

# **Jane Eyre Book Notes**

## **Jane Eyre by Charlotte Brontë**

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## Author/Context

Charlotte Bronte (1816-55), was the daughter of Patrick Bronte, an Irishman and curate in Yorkshire for over forty years. Many of the facts within *Jane Eyre*, are biographical. Charlotte's mother died in 1821, which left five daughters and one son in the care of their aunt, Elizabeth Branwell. Four daughters went to school, the Clergy Daughters' School at Cowan Bridge, which was the model for Lowood Institution. Many of the aspects of the Clergy School were very similar to Lowood, and in 1825, Charlotte's two elder sisters died there.

The remaining children, Charlotte, Emily, Anne and Branwell, afterward pursued their education at home instead. This involvement led to rich collaborations among the four in creating an in-depth and varied fantasy life, enacted through stories, tales, poetry, and miniature publications. From 1831-32, Charlotte attended Miss Wooler's School at Roe Head, where she later returned to teach, from 1835-8. From 1839-1841, she was a governess with two different families in parts of England. In 1842, Charlotte accompanied her sister Emily to Brussels to pursue studies in languages, at the Pensionnat Heger. At the end of the year, they returned to England at the death of their aunt. But Charlotte returned to Brussels in 1843 to continue her studies for a year. During this time, she fell in love with a teacher at the school M. Heger, but which was fated and fruitless, as well as unrequited, upon Charlotte's return to England.

Charlotte and her sisters attempted to establish their own school in 1844, a project which failed. In 1846, Charlotte and her two sisters published a volume of poetry which got little review, called *Poems of Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell*, under pseudonyms. By 1847, all three sisters had finished their first novels. Both Emily's *Wuthering Heights* and Anne's *Agnes Grey*, were accepted and published by the publisher, Thomas Newby, in 1848. Charlotte's first novel, *The Professor*, was rejected and never found a publisher. But, in 1847, Jane's second novel, *Jane Eyre*, which she had begun writing only after her first novel, was accepted and published by Smith, Elder Publishing Co. Jane Eyre was immediately successful, so much that in 1848, Charlotte and Anne had to go to the publishing companies to show their actual selves; much suspicion existed related to the pseudonyms, where critics suggested there was only one actual author.

*Jane Eyre* brought Charlotte much success, and various invitations from all literary circles. This was juxtaposed against the terrible loss of not only her brother Branwell in September of 1848, but also both her sisters Anne in December of 1848, and Emily the following summer. In 1849, Charlotte completed *Shirley*, her third novel. Her great loneliness in later years was made up for by her companion and friend, Mrs. Elizabeth Gaskell, whom she met in 1850 and who also wrote her biography.

In 1857, Charlotte put on memorial editions of *Agnes Grey* and *Wuthering Heights*. *Villette* appeared in 1853, based on Charlotte's memories of her time in Brussels. Despite the fact that the literary world was aware of her identity as a woman, she still published under the name of Currer Bell. In 1854, against much hesitation, Charlotte married her father's curate, at his desire. A few months later, she was dead from

complications and an illness, during pregnancy. Her fragment, *Emma*, was published finally in 1860, in Cornhill Magazine, introduced by Thackeray. During Charlotte's life she was a great admirer of Thackeray, wrote to him, and dedicated *Jane Eyre* to him.

Charlotte Bronte was both greatly admired, and harshly criticized by literary critics in her day. Many critics accused her of being overly emotional, rebellious, rage, blasphemousness, and passionate. H. Martineau, a critic, wrote of *Villette*, that it "dealt excessively with 'the need of being loved', and was passionately anti-Catholic." (Drabble, 134). Nevertheless, Charlotte Bronte was known in her day, and is remembered for her "depth of feeling and her courageous realism." Her remarkable ability to capture the humanism in her characters, especially in strong female protagonists, distinguished her from other novelists and writers who did not create such human, nor fallible portraits. Charlotte Bronte is considered to be the most talented and popular of the Bronte sisters.

### **Bibliography**

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# Plot Summary

*Jane Eyre* is a Bildungsroman, or a coming-of-age novel, which recounts the first nineteen years of the character of Jane Eyre, in the first-person voice.

Jane Eyre is a young girl, orphaned as a baby; both her mother and father die together from a type of fever. Jane goes to live with her cruel Aunt Reed, who only takes her in as the result of a promise to her husband on his deathbed. Mrs. Reed does not treat Jane so very well, and her son often beats and verbally abuses her. Jane grows up for many years very unhappy-an overly mature, sad, sallow and un-childlike child. Finally it is too much for Mrs. Reed. Jane is sent to Lowood Institution, a charitable, cheap and strictly kept school for clergyman's daughters. Jane attends this school for over eight years; after a couple years, the standard of living at the school is improved. Jane makes the friends of Helen Burns, and Ms. Temple, a teacher, while she is there. These two individuals greatly affect Jane's personality and character, especially related to personal philosophy, religion, and treatment of others.

Jane spends the last few years at Lowood as a teacher. Miss Temple finally marries, and Jane places an advertisement for a position as a governess in the local paper. Soon she is contacted by a Mrs. Fairfax, about the position of governess in Millcote, -shire, for a young single girl. Jane gets leave from Lowood and journeys to Millcote to take the position. There she begins as governess for Adèle Varens, a young French girl, and ward of the master of Thornfield Hall, Mr. Rochester. Thornfield Hall is where Jane lives, now. Jane begins to spend much time with Rochester; they grow a great friendship and affection for each other. Jane begins to realize she is falling in love with Mr. Rochester. Simultaneous to this, it appears that Rochester is courting the hand of Blanche Ingram, in hopes of marrying her. This turns out to simply be a ploy by Rochester to make Jane jealous, and increase her love for him.

Jane goes home for her aunt's death for several weeks. She returns to Thornfield Hall, to find Mr. Rochester greatly missing her. During her time at the house, she has noticed the presence of a madwoman in the attic, presumably, Grace Poole. In the middle of the night, this woman tries to light Rochester's bed on fire. Jane wakes, smells the smoke, and saves him. This happens before she leaves for her aunt's funeral. When Jane returns, Rochester finally tells her of his love for her. They become engaged. The ceremony approaches, and as it comes closer and closer, Rochester becomes more and more arrogant. Jane declares she will still work once they are married-she will only be his equal. Their relationship becomes off-balance. On the day of the marriage ceremony, the rite is broken up by the entrance of Mr. Mason and Mr. Briggs. Here they reveal that Rochester has been previously married. The madwoman in his attic, is Bertha Mason, his first wife. The marriage doesn't go through; Jane sees Bertha, feels numb, sad, and realizes she cannot marry Rochester out of wedlock, for fear of inequality in their relationship.

Jane flees Thornfield, and arrives at Whitcross. She is destitute, begs and is near death almost for three days, until she comes upon a house, whose members take her in and



care for her. She stays there for many days. She wakes and tells them most of her story. She develops a great friendship with Diana, Mary and St. John Rivers, who is a pastor, and are inhabitants of the house. Within good time, St. John finds Jane work as the teacher of a village-school for peasant girls in that town, Morton. Jane takes the job. Soon she finds through St. John that she has been left a fortune of twenty-thousand pounds by her uncle in Madeira, who had died. She also finds out that St. John, Mary and Diana are her cousins; her uncle is also their uncle with whom their father had once had a terrible quarrel. Thus they were left no inheritance. Jane immediately divides her fortune equally between the four of them, and vacates the school position.

Jane goes to live at Moor House with her cousins. They are happy for a while, and St. John begins to teach Jane Hindostanee. Jane finds him intelligent and greatly admires him, but nevertheless is inwardly wary of his cold power over her. Finally he asks her to marry him, for the "service of God" to become a missionary with him in India. Jane is torn, but knows she could never have a kind and warm, loving relationship with St. John that way as a husband. She tells him so, but he will not take her unless she is his wife. She refuses him. At this time, she hears a sudden spectre of Rochester's voice calling her from the near garden. She takes it as a sign, and the next day leaves from Whitcross in a coach to see what has happened to Rochester.

Jane arrives in Millcote after a day and a half. She finds out and sees that Thornfield Hall is a ruin; it burned down last fall from a fire Bertha Mason started. During the fire, Bertha killed herself from jumping from the battlements; Rochester was blinded and lost one of his arms from falling timber, when helping servants out of the house. He turned to depression and utter isolation after her disappearance. Now he lives with two servants, John and Mary, at Ferndean Manor, thirty miles away. Jane journeys there that night, sees Rochester and makes herself known to him. He almost does not believe it is her, but finally is convinced, and blesses the Lord for returning Jane to him. He is utterly happy, and so is she, and despite his blindness and being a cripple, she accepts his hand in marriage. They marry three days later. Jane brings Adèle to a closer school and makes frequent visits. Mary and Diana marry and see her on a regular basis. St. John goes off to India. Jane gives birth to one baby boy of Rochester's. The novel ends with Jane telling us that she has been married to Rochester for ten years; she is happier than she could ever be, because they love each other so much, they are each other's better half and never tire of each other. They are perfectly suited for each other, and Jane is happy spending her life loving and helping Rochester, being his 'prop'.



# Major Characters

**Jane Eyre:** Main character of entire novel. Young orphan who grows up, goes to school, works, marries, creates a life for herself.

**Mrs. Reed:** Jane's harsh and cruel aunt who takes Jane in against her will, because of a promise made to her husband, Jane's late uncle.

**Eliza Reed:** Mrs. Reed's second daughter who is rather more serious and quiet; she eventually becomes a noviate and then a Catholic nun.

**John Reed:** Mrs. Reed's arrogant and spoiled son who likes to beat Jane for punishment and amusement.

**Georgiana Reed:** Mrs. Reed's attractive and self-absorbed first daughter, who eventually marries well in London.

**Jane's mother:** Jane Reed, who married against her family's wish, was disowned, and who died when Jane was a baby.

**Jane's father:** John Eyre, a clergyman, who died with his wife.

**Bessie:** The nurse at Gateshead

**Abbot:** The maid at Gateshead.

**Mr. Reed:** Mrs. Reed's late husband, and Jane's late uncle on her mother's side.

**Dr. Lloyd:** The doctor who comes to see Jane after she has been ill in the Red-Room. He suggests to Mrs. Reed that Jane go to school.

**Mr. Brocklehurst:** The cruel, intolerant, overzealous and money-pinching master of Lowood Institution, a pastor, who humiliates Jane in public, when she comes to Lowood.

**Miss Miller:** One of the teachers at Lowood.

**Miss Maria Temple:** The superintendent of Lowood Institution, whom Jane wishes to emulate, and who cares for both Helen and Jane.

**Miss Scatcherd:** The history teacher at Lowood, who often punishes Helen Burns with a whipping.

**Helen Burns:** The overly mature, fatalistic, religious best friend of Jane while she is at Lowood; Helen dies early from tuberculosis at Lowood.

**Reverend Nasmyth:** The man whom Miss Temple eventually marries.



**Mrs. Fairfax:** The widow who initially inquires after a governess for Adèle Varens, at Thornfield Hall.

**Miss Adèle Varens:** The bastard child of Céline Varens, a mistress of Rochester's while he was in Paris; Rochester takes Adèle back with him to England, as his ward.

**Mr. Edward Fairfax Rochester:** The master of Thornfield Hall, traditional Gothic male hero, and eventual husband of Jane Eyre.

**Sophie:** The nurse or "bonne" of Adèle Varens, who is French.

**Mme Pierrot:** Jane's French teacher at Lowood Institution.

**Leah:** The maid at Thornfield Hall, who assists Grace Poole often.

**Grace Poole:** The woman whom Rochester hires to watch over and care for his mad first wife, Bertha.

**Pilot:** Rochester's dog.

**Rowland:** Rochester's dead elder brother.

**Céline Varens:** Adèle's mother, and Rochester old French mistress, who ran off and left her daughter.

**Charge of the Vicomte:** The French officer with whom Céline was cheating unknown to Rochester.

**Miss Blanche Ingram:** The beautiful, cold, snotty, arrogant and condescending upper-class woman whom Rochester leads to believe he wishes to marry.

**Mesrour:** Rochester's horse.

**Mr. Mason:** Bertha Mason, Rochester's first bride's, brother. He is from Jamaica, West Indies.

**Sibyl:** The gypsy fortune-teller character played by Rochester.

**Doctor Carter:** The surgeon who cares for Mr. Mason when Bertha attacks him.

**Bessie's sister:** She dies.

**Robert Laven:** Bessie's husband and the coachman of Gateshead Hall.

**Uncle John Eyre:** The uncle of both Jane, St. John, Diana and Mary, who dies, lived in Madeira, and leaves Jane a fortune of twenty-thousand pounds.

**Mr. Briggs:** The solicitor from London who handles Jane's fortune, and breaks up Rochester's attempt at a bigamous marriage.





**Bertha Mason:** Rochester's first wife from Jamaica, who is mad and he keeps in his attic of Thornfield Hall. It was an arranged marriage.

**St. John Rivers:** Jane's cold, exacting, distant and intellectual cousin who was the pastor of Morton Parish. He asks Jane to marry him and go to India to do missionary work; she refuses and he goes alone.

**Diana Rivers:** The beautiful, refined and caring first sister of St. John, and Jane's cousin.

**Mary Rivers:** The quieter, more cautious but equally intelligent second sister of St. John, and also Jane's cousin.

**Hannah:** The older woman/maid who lives with Mary and Diana at Moor House.

**Jane Elliot:** The pseudonym which Jane takes on when she arrives at Moor House.

**Miss Rosamond Oliver:** The beautiful and childlike heiress with whom St. John is in love. She eventually marries Mr. Granby.

**Mr. Granby:** Wealthy Morton resident who marries Rosamond.

**Mary and John:** Couple who takes care of Rochester at Ferndean Manor, when he is blind and crippled.



## Objects/Places

**Gateshead Hall:** The house where Mrs. Reed lives, and where Jane's mother lived as a child. Jane lives there for part of her childhood as well.

**Bewick's Book of British Birds:** The colorful book of British birds which Jane likes to peruse while sitting in the windowseat at Gateshead.

**Red Room:** The particularly Gothic and frightening room which Jane is locked up in after flying at John Reed who beat her. It is the room where the late Mr. Reed, Jane's uncle died, and its furnishings are dark, ornate and red.

**Nursery:** The nursery where Jane is allowed to stay sometimes and not others, at Gateshead.

**Lowood Institution:** The charitable institution for poor or orphaned girls of clergyman, run by Mr. Brocklehurst, which almost starved its occupants, and was torturously strict. Jane attends this school for over eight years.

**Typhoid Fever:** Fever which runs through Lowood, killing half its inhabitants; a common cause of death among the young throughout the 19th century.

**Thornfield Hall:** The manor and home owned by Mr. Rochester in Millcote, -shire, which eventually burns down.

**Attic:** The third floor of Thornfield, where the mad Bertha is kept.

**Leas:** House of Mr. Eshton, where Mr. Rochester goes for a while.

**Drawing-Room:** Happy haunt of Mr. Rochester, where he cares to sit many hours in front of the fire, and speak to Jane.

**West Indies:** Where Mr. Mason and Bertha are both from (Jamaica).

**Madeira:** Home of Jane's uncle John who dies.

**Chesnut Tree:** The symbolic tree which gets struck by lightning.

**Wedding Veil:** The wedding veil which Rochester buys Jane, and which Bertha rips in half in the middle of the night.

**Whitcross:** The town where the coach deposits Jane when she leaves Thornfield after the shock of Bertha. She begs here for many days before finding Moor House.

**Moor House:** The house where Diana and Mary came to stay because of their father's death, at Marsh End, in Morton. Jane eventually lives here for a few months.



**Morton:** The town where St. John is a pastor, where Jane teaches, and where Moor House is located, in the northern moors.

**Village school:** The school where Jane teaches peasant's daughters in Morton.

**Twenty-Thousand pounds:** The fortune which Jane's dead uncle John from Madeira, leaves her, which she divides evenly between herself and her three cousins.

**Hindustanee:** The Eastern language which St. John convinces Jane to learn because he wants to convince to marry him, and go to India to be a missionary.

**India:** Country where St. John goes to become a missionary.

**Ferndean Manor:** The manor owned by Rochester, where he goes to live crippled and blind, after Thornfield Halls burns to the ground.

## Quotes

Quote 1: "'She regretted to be under the necessity of keeping me at a distance; but that until she heard from Bessie and could discover by her own observation that I was endeavoring in good earnest to acquire a more sociable and childlike disposition, a more attractive and sprightly manner--something lighter, franker, more natural, as it were--she really could must exclude me from privileges intended only for contented, happy, little children.'" Chapter 1, pg. 5

Quote 2: "Each picture told a story; mysterious often to my undeveloped understanding and imperfect feelings, yet ever profoundly interesting: as interesting as the tales Bessie sometimes narrated on winter evenings, when she chanced to be in good humor...fed our eager attention with passages of love and adventure taken from fairy tales and older ballads...With Bewick on my knee, I was then happy: happy at least in my way." Chapter 1, pg. 7

Quote 3: "'And you ought not to think yourself on an equality with the Misses Reed and Master Reed, because Missis kindly allows you to be brought up with them. They will have a great deal of money, and you will have none: it is your place to be humble, and to try to make yourself agreeable to them.'

'God will punish her: He might strike her dead in the midst of her tantrums, and then where would she go? ...Say your prayers, Miss Eyre, when you are by yourself; for if you don't repent, something bad might be permitted to come down the chimney, and fetch you away.'" Chapter 2, pg. 10

Quote 4: "What a consternation of soul was mine that dreary afternoon! How all my brain was in tumult, and all my heart in insurrection! Yet in what darkness, what dense ignorance, was the mental battle fought! I could not answer the ceaseless inward question--**why** I thus suffered; now at the distance of--I will not say how many years, I see it clearly." Chapter 2, pg. 12

Quote 5: "No severe or prolonged bodily illness followed this incident of the red-room: it only gave my nerves a shock, of which I feel the reverberation to this day. Yes, Ms. Reed, to you I owe some fearful pangs of mental suffering. But I ought to forgive you, for you knew not what you did: while rending my heart-strings, you thought you were only uprooting my bad propensities." Chapter 3, pg. 18

Quote 6: "'I scarcely knew what school was; John Reed hated his school, and abused his master; but John Reed's tastes were no rule for mine...[Bessie] boasted of beautiful paintings of landscapes and flowers by them executed...Besides, school would be a complete change: it implied a long journey, an entire separation from Gateshead, an entrance into a new life.

'I should indeed like to go to school,' was the audible conclusion of my musings." Chapter 3, pg. 20-21



Quote 7: "'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: should you admit her into Lowood school, I should be glad if the superintendent and teachers were requested to keep a strict eye on her, and above all, to guard against her worst fault, a tendency toward deceit. I mention this in your hearing, Jane, that you may no attempt to impose on Mr. Brocklehurst.'" Chapter 4, pg. 28

Quote 8: "'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 girl, Georgiana, for it is she who tells lies, and not I.'" Chapter 4, pg. 30-31

Quote 9: "'But I feel this Helen: I must dislike those who, whatever I do to please them, persist in disliking me. I must resist those who punish me unjustly. It is as natural as that I should love those who show me affection, or submit to punishment when I feel it is deserved.'" Chapter 6, pg. 50

Quote 10: "What a singularly deep impression her injustice seems to have made on your heart! No ill-usage so brands its record on my feelings. Would you not be happier if you tried to forget her severity, together with the passionate emotions it excited? Life appears to me too short to be spent in nursing animosity, or registering wrongs." Chapter 6, pg. 50-51

Quote 11: "'No; I know I should think well of myself; but that is not enough; if others don't love me, I would rather die than live--I cannot bear to be solitary and hated, Helen. Look here; to gain some real affection from you, or Miss Temple, or any other whom I truly love, I would willingly submit to have the bone of my arm broken, or to let a bull toss me, or to stand behind a kicking horse, and lit it dash its hoof at my chest.'" Chapter 8, pg. 60

Quote 12: "Well has Solomon said--'Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.'

I would not now have exchanged Lowood with all its privations, for Gateshead and its daily luxuries." Chapter 8, pg. 65

Quote 13: "And I clasped my arms closer round Helen; she seemed dearer to me than ever; I felt as if I could not let her go; I lay with my face hidden on her neck. Presently she said in the sweetest tone,--'How comfortable I am! That last fit of coughing has tired me a little; I feel as if I could sleep: but don't leave me, Jane; I like to have you near me.' 'I'll stay with you, dear Helen: no one shall take me away.'

'Are you warm, darling?'

'Yes.'" Chapter 9, pg. 71

Quote 14: "All these relics gave...Thornfield Hall the aspect of a home of the past: a shrine to memory. I liked the hush, the gloom, the quaintness of these retreats in the day; but I by no means coveted a night's repose on one of those wide and heavy beds: shut in, some of them, with doors of oak; shaded, others, with wrought old-English



hangings crusted with thick work, portraying effigies of strange flowers, and stranger birds, and strangest human beings,--all which would have looked strange, indeed, by the pallid gleam of moonlight." Chapter 11, pg. 92

Quote 15: "I longed for a power of vision which might overpass that limit; which might reach the busy world, towns, regions full of life I had heard of but never seen: that I desired more of practical experience than I possessed; more of intercourse with my kind, of acquaintance with variety of character, than was here within my reach...I could not help it: the restlessness was in my nature; it agitated me to pain sometimes..." Chapter 12, pg. 95

Quote 16: "Women are supposed to be very calm generally; but women feel just as men feel; they need exercise for their faculties and a field for their efforts as much as their brothers do; they suffer from too rigid a restraint, too absolute a stagnation, precisely as men would suffer; and it is narrow-minded in their more privileged fellow-creatures to say that they ought to confine themselves to making puddings and knitting stockings, to playing on the piano and embroidering bags. It is thoughtless to condemn them, or laugh at them, if they seek to do more or learn more than custom has pronounced necessary for their sex." Chapter 12, pg. 96

Quote 17: "I traced the general points of middle height, and considerable breadth of chest. He had a dark face, with stern features, and a heavy brow; his eyes and gathered eyebrows looked ireful and thwarted just now; he was past youth, but had not reached middle age; perhaps he might be thirty-five. I felt no fear of him, and but a little shyness. Had he been a handsome, heroic-looking young gentleman, I should not have dared to stand thus questioning him against his will, and offering my services unasked...I had a theoretical reverence an homage for beauty, elegance, gallantry, fascination; but had I met those qualities incarnate in masculine shape, I should have known instinctively that they neither had nor could have sympathy with anything in me and should have shunned them as one would fire, lightning, or anything else that is bright but antipathetic." Chapter 12, pg. 99

Quote 18: "--'No, sir.'

'Ah! By my word! There is something singular about you,' said he: 'you have the air of a little nonnette; quaint, quiet, grave, and simple, as you sit with your hands before you, and your eyes generally bent on the carpet (except, by-the-bye, when they are directed piercingly to my face; as just now, for instance); and when one asks you a question, or makes a remark to which you are obliged to reply, you rap out a round rejoinder, which, if not blunt, is at least brusque. What do you mean by it?'

'Sir, I was too plain: I beg your pardon. I ought to have replied that it was not easy to give an impromptu answer to a question about appearances; that tastes differ; that beauty is of little consequence, or something of that sort.'

'You ought to have replied no such thing...Just so: I think so: and you shall be answerable for it. Criticize me: does my forehead not please you?'" Chapter 14, pg. 115

Quote 19: "'You have saved my life: I have a please in owning you so immense a debt. I cannot say more. Nothing else that has being would have been tolerable to me in the



character of creditor for such an obligation: but you: it is different;--I feel your benefits no burden, Jane...I knew,' he continued, 'you would do me good in some way, at some time;--I saw it in your eyes when I first beheld you: their expression and smile did not...strike delight to my very inmost heart so for nothing...My cherished preserver, good night!'" Chapter 15, pg. 133

Quote 20: "Most true is it that 'beauty is in the eye of the gazer.' My master's colorless, olive face, square, massive brow, broad and jetty eyebrows, deep eyes, strong features, firm, grim mouth,--all energy, decision, will,--were not beautiful, according to rule; but they were more than beautiful to me: they were full of an interest, an influence that quite mastered me,--that took my feelings from my own power and fettered them in his. I had not intended to love him: the reader knows I had wrought hard to extirpate from my soul the germs of love there detected; and now, at the first renewed view of him, they spontaneously revived, green and strong! He made me love him without looking at me." Chapter 17, pg. 153

Quote 21: "Where was I? Did I wake or sleep? Had I been dreaming? Did I dream still? The old woman's voice had changed: her accent, her gesture, and all were familiar to me as my own face in a glass--as the speech of my own tongue...I looked...The flame illuminated her hand stretched out: roused now, and on the alert for discoveries, I at once noticed that hand. It was no more the withered limb of old than my own; it was a rounded supple member, with smooth fingers...a broad ring flashed on the little finger, and stooping forward, I looked at it, and saw a gem I had seen a hundred times before. Again, I looked at the face; which was no longer turned from me-- 'Well, Jane, do you know me?' asked the familiar voice... And Mr. Rochester stepped out of his disguise." Chapter 19, pg. 177-8

Quote 22: "'But the instrument--the instrument! God, who does the work, ordains the instrument. I have myself--I tell it you without parable--been a worldly, dissipated, restless man; and I believe I have found the instrument of my cure, in--'" Chapter 20, pg. 192

Quote 23: "'Sir,' I answered, 'a wanderer's repose or a sinner's reformation should never depend on a fellow-creature. Men and women die; philosophers falter in their wisdom, and Christians in goodness: if any one you know has suffered and erred, let him look higher than his equals for strength to amend, and solace to heal.'" Chapter 20, pg. 192

Quote 24: "'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 me, Jane--the fury with which you once turned on me; the tone in which you declared you abhorred me the worst of anybody in the world; the unchildlike look and voice with which you affirmed that the very thought of me made you sick, and asserted that I had treated you with miserable cruelty. I could not forget my own sensations when you thus started up and poured out the venom of your mind: I felt fear, as if an animal that I had struck or pushed had looked up at me with human eyes and cursed me in a man's voice.'" Chapter 21, pg. 210



Quote 25: "Well, he is not a ghost; yet every nerve I have is unstrung: for a moment I am beyond my own mastery. What does that mean? I did not think I should tremble in this way when I saw him--or lose my voice or the power of motion in his presence. I will go back as soon as I can stir: I need not make an absolute fool of myself. I know another way to the house. It does not signify if I knew twenty ways; for he has seen me." Chapter 22, pg. 214

Quote 26: "'I sometimes have a queer feeling with regard to you--especially when you are near me, as now: it is as if I had a string somewhere under my left ribs, tightly and inextricably knotted to a similar string situated in the corresponding quarter of your little frame. And if that boisterous channel, and two hundred miles or so of land come broad between us, I am afraid that cord of communion will be snapped; and then I've a nervous notion I should take to bleeding inwardly. As for you--you'd forget me.' 'That I never should, sir: you know'--impossible to proceed.'" Chapter 23, pg. 221

Quote 27: "'Gratitude!' he ejaculated; and added wildly--'Jane, accept me quickly. Say, Edward--give me my name--Edward--I will marry you.' 'Are you in earnest?--Do you truly love me? Do you sincerely wish me to be your wife?' 'I do; and if an oath is necessary to satisfy you, I swear it.' 'Then, sir, I will marry you.' 'Edward--my little wife!' 'Dear Edward!' 'Come to me--come to me entirely now,' said he: and added, in his deepest tone, speaking in my ear as his cheek was laid on mine, 'Make my happiness--I will make yours.'" Chapter 23, pg. 224

Quote 28: "[B]y that I shall earn my board and lodging, and thirty pounds a year besides. I'll furnish my own wardrobe out of that money, and you shall give me nothing but...your regard: and if I give you mine in return the debt will be quit." Chapter 24, pg. 237

Quote 29: "My future husband was becoming to me my whole world; and more than the world: almost my hope of heaven. He stood between me and every thought of religion, as an eclipse intervenes between man and the broad sun. I could not, in those days, see God for his creature: of whom I had made an idol." Chapter 25, pg. 241

Quote 30: "In the deep shade, at the further end of the room, a figure ran backwards and forwards. What it was, whether beast or human being, one could not tell: it groveled, seemingly, on all fours; it snatched and growled like some strange wild animal: but it was covered with clothing; and a quantity of dark, grizzled hair, wild as a mane, hid its head and face...the hyena rose up, and stood tall on its hind feet." Chapter 26, pg. 257

Quote 31: "I was in my own room as usual--just myself without obvious change: nothing had smitten me, or scathed me, or maimed me...Jane Eyre, who has been an ardent, expectant woman--almost a bride--was a cold, solitary girl again: her life was pale; her prospects were desolate...I looked at my love...it shivered in my heart, like a suffering





child in a cold cradle...Mr. Rochester was not to me what he had been, for he was not what I had thought him. I would not ascribe vice to him; I would not say he had betrayed me but the attribute of stainless truth was gone from his idea; and from his presence I must go, that I perceived well." Chapter 26, pg. 260

Quote 32: "'Oh comply!' it said, 'Think of his misery, think of his danger--look at his state when left alone...Who in the world cares for you? or who will be injured by what you do?'...Still indomitable was the reply--'I care for myself. The more solitary, the more friendless, the more unsustained I am, the more I will respect myself. I will keep the law given by God, sanctioned by man. I will hold to the principles received by me when I was sane, and not mad--as I am now. Laws and principles are not for the times when there is no temptation: they are for such moments as this, when body and soul rise in mutiny against their rigour, stringent are they; inviolate they shall be...with my veins running fire, and my heart beating faster than I can count its throbs. Preconceived opinions, foregone determinations, are all I have at this hour to stand by: there I plant my foot!'" Chapter 27, pg. 279

Quote 33: "'I can but die...and I believe in God. Let me try and wait His will in silence.'" Chapter 28, pg. 295

Quote 34: "'I felt desolate to a degree. I felt--yes, idiot that I am--I felt degraded. I doubted I had taken a step which sank instead of raising me in the scale of social existence. I was weakly dismayed at the ignorance, the poverty, the coarseness of all I heard and saw round me. But let me not hate and despise myself too much for these feelings: I know them to be wrong--that is a great step gained; I shall strive to overcome them...In a few months, it is possible, the happiness of seeing process, and a change for the better in my scholars, may substitute gratification for disgust.'" Chapter 31, pg. 316

Quote 35: "'I had found a brother: one I could be proud of,--one I could love; and two sisters whose qualities were such that, when I knew them but as mere strangers, they had inspired me with genuine affection and admiration. The two girls on whom, kneeling down on the wet ground, and looking through the low, latticed window of Moor House kitchen, I had gazed...were my near kinswomen, and the young and stately gentleman who had found me almost dying at his threshold was my blood relation. Glorious discovery to a lonely wretch! This was wealth indeed!--wealth to the heart!--a mine of pure, genial affections. This was a blessing...not like the ponderous gift of gold: rich and welcome enough in its way, but sobering from its weight.'" Chapter 33, pg. 339

Quote 36: "'As for me, I daily wished more to please him: but to do so, I felt daily more and more that I must disown half of my nature, stifle half my faculties, wrest my tastes from their original bent, force myself to the adoption of pursuits for which I had no natural vocation. He wanted to train me to an elevation I could never reach; it racked me hourly to aspire to the standard he uplifted. The thing was as impossible as to mould my irregular features to his correct and classic pattern, to give to my changeable green eyes the sea-blue tint and solemn lustre of his own.'" Chapter 34, pg. 351



Quote 37: "I have made study of you for ten months. I have proved you in that time by sundry tests: and what have I seen and elicited? In the village school, I found that you could perform well, punctually, uprightly, labor uncongenial to your habits and inclinations; I saw you could perform it with capacity and tact: you could win while you controlled. In the calm with which you learnt you had become suddenly rich, I read a mind clear of the vice of Demas:--lucre had no undue power over you...Jane, you are docile, diligent, disinterested, faithful, constant, and courageous; very gentle, and very heroic: cease to mistrust yourself--I can trust you unreservedly. As a conductress of Indian schools, and a helper amongst Indian women, your assistance will be to me invaluable." Chapter 34, pg. 355

Quote 38: "'I scorn your idea of love,' I could not help saying, as I rose up and stood before him, leaning my back against the rock. 'I scorn the counterfeit sentiment you offer: yes, St. John, and I scorn you when you offer it.'" Chapter 34, pg. 359

Quote 39: "I recalled the voice I had heard; again I questioned whence it came, as vainly as before: it seemed in me--not in the external world. I asked, was it a mere nervous impression--a delusion? I could not conceive or believe: it was more like an inspiration. The wondrous shock of feeling had come like the earthquake which shook the foundations of Paul and Silas's prison: it had opened the doors of the soul's cell, and loosed its bands--it had wakened it out of its sleep, whence it sprang trembling, listening, aghast; then vibrated thrice a cry on my startled ear, an din my quaking heart, and through my spirit; which neither feared nor shook, but exulted as if in joy over the success of one effort it had been privileged to make, independent of the cumbrous body." Chapter 36, pg. 371

Quote 40: "'My living darling! These are certainly her limbs, and these her features; but I cannot be so blest, after all my misery. It is a dream; such dreams as I have had at night when I have clasped her once more to my heart, as I do now; and kissed her, as thus--and felt that she loved me, and trusted that she would not leave me...Gentle, soft dream, nestling in my arms now, you will fly, too, as your sisters have all fled before you: but kiss me before you go--embrace me, Jane.'" Chapter 37, pg. 382

Quote 41: "'Jane! you think me, I daresay, an irreligious dog: but my heart swells with gratitude to the beneficent God of this earth just now. He sees not as man see, but far clearer; judges not as man judges, but far more wisely. I did wrong: I would have sullied my innocent flower--breathed guilt on its purity: the Omnipotent snatched it from me. I, in my stiff-necked rebellion, almost cursed the dispensation: instead of bending to the decree, I defied it. Divine justice pursued its course; disasters came thick on me: I was forced to pass through the valley of the shadow of death...Of late, Jane--only--only of late--I began to see and acknowledge the hand of God in my doom. I began to experience remorse, repentance; the wish for reconciliation to my Maker. I began sometimes to pray: very brief prayers they were, but very sincere.'" Chapter 37, pg. 393

Quote 42: "I know no weariness of my Edward's society: he knows none of mine, any more than we each do of the pulsation of the heart that beats in our separate bosoms; consequently, we are ever together. To be together is for us to be at once as free as in

solitude, as gay as in company. We talk, I believe, all day long: to talk to each other is but a more animated and an audible thinking. All my confidence is bestowed on him, all his confidence is devoted to me; we are precisely suited in character--perfect concord is the result." Chapter 38, pg. 397

# Topic Tracking: Female Protagonist

Female Protagonist 1: Jane has a vivid imagination and romantic side which cause her to be passionate, "strange" as the Reeds call her, and more emotionally and verbally advanced than other children her age. She is also extremely perceptive, analytical and self-aware. She says:

*"Each picture told a story; mysterious often to my undeveloped understanding and imperfect feelings, yet ever profoundly interesting: as interesting as the tales Bessie sometimes narrated on winter evenings, when she chanced to be in good humor...fed our eager attention with passages of love and adventure taken from fairy tales and older ballads...With Bewick on my knee, I was then happy: happy at least in my way."* Chapter 1, pg. 7

Female Protagonist 2: Jane, after yelling at Mrs. Reed, realizes the later negativity of her words, despite their satisfactory nature at the time of performance.

Female Protagonist 3: Breaking down after her public censure, Jane admits her human need for love and affection to Helen. Her words and emotions reveal the great passion of her personality, and the drama of her imagination.

*"No; I know I should think well of myself; but that is not enough; if others don't love me, I would rather die than live--I cannot bear to be solitary and hated, Helen. Look here; to gain some real affection from you, or Miss Temple, or any other whom I truly love, I would willingly submit to have the bone of my arm broken, or to let a bull toss me, or to stand behind a kicking horse, and let it dash its hoof at my chest."* Chapter 8, pg. 60

Female Protagonist 4: *"Women are supposed to be very calm generally; but women feel just as men feel; they need exercise for their faculties and a field for their efforts as much as their brothers do; they suffer from too rigid a restraint, too absolute a stagnation, precisely as men would suffer; and it is narrow-minded in their more privileged fellow-creatures to say that they ought to confine themselves to making puddings and knitting stockings, to playing on the piano and embroidering bags. It is thoughtless to condemn them, or laugh at them, if they seek to do more or learn more than custom has pronounced necessary for their sex."* Chapter 12, pg. 96

Female Protagonist 5: *"Most true is it that 'beauty is in the eye of the gazer.' My master's colorless, olive face, square, massive brow, broad and jetty eyebrows, deep eyes, strong features, firm, grim mouth,--all energy, decision, will,--were not beautiful, according to rule; but they were more than beautiful to me: they were full of an interest, an influence that quite mastered me,--that took my feelings from my own power and fettered them in his. I had not intended to love him: the reader knows I had wrought hard to extirpate from my soul the germs of love there detected; and now, at the first renewed view of him, they spontaneously revived, green and strong! He made me love him without looking at me."* Chapter 17, pg. 153

Jane strongly expresses her newfound knowledge of her love for Rochester, unabashedly or dishonestly.

Female Protagonist 6: Jane expresses herself very distinctly at seeing Rochester as she comes over the road, toward Thornfield. The symptoms add up, she is in love:

*"Well, he is not a ghost; yet every nerve I have is unstrung: for a moment I am beyond my own mastery. What does that mean? I did not think I should tremble in this way when I saw him--or lose my voice or the power of motion in his presence. I will go back as soon as I can stir: I need not make an absolute fool of myself. I know another way to the house. It does not signify if I knew twenty ways; for he has seen me."* Chapter 22, pg. 214

Female Protagonist 7: *"I was in my own room as usual--just myself without obvious change: nothing had smitten me, or scathed me, or maimed me...Jane Eyre, who has been an ardent, expectant woman--almost a bride--was a cold, solitary girl again: her life was pale; her prospects were desolate...I looked at my love...it shivered in my heart, like a suffering child in a cold cradle...Mr. Rochester was not to me what he had been, for he was not what I had thought him. I would not ascribe vice to him; I would not say he had betrayed me but the attribute of stainless truth was gone from his idea; and from his presence I must go, that I perceived well."* Chapter 26, pg. 260

Jane realizes she must look out for herself and live according to the values she has placed as significant in her life. Rochester finally becomes human for her--no longer an idol--the only locale of equality.

Female Protagonist 8: *"As for me, I daily wished more to please him: but to do so, I felt daily more and more that I must disown half of my nature, stifle half my faculties, wrest my tastes from their original bent, force myself to the adoption of pursuits for which I had no natural vocation. He wanted to train me to an elevation I could never reach; it racked me hourly to aspire to the standard he uplifted. The thing was as impossible as to mould my irregular features to his correct and classic pattern, to give to my changeable green eyes the sea-blue tint and solemn lustre of his own."* Chapter 34, pg. 351

## Topic Tracking: Gothic Imagery

Gothic Imagery 1: The red-room is dark like blood. It emits strange noises and has a large mirror that distorts Jane's appearance. The late Mr. Reed died there, and Jane imagines his ghost now haunts the room, troubled by wrongdoing regarding his last wishes. Outside it is raining, the wind blows against the moors, faint voices are heard. All of these elements--a dark and foreboding room where a family member died, the color red, ghosts and phantoms, and the romantic gothic scene of rain on the moors--are Gothic and predict future Gothic locales and themes in the plot.

Gothic Imagery 2: This incident on the third floor of Thornfield Hall introduces Jane and the reader to the first Gothic aspects of what is to be the most extended location for the rest of the novel. Jane describes the decoration of Thornfield Hall as dark, old, labored with the secrets and memories of the past. Immediately this sets Thornfield Hall off--the Gothic local of the old and mysterious castle or great manor, which has the potential to turn supernatural "strange, indeed, by the pallid gleam of moonlight." (pg. 92), as Jane herself says.

This introduction of locale is enforced by Jane's hearing of the strange and disturbingly curious laugh from the attic door. Mrs. Fairfax says it is only Grace Poole, sewing with Leah. But we know immediately that there is more to the story than this simply answer; the intuitive description of the odd laugh by Jane herself, foreshadows a more complex and disturbing explanation to come in the future. As she describes:

*"I lingered in the long passageway to which this led, separating the front and back rooms of the third story: narrow, low, and dim, with only one little window at the far end, and looking, with its two rows of small black doors all shut, like a corridor in some Bluebeard's castle...the laugh was as tragic, as preternatural a laugh as any I ever heard; and, but that it was a high room, and that no circumstance of ghostliness accompanied the curious cachinnation, but that neither scene nor season favoured fear, I should have been superstitiously afraid."* Chapter 11, pg. 94

The reference to Bluebeard's Castle is also an important allusion; the French fairy tale referenced is a pre-Gothic account of a Duke who murders all his wives, locking their bodies in different closets, while forbidding each new wife to look inside each closet. When each bride breaks his commands, they find the dead wives, and are themselves, murdered. This tale provides an interesting foreshadowing of what is behind the door, while using a tale based off a pre-Gothic plot, in the sense that the Gothic plot is composed of the mysterious castle, the cold, damp and mysterious, moonlit natural environment, the mysterious, misunderstood, enigmatic yet lovable male hero, who is only understood and cured of his inner self-torment by the marriage or affiliation with a good, Christian and virginal female character who enters the plot. The opposing dynamic consists of a bad female character, often insane, sexualized and racially inferior by English class standards, who is the hidden secret of the male lead, and the reason for his unending torment. The Gothic plot is Romantic in the literary sense; the





myth of Bluebeard is not. It is a dark drama/comedy in some interpretations--a didactic and frightening commentary of society in others.

Gothic Imagery 3: The whole incident of meeting Mr. Rochester on the road, against the pallid moon-lit hills and vales, introduces the tortured yet romantic character of the male hero, against a backdrop which is particularly Gothic and contrasting to bringing forth his intense nature. Jane describes Mr. Rochester, and her inclinations toward him well:

*"I traced the general points of middle height, and considerable breadth of chest. He had a dark face, with stern features, and a heavy brow; his eyes and gathered eyebrows looked ireful and thwarted just now; he was past youth, but had not reached middle age; perhaps he might be thirty-five. I felt no fear of him, and but a little shyness. Had he been a handsome, heroic-looking young gentleman, I should not have dared to stand thus questioning him against his will, and offering my services unasked...I had a theoretical reverence an homage for beauty, elegance, gallantry, fascination; but had I met those qualities incarnate in masculine shape, I should have known instinctively that they neither had nor could have sympathy with anything in me and should have shunned them as one would fire, lightning, or anything else that is bright but antipathetic."* Chapter 12, pg. 99

Rochester is further marked in the following pages and chapters, by dark red, purple or fire imagery given to décor, nature or the sky.

Gothic Imagery 4: This event with 'Grace Poole' lighting Rochester's bedclothes on fire, introduces more dangerous and foreboding elements related to the secret creature who resides upstairs. No information is given here, except that Jane's description of Rochester belies that there is more to the story than simply Grace Poole; also the presence of the violence and destructiveness of fire foreshadows a dark side and violence to come from this secret. The apparent contrast would be Jane, whose imagery is always based off the color white, black or very cool imagery and descriptions.

Rochester's gratitude also introduce the plot necessity of the tortured male hero who can only be redeemed through the good, not violent, wild or sexual female lead; Rochester intimates this when he says, "I knew...you would do me good in some way...I have heard of good genii..." calling her his 'cherished preserver'. This plot aspect resurfaces throughout their relationship, and especially later, where Jane becomes a symbol of what is good, clean, pure and innocent in women, as opposed to Rochester's deranged first wife.

Gothic Imagery 5: The striking of the chestnut tree, under which Jane and Rochester had just sat when he proposed the previous night, is foreshadowing of impending separation, disaster and danger for Jane and Rochester. It is also a perfect Gothic symbol, nature predicting human fate to come.

Gothic Imagery 6: Jane meets her double here, in this visitation to her room the night before her wedding. As we will see, it is not Grace Poole, but Rochester's first wife who is hysterical and insane, being watched over by Grace Poole in the upstairs attic. This

double is the eternal whore, the dirty, befouled and evil woman, to Jane's religious goodness and clean bodily appearance (despite Jane's not fitting into this stereotype in mind and soul).

In her visit to Jane's room, Jane is revisited with the greatest terror, only equaled by her time in the Red Room, for it is the only other time Jane ever passes out. This enactment of the trying on of the veil, and gazing into the mirror, is later reenacted by Jane the morning of the wedding (page 252). When Jane looks in that very mirror, she says she does not recognize herself, but sees only, "a robed and veiled figure...the image of a stranger." This is typical Gothic imagery.

Gothic Imagery 7: A basic plot component of the Gothic novel, and often of the Bildungsroman (or coming-of-age novel), is a romantic and desperate escape/fleeing from the site of romance/male hero. This escape must exist for the female heroine to later return to the locale, often a castle-like structure.

Gothic Imagery 8: Jane comments:

*"I recalled the voice I had heard; again I questioned whence it came, as vainly as before: it seemed in me--not in the external world. I asked, was it a mere nervous impression--a delusion? I could not conceive or believe: it was more like an inspiration. The wondrous shock of feeling had come like the earthquake which shook the foundations of Paul and Silas's prison: it had opened the doors of the soul's cell, and loosed its bands--it had wakened it out of its sleep, whence it sprang trembling, listening, aghast; then vibrated thrice a cry on my startled ear, an din my quaking heart, and through my spirit; which neither feared nor shook, but exulted as if in joy over the success of one effort it had been privileged to make, independent of the cumbrous body." Chapter 36, pg. 371*

This manifestation of the voice within Jane's actual frame, where she perceives it in her spirit and mind, and not external, is a traditional Gothic affectation. Once again, it is the idea inherent in the romance novel transferred to the Gothic setting. The romantic soulmate's voice is realized and conjured through the dark spectre/ disembodied voice, irrational and superstitious forms. The importance is placed in the contrast between St. John who is wholly mental is formula, and the transmutation the voice enacts in Jane; she says "her soul woke up--she began to feel". The balance comes in a harmony of spirit, instinct, emotion, mind and body. Her the choice of investigating the voice is raised by Bronte to the equal level of something God-sent and spiritual "independent of the cumbrous body"; meaning it is equal in value and meaning to St. John's previous religious quest for Jane.



## Topic Tracking: Morality and Religion

Morality and Religion 1: Bessie and Abbot warn Jane of the appropriate behavior for a child of her gender and class, and the result if Jane does not:

*"And you ought not to think yourself on an equality with the Misses Reed and Master Reed, because Missis kindly allows you to be brought up with them. They will have a great deal of money, and you will have none: it is your place to be humble, and to try to make yourself agreeable to them."*

*'God will punish her: He might strike her dead in the midst of her tantrums, and then where would she go? ...Say your prayers, Miss Eyre, when you are by yourself; for if you don't repent, something bad might be permitted to come down the chimney, and fetch you away.'*" Chapter 2, pg. 10

Morality and Religion 2: *"No severe or prolonged bodily illness followed this incident of the red-room: it only gave my nerves a shock, of which I feel the reverberation to this day. Yes, Ms. Reed, to you I owe some fearful pangs of mental suffering. But I ought to forgive you, for you knew not what you did: while rending my heart-strings, you thought you were only uprooting my bad propensities."* Chapter 3, pg. 18

Morality and Religion 3: Helen Burns remarks how the pain and animosity Jane feels toward Mrs. Reed and John Reed could be averted with a different Christian philosophy. Here we are given Helen's opinion of more appropriate behavior for a young Christian girl:

*"What a singularly deep impression her injustice seems to have made on your heart! No ill-usage so brands its record on my feelings. Would you not be happier if you tried to forget her severity, together with the passionate emotions it excited? Life appears to me too short to be spent in nursing animosity, or registering wrongs."* Chapter 6, pg. 50-51

Morality and Religion 4: Jane's belief about the intent of the self, is very similar now, to what was once Helen's philosophy.

*"'Sir,' I answered, 'a wanderer's repose or a sinner's reformation should never depend on a fellow-creature. Men and women die; philosophers falter in their wisdom, and Christians in goodness: if any one you know has suffered and erred, let him look higher than his equals for strength to amend, and solace to heal.'"* Chapter 20, pg. 192

Morality and Religion 5: Jane admits that she makes Rochester promise to let her continue on as Adèle's governess and being paid for that so that they are equal, or as she puts it:

*"[B]y that I shall earn my board and lodging, and thirty pounds a year besides. I'll furnish my own wardrobe out of that money, and you shall give me nothing but...your regard: and if I give you mine in return the debt will be quit."* Chapter 24, pg. 237

Jane's views on this affair are extremely feminist when taken out of historical perspective. In actuality, they are her attempt to not change the power dynamics of her relationship with Rochester, to be paid for work, instead of becoming his object or property. But she admits later:

*"My future husband was becoming to me my whole world; and more than the world: almost my hope of heaven. He stood between me and every thought of religion, as an eclipse intervenes between man and the broad sun. I could not, in those days, see God for his creature: of whom I had made an idol."* Chapter 25, pg. 241

Jane also admits before this that she wishes she could tease Rochester like they used to, but that she felt the need to be more firm and serious with him, so that he would treat her not as his object or prize. There is an interesting connection between Jane's comments about power in marriage for herself and Rochester, and her comments about his image as an idol.

Morality and Religion 6: Jane grapples with the voice inside her which is tempted, and her better reason:

*"'Oh comply!' it said, 'Think of his misery, think of his danger--look at his state when left alone...Who in the world cares for you? or who will be injured by what you do?'...Still indomitable was the reply--'I care for myself. The more solitary, the more friendless, the more unsustained I am, the more I will respect myself. I will keep the law given by God, sanctioned by man. I will hold to the principles received by me when I was sane, and not mad--as I am now. Laws and principles are not for the times when there is no temptation: they are for such moments as this, when body and soul rise in mutiny against their rigour, stringent are they; inviolate they shall be...with my veins running fire, and my heart beating faster than I can count its throbs. Preconceived opinions, foregone determinations, are all I have at this hour to stand by: there I plant my foot!'"* Chapter 27, pg. 279

Morality and Religion 7: *"'Jane! you think me, I daresay, an irreligious dog: but my heart swells with gratitude to the beneficent God of this earth just now. He sees not as man see, but far clearer; judges not as man judges, but far more wisely. I did wrong: I would have sullied my innocent flower--breathed guilt on its purity: the Omnipotent snatched it from me. I, in my stiff-necked rebellion, almost cursed the dispensation: instead of bending to the decree, I defied it. Divine justice pursued its course; disasters came thick on me: I was forced to pass through the valley of the shadow of death...Of late, Jane--only--only of late--I began to see and acknowledge the hand of God in my doom. I began to experience remorse, repentance; the wish for reconciliation to my Maker. I began sometimes to pray: very brief prayers they were, but very sincere.'" Chapter 37, pg. 393*

## Chapter 1-5

*Jane Eyre* opens immediately with the voice of the narrator, a young orphan girl named Jane Eyre, who is living with her aunt Mrs. Reed, and her aunt's three children, Eliza, John and Georgiana Reed. Both Jane's mother and father are dead, her father having been a clergyman. Mrs. Reed is a rich, pretentious and condescending woman, and her children are terribly spoiled, cruel and rude. Jane is not a welcome member of the Reed household, at Gateshead Hall--she was born of a different class--and is continuously being criticized for her behavior and personality by both the Reeds, and their nurse, Bessie. A comment by Ms. Reed gives an indication of Jane's personality and her treatment:

*"She regretted to be under the necessity of keeping me at a distance; but that until she heard from Bessie and could discover by her own observation that I was endeavoring in good earnest to acquire a more sociable and childlike disposition, a more attractive and sprightly manner--something lighter, franker, more natural, as it were--she really could must exclude me from privileges intended only for contented, happy, little children."*  
Chapter 1, pg. 5

Jane, an intelligent, mature for her age, often cynical, passionate, questioning and moody child, does crave affection and love from her relatives and those she meets. But she is always excluded from family events with the Reeds. Jane often retreats to the window-seat in the drawing-room, to escape in the fantasy of words and pictures in books.

### Topic Tracking: Female Protagonist 1

It is at the beginning of the novel that she is seated thus, reading Bewick's *History of British Birds*, behind a curtain and hidden from sight, until John Reed enters the room and calls for her. She tells us of John, that he is fourteen, eats too many sweets, is cruel, abusive ("He bullied and punished me...once or twice...[a] day") and spoiled by his mamma. John then begins more abuse; he sticks out his tongue at her, and smacks her. He tells her that she has no right reading books which he owns, then violently throws the book at her, from across the room. Jane falls, cutting her head on the doorjamb--she is bleeding. Utterly frightened and enraged at John, Jane calls him a murderer. He then approaches her, dragging her by her hair and shoulders, Jane clawing with her hands. Mrs. Reed, the girls, Bessie, and Abbot, the maid, enter the room and take Jane away to be locked in the red-room.

Bessie and Abbot place Jane on a stool in the red-room, and chastise her for flying passionately at Master Reed. They look at her as if she were insane and evil, calling her "an under-handed little thing." They remind her of her place in the Reed household--less than a servant because she does not earn her keep--that it is up to the whim of Ms. Reed to keep Jane or turn her back to the poor-house. Then they leave Jane, locking the door behind.



### Topic Tracking: Morality and Religion 1

Jane introduces us to the interior of the red-room, a spare chamber with a large, looming mahogany bed, red decorations and drapes, and the chill of the white drawn windows, a wide mirror. It was in this room nine years ago that the late Mr. Reed died, her mother's brother, and was carried away by the undertaker, as well. Crossing the mirror, she sees her own image, and is spooked by her white skin, by how much a spirit or phantom she looks.

Jane confides her own fears, and feelings of anger, injustice and pain toward the Reeds. She questions why she is always the object of cruelty, suffering, accusation and condemnation continuously, with John's violence, his sisters' selfishness, Ms. Reed's indifference. She is still bleeding, but John's abuse was overlooked because Jane tried to fight him off of her. She admits:

*"What a consternation of soul was mine that dreary afternoon! How all my brain was in tumult, and all my heart in insurrection! Yet in what darkness, what dense ignorance, was the mental battle fought! I could not answer the ceaseless inward question--why I thus suffered; now at the distance of--I will not say how many years, I see it clearly."*  
Chapter 2, pg. 12

Jane is always the object of abuse because she is completely different from and in discord with everyone else at Gateshead Hall. Neither party love each other, and Jane does not have the necessary personality traits and physical appearance--"a sanguine, brilliant, careless, exacting, handsome, romping child"--to be accepted and tolerated by the Reeds. Her own more perceptive and experienced temperament is not liked or understood, and instead, condemned.

Jane becomes cold and depressed in the red-room. Seeing a while light move above the mirror and across the ceiling, she thinks it is a ghost or the dead spirit of Mr. Reed haunting the room, troubled from the grave. She screams, and Bessie comes upstairs to see if she is ill. Jane tells of the ghost and begs to be let into the nursery, but Ms. Reed enters the room and throws Jane back in for another hour as punishment for her insurrection. Jane, tortured, crying and hysterical goes into a fit, passing out.

### Topic Tracking: Gothic Imagery 1

Jane wakes unawares of anything except of the feeling of having had a terrible nightmare. She realizes Bessie has put her in her nursery bed and can see the red glare of the fire. A physician, Dr. Lloyd, stands beside and speaks to Jane. Jane admits to feeling much relieved by his presence, his warm voice and affection, next to her bed. To her unhappiness, he leaves, and Bessie asks Jane if she is well, would like food, drink or sleep. Jane is much surprised by this kind treatment, even though Bessie treats her the kindest of anyone, and questions Bessie as to if she is ill. Bessie tells Jane that she fell sick in the red-room crying, and that was why the doctor was called. Bessie and Abbot prepare for sleep next-door, and Jane falls asleep herself to the pieces of their conversation about the ghost she saw in the red-room. Jane has an edgy night trying to

sleep, ever sensitive to scary sounds outside. She speaks of the effects of this night, and of her feelings of mental suffering and trauma toward Ms. Reed.

#### Topic Tracking: Morality and Religion 2

Jane is dressed and found the next day, hearth-side with a shawl. She tells us that she "felt physically weak and broken down [with]...an inalienable wretchedness of mind," which kept causing her to cry continuously, her nerves in such a state of shock that nothing could calm her. The Reeds are out in the carriage, and Bessie tidies up the nursery while kindly talking to Jane. Nevertheless, even when Bessie brings Jane a tart on her favorite yet forbidden painted peacock plate, Jane refuses reconciliation. The only respite comes when Bessie offers a book, and Jane immediately asks for *Gulliver's Travels*. But after a few moments of reading about Lilliputian spirits, Jane puts down the book with depression.

Bessie begins to sing two folk ballads, as she sews. One "A long time ago..." sounds like a funeral hymn to Jane, who begins to cry. Dr. Lloyd returns to Gateshead to visit Jane, where he begins to talk to Jane about why she has been crying, and what caused her pain. Jane responds that it is because she is miserable, was knocked down by John Reed, and was locked up in the red-room all night with ghosts. Bessie is called down for dinner, during which Dr. Lloyd takes the opportunity to have a more honest discussion about Jane's unhappy nerves without Bessie's overhearing.

Dr. Lloyd questions Jane as to what the other things are which make her unhappy; she says that it is because she has no father or mother, brothers and sisters--that John abused her and her aunt locked her in the red-room. Dr. Lloyd asks her if she has any relatives, but they are only poor Eyre relatives, or so Jane thinks from what Ms. Reed has said. Jane states that she does not want to be poor, degraded, go-a-begging, or become coarse in manners and education. And in response to the doctor's query that she wouldn't like them even if they were kind, Jane says that she cannot imagine that anyone poor would be kind. The doctor finally asks her about school; in reply she says:

*"I scarcely knew what school was; John Reed hated his school, and abused his master; but John Reed's tastes were no rule for mine...[Bessie] boasted of beautiful paintings of landscapes and flowers by them executed...Besides, school would be a complete change: it implied a long journey, an entire separation from Gateshead, an entrance into a new life.*

*'I should indeed like to go to school,' was the audible conclusion of my musings."*

Chapter 3, pg. 20-21

Dr. Lloyd requests a meeting with Ms. Reed, and suggest that Jane Eyre be sent to a boarding school for young girls, a suggestion Ms. Reed accepts immediately. Jane also overhears the history of her father and mother, in a conversation between Bessie and Abbot. Jane's father was a clergyman who married Jane's mother, who was a Reed. Jane's mother was disowned because she married beneath her class, and after a year of marriage both parents caught the typhus fever in the curacy where Jane's father worked. Both died within a month.

Jane gets better, but weeks go by without any allusion to going off to school, by Ms. Reed. Jane has been exiled to sleeping in a closet by herself, eating her meals alone, never leaving the nursery, and never talking or associating with any of the Reeds. Jane socks John in the nose one time when he attempts to abuse her; overhearing Ms. Reed speak ill of her, she screams over the banister that the Reed children are unfit to talk to her. Ms. Reed runs up, grabs her, and tells her to shut up. Jane defiantly asks Ms. Reed what she thinks Mr. Reed would say if he knew how she was being treated. Ms. Reed beats Jane, and later Bessie chastises her.

November, December, and half of January pass with little change. Jane is excluded from all holiday celebrations, save listening to the murmuring and piano-playing from the stairway banister. She sits quietly alone in the nursery "her doll on her knee" sometimes with Bessie, sometimes alone, until the fire goes out, and she goes to sleep. Jane speaks of Bessie's kindness during this time; how Jane would listen for Bessie's step on the stair, often bringing Jane a bun or cheesecake for supper, always kissing her and tucking her into bed. Jane remembers her as pretty and wishes she were always so kind in manner.

On the morning of January 15<sup>th</sup>, while feeding a robin some crumbs and dusting, Bessie runs upstairs to summon Jane to get dressed immediately. Jane does not know what the fuss is about, but lets Bessie wash her face roughly and dress her. She is told that she is wanted in the drawing-room. A carriage has previously pulled up the Gateshead; it is Mr. Brocklehurst, the master of a Christian school for poor girls. Jane enters the room, and is interrogated by Mr. Brocklehurst, with Ms. Reed present. He asks her if she is a good girl, and then assuming the worst from Ms. Reed's accounts, addresses Jane on the eventual demise of bad girls in Hell. Mr. Brocklehurst asks Jane if she is religious, and at her response of not liking the psalms, he says that is proof of her wicked heart. Ms. Reed ruins Jane's future prospects of starting anew by stating,

*"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: should you admit her into Lowood school, I should be glad if the superintendent and teachers were requested to keep a strict eye on her, and above all, to guard against her worst fault, a tendency toward deceit. I mention this in your hearing, Jane, that you may no attempt to impose on Mr. Brocklehurst."* Chapter 4, pg. 28

Jane expresses an intense frustration toward Ms. Reed for this injustice; what could she do to remedy the injury? Her thought is nothing, cast between a hidden sob. Jane is to go to Lowood school, and stay there on holidays as well. One of the goals of Mr. Brocklehurst's school is to enforce humility, in character, sentiment and dress, as well as, to mortify in them the sentiment of pride at all things. Mr. Brocklehurst leaves.

Jane stands watching Ms. Reed sew for a few minutes until she looks up, telling Jane in a scornful manner, to retire to the nursery. Jane turns to leave, but instead decides to finally tell Ms. Reed her mind. She walks directly up to Ms. Reed and says:





*"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 girl, Georgiana, for it is she who tells lies, and not I."*

Chapter 4, pg. 30-31

Ms. Reed is completely still, having dropped her sewing. She is staring at Jane and asks Jane quite like an adult, if she has anything else to say? In a rage, Jane tells her that she shall never call her aunt again, or ever visit her, but only speak ill of her to everyone at Lowood, telling them that the thought of her aunt makes her sick. When questioned by Ms. Reed on how to affirm it, Jane says it is because it is the truth. Jane tells Ms. Reed that she has feelings too and desired love and understanding, but was given none. She tells Ms. Reed that she is deceitful!

Jane feels a great relief and freedom from having spoken. Mrs. Reed looks very oddly at Jane, asking her what is wrong with her, is she ill? There is a sudden change in Ms. Reed, perhaps because Jane is leaving, perhaps because it is the first time Jane has spoken back with nerve. She tells Jane that she only wants to be her friend, and that children must have their faults corrected. Jane screams that she is not deceitful, and that Mrs. Reed should send her to school soon. Much changed and frightened, calling Jane "a dear" she says that she will.

#### Topic Tracking: Female Protagonist 2

Jane retires upstairs to speak to Bessie. She is just as forthright with Bessie, which is surprising to the nurse, who expresses a deep affection for Jane. Jane kisses Bessie. Bessie says that this afternoon she and Jane will have tea and cake, while the Reeds are out, in honor of Jane's leaving.

On the cold morning of January 19<sup>th</sup>, Jane leaves Gateshead, saying goodbye to Bessie with tears, in a carriage to journey fifty miles alone. After a long journey of over a hundred miles, the carriage stops. It is well into the night, and Jane awakens from sleep and exits the carriage to meet a woman. They enter a door in a wall, and then a warm hearth-kitchen in one of the houses. A woman enters the room, Miss Temple, and speaks to Jane for a few minutes about her education, name, parents, and if she wants food.

Jane goes with another woman, Miss Miller, whom Jane describes as more ruddy and ordinary. Jane is led into a long room filled with the other pupils of Lowood Institution, no more than eighty, in brown frocks and long holland pinafores, in their hour of study. They have a small meal. Jane goes to bed next to Miss Miller in the dormitory. Jane rises early the next morning to the sound of a bell before dawn; all the girls assemble in the schoolroom and form classes in a hurried tumult. Classes begin as teachers enter the room and assume the seat before four tables/semicircles of girls. Jane is placed with the lowest and youngest group.

After an hour of scripture, a terrible breakfast is eaten--burnt porridge. The girls and teachers are dissolent. Classes resume for the rest of the day, Jane commenting with



pleasure on the demeanor and appearance of Miss Maria Temple, the superintendent of Lowood. Miss Temple announces a special lunch of bread and cheese because of the terrible porridge--on her responsibility. The girls retire to the garden, where Jane finally sees the sign that says she is at *Lowood Institution*, a charity school for orphans. She meets a girl who is reading, whom she asks questions about the institution and teachers. Later this girl is punished by having to stand alone during lessons, by Miss Scatcherd; Jane is intrigued by the girl's dignity.



## Chapters 6-10

Day two at Lowood Institution commences for Jane. She is placed in the fourth class, and expresses bewilderment at the speed of classes and lessons, in her first active day. While sewing, Jane witnesses her new friend, Helen Burns, being whipped with a rod, by Miss Scatcherd. Helen is often punished for her 'slatternly' ways, lack of attention, or messiness. Jane is horrified and indignant over Helen's unfair treatment, as Helen really was not at fault or slatternly. She speaks to Helen later about the teacher's treatment, and Helen's calm behavior under duress. Jane says that she would desire only to break the rod beneath the teacher's nose,

*"But I feel this Helen: I must dislike those who, whatever I do to please them, persist in disliking me. I must resist those who punish me unjustly. It is as natural as that I should love those who show me affection, or submit to punishment when I feel it is deserved."*

Chapter 6, pg. 50

Helen explains to Jane that Miss Scatcherd is not cruel, but simply dislikes Helen's unruly habits and faults. She explains that sometimes it is one's responsibility to endure certain types of punishment, to "endure patiently a smart which nobody feels but yourself, than to commit a hasty action whose evil consequence will extend to all." (pg. 49) She bids Jane return evil with good, instead, as it is not violence which will overcome hate--nor vengeance which will someday heal injury. Jane thinks about Helen's words, not agreeing with her in temperament or spirit, but feeling a deep intuition that Helen is indeed correct.

### Topic Tracking: Morality and Religion 3

Jane passes her first quarter at Lowood successively, but with the natural adjustments necessary to a new environment and hardships. January, February, and March bring a great cold, and inhumane conditions of food and weather for the girls--long marches to church in the blistering cold wind, swollen and flayed fingers and feet, and chilblains on the hands. More and more in these hard times, Jane admits that Miss Temple is a positive role model, mothering and affectionate friend to both herself and to Helen.

Jane recounts the one afternoon only three weeks into her time at Lowood; Mr. Brocklehurst finally arrives for his monthly survey of the school, and harangue at the teachers. Mr. Brocklehurst rakes Miss Temple over the coals for administering two lunches of extra bread and cheese, days when the meals were prepared so horribly that they could not be consumed. The point of Lowood Institution is not to spoil these girls, but rather instill in them a good mortification toward the mortal flesh. With that, he surveys the school and declares that the older girls of the first form must cut off their longer hair (some with natural curls), because it violates the strict humble strictures of the school.

Jane believes that she has escaped Mr. Brocklehurst's disclosure of her deceit, until she accidentally drops her slate tablet on the floor, calling all attention to herself. Mr.



Brocklehurst immediately recognizes her, calls her up, places her on a stool at the front of the room, and proceeds to lecture the entire room as to how Jane is already possessed by the Evil One; she is a liar, not an innocent little girl, she is deceitful and should be shunned by everyone. Jane feels horribly humiliated but somehow to her own surprise is able to endure the public censure for the rest of the day, alone of the stool. Finally, after the five o'clock bell sounds, Jane leaves the stool, falling on a desk crying. Helen joins her to bring comfort, kind words, and Jane's portion of brown bread and coffee.

Jane believes that she will never be able to regain any respect from the students or teachers now--everyone wrongly believes she is a liar--she is doomed. But Helen, with her logic, reassures Jane that Mr. Brocklehurst is not well-liked at Lowood; the teachers and students will judge Jane by her own future actions rather than random hearsay.

Topic Tracking: Female Protagonist 3

Helen and Jane, at the request of Miss Temple, join her in her room for tea, the treat of toast, and seed-cake. Jane tells Miss Temple of her history--the terrible tale of the red-room and the Reeds, most calmly and rationally, with Helen's advice of goodness in mind. Miss Temple explains to Jane that all criminals have the right to defend themselves; Miss Temple will write to Dr. Lloyd to agree with Jane's story. If he does, her name will be publicly cleared before the whole school. Jane is much relieved.

Jane is promoted to a higher class very soon, and allowed to begin study of French and painting. Her name is soon publicly cleared, and she soon falls into the comfort and safety of Lowood, the warm companionship of her classmates and of Helen. She admits:

*"Well has Solomon said--'Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.'*

*I would not now have exchanged Lowood with all its privations, for Gateshead and its daily luxuries."* Chapter 8, pg. 65

Spring comes to Lowood, and Jane expresses a great contentment in the arrival of many flowers, and the beauty of the grasses and green hills. But contagion has spread to Lowood; because of its location in a forest-dell, the coming fog has brought the Typhus pestilence all too soon. Already almost half the girls at Lowood have fallen ill, and some have been buried or left for home. Miss Temple spends most of her time in the sick ward; rules for all the healthy girls are greatly relaxed. Jane and the other girls are allowed more food (a new housekeeper), and to run free in the woods most of the day in an effort to keep them away from the ill.

Helen Burns has taken ill as well, but with consumption (Tuberculosis) instead. Jane doesn't realize the severity of the illness until Helen is very bad indeed; it occurs to her one day after seeing the surgeon's carriage leaving Lowood's lane--she is struck with the sudden realization of death, an empathy with the ill girls, a fear, and a great desire to see Helen immediately. That night, Jane creeps into Miss Temple's room when she is



absent to visit Helen, alone and pale in a curtained sick-crib. Helen is placid and at peace, and very happy to see Jane. They talk, and Helen admits knowledge of her impending death; she is at a great peace--her suffering is not great and she is going to God in the Kingdom of Heaven. Jane does not really understand what or where God or Heaven is, but she crawls next to Helen in the bed, hugging her around the neck with a sad love. She kisses Helen warmly as they speak:

*"And I clasped my arms closer round Helen; she seemed dearer to me than ever; I felt as if I could not let her go; I lay with my face hidden on her neck. Presently she said in the sweetest tone,--'How comfortable I am! That last fit of coughing has tired me a little; I feel as if I could sleep: but don't leave me, Jane; I like to have you near me.'*

*'I'll stay with you, dear Helen: no one shall take me away.'*

*'Are you warm, darling?'*

*'Yes.'"* Chapter 9, pg. 71

Eight years pass at Lowood for Jane. She completes her schooling, and spend two years teaching, as well. Lowood Institution is moved to a better building and location, and the living conditions are greatly improved on account of public horror over the sub-standard conditions associated with the Typhoid deaths. Toward the end of the eight years, Miss Temple marries a Reverend Nasmyth. At this point, Jane realizes that she has a great desire to leave Lowood, to see more of the world, and to better her living position: to find a new servitude. Since Miss Temple has left, Jane comments that the calm, peace, and feeling of home she associates with herself at Lowood Institution, has dissipated.

Jane places an ad in the local newspaper, advertising the presence of a teacher looking for a private position instructing a child below the age of ten. She is qualified to teach the essentials of a good English education, plus music, French and painting. Within a week a response in the form of a letter comes to the local post-office; Jane gives leave to Lowood, and obtains references from them, sending them off to a Mrs. Fairfax, c/o Thornfield Hall, Millcote, --shire. An unexpected visit from her old nurse, Bessie, comes the day before her departure; Bessie has gotten word about Jane from the letter Jane sent to Mrs. Reed to be absolved of all legal bindings to her aunt. A happy visits ensues. The next morning at four in the morning, Jane leaves Lowood Hall in a carriage, for the first time in eight years.

## Chapters 11-15

Jane arrives in Millcote nearly sixteen hours later, cold and tired. A man is supposed to come to meet her at the George Inn, to drive her to Thornfield Hall. Finally the man comes, Jane is conveyed to Thornfield Hall, nearly an hour and a half drive from Millcote. She is greeted by Mrs. Fairfax that night, warmly, in a snug house adjacent to the Manor. Jane believes that Mrs. Fairfax is the owner of Thornfield Hall; she retires for bed in a snug room. The next day she finds out that Mrs. Fairfax is simply the housekeeper, and her future pupil, Miss Varens, is the ward of a Mr. Rochester. The next morning, Jane rises early and surveys the long hallways of the house; everything is very stately and imposing, dark and heavy.

Jane meets the pupil to whom she will be governess--Miss Adèle Varens and her "bonne" (Sophie, her nurse) from France. Adèle rattles off in French easily, as she has only just begun to learn English. Jane converses with her for a little while easily, being fluent from her years of study with Mme Pierrot, the French teacher at Lowood Institution. Adèle gives a short history of her life--her mother was an opera star in France who died a few years ago, of the friends who kept her for a while, and now Mr. Rochester who has promised to have her live with him in England. She is a sprightly and cheerful character, showing off her talents of singing, poetry recitation, dance and French to Jane Eyre.

Jane and Adèle retire to the library to do studies for half the day. After these studies Jane prepares a few drawing lessons for the next day, and while encountering Mrs. Fairfax, tries to exact an accurate character portrait of Mr. Rochester from her. Mrs. Fairfax is little help, not being very perceptive or descriptive; all that Jane can derive is that Mr. Rochester is a gentleman, likes his affairs to be exact, neat and managed, his family has always lived at Thornfield Hall, he is a just and fair landlord, and he is only slightly peculiar because he has traveled a lot, seen much of the world: he is enigmatic sometimes in his speech--one cannot tell if he is in jest or sincerity.

Mrs. Fairfax gives Jane a further tour of Thornfield Hall. The house is large and imposing, and according to Jane's mind, has the 'aspect of a home of the past'. To be exact, many paintings over the walls of relatives long past dead; the furniture spans the styles of the past several hundred years; Jane explains:

*"All these relics gave...Thornfield Hall the aspect of a home of the past: a shrine to memory. I liked the hush, the gloom, the quaintness of these retreats in the day; but I by no means coveted a night's repose on one of those wide and heavy beds: shut in, some of them, with doors of oak; shaded, others, with wrought old-English hangings crusted with thick work, portraying effigies of strange flowers, and stranger birds, and strangest human beings,--all which would have looked strange, indeed, by the pallid gleam of moonlight."* Chapter 11, pg. 92

The old furniture and aura of heavy mystery do give Thornfield Hall an edge of romanticism for Jane. On the third floor, with Mrs. Fairfax, Jane ventures up the garret

stairs to a set of passageways in the attic. Oddly and unexpectedly, she hears a sudden curious laugh coming from behind one door; the laugh is odd and almost monosyllabic--mirthless and preternatural. Jane calls for Mrs. Fairfax and asks her what the sound has come from. Mrs. Fairfax explains that it is Grace Poole, a servant hired to sew in the attic and assist the maid, Leah, with housework. Another hideous laugh erupts, and suddenly Grace Poole appears from behind the door. Mrs. Fairfax admonishes her and Leah to be much more quiet--Jane is a bit unnerved and suspicious, but she and Mrs. Fairfax leave without event and retire to dinner.

#### Topic Tracking: Gothic Imagery 2

Jane surveys the features of those she attends to at Thornfield Hall, with contentedness. Mrs. Fairfax is pleasant to associate with and Jane feels much in control of the tutelage of Adèle; she is a perfectly docile and acceptable student, if not containing within in her character no particularly unique, superior or inferior talents--she is quite ordinary if not a little lacking in profundity for her age. Jane feels a good enough affection and connection to Adèle for their work together, and a satisfaction in the well-adjusted yet never harmful path she is preparing for Adèle. She also admits, while traversing the hills and long dim sky-line around Thornfield:

*"I longed for a power of vision which might overpass that limit; which might reach the busy world, towns, regions full of life I had heard of but never seen: that I desired more of practical experience than I possessed; more of intercourse with my kind, of acquaintance with variety of character, than was here within my reach...I could not help it: the restlessness was in my nature; it agitated me to pain sometimes..."* Chapter 12, pg. 95

Jane speaks of the visions--passionate, glowing, full of fire and life, which often rise in her imagination on some of her long ventures in the dark halls of Thornfield Hall; visions and adventures which she desires but has not actually experienced.

#### Topic Tracking: Female Protagonist 4

The odd and often hysterical laughter of what Jane assumes to be Grace Poole, in the attic, has become something of a regular occurrence to overhear. There is still the same ha! ha! and eccentric cackling, and often Jane sees Grace Poole coming and going from the attic rooms, carrying trays with tea, food or a porter pot. October, November and December pass quickly at Thornfield Hall. Jane is contented with her teaching and the company of the house's inmates.

On a particularly cold December day, Jane volunteers to take the two mile walk to Hay, a nearby town, to post a letter belonging to Mrs. Fairfax. Glad for the walk, Jane has agreed to Adèle's petition for a holiday from school, due to a cold. Toward the end of a rather calming and pleasant walk along the road peppered with new roses and hawthorn bushes, a rude noise of an approaching person on horseback rises in the distance. Jane sees a large lion-like hairy dog appear first bounding along without notice of Jane; a rider on horseback, a man, follows--galloping fast until he gives a



sudden yell, and they both are down. The horse has slipped on a sheet of ice, and as Jane asks if her services are needed, the rider rises, readjusts the horse, and his own sprained ankle. While waiting she is able to survey the appearance of the traveler, who she is later to find out is Mr. Rochester. Rather cleverly, Mr. Rochester questions her unawares, of her mission and status, until he finds she is the governess of Thornfield Hall. She aids him to his horse, and after recovering his whip, he is off, and she once again on her way to Hay with the letter.

### Topic Tracking: Gothic Imagery 3

Jane arrives back at Thornfield Hall after delivering the letter; she finds the grate warm and Mrs. Fairfax announces that Mr. Rochester has just arrived--he is in the dining-room with Adèle and Pilot, the dog. The surgeon has just come in to see him, because he fell on the lane and has sprained his ankle: suddenly Jane realizes she has just met Mr. Rochester! Jane and Adèle share tea with Mr. Rochester that evening, at which point we are introduced to his brusque and commanding manner, although not mean in any way; he cross-examines Jane on have a dozen subjects, surveying her paintings and abilities, wittily engaging in pointed conversation.

We find from Mrs. Fairfax that Mr. Rochester is often changeful and abrupt because of his nature, and also because of family troubles which absorb him painfully; she gives a vague story of Mr. Rochester missing his dead brother, Rowland. She also speaks of financial arrangements which led to much discomfort for Mr. Rochester in his youth, dealing with inheritance. In any case, Mr. Rochester rarely spends more than a fortnight at once, at Thornfield Hall.

Over the next four weeks evening meetings commence from time to time, at the request of Mr. Rochester, with Jane, himself, often Adèle, and Mrs. Fairfax as well; between Jane and Rochester, conversation is full and playful, almost a mind-game of wits and who can be most perceptive and sharp of tongue. Often Mr. Rochester will see Jane for a while, and then be absorbed with important business with his tenants and lawyers for many days in succession. Jane herself admits that she does find Mr. Rochester quite peculiar, but not bad, just troubled, blunt, abrupt, direct and honest, altogether perceptive to a fault. Jane tells Mr. Rochester of her history and the Reeds, and begins to open up to her the history of his life.

But there are no lies between Jane and Mr. Rochester; rather they converse as almost equals even though they are of different classes and Mr. Rochester is over twenty years Jane's superior in age. In many ways, Mr. Rochester speaks to Jane rudely and sharply; he is commanding in nature and often very diminutive toward her although never in a cruel manner. She admonishes him though, that he is no superior for age or experience, or such arrogant vanity as that, but rather because she is a paid governess in his charge. When asked if she feels he is handsome, she blurts without even thinking first:

*"--'No, sir.'*

*'Ah! By my word! There is something singular about you,' said he: 'you have the air of a little nonnette; quaint, quiet, grave, and simple, as you sit with your hands before you,*





*and your eyes generally bent on the carpet (except, by-the-bye, when they are directed piercingly to my face; as just now, for instance); and when one asks you a question, or makes a remark to which you are obliged to reply, you rap out a round rejoinder, which, if not blunt, is at least brusque. What do you mean by it?'*

*'Sir, I was too plain: I beg your pardon. I ought to have replied that it was not easy to give an impromptu answer to a question about appearances; that tastes differ; that beauty is of little consequence, or something of that sort.'*

*'You ought to have replied no such thing...Just so: I think so: and you shall be answerable for it. Criticize me: does my forehead not please you?'"* Chapter 14, pg. 115

Mr. Rochester does indeed enjoy Jane's sharp intellect, her rationale, and her teasing if not also sarcastic tongue. The two do get along on this point, and a friendship develops. Jane lets down her guard and begins to welcome her often nightly chats with Mr. Rochester. Rochester admits to feeling greatly at ease around Jane, because she is inclined to listen calmly and non-judgmentally to her speaker, rather than push to narrate, herself.

During one of these evenings, Mr. Rochester tells Jane the history of Adèle and her run-away mother-opera dancer, Céline Varens. He became terribly infatuated with the French Céline, and soon, her lover. She pledged affection and love of his, despite his "unhandsome appearance". All goes well until one night, as Rochester has come on a surprise visit to Céline's hotel-room, he spies her alighting from a carriage with another man--a stupid charge of the Vicomte--cheating on him. He waits until the two go up to her room, kiss, and have a general bad-mouthing session of Mr. Rochester and his hideousness. Then, springing from his hiding-place behind the curtain balcony, he releases Céline of all obligations to him, and informs her that she must vacate the premises immediately, as it has been his money which has paid for her food, jewelry, clothes, carriage and hotel. The supposed child by his seed and Céline, Adèle Varens, was abandoned when her mother ran away; soon Rochester took her up as his ward, although he doesn't believe she is really his child.

This orphan state of Adèle makes Jane ever more sympathetic and predisposed to sympathy for her small student, which she expresses to Rochester. Expressing a gratitude at the present state of her emotions and self at Thornfield Hall, she questions how long Mr. Rochester will stay; he has already outstayed previous records of visits by six weeks.

The night of her musings, Jane is awakened by the devious and hysterical laugh once again, but this time it is coming from directly behind her bedroom door. Raps sound on the door, she calls out to no answer. Rising from bed, Jane puts on her frock and shawl, opens the door to find a candle burning outside her door, and heaps of blue thick smoke coming from the direction of Mr. Rochester's room. Jane immediately runs into his room, finds him asleep while almost his entire bed, sheets, and bed-curtain are engulfed in flames. Immediately she gets his basin of water and her own, putting out the fire in the flying of water pitchers; she then wakes Mr. Rochester who is confused and cursing because he is seated in a puddle of water. When he rouses, she explains the whole situation to him, her actions, and about the fire. Jane guesses that it is the crazed and

dangerous Grace Poole again who is to blame, to which he admits. Jane begins to leave, but Mr. Rochester attends her a few moments more, thanking her for saving him, his tone changed, his affection more vivid, saying:

*"You have saved my life: I have a pleasure in owing you so immense a debt. I cannot say more. Nothing else that has being would have been tolerable to me in the character of creditor for such an obligation: but you: it is different;--I feel your benefits no burden, Jane...I knew," he continued, 'you would do me good in some way, at some time;--I saw it in your eyes when I first beheld you: their expression and smile did not...strike delight to my very inmost heart so for nothing...My cherished preserver, good night!'"* Chapter 15, pg. 133

Jane is a bit taken aback by Mr. Rochester's passion and sincerity, but she retires to her chamber in search of sleep. None ever comes though, as she sits up all night thinking, her emotions contrast between surges of joy and feverish delirium, coming from she knows not where. Finally, dawn comes.

Topic Tracking: Gothic Imagery 4



## Chapters 16-20

Jane rises early the next morning, and on her way downstairs, comes upon Grace Poole sewing rings on the curtains in Mr. Rochester's room. She is suspicious of Grace obviously, and begins to question her about the previous night's events. But Grace is only indifferent and says that Mr. Rochester fell asleep with the candle lit, reading, and thus his bedclothes caught on fire. Jane is non-plussed by the entire interrogation, which begins to be more of one led by Grace. Jane is suspect as to why Rochester would keep an insane woman like Grace in the house, under employment; she ventures that perhaps they used to be lovers, but quickly dismisses such a possibility. This train of thought leads her to her own thoughts about herself from last night, and Rochester's words--a sudden flush comes over her appearance. Grace Poole and she are very different; as Bessie said, she is a lady, even if she is not beautiful.

She soon finds out that Mr. Rochester has left that morning for the Leas, Mr. Eshton's place, who is a fellow rich acquaintance, to dine, play, and be entertained for perhaps a week or more. Mrs. Fairfax then describes the appearance of the most attractive of that party, a Miss Blanche Ingram: Blanche is beautiful, exotic with sloping shoulders, a long graceful neck, olive complexion, noble features, a gay personality, lots of talents like song and music, bright brilliant eyes, and a full head of fine black curls. From Mrs. Fairfax's description, it is obvious that Rochester and Blanche often pair up and entertain each other, and Jane unconsciously feels immediately jealous. After this, Jane resides her to extinguishing completely any passionate notions she held for Rochester, or that she felt he held for herself. She chastises herself sharply for being so arrogant, so vain, so above her own class and station in life to imagine such feelings to exist.

She draws a grave and plain self-portrait of herself, "the plain, poor governess" and a striking miniature in bright colors of the famed Blanche, to remind herself of this fact. Mr. Rochester does not return for another week and a half, until Mrs. Fairfax receives a letter that he, and all his fine guests will be arriving the coming Thursday. The house is set into a bluster of cleaning, cooking and decoration of all the spare rooms as a result; classes are suspended temporarily for Adèle, as Jane is helping to cook and Adèle is too wound up to study.

Finally the grand party arrives, led by Mr. Rochester on his horse, Mesrour, and alongside a lady horsewoman, who is Blanche Ingram. The party enters, sits to dinner, all the while Jane and Adèle keep out of sight. Jane and Adèle are finally shown in to the drawing-room of guests by Mrs. Fairfax, where Adèle plays the adorable puppet, and Jane is quite unnoticed or disdained by the uptight guests. The men finally join the female guests in the drawing-room, and Jane is given the opportunity to examine both Blanche and Mr. Rochester side by side.

Topic Tracking: Female Protagonist 5

Jane realizes while watching Rochester with his crew, that she has fallen in love with him, despite her better efforts to 'extirpate' the growing seeds of such a love. The rest of

the night proceeds, while the ladies chat and gush with the men, quite loudly and affectedly. Jane leaves near the end quickly, but is apprehended warmly by Rochester in the hallway; he expresses concern for her tired appearance and his affectionate and intimate tone has returned. He wishes that she and Adèle be present at the festivities every night, at his request.

The party stays for almost another two weeks, Jane at attention every night. She is now convinced that Mr. Rochester is planning to marry Blanche Ingram, for he does nothing but court her, but with dispassion and a touch of sarcasm: Jane can never tell if he truly means his felicitousness or is in mockery. Blanche on the other hand, she can read like a book--she is false, annoying, silly, conniving, boring and immensely stupid as well as superficial. Despite Jane's surging feelings of pain about the implied impending marriage, she sees where Blanche misses the mark of her talk and repartee with Rochester, where if she had just been more sincere or less affected, she might have won his heart. Throughout this time, Jane is terribly confused as to the reason for Rochester's decision, even though he has alluded only to the "fact that I will be married soon!", since they do not seem to get along. Her thoughts on the marriage are validated when a silly game of charades by the guests reveals Rochester and Blanche to be partnering up in a mock-marriage ceremony.

A mystery man, a Mr. Mason arrives while Rochester is apparently 'away on business' one day. Jane notices him immediately as quite the opposite sort of fellow than Rochester, and she thinks it is odd that they should be close friends. Suddenly the doorman announces that an old crone, a hag palmist is at the door, demanding to tell the fortunes of the young and single women in the room. The arrogant women guests are either outraged or pampered with vanity; Blanche calms the rest of the crowd by saying she wants her fortune read, and leaves immediately. But she returns twenty minutes later quite changed--her face is straight and humorless, she is not gay at all. A bunch of other ladies go in as a group, and then finally Jane, at the request of the hag herself.

Jane is suspicious and has no feelings for the game. She notices that the hag is oddly dressed and mysteriously not female, but being in such a changed and odd state from Mr. Rochester's absence, she doesn't notice that much. The hag asks leading questions, telling more the fortune of Rochester than Jane herself, which she comments on. The Sibyl comments on the impending marriage of Blanche and Rochester, as Jane becomes terribly carried away with her jealousies and thoughts regarding this very subject. Finally, after a prolonged time while the Sibyl has regarded her face in the gleam of the fire, Jane becomes suspicious--the hag is no hag but actually Mr. Rochester:

*"Where was I? Did I wake or sleep? Had I been dreaming? Did I dream still? The old woman's voice had changed: her accent, her gesture, and all were familiar to me as my own face in a glass--as the speech of my own tongue...I looked...The flame illuminated her hand stretched out: roused now, and on the alert for discoveries, I at once noticed that hand. It was no more the withered limb of old than my own; it was a rounded supple member, with smooth fingers...a broad ring flashed on the little finger, and*

*stooping forward, I looked at it, and saw a gem I had seen a hundred times before. Again, I looked at the face; which was no longer turned from me-- 'Well, Jane, do you know me?' asked the familiar voice... And Mr. Rochester stepped out of his disguise."* Chapter 19, pg. 177-8

Rochester reveals himself to Jane, much to her surprise! He explains his prank for personal reasons related to his guests--one in particular that he informed Blanche Ingram, under the guise of the Sybil, that Rochester's fortune was only one-third of its true sum. Jane is about to leave, but tells Rochester of the man who has come to see him, a Mr. Mason from the West Indies. Rochester is suddenly struck cold and shocked; he questions Jane as to how much this man has told his guests, but Jane assures him that they are happy and joyful inside. Immediately, she shows Mr. Mason into see Mr. Rochester.

That night strange things occur! Jane is woken up in the middle of the night by a voice directly above her room which is laughing, screaming, shrieking and yelling for Rochester's name. Jane gets up immediately and leaves her room; all the other guests are up in the dark hallways as well, most the women shrieking and almost passing out from the dark and scare. No one can decide who it is--a robber, someone is ill? Finally Rochester emerges from the third floor attic room, as the young, female guest annoyingly cling about him. He abruptly explains that a servant on the third floor has simply had a nightmare--thought she saw an apparition and so proceeded to scream and shriek like mad. This reason suffices for the guests, whom he persuades to return to their rooms. But Jane is aware that it is a lie, and she returns to her room, sitting up in bed, waiting lest Rochester should need her help with anything.

Indeed a knock at her door does sound almost an hour later; it is Mr. Rochester and he requests that she come upstairs with him, that he needs her aid in something. They fetch a sponge and smelling salts, and go upstairs to the room where Grace Poole usually stays. There, Jane finds the man, Mr. Mason bleeding terribly and almost unconscious. Rochester instructs Jane to soak up the blood that is coming from his deep wounds, while Rochester quickly sends for the doctor. Jane is alone. Almost two hours later, her nerves well-enough shaken by random laughs and the terror of the violence, Rochester returns with a doctor, Carter, who sees to quickly bandaging and cleaning the man's wounds. Jane hears their conversation and comes to understand that the raving woman, presumably Grace Poole, has actually cut and bitten Mr. Mason's shoulder and arm, badly. Quickly, Mr. Mason is carted downstairs before anyone wakes, and sent away in a carriage with the doctor, Rochester saying that he will visit him in a few days.

Jane is ragged, tired, and emotionally drained. Nevertheless, she and Rochester walk and sit in the garden for a few moments, as dawn is rising, before going inside. He gives Jane a red rose from the garden, and they vaguely discuss the night's events. Rochester gives Jane no further information about the event, only telling her that he must keep Grace Poole on, for reasons she will someday understand. Rochester speaks to Jane of her character, her goodness in helping him, and doing what will please him, as she herself says. He speaks how she is knowledgeable of the difference

between right and wrong, which carries over to her actions. Finally, Rochester asks Jane to suppose that a man, very early in his youth, had made a great injurious mistake, an error. But now, that man wanted to redeem himself, to make his life better, through another fellow creature--would this be right? Jane replies that the inner spiritual and moral rules of a man are never determined by anyone but himself.

Continuing with his pretense of marrying Blanche Ingram, he infers that this marriage shall renew him, to Jane. Jane's heart falls a bit, but she does not show it. Instead, she listens as he cries,

*"But the instrument--the instrument! God, who does the work, ordains the instrument. I have myself--I tell it you without parable--been a worldly, dissipated, restless man; and I believe I have found the instrument of my cure, in--"* Chapter 20, pg. 192

Rochester alludes to an instrument, once pure and clean, which may renew him--all too soon to be--Jane.

Topic Tracking: Morality and Religion 4



## Chapters 21-25

Jane soon finds out that Bessie's little sister is on her deathbed. An old wives' tale says that when one dreams of children, it is a bad omen. At about the same time, Jane receives word that there is a man downstairs to see her. She finds that it is Robert Laven, Bessie's husband and the coachman at Gateshead. Old Mrs. Reed is ill in bed; word is that she will die very soon, and she has requested that Jane Eyre come to visit her on important business. Robert relays that he is prepared to stay over and drive Jane back to Gateshead tomorrow morning.

Jane gets leave from Rochester, of course with the rather overwrought promise that she will return in a few weeks. Jane then accompanies Robert back to Gateshead. Georgiana and Eliza have grown--Georgiana is self-absorbed yet strangely social with Jane upon knowledge of Jane's painting and music accomplishments; Eliza is frugal, non-emotional, quiet and anti-social. On Jane's first day back, she has Bessie bring her to see Mrs. Reed, in her bedroom. Mrs. Reed is very ill and delusional and she does not immediately recognize Jane at all.

Jane admits that she feels no vengeance upon seeing Mrs. Reed; in fact she feels only reconciliation toward the woman's past actions and misuse of her. Mrs. Reed finally comes to believe that Jane is truly Jane; she tells Jane that she wishes to have her stay at Gateshead until she is physically and mentally capable of discussing some important subject, which weighs heavily on her mind.

But for the next week, Mrs. Reed is too delirious to speak to Jane. Finally, Jane is called to speak to Mrs. Reed. Once again, Mrs. Reed does not immediately recognize Jane--Jane addresses her as "aunt," and Mrs. Reed says that it cannot be Jane, that her mind deceives herself. Jane assures her aunt of her presence, and Mrs. Reed launches into clearing her conscience when she is sure they are alone. She admits that she has done wrong to Jane twice; once when she did not treat and raise Jane kindly, as she promised her late husband she would, and the second time, when she received an important letter from Jane's uncle Eyre, who lives in Madeira. The letter requests the address of his niece Jane Eyre, whom he wishes to adopt, as he is childless and unmarried, so that he can leave her his fortune when he dies. The letter is dated almost three years back, and Jane questions Mrs. Reed as to why she never received news of it. Mrs. Reed confides:

*"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 me, Jane--the fury with which you once turned on me; the tone in which you declared you abhorred me the worst of anybody in the world; the unchildlike look and voice with which you affirmed that the very thought of me made you sick, and asserted that I had treated you with miserable cruelty. I could not forget my own sensations when you thus started up and poured out the venom of your mind: I felt fear, as if an animal that I had struck or pushed has looked up at me with human eyes and cursed me in a man's voice."* Chapter 21, pg. 210



Mrs. Reed suddenly begins coughing violently, and Jane assures her that all is forgiven and to please think no more of it. In fact, Mrs. Reed actually wrote to Jane's uncle, relaying the information that Jane had died of typhus fever at Lowood Institution. She urges Jane to write back to contradict her statement, and she admits her past need for revenge. Jane again gives free forgiveness, but Mrs. Reed says very directly, that she has a bad disposition still, that she never understood how Jane could be patient and quiet for nine years, and suddenly break out like an animal in the tenth. Jane explains that her disposition is not bad, but rather passionate, not vindictive, that she yearned for love where no one was willing to give it. She asks Mrs. Reed to kiss her, but she will not. Jane leaves and soon, Mrs. Reed dies. Jane does not cry.

Jane wishes to leave Gateshead immediately after Mrs. Reed's death, but first Georgiana and then Eliza, request that she stay to aid them in preparations with the house, the funeral and their own particular future plans. Jane admits to staying and enduring Georgiana's laziness and selfish comments, only because her contact with her was so fleeting and transitory. Eliza requests that Jane stay a second week, finally informing her that she plans to enter a convent and take the veil for the rest of her life. Jane is not surprised and does inform us later that Eliza has become the superior of the convent where she was noviate, endowing it with her money, and Georgiana has married a worn-out man of money.

Jane leaves for Thornfield Hall, sure that her time there will be short, due to the pending marriage of Rochester and Lady Blanche Ingram. She has heard from Mrs. Fairfax that the grand party ended and, Mr. Rochester left for a England three weeks ago and is to be expected back in a fortnight. She arrives in Millcote, leaving her box and takes the long walk to Thornfield on foot, by herself. Jane is sure she will be separated from Rochester, and a new inner agony creeps inside on her walk home. Jane sees Rochester, sitting on the style, writing as she approaches Thornfield.

#### Topic Tracking: Female Protagonist 6

Jane is greeted happily by everyone at Thornfield, and feels a great calm in returning, especially in Mr. Rochester's warm welcome. He calls her often to his presence, as she says, she never felt that she had loved so well as now. No meetings between Blanche Ingram and Rochester occur either.

On the warm, late afternoon of Midsummer-eve, Jane puts Adèle to bed early, so weary is she from picking wild strawberries. It is this night that Mr. Rochester takes a walk with Jane in the orchard, the moon all silvery in its gloaming. Mr. Rochester is smoking a cigar, and Jane speaks of her nervousness of walking alone with him at night, yet his manor was so peaceful and reproachless, that she could do nothing but be at a thrilled ease. Mr. Rochester begins a dialogue with Jane about how she must soon leave Thornfield, because he is to be married. He tells her how he has found a suitable position for her at a cottage in Ireland, all the while Jane, feeling ill and utterly sickened by the idea of going to Ireland and leaving Thornfield. Jane says it directly when she speaks how the sea will be a barrier between herself and Mr. Rochester, how "wealth, caste, custom intervened between me and what I naturally and inevitably loved" (221).





Rochester asks Jane to spend this short time with him, before she must leave. He then admits:

*"I sometimes have a queer feeling with regard to you--especially when you are near me, as now: it is as if I had a string somewhere under my left ribs, tightly and inextricably knotted to a similar string situated in the corresponding quarter of your little frame. And if that boisterous channel, and two hundred miles or so of land come broad between us, I am afraid that cord of communion will be snapt; and then I've a nervous notion I should take to bleeding inwardly. As for you--you'd forget me.'*  
*'That I never should, sir: you know'--impossible to proceed."* Chapter 23, pg. 221

Jane, upon the topic of Rochester's bride coming up again, say she must go, but Rochester exclaims that she must stay! Jane passionately extorts that she cannot go on watching while her own feelings are torn to shreds, while she is nothing to Rochester, in communion and spirit; she insists that despite the fact that she is "small, plain, obscure" she has just as much soul as he does, she is just as much his equal, as before God. Rochester exclaims "as we are" as well, meaning equal, gathering Jane to his breast, and kissing her. Jane still does not understand until Rochester asks and summons her to be his wife, asking her to be his best earthly companion, saying that it was always her he intended to marry. Jane does not believe Rochester, but he explains that he led her on with the story of Blanche Ingram to make her jealous, to be sure she loved him as he did her. He adds,

*"'Gratitude!' he ejaculated; and added wildly--'Jane, accept me quickly. Say, Edward--give me my name--Edward--I will marry you.'*  
*'Are you in earnest?--Do you truly love me? Do you sincerely wish me to be your wife?'*  
*'I do; and if an oath is necessary to satisfy you, I swear it.'*  
*'Then, sir, I will marry you.'*  
*'Edward--my little wife!'*  
*'Dear Edward!'*  
*'Come to me--come to me entirely now,' said he: and added, in his deepest tone, speaking in my ear as his cheek was laid on mine, 'Make my happiness--I will make yours.'"* Chapter 23, pg. 224

Jane accepts Edward Rochester's hand in marriage, they linger in the garden for a few more moments, kissing. Then, as it begins to rain, they enter the house, Rochester shaking out Jane's hair and kissing her before she runs upstairs. A storm comes that night, cracking wildly with thunder, rain and lighting. Adèle comes to tell Jane in the morning, that the chestnut tree under which she and Rochester sat, has been split in half.

#### Topic Tracking: Gothic Imagery 5

As soon as the next day dawns, Rochester begins treating Jane differently than she is used to, and prefers. Usually he is affectionate and warm in the manner which is common to their relationship--he often teases her and her him, he treats her as if she were an imp, a fairy, with some trick up her sleeve, he is cynical and sarcastic, their





conversation is as such would occur between real people, no affectations. But Jane notices that Rochester desires to adorn her in jewels, buy her fancy dresses, raise her up to some impossible image or symbol of the bride or woman, which does not suit her at all. She tells us that she is much better suited to gray and black plain dresses, and would prefer keep her own due. This new treatment feels unequal, as Rochester would pay for her completely, she feels too dependent on him, and not her own woman. Rochester calls her feminine affectionate names that don't suit his tone normally, although they are meant with the same love and affection.

Jane feels the difference easily though, finally making Rochester promise not to buy her anything, but that she will continue to take care of Adèle when they marry, and he will continue to pay her for this work, she will earn her keep and buy her own clothes, so that she is his equal, and nothing of these power dynamics and gender treatment will change. Rochester is soon back to his grumpy and often caustic self, due to her inability to comply in his desire to parade her publicly. This suits Jane entirely and she is greatly happy to have him calling her rude and playful epithets once again, affectionately.

#### Topic Tracking: Morality and Religion 5

Jane has packed her bridal trunks for the honeymoon. The day has now come to marry Rochester, and she is completely prepared. The night before the marriage ceremony, Jane is tortured by a strange foreboding--she is restless waiting for Rochester to arrive home to the study, and filled with a strange possession from painful things passing her mind, she runs out into the orchard in the wind and rain. There, she stares at the lightning-struck chestnut tree, rent in two, blackened and sad. It seems to be speaking to her, its pain not singular but also her own--she runs down the road, unable to see things clearly in her mind, searching for Rochester.

Rochester finds her while returning home. They go to the study, where Jane admits that which is troubling her mind--it is not the prospect of marriage, but an experience she had the night before, perhaps a dream. Jane feels a great foreboding still, that something will happen great to change this present bliss; she wishes this late hour with Rochester could remain frozen as the present.

Jane recounts the event of the night before. It was last night, when Sophie brought up the box containing Jane's wedding dress, and an expensive London veil Rochester had bought as a surprise. Jane falls asleep, and soon begins to dream odd, rainy and dark dreams. Her first dream was about finding a small unknown child in the orchard which almost strangled her in terror, while watching Rochester leave in the distance. It was from this odd dream that Jane woke to a spectre moving about in her room, the form of a hideous and monstrous woman emerging from her very own closet. Jane cannot think that it was anyone but Grace Poole. The woman was tall, large, with dark and thick unwieldy hair, tousled and fierce down her back. The woman took Jane's veil and tried it on in front of the mirror, revealing her red eyes and purple, swollen face. Then in a rage, she tore the veil in two, thrusting her candle in Jane's face until Jane passed out, and left the room.

Rochester claims that nothing is actually real as Jane has seen--Thornfield is not a ruin, he is not lost from her, that her memories must have been mental terrors or dreams. Jane cannot be so convinced, because upon waking she found the veil ripped in two, that very morning, on her floor. Rochester gives Jane the explanation that it must have been Grace Poole, and comforts her, telling her to sleep in the nursery with Adèle that night. The night ends, Jane prepares for sleep, but passes the night troubled, poorly, without dreams.

Topic Tracking: Gothic Imagery 6

## Chapters 26-32

Jane awakens the morning of her wedding day, rises quickly to dress for the ceremony. Rochester surveys Jane quickly; she is "fair as a lily". Jane and Rochester leave speedily for the church, which is silent, alone, gray with only the parson present. The ceremony proceeds unimpeded until two dark figures emerge from the back of the church, as the question of any known impediment to the lawful joining of this man and woman, is spoken. Rochester becomes extremely tense and questions the solicitor from London, one of the dark figures, a Mr. Briggs. He is accompanied by the Mr. Mason who previously graced Thornfield many months ago.

Jane tells us she never heard more fearful words spoken, as the two men objected to their marriage, yet she feels decidedly cold, collected and numb. Mr. Rochester questions the men, and it is revealed that he has been indeed married before, and is married presently to a Bertha Mason. The marriage took place in Mr. Rochester's youth, in Jamaica. Mr. Mason steps forward to attest as a witness that his sister, Bertha, is still alive and living in Mr. Rochester's attic: the madwoman. It is in fact Rochester's first wife who inhabits the third floor of Thornfield, taken care of by Grace Poole, for many years.

Mr. Rochester becomes increasingly agitated until this truth is spoken, whence he admits the existence of Bertha and Jane's innocence in the matter. Rochester takes Jane, Briggs, Mason and the pastor to Thornfield, to see the real Bertha. Rochester asks them to judge whether he was wrong to desire even a bigamous marriage, as he considers Bertha no longer human enough to be his wife. Bertha is a monstrous image, the men are even wary of her. Jane describes her:

*"In the deep shade, at the further end of the room, a figure ran backwards and forwards. What it was, whether beast or human being, one could not tell: it groveled, seemingly, on all fours; it snatched and growled like some strange wild animal: but it was covered with clothing; and a quantity of dark, grizzled hair, wild as a mane, hid its head and face...the hyena rose up, and stood tall on its hind feet."* Chapter 26, pg. 257

Bertha lunges for Rochester, biting his throat. It takes all three men to wrestle her down and tie her hands behind the chair. Jane finds out that it is because of the letter she wrote to her uncle, who lives in Madeira, that Mr. Mason and her uncle learnt of the upcoming bigamous marriage. Jane is too numb and shocked to truly react at all. She leaves all the men and retires to her room, silent and unemotional. A transformation has occurred inside herself regarding her future and her own identity. She soon falls asleep.

Topic Tracking: Female Protagonist 7

Jane awakens again later in the afternoon, faint with hunger and still numb from emotion. She has no single understanding of the past day's event, save that she knows she must leave Thornfield, painfully extricate herself from Rochester forevermore. She must aid herself, not fall into another's will, without her own independence.



She leaves her chamber to find Rochester, at vigil outside her door. They go downstairs, and after Jane has eaten and drunk, they discuss their future, albeit stiltedly and emotionally. Jane finds herself holding back, so as to not become involved. Rochester asks Jane's forgiveness--which she gives immediately, completely, such is his sincerity and her love for him. But the forgiveness is not shown, only at her heart's core. Jane has decided that she will and must not live with Mr. Rochester out of wedlock, even though he urges her to this discussion, that his marriage status makes no difference for their relationship. Despite his violent passion, his tears, his fierceness, she is sure--for she knows how Rochester would eventually not respect her, would only see her as not different than his past flings/mistresses, i.e. Celine. She understands that in this situation she would be dependent on him financially--as the transaction of money for sex--she could not respect herself within. In one final attempt, Rochester cries that she will be his only salvation, his redeemer; how he will suffer with her gone.

#### Topic Tracking: Morality and Religion 6

Jane leaves Mr. Rochester that night, and for all time she believes. Barely sleeping through the night, she wakes early the next morning and escapes Thornfield, wrapping a satchel of her only money, a few belongings, and some bread and water. She leaves on the road which runs in the opposite direction than Millcote. After walking the road for the good part of a day, she finally meets a coach running in the same direction. The coach deposits her at a desolate town named Whitcross; it is as far as it will take her based on the only money she has to pay. It is two days later.

#### Topic Tracking: Gothic Imagery 7

Jane realizes she has left her satchel in the side pocket of the coach, and in fact she is utterly destitute. Alone in the desolate town, Jane wanders the vales and windy moors for many hours, on the lookout to faintly explore this town. This continues for several days; she walks through Whitcross, initially feeling a great relief to be free of Thornfield, and a safety in nature. She sleeps outside the first night, in a small stone cave, and although cold, she is not unsatisfied. But even a day later, she is not so well--she is famished, utterly exhausted physically and emotionally. The walking is too much, and she inquires at several places in the town for work, with no luck. She passes a small bakeshop, and hungers over only a small roll to eat, but cannot bear to bring herself to the level of begging for food from the woman inside; she is too humiliated. Mr. Rochester seems very far away from her now, sadly so. Finally she eats by begging the dried remainder of old porridge from a peasant woman.

Jane's trust slowly shifts from only herself, to one placed in God, and a humbling occurs. On the last day, she comes to a warm and cozy cottage and watches two educated ladies talk inside, studying a foreign language. They are fine and intelligent, the house warm and an older woman sitting by the fire, stroking a pointer dog. After many minutes, Jane finally gains the strength to knock. The older woman answers the door, but is not kind to Jane at all. She is very suspicious that Jane 'is up to no good'; she regards Jane's presence in the rainy and forsaken night as questionable, and her nerve to knock upon their door, as shameful. She gives Jane a penny, tells her to leave,



and shuts the door. Jane is utterly exhausted by this point, and cannot endure any longer. Dramatically, she falls to the ground at their door, in the pouring rain, uttering,

*"I can but die...and I believe in God. Let me try and wait His will in silence."* Chapter 28, pg. 295

But a man comes behind Jane, saying that yes all men must die, but not prematurely as Jane's death would now be at this very place. The man is St. John, and he is brother to the two ladies sitting so warmly inside. He admonished the maid for closing the door on Jane. He brings Jane inside and he and his sisters place her on a chair; she is barely conscious. He is a sharp and exacting sort of man, Jane tells us immediately. Not unkind, but not initially friendly, he commands great respect and is intimidating, yet deceptively passionate. He and his sisters begin to question Jane that night, but she tells them that she cannot explain her situation tonight, she is sorry. All she can say is that she is friendless, destitute, and has not the strength to go any further; they are her only hope. He conferences with his sisters, and they decide kindly and affectionately to take Jane into their house to recuperate. They feed her something small, and the maid takes her upstairs, undresses her, and places her in bed.

Many days pass, and Jane is recuperating. She gives us a portrait of the two sisters, who care for her, of the older woman, and of Mr. St. John. The sisters are named Diana and Mary. Diana has long curls, a warm, kind and empathic manner. She opens up to those she speaks to; she has a remarkable and pure countenance, is beautiful and imbued with both power and goodness. Mary is also intelligent and kind, but has not the same sagacity of expression, and is more reserved around those she encounters. St. John has a particularly roman face and expression, a sharp nose and a keen ability to perceive the interior state of his subject, at all costs.

Finally after several days of sleeping, eating and ministering by the members of the house, Jane is able to dress and go downstairs. Once there, she talks with the old woman, whose name is Hannah, and finds that the name of the house at which she is staying, is Moor House. She has also assumed a pseudonym, Jane Elliot. The sisters and St. John are out for a few hours. Upon their arrival home, they are happy to see Jane is feeling better, and all four go into the sitting-room, where St. John proceeds to interview Jane concerning her circumstances, name, and history. She tells them a very abbreviated history of herself, referring to Lowood, her education, orphan status, cruel relatives, and past position, without releasing the circumstances of her quitting that position. St. John asks Jane what she expects from them, and at finding that St. John is the local pastor in Whitcross, she says that she is willing to accept any mode of employment, as long as it be honest and paying, to alleviate them of the burden of caring for her. Jane asks St. John if her will procure this position for her, and he says he will look for that which will aid her; in the meantime she can stay at Moor House, Marsh End, and be company for his two sisters.

We find out that the two sisters are actually governesses in expensive houses in London, but are here at Marsh End, in Morton for only a few weeks, upon the death of their father, who has recently passed on. Jane stays with Mary and Diana and studies,



reads and discusses a plethora of subjects for about a month. Diana is the superior in study, but Jane tells us that she doesn't mind excelling for Diana's praise. She is also superior in drawing, which she begins to teach the two sisters. After a month, St. John Rivers comes to Jane with the prospect of employment--it is the position of schoolmistress of the local girl's schoolhouse for the common town's folks daughters. Jane would have a small cottage, furnished, next-door, and be paid a median sum. Jane accepts the position gratefully, even though it is monotonous, poor and obscure.

Mary and Diana grow sad as the days approach for them to return to their positions in London. St. John has decided to leave Morton, and become a missionary in some far-off country. Diana and Mary are sad, for they have lost their father, and who knows when they may see their brother again--this separation may be for life. Toward the end of their time, they find that their uncle John has died; but there is little sadness for he was unknown to them in their life and had a longstanding quarrel with their father regarding business ventures.

Jane moves into the cottage near the schoolhouse. The first day of school begins, and she finds the work proceeding easily, albeit her charge of students are not terribly advanced, nor educated. The work is monotonous, and Jane admits to feeling a desperate pang. She reminds herself that the coarse pupils she has have just as much potential for refinement, excellence, kindness and feeling, as any higher-born. But there is a conflict in her spirit; she admits,

*"I felt desolate to a degree. I felt--yes, idiot that I am--I felt degraded. I doubted I had taken a step which sank instead of raising me in the scale of social existence. I was weakly dismayed at the ignorance, the poverty, the coarseness of all I heard and saw round me. But let me not hate and despise myself too much for these feelings: I know them to be wrong--that is a great step gained; I shall strive to overcome them...In a few months, it is possible, the happiness of seeing process, and a change for the better in my scholars, may substitute gratification for disgust."* Chapter 31, pg. 316

St. John comes to visit her at the end of that first day, upon which occasion Jane meets the benefactress of the schoolhouse and some charitable acts of the Parish--Miss Oliver. Miss Rosamond Oliver is the perfect picture of immaculate skin, countenance, spirit, beauty, and animal vigor, and a heiress. As she comes to greet Jane, she speaks to St. John, whose back is turned from her. Miss Rosamond entreats St. John to come down to Vale Hall to visit with her father this night, but upon the pretext of not wanting to bother him, he declines. Jane can tell that it is taking quite a lot of willpower for him to refuse such an offer; obviously there is more to his feelings for Miss Rosamond than he would care to divulge. Both leave Jane standing outside the cottage.



## Chapters 33-38

Jane continues her steady duty of teaching the village girls. She finds among them many talented and kindred girls, most fitted with the desire to learn and excel; progress comes. Jane is often met with romantic and terrifyingly passionate dreams at night of Mr. Rochester, of what her future with him would be. But she is always woken in the night to the harsh reality of her life, of which she is not wholly unhappy. She describes the work as warm and satisfying, where she is liked and regarded affectionately by all those who work in the village.

Often Miss Rosamond will come to visit during her lessons, often when St. John is teaching catechism--Jane is not unawares of his fervor for her, or the power over him which she has. Jane takes up the craft of her drawing once more, and upon Miss Rosamond's discovery of her talent, Jane begins a miniature of Miss Rosamond. On the eve on a holiday several days later, Mr. St. John comes by to bring her a book, and comes upon the portrait. He is immediately struck, and Jane takes the opportunity to discuss St. John's passion and affections for Miss Rosamond, with him. He admits to their veracity--and for a quarter of an hour, indulges in staring at the picture and thinking passionately of her. Jane tells him that she does care for him, asks why he does not just marry her? But after the fifteen minutes end, St. John rises and replaces the picture on the table, saying that he is very much in love with Rosamond; but in fact he knows that she would not be suited to be a missionary's wife--he knows her defects as well as her positives. Within a year, he would be miserable with her, they would have nothing of which to speak--her mind would be empty from companionship. He insists that he is a cold, hard man who is not willing to give up his ambitions for God, for love. He remarks that Jane is original and direct in her manner, and with that comment and stealing a small strip of paper from the scratch-sheet, he quits the house.

It begins to snow that night. The next night, while reading *Marmion*, a poem brought by St. John for Jane's diversion, the latch to the door shakes, and suddenly St. John emerges from the blizzard. He is bright and sudden, and Jane questions him as to the reason for his arrival in the middle of a storm. He says that there is the second part of a tale to tell her, half of which she only knew before. St. John reveals that he has got word from a solicitor in London, a Mr. Briggs, that the search is on for a Miss Jane Eyre, who has recently come into a fortune, upon the death of her uncle in Madeira. St. John tells the tale of the orphan (who is actually Jane), without revealing that he initially knows it to be her. Jane questions him over his knowledge of Mr. Rochester, of which he has none. St. John quietly reveals that he knows her to be Jane Eyre, by showing her the slip of paper he ripped two days earlier--on which is her name, inscribed in vermilion ink.

Jane finds from St. John that she has inherited twenty thousand pounds, quite a fortune indeed. This is sudden and shocking news to Jane, who admits that is a quiet a breath of air to find out that one was poor and now one is rich with fortune. But another shock comes--when Jane realizes suddenly what St. John already knows--that he is in fact, with his sisters, her cousins. The uncle who died was uncle John, both Jane's and St.



John's uncle. It was his father who had had the dispute with his uncle, his uncle who left his entire fortune to a poor orphan niece rather than to his brother's children, as a act of forgiveness. St. John's mother's name was Eyre, and it was one of her brothers who married a Jane Reed of Gateshead--both of whom died right after Jane was born.

After a great exclamation of joy upon finding living relatives with whom she already feels such kinship, Jane resolves to divide the twenty thousand pounds evenly among her three cousins and herself, so that they should all be taken care of well. She says,

*"I had found a brother: one I could be proud of,--one I could love; and two sisters whose qualities were such that, when I knew them but as mere strangers, they had inspired me with genuine affection and admiration. The two girls on whom, kneeling down on the wet ground, and looking through the low, latticed window of Moor House kitchen, I had gazed...were my near kinswomen, and the young and stately gentleman who had found me almost dying at his threshold was my blood relation. Glorious discovery to a lonely wretch! This was wealth indeed!--wealth to the heart!--a mine of pure, genial affections. This was a blessing...not like the ponderous gift of gold: rich and welcome enough in its way, but sobering from its weight."* Chapter 33, pg. 339

Jane tells St. John, who partially believes her to be a bit mad with the fervor of good news, that she will indeed divide up her fortune between the four of them. She will live in Moor House with her two cousins, and St. John will perhaps settle down with Rosamond, or at least have the money to go off and do missionary work peaceably. Jane stays at the school until a substitute can be found. Accordingly, she closes the school at the beginning of winter as usual, and her students who have much affection for her, wish a sorrowful goodbye. St. John asks Jane what she will now do with her time, what are her ambitions, what good will she do. She responds that she must give equal time to her own diversions and talents, as to the act of helping other people--that is what she plans to do by living with Mary and Diana. She says she will not marry.

Hannah comes to stay with Jane at Moor House; Jane proceeds to bake, clean and decorate in anticipation of the coming of her two cousins from London. St. John seems very dissatisfied and distrustful of Jane's desire for sensual comfort and calm in household familiarities to come, and blood relations. He warns her not to let it eclipse the "God-given ability" which Jane has to help others, to do real work which is not transitory or flesh-bound. Jane tells him to not spoil this joy for her, and quits his presence. Jane cleans the house and in several weeks, she and Hannah await the arrival of their cousins.

St. John arrives first, but his joy at the house is not great; Jane is disappointed to hear no positive remarks of pleasure about her duties. It is quite the opposite; he seems suspicious that she spent so much time on such 'trivial' things as household furnishings--as if such things were innately suspect. Jane is left cold. Diana and Mary arrive home full with exhilaration and joy. But suddenly, a boy shows up at the door; he has come to fetch Mr. Rivers to see his mother, who is on her death bed. St. John goes and returns near midnight; he looks better and more content with duty. News comes that Miss Rosamond Oliver is to be married to Mr. Granby, a rich and esteemed man of good

standing living near town. Both Jane and his sisters express concern for him at this news, but St. John remains implacable--cold and distant.

Days go on; Jane is studying German, but one evening on his sister's absence, St. John convinces Jane to begin to study Hindostanee (an Eastern language) so that he may improve his competence by teaching a pupil. Jane comments that as she becomes more of a pupil of St. John, she wishes to please him and admires him, but that she feels that his nature is so completely different than her own, that she is losing some better part of herself. She almost wishes he would neglect her more, not be so hard to push her. One evening, Diana teasingly asks why he does not kiss her as he kisses his two real sisters--since he names Jane his 'sister' as well? St. John and Jane are both a bit uncomfortable, but St. John stoops to kiss her, what Jane calls 'an experimental kiss'. Jane says that kiss felt like a fetter to her will--attached again every time he gave it.

#### Topic Tracking: Female Protagonist 8

Jane writes to Mr. Briggs to inquire about Rochester--daily he frequents her thoughts--but he knows nothing. Twice she writes to Mrs. Fairfax to inquire as well, but over three months pass without any response; Jane becomes a bit anxious. It is at this time that St. John and Jane go for a beautiful May walk in the heath. Again, Jane comments that St. John's will is so strong that she either is submission or revolt; St. John tells her to walk with him in ten minutes and she does. Down in the heath, St. John reveals that he believes Jane should come with him to India, to be a missionary's wife--not in body but in mind, in spirit. He is convinced she has the qualities that are needed to help others and he is sure this is her calling. He says,

*"I have made study of you for ten months. I have proved you in that time by sundry tests: and what have I seen and elicited? In the village school, I found that you could perform well, punctually, uprightly, labor uncongenial to your habits and inclinations; I saw you could perform it with capacity and tact: you could win while you controlled. In the calm with which you learnt you had become suddenly rich, I read a mind clear of the vice of Demas:--lucre had no undue power over you...Jane, you are docile, diligent, disinterested, faithful, constant, and courageous; very gentle, and very heroic: cease to mistrust yourself--I can trust you unreservedly. As a conductress of Indian schools, and a helper amongst Indian women, your assistance will be to me invaluable."* Chapter 34, pg. 355

St. John tells Jane that she is disposed to be a missionary's wife--that it is not personal but mental endowments that she has been given my God, she is made for labour not for love. Jane is overcome too much and argues with him increasingly. She admits that inside his voice and logic have a great pull on her, but that she knows her spirit. She feels no great elevation upon his words and offer, no internal knowledge that this should be her chosen vocation; she believes such knowledge should come from inside the individual. Jane thinks and comes to the conclusion that she would and could be a missionary with St. John, but never as his wife. She realizes that it is for God and not in love that he summon her to him for this vocation; he has no husband's heart for her,

only a brother's heart. And Jane is sure he would observe all the duties of a husband--and cannot live and bear that every affection would be a sacrifice made on principle, absent of spirit or love.

She tells him she will go as his sister, but this he will not hear--he sees it as a partial sacrifice to God--God will only accept a whole gift, consecrated in marriage. Plus, he does not want for a sister, but a wife who will be his helpmeet until his death. Jane cannot bear this, it is too much, and utters that she will give her heart to God, but that he does not want it! Jane sees that if she tired with him as his equal, which she now realizes yes she is, as his sister, she could bear this because her heart and mind would be free. But those objects would not be free bonded in marriage to St. John, it is impossible! But St. John will still not hear of it, he says that they must and will be married--to take her otherwise would arise suspicion in a foreign land, and he is sure she would not regret it later. Jane exclaims:

*"'I scorn your idea of love,' I could not help saying, as I rose up and stood before him, leaning my back against the rock. 'I scorn the counterfeit sentiment you offer: yes, St. John, and I scorn you when you offer it.'" Chapter 34, pg. 359*

When questioned, Jane tells Diana and Mary of St. John's plans. They had hoped he had wanted to marry Jane, but are quite resolved with Jane that his cold and mental attitude is not suitable for a husband toward his wife. But just the next night, St. John alone with Jane late again almost has sway over her. She feels the call of God and thinking only of a duty not love, tells St. John that she could marry him if she only knew it was God's will. This continues until suddenly, Jane hears only in her own ear, the spectre of Mr. Rochester's voice. She stops, she is possessed and hears him calling her name--only shadows exist in the garden, while Jane rushes around the sitting-room, yelling that she will come. She releases herself from St. John and goes to her room, quite taken, to pray. The next morning St. John has left her a note saying that he will return in a fortnight to await her decision--he feels she will be clean in her spirit to know her duty by then.

#### Topic Tracking: Gothic Imagery 8

But Jane goes to bed and wakes knowing her duty--she is at peace. The next morning she organizes her room for an absence, and after breakfast-time she tells Mary and Diana that she is going on a journey alone; she will absent at least four days. Jane takes a coach from Whitcross and arrives outside Thornfield Hall thirty-six hours later, nervous but clear in her mind and actions. Jane runs toward where the mansion sits, first quickly, then timidly. But the shock is exact; Thornfield Hall is no longer--all is gone and what exists is a blackened ruin of the large building.

Jane speaks to the man at the inn where she is staying; he tells her how Thornfield Hall burned at the mid of night last harvest season--he used to be the elder Mr. Fairfax's butler. The old butler tells Jane the story of Mr. Rochester and Thornfield Hall. It was Bertha, Rochester's mad wife who started a fire in Jane's old room--she lit the bed ablaze. Then she mounted the battlement and stood atop the roof, raving. Mr.



Rochester, upon waking, as the mansion burned, made sure that every servant was out of the house first. Then he mounted the roof himself, calling his wife's name. But Bertha would not come down; rather she jumped from the building's roof and landed on the ground, dead. After all the servants were out, Mr. Rochester ran down the stairs, but was hit by a burning timber from the ceiling. He was pulled out from the rubble, but the timber knocked out one eye completely and injured the other one. It also crushed one of his arms. The surgeon had to amputate one of his arms, and the catastrophe left Mr. Rochester crippled and blind. He was now living in a small cottage at Ferndean, a manor thirty miles off.

Jane asks the first coach available to take her to Ferndean. Jane reaches Ferndean the last mile by foot; advancing toward the house, she hears the door open. Suddenly, she sees Mr. Rochester outside the door. He is putting his hand outside, to feel for rain. Jane tells us that nothing about him has changed. His fierce, athletic form, good posture, and strength still exist. But something in his countenance has changed; he is wounded and almost ferocious in his sadness. He is desperate and trapped almost. Jane tells us that she did not fear him in this state, more did she know him as she watched silently. She follows Rochester into the house unknown.

Jane finds Mary and John inside the kitchen--the couple who stays with Rochester at Ferndean to care for him. They are terribly surprised to see her, for she has almost appeared out of nowhere. Rochester has asked for a tray with water and candles, now that it is nearing dusk; Jane takes the tray and brings it into Rochester, under the guise of Mary. She gives the water to Rochester, but does not hide her own voice; Pilot yelps at her entrance and she tells him to sit. After a few minutes Rochester can tell the difference, perceives that the voice is Jane's. He grabs for her fingers, her waist, her form to verify this spectre of a voice. He embraces her gratefully, still in disbelief that it is his Jane. In fact, he still believes the form and voice are in his mind, as they have come and gone before during dreams. He says:

*"My living darling! These are certainly her limbs, and these her features; but I cannot be so blest, after all my misery. It is a dream; such dreams as I have had at night when I have clasped her once more to my heart, as I do now; and kissed her, as thus--and felt that she loved me, and trusted that she would not leave me...Gentle, soft dream, nestling in my arms now, you will fly, too, as your sisters have all fled before you: but kiss me before you go--embrace me, Jane."* Chapter 37, pg. 382

Jane kisses him gratefully on his broken, closed eyes, on his hair and his brow. Jane tells him briefly of her history of the past year, and how she is now an independent woman--her cousins, her fortune. She tells Rochester that she will stay with him to care for him and love him now, forever, if he wish it. There is some miscommunication at first--Rochester believes that Jane will only stay as his nurse and companion. He is downtrodden, and Jane sees where the confusion lies. He professes that he is not suitable for Jane now, being crippled and blinded. But Jane reassures him that she can and will love him, if he will let her; of course he wishes it.



Jane takes Rochester out for a walk through the fields the next day. They talk, as they always had before, Jane perching upon Rochester's knee. There in the waning light of day, Rochester asks Jane to marry him again. But he says he will leave the decision up to Jane--to choose. Jane says yes immediately; Rochester is ecstatic and says they will be married in three days. Rochester has also changed very much in his view about himself in the world, now after his accident and ill fortune. Rochester is now not so arrogant as before, and has a sincere gratitude to God for blessing him with Jane's return.

#### Topic Tracking: Morality and Religion 7

Rochester also tells how many days ago, around midnight, he was struck with an impossible desire to see Jane--in flesh and spirit. He could not control it, and against his will, he yelled out her name three times. To his surprise, he heard her voice answer that she was coming, etc... Jane is struck by the coincidence that this is exactly the same experience that she had, on the same night. She does not wish to tell Rochester though, fearing that it will make him too superstitious. She smiles inside and takes Rochester's hand to lead him home through the twilight.

Jane and Rochester marry. She tells us that she has now been married ten years to Mr. Rochester. Both Mary and Diana are married and come by at least once a year to visit her. She took Adèle out of the school where she was, which was too strict, and placed her in a more suitable school nearer to Ferndean. Jane has given birth to one boy--a son between herself and Rochester. And St. John did go off to India, and is doing the best work he can do in the name of God. He has always been respectful of Jane, and they have had a correspondence for many years. After the first two years of Jane and Rochester's union, Rochester began to regain partial sight in his left eye; now he has almost full sight in that eye again. Jane is happy, fulfilled and living in equal partnership. She tells us:

*"I know no weariness of my Edward's society: he knows none of mine, any more than we each do of the pulsation of the heart that beats in our separate bosoms; consequently, we are ever together. To be together is for us to be at once as free as in solitude, as gay as in company. We talk, I believe, all day long: to talk to each other is but a more animated and an audible thinking. All my confidence is bestowed on him, all his confidence is devoted to me; we are precisely suited in character--perfect concord is the result."* Chapter 38, pg. 397