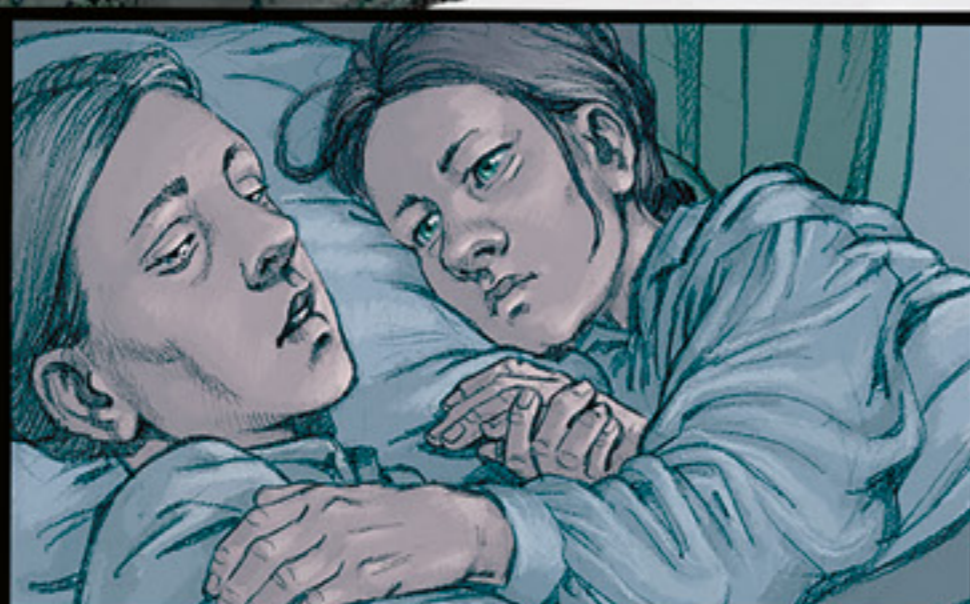


# JANE EYRE

THE ULTIMATE GRAPHIC RETELLING TO  
GUIDE YOU THROUGH THE CLASSICS

BY CHARLOTTE BRONTË



ILLUSTRATED BY PENKO GELEV

RETOLD BY FIONA MACDONALD

# JANE EYRE



First published in the UK in 2009 by The Salariya Book Company Ltd  
Originally created and designed by David Salariya  
This edition published in the UK in 2025 by Hatch Press,  
an imprint of Bonnier Books UK  
5th Floor, HYLO, 105 Bunhill Row  
London EC1Y 8LZ

Copyright © 2025 by Hatch Press

13579108642

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except as permitted by applicable copyright law.

ISBN 978-1-83587-403-5

Edited by Rebecca Kealy  
Production by Nick Read

Printed in China



The authorised representative in the EEA is Bonnier Books UK (Ireland) Limited.  
Registered office address:  
Floor 3, Block 3, Miesian Plaza, Dublin 2, D02 Y754, Ireland  
[compliance@bonnierbooks.ie](mailto:compliance@bonnierbooks.ie)  
[www.bonnierbooks.co.uk](http://www.bonnierbooks.co.uk)

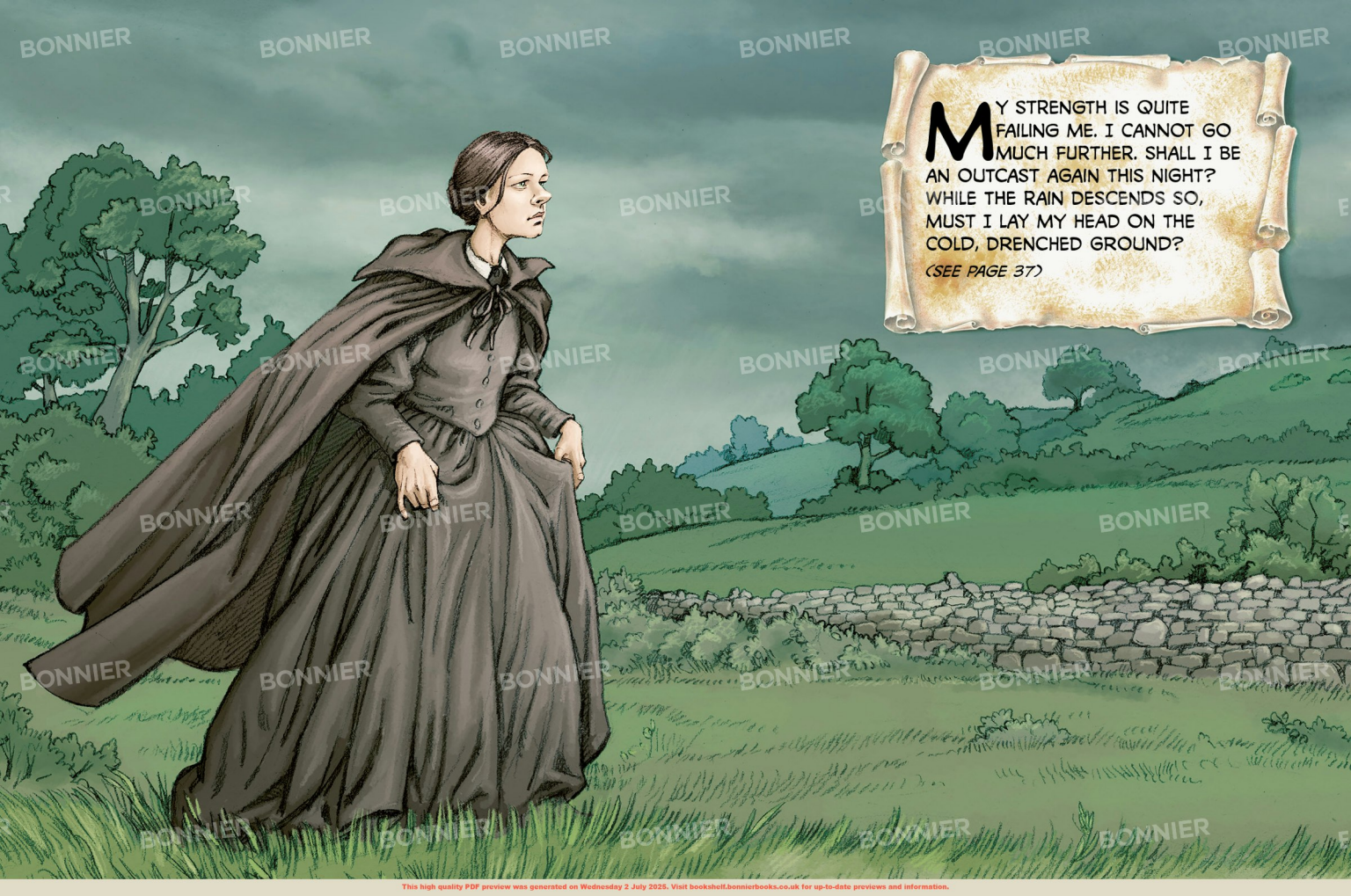
# JANE EYRE

**BY CHARLOTTE BRONTË**

**ILLUSTRATED BY  
PENKO GELEV**

**RETOLD BY  
FIONA MACDONALD**





**M**Y STRENGTH IS QUITE  
FAILING ME. I CANNOT GO  
MUCH FURTHER. SHALL I BE  
AN OUTCAST AGAIN THIS NIGHT?  
WHILE THE RAIN DESCENDS SO,  
MUST I LAY MY HEAD ON THE  
COLD, DRENCHED GROUND?

(SEE PAGE 37)



JANE EYRE



MRS SARAH REED, JANE'S AUNT



ELIZA REED, JANE'S COUSIN



GEORGIANA REED, JANE'S COUSIN



JOHN REED, JANE'S COUSIN



MR LLOYD, A LOCAL DOCTOR



MR BROCKLEHURST,  
THE SCHOOLMASTER



HELEN BURNS,  
JANE'S SCHOOLFRIEND



EDWARD FAIRFAX ROCHESTER,  
MASTER OF THORNFIELD HALL



MRS FAIRFAX,  
THE HOUSEKEEPER



ADELE VARENS,  
JANE'S PUPIL



GRACE POOLE,  
SERVING WOMAN



ST JOHN RIVERS,  
THE PRIEST



DIANA RIVERS,  
THE PRIEST'S SISTER



MARY RIVERS,  
THE PRIEST'S SISTER

NOVEMBER 1837



GATESHEAD HOUSE, NORTH ENGLAND

JANE EYRE, AN ORPHAN ABOUT 9 YEARS OLD, SITS ALONE, READING. HER COUSINS, ELIZA AND GEORGIANA REED, ARE PLAYING IN THE NEXT ROOM. THEIR MOTHER, MRS SARAH REED, FONDLY LOOKS ON. SHE SPOILS THOSE CHILDREN - AND JANE IS BANNED FROM JOINING THEM!

Why am I always suffering?

Each picture tells a story.

JANE FEELS HURT, SAD AND ANGRY. SHE IS HAPPIER ALONE.



Wicked and cruel boy! You are like a murderer!

You rat!

Rat! Rat! Owwww!

What a fury! Take her to the Red Room!

JANE'S COUSIN, JOHN REED, STOMPS INTO THE ROOM AND ATTACKS JANE. HE'S A SPOILED, STUPID BULLY!

MRS REED HURRIES INTO THE ROOM. SHE BLAMES JANE FOR THE FIGHT.



For shame! What shocking conduct!

She's like a mad cat!

Unjust! Unjust!

My uncle's spirit! A ghost!

NIGHT FALLS. IS THAT MOONLIGHT FLICKERING IN THE MIRROR?



JANE BEGS TO BE LET OUT, BUT MRS REED REFUSES. LEFT ALONE ALL NIGHT IN THE HAUNTED ROOM, JANE FAINTS IN TERROR.



THE NEXT DAY...

JANE WAKES UP IN THE NURSERY, CONFUSED AND FRIGHTENED. MR LLOYD, THE LOCAL APOTHECARY<sup>1</sup> IS SITTING BY HER BEDSIDE. BESSIE STANDS CLOSE BY.



MR LLOYD REPORTS TO MRS REED. HE THINKS JANE SHOULD LEAVE GATESHEAD HOUSE - AND GO TO BOARDING SCHOOL!



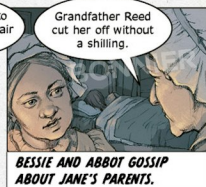
BOTH JANE'S PARENTS DIED OF A KILLER DISEASE THAT THEY CAUGHT WHILE HELPING POOR PEOPLE.



SLOWLY, JANE GROWS STRONGER, BUT SHE STILL DESPERATELY WANTS TO LEAVE GATESHEAD HOUSE.



JANE SOON FEELS STRONGER, AND IS WELL ENOUGH TO GET UP TO SIT BY THE FIRE. BUT HER MIND IS STILL IN TURMOIL. SHE CAN'T STOP CRYING.



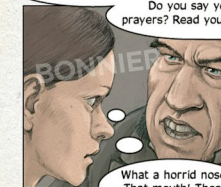
JANE'S FATHER WAS A PRIEST, AND HER MOTHER CAME FROM A RICH FAMILY. BUT THEY DISAPPROVED OF THE MARRIAGE, AND DISOWNED HER.



JOHN REED TRIES TO BULLY JANE AGAIN. MRS REED TELLS ALL HER CHILDREN TO AVOID AND IGNORE JANE - AND JANE LOSES HER TEMPER!



MRS REED IS FURIOUS. SHE CHASES JANE UPSTAIRS, SHAKES HER AND BOXES HER EARS.



MRS REED SAYS THAT SHE IS THINKING OF SENDING JANE TO MR BROCKLEHURST'S SCHOOL. BUT FIRST, SHE MUST WARN HIM THAT JANE IS WICKED AND VIOLENT. SHE MUST BE KEPT HUMBLE, AND TAUGHT TO WORK HARD.



JANE IS SO ANGRY THAT SHE IS NO LONGER AFRAID OF HER AUNT. SHE CONTINUES TO SHOUT, PASSIONATELY.



IT'S CHRISTMAS TIME, BUT JANE IS BANNED FROM ALL THE CELEBRATIONS. SHUT AWAY, ALL ALONE, SHE FEELS WICKED - AND REBELLIOUS.



MRS REED TELLS ALL HER CHILDREN TO AVOID AND IGNORE JANE - AND JANE LOSES HER TEMPER!



JANE IS SO ANGRY THAT SHE IS NO LONGER AFRAID OF HER AUNT. SHE CONTINUES TO SHOUT, PASSIONATELY.



AFTER CHRISTMAS, MRS REED SUMMONS MR BROCKLEHURST, A SCHOOLMASTER.



MRS REED TELLS ALL HER CHILDREN TO AVOID AND IGNORE JANE - AND JANE LOSES HER TEMPER!



JANE IS SO ANGRY THAT SHE IS NO LONGER AFRAID OF HER AUNT. SHE CONTINUES TO SHOUT, PASSIONATELY.

1. apothecary: pharmacist and junior doctor.  
2. civility: politeness.  
3. ill-conditioned: bad-tempered.



I am fonder of you than of all of the others.

AT LAST, JANE IS TO GO TO SCHOOL. BESSIE HELPS HER TO GET READY. SHE IS VERY KIND; JANE IS SORRY TO BE LEAVING HER BEHIND.



Goodbye to Gateshead!

JANE IS TO TRAVEL ALONE BY COACH. IT'S A LONG JOURNEY – FIFTY MILES. WHEN JANE REACHES HER NEW SCHOOL, LOWWOOD, SHE IS EXHAUSTED AND NIGHT HAS FALLEN.



AT LOWWOOD, A SERVANT COMES TO MEET JANE.

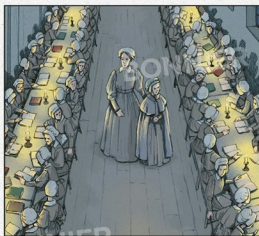
Jane Eyre?



INSIDE, JANE IS MET BY TWO TEACHERS – YOUNG, KINDLY MISS TEMPLE, AND MISS MILLER, WHO IS OLDER AND CAREWORN.<sup>1</sup>



She is very young to be sent alone. She had better be put to bed...



MISS MILLER LEADS JANE THROUGH A CLASSROOM FULL OF GIRLS.



SHE GIVES JANE SOME SUPPER, COLD WATER AND OATCAKE.<sup>2</sup> THEN SHOWS JANE TO HER BED IN A LARGE DORMITORY.<sup>3</sup>



I'm even too tired to dream.

JANE GOES TO SLEEP, EXHAUSTED.



CLANG! CLANG!

EARLY NEXT MORNING, JANE AND THE OTHER GIRLS ARE WAKENED BY A CLANGING BELL.



Brrrrrr!

IT'S STILL DARK, BUT THEY HAVE TO GET UP AND WASH IN ICY WATER. AFTER GETTING DRESSED, IT'S TIME FOR PRAYERS. JANE FEELS WEAK FROM STRESS AND HUNGER.



Abominable!

AT LAST, BREAKFAST IS SERVED. IT'S SLIMY, DISGUSTING AND BURNT PORRIDGE! AND IT'S TOTALLY INEDIBLE.<sup>4</sup> JANE AND THE OTHER GIRLS ARE HUNGRY AND MISERABLE.

THE TEACHERS ARRIVE, READY TO BEGIN LESSONS.



MISS TEMPLE, THE HEADMISTRESS, SEEMS KIND AND CALM. BUT THE OTHER FOUR TEACHERS ARE FAR LESS FRIENDLY.



Mmmm!

THE GIRLS LOOK PALE. MISS TEMPLE ASKS WHY. WHEN SHE HEARS ABOUT THE PORRIDGE, SHE ORDERS BREAD AND CHEESE FOR THEM ALL, AND PAYS FOR IT HERSELF.



Lowwood "Institution"?

JANE IS CONFUSED BY THE INSCRIPTION SHE READS ABOUT HER SCHOOL.



All of us are charity children.

ANOTHER GIRL, HELEN BURNS, EXPLAINS. LOWWOOD IS A REFUGE FOR POOR, HOMELESS GIRLS. JANE IS APPALLED. WHY HAS SHE BEEN SENT HERE, AND NOT TO A PROPER SCHOOL?

1. careworn: unhappy and tired due to feeling worried for a long time.  
2. oatcakes: ground-up oat grains mixed with water, then baked into a hard, dry, biscuit.  
3. dormitory: a large bedroom for many people.



JANE SOON LEARNS THAT CONDITIONS AT LOWOOD ARE HARD. THERE IS LITTLE FOOD, AND THE ROOMS ARE FREEZING COLD.



THE GIRLS ARE ALWAYS COLD, TIRED AND HUNGRY. MANY FALL ILL. THEY FAINT FROM WEAKNESS DURING LONG PRAYER MEETINGS.



ON SUNDAYS, THEY HAVE TO WALK MILES THROUGH THE SNOW TO CHURCH.



MISS TEMPLE ENCOURAGES THEM, BUT THE OTHER TEACHERS ARE CRUEL. THE GIRLS ARE PUNISHED AND HELEN BURNS IS BEATEN FOR THINGS THAT ARE NOT HER FAULT.



LATER, JANE FINDS HELEN SITTING ALONE, READING. JANE IS STILL ANGRY AT THE TEACHERS' CRUELTY AND UNFAIRNESS, BUT HELEN IS MEEK<sup>2</sup> AND PATIENT.



HELEN BELIEVES SHE MUST SUFFER IN SILENCE. OTHERWISE SHE MAY LOSE HER CHANCE TO LEARN, CORRECT HER FAULTS AND HELP OTHERS. JANE DOES NOT AGREE!



HELEN TRIES TO CONVINCE JANE THAT SHE SHOULD TRY TO PLEASE EVEN THE NASTIEST TEACHERS. THEY TALK OF MRS REED, TOO. HELEN WANTS JANE TO FORGIVE MRS REED FOR HER CRUELTY.



ONE DAY, MR BROCKLEHURST, THE MASTER WHO OWNS THE SCHOOL, MAKES A VISIT OF INSPECTION. HE FINDS FAULT WITH EVERYTHING! WHILE HE IS DRONING ON AND ON, JANE'S SLATE<sup>2</sup> SLIPS FROM HER FINGERS...



MR BROCKLEHURST ROUNDS ON JANE IN FURY. HE MAKES HER STAND, IN DISGRACE, ON A STOOL - AND TELLS THE WHOLE SCHOOL THAT SHE IS A WICKED LIAR!

1. her severity: Mrs Reed's cruelty.  
2. slate: a thin sheet of shiny stone, used to write on with chalk.



JANE IS DISTRAUGHT, BUT HELEN SMILES AT HER SECRETLY. IT GIVES JANE COURAGE. AFTERWARDS, WHEN JANE CRIES BITTERLY, HELEN COMFORTS HER.

SO DOES MISS TEMPLE, WHO COMES TO FIND THEM AS SOON SHE CAN. SHE LEADS THEM BOTH TO HER COSY PRIVATE PARLOUR.



THERE, MISS TEMPLE LISTENS WHILE JANE TELLS THE WHOLE STORY OF HER SHORT, UNHAPPY LIFE.



THEN MISS TEMPLE ASKS HELEN VERY KINDLY ABOUT HER HEALTH. WITH A WORRIED LOOK, SHE TAKES HELEN'S PULSE.<sup>1</sup>



AFTER THIS, IT'S TIME FOR TEA AND TOAST. AS A SPECIAL TREAT, MISS TEMPLE PRODUCES A SPLENDID CAKE AND CUTS GENEROUS SLICES.



WHEN TEA IS OVER, ALL THREE SIT HAPPILY BY THE FIRE. HELEN AND MISS TEMPLE TALK OF WONDERFUL FARAWAY COUNTRIES, EXCITING BOOKS AND POEMS, AND THE MARVELS OF NATURE.



LISTENING TO THEM INSPIRES JANE TO WORK HARD AT HER STUDIES. SHE WANTS TO LEARN AS MUCH AS SHE CAN!



MISS TEMPLE GIVES JANE EXTRA TIME FOR HER FAVOURITE SUBJECTS: FRENCH AND DRAWING. SHE BEGINS TO FEEL HAPPIER.

<sup>1</sup> takes Helen's pulse: counts how fast Helen's heart is beating by feeling the artery on her wrist. A fast or slow pulse can be a sign of illness.



AT LAST, THE WEATHER GETS WARMER. FLOWERS GROW QUICKLY IN THE BOGGY LAND AROUND THE SCHOOL. SO DO DANGEROUS GERMS! HALF THE GIRLS FALL ILL...



... AND MANY OF THEM DIE! MR BROCKLEHURST - THE COWARD! - STAYS AWAY, BUT MISS TEMPLE BRAVELY NURSES HER PUPILS.



BUT EVEN MISS TEMPLE'S LOVING CARE CANNOT SAVE HELEN. HER DISEASE IS DEADLY!



JANE KNOWS THAT HELEN IS VERY, VERY ILL. SHE DESPERATELY WANTS TO SEE HER. HELEN'S NURSES TRY TO SEND JANE AWAY...



... BUT SHE CREEPS INTO MISS TEMPLE'S ROOM, WHERE HELEN IS BEING LOOKED AFTER.



HELEN LOOKS TERRIBLY THIN AND PALE, BUT SHE IS CALM AND SMILING. HELEN BELIEVES THAT SHE IS GOING TO GOD, WHO LOVES HER.



JANE IS HEARTBROKEN. SHE DOES NOT WANT TO LOSE HER GOOD, KIND FRIEND. SHE CLIMBS ONTO HELEN'S BED AND WRAPS HER ARMS AROUND HER.



THAT IS HOW MISS TEMPLE FINDS THEM. BOTH ARE VERY PEACEFUL. JANE IS ASLEEP BUT HELEN HAS DIED.



AFTER ALL THE DEATHS, LOWOOD IS REBUILT. IT IS WARMER AND CLEANER, WITH PLENTY OF GOOD, HEALTHY FOOD, THE TEACHERS ARE KINDER AND THE PUPILS ARE HAPPIER.



HELPED BY MISS TEMPLE, JANE WORKS HARD AT HER STUDIES. SHE IS A CLEVER GIRL AND, AFTER SIX YEARS, KNOWS ENOUGH TO BECOME A TEACHER HERSELF.



TWO YEARS LATER, MISS TEMPLE MAKES A SURPRISE ANNOUNCEMENT. SHE'S LEAVING TO GET MARRIED!



JANE WANTS TO LEAVE TOO. SHE FEELS TRAPPED AND RESTLESS. LOWOOD NOW SEEMS LIKE A PRISON. SHE WANTS TO SEE MORE OF THE WORLD!



BRAVELY, SHE PUTS AN ADVERTISEMENT IN THE NEWSPAPER - AND RECEIVES A REPLY!



A GOVERNESS IS WANTED AT A COUNTRY HOUSE CALLED THORNFIELD HALL. IT'S NOT FAR FROM GATESHEAD, SO JANE CALLS IN TO SEE HER OLD NURSEMAID, BESSIE.



BESSIE IS NOW MARRIED, WITH CHILDREN: A SON, AND A DAUGHTER CALLED JANE! SHE HAS NEWS OF THE REED FAMILY:



**GEORGIANA HAS TRIED TO ELOPE - SUCH A DISGRACE - AND JOHN IS OFTEN DRUNK - A DISAPPOINTMENT!**



MRS REED IS 'NOT EASY IN HER MIND'. IN FACT, SHE'S DESPAIRING!



**MORE SHOCKING NEWS FOLLOWS...**

SEVEN YEARS AGO, JANE'S UNCLE, WHO LIVES ABROAD, CALLED AT GATESHEAD. HE WANTED TO FIND JANE, BUT MRS REED WOULD NOT HELP HIM.



JANE TRAVELS ON TO THORNFIELD HALL. SHE'S EXCITED, BUT NERVOUS. AGED JUST 18 AND ALL ALONE - WHAT FUTURE LIES AHEAD?



**AT LAST, THE JOURNEY ENDS.**



**THEY PASS THROUGH A WIDE, GRAND HALL.**



THE MAID SHOWS JANE INTO A PRIVATE SITTING ROOM, WHERE MRS FAIRFAX, THE HOUSEKEEPER, IS WAITING BESIDE A WARM AND WELCOMING FIRE.



MRS FAIRFAX TELLS JANE ABOUT THORNFIELD HALL, THEN LEADS HER UPSTAIRS TO A PLEASANT, COMFORTABLE BEDROOM.



You must feel tired!



A safe haven! I'm weary but content!



C'est ma gouvernante?<sup>1</sup>

JANE MEETS HER PUPIL - ADELE VARENS. ADELE IS THE DAUGHTER OF MR ROCHESTER, OWNER OF THORNFIELD. ADELE'S MOTHER, WHO CAME FROM PARIS:<sup>2</sup> IS DEAD.



Now shall I dance for you?

No, that will do!

ADELE IS PRETTY AND CHARMING BUT RATHER SILLY. SHE SPEAKS MOSTLY FRENCH. JANE MUST TEACH HER BETTER ENGLISH AND HELP HER TO GROW MORE SENSIBLE.



Like a map! All is pleasing!



HAAAAAH! HOOOOH! HEEEEEE!

A laugh? Odd!

JANE HEARS WILD LAUGHTER FROM UPSTAIRS.



Did you hear it?

Too much noise, Grace! Remember, directions!<sup>3</sup>

MRS FAIRFAX BLAMES THE NOISES ON GRACE POOLE. GRACE IS THE WOMAN WHO MENDS CLOTHES IN THE ATTIC. AS THEY SPEAK, GRACE APPEARS.



Restlessness is in my nature.

WHEN HER DUTIES ARE DONE, JANE LOVES TO ESCAPE FROM THORNFIELD AND WANDER IN THE LANES NEARBY. ONE COLD WINTER'S EVENING, A HUGE DOG BOUNDS PAST HER, FOLLOWED BY A MAN ON HORSEBACK.



A Gytrash?<sup>1</sup> No - a traveller!



WITH A SICKENING CRASH, THE HORSE SKIDS ON A PATCH OF ICE AND FALLS!



Are you injured, sir?

Can I do anything? I am the governess!

Stand aside!



IN SPITE OF HIS PROTESTS, JANE HELPS THE FALLEN RIDER TO HIS FEET, THEN HE LUMPS OVER TO HIS HORSE, AND RIDES OFF INTO THE DARKNESS.



Thank you!



JANE HURRIES HOME TO LOOK FOR MRS FAIRFAX. SHE ISN'T IN HER ROOM - BUT THE TRAVELLER'S HUGE DOG IS, LOOKING QUITE AT HOME IN FRONT OF THE FIRE.

1. C'est ma gouvernante?: Is this my governess? (French).  
2. Paris: the capital of France.  
3. directions: instructions.



YES! THE TRAVELLER IS NONE OTHER THAN MR ROCHESTER, OWNER OF THORNFIELD HALL. HE'S VISITING TO DISCUSS BUSINESS WITH HIS FARM MANAGER, AND TO SEE ADELE.



JANE OBSERVES MR ROCHESTER CAREFULLY. HE'S STRANGE: CLEVER, MOODY, UNPREDICTABLE AND SOMETIMES RUDE.



A face more remarkable for character than beauty...

Who are your parents? Have you seen much society? Have you read much?



**MR ROCHESTER NEVER FORGAVE HIS FATHER, OR SPOKE TO HIM EVER AGAIN.**



**MR ROCHESTER INVITES JANE AND MRS FAIRFAX TO TEA.**

Let Miss Eyre be seated!!



He is very changeful and abrupt!

I am so accustomed to his manner that I never think of it.

JANE IS SURPRISED BY MR ROCHESTER'S SHARP WAY OF SPEAKING. MRS FAIRFAX EXPLAINS THAT MR ROCHESTER'S TEMPER HAS BEEN SOURED BY A TERRIBLE FAMILY QUARREL.



He has great, dark eyes... very fine.

JANE IS NOT LIKE MOST OTHER WOMEN. MR ROCHESTER SENSES THAT SHE'S STRAIGHTFORWARD, HONEST AND SINCERE. HE CAN TRUST HER! JANE IS PUZZLED BY HIM, BUT FASCINATED ALSO.



Young lady, I am disposed to be gregarious and communicative\* tonight!

THEY TALK OF ALL KINDS OF THINGS - WORK, FREEDOM, SIN, FORGIVENESS, PLEASURE, SORROW, GOODNESS AND BEAUTY. JANE SPEAKS HER MIND FREELY, EVEN THOUGH MR ROCHESTER IS HER MASTER.



ONE DAY, JANE IS TAKING ADELE FOR A WALK. THEY MEET MR ROCHESTER. WHILE ADELE PLAYS WITH THE DOG, MR ROCHESTER DECIDES TO TELL JANE HIS LIFE HISTORY.



AFTER THE QUARREL WITH HIS FATHER, MR ROCHESTER RAN AWAY TO FRANCE. THERE, HE MET A DANCER, CÉLINE VARENS, AND FELL IN LOVE WITH HER.



I gave her servants, a carriage, cashmères, diamonds, even lace...



BUT CÉLINE DECEIVED HIM. TOOK HIS MONEY, AND WENT OFF WITH ANOTHER MAN.



MR ROCHESTER CHALLENGED THE OTHER MAN TO A DUEL AND WOUNDED HIM. CÉLINE RAN AWAY, LEAVING ADELE BEHIND.



NOW CÉLINE IS DEAD. ROCHESTER DOES NOT KNOW WHETHER HE IS REALLY ADELE'S FATHER, BUT FEELS HE MUST LOOK AFTER HER.

1. let...be seated: this shows unusual respect towards a governess like Jane.  
2. seen much society: met many different people.



What if he leaves? If he does go, the change will be doleful!!

JANE LIES AWAKE, THINKING ABOUT MR ROCHESTER. THEN, WHAT'S THAT? A MAD LAUGH! FOOTSTEPS! A STRANGE SMELL!



SMOKE! FLAMES! JANE LEAPS OUT OF BED AND RUSHES TOWARDS THE SMOKE. THE FIRE IS IN MR ROCHESTER'S ROOM!



Wake! Wake!



Has there been a flood?

No, sir - a fire! Get up!

JANE QUICKLY THROWS WATER FROM THE WASH-STAND! ONTO THE BLAZE. MR ROCHESTER GROANS, AND OPENS HIS EYES.



Who did it?

JANE TELLS MR ROCHESTER ABOUT THE LAUGH, THE FOOTSTEPS AND THE FIRE. MR ROCHESTER LOOKS GRIM.



MR ROCHESTER HEADS FOR THE ATTIC.

Remain where you are! Don't move!



It is as I thought.

Grace Poole?

You have guessed it!

AFTER A WHILE, MR ROCHESTER RETURNS, PALE AND GLOOMY. HE TELLS JANE NOT TO TALK ABOUT WHAT HAS JUST HAPPENED.



My cherished preserver, goodnight!

MR ROCHESTER SENDS JANE BACK TO HER ROOM. BUT FIRST, HE CLASPS HER BY THE HAND AND THANKS HER PASSIONATELY FOR SAVING HIM.



BACK IN HER OWN BED, JANE SOON FALLS FAST ASLEEP. HER DREAMS ARE STRANGE AND TROUBLING - BUT VERY SWEET.



JANE WALKS PAST MR ROCHESTER'S OPEN DOOR.



Past comprehension!!

GRACE POOLE IS SITTING CALMLY IN MR ROCHESTER'S ROOM. SEWING NEW CURTAINS!



Has anything happened here?



He fell asleep with his candle lit!

Perhaps you may have heard a noise?

JANE DECIDES SHE MUST QUESTION GRACE POOLE. IS GRACE THE WOULD-BE MURDERER?



I am certain I heard a laugh.

You must have been dreaming!

IN REPLY, GRACE INVENTS A STORY - THEN ASKS SOME QUESTIONS OF HER OWN.

GRACE IS GOOD AT KEEPING SECRETS. SHE WON'T TELL JANE WHAT SHE KNOWS.



Mr Rochester has, on the whole, had a favourable day for his journey.

MRS FAIRFAX INVITES JANE TO HER ROOM. THEY DRINK TEA AND TALK ABOUT THE WEATHER.



Journey! Is Mr Rochester gone anywhere? I did not know he was out!



The ladies are very fond of him.

He is very likely to stay a week or more.

MR ROCHESTER HAS GONE TO VISIT SOME FINE, FASHIONABLE FRIENDS WHO LIVE MANY MILES AWAY.



ALONE, JANE FEELS TERRIBLE. HOW COULD SHE HAVE THOUGHT THAT MR ROCHESTER CARED FOR HER?

PAINFULLY AWARE OF HER PLAIN LOOKS AND LOWLY POSITION, JANE DRAWS TWO PORTRAITS.



MR ROCHESTER WRITES TO TELL MRS FAIRFAX THAT HE IS BRINGING HIS FRIENDS TO THORNFIELD. ALL THE SERVANTS, INCLUDING JANE, WORK HARD TO GET THE HOUSE READY.



ONLY GRACE POOLE SEEMS NOT TO CARE. SHE CONTINUES WITH HER DUTIES AS USUAL. JANE WONDERS WHAT THESE ARE - THE OTHER SERVANTS SEEM TO KNOW.



THREE DAYS LATER MR ROCHESTER AND HIS FRIENDS ARRIVE IN FINE STYLE. JANE AND ADELE - WHO IS VERY EXCITED - WATCH FROM BEHIND A CURTAIN.



BEAUTIFUL BLANCHE INGRAM IS THE BELLE OF THE BALL. NEXT DAY, JANE AND MRS FAIRFAX SEE HER OUT RIDING WITH MR ROCHESTER.



THAT NIGHT, JANE AND ADELE ARE INVITED TO JOIN THE GUESTS AT A PARTY. WHERE THERE ARE EIGHT OTHER WOMEN ATTENDING. MR ROCHESTER TALKS AND LAUGHS WITH THEM ALL.

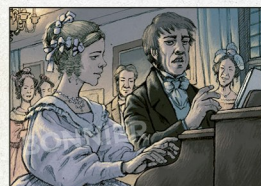


ADELE LOVES MEETING NEW PEOPLE, BUT JANE FINDS A QUIET, HIDDEN PLACE JUST TO SIT AND WATCH.

IT'S AGONY FOR JANE TO SEE MR ROCHESTER PAYING ATTENTION TO THE OTHER YOUNG WOMEN.



JANE LISTENS TO THE YOUNG WOMEN CHATTER ABOUT THE GOVERNESSES WHO ONCE TAUGHT THEM. THEIR WORDS ARE THOUGHTLESS, CRUEL AND INSULTING.



BLANCHE INGRAM PLAYS THE PIANO, WHILE MR ROCHESTER SINGS. HE HAS A DEEP, SPLENDID VOICE. JANE IS THRILLED.



JANE CAN BEAR IT NO LONGER. SHE LEAVES THE ROOM - AND MR ROCHESTER FOLLOWS.



JANE BEGINS TO CRY. MR ROCHESTER STARTS TO SPEAK, BUT STOPS, SUDDENLY. JANE RETIRES TO BED.

1. dupe: fool.  
2. disconnected: with no friends or family.  
3. accomplished: skilful at music, dancing, art and elegant conversation.



ONE NIGHT, THEY PLAY CHARADES! MR ROCHESTER CHOOSES BLANCHE FOR HIS TEAM, AND SHE PLAYS THE PART OF A BRIDE.



JANE LOOKS ON, HORRIFIED.



BLANCHE IS PROUD AND VAIN, AND JANE THINKS SHE IS MEAN, SELFISH AND SPITEFUL. SHE DOES NOT TRULY LOVE MR ROCHESTER; SHE'S JUST HOPING TO FIND A RICH HUSBAND.



A VISITOR ARRIVES - MR MASON HAS JUST LANDED IN ENGLAND FROM HIS HOME IN THE CARIBBEAN.<sup>1</sup> JANE CAN'T QUITE MAKE OUT WHAT HE IS SAYING.



JANE TRIES TO HEAR MORE, BUT MR MASON'S WORDS ARE INTERRUPTED. A MYSTERIOUS FORTUNE-TELLER HAS ARRIVED. BLANCHE SEES HER FIRST.



SHE RETURNS, LOOKING UPSET. THE FORTUNE-TELLER HAS HINTED THAT MR ROCHESTER WILL SOON BE POOR!



She told us such things!

She knows all about us!



THE OLD WOMAN INSISTS THAT JANE GOES TO SEE HER. JANE DOES NOT BELIEVE IN FORTUNE-TELLING, BUT IS CURIOUS AND EXCITED.



THE OLD WOMAN SAYS THAT JANE NEEDS THE WARMTH OF LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP. SHE DECLARES THAT JANE IS LOVESICK - BUT AFRAID OF REVEALING HER LOVE!



THE OLD WOMAN EXAMINES JANE'S FACE CAREFULLY.



SUDDENLY, THE OLD WOMAN'S VOICE CHANGES. SHE TAKES OFF HER HAT...



IT'S MR ROCHESTER IN DISGUISE. JANE IS NOT PLEASED. WAS IT A TRICK? A JOKE? A TEST?



ALL AT ONCE, MR ROCHESTER TURNS DEADLY PALE. HE GASPS AND STAGGERS!

AS MR ROCHESTER REMOVES HIS DISGUISE, JANE TELLS HIM THAT A VISITOR HAS ARRIVED.



1. I have no faith: I do not believe in you.  
2. dare censure: fero biamo and shame.



IT'S PAST MIDNIGHT, BUT JANE IS STILL AWAKE, AS SHE GAZES OUT OF THE WINDOW. A BLOOD-CURLING SHRIEK SHATTERS THE SILENCE.



ALL THE GUESTS ARE AWOKEN AND RUSH OUT. MR ROCHESTER TELLS THEM NOT TO WORRY AND SENDS THEM BACK TO THEIR ROOMS.



BUT JANE DRESSES, AS SHE HALF-EXPECTS, MR ROCHESTER TAPS AT HER DOOR.



**MR ROCHESTER UNLOCKS A HIDDEN DOOR.**



A MAN LIES PROPPED ON PILLOWS IN THE ATTIC ROOM. IT IS MR MASON - BLEEDING AND UNCONSCIOUS!



MR ROCHESTER LEAVES JANE TO LOOK AFTER MR MASON, BUT FORBIDS HER TO SPEAK TO HIM.



AT DAYBREAK, THE SURGEON ARRIVES. MR ROCHESTER ORDERS HIM TO BANDAGE MR MASON'S WOUNDS, READY FOR A LONG JOURNEY.



THE SURGEON EXAMINES MR MASON, WHO IS TREMBLING AND TERRIFIED. MASON HAS LOST A LOT OF BLOOD, BUT SHOULD SURVIVE.



TREMBLING, MR MASON SIPPS MEDICINE, BUT IS SOON ABLE TO STAND.



THE SURGEON AND MR ROCHESTER HELP MR MASON TOTTER TOWARDS HIS CARRIAGE. A FEW WORDS ESCAPE HIS WEAK LIPS.



JANE DOES NOT UNDERSTAND. AS THE CARRIAGE RUMBLES AWAY, MR ROCHESTER LEADS HER QUIETLY INTO THE GARDEN.



THEY TALK. JANE SAYS THAT SHE WAS AFRAID OF THE SHRIEKING AND LAUGHING. WAS GRACE POOLE BEHIND THAT DOOR?



MR ROCHESTER SAYS THAT DANGER WILL COME NOT FROM GRACE POOLE, BUT FROM MR MASON.



AGAIN, JANE IS PUZZLED. BUT SHE LISTENS WHILE MR ROCHESTER TELLS HER HOW HE ONCE MADE A TERRIBLE MISTAKE, AND IS STILL SUFFERING BECAUSE OF IT.



NOW, HE WANTS PEACE AND HAPPINESS - BUT GETTING THIS WILL CAUSE A SHAMEFUL SCANDAL. JANE TELLS HIM, INSTEAD, TO SEEK PEACE THROUGH GOD.



SUDDENLY, ROCHESTER'S VOICE CHANGES. IT IS HARSH AND SARCASTIC.



HE WALKS OFF TO SEE HIS HORSES IN THE STABLES. JANE IS LEFT ALONE, SHOCKED AND SHAKEN.



JANE'S DREAMS ARE STRANGELY HAUNTED BY SMILING LITTLE CHILDREN. SHE REMEMBERS NURSEMAID BESSIE SAYING THAT THIS WAS A SINISTER OMEN.



A MESSENGER APPEARS WITH BAD NEWS: JANE'S COUSIN, JOHN REED, HAS DIED. MRS REED HAS COLLAPSED IN SHOCK - AND IS CALLING FOR JANE.



You always said you had no relations!

Promise me only to stay a week!



JANE ASKS MR ROCHESTER FOR PERMISSION TO GO. HE HAS HEARD ABOUT THE REEDS, AND IS SURPRISED TO LEARN THAT JANE IS RELATED TO THEM. AT LAST, JANE REACHES GATESHEAD HOUSE.



How are you, dear aunt?

MRS REED IS VERY ILL. SHE IS CONFUSED, BUT SHE REMEMBERS JANE, AND GREETES HER VERY COLDLY.



Such a burden... so much annoyance.

MRS REED TALKS BITTERLY ABOUT JANE'S PAST LIFE, AT GATESHEAD - AND HAS SOME STARTLING NEWS FOR HER!



'I wish to adopt her, and bequeath<sup>1</sup> her at my death whatever I may have.'

THREE YEARS AGO, A LETTER ARRIVED FROM JANE'S UNCLE, OVERSEAS. MRS REED HAD HIDDEN IT, BUT NOW GIVES IT TO JANE JUST BEFORE SHE DIES.



ONE DAY, JANE WILL BE RICH. BUT NOW SHE HEADS BACK TO THORNFIELD HALL.



Go up home, and stay! your little, weary wandering feet.

Wherever you are is my home!

THOUGHTS OF MR ROCHESTER FILL JANE'S MIND. AND THEN, BY THE SIDE OF THE ROAD - IT'S THE MAN HIMSELF!



I have never loved him so well!

ONE BEAUTIFUL MIDSUMMER EVENING, MR ROCHESTER ASKS JANE TO WALK WITH HIM IN THE GARDEN. ROSES ARE BLOSSOMING. NIGHTINGALES ARE SINGING.



I am going back to Thornfield, but how long am I to stay there?

Hasten! Hasten! Be with him while you may!

SHE DECIDES TO WALK THE LAST FEW MILES OF THE JOURNEY. THE CLOSER SHE GETS TO THORNFIELD, THE HAPPIER SHE FEELS.



TIME PASSES. THORNFIELD IS QUIET AND CALM. BUT WHY IS THERE NO NEWS OF MR ROCHESTER'S WEDDING? AND NO PLAN FOR THE GREAT OCCASION?



I shall never see you again!

MR ROCHESTER HAS IMPORTANT NEWS. HE IS TO MARRY BLANCHE INGRAM IN ONE MONTH. ADELE MUST GO TO BOARDING SCHOOL, AND JANE MUST LEAVE THORNFIELD!



JANE AND MR ROCHESTER SIT UNDER A SHADY TREE. THERE, HE OFFERS TO FIND HER A NEW JOB AS A GOVERNESS, BUT THE ROLE IS IN IRELAND.

JANE IS ALMOST TOO UPSET TO SPEAK. MR ROCHESTER LOOKS WORRIED.



**A WILD WIND SPRINGS UP. TREES WRITHE AND GROAN. LIGHTNING FLASHES OVERHEAD!**

LATER, ADELE TELLS JANE THAT THE BIG SHADY TREE HAS BEEN STRUCK AND SHATTERED BY LIGHTNING.

JANE HURRIES TO GREET MR ROCHESTER. SHE HAS NEVER, EVER, FELT SO HAPPY!



MR ROCHESTER PLANS THE WEDDING AND THE HONEYMOON. HE WANTS TO GIVE JANE JEWELS, FINE CLOTHES...

BUT MRS FAIRFAX LOOKS WORRIED. HAS JANE BEEN FOOLISH? WILL MR ROCHESTER CHANGE HIS MIND?

ALL DAY, JANE WORKS AS A HUMBLE, DUTIFUL GOVERNESS. BUT, AFTER WORK, SHE CAN BE ALONE WITH MR ROCHESTER, HER FUTURE HUSBAND - AND HER EQUAL.



TWO NIGHTS BEFORE THE WEDDING, JANE HAS TERRIFYING DREAMS OF THORNFIELD HALL IN RUINS, AND LOSING MR ROCHESTER.



SHE WAKES WITH A START. SHE SEES LIGHT - A CANDLE! WHO'S HOLDING IT? AND WHAT ARE THEY DOING?



IT'S A STRANGE WOMAN WITH A WILD FACE. SHE'S TRAMPLING ON JANE'S WEDDING DRESS AND RIPPING HER VEIL. JANE FAINTS WITH TERROR.



IN THE MORNING, JANE TELLS MR ROCHESTER ABOUT THE DAMAGE. HE SHUDDERS.



ADELE'S FRENCH MAID HELPS JANE PUT ON HER CLEANED, MENDED WEDDING CLOTHES.



MR ROCHESTER CANNOT WAIT. HE HURRIES JANE TO THE CHURCH. SHE SEES TWO STRANGERS WAITING OUTSIDE, BUT DOES NOT STOP TO TALK TO THEM.



JANE AND MR ROCHESTER STAND READY TO MAKE THEIR WEDDING VOWS, BUT THE PRIEST'S MILD VOICE IS INTERRUPTED BY ANGRY WORDS, SPOKEN BY ONE OF THE STRANGERS.



JANE'S HEART QUAKES. MR ROCHESTER LOOKS GRIM. THE PRIEST ASKS THE STRANGER THE REASON FOR HIS INTERRUPTION.



THERE IS A WITNESS TO THAT WEDDING - WHO SWEARS THAT BERTHA IS STILL ALIVE.



THE WITNESS IS MR MASON. HE IS BERTHA'S BROTHER. HE SAYS BERTHA ATTACKED HIM WHEN HE VISITED THORNFIELD HALL.



MR ROCHESTER CONFESSES. YES, HE KEEPS BERTHA HIDDEN AT THORNFIELD! HE WAS TRICKED INTO MARRYING HER BY HIS FATHER. NOW SHE IS CARED FOR BY GRACE POOLE.



THEY GO TO THE ATTIC.



BERTHA HURLS HERSELF AT MR ROCHESTER, GROWLING, BITING AND SCRATCHING. SHE WANTS TO KILL HIM!



DUMBSTRUCK AND IN A DAZE, JANE STAGGERS TO HER ROOM, ALONE. THERE, SHE FALLS TO THE FLOOR, SENSELESS.





JANE WAKES, SICK AND DIZZY. HER MIND IS IN TURMOIL. SHE STAGGERS TO HER DOOR, OPENS IT - AND FALLS INTO THE ARMS OF MR ROCHESTER. HE HAS BEEN WAITING FOR HER, ALL NIGHT LONG!



JANE IS TOO WEAK TO STAND. MR ROCHESTER CARRIES HER DOWNSTAIRS, TO SIT BESIDE THE FIRE.



MR ROCHESTER KNEELS BESIDE JANE, AND PASSIONATELY TRIES TO KISS HER. JANE PUSHES HIM AWAY.



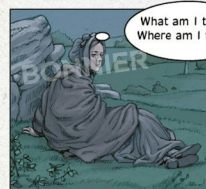
MR ROCHESTER SAYS THAT HIS LIFE WITH BERTHA WAS A MISERY. BERTHA WAS A DEMON; JANE IS AN ANGEL! BUT JANE SAYS THAT BERTHA IS ILL, NOT EVIL. SHE NEEDS HELP AND UNDERSTANDING.



MR ROCHESTER BEGS JANE TO LIVE WITH HIM IN SECRET - AND UNMARRIED! SHE IS AFRAID OF HIS ANGER, BUT REFUSES. HIS PLAN IS UNJUST, DECEITFUL, DISHONEST!



THAT NIGHT, JANE DREAMS OF HER LONG-DEAD MOTHER, WHO WARNS HER TO 'FLEE TEMPTATION'. SHE TIPTOES AWAY FROM THORNFIELD HALL BEFORE DAYBREAK.



COLD, TIRED, HUNGRY AND FEARFUL, JANE HEADS FOR THE MOORS. SHE SPENDS THE NIGHT UNDER A BUSH; SHE BEGS FOR COLD, STALE PORRIDGE - PIG FOOD!



JANE WANDERS LIKE A LOST AND STARVING DOG.



JANE STUMBLES, EXHAUSTED, ACROSS ROUGH, BOGGY GROUND, THROUGH THE PARSONAGE WINDOW. SHE SEES TWO YOUNG WOMEN, READING.



FULL OF HOPE, JANE KNOCKS AT THE PARSONAGE DOOR, BUT SHE IS REFUSED ENTRY BY AN OLD SERVANT.



JANE STAGGERS AWAY INTO THE WILD, RAINY NIGHT.



LATER THAT NIGHT...

JANE HAS COLLAPSED. A YOUNG MAN FINDS HER AND RESCUES HER.



IT IS THE PRIEST! HE TAKES JANE TO THE PARSONAGE, WHERE HIS SISTERS CARE FOR HER TENDERLY.



THE OLD SERVANT - NOW KIND AND HELPFUL - PUTS JANE TO BED. SHE RESTS FOR A WEEK, UTTERLY EXHAUSTED.



THE SISTERS, DIANA AND MARY, ARE SWEET AND FRIENDLY. BUT JANE CANNOT TELL THEM HER STORY. SHE'S SCARED MR ROCHESTER WILL FIND HER.



THEIR BROTHER, ST JOHN<sup>1</sup> THE PRIEST, IS CLEVER, GOOD - AND HANDSOME. JANE HIDES THE TRUTH FROM HIM, TOO...



... BUT OFFERS TO TEACH AT THE NEARBY CHURCH SCHOOL. SHE WANTS TO REPAY HIS KINDNESS.



SOMETIMES, JANE WONDERS WHAT HER LIFE WOULD HAVE BEEN LIKE IF SHE HAD RUN AWAY WITH MR ROCHESTER. HER MIND WHIRLS...



JANE WAKES FROM HER DAYDREAM. ST JOHN ARRIVES TO ASK HOW SHE LIKES THE SCHOOL. HE TELLS HER HIS GREAT AMBITION TO BE A MISSIONARY!



A VERY PRETTY GIRL WALKS BY. IT IS ROSAMOND OLIVER, A RICH HEIRESS. SHE INVITES ST JOHN TO WALK WITH HER TO HER HOME. HE BLUSHES, BUT REFUSES.



A LETTER ARRIVES.

ST JOHN'S UNCLE, MR EYRE, HAS DIED - AND LEFT ALL HIS FORTUNE TO A NIECE, CALLED JANE EYRE.



ST JOHN GUESSES WHO JANE REALLY IS. SHE IS HIS COUSIN. THEIR MOTHERS WERE SISTERS, AND, THANKS TO THEIR UNCLE, SHE'S NOW AN HEIRESS!



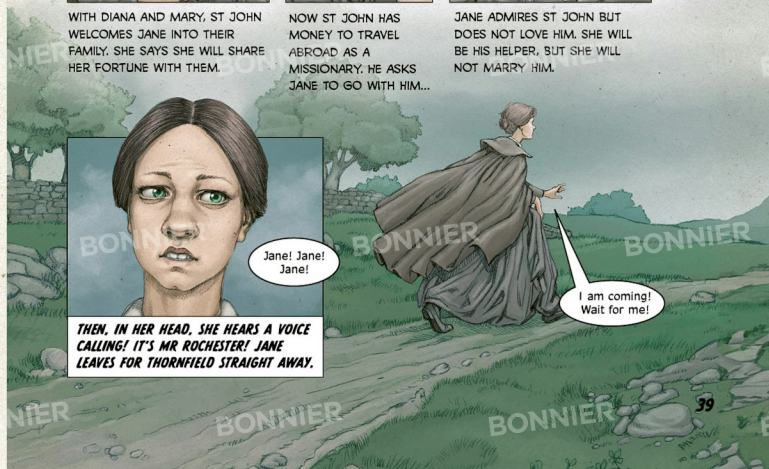
WITH DIANA AND MARY, ST JOHN WELCOMES JANE INTO THEIR FAMILY. SHE SAYS SHE WILL SHARE HER FORTUNE WITH THEM.



NOW ST JOHN HAS MONEY, HE ASKS JANE TO GO WITH HIM...



JANE ADMIRES ST JOHN BUT DOES NOT LOVE HIM. SHE WILL BE HIS HELPER, BUT SHE WILL NOT MARRY HIM.



THEN, IN HER HEAD, SHE HEARS A VOICE CALLING! IT'S MR ROCHESTER! JANE LEAVES FOR THORNFIELD STRAIGHT AWAY.



AFTER 36 ANXIOUS HOURS, JANE REACHES THORNFIELD HALL. TO HER HORROR, SHE FINDS A BLACKENED, CRUMBLING RUIN.



The silence of death.



A dreadful calamity!

JANE HURRIES TO THE NEAREST VILLAGE, WHERE AN INNKEEPER TELLS HER WHAT HAPPENED.



Bertha!

LAST AUTUMN, BERTHA SET FIRE TO JANE'S OLD BEDROOM.



Grrrrrrrr! Eeeeeeeeeeeeee!

MR ROCHESTER TRIED TO SAVE HER, BUT SHE JUMPED TO HER DEATH.



THE FIRE BLINDED MR ROCHESTER: FALLING BEAMS CRUSHED ONE OF HIS ARMS.



I pity him!

Where is he?

NOW MR ROCHESTER LIVES MISERABLE AND ALONE, WITH HIS DOG.



It is my master! Desperate and brooding. A caged eagle!

THE INNKEEPER'S BOY DRIVES JANE TO A BLEAK, REMOTE FARMHOUSE. JANE WAITS OUTSIDE, WATCHING...



Is it really you, miss?

JANE KNOCKS ON THE DOOR. MARY, AN OLD SERVANT, ANSWERS.



Mary? Who is it?

Woof!

JANE PLANS A SURPRISE.

WHEN MR ROCHESTER CALLS FOR WATER, JANE BRINGS IT TO HIM. THE DOG RECOGNISES HER INSTANTLY.



Great God! What sweet madness has seized me?

JANE TELLS MR ROCHESTER THAT MARY IS IN THE KITCHEN. SHE USES HER SOFTEST VOICE.



Her small, slight fingers! Is it Jane?

FEARING THAT JANE'S A GHOST, MR ROCHESTER REACHES OUT TO TRY TO CATCH HER.



My dear master - I am come back to you!

TOGETHER AGAIN AT LAST, THEY KISS PASSIONATELY.



And you will stay with me?

As long as I live!



THE WEDDING TAKES PLACE THREE DAYS LATER. A BUSSFUL FUTURE BECKONS; LIFE SEEMS LIKE ONE LONG HONEYMOON.



THE YEARS PASS...

As happy as I can be!

ST JOHN GOES TO INDIA; HIS SISTERS MARRY. ADELE LEARNS TO LIKE LESSONS; MRS FAIRFAX RETIRES. JANE AND MR ROCHESTER? EVENTUALLY, HIS SIGHT RETURNS. THEY HAVE A BABY SON. AND THEY ARE 'EVER TOGETHER'.

Charlotte Brontë belonged to an extraordinary literary family. Together with her two younger sisters, Anne and Emily, she created some of the best-loved and most famous novels ever written in English.

Charlotte's father, Patrick, was born in Ireland, but moved to work as a Rector (senior priest) in the north of England. Although he loved books and learning, Patrick Brontë could not afford comfortable lodgings, good clothes or a horse and carriage for his family. Instead, he expected all of his six children to work hard to make a living. He sent the girls to charity schools to learn reading, writing and arithmetic. With these simple skills, Charlotte became a teacher in 1835, then, from 1839 to 1841, a governess. She worked in rich families' homes, where she was scorned for her lowly social status – just like Jane Eyre.

#### LOVE AND LEARNING

In 1842, Charlotte planned to open her own school. But no pupils came, and so she travelled to Brussels in Belgium to improve her knowledge of French. She returned to Brussels in 1843 to work as a teacher of English. Charlotte fell in love with a Belgian headmaster there, named Constantin Heger, but he was married and she did not tell him of her feelings. Instead, she wrote private, passionate letters to him – which the headmaster ripped up. His wife retrieved them from the bin and meticulously glued them back together. They were later given to the British Museum by Heger's son.



Charlotte Brontë: an engraving of a painting by Evert A. Duycknick, based on a drawing by George Richmond.

#### EARLY WORKS

In 1845, Charlotte returned to England, and read some of the poems that her sister Emily had been writing. She was so impressed that she arranged for them to be published in 1846, together with poems written by herself, and her youngest sister, Anne. The sisters feared that their work would be scorned if readers knew they were women, so they chose false names: Acton (Anne), Ellis (Emily) and Currer (Charlotte) Bell. Their book sold only two copies, but was praised by influential people. This gave the sisters courage to go on writing. Charlotte also tried – but failed – to get her first novel, *The Professor*, published.

#### JANE EYRE

In 1846, Charlotte began work on her second novel, *Jane Eyre*. Although Jane Eyre's life story was very different from her own, Charlotte poured some of her deepest feelings into the text, and based several scenes on her own experiences. This – and her passionate, powerful writing – gave the story great appeal. It soon found a publisher, and became an overnight success. Charlotte and her sisters became celebrities and travelled to London and Manchester to meet famous writers and thinkers.

Charlotte went on to write two more novels: *Shirley* (1849), which was set against a background of industrial unrest in a Yorkshire village during the Napoleonic wars, and *Villette* (1852), about a sheltered girl who grows into a lonely, young woman, until she finds her own place in the world.

#### STRONG VALUES

Charlotte had some strong opinions about politics, society and religion, and was not afraid to share them. She believed in traditional values, including honour, duty, respect and hard work, and upheld law and order. She valued honesty, truthfulness and straight talking much more than the rules of rich, fashionable society. She was fiercely critical of religious hypocrites and fundamentalists.

Charlotte was physically very small. She was less than five feet (a metre and a half) tall, thin, shy, with plain features and poor eyesight. But she had a great spirit, a fine intellect, and an attractive

personality. Her female friends were devoted to her, and she received several proposals of marriage from men.

#### FAMILY MATTERS

Charlotte enjoyed huge literary success, although her private life was tragic. Her mother died young, in 1821, when Charlotte was five years old. Her two older sisters, Elizabeth and Maria, died aged 10 and 12, just four years later. They were victims of tuberculosis (TB), a common 19th-century infection. Charlotte claimed that the hunger, cold and dirt at their boarding school helped kill them, and stunted her own development.

In 1848 and 1849, Charlotte's two younger sisters, Anne and Emily, also died of TB. Charlotte's only brother, Branwell, became addicted to alcohol and died in 1848.

#### CHARLOTTE'S DEATH

In 1854, Charlotte married a poor curate (junior priest) named Arthur Bell Nicholls. At first her father forbade the marriage, but Charlotte and Arthur were very happy. Soon, Charlotte became pregnant, and fell seriously ill with continuous sickness and faintness. Charlotte and her unborn child died in March 1855; she was only 38 years old. Some say the cause was pneumonia, and evidence discovered since her death has led others to believe it was typhus.

Charlotte is buried in the family vault, along with her father, brother and sisters, in the church of St Michael and All Angels, Haworth, West Yorkshire.

## BRITISH WOMEN'S EDUCATION AND LEGAL RIGHTS

Charlotte Brontë lived a very respectable, conventional life, and spent years as a teacher and governess. But her writings reveal her passionate belief in personal freedom and equality, and convey her complaints about the low standard of women's education.

The character Jane Eyre describes herself as 'free-born' and 'independent'. Jane becomes a governess because teaching is the only career, apart from marriage, open to 'decent' women. Throughout the book, Jane 'respects herself' and has the courage to stand up for her beliefs and ideas at a time when women had very few legal rights or educational opportunities.

## EDUCATION AND MARRIAGE

During the 1800s, most British children did not go to school. Rich parents paid to send boys and girls to private schools, or employed governesses; churches and charities ran schools for a few poor children. In many schools, standards were low and children were badly treated. Girls were not usually taught the same subjects as boys, but were expected to learn useful skills, such as sewing, that they might need as wives and mothers.

Unmarried women were under the legal control of their fathers. The law allowed married women's husbands to beat them, lock them up, and take their children away from them. Husbands had the right to control their wives' money and property – even their clothes.

Divorce was almost impossible. Marriages could only be ended by a private Act of Parliament (a special new law). The new 'Poor Law' banned and punished beggars and wanderers seeking shelter and employment.

### 1792

Woman writer Mary Wollstonecraft publishes *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, calling for equal rights with men. Her shocking ideas are ignored by most men – and many women.

### 1836–1858

Working-class campaigners, called 'Chartists', demand social justice. There are riots in the north of England. Poor, homeless people – like Jane Eyre when she runs away – are treated with much suspicion.

### 1839

Thanks to campaigns by woman writer Caroline Norton (1818–1877), women win the right of custody (care and control) over their children under seven years old, and rights to see their older children, even if their husbands have taken them away.

### 1840

Women governesses outnumber male schoolteachers.

### 1848

Queen's College, London, is set up to train women teachers.

### 1854

Cheltenham Ladies' College (private boarding school) is set up in south-west England. It aims to teach women the same subjects that boys learn at the best boys' schools, to the same high standards. Soon, other private schools for girls follow its example.

### 1857

Divorce is now handled by law-courts. Wives can ask for a divorce from husbands who are cruel, who desert them, or who have affairs with other women.

### 1860

Florence Nightingale sets up Nightingale School to train women as expert, professional nurses.

### 1867

London Society for Women's Suffrage formed to campaign for the right of women to vote.

### 1870

Education Act established. Local councils must provide elementary (primary) schools for all children, rich or poor.

### 1870 and 1884

New laws give wives the right to keep the clothes, money and other property they owned before marriage, and to run their own businesses.

### 1874

Elizabeth Garrett Anderson and Sophia Jex-Blake set up the London School of Medicine for Women.

### 1876

New law allows women in Britain to train as doctors.

### 1878

Wives who leave cruel husbands win the right to demand financial support for their children. British universities accept female students for the first time.

### 1879

Millicent Fawcett founds the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies to organise country-wide campaign for votes for women.

### 1880

Primary education made compulsory for all British children. Children from rich families go to private schools; poor, ordinary children go to state schools.

### 1886

Law gives a widow complete custody of her children after her husband dies.

### 1891

Married women can no longer be forced by the law to stay in their husband's house against their will.

### 1895

Judges can now order protection for women who have been attacked by violent husbands.

### 1899

State school leaving age raised to 12 years for girls and boys.

## BRONTË FAMILY TIMELINE

### April 1814

Maria, the first of the Brontë siblings, is born.

### February 1815

Elizabeth Brontë born.

### April 1816

Charlotte Brontë born.

### June 1817

Branwell, the only boy in the Brontë family, is born.

### July 1818

Emily Brontë born.

### January 1820

The last of the Brontës, Anne, is born.

### 1821

Maria Brontë, Charlotte's mother, dies of cancer.

### 1843

Charlotte travels to Brussels to teach English.

### 1846

*Poems by Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell* is published, but sells only two copies.

### 1847

*Jane Eyre* is published and becomes an instant hit. Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* is published.

### 1848

Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* is published. Emily dies of tuberculosis.

### 1849

Anne dies. Branwell dies of suspected tuberculosis. Charlotte's novel *Shirley* published.

### 1853

Charlotte's novel *Villette* is published.

### 1854

Charlotte marries curate Arthur Bell Nicholls.

### 1855

Charlotte suffers from poor health whilst pregnant, and dies along with her unborn child.

### 1857

Two years after Charlotte's death, her first novel, *The Professor*, is published.

It seems as if Charlotte was born to be a writer. While still a child, she and her brother and sisters made up stories and wrote over 20 books about imaginary lands called Glass Town and Angria. Charlotte also kept a diary, and wrote long, lively letters to her friends. Aged 20, she bravely wrote to Robert Southey, the Poet Laureate (official national poet), asking for advice on how to earn her living as a writer. Discouragingly, he wrote back saying, 'literature cannot be the basis of a woman's life, and it ought not to be.' But this did not keep Charlotte from writing!

#### CHARLOTTE BRONTË'S BOOKS:

1846: *Poems* by Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell

1846: *The Professor* (at first unpublished)

1847: *Jane Eyre*

1849: *Shirley*

1852: *Villette*

1847: *Jane Eyre*

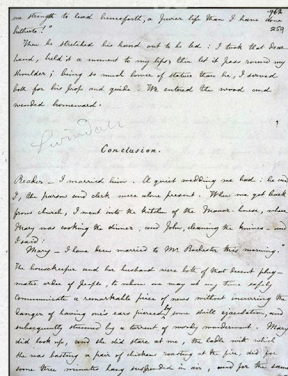
1849: *Shirley*

1852: *Villette*

#### WHAT THE CRITICS SAID

*Jane Eyre* was Charlotte Brontë's second novel. It won great praise and stirred up tremendous controversy. Most reviewers praised it, but a few were savage.

'a very clever book... varied and vivid'



Part of the original manuscript of *Jane Eyre*

'the most extraordinary production... true and interesting'

'freshness and originality'

'a mere vulgar boiling-over'

'the story invites the reader into the recesses of the human heart'

'do not leave it around for your daughters to read'

'much power, and still more promise...'

'a naughty book'

'we have rarely met with a more deeply interesting story'

'a new genius!'

Over the decades, *Jane Eyre* has been adapted many times for films and stages all over the world. Some are period dramas that stick closely to Charlotte Brontë's original tale; others are musicals, operas and even horror films.

#### 1910: *JANE EYRE* (USA)

This very early film was in black and white and had no soundtrack.

#### 1914: *JANE EYRE* (USA)

Another black-and-white, silent movie, directed by Frank Hall Crane, who played Mr Rochester in the 1910 version.

#### 1926: *ORPHAN OF LOCKWOOD* (GERMANY)

A German adaptation of *Jane Eyre*.

#### 1940: *REBECCA* (USA)

Directed by Alfred Hitchcock, this film was based on a book of the same name by Daphne du Maurier, which was itself inspired by *Jane Eyre*. Jane's character was played by Joan Fontaine, who also starred in another, more straightforward adaptation, made in 1944.

#### 1943: *I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE* (USA)

A horror film, inspired by *Jane Eyre* and loosely based on parts of Brontë's story.

#### 1944: *JANE EYRE* (USA)

Director Robert Stevenson cast actor/director Orson Wells as Mr Rochester and Joan Fontaine as Jane.

#### 1956: *MEI GU CHONG KONG REGION, CHINA*

(*The Orphan Girl*) A Chinese retelling of *Jane Eyre*, starring Lin Dai as Jane, who is known in this version as 'Mei Ji'.

#### 1970: *JANE EYRE* (UK)

Starring Susannah York as Jane and George C. Scott as Mr Rochester.

#### 1994: *JANE EYRE* (UK)

Ballet adaptation, created by the London Children's Ballet.

#### 1996: *JANE EYRE* (USA)

Directed by Franco Zeffirelli. Charlotte Gainsbourg played Jane, alongside supermodel Elle Macpherson, who played Jane's love rival, Blanche Ingram.



Jane (Charlotte Gainsbourg) wanders the moors in Franco Zeffirelli's *Jane Eyre*, 1996.

#### 2000: *JANE EYRE* (UK)

An opera, composed by Michael Berkeley.

There have also been numerous television adaptations. In the UK alone, the BBC has made seven drama series based on *Jane Eyre*; the earliest was televised in 1963, and the latest was aired in 2006.

