:* Bah! You give me up those papers, or by Heavens I have a murder on my hands.

*Jane:* Yes, a fitting termination to the life of a heartless seducer.



- John Reed:* You upbraid me – Ha, Ha, – my highly moral Jane Eyre – the mistress of Mr Rochester.
- Jane:* You lie, I am not his mistress.
- John Reed:* You tried to make him commit a crime to marry you, when he had already a wife – you’ll come down yet – he turned you out of doors – that’s the report.
- Jane:* Heavens how unjust.
- John Reed:* Give me those papers, Jane Eyre! – You’ve raised the devil in me – give them to me!
- Jane:* Coward to attack a woman!
- John Reed:* Give ‘em me! (*Seizes her, struggles*)
- Jane:* I’ll die first – is there no help – I’ll raise the village – Help! Help! Rochester – Rochester!

*Rochester runs in at door, siezes Reed, throws him round*

- Rochester:* At last – At last!
- John Reed:* Didn’t I say right – be happy with your Paramour. (*Business*)
- Rochester:* Wretch.
- John Reed:* You are a noble example – worthy champion of a cast-off mistress – Ha, Ha, the atmosphere is not clear, immorality abounds – I’ll seek purer scenes, unimpregnated with the odour of governesses and married men’s mistresses, it serves me right for conversing with a lot of poor relations.
- Rochester:* Well, Jane, not a word of reproach? Nothing bitter – nothing to cut a feeling or sting a passion? You regard me with a weary, passive look. Jane, I never meant to wound you thus. If the man who had but one little ewe lamb that was dear to him as a daughter, that ate of his bread and drank of his cup, and lay in his bosom, had by some mistake slaughtered it at the shambles, he would not have rued his blunder more than I rue mine. Will you ever forgive me?
- Jane:* Mr Rochester.
- Rochester:* You know I am a scoundrel, Jane.
- Jane:* Yes.
- Rochester:* Then tell me roundly and sharply – don’t spare me.
- Jane:* I cannot: I am tired and sick. If I could go out of life now, without too sharp a pang, it would be well for me.
- Rochester (goes to kiss her, she repulses him):* What! How is this? you won’t kiss the husband of Bertha Mason? You consider my arms filled, and my embraces appropriated?
- Jane:* At any rate, there is neither room nor claim for me, Sir.
- Rochester:* Why, Jane? I will answer for you – because I have a wife already. You have as good said I am a married man – as a married man you will shun me, keep out of my way – just now you refused to kiss me.

- Jane:* All is changed about me, Sir; I must change too. Was Adèle to have a new governess, Sir?
- Rochester:* Adèle will go to school – I have settled that already, nor do I mean to torment you with the hideous associations and recollections of Thornfield Hall, where the Maniac dwells you call my wife.
- Jane:* You speak of that unfortunate lady with hate. It is cruel, she cannot help being mad.
- Rochester:* Jane, my darling Jane, you misjudge me again, it is not because she is mad I hate her. If you were mad, do you think I should hate you?
- Jane:* I do indeed, Sir.
- Rochester:* Then you are mistaken – every atom of your flesh is as dear to me as my own, your mind is my treasure, and if it were broken, I should not shrink from you with disgust as I did from her – but why do I follow that train of ideas? I was talking of removing you from here. I have a place to repair to, secure from unwelcome intrusion – even from falsehood and slander.
- Jane:* And take Adèle with you. She will be a companion for you.
- Rochester:* What do you mean, Jane? I told you I would send Adèle to school: and what do I want with a child for a companion?
- Jane:* You spoke of retirement, and retirement and solitude are too dull for you.
- Rochester:* Solitude! – I see I must come to an explanation. You are to share my solitude. Do you understand? Jane, will you hear reason? if you don’t I’ll try violence.
- Jane:* Sit down; I’ll talk to you as long as you like, and hear all you have to say heartily, but I cannot while you are in such a passion.
- Rochester:* But I am not angry, Jane: I only love you too well; hush now, I wipe your eyes, you don’t love me then? It was only my station, that you valued? Now that you think me disqualified to become your husband, you recoil from my touch, as if I were a viper.
- Jane:* I do love you, more than ever: but I must not indulge the feeling: and this is the last time I must express it.
- Rochester:* The last time, Jane?
- Jane:* I must part with you for my whole life: I must begin a new existence amongst strange faces and strange scenes.
- Rochester:* You mean you must become a part of me. You shall yet be my wife: I am not married. I shall keep only to you so long as you and I live. You shall go to a place I have on the shores of the Mediterranean. There you shall live a happy and most innocent life. Why do you shake your head? Jane, you must be reasonable or in truth I shall again become frantic.
- Jane:* Sir, your wife is living. If I lived with you as you desire, I should be your mistress.



- Rochester:* Jane, you forget I am not long enduring. Out of pity to me and yourself –
- Jane:* Heaven help me!
- Rochester:* I am a fool! I keep telling her I am not married, and do not explain to her why. I forget she knows nothing of the character of that woman – can you listen to me?
- Jane:* Yes, Sir, for hours if you will.
- Rochester:* I ask only minutes, Jane – it was my father's and eldest brother's resolutions to keep the property together; they could not bear the idea that a younger son should be a poor man. I must be provided for by a wealthy marriage. My father sought me a partner, the daughter of a Mr Mason, a West India planter, with a fortune of thirty thousand pounds: When I left college I was sent out to Jamaica, to espouse a bride already courted for me. Her relations encouraged me; competitors piqued me; she allowed me; a marriage was achieved almost before I knew where I was. I never loved, I never esteemed, I did not even know her. But I married her: gross, grovelling, mole, that I was. My bride's mother I had never seen. I understood she was dead – the honeymoon over, I learned my mistake; she was only mad and shut up in a lunatic asylum – insanity was in the family. My father and my brother Rowland knew all this; but they thought only of the thirty thousand pounds, and joined in the plot against me – with a pigmy intellect she had giant propensities! How fearful were the curses those propensities entailed on 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 – my father died. I was rich enough now – the doctors now discovered that *my wife* was mad – her excesses had prematurely developed the germs of insanity.
- Jane:* I do pity you.
- Rochester:* She was a helpless, dangerous lunatic.
- Jane:* What did you do when you found she was mad?
- Rochester:* Friends [advised me] – take her to Europe, place her in safety and comfort: shelter her degradation with secrecy, and leave her. To England I conveyed her – a fearful voyage I had with such a monster in the vessel. Glad was I when I at last got her to Thornfield, and saw her safely lodged in that third story room, of whose secret inner cabinet she has now for ten years made a wild beast's den – a goblin's cell. I hired Grace Poole, as an attendant for her.
- Jane:* What did you do when you had settled her here? Where did you go?
- Rochester:* What did I do, Jane? I transformed myself into a will o' the wisp. I sought the continent, and went through all its lands. My fixed desire was to seek a good and intelligent woman, whom I could love: a contrast to the fury I left at Thornfield.
- Jane:* But you could not marry.

- Rochester:* I had determined, and was convinced that I could and ought. For ten long years I roved about, living first in one place, then in another – I could choose my own society; no circles were closed against me. I was recalled to England. On a frosty winter afternoon – my horse stumbled in Hay Lane, when I was just in sight of Thornfield – a little fairy – yourself, came to assist me. When once I'd pressed your fair shoulder – all love seemed to return to me – I found you were at my house – I could see you often, I was delighted by your freedom of manner – your winning smile – in short – I loved you.
- Jane:* Don't talk any more of those days.
- Rochester:* No Jane, no need to dwell on the past – the future is brighter – after a life of solitude, I have found you – I love you – you are my life – you are my wife – I have no other – no demon – I was wrong to deceive you – I should have asked you a pledge of fidelity – give it me now, Jane? Why are you silent? Jane, I want of you – this promise – say – I will be yours, Mr Rochester?
- Jane:* Mr Rochester – I will *not* be yours!
- Rochester:* Do you mean that, Jane?
- Jane:* I do –
- Rochester:* Jane – do you mean it now?
- Jane:* I do.
- Rochester (kissing her):* And now?
- Jane:* I do –
- Rochester:* This is bitter – it cannot be wicked to love me?
- Jane:* It would be to obey you.
- Rochester:* Oh, comply, Jane – consider the despair in which you leave me. – soothe me, love me – tell me you love me and will be mine – who in the world cares for you but I? – Who will be injured by what you do?
- Jane:* I care for myself – Mr Rochester, I love you – but you see before you a woman who prizes honour as the noblest gift bestowed.
- Rochester:* I am losing my senses – Jane, come with me?
- Jane:* No, farewell –
- Rochester:* Farewell, Jane – Heavens –
- Jane:* Farewell – for ever –! (*Sinks into chair*)

## Scene 3

## A Country Lane. Night.

- John Reed:* Well, I feel rather better after that short nap. I can get a horse at the next village and then I intend to return and watch my little cousin. If she has looked through those papers, she'll find Briggs's address – she may communicate with him – make an appointment – convince him of her identity, then goodbye to my £20,000 – I'd no idea that little imp



was under Brocklehurst's roof – what's she doing there – will she leave him now? I watched the house some hours after dusk – Rochester left her early in the day – mounted his horse and rode away. But she never crossed the threshold (*looks at watch*). By Jove, it's very late, one whole day wasted through my cursed folly – but I must have – those papers back – she must never see the solicitor with those in her possession – that's a rare blaze yonder, I suppose a hay rick on fire – rather in the direction of Thornfield – it's been burning some time – I'd give a trifle if it was Rochester's place – and Rochester and his mistress were in it – and burnt to a cinder – they and the precious documents she stole from me – but I never have any luck in my wishes – now, Jane, I'll have a short excursion to the nearest Inn – come what may – you shall never prove your claim – (Exit L.H.)

*Blanche Ingram appears L.H.*

*Blanche:* It is he – John Reed – I saw him hastily cross the road a short time since – I thought I should catch up with him. Ah, he mounts a horse and rides in the direction of the fire yonder – you shall not escape me – you are known – your victim *is* here – I'll follow whilst life remains – I'll dog your steps and cross your path at every turn – justice shall sleep no more. (Exit L.H.)

#### Scene 4

*Interior of Curate's house as before*

*Jane:* Well – here I am ready for School – I have written to Mr Briggs to the address on his note, and begin already to feel the responsibility of independence – I must not neglect my school duties – yet – a knock – who can that be so early?

*Opens door – Blanche Ingram enters*

*Blanche:* Pardon me, Miss – my strength is failing – I crave a morsel of bread and a drink of water, and one moment's shelter from this drenching rain – then I will go on my way again – I fear to die yet –

*Jane:* Die – my good woman! here. (*Gets glass of water*)

*Blanche:* Though why I struggle to live, I know not, my life is valueless.

*Jane:* Surely I know that face!

*Blanche:* Know me – you – ah – yes, your name is Jane Eyre!

*Jane:* And yours was – Blanche Ingram.

*Blanche:* And I have received charity from you – charity from your hands.

*Jane:* This is indeed a change.

*Blanche:* Yes, a change – but who wrought the change – whose fault was it that I fled with that villain – yours, Jane Eyre! – The guilt, the sin of my elopement lies at your door – I loved Fairfax Rochester – you, with your smooth face and mock humility, tore his love away, and crushed my heart – John Reed poured into my ears the taunt – I was a jilted woman. Furious at Rochester's preference for you, I threw myself into the tempter's arms – he promised marriage – I, too credulous dupe, believed him, trusted him – loved him – but he robbed me of the choicest jewel of a woman's life – and then flung aside the empty casket – my love turned to hate – my hatred to revenge – I hate him – myself and all the world.

*Jane:* The story then was true?

*Blanche:* True – true – what am I now? How can I seek again my happy home – how crawl back to the deserted fireside – the family I have disgraced – how ask forgiveness of that mother's heart, whose precepts I have set at naught – whose example I have defiled – pointed at with scorn – how can I mingle with my friends of old – a cast off mistress – a woman of the streets – the woman, who suffers all the degradation, losing position, friends, station, is an outcast whose momentary sin no repentance can palliate, no reparation condone – the man, the betrayer, whose base passion has ruined the heart he should have cherished, society receives with open arms – he is free to ruin other homes, and send more innocent souls to perdition. (*Kneels*) Great Heavens – is there no avenging spirit thou canst send – in answer to a betrayed woman's prayer – grant my curse the power to blast the seducer's prospects, as he has withered my youthful life.

*Jane:* This is terrible – Miss Ingram – stay your curses – with sincere repentance, peace of mind will return – trust in Heaven –

*Blanche:* You were the cause of all!

*Jane:* Indeed you wrong me – I could not help loving him – but 'tis past now –

*Blanche:* Past – how?

*Jane:* Surely you have heard Mr Rochester was already married?

*Blanche:* Then you too, have been deceived?

*Jane:* Cruelly – but –

*Blanche:* Not – fallen – you would say – don't spare me – I deserve it all – I deserve the bitterest things – oh fool – oh dupe –

*Jane:* Don't weep any more, Miss Ingram. If I did you any wrong, it was unintentional – and you say you cannot return to your parents' roof?

*Blanche:* I would sooner beg from door to door than enter the house – I have so disgraced – the Workhouse – a Pauper's grave are all I pray for – excepting revenge!

*Jane:* Miss Ingram – be composed – promise to forego your thoughts of vengeance and leave your betrayer to answer a higher tribunal.



- Blanche:* You counsel this?  
*Jane:* Yes – Miss Ingram – suddenly I have learned that I am heiress to my uncle's property.  
*Blanche:* You – the despised governess?  
*Jane:* Yes – I – and you are aware I am without sisters, relations or friends – save one I have lost – Miss Ingram – Blanche, I offer you a home – the independence – the affluence which will be mine – I offer you to share it – I long for the ties of home and friends – Blanche, will you be my sister?  
*Blanche:* Your – sister – am I awake – you pity me – you offer me a home – the companionship of all that is good and virtuous – Heaven bless you – forgive me? – I came here to curse you – and I stay – to bless – to adore you. (*Embraces*)  
*Jane:* There, there – drive out all these bitter recollections of the past – think of the future as a new existence.  
*Blanche:* The future – how shall I ever repay your kindness – stay – ah – I had forgotten, Miss Eyre – Jane – answer me one question – do you still love Mr Rochester?  
*Jane:* What do you mean?  
*Blanche:* Do you still cherish the memory of the man who deceived you? Do you still love Mr Rochester?  
*Jane:* With all my heart and soul –  
*Blanche:* What would you do for him?  
*Jane:* What would you do for the man you loved? –  
*Blanche:* Brave all dangers – sacrifice my life; if needs be –  
*Jane:* So would I willingly.  
*Blanche:* Listen – Jane – last night as I lay on the ground beneath the hedge – I saw a fire reflected on the sky – bitterly cold on the ground, I rose and went towards the spot – and there learned that Thornfield Hall was a smoldering ruin.  
*Jane:* His house? –  
*Blanche:* I pressed on and curiosity led me to enquire concerning it – this is what I heard – the fire broke out at dead of night –  
*Jane:* Always – the fatal hour at Thornfield!  
*Blanche:* Amidst the roaring of flames, a tall female figure was seen at one of the windows – the people saw it was a Maniac – Mr Rochester called her Bertha – he rushed through the burning rooms – he was seen approaching to save her, when with one yell – she sprang from the window and the next minute lay smashed on the pavement.  
*Jane:* Dead – And Mr Rochester – is he alive?  
*Blanche:* Yes – but many think he had better have died.  
*Jane:* How? – speak quickly?  
*Blanche:* Mr Rochester was dragged from the ruins.  
*Jane:* Alive – Thank Heaven.

- Blanche:* But with a Broken arm – a cripple.  
*Jane:* Joy – no worse.  
*Blanche:* Yes – worse – he is blind!  
*Jane:* Great Heavens – a cripple and blind!  
*Blanche:* Jane – do you still love Mr Rochester?  
*Jane:* I love him now – more than ever –  
*Blanche:* Jane – sister – come, follow me!  
*Jane:* Where?  
*Blanche:* To help the cripple – to give sight to the blind!  
*Jane:* I'm ready. (*[They] hurry out of door.*)

*Act drops quickly*

## Act IV

### Scene 1

*Interior of the Library at Fearn Dean*

*Rochester discovered sitting in Arm Chair, doctor with him*

- Rochester:* So, Doctor, if you can manage to keep the secret –  
*Doctor:* Never fear, Mr Rochester – we medical men are not the most communicative creatures in creation.

*Enter Mrs Fairfax R. D.*

- Doctor:* All you have to do now is to rest – and, Mrs Fairfax, see that his eyes are bathed regularly. We have made him a comfortable as circumstances will allow.  
*Mrs Fairfax:* He can't expect in a few hours to have as many comforts around him as it took him years to get together at Thornfield – I think if he could only see what is being done for him – he'd approve of all the arrangements – don't you think so, Doctor.  
*Doctor:* I'm certain he would – good day, Mr Rochester – keep easy in your mind – don't give way to fits of temper – don't be despondent – it's an unfortunate affair – but it might have been worse.  
*Rochester:* It couldn't have been worse.  
*[Doctor]:* You might have met the fate of your wife!  
*Rochester:* Don't mention her, Doctor – I wish I had – I have nothing to live for – Jane has deserted me – don't say wife again please?  
*Doctor:* Well, well. I'll be quiet – I know the subject was never pleasant to you – Mrs Fairfax – if any visitors should call – any that he has no objection



to – let them come to him – conversation will brighten his spirits and divert his thoughts from his sufferings – come, Mr Rochester, tread carefully – lean on me? (Exit with Rochester R.)

*Mrs Fairfax:* It's no use talking to him – he snubs me – calls me an ignorant old woman – I was obliged to speak this morning though – when he blowed me up – I told him I thought he wanted a certain young lady as was a governess *once* to wait on him – it was all very well for my poor governess to improve her position by trying to marry a rich handsome man, but when the handsome figure becomes a cripple and the brilliant eye loses its fascination – you, fine marm – don't care to be a nurse – when I was young – girls took their husbands for better or worse – but now they cling to them in the sunshine, but desert at the first approach of rough weather – that is not love – the downright old-fashioned true love twines round the heart like [iv]y round a tree engrafting its roots so strongly into the sturdier stem – the rougher the storm – the tighter it clings – that's how I loved once – but the villain jilted me. –

*Enter Jane*

*Jane (entering):* What a strange place – how different to Thornfield – will he love me now? – Here, Mary! –

*Mrs Fairfax:* Well if you're not the very last person I should have expected to see.

*Jane:* Yes. You didn't think I should return.

*Mrs Fairfax:* That I didn't – oh, lor – I had such a bad opinion of you – Miss Eyre –

*Jane:* Well you'll change it now, when I tell you I've come to take care of your patient –

*Mrs Fairfax:* What, Mr Rochester?

*Jane:* Yes –

*Mrs Fairfax:* Ah, that'll about please him, I'm not sorry – when will you begin your nurse's duties?

*Jane:* At once – Mrs Fairfax – show me where the things are – the tea things – the invalid's broth? &c

*Mrs Fairfax:* Shall I put down your parcel?

*Jane:* Oh, thank you – stay – haven't you a drawer somewhere – to lock up?

*Mrs Fairfax:* There's a spare drawer there.

*Jane:* That will do – these papers are of great importance to me – (goes to drawer). Why, there's no key here!

*Mrs Fairfax:* Well, they're no thieves in the house. Is that the way you're going to begin your duties – calling us all thieves and locking up everything of value?

*Jane:* Oh, forgive me – there, I'll leave it as it is – I didn't mean to offend you.

*Mrs Fairfax:* Now you'd better come and see the patient. Oh! Here's the Doctor bringing him back. (Exit Mrs Fairfax)

*Re-enter Doctor & Rochester*

*Doctor:* Here, Mr Rochester – in your old chair again.

*Rochester:* Yes – thanks – Doctor, for your assistance – you won't forget what I asked you?

*Doctor:* No – rely on me. (Exit L.H.)

*Rochester (in chair):* Give me the water, Mary?

*Jane:* Will you have a little more, Sir? I have spilled half.

*Rochester:* Who spoke? Where is the speaker? Whoever you are, be perceptible to the touch – the voice I know.

*Jane (going to him):* 'Tis I, Sir – my – Mr Rochester.

*Rochester:* Her very fingers – her small slight fingers – if so there must be more of her. (Seizes Jane & embraces her) Is it Jane?

*Jane:* Yes, Sir – bless you, I'm so glad to be near you again.

*Rochester:* Jane Eyre – my Jane!

*Jane:* My dear Edward. I am come back to you.

*Rochester:* I felt that you loved me, and trusted you would not leave me.

*Jane:* Which I never will from this day.

*Rochester:* And you are not an outcast amongst strangers?

*Jane:* My uncle in Madiera is dead and has left me a fortune.

*Rochester:* But since you are rich, Jane – you now must have friends who will look after you – and not suffer you to devote yourself to a blind cripple like me.

*Jane:* You forget I am my own mistress.

*Rochester:* And you'll stay with me.

*Jane:* Certainly, unless you object – I'll be your companion – wait on you. Read to you. Walk with you – be your eyes and hands.

*Rochester:* But my seared vision – my crippled strength – I am no better than the old lightning-struck chestnut tree in Thornfield orchard – what right would that ruin have to bid a budding woodbine cover its decay with freshness?

*Jane:* You are no ruin – one can love you still.

*Rochester:* But, Jane – I want a wife?

*Jane:* Do you?

*Rochester:* Is it unwelcome news?

*Jane:* That depends on circumstances, or your choice.

*Rochester:* Which you shall make for me.

*Jane:* Choose then, Sir – her who loves you best.

*Rochester:* I will choose at least – her I love best – Jane, will you *marry me*?

*Jane (playfully):* Yes, Sir – I think I might – if I tried – let's look – yes I think I'd chance you for a husband.

*Rochester:* A poor blind man, whom you will have to lead about by the hand.



Jane: Yes –  
 Rochester: A crippled man twenty years your senior whom you will have to be nurse to –  
 Jane: Yes –  
 Rochester: Truly – Jane?  
 Jane: Most truly – dear Sir.  
 Rochester: My darling – Heaven bless you, and reward you – my wife!  
 Jane: My husband – never to part more. (*Embraces*)

*Enter Mr Brocklehurst slowly L.H. – looks out of window*

Mr Brock: There goes £30 a year out of my income – hem – hem.  
 Rochester: Who's that?  
 Jane: Mr Brocklehurst – The Reverend Gentleman at whose house I was so welcomed and cared for. He offered me a situation as teacher at his schools at £30 per annum.  
 Mr Brock: Allow me to observe – this is hard on me – abducting my school teacher – Miss Eyre – the school duties have commenced – the scholars wait their mistress – if they are imitating their teacher at the present time – the sooner the holidays occur, the better for the morals of the[ir] school. (*To Rochester*): What do *you* think of the present I have brought.  
 Rochester: Thanks, Sir – thanks – you could not have brought me one I value more (*to himself*) I thank you for the care of her. She is charming.  
 Mr Brock: Perfect to the eye at first sight – but the manufacture has been rather (*looking at clock*) scamped – not a good foundation.  
 Rochester: How do you know – it's true she was reared in poverty – has her face altered?  
 Mr Brock: Not much – excepting there's a scratch under the one –  
 Rochester: Her face scratched –  
 Mr Brock: You'll excuse it not being better polished –  
 Rochester: She is polished – naturally –  
 Mr Brock: I never heard anyone say so before –  
 Rochester: Never mind her defects, Sir –  
 Mr Brock: I thought it would be so useful for you – its merry tick will be a companion for you through the weary nights.  
 Rochester: Sir – I'll hear no more – I am satisfied with her as she is.  
 Mr Brock: If it don't suit you after a week or so – you can change it for another.  
 Rochester: Change – Sir  
 Mr Brock: Yes – the man I had her from said he'd change it till you were suited, there she goes.  
 Rochester: I don't want her to go, Sir – I want her to stop.  
 Mr Brock: Well, you have a funny idea of these things.  
 Rochester: Insulting – silence, Sir – or you may find the mischief difficult to repair.

Mr Brock: Repairs – yes repairs are difficult, but not expensive – there's one of my congregation puts a new spring for 5/ – or entire new movement for £1 – pendulum extra –  
 Rochester: Man – what are you talking about?  
 Mr Brock: This clock – and you –  
 Rochester: I spoke of Jane Eyre.  
 Mr Brock: Oh, this is a winding-up arrangement –  
 Rochester: Ha, ha, ha, –  
 Mr Brock: You'll excuse me, Mr Rochester. (*Exit L.H.*)

*Window opens slowly – John Reed enters*

John Reed: Only the blind man, so, so, I'm safe – this is where she placed the papers – now to see what the lock is made of – ah not closed – yes, here they are – ha! – soft – Jane Eyre – now prove your case if you can – I defy you – you cannot do it –  
 Blanche (*in at window*): But I can – wretch!  
 John Reed (*locks door*): Blanche.  
 Blanche: Yes, your victim – who received kindness from the girl you would rob – and who will defend a sister's rights with my life.  
 Rochester: Who is that – what is it?  
 Blanche: Help – thieves – thieves – help!  
 John Reed: Fool – there is none here to detain me. (*Dashes her down and is making to window, when Rochester, who has risen, meets him*)  
 Rochester: You lie, John Reed.  
 John Reed: Blind idiot, let go –  
 Rochester: Never – (*tears off bandage*)  
 John Reed: Great Heaven, he is not blind, he sees!  
 Rochester: Yes – he can *see* – I was blind even to the one I loved – blind to learn if her love was deep enough to fly to my side as a cripple – but blind no longer to see my darling's heritage stolen by a robber and a scoundrel –

*Noise, all doors broken open – Brocklehurst enters*

Jane: Rochester – Edward – you can see.  
 Rochester: Yes. Pardon the deception, Jane – my sight is slightly injured but it was given out I was stone blind. And anxious to test the sincerity of your love – I feigned blindness. That was the secret I told you I had, and which I longed to tell you – when you had consented to link your life to one you thought abandoned by the world.  
 Jane: Edward – Oh joy –  
 John Reed: It seems I'm not wanted here.



- Mr Brock:* Young man – you are a superfluous party – I scorn to number you amongst my flock – Miss Eyre – here is a lett[er.]
- Jane:* For me – yes from Mr Briggs, he admits my claim – Jane Eyre – is rich – but richer far in the love of the man she loves.
- Rochester:* Mr Brocklehurst, I've taken your teacher away – but in honour, I am bound to allow you her salary.
- Mr Brock:* I must look forward a bit, and if you are inclined to further the prospects of my little school, when your married, give me your promise, all the little Rochesters shall be educated at my establishment. Mr Reed – that is the way out.
- John Reed:* Curse you all – well – Blanche I suppose you'll come with me? – you can't both marry Mr Rochester.
- Blanche:* Tempter – I am proof against you now. *(Exit Reed L.H. door)*
- Jane:* My home shall be yours, Blanche.
- Blanche:* Call me Sister?
- Jane:* Sister – dear sister. *(To Rochester):* to Blanche you owe my early presence with you.
- Rochester:* My love – my life – to-morrow will see our hands united as our hearts have long since been – my Jane – my darling Jane Eyre.
- Jane:* To-morrow, indeed to become, Jane Rochester.

*Curtain*