

JANE EYRE

Screenplay by

Moira Buffini

Based on the novel by
Charlotte Brontë

1 EXT. A MIDSUMMER DAWN. THORNFIELD - THE GROUNDS. 1

First light. Jane Eyre is leaving a mansion house. She makes no noise, controlling her emotions lest they give her away.

She runs across a meadow, flushed and breathless; the hem of her plain, black dress soaked with dew. She carries a shawl and has a small bag of belongings over her shoulder.

She trips, falls to her knees; looks back. Expressive eyes, open features. She is desperate. We see the house she is running from; a Jacobean battlemented mansion.

She can't tear her eyes away. But her need to escape is so great that she crawls forward until she is able to raise herself to her feet.

She reaches a stile, lifts herself on to it, lands on the road - and runs.

2 I/E. DAY. A ROADSIDE. 2

The sun is higher in the sky. Jane exhausted, now running down a main road.

3 EXT. EVENING. WHITCROSS. 3

Sunset. A whitewashed, stone pillar set up where four roads meet on a barren moor.

Jane looks around, dismayed. In each direction there is open moorland for as far as the eye can see. She comes to a halt, objectless, lost, alone. She pulls her knitted shawl around her. She leaves the road and sets off across the moor, into the gathering dark.

4 EXT. NIGHT. THE MOOR. 4

Jane is on her knees by a strange overhanging rock. The night sky is awesome; the universe is all around her. She is trying to calm herself with a prayer.

She gives way to her emotion.

5 EXT. DAY. THE MOOR. 5

Jane lies on a great rock, soaking up the heat of the sun, numb with pain. She watches a lizard crawl over the rock, mesmerised.

6 DELETED. 6

7 DELETED. 7

9 DELETED. 9

10 EXT. DAY. THE EDGE OF A MOOR. 10

Jane is huddled under a wall. She is shaking, shuddering. The life has gone out of her eyes. Jane suddenly turns, as if unable to bear her thoughts. She staggers away.

11 DELETED. 11

12 EXT. EVENING. THE MOOR. 12

Dark clouds. It is pouring with rain. Jane is struggling through a marsh. She falls. Her hand disappears into mud; her face pressed against the earth. She doesn't move. She has reached the point of despair.

13 EXT. NIGHT. THE MOOR/MOOR HOUSE. 13

Jane is toiling through the lashing rain. A brief flash of lightning shows her a low stone cottage.

Jane knocks at the door. Hannah, an old servant answers. She is suspicious; Jane looks like a wretch. She cannot find her voice.

HANNAH

I can't take in vagrants. You can move off. And if there are others with you tell them we are not alone. We have a gentleman here, and dogs.

JANE

But -

The door slams shut. Jane lets out a hopeless wail. She turns away, her hope gone, towards the darkness.

JANE (CONT'D)

God help me. I will die.

As she collapses, she finds herself supported by a strong pair of black-clad arms.

She is lifted up. She finds herself looking into the face of St John Rivers. He carries her over the threshold into the warmth of Moor House.

14

INT. NIGHT. MOOR HOUSE - THE KITCHEN.

14

A fire is roaring in the stove. St John sets Jane down before the hearth. Diana and Mary enter.

DIANA

St John?

ST JOHN

I found her at the door.

MARY

She's white as death.

HANNAH

(guiltily)

I thought her one of the gypsies from the cross.

Jane can hold herself up no longer. Diana and St John help her into a chair. The rain hammers on the windows.

DIANA

Hannah, some of that hot milk.

MARY

St John, we would have stumbled upon her corpse in the morning. And she would have haunted us for turning her away -

ST JOHN

She's no vagrant; I'm sure of it.

HANNAH

There's milk for you.

Jane tries to mouth her thanks. She sips the milk. Diana kneels at her side.

ST JOHN

Ask her her name.

JANE

I - I am J -

Jane cannot speak. She's incapable of uttering her own name. She hears John Reed's voice calling from far away.

JOHN REED (O.S.)

Jane Eyre!

ST JOHN

Tell us how we may help you.

DIANA

Your name?...

Jane is deeply troubled. She is losing consciousness. She sees a frightened girl of ten holding a book, running from the cosy kitchen, down the dark corridor into the heart of the house. Jane turns her head to follow her.

JOHN REED (O.S.)

Jane Eyre! Where are you?

Jane looks up at St John Rivers, imploring.

JANE

Must hide...

She passes out.

15 INT. DAY. GATESHEAD HOUSE.

15

The small girl - Jane, aged ten - races down a long, dark corridor, clutching the precious book. Heavy footsteps pound closely behind her.

JOHN REED (O.S.)

Where are you, rat?

Jane races on. She enters the gloomy, cold library and springs behind a curtain, drawing it shut. John Reed enters; fourteen years old. He is holding a sword.

JOHN REED (CONT'D)

I know you're here.

Jane watches him pass by her. He practises a lunge.

JOHN REED (CONT'D)

If you crawl out and say 'Forgive me, Master Reed,' I might consider it.

We follow him as he enters a large adjoining room. We briefly see Mrs Reed and her two daughters, Georgiana and Eliza; girls slightly older than Jane. They are playing 'I love my love'.

Behind the curtain, Jane breathes a sigh of relief in her private sanctuary.

Jane opens the book. It is full of beautifully drawn birds. She runs her fingers over the lines of the drawing.

DIANA (V.O)
St John, we must get her warm.

ST JOHN (V.O.)
Let us take her upstairs.

MARY (V.O.)
Will she die?

The curtain is pulled back. John Reed stands in front of her. Jane shrinks back, using the book for protection.

JOHN REED
(Grabbing the book)
That belongs to me, rat.

JANE
It belongs to my Uncle Reed.

He senses her defiance and belts her with the book. Jane hits her head on the window clasp, drawing blood.

Something in Jane snaps. She throws herself upon him, the rage in her released. She is barely coherent.

JANE (CONT'D)
I hate you John Reed. I hate you -

John is flabbergasted. Like all bullies, he is terrified.

JOHN
Mamma! Mamma!

Jane bites him, literally pulls on the skin of his cheek with her teeth. She virtually draws blood. He screams. Others arrive on the scene.

MISS ABBOT
For shame! She bites!

We see Mrs Reed's shocked face - her daughters at her side. She's a woman not yet forty in a bright, elaborate dress - once a great beauty and still proud of it.

She pulls Jane off John by her hair and holds her.

MRS REED
You wretched imp.
(To Bessie and Miss Abbot)
Take her to the red room and lock her there.

We see a look of shock in Bessie's eyes. Jane resists with all her strength.

16 INT. DUSK. GATESHEAD - CORRIDOR / THE RED ROOM. 16

Jane is carried struggling down the corridor by Miss Abbot and Bessie - one at each side of her. Her shouts of resistance shatter the quiet.

They open the door of a large cold room, the sudden drop in temperature making their breath vapourise. Jane resists even more furiously when she realises where she is.

JANE

No! NO! It is HAUNTED!

MISS ABBOT

If you don't sit still you must be tied down!

The fight goes out of Jane. She sits, defeated. Bessie, young and bonny, quickly wipes her bleeding forehead. She has some compassion. Miss Abbot has none.

BESSIE

What we do is for your own good. If you are passionate and rude like this, your Aunt Reed will send you away.

MISS ABBOT

Pray for forgiveness Miss Eyre or something bad will come down that chimney and fetch you away.

The door slams. They are gone. Jane slowly grips the edge of the stool. The room is chill, silent. Red walls and curtains, murky in the fading light.

In front of Jane, a stone fireplace gapes like a mouth.

Jane bangs the door in her panic and distress, hysterically glancing at the fireplace. She hears something; a noise in it - something coming to fetch her away.

There's a fall of soot in the chimney, a cloud of black from the gaping mouth. Something is coming for her. Jane hurls herself against the door, hitting her head. She falls back.

Jane lies unconscious in a pool of ghostly light.

17. DELETED. 17.

18 DELETED. 18

19 INT. DAY. GATESHEAD - THE MORNING ROOM. 19

A bright morning. A clergyman dressed in black is staring down at Jane. Brockelhurst, pious hypocrite, ambassador of self-denial, epitome of grim.

BROCKLEHURST

Do you know, Jane Eyre, where the wicked go after death?

JANE

They go to hell.

BROCKLEHURST

And what is hell?

JANE

A pit full of fire.

BROCKLEHURST

Should you like to fall into that pit and burn there forever?

JANE

No sir.

BROCKLEHURST

What must you do to avoid it?

JANE

I must keep in good health and not die.

Mrs Reed is by the fireside in an ultra-feminine dress. She puts down her tea cup in irritation.

BROCKLEHURST

What's her parentage?

MRS REED

She's an orphan. Her mother was my husband's sister. On his deathbed he exhorted me to care for her. I have always treated her as one of my own...

Jane silently revolts against this lie.

MRS REED (CONT'D)

If you accept her at Lowood school Mr Brocklehurst, keep a strict eye on her.

(MORE)

MRS REED (CONT'D)

She has a heart of spite and I'm sorry to tell you that her worst fault is that of deceit.

Jane's eyes flash with outrage.

BROCKLEHURST

You can rest assured dear lady that we shall root out the wickedness in this small, ungrateful plant.

A passion of resentment is forming in Jane. Mrs Reed smiles sweetly.

MRS REED

And as for its vacations, it must spend them all at Lowood.

A manservant enters with Brockelhurst's hat and coat. Brockelhurst bows to Mrs Reed and takes his leave. The manservant closes the door.

JANE

You said I was a liar. I am not. If I were I should say that I loved you and I don't. People think you are good but you're bad and hard-hearted. I'll let everyone know what you have done.

MRS REED

Children must be corrected for their faults.

JANE

Deceit is not my fault.

MRS REED

But you are passionate.

JANE

My Uncle Reed is in heaven, so are my mother and father. They know how you hate me and wish me dead. They can see. They see everything you do and they will judge you, Mrs Reed.

Mrs Reed has turned quite pale. Jane blazes.

MRS REED

Get out.

21 EXT. DAWN. GATESHEAD - FRONT DOOR. 21

Jane is shut into a coach.

As it picks up speed, she peers out of the window, watching Gateshead recede behind her.

22 DELETED. 22

23 DELETED. 23

24 DELETED. 24

25 INT/EXT. NIGHT. LOWOOD - THE GATES. 25

Jane, barely awake, is lifted out of a coach and into a thick fog. A stone inscription looms at her: 'Lowood Institution'. Great gates close behind her.

A woman with a bitter look approaches; Miss Scatcherd.

MISS SCATCHERD
What's your name, child?

25A INT. NIGHT. LOWOOD - DORMITORY. 25A

Jane is standing in the dormitory of the school in her travelling clothes. A long room in which each bed sleeps two girls. By the inadequate, smoky rushlight (for candles are too expensive) Jane can see that it is full of pale, brown-clad girls. Their clothes are patched and worn. They huddle round the fire. They look cold, submissive and half-starved. None of them looks friendly. This is a dumping ground for the unwanted. The poverty appalls her.

The girls stare at Jane in her warm clothes and good shoes, as if she comes from a different world.

MISS SCATCHERD
Step out of your fine clothes.

Miss Scatcherd helps Jane off with her clothes. They drop to her feet; her old life being discarded.

ST JOHN (V.O.)
What is your name?

25B DELETED. 25B

26 INT. DAY. MOOR HOUSE - A BEDROOM.

26

Jane is lying back against clean white pillows.

JANE

My name is Jane Elliott...

Diana and Mary are full of kindness but St John's face is merely curious.

ST JOHN

Who can we send for to help you?

JANE

No one.

ST JOHN

Do you mean to say that you are absolutely without home and without friends?

JANE

Yes sir.

ST JOHN

How did you come to be roaming the moors, Miss Elliott?

The name sounds strange to Jane. St John is exasperated.

ST JOHN (CONT'D)

Miss Elliott?

JANE

That is not my name.

DIANA

You haven't given us your real name?

Jane shakes her head.

ST JOHN

Why not?

JANE

I mustn't ever be found.

Diana and Mary glance at each other, fascinated.

27 INT. EVENING. MOOR HOUSE - THE BEDROOM

27

Jane is dressing herself. She stops, weakly holding the back of a chair for support, looking out of the window at the sun setting over the hills.

ST JOHN (V.O.)

Merciful Jesus, enlighten thou me with
the brightness of thine inward light
and take away all darkness from the
habitation of my heart...

28 DELETED. 28

29 INT. EVENING. MOOR HOUSE - THE PARLOUR 29

St John is praying ardently over Jane, Diana and Mary. They
kneel at his feet.

ST JOHN

Join me to thyself with an inseparable
band of love. For thou, even thou
alone, dost satisfy him that loveth
thee...

Jane finds herself staring at St John.

ST JOHN (CONT'D)

And without thee all things are vain
and empty. Amen.

St John opens his eyes. Jane immediately looks down.

JANE, MARY, DIANA

Amen.

30 INT. NIGHT. MOOR HOUSE. PARLOUR - 10 MINUTES LATER. 30

They are eating.

MARY

It's wonderful to see you up, Miss
Elliott. Last week we thought we'd be
escorting your remains to an unmarked
grave.

DIANA

She read 'The Bride of Lindorf' and
suddenly all is woebegone maidens and
dramatic deaths.

JANE

I'm sorry to have caused you so much
trouble

DIANA

Nonsense.

MARY

You're the most exciting thing that's happened here since St John's sermon on the Fall of Babylon.

Jane is amused. She turns her attention to St John.

JANE

I hope I'll not be eating long at your expense, Mr Rivers.

ST JOHN

Then tell me where to place you.

JANE

Show me where to seek work; that's all I ask.

MARY

You're not fit enough to work. Is she, Di?

DIANA

Stay with us.

ST JOHN

You return to your posts at the end of the month. What must Miss Elliott do then?

(To Jane)

I'll endeavour to help you, if that's what you wish.

JANE

With all my heart, sir.

ST JOHN

This school you were at, Miss Elliot, this charitable institution; what did it prepare you for?

CUT TO:

We see a bundle of sharp twigs come down on a girl's bare neck, like a whip.

CUT TO:

Jane flinches at the memory.

ST JOHN (CONT'D)

Was it a thorough education?

JANE
Most thorough.

31 INT. DAY. LOWOOD - THE HALL. 31

Once more, the twigs come down on the bare neck. We now see that the neck belongs to Helen Burns, a red-haired Northumbrian girl of thirteen. Jane, along with the rest of the school, is watching the punishment, aghast.

MISS SCATCHERD
Burns.

Miss Scatcherd's bitter life is in her face and voice.

MISS SCATCHERD (CONT'D)
You're a slattern and a disgrace.

The punishment is continued; slow, stinging whacks with the birch twigs, three, four, five. Jane is appalled. But Helen doesn't cry; she seems like one in a trance.

Helen shows great fortitude, as if an inner strength is helping her endure. It is deeply impressive to Jane.

32 DELETED 32

33 EXT. DAY. LOWOOD - THE GROUNDS 33

The girls are outside in the freezing cold. Snow lies in patches. Their shoes are soaked and grey frieze cloaks are completely inadequate. A few girls huddle by the building, trying to stay out of the biting wind. Jane stands alone. Icy water seeps on her feet.

She sees Helen seated, her cloak wrapped tightly around her, head deep in a book. She approaches.

JANE
How do you bear being struck?

HELEN
Miss Scatcherd hits me to improve me.
She's tormented by my faults.

JANE
If she hit me I'd get that birch and
break it under her nose.

HELEN
She'd find another soon enough.

Helen perceives the passion in Jane's expression.

HELEN (CONT'D)

My father used to preach that life is too short to spend in nursing animosity.

JANE

At my aunt's house I was solitary and despised. She thought I could do without one bit of love or kindness but how can we live so?

HELEN

You are loved...

Helen, compassionate, beckons Jane to sit with her.

HELEN (CONT'D)

There is an invisible world all around you, a kingdom of spirits commissioned to guard you. Do you not see them?

Jane looks through the air for them, intrigued.

34

INT. DAY. LOWOOD SCHOOL - THE HALL.

34

Snow is falling outside the window. The afternoon's lessons are in progress. The girls are divided into groups. Madame Pierrot is teaching French verbs. The younger girls repeat Etre in a motley chant.

Mr Brocklehurst is watching, approving. Miss Scatcherd's shrill voice suddenly pierces the calm.

MISS SCATCHERD

Burns! I will not have you before me in that attitude. Fetch the birch.

Jane stands involuntarily, letting her slate fall. It breaks on the floor. Brocklehurst's eyes land on her.

BROCKLEHURST

The new girl. Step forward, Jane Eyre.

Jane steps forward.

BROCKLEHURST (CONT'D)

Bring forth that stool. Place the child upon it.

Jane is lifted on to the stool. She finds herself suddenly the tallest in the room, looking down even on Brocklehurst. He is in deadly earnest.

BROCKLEHURST (CONT'D)

It is my duty to warn you about this girl. Who would have thought that the evil one had already found a servant and an agent in her?

We see the look of frustration on Miss Temple's face.

BROCKLEHURST (CONT'D)

You must be on guard against her. For this girl... is a liar!

Jane burns with injustice. A terrible shame overcomes her. But she meets Helen's eye. She remembers the lesson of fortitude. She remembers the spirits who guard her. As Brocklehurst continues, she gathers strength.

BROCKLEHURST (CONT'D)

This is the pedestal of infamy - and you must remain upon it all day long. You'll have no food or drink, for you must learn how barren is the life of the sinner. Children, I exhort you to shun her, exclude her, shut her out from this day forth. Withhold the hand of friendship and deny your love to Jane Eyre, the liar.

34A INT. DAY. LOWOOD - THE HALL - LATER.

34A

The sun is setting. The girls are filing past the small figure of Jane with their meagre suppers. She is still high on her stool. Her exhaustion is beginning to break her.

As Helen Burns passes her, she pushes a piece of bread into Jane's hand. This tiny act of kindness brings the tears welling up in Jane's eyes.

35 DELETED.

35

36 DELETED.

36

37 INT. NIGHT. LOWOOD - SANITARIUM HALL.

37

Jane opens the door. In a small bed lies Helen Burns. A candle is set on a table at her side.

JANE

Helen.

HELEN

Is it you, Jane?

Jane takes Helen's hand.

HELEN (CONT'D)

You're freezing. Your little feet are bare. Come into bed and cover yourself.

Jane climbs into bed next to Helen. For a moment they just hold each other.

HELEN (CONT'D)

I am happy, Jane. I'm going home.

JANE

Back to your father?

HELEN

To my last home, where all is light. I am going to God.

Jane is devastated.

HELEN (CONT'D)

Don't be sad. You have a passion for living, Jane. And one day you will come to the region of bliss...

Jane cannot articulate her distress at Helen's words.

HELEN (CONT'D)

I could sleep now. Don't leave me. I like to have you near.

JANE

I will not leave you, Helen.

Helen kisses Jane.

JANE (CONT'D)

No one shall take me from you.

Jane, still asleep, has her small arms around Helen, as if fiercely protecting her. Helen is dead, her eyes open staring at Jane. Miss Temple lifts Jane away. As she does so, Jane wakes.

MISS TEMPLE

Jane...

We see the shock of realisation begin to form on her face. The waking horror that Helen is gone.

MARY (V.O.)

Jane?

39

INT. DAY. MOOR HOUSE - THE PARLOUR.

39

Jane is staring out at the Autumn rain. She surreptitiously wipes her tears away and smiles up at Mary.

JANE

Have you something for me to do?

MARY

You're doing something already. May I see?

Jane hands her the book. She has sketched Helen; her tentative smile.

Mary turns the page; Bessie.

MARY (CONT'D)

These are wonderful...

The next page shows a sketch of St John Rivers. Mary gasps in delight. She takes the book straight to St John, who is diligently working at his desk.

MARY (CONT'D)

St John -

JANE

No, Mary, please -

MARY

See how skilled Jane is. Better than any drawing master.

St John looks at the sketch of himself. He is quite taken aback. He looks over at Jane, who is quite embarrassed.

ST JOHN

Is this how you perceive me, Miss Elliott?

Jane doesn't know how to reply. For a moment, St John seems to be weighing up whether to be insulted.

ST JOHN (CONT'D)
Well. How fierce I am.

40 DELETED. 40

41 EXT. DAY. MOOR HOUSE. 41

St John and Jane are seeing Diana and Mary on to a trap. They watch until it disappears.

JANE
Mr Rivers? I wondered if you had yet heard of any work that I could do...

ST JOHN
(still watching the coach)
I found you a situation some time ago but I've delayed telling you because the work is lowly and I fear you'll scorn it.

JANE
I shan't mind what I do.

St John starts walking.

ST JOHN
When I took over the parish two years ago it had no school. I opened one for boys; I now intend to open one for girls. The school mistress will have a cottage paid for by benefactors and she'll receive fifteen pounds a year. You can see how humble, how ignoble it is.

On the contrary, Jane is deeply gratified.

JANE
Mr Rivers, thank you. I accept.

ST JOHN
But you comprehend me? It's a village school - cottagers daughters. What will you do with all your fine accomplishments?

JANE
I'll save them until they're wanted. They will keep.

St John watches as Jane walks on. He is impressed.

42 INT. NIGHT. MORTON - JANE'S COTTAGE. 42

Jane is sweeping with a broom through her tiny cottage, from the whitewashed bedroom with its single bed, into the parlour with its tiny fireplace. St John is laying a fire. She considers him as he works, intent on his task. He feels her gaze. Their eyes briefly meet.

Jane immediately opens the door and goes outside. St John watches her exit. There is an interest in his gaze, as if she is a mystery he must solve.

43 INT. NIGHT. MORTON - JANE'S COTTAGE. 43

St John is putting his coat on.

ST JOHN
You'll be quite alone here.

JANE
I'm not afraid of solitude.

St John's look is questioning her bravado.

JANE (CONT'D)
This is my first home - where I am
neither dependent nor subordinate to
anyone. Thank you, Mr St John.

He notices her use of his Christian name.

ST JOHN
It is small and plain, as I told you.

JANE
Then it'll suit me very well.

St John nods, almost - but not quite - able to return her smile. Jane watches him walk away. With him goes all companionship.

Jane turns around in the small space, alone.

44 INT/EXT. LOWOOD - THE THRESHOLD. 44

Jane is now an adult. A group of small girls are looking up at her.

GIRLS
Goodbye, Miss Eyre.

CUT TO:

Miss Scatcherd is at the door. Jane looks at her, trying to muster her forgiveness. No words come.

JANE

Goodbye.

45 EXT. NIGHT. THORNFIELD - THE GROUNDS. 45

Winter trees all around. Jane is passenger on a cart, being driven over a bridge. A great house silhouetted on the horizon, the battlemented roof we have seen in scene one.

Jane looks at the driver, John, a black Caribbean man of fifty five, dressed against the cold in a cap and scarf. She peers at him, fascinated at his taciturn incongruity.

CUT TO:

The cart approaches the dark bulk of the house. A church bell starts tolling the hour. John slows to a halt.

JOHN

Thornfield.

Only two small windows are lit. Jane looks at them, full of misgivings. Holding the lantern, he helps her down and opens a large wooden door, the side entrance to the house.

46 INT. NIGHT. THORNFIELD - KITCHEN. CONTINUOUS 46

We are immersed in darkness, a small point of light appears, a candle, held by a black clad figure, Mrs Fairfax. She smiles at Jane.

MRS FAIRFAX

How do you do, my dear?

JANE

Are you Mrs Fairfax?

MRS FAIRFAX

Indeed I am.

46A INT. NIGHT. THORNFIELD - MRS FAIRFAX'S PARLOUR. 46A

Mrs Fairfax is leading Jane in.

MRS FAIRFAX

What a tedious journey you must have had. John is quite the slowest driver in the county. Your poor hands must be numb; here.

Mrs Fairfax undoes the ribbon on Jane's bonnet. Jane is taken aback, unused to motherliness of any kind.

MRS FAIRFAX (CONT'D)

My goodness... How young you are.

JANE

I'm eighteen. I've been teaching at Lowood for two years.

MRS FAIRFAX

Of course you have... I'm sure we're very lucky to have you. Leah, would you ask Martha to make a little hot port and cut a sandwich or two.

Leah eyes Jane with great curiosity. She hurries away.

MRS FAIRFAX (CONT'D)

Draw nearer the fire. John is taking your trunk up to your room.

She moves her abandoned knitting aside and gestures for Jane to sit.

MRS FAIRFAX (CONT'D)

I've put you at the back of the house; I hope you don't mind. The rooms at the front have much finer furniture but they're so gloomy and solitary I think.

Jane can't help noticing that every surface is covered in lace, embroidery, or fine crochet. The whole room is an advertisement for Mrs Fairfax's skill at handicrafts - and testament to the hours she has spent alone.

MRS FAIRFAX (CONT'D)

I'm so glad you are come. To be sure this is a grand old house but I must confess that in winter one can feel a little dreary and alone. Leah is a very nice girl and John and Martha good people too, but they are servants - and one cannot talk to them on terms of equality.

46B

INT. NIGHT. THORNFIELD - THE GREAT HALL.

46B

Mrs Fairfax leads Jane through the great hall, lit only by a candle. Jane can perceive grandeur looming out of the darkness; a richly carved Jacobean fireplace, heavy drapes, ancient tapestries, the head of a stag. Very gloomy, eerie. Her breath is vapourising in the cold.

JANE

Am I meeting Miss Fairfax tonight?

MRS FAIRFAX

Who?

JANE

Miss Fairfax - my pupil?

MRS FAIRFAX

You mean Miss Varens; Mr Rochester's ward. She is to be your pupil.

JANE

Who's Mr Rochester?

MRS FAIRFAX

Why, the owner of Thornfield. Mr Edward Fairfax Rochester.

JANE

I thought Thornfield Hall belonged to you.

MRS FAIRFAX

(bursting into laughter)

Oh bless you child, what an idea. To me? I am only the housekeeper.

JANE

Forgive me -

MRS FAIRFAX

There is a distant connection between Mr Rochester and I - his mother was a Fairfax - but I'd never presume on it. Heavens, me, owner of Thornfield?

Her laughter fills the darkness. A bashful smile is playing on Jane's lips. Mrs Fairfax is beginning to thaw her. They move on.

47 INT. NIGHT. THORNFIELD - STAIRCASE / CORRIDOR / THE GALLERY.7

Mrs Fairfax turns up a wooden staircase. Leaded windows reflect the candlelight.

MRS FAIRFAX

We shall have a cheerful house this winter...

Light is thrown on portraits of long dead ancestors. Mrs Fairfax is as warm as the house is cold.

MRS FAIRFAX (CONT'D)

With Miss Varens here - and with you -
we'll have quite a merry time of it.

Dark heavy drapes, Jane sees another striking portrait. A dark, voluptuous woman in an 18th Century gown, ruby lipped, one full breast exposed. Jane glances away, taken aback by the woman's bold expression and her nakedness.

MRS FAIRFAX (CONT'D)

I'm sure that last winter - and what a severe one - if it didn't rain it snowed and if it didn't snow it blew - last winter I declare that not a soul came to the house from November to February.

48 INT. NIGHT. THORNFIELD - GALLERY / JANE'S BEDROOM. 48

Mrs Fairfax leads Jane through the wood-panelled darkness.

MRS FAIRFAX

I got quite melancholy night after night alone. When spring finally came I thought it a great relief that I hadn't gone distracted.

She bursts into peals of laughter.

MRS FAIRFAX (CONT'D)

Here. I've had Martha lay a fire.

She opens the door to a small but delightful room. Jane looks in: a fire burning, a soft quilt, pale chintz curtains - and a bright lamp. She is utterly speechless.

MRS FAIRFAX (CONT'D)

I hope you will be comfortable.

Jane smiles her thanks. Mrs Fairfax can see how affected she is - and how hard she is trying to button it down.

49 INT. NEXT MORNING. THORNFIELD - JANE'S BEDROOM. 49

Jane, hair loose, opens the curtains. Her fire has been lit. She draws her breath in at the sight of the grounds. Her rag doll is on her bed, shabby and worn as a miniature scarecrow.

Jane pins her hair into its close, neat style. She straightens her belongings on the dresser: a brush, a comb, a brooch. She looks at herself in the glass, wondering what she'll become.

50 INT. DAY. THORNFIELD - THE GREAT HALL.

50

Jane enters a magnificent room; moulded ceilings, panelled walls, crimson couches and ottomans, Turkish carpets; a general blending of snow and fire. The room is cold, her breath makes vapour. Mrs Fairfax is dusting ornaments of ruby red Bohemian glass on the windowsill. Leah helps her.

JANE

I've never seen such an ancient old house. How beautifully you preserve it.

This pleases Mrs Fairfax. Jane shivers. Mrs Fairfax notices how cold she is.

MRS FAIRFAX

Mr Rochester's visits are always unexpected. He doesn't like to arrive and find everything all swathed up, so I keep it in constant readiness. Now, come and meet Miss Varens. Did I mention she was French?

51 INT. DAY. THORNFIELD - THE LIBRARY.

51

Adele Varens, an exquisitely dressed child of eight, is chatting animatedly to Jane and Mrs Fairfax. At her side is Sophie, her nurse - a desperately shy and lonely girl.

ADELE

Sophie a pleure car personne ne nous comprend. Personne ne peut nous parler a part Mr. Rochester mais il est parti.

(Translation: Sophie has been crying because no one understands. Nobody can speak to us except for Mr Rochester and he has gone away).

SOPHIE

(Shushing her)

Adele...

Jane looks more closely at Sophie; pretty, but desperately lonely and unhappy. She cannot meet Jane's eye.

MRS FAIRFAX

Would you ask her about her parents? Mr Rochester's neglected to tell me anything about her.

JANE

Ou vivais-tu Adele, avant de venir a
Thornfield.
*(Translation: Where did you live
Adele, before you came to Thornfield?)*

ADELE

Avec Maman, mais elle est avec la
Sainte Vierge maintenant...
*(Translation: With Maman - but she is
gone to the Holy Virgin now).*

JANE

Her mother has passed away.

ADELE

Maman m'apprenait a danser et a reciter
des poemes...
*(Translation: Maman used to teach me to
dance and say verses).* Elle me laissait
toujours m'asseoir sur les genoux des
monsieurs qui venaient la visiter, et
chanter pour eux. Puis-je chanter pour
toi?
*(Translation: When gentlemen came to
see her I used sit on their knees and
sing. May I sing for you now)?*

JANE

Ce serait ravissant.
*(Translation: Well - that would be
lovely).*
(To Mrs Fairfax)
Adele is going to show us her
accomplishments.

Adele adopts a lovelorn pose. She sings an operetta song; a
forsaken lady plotting vengeance on her lover. Her high voice
warbles with pretended emotion. The effect is rather weird.
Jane and Mrs Fairfax watch, open-mouthed.

MRS FAIRFAX

How very French...

52

INT. NIGHT. THORNFIELD - MRS FAIRFAX'S PARLOUR.

52

Jane has laid out a large atlas, it nearly covers the table.
Adele kneeling on it, head leaning on her hands. She is
tracing round the continents with her finger. She is trying
to name countries in English, and humming a strange tune.

Mrs Fairfax is finishing a shawl, deep in a reverie.

MRS FAIRFAX

Sometimes, when I am sitting alone
it's seemed to me more than once that
my dear husband, who died years since,
has come in and sat down beside me. I
have even heard him call me by my
name, just as he used to - Alice.

A dainty clock starts to chime. Mrs Fairfax is recalled to
the present, embarrassed to have revealed herself. Jane is
looking at her with compassion.

Mrs Fairfax shakes out the finished shawl and puts it round
Jane's shoulders, departing before Jane can protest.

MRS FAIRFAX (CONT'D)

Here. For you.

Jane is delighted at the kindness of the gift.

53

INT. DAY. THORNFIELD - THE LIBRARY.

53

Adele is playing with a doll's house; a model of Thornfield.
Jane has made tiny labels in English that Adele is putting on
the furniture. The dolls house is very old, as if children a
century ago once played with it. Jane is playing with one of
the little figures; a maid. In her other hand, is a girl.

JANE

'Oh do not go,' begged her maid, 'For
the gytrash roams these hills...'

ADELE

Qu'est-ce?
(*Translation: What's that?*)

JANE

A spirit of the North that lies in
wait for travellers. It tenants the
carcasses of beasts; possesses horses,
wolves, and great dogs. You know it
only by its eyes, which burn as red as
coals and if one should chance upon
you -

ADELE

Quoi? Qu'est-ce qu'il fera?
(*Translation: What? What will it do?*)

Jane sees that she has scared Adele.

JANE

Nothing. A mere story.

Sophie enters with drinks and biscuits for Jane and Adele.
Adele speaks confidentially to Jane.

ADELE

Sophie told me of a lady who wanders
here at night. Sometimes we hear:

Adele impersonates ghostly breathing.

ADELE (CONT'D)

We lock our door because if she gets
in she bites you with her teeth and
sucks the blood.

Jane blinks, taken aback. She looks disapprovingly at Sophie.

JANE

What nonsense.

54	DELETED.	54
55	DELETED.	55
56	DELETED.	56
57	DELETED.	57
58	INT. DUSK. THORNFIELD - THE LONG GALLERY.	58

Jane is watching the sun set over the snow. She looks up at
the cawing rooks - and down at the view; a darkening land of
ice. Mrs Fairfax approaches her.

MRS FAIRFAX

Whatever brings you up here? I've
been waiting to pour our tea.

JANE

I'm not in need of tea, thank you.

Mrs Fairfax approaches, concerned.

MRS FAIRFAX

It's a quiet life, isn't it? This
isolated house; a still doom for a
young woman...

Jane looks out at the view once more.

JANE

I wish a woman could have action in her life, like a man. It agitates me to pain that the sky-line over there is ever our limit. I long sometimes for a power of vision that would overpass it. If I could behold all I imagine... I've never seen a city, never spoken with men. And I fear my whole life will pass...

Jane brushes her ideas away. Mrs Fairfax puts on a practical face, the moment of intimacy has gone.

MRS FAIRFAX

Now, exercise and fresh air; great cures for anything, they say. I have some letters to post. Will you take them?

59 EXT. DUSK. A FROZEN MEADOW. 59

Jane is walking with purpose, carrying a bundle of letters. The moon is rising, giving the frost a ghostly light.

60 EXT. DUSK. A FROZEN WOOD. 60

A brook runs close to the path; half frozen. It's slow trickle is the only sound to be heard. Jane moves slowly, acutely aware of everything around her.

A pheasant suddenly files up from undergrowth right by her feet. The noise and the fluster of its wings startle her. She laughs at herself - and enters the darkening wood.

She peers into the shadows beneath the trees.

Further on, the brook has frozen right across the path. Jane slips on it as she passes. The noise of her feet echoes. She steadies herself.

She hears a sound like the beating of wings. The blood is rushing through her ears. She sees the figure of a great dog - which glides past her so close it almost knocks her off her feet. The beating is loud; not wings she realises, but the rush of an approaching horse. It is almost on top of her before she can move. Her shocked, pale face, her black garments startle both horse and rider.

The rider gets the horse under control and continues, only to have his horse slip on the ice. Both man and horse fall with a crash.

The dog begins to bark, until the hills echo with the sound. The horse is on one side; the man is lying, trapped beneath it on the ice; Edward Fairfax Rochester.

ROCHESTER
Hellfire. Damnation. Up, you cursed
beast!

Jane is confounded.

Rochester stares at her; a tiny black figure, the low moon behind her.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)
Stand back.

With much stamping and clattering, the horse clambers to its feet. Rochester tries to stand himself. His ankle will bear no weight. He lets out an involuntary cry. It echoes.

JANE
Are you injured, sir? May I be of some
help?

Rochester looks at her once more. Jane now has the moon on her face. She begins to look less like a phantom and more like a girl.

ROCHESTER
Where did you come from?

JANE
Just below.

ROCHESTER
Below?

JANE
At Thornfield Hall. I am the
governess.

ROCHESTER
(A slow smile)
The governess...

JANE
I'm on my way to post a letter. Can I
fetch someone to help?

ROCHESTER
You may help me yourself. Get hold of
his bridle and lead him to me.

Jane looks at the horse; huge, trampling, nervous. Rochester is amused.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

If you would be so kind...

Jane tries to catch the bridle but the horse rears up. She falls on the ice. Rochester laughs. She picks herself up.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

It would be easier to bring me to the horse. Come here.

Jane resists the imperious tone.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

I must beg of you to please come here, Miss Governess.

Jane approaches. Rochester instantly leans all his weight on her. She almost crumples under it; the first time she has ever touched and been touched by a man. She holds him up. And walks him closer to his horse.

Rochester calms it. He springs into the saddle, grimacing as he wrenches his sprain.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

Make haste with your letter.

(He bows.)

For who knows what might lurk in these dark woods...

Rochester grins widely, then spurs his horse. Jane steps back. The horse bounds away, the dog rushing in its traces. She watches until they have gone, her face energised with the intensity of the encounter.

61 I/E. NIGHT. THORNFIELD - THE FRONT ENTRANCE/ GREAT HALL. 61

Jane runs up to the front door. She pushes it open. To her amazement, there is a fire burning in the stone fireplace. The whole hall is lit. Mrs Fairfax is approaching, followed by Leah.

MRS FAIRFAX

Mr Rochester is here.

JANE

Oh?

MRS FAIRFAX

Go and change your frock; he wishes to meet you. Leah, take her cloak.

JANE

I have to change?

MRS FAIRFAX

Oh yes - I always dress for the evening when Mr Rochester is here.

JANE

But all my dresses are the same.

MRS FAIRFAX

(Desperately)

You must have one that is better? He's in a terrible humour; his horse fell in Hay lane and his ankle is sprained. He's had the doctor this half hour. Where have you been??

Mrs Fairfax and Leah anxiously hurry away. Jane finds herself staring at the great black dog. She smooths her dress.

62

INT. NIGHT. THORNFIELD - ROCHESTER'S STUDY.

62

Jane enters. Rochester is in front of a superb fire - one foot bandaged and supported on a stool. Pilot goes to his feet - and joins Adele, who is gazing adoringly at him.

ADELE

Monsieur, voici mademoiselle.
(*Translation: Here is mademoiselle, sir*).

ROCHESTER

(Without looking up)

Let her sit.

He is looking through Jane's portfolio of sketches and watercolours. She approaches feeling utterly exposed - as if her diary is being read. She sits.

Mrs Fairfax and Leah return with tea. Mrs Fairfax quietly fusses. Rochester continues to study Jane's work.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

I've examined Adele and I find you've taken great pains with her. She's not bright, she has no talents - yet in a short time she's improved.

Adele is gazing at him uncomprehending.

JANE

Thank you, Mr Rochester.

ROCHESTER

You've been resident here three months?

JANE

Yes, sir.

ROCHESTER

(finally looking up)

And from whence do you hail; what's your tale of woe?

JANE

Pardon?

ROCHESTER

All governesses have a tale of woe; what's yours?

JANE

(Slightly insulted)

I was brought up by my Aunt, Mrs Reed of Gateshead, in a house even finer than this. I then attended Lowood school where I received as good an education as I could hope for. I have no tale of woe, sir.

ROCHESTER

Where are your parents?

JANE

Dead.

ROCHESTER

Do you remember them?

JANE

No.

ROCHESTER

And why are you not with Mrs Reed of Gateshead now?

JANE

She cast me off, sir.

ROCHESTER

Why?

JANE

Because I was burdensome and she disliked me.

ROCHESTER

Lowood; that's a charity school, isn't it?

JANE

Yes.

ROCHESTER

How long did you survive there?

JANE

Eight years.

ROCHESTER

No tale of woe...

MRS FAIRFAX

(placing his tea)

I daily thank providence for sending us Miss Eyre. She's an invaluable -

ROCHESTER

Don't trouble yourself to give her a character. I'll judge for myself. I have her to thank for this sprain.

MRS FAIRFAX

Sir?

ROCHESTER

You bewitched my horse.

For a second Mrs Fairfax thinks Rochester might be addressing her. But he is giving Jane a piercing stare. Mrs Fairfax looks at Jane, bewildered.

JANE

I did not.

ROCHESTER

Were you waiting for your people on that lane?

JANE

I have no people, sir.

ROCHESTER

I mean for the imps and elves and the little green men.

JANE

The sad truth is they are all gone. Your land is neither wild nor savage enough for them.

ROCHESTER

You lie.

Mrs Fairfax puts her tea down, supremely perplexed by this line of conversation. Rochester lifts one of Jane's watercolours.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

Adele brought me these; are they yours?

JANE

Yes sir.

A swollen sea. A cormorant, a golden bracelet held in its beak. A girl's arm coming out of the water, white and deathly, her drowned figure underneath.

ROCHESTER

Where did you get your copies?

JANE

Out of my head.

ROCHESTER

That head I now see on your shoulders?

JANE

Yes sir.

He turns to the next. The top of a hill. An expanse of twilight sky. Rising up, a girl's shape, her forehead crowned with a star, red hair flowing; Helen Burns.

ROCHESTER

Who's this?

JANE

The evening star.

Rochester gives her a direct gaze. He looks at the next. A dark turbanned figure with a wreath of white flame above its head. Mrs Fairfax is cutting a dark cake.

ROCHESTER

Where you happy when you painted these?

Mrs Fairfax sets the cake out, glancing at Jane's gloomy water colours. She doesn't like them.

JANE

Yes. To paint is one of the keenest pleasures I have ever known.

ROCHESTER

Then your pleasures have been few... Are you satisfied with them?

JANE

Far from it. I imagine things I'm powerless to execute.

ROCHESTER

Not quite. You've secured the shadow of your thoughts. Yet the drawings are, for a schoolgirl... peculiar.

Jane has no reply. Rochester looks at her for longer than is comfortable. Then he abruptly dismisses her.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

Goodnight.

63

INT. DAY. THORNFIELD - THE LIBRARY

63

Mrs Fairfax is saying grace over lunch with Jane and Adele.

MRS FAIRFAX

Most merciful Father, we give thee humble thanks for this, thy special bounty. Amen.

JANE & ADELE

Amen.

They are about to tuck in when suddenly piano music strikes up, furiously played. It is the fiery kind of music one would normally hear in a shebeen, not in a quiet country manor. Adele swings round in her chair, grinning..

MRS FAIRFAX

Sit nicely please, Adele.

Neither Mrs Fairfax nor Jane knows what to make of the music. Rochester fills the house with it - as if he wants to impress his life and presence upon it. Mrs Fairfax is beginning to find it oppressive. Then it abruptly stops.

ADELE

Tonight I will have my cadeaux. He always bring me a cadeaux. Perhaps he bring you one too.

JANE

A present Adele and no, he will not.

Mrs Fairfax breathes a sigh of relief, her peace restored. She lifts her fork to her mouth when the music starts up again. Jane finds it infectious. Despite herself, a smile begins to break through. The piece climbs to a frenzied, overdone ending, then suddenly stops mid-note.

JANE (CONT'D)

He is very abrupt and changeful...

Footsteps pass, a door swings open and Rochester passes the window, stepping out into the cold grounds. Adele flies to the window to watch him.

JANE (CONT'D)

What manner of man is he?

Outside, Rochester is throwing a stick for Pilot.

MRS FAIRFAX

He's a very good master. And fine company too - when he's in a good humour.

64 DAY. THORNFIELD - THE GROUNDS.

64

Jane is playing battledore and shuttlecock with Adele. Her playing is full of energy, very free. Her cheeks look almost rosy. It is spring. The gardener and his boy are hard at work. Rochester is with them. Together they are lifting a huge root out of the ground.

Jane stares at Rochester, losing her concentration.

65 INT. NIGHT. THORNFIELD - ROCHESTER'S STUDY.

65

Rochester sits at the piano, brooding. He keeps playing the same augmented fourth over and over. A dismal sound. He sighs deeply; anything but a good humour. Jane finds herself staring at him. Mrs Fairfax hands him tea, with some trepidation.

ROCHESTER

Keep it.

He goes to pour himself a drink. He stands at the mantelpiece, staring into the fire. Jane looks questioningly at Mrs Fairfax. Mrs Fairfax looks back, warning her to remain silent.

Rochester knocks the drink back. At that moment Adele enters with Sophie. A ribboned box sits on the table.

ADELE

Ma boite, ma boite!
(*Translation: My box! My box!*)

Her excitement grates on Rochester's nerves.

ROCHESTER

Take it away and disembowel it.

ADELE

Oh Ciel! Que c'est beau! (*Translation:
Oh Heavens! It is so beautiful!*)

Adele is already pulling a pink satin dress out of the box.

ROCHESTER

Miss Eyre.

He gestures to a chair by the fire, no warmth in his expression. Jane sits.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

I'm not fond of children.

(BEAT).

Nor do I particularly enjoy simple-minded old ladies.

This is loud enough for Mrs Fairfax to hear.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

But you might suit me - if you would.

JANE

How, sir?

ROCHESTER

By distracting me from the mire of my thoughts.

Adele, irrepressible, runs across the room embracing the dress. She drops on one knee at Rochester's feet.

ADELE

Monsieur, je vous remercie mille fois de votre bonte...

(*Translation: Sir, I thank you ever so much for your generosity...*)

She looks up, seeking his approval.

ADELE (CONT'D)

That is how Maman used to say...

ROCHESTER

Precisely. And that's how she charmed my English gold out of my English pocket.

MRS FAIRFAX

Let's try it on, shall we?

Adele skips off with a mortified Mrs Fairfax and Sophie. Rochester notices how keenly Jane is observing him. He waits a beat before asking...

ROCHESTER

Your gaze is very direct, Miss Eyre?
D'you think me handsome?

JANE

No sir.

Rochester laughs.

ROCHESTER

What fault do you find with me? I have
all my limbs and features -

JANE

I beg your pardon. I ought to have
replied that beauty is of little
consequence -

ROCHESTER

You're blushing Miss Eyre. And though
you're not pretty any more than I am
handsome, I must say it becomes you...
And now I see you're fascinated by the
flowers on the rug.

Jane senses his mockery.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

Come, speak to me.
The fact is, Miss Eyre, I'd like to
draw you out. You have rather the look
of another world and I don't wish to
treat you as inferior.

JANE

Yet you'd command me to speak?

ROCHESTER

Are you very hurt by my tone of
command?

Jane smiles.

JANE

There are few masters who'd trouble to
enquire whether their paid
subordinates were hurt by their
commands.

ROCHESTER

Paid subordinate... I'd forgotten the salary. Well on that mercenary ground, will you consent to speak as my equal - without thinking that the request arises from insolence?

JANE

I'd never mistake informality for insolence, sir. One, I rather like. The other, nothing free born should ever submit to -

ROCHESTER

Humbug -

JANE

Even for a salary.

ROCHESTER

Most free-born things would submit to anything for a salary. But I mentally shake hands with you for your answer. Not three in three thousand schoolgirl governesses would have answered me as you've just done.

JANE

Then you've not spent much time in our company, sir. I'm the same plain kind of bird as all the rest, with my common tale of woe.

ROCHESTER

I envy you.

JANE

How?

ROCHESTER

Your openness, your unpolluted mind. If I were eighteen I think we truly would be equals. Nature meant me to be a good man but as you see, I am not so.

JANE

Are you a villain then, sir?

ROCHESTER

I'm a trite commonplace sinner. When I was your age, fate dealt me a blow. Dread remorse, Miss Eyre. It is the poison of life.

Rochester takes in her open, puzzled face.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

And since happiness is denied me, I've
a right to get pleasure in its stead.
And I will get it, cost what it may.

JANE

Then you'll degenerate still more.

ROCHESTER

But, Miss Eyre, if the pleasure I was
seeking was sweet and fresh; if it was
an inspiration; if it wore the robes
of an angel of light... what then?

JANE

To speak truth, I don't understand you
at all. I fear the conversation has
got out of my depth.

Rochester laughs.

ROCHESTER

You're afraid of me.

JANE

I'm not afraid. I've simply no wish to
talk nonsense.

ROCHESTER

Do you never laugh, Miss Eyre?

This question cuts Jane to the quick.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

Only rarely, perhaps. But you're not
naturally austere, any more than I'm
naturally vicious. I can see in you the
glance of a curious sort of bird
through the close set bars of a cage: a
vivid, restless captive. Were it but
free, it would soar. Cloud high.

Jane opens her mouth to speak - but she cannot.

66. DELETED.

66.

67 INT. DUSK. THORNFIELD - GALLERY.

67

Jane is in the gallery looking intently at a picture of a
voluptuous, naked woman reclining on a bed. She studies it
with an artist's curiosity - and a girl's.

68

INT. NIGHT. THORNFIELD - JANE'S BEDROOM / CORRIDOR.

68

Jane wakes. Her curtains are open; moonlight spilling in. She hears it again; the thud from her dream. It's a knock against her door.

JANE

Who's there?

Jane gets out of bed and gingerly pulls the door open.

There is a single candle burning in its holder on the rush matting, flickering in the draft.

JANE (CONT'D)

Who's there?

Jane picks up the candle. She walks up the corridor.

Jane senses something on the air. A smell. She sees a curling wreath of grey smoke. She follows its trail through the pitch darkness. It is coming thickly from a half-open door - Rochester's chamber.

68AA

INT. NIGHT. THORNFIELD - ROCHESTER'S BEDROOM.

68AA

Jane rushes in. Rochester's bed is on fire; the hangings, the curtains, are alight. The room is full of smoke. She pulls the huge window open.

JANE

Wake up! Wake up! Sir!

Rochester is asleep. She shakes him. He stirs, stupefied by the acrid smoke. Jane takes his basin and douses him.

JANE (CONT'D)

Wake up!!

Rochester wakes.

JANE (CONT'D)

It is I, Jane Eyre, sir.

ROCHESTER

What in damnation - ?

Jane takes the ewer and throws water on the curtains. Rochester leaps out of bed, pulls the fabric from its rail and smothers the remaining flames.

They don't stop until all the flames are quenched. Smoke billows out through the window into the cold gale.

Jane becomes aware that Rochester is only half dressed. She turns away, mortified. He is pulling on a shirt.

JANE

A noise aroused me from my sleep.

ROCHESTER

What noise?

JANE

There was someone at my door. I opened it. A candle was burning there, placed on the matting.

ROCHESTER

Stay here. Don't make a sound.

Rochester gets his coat and puts it round her. He goes, taking the light. Jane looks at his ruined chamber; the blackened drapes on the four poster bed, the fireplace, the huge wardrobe. It is not unlike the red room.

Jane wraps the coat around her. Overhead, she hears a door thud to. She waits. Nothing, not a sound. She backs into an armchair. She curls up inside the coat.

CUT TO:

A gust of wind blows in through the window bringing the first light of day. Jane wraps the coat tighter. She closes her eyes, running her fingers down the lining, smelling its owner.

She looks up. Rochester is watching her.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

Say nothing about this. You're no talking fool.

JANE

But -

ROCHESTER

I'll account for this state of affairs. Say nothing.

JANE

Yes, sir.
(She takes off his coat.)

ROCHESTER

Is that how you would leave me?

Rochester is between Jane and the door. He uses her name.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

Jane... fire is a horrible death. You have saved my life. Don't walk past me as if we were strangers.

JANE

What am I to do then?

ROCHESTER

At least... take my hand.

Rochester holds out his hand. Jane takes it. Rochester wraps her hand in both of his.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

I have a pleasure in owing you my life.

JANE

There is no debt.

Rochester is looking at her small hand. She tries to inch it back. He doesn't let her. She looks up at him.

ROCHESTER

I knew you would do me good in some way. I saw it in your eyes when I first beheld you. Their expression did not strike my very inmost being so, for nothing. People talk of natural sympathies... You.

Rochester is drawing her slowly closer. Jane, disconcerted, is trying to resist.

JANE

Good night then, sir.

ROCHESTER

So you will leave me?

Jane doesn't move. Her breath is heightened. It vapourises.

JANE

I am cold.

ROCHESTER

Go.

At last, he relaxes his grip. She passes him. She goes.

68A INT. DAWN. THORNFIELD - CORRIDOR/JANE'S BEDROOM. 68A

Jane enters her room. Dawn is breaking. She is wide awake. She cannot rest. As light begins to saturate the room Jane gazes at the new day, inspired, enlivened, unquiet.

69 DELETED. 69

70 INT. DAY. THORNFIELD - THE GREAT HALL. 70

Jane peers in. The room is cold. Jane crosses it. There is no sign of Rochester. The house is once more quiet as a church. Mrs Fairfax crosses the gallery.

JANE
Has Mr Rochester not sent for us
today?

MRS FAIRFAX
Why, he's gone away. Were you not
aware? He left after breakfast.

Jane takes this piece of news like an invisible shock.

MRS FAIRFAX (CONT'D)
He's gone to The Leas, Mr Eshton's
place. I believe Blanche Ingram is
there. She's a great favourite of his.

JANE
Oh?

MRS FAIRFAX
I saw her two years ago when Mr
Rochester had a party here. The most
elegant girl. They sang a duet
together; made a lovely harmony. I was
quite surprised he didn't make a
proposal - but she has no fortune... In
every other way they'd make a splendid
match. Perhaps it's his intention now.

Mrs Fairfax has given Jane a veiled warning.

MRS FAIRFAX (CONT'D)
Of course it's far more likely he'll go
off to Europe. He often leaves without
so much as a fare-you-well and I don't
see him for a year.

71 DELETED. 71

72 INT. DAY. THORNFIELD - ROCHESTER'S ROOM. 72

Jane is at the window watching the rain hammer against it. The room has been stripped bare and scrubbed clean. All trace of its owner have gone. Desolate. Jane is having an intense emotional reaction to the loss of Rochester. As she brings a hand up to her face, we see that it is shaking.

Adele is watching her from the doorway, puzzled.

ADELE (O.S.)
Qu'avez-vous, mademoiselle?
(*Translation: What's wrong, miss?*)

Jane turns.

73 INT. DAY. THE LIBRARY. 73

With the globe, Jane teaches Adele the extent of the Empire. All the light has gone out of her eyes.

74. INT. DAY. THORNFIELD - JANE'S BEDROOM. 74.

Jane is attempting to sketch Rochester, time vanishing in the task.

75 INT. DAY. THORNFIELD - JANE'S BEDROOM. 75

Jane unlocks her door. Mrs Fairfax is on the threshold of her room, a letter in her hand.

MRS FAIRFAX
He's back tomorrow.

Jane is flushed with anticipation.

MRS FAIRFAX (CONT'D)
He gives directions to prepare all the rooms but he cannot give numbers. I'm to get more staff from the George Inn. Miss Ingram is coming!

Jane does her best to hide her disappointment. Mrs Fairfax is flustered.

MRS FAIRFAX (CONT'D)
Supplies to be got; linen, the mattresses... I'll go to the George. No, I'll tell Martha...

Jane can sense that the old lady is overwhelmed.

JANE

May I assist you, Mrs Fairfax?

Mrs Fairfax approaches Jane in a rush of gratitude.

76 INT. DAY. THORNFIELD - THE SECOND FLOOR. 76

Adele comes skidding down the newly polished gallery in her tights. Jane passes, wearing a housekeeper's apron over her dress. She throws herself into preparing the house.

77 INT. DAY. THORNFIELD - THE KITCHENS. 77

Jane sets down several bottles of wine on the kitchen table in order to dust them. The kitchen is a hive of activity - except for one lone figure sitting in a chair by the fire, smoking a pipe; Grace Poole. Martha and one of the hired under cooks are talking about her.

Jane affects not to listen, but is keenly interested. She moves a bit nearer with her work, trying to overhear.

UNDER COOK

No wonder the master relies on her -

Martha notices Jane's curious glance. She shushes the under cook. At that moment, Sophie rushes in with Adele.

SOPHIE

Ils sont la!

(Translation: They are here!)

Adele makes a bee-line for the kitchen window.

ADELE

Regardez! Regardez!

(Translation: Look! Look!)

Jane curiously looks over Adele's shoulder. From her P.O.V we can see the guests arriving, THREE carriages and a pair of horses at the head, BLANCHE and Rochester. The servants are filing out of the kitchen to greet the party. Adele follows, pushing her way through the bottleneck down the corridor.

77A INT. DAY. THORNFIELD - THE KITCHEN CORRIDOR/ENTRANCE HALL 77A

Adele flies out of the corridor into the great hall. Jane follows Mrs Fairfax, helping her to untie her apron.

Mrs Fairfax, slightly flustered, goes into the lower courtyard and organises the staff into a line to greet the guests. She stands at the head, forming herself into a picture of helpful dignity.

Jane, who has no place in the line, is unsure where to go.

77B INT/EXT. DAY. THORNFIELD - THE GREAT HALL/OUTSIDE WINDOW. 77B

Adele is at the window. Jane gravitates towards her, unable to stop herself from watching Rochester gallantly helping Blanche off her horse. They then lead the party towards the house as servants unload the carriage's luggage and supplies. Blanche is leaning on Rochester's arm, already established as first lady of the party. She is an elegant young woman, beautifully attired.

ADELE

Qu'elle est belle...

(Transaltion: She's so beautiful...)

Blanche laughs at something Rochester has said. She half smiles at Mrs Fairfax and the staff but has eyes only for him. Jane turns away trying to quell her emotions.

Rochester enters the house. Adele, hearing his voice, runs to the door.

JANE

Adele, come away.

Adele's face falls.

77C INT. DAY. THORNFIELD - THE LIBRARY. AN HOUR LATER 77C

Jane and Adele are working but neither concentrates. They are listening to the voices that surround the quiet room, to the rich life of the house. Adele's agitation grows. Jane tries to let her down gently:

JANE

Adele, he will not ask for you today.

78 DELETED. 78

79 DELETED. 79

80 DELETED. 80

81 INT. DAY. THORNFIELD - LANDING.

81

Mrs Fairfax approaches Jane and Adele in a great hurry, holding a precarious flower arrangement.

MRS FAIRFAX

Tonight. He wants you both in the drawing room after dinner.

Adele leaps up, delighted. Jane is blanched.

JANE

Not me, surely.

MRS FAIRFAX

I'm instructed to tell you that if you resist, he'll come up and get you himself.

JANE

I don't have a dress.

MRS FAIRFAX

Don't worry child; who will notice?

81A DELETED.

81A

82 INT. NIGHT. THORNFIELD - THE GREAT HALL

82

Jane is delivering Adele into the centre of the company. She has on her best dress - still very plain - and has tried something different with her hair.

ADELE

Bonjour, mesdames, monsieurs.
(*Translation: Good day.*)

Adele makes a dainty curtsy - pink frock, ringlets, lace gloves. In the midst of the crowd is Blanche.

BLANCHE

Why, what a little puppet.

Adele blissfully disappears into a moving sea of dresses.

Jane backs into a nearby window seat; always her place of refuge. Jane pulls her work on to her lap; a beaded purse. She doesn't lift her eyes from it - but she listens. Blanche arrives at Rochester's side.

BLANCHE (CONT'D)

Why don't you send her to school?

ROCHESTER

She has a governess.

Jane glances up. Rochester is turning his back to her.

BLANCHE

Poor child. I had half a dozen in my day, all detestable incubi.

LADY INGRAM

Mr Rochester, beware the governess.

BLANCHE

Mamma thinks they are generally hysterics.

LADY INGRAM

Or degenerates.

BLANCHE

It's a miracle that I survived my education.

Jane's fingers sew. Only the briefest flash of her eyes shows her mortification.

BLANCHE (CONT'D)

I remember the way Miss Wilson would scream 'You villainous girl!' And -

Rochester is moving away. Blanche sees that the subject is failing to amuse him; a momentary flash of panic.

BLANCHE (CONT'D)

Enough of the whole dreary race. We shall have music - and a new subject. Signor Eduardo, what shall it be?

She sits and starts playing a brilliant prelude on the piano. Rochester considers her.

ROCHESTER

I give you beauty...

BLANCHE

Why there's nothing new to be said. I give you back male beauty.

LADY INGRAM

Well that's my son, of course.

LORD INGRAM

Hear hear.

Blanche's effete brother is sprawled on a chaise nearby.

BLANCHE

A man should pay no heed to his looks.
(Glancing at Rochester)
He should possess only strength and
valour. Gentleman or a highwayman; his
beauty lies in his power.

ROCHESTER

So a pirate would do for you?

Blanche coyly demurs. Rochester laughs quietly. Jane is heading for the door.

83

INT. NIGHT. THORNFIELD - THE GREAT HALL/STAIRWELL

83

Jane closes the door on Blanche. She breathes in fresh air, almost nauseous. Blanche's splendid prelude drifts out.

Rochester comes into the hall from the other door. Jane instantly bends down and pretends to be tying her shoe.

ROCHESTER

Why did you leave the room?

JANE

I am tired, sir.

ROCHESTER

Why didn't you come and speak to me? I haven't seen you for weeks. It would have been normal and polite to wish me good evening.

JANE

You seemed engaged.

ROCHESTER

You look pale.

JANE

I am well.

ROCHESTER

What have you been doing while I've been away?

JANE

Teaching Adele.

ROCHESTER

You're depressed. What's the meaning of this? Your eyes full of -

Rochester catches sight of Mrs Fairfax, who is watching them with an expression of unease. Rochester barks at her.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

What is it?

MRS FAIRFAX

A gentleman is here to see you, sir...
From Spanish Town, Jamaica. And indeed
I think he must have come from some
hot place because he won't take off
his coat. Mr Richard Mason. I've put
him in the morning room.

Rochester cannot speak.

MRS FAIRFAX (CONT'D)

Have I done wrong?

ROCHESTER

Bring him to my study.

Mrs Fairfax goes. Rochester sinks on to the stairs.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

Jane - Jane. This is a blow.

Blanche's prelude trills on in the great hall. Over it, the guests' laughter. Rochester takes Jane's hand.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

If I were to go to those people and
they looked at me coldly and sneered,
then left me one by one, what would you
do? Would you go with them?

JANE

No sir. I'd stay with you.

ROCHESTER

And if they came and spat at me, what
then?

JANE

I'd turn them out of the room sir, if
I could.

ROCHESTER

And if they cast you out for it?

JANE

I'd care nothing about it.

ROCHESTER

You'd dare condemnation for my sake?

His look is intense. Jane feels out of her depth.

JANE

For the sake of any friend who deserved
it.

Rochester rapidly lets go Jane's hand as if her reserved
reply has somehow betrayed him. She follows his gaze. A gaunt
man is approaching them.

ROCHESTER

Richard.

MASON

Fairfax...

They embrace. Mason is genuinely moved as if reunited with a
much-loved older brother. Rochester is doing a fine
impression of delight.

ROCHESTER

How the devil are you?

84. DELETED. 84.

85 INT. NIGHT. THORNFIELD - JANE'S BEDROOM 85

Jane wakes to the sound of a savage, sharp shriek that seems
to split the night in two. Overhead, the sounds of a
struggle. A man cries out. Cries out again in pain and
horror. Jane hears footsteps rush past her door. She pulls on
her shawl.

Directly over head she hears a muffled voice scream for help.

A great stamp on the floor above; something falls with a
thud; the man whimpering now. Jane grabs her candle and
leaves her room.

86 INT. NIGHT. THORNFIELD - SECOND FLOOR LANDING. 86

The guests likewise are all issuing from their rooms; some
with candles, some stumbling into the dark. The gallery is
filling with terrified ladies and shocked gentlemen. Their
shadows dance grotesquely on the walls.

LADY INGRAM

Oh what is it?

BLANCHE

Who is hurt? Who screamed like that?

Rochester comes forth from the latched door at the end of the gallery, holding a candelabra. He passes Jane and orders her:

ROCHESTER

Wait.

LADY INGRAM

Where's Rochester?

ROCHESTER

I'm here, be composed.

Blanche flies towards him like a banshee. She embraces him in an affectation of fear. Rochester patiently removes her.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

A servant has had a nightmare, that's all. She's an excitable person and has taken a fit with fright.

He speaks to Blanche gently, as if she's a child. He pushes her hair aside; an intimacy that causes a pang to Jane.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

I must see you back into your rooms because until the house is settled, she can't be properly looked after.

BLANCHE

Is there anything I might do?

ROCHESTER

Miss Ingram, ladies, please return to your nests like the doves that you are. I assure you, all is well.

Blanche coyly acquiesces, using every opportunity to show off her semi-opaque nightgown. The candles flicker as the guests make their way back to their rooms. Jane too is about to go. Rochester silently gestures her to stay.

Blanche is at her door, eyes lingering on Rochester. Lady Ingram closes Blanche into her room with a loaded glance at Jane: What are her intentions?

As soon as she's gone, Rochester turns to Jane.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

Come with me.

Holding the light aloft, he heads for the third floor.

Rochester stops by a low door. He puts a key in the lock.

ROCHESTER

Be steady. I need you.

He unlocks it. A room hung with tapestries; a dark oak cabinet along one wall with portraits of the apostles on its panels. One part of the tapestry is hooked up over a hidden door - which lies open to an inner chamber. A dull, sickly light shines out.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

Get some water.

He goes to the inner chamber. A moan of anguish, of remorse greets him. Jane shudders. She fetches the ewer and bowl as Rochester locks the door.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

Here.

Rochester goes to a low day bed. Richard Mason is lying on his side, his back and all the linen soaked in blood. There is a wound to his neck, jagged, bruised and ugly; a bite. Jane controls her reaction. Rochester cuts the bloody shirt away revealing a stab wound to the back of his shoulder.

Rochester turns to Jane.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

Can you clean this?

Jane looks at the daunting mess. She begins to clean it. Rochester is taking a phial from a wooden box. He puts ten drops of crimson liquid into a tiny glass.

Mason is calming; staring at Jane with puzzlement.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

Drink Richard, it will give you the strength you lack.

MASON

Will it hurt me?

ROCHESTER

Drink!

Mason drinks. Rochester turns to Jane.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

I must go for the doctor. Sponge the blood away when it returns.

(MORE)

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

Give him water if he wants it. Do not speak to him for any reason. And Richard - on pain of death - do not speak to her.

Rochester takes the candelabra leaving only one light. He is gone. Mason is staring at Jane, receding into a trance. There is something about the pupils in his eyes that she finds chilling. She dips the sponge in the bloody water and wipes away the trickling gore.

CUT TO:

The water in the bowl is dark red, the wounds covered in strips of cloth. Low buzzing of a bluebottle. It lands on one of the dressings. Jane brushes it away, disgusted.

Mason is insensible, his eyes still open. Jane hears a deep human moan from the inner chamber.

CUT TO:

Jane hears a distant whisper. She glances at her patient; he is sleeping. She approaches the inner door and puts her ear to it.

A woman's whisper. A language unrecognisable to Jane. Some kind of incantation, maybe a prayer. It is urgent, like a warning. She listens, fearful, fascinated. She hears footsteps approach. She dashes back to the bed just as Rochester opens the door. With him is Carter, the doctor.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

How does he?

Jane has not composed herself enough to speak.

DR CARTER

He's bled a great deal.

ROCHESTER

Hurry Carter, be on alert, the sun will soon rise and he must be gone.

88 DELETED.

88

89 EXT. DAY. THORNFIELD - THE GROUNDS.

89

A carriage waits. Rochester and John lift Mason in. Carter follows. Jane hands him Mason's great coat.

MASON

Fairfax -

John drives the carriage away. For a moment Rochester doesn't move. Then he takes Jane's arm and pulls her away from the house.

ROCHESTER

That house is a dungeon.

JANE

It is a splendid mansion, sir.

Dawn light illuminates the trees. Rochester keeps walking.

ROCHESTER

It's a strange night you've passed.

JANE

Yes sir.

ROCHESTER

You showed no fear.

JANE

I was afraid. Of the inner room.

ROCHESTER

You were in no danger.

JANE

Mr Rochester, who did that violence?

ROCHESTER

I cannot tell you.

JANE

Why do you protect them?

Rochester is trying to find words. He sits, pulling Jane down next to him.

ROCHESTER

I drag through life a capital error.
Its consequence blights my existence.
For years I have sought to escape it
in bitter exile, seeking respite in
heartless, sensual pleasure.

He looks at her open, anxious face. He seems to change his mind about what to say.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

This spring, I came home heartsore and
soul-withered. And I met a gentle
stranger whose society revives me.
With her I feel I could live again in
a higher, purer way.

Jane's face falls.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

Tell me, am I justified in overleaping an obstacle of custom to attain her?

JANE

There is an obstacle?

ROCHESTER

A mere conventional impediment.

JANE

But what can it be? If you cherish an affection, Sir then fortune alone should not impede you...

ROCHESTER

Yes.

JANE

If the lady is of noble stock and she's indicated that she may reciprocate -

ROCHESTER

Jane... of whom do you think I speak?

JANE

Of Miss Ingram.

Rochester is stunned at her miscomprehension.

ROCHESTER

But I am asking what Jane Eyre would do to secure my happiness?

JANE

I would do anything for you, sir. Anything that was right.

ROCHESTER

(Gently)

Yes. And if I ever bid you do what was not right, you'd turn to me and say 'No sir, that's impossible. I cannot do it, because it is wrong.' And you'd gaze at me with that face, there; immutable as a fixed star. Perhaps the greatest danger to me, is you...

JANE

I could never harm you.

ROCHESTER

You transfix me quite.

He roughly pulls the head of a flower as if the sight of it pains him. He puts it in Jane's hair.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

I feel I can speak to you now of my lovely one, for you have met her and you know her. She's a rare one, isn't she? Fresh and healthy, without soil or taint. I'm sure she'll regenerate me with a vengeance.

The gardener appears. Jane and Rochester look at the clock. Jane suddenly feels vulnerable in her night attire. She goes.

90 EXT. DAY. THORNFIELD - AN outhouse. 90

Jane pulls the flower out of her hair. She turns it in her fingers, bruising it.

91 INT. DAY. THORNFIELD - THE GARDEN. 91

Jane approaches with an open letter in her hands. Through the garden door she sees Rochester and Blanche playing a game where they are trying to keep a feather in the air by blowing it. Blanche's maid is in attendance some distance away.

The feather falls. Rochester picks it up. Gallantly, on one knee, he holds it out to Blanche. She reaches out her hand for it, full of expectation. Jane cannot bear to witness his proposal.

JANE

Excuse me, sir.

Blanche looks at Jane with a flash of rage.

BLANCHE

Does that creeping creature want you?

92 INT. DAY. THORNFIELD - ROCHESTER'S STUDY. 92

Rochester has followed Jane inside.

JANE

Please may I have a leave of absence, sir?

ROCHESTER

What to do?

Jane shows him the letter.

JANE

This is from my old nurse, Bessie. She says my cousin John Reed is dead. He squandered his fortune and he has committed suicide. The news has so shocked my aunt, that it's brought on a stroke.

ROCHESTER

The aunt who cast you out?

JANE

She's been asking for me. I parted from her badly and I can't neglect her wishes now.

ROCHESTER

Promise me you won't stay long.

He is about to go.

JANE

Mr Rochester, I've had no wages yet... I need funds for my journey.

Rochester softens.

ROCHESTER

How much do you have in all the world, Jane?

Jane shows him a few coins. He smiles.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

How much do I owe you?

JANE

Thirty pounds.

Rochester goes to his desk, takes out some notes.

ROCHESTER

Here's fifty.

JANE

That's too much.

ROCHESTER

Take your wages, Jane.

JANE

I cannot.

ROCHESTER

Is it wrong?

Jane nods.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

Then I only have ten.

She takes it.

JANE

Now you owe me.

ROCHESTER

Indeed I do. Come back for it soon.
Meantime I shall safeguard it, here.

He puts the spare note in his breast pocket.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

Do you trust me to keep it?

JANE

Not a whit, sir. You are not to be
trusted at all.

93 INT. DAY. GATESHEAD - THE MORNING ROOM. 93

A maid shows Jane in. Jane's cousins, Eliza and Georgiana, dressed in mourning, stare at her with cold curiosity.

94 INT. DAY. GATESHEAD - MRS REED'S BEDROOM 94

A nurse is opening the curtains. Mrs Reed blinks in the daylight. She looks very near death.

JANE

Aunt Reed? It is Jane Eyre.

Mrs Reed, with an effort, pulls her hand away from Jane's.

MRS REED

No one knows the trouble I have with
that child. Such a burden. Left on my
hands. Speaking to me like a fiend.

JANE

Why do you hate her so?

Mrs Reed gazes at her.

MRS REED

Who are you?

JANE
I am Jane Eyre.

MRS REED
You. Is there no one in the room?

JANE
We are alone.

MRS REED
I've twice done you wrong. I broke the
vow I made to Reed -

JANE
Please, don't think of it -

MRS REED
I am dying; I must get it out!

Mrs Reed indicates a box on her bedside table.

MRS REED (CONT'D)
Open that box. Take out the letter.
Read it.

Jane obeys. She reads the letter aloud.

JANE
'Madam, will you have the goodness to
send me the address of my niece, Jane
Eyre. I desire her to come to me at
Madeira. Fortune has blessed my
endeavours and as I am childless I wish
to adopt her and bequeath her at my
death whatever I may have to leave.
Yours, John Eyre, Madeira.'

Jane is stunned.

JANE (CONT'D)
This is dated three years ago. Why did
I never hear of it?

MRS REED
Because I wrote and told him you had
died of typhus at Lowood school.

This dreadful revelation confounds Jane.

MRS REED (CONT'D)
You fury. You were born to be my
torment. You called the names of the
dead down upon me. You cursed me.

JANE

I would have loved you if you'd let me.

Mrs Reed shrinks from Jane's touch. Jane forces herself to forgive.

JANE (CONT'D)

Then love me or hate me as you will.
You have my full and free forgiveness.
Be at peace.

Mrs Reed's eyes close.

95 INT. DAY. GATESHEAD

95

Jane is at the window where she hid from John Reed, writing a letter.

JANE (V.O.)

My dear uncle, some years ago, my Aunt Reed mistakenly informed you that I had died. I am writing to tell you that I'm very much alive and gratified to find I have a relative....

96 DELETED.

96

97 EXT. EVENING. THORNFIELD - BY THE FOOTBRIDGE.

97

Jane is walking through the wooded glade where she first met Rochester. All is green and verdant and bathed in sunset light. There seems to be life everywhere.

JANE (V.O.)

I'm currently living at Thornfield Hall, where I am governess to the ward of Mr Edward Fairfax Rochester -

ROCHESTER (O.S.)

There you are.

Jane turns. Rochester is sitting on a footbridge. For a moment her every nerve is unstrung.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

Just like one of your tricks, to steal in along with the twilight. Where have you been this last month?

JANE

I have been with my aunt sir, who is dead.

Rochester laughs. Jane is still trying to compose herself.

ROCHESTER

A true Janian reply. She comes from another world... If I dared I'd touch you, to see if you were real.

He puts out his hand. Jane steps back. He is disappointed.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

Come Jane - stay your wandering feet at a friend's threshold.

His hand is still held out. Jane takes it. This intimacy forces her feelings from her.

JANE

I'm strangely glad to get back again.

She has said too much. She sees the effect on Rochester, a smile, painful, almost sardonic. She fears he is laughing at her. She hurries up towards Thornfield.

98 INT. EVENING. THORNFIELD - MRS FAIRFAX'S PARLOUR 98

Jane is on a low seat, Adele nestling close to her.

MRS FAIRFAX

There's been nothing official yet but he's ordered jewels from his bank and he's making preparations to travel to Europe. He's taken to singing at all times of day... the operas Miss Ingram favours so well. We'll hear their announcement soon, I'm sure.

Jane cannot endure it. She leaves.

99 EXT. EVENING. THORNFIELD - THE GARDENS 99

Jane is walking away from the house. She sees Rochester and approaches him.

JANE

You are to be married.

ROCHESTER

Indeed. I see Mrs Fairfax has intimated my intention to put my neck into the sacred noose.

JANE

Adele should go to school. And I must seek another situation.

She walks on. Then turns.

JANE (CONT'D)

Congratulations, sir.

Rochester catches her up. He walks with her out of the garden and into the grounds beyond.

ROCHESTER

Thornfield is a pleasant place in summer, isn't it?

JANE

Yes sir.

ROCHESTER

You'll be sorry to part with it. It's always the way with events in life. No sooner have you got settled than a voice cries 'rise and move on!' I'll find you a new situation Jane, one I hope that you'll accept.

JANE

I shall be ready when your order to march comes.

Rochester blocks her path.

ROCHESTER

Must I really lose a faithful paid subordinate such as yourself?

JANE

You must.

Jane keeps on walking - into a wilder part of the estate.

ROCHESTER

We've been good friends, haven't we?

JANE

Yes, sir.

ROCHESTER

I have a strange feeling with regard to you: as if I had a string somewhere under my left ribs, tightly knotted to a similar string in you. And if you were to leave I'm afraid that cord of communion would snap.

(MORE)

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

And then I've a notion that I'd take to
bleeding inwardly. As for you - You'd
forget me.

Jane finally stops, her great distress escaping her.

JANE

How? I have lived a full life here. I
have not been trampled on. I have not
been petrified. I have not been
excluded from every glimpse of what is
bright. I have talked, face to face,
with an original, expanded mind. I
have known you, Mr. Rochester; and it
strikes me with anguish to be torn
from you.

ROCHESTER

Then why must you leave?

JANE

Because of your wife!

ROCHESTER

I have no wife.

JANE

But you are to be married.

ROCHESTER

Yes - Jane, you must stay.

JANE

And become nothing to you? Am I a
machine without feelings? Do you think
that because I am poor, obscure, plain
and little that I am soulless and
heartless? I have as much soul as you
and full as much heart. And if God had
blessed me with beauty and wealth I
could make it as hard for you to leave
me as it is for I to leave you.

This comes as a revelation to Rochester.

JANE (CONT'D)

I'm not speaking to you through mortal
flesh. It's my spirit that addresses
your spirit as if we'd passed through
the grave and stood at God's feet,
equal - as we are.

Rochester takes Jane in his arms.

ROCHESTER

As we are.

She struggles.

JANE

(Freeing herself)

I am a free human being with an independent will, which I now exert to leave you.

Rochester releases her.

ROCHESTER

Then let your will decide your destiny. I offer you my hand, my heart and a share of all this.

He gestures towards the house, the land. Jane is stunned.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

I ask you to pass through life at my side. Jane, you are my equal and my likeness. Will you marry me?

JANE

Are you mocking me?

ROCHESTER

Do you doubt me?

JANE

Entirely.

(BEAT)

Your bride is Miss Ingram -

ROCHESTER

Miss Ingram? She is the machine without feelings. It's you - you rare, unearthly thing. Poor and obscure as you are - please accept me as your husband.

Jane begins to believe him, she studies his face.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

I must have you for my own.

JANE

You wish me to be your wife?

ROCHESTER

I swear it.

JANE

You love me?

ROCHESTER

I do.

JANE

Then sir, I will marry you.

They embrace.

Neither Jane nor Rochester moves. Darkness is almost complete. Still the intensity of the embrace is held.

A sheet of lightning momentarily lights up the sky. Some moments later a distant rumble of thunder.

100 I/E. NIGHT. THORNFIELD - THE GARDEN. 100

It is teeming with rain. Rochester and Jane run to the front entrance. He holds his jacket around her. Lightning.

100A INT. NIGHT. THORNFIELD - THE GREAT HALL 100A

They reach the dry hearth inside. Thunder. They are both euphoric, breathless, laughing.

ROCHESTER

Good night. Good night. My love.

He kisses her. They kiss again. Jane will not let him go.

JANE

Good night.

As Jane parts from him, she sees Mrs Fairfax above on the gallery. She is looking down, deeply shocked.

101 EXT. DAY. THORNFIELD - THE GROUNDS. 101

Adele is climbing over a fallen tree, Sophie with her. It has been split open by a lightning bolt. Mrs Fairfax is very concerned.

JANE

Am I a monster? Is it so impossible that Mr Rochester should love me?

MRS FAIRFAX

No, I've long noticed that you were a sort of pet of his. But you're so young and so little acquainted with men.

Adele is whispering the news in Sophie's ear. Sophie cannot hide her shock. She finds it incomprehensible.

MRS FAIRFAX (CONT'D)

I don't want to grieve you child, but let me put you on your guard. Gentlemen in his position... Let's just say they're not accustomed to *marry* their governesses. Until you are wed, distrust yourself as well as him. Please, keep him at a distance -

Jane has heard enough. She turns away. Adele follows her. And clings to her.

102 EXT. DAY. THORNFIELD - BY THE GATE. 102

Jane is waiting. Rochester approaches on horseback, Pilot at his side. He sees Jane's agitation and slows the horse.

ROCHESTER

What is it?

Jane cannot articulate.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

Jane Eyre with nothing to say?

JANE

Everything seems unreal.

ROCHESTER

I am real enough.

He draws her close. She clings to him.

JANE

You sir are most phantom-like of all.

103 EXT. DAY. THORNFIELD - THE GARDEN. 103

Rochester is walking with Jane. He wants a kiss. She resists. He draws her close. Her resistance is crumbling. At last she kisses him - as briefly as she can. She pulls away.

104 INT. DAY. THORNFIELD - MRS FAIRFAX'S PARLOUR. 104

A box sits on the table. Jane pulls out a wedding gown.

Adele, Sophie and Mrs Fairfax are all looking on. Jane holds it up, dismayed at its opulence.

Adele pulls out a vapoury veil. It goes on and on, with a wraith-like, ghostly shimmer. Adele wraps the veil around herself.

JANE
(whispers)
I will be Jane Eyre no longer...

105. DELETED. 105.

106 DELETED. 106

107 DELETED. 107

108 INT. DAY. THORNFIELD - BLANCHE'S BEDROOM. 108

Jane is in her wedding gown. Sophie is pinning on a square of blond as a simple veil.

ADELE
Mademoiselle...
(*Translation: Miss...*)

Adele gives her a small bouquet. Jane hugs her, very moved - as if she is leaving her childhood behind.

109 INT/EXT. DAY. THORNFIELD - THE GREAT HALL/GROUNDS. 109

Rochester is waiting at the bottom of the stairs. Jane walks down to him. Rochester, moved by her beauty, grips her hand. They pass Mrs Fairfax. She's full of concern.

They quit the house. Outside, a new coach is waiting. John watches as they pass. His expression is deeply uneasy.

110 DELETED. 110

111 EXT. DAY. THORNFIELD - THE CHURCH. 111

Rochester is striding towards a small church. As they approach the graveyard, Jane stumbles. She cannot go on. At last, Rochester perceives her. He lets her rest, suddenly full of solicitude.

When Jane is ready, Rochester forces himself to calmness and leads her into the church.

112 INT. DAY. THE CHURCH.

112

At the altar, Jane glances at Rochester. He is looking straight ahead at the clergyman, Wood.

WOOD

I require and charge you both, as ye will answer at the dreadful day of judgement when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed, that if either of you know any impediment why ye may not be lawfully joined together in matrimony, ye do now confess it.

There is not a sound. The clergyman prepares the rings.

WOOD (CONT'D)

Edward Fairfax Rochester, do you take -

A commotion at the back of the church. Two men rapidly enter. One of them Briggs, hurries up the aisle.

BRIGGS

The marriage cannot go on. I declare the existence of an impediment.

ROCHESTER

Proceed.

Wood is utterly dismayed.

BRIGGS

An insurmountable impediment exists.

ROCHESTER

Proceed!

BRIGGS

Mr Rochester has a wife now living.

Jane looks at Rochester. He denies nothing; defies everything. Briggs starts to read out a document.

BRIGGS (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I affirm and can prove that Edward Fairfax Rochester was fifteen years ago married to my sister, Bertha Antoinetta Mason at St James church, Spanish Town, Jamaica. A copy of the register is now in my possession. Signed, Richard Mason.

The figure by the door steps out of the shadows. It is Richard Mason. Rochester flies down the aisle, a groan of rage escapes him. He lifts his arm.

MASON

Good God -

WOOD

Sir, you are in a sacred place -

Mason flinches away. Rochester swallows his rage.

MASON

She is at Thornfield Hall. I saw there
in April. I'm her brother.

Rochester turns towards Jane. She remains where she was abandoned - at the altar - tiny under the vaulted arch. The bouquet falls from her hand. Rochester walks to her.

ROCHESTER

This girl knew nothing. She thought all
was fair and legal. She never dreamt
she was being entrapped into a feigned
union with a defrauded wretch.

A tiny breath is the only noise Jane utters. Rochester pulls her from the altar to his side.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

Come Jane. Come all of you and meet my
wife.

The sun outside is blinding. Jane closes her eyes.

113 I/E. DAY. THORNFIELD - THE ENTRANCE / GREAT HALL 113

Rochester enters pulling Jane after him, her hand still in his iron grip. Wood, Mason and Briggs follow.

Mrs Fairfax, Adele and the servants are waiting. Adele runs forward with confetti. Rochester stops her in her tracks.

ROCHESTER

Get back! Go, all of you - Go! You are
fifteen years too late.

Adele has crumpled into frightened tears. Sophie comforts her, pale with shock. Jane meets Mrs Fairfax's uneasy eye as Rochester pulls her up the stairs. Mrs Fairfax follows.

114 INT. DAY. THORNFIELD - THE LONG GALLERY. 114

Rochester pulls Jane along the corridor. Wood, Mason and Briggs follow, finding it increasingly hard to keep up. Rochester stops at the tapestried door. He unlocks it.

114A INT. DAY. THORNFIELD - THE THIRD FLOOR

114A

Grace Poole is by the fire. She stands as if wanting to block their way.

GRACE

You ought to give warning, sir.

Rochester passes her by without a word. He leads Jane and the visitors through a narrow corridor and up another set of worm-eaten stairs. Rochester opens the door at the top with one hand; the other won't let go of Jane.

They enter an attic. Small windows, high up, too narrow to climb out of. A strongly guarded fire. There is no furniture except for a mattress.

Jane gasps for breath. A woman sits with her back to us. Slowly, she rises. She wears a white shift; black feathers twined in her hair. Her pose is dignified, she turns towards the on-lookers, her expression triumphant.

MASON

Antionetta. It is I, Richard...

Bertha sees him - and turns her back. She peers through a tiny gap in the shuttered window. A fly struggles against the glass. Grace addresses herself to Briggs and Wood. Jane cannot tear her eyes from Bertha.

GRACE

She has her quiet times and her rages. The windows are shuttered lest she throw herself out. We have no furniture as she can make a weapon out of anything. I take her for a turn upon the roof each day, securely held, as she's taken to thinking she can fly.

Bertha is approaching them. Jane is frozen.

Bertha lays her head on Rochester's shoulder and closes her eyes. Rochester, with great sadness:

ROCHESTER

My own demon...

Bertha triumphantly spits the fly at Rochester. He sees it coming and dashes it away. It lands on the bosom of Jane's dress. It struggles there. Everyone looks at it. Silence, but for Jane's slow intake of breath.

Rochester puts out a hand to remove the fly. With shocking speed and strength Bertha lays her nails into his cheek. She draws blood.

At last he lets go of Jane's hand.

Grace assists Rochester. They do not hit; they subdue. Bertha's attack is effectively contained. They have her on her knees, her arms behind her.

MASON

Netta, be calm. All will be well...

Bertha lifts her head and screams. If a scream could express the agony of a whole soul then this would. Jane turns on her heels. Mrs Fairfax is at the door, wanting to speak - but Jane pushes past her and exits.

115 INT. DAY. THORNFIELD - JANE'S BEDROOM. 115

Jane claws at the back of her wedding dress, trying to undo it.

116 INT. DAY. THORNFIELD - JANE'S BEDROOM. 116

Jane stands in stillness, as the wedding dress falls crumpled to her feet.

117 DELETED. 117

118 NIGHT. THORNFIELD - JANE'S BEDROOM. 118

Jane slowly puts her arms around her black dress, as if it is her old self. She lies down. She curls up, taking the blow.

119 INT. NIGHT. THORNFIELD - JANE'S BEDROOM. 119

The moon has risen. Jane is at the mirror. Her reflection with hair loose, watches numbly as she pulls her hair into its neat bun.

120 INT. NIGHT. THORNFIELD - SECOND FLOOR. 120

Jane steps out of her room. Rochester is sitting opposite the door in a great wooden chair.

ROCHESTER

Jane... Forgive me. How could I? I'm worthless.

Jane falls forward - Rochester springs up catching her in his arms.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

No tears... Why don't you cry? Why not scream at me? I deserve a hail of fire.

Jane just gazes at him weakly.

JANE

I need some water.

Rochester perceives Jane's inanition. He picks her up.

121 INT. NIGHT. THORNFIELD - ROCHESTER'S STUDY.

121

Rochester has lain Jane in front of the fire. He gives her water. She sips.

ROCHESTER

How are you now?

JANE

I'll be well again soon.

Rochester stoops to kiss her. She turns her head from him. He moves away, stung.

ROCHESTER

I know you. You're thinking. Talking is no use; you're thinking how to act.

JANE

All is changed, sir. I must leave you.

ROCHESTER

No! NO!

He controls the violence of his feelings.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

Jane, do you love me?

Jane nods, tears spilling from her eyes.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

Then the essential things are the same. We've gone to the altar to make our pledge. Let's make it here and now, my spirit addressing yours. Be my wife.

JANE

You have a wife.

ROCHESTER

I pledge you my honour, my fidelity -

JANE

You can not.

ROCHESTER

My love, until death do us part -

JANE

What of truth?

ROCHESTER

I would have told you.

JANE

You are deceitful, sir!...

ROCHESTER

I was wrong to deceive you; I see that now; it was cowardly. I should have appealed to your spirit - as I do now. Bertha Antoinetta Mason. She was wanted by my father for her fortune. He sent me to Spanish Town ignorant and raw. I hardly spoke with her before the wedding...

The memory seems to take the breath out of him. He sits.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

I lived with her for four years. She dragged me through all the degrading agonies which wait upon a man bound to a wife intemperate and unchaste. Her excesses fed the germs of madness and at last, the doctors shut her up. I was chained to her for life.

Jane's face is wrought with pity.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

Have you ever set foot in a madhouse, Jane?

JANE

No, sir.

ROCHESTER

The inmates are caged and baited like beasts. I spared her that, at least. What else would you know?

(MORE)

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

This is the time for truth and for trust. I will lay my life bare...

JANE

I earnestly pity you, sir.

ROCHESTER

Jane, it's not pity that I see in your eye. It is not pity -

JANE

I must go apart from you.

ROCHESTER

Be a part of me.

JANE

I must start again.

ROCHESTER

You cannot mean to leave me.

JANE

I do.

He caresses her gently, lovingly.

ROCHESTER

Do you mean it now?

He runs his hands over her, with great tenderness. Jane offers no resistance.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

Jane...

Rochester lays her down.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

Who would you offend by living with me? Who would care?

JANE

I would.

ROCHESTER

You'd rather drive me to despair than break a mere human law?

JANE

I must respect myself!

ROCHESTER

Will you hear reason?

Rochester's hold on her becomes violent.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)
I could bend you with my finger and
thumb; a mere reed you feel in my
hands.

Jane neither moves nor speaks.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)
But what ever I do with this cage I
cannot get at you. And it is your soul
that I want! Why don't you come of
your own free will?

JANE
(crying out)
God help me!

All the life seems to go out of Rochester. He lets Jane go. She pulls herself away from him. Rochester turns his eyes to her, willing her to remain.

Jane flies up the stairs, along the dark gallery, into her bedroom. She locks the door.

122 INT. DAWN. THORNFIELD - JANE'S BEDROOM/THE CORRIDOR. 122

Jane is staring at her wedding trunk, full of new clothes. The label reads Mrs Edward Fairfax Rochester.

ROCHESTER (O.S.)
Jane...

Jane stands stock still. Rochester tries the door. He leans against it. Jane goes to the door, leans her whole body against it. They listen to each other breathe.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)
Let me in.

Jane doesn't move.

123 EXT. DAWN. THORNFIELD - THE GROUNDS. 123

First light. Jane is climbing out of her bedroom window.

123A EXT. DAWN. THORNFIELD - THE GROUNDS. 123A

Jane is running; flushed, breathless, her dress soaked with dew.

124 INT. DAY. THORNFIELD - JANE'S BEDROOM. 124

Rochester breaks open the door. The room is empty; Jane's wedding dress is left lying on the bed.

He picks the dress up in his fist.

ROCHESTER

Jane.

He goes to the open window.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

Jane...

He cries out.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

JANE!

124A EXT. DAY. THE MOORS. 124A

Jane struggles on, over the wild landscape. She lies in the heather, exhausted, giving vent to her grief.

125 INT. EVENING. MORTON - THE SCHOOL ROOM. 125

Jane finds herself in front of St John Rivers. The classroom is empty. Her life is bare. It shows on her face. He is waiting expectantly for an answer.

ST JOHN

I asked how you were.

Jane immediately puts on a sprightly face and starts to tidy up.

JANE

I'm getting on very well.

ST JOHN

Do you find the work too hard?

Two girls have tidied all the slates and chalk. Jane smiles at them.

JANE

Not at all. Thank you girls.

The girls run out. Jane continues clearing up. A bluebottle is buzzing against the window.

ST JOHN

Is the solitude an oppression?

JANE

I hardly have time to notice it.

ST JOHN

Then perhaps you are dwelling on things past?

JANE

When I came to your door I had nothing. Now I have a home and work; free and honest. I thank God for the generosity of my friends.

St John approaches her; speaks intimately.

ST JOHN

What you had left before I met you, I don't know. But I counsel you to resist firmly every temptation to look back.

JANE

It's what I mean to do.

The buzzing fly is oppressing Jane dreadfully.

ST JOHN

We can overcome every kind of human weakness. A year ago I was myself intensely miserable. I considered my life so wretched that it must be changed - or I would die. After a season of darkness, light broke. I heard my call from God -

Jane reaches out and swats the fly with an utterance of disgust. She half kills it and hits it again, mercilessly.

St John is both repelled by her inexplicable passion and offended. He feels she hasn't listened. He turns to go. Jane sees what she has done. She tries to placate him.

JANE

Why were you intensely miserable?

St John stops at Jane's desk. He starts flicking through her papers. He speaks with a forced nonchalance.

ST JOHN

A year ago, I was weak enough to fall in love.

Jane moves involuntarily towards him.

ST JOHN (CONT'D)
I scorned this weakness, fought hard
against it - and won.

Jane is incredulous.

ST JOHN (CONT'D)
I could have sunk down in the silken
snare and known a feverish, delusive
bliss. I could have squandered my
future upon it.

JANE
You could have been happy.

St John senses the struggle in her. He approaches.

ST JOHN
I wonder if we do not share the same
alloy... You are ambitious, I think.

JANE
What do you mean?

ST JOHN
For a life which has consequence,
value. We're cut from a similar metal,
Miss Elliott. And this little school
will not hold you for long.

He suddenly snatches up a piece of paper.

ST JOHN (CONT'D)
Is this yours?

JANE
Yes.

His eyes, in an instant, seem to take in everything about
her. He opens his mouth to speak - then checks himself.

JANE (CONT'D)
What's the matter?

ST JOHN
Nothing.

He folds the paper and takes it.

ST JOHN (CONT'D)
Good night.

He goes. Jane looks after him, dumbfounded.

126 INT. NIGHT. MORTON - JANE'S COTTAGE.

126

Jane is lit by the candlelight and the flames from her fire, lost in painful memory. Outside, a snowstorm howls..

There is a knock on the door.

CUT TO:

Jane opening the door. Rochester is there, standing in the frozen hurricane and howling darkness.

ROCHESTER

Jane...

Jane pulls him inside. They embrace passionately. Jane is actively pulling him towards her, delirious with love and longing.

CUT TO:

The exact same shot of Jane hearing the knock on the door. She opens it, St John Rivers is there. He wears a parson's hat and woollen scarf. The contrast between the two men - and Jane's feelings for them - couldn't be more apparent.

JANE

Mr St John - What on earth brings you
from your hearth on a night like this?
There's no bad news I hope?

ST JOHN

How easily alarmed you are, Miss Eyre.

Jane starts at his use of her name. He takes off his cloak; stamps the snow off his boots.

JANE

Won't you sit down?...

ST JOHN

Thank you, Miss Eyre.

Jane is confounded. St John unfolds a paper from his breast pocket.

ST JOHN (CONT'D)

I saw an advertisement in the Times
from a solicitor named Briggs,
enquiring of a Jane Eyre. I knew a
Jane Elliott. This paper resolved my
suspicion into certainty.

It is her drawing, with her signature, "Jane Eyre".

ST JOHN (CONT'D)

And so I wrote to him. He told the story of a young governess. Her employer, a Mr Fairfax Rochester -

JANE

Mr Rivers -

ST JOHN

I can guess your feelings but please hear me.

JANE

As you know so much, perhaps you'll tell me how he is?

ST JOHN

Who?

JANE

Mr Rochester.

ST JOHN

I'm ignorant of all concerning him.

JANE

But he has been seeking me?

ST JOHN

No, he hasn't. Briggs has.

JANE

Then what does he want with me?

ST JOHN

Merely to tell you that your uncle, Mr John Eyre of Madeira, is dead; that he has left you all his property and that you are now rich.

JANE

What?

ST JOHN

You are rich; quite an heiress.

Silence. Jane is flabbergasted. At last, Jane looks questioningly up at him.

ST JOHN (CONT'D)

Your forehead unbends at last. Will you ask how much you are worth?

JANE

How much am I worth?

ST JOHN

Twenty thousand pounds.

The news literally takes Jane's breath away. St John begins to laugh at her reaction.

ST JOHN (CONT'D)

If you'd committed a murder and I'd found you out, you could scarcely look more aghast.

JANE

There must be some mistake.

ST JOHN

None at all. You look desperately miserable about it, I must say.

Jane still cannot take it in. She frowns in disbelief.

ST JOHN (CONT'D)

Sit down. I have shocked you.

St John goes into Jane's tiny kitchen. He rinses out her mug, slightly fastidious, and brings her water.

JANE

Mr St John... The debt I owe to you and your sisters -

ST JOHN

Is nothing.

JANE

You saved my life.

Jane drinks. She is thinking hard.

JANE (CONT'D)

Please write to them. This money frees them. They will have five thousand each - and so will you, if you'll take it.

ST JOHN

Certainly not.

JANE

And if you would accept me as your sister perhaps we could live together, at Moor House.

ST JOHN

I've told you the news too quickly;
you're confused.

JANE

My only relative is dead..

ST JOHN

You cannot know what it means to be
wealthy.

JANE

You have family - and you cannot know
what isolation means. I have been
alone, always. I never had a brother
or sisters - Please, let me be yours.

A terrible thought occurs to her.

JANE (CONT'D)

Are you reluctant to have me?

ST JOHN

No, Miss Eyre. On the contrary...
I'll write to my sisters, as you
request.

She throws her arms around St John. He, finding it peculiar
to be held, gently tries to calm her. He is moved. Jane's
eyes are still shining with happiness.

JANE

Brother...

She releases him. He has misunderstood her embrace.

127 EXT. DAY. SPRING. MOOR HOUSE.

127

A coach drives off. Jane, Diana and Mary are reunited.

St John stands back, watching their raw emotion, the
gratitude of his sisters, the genuine delight of Jane.

128 INT. NIGHT. MOOR HOUSE - THE PARLOUR.

128

Jane, Mary and Diana are sitting at the fireside.

St John is praying over the women with devoted fervour.

ST JOHN

We are bid to work while it is day.
For night cometh when no man shall
work.

(MORE)

ST JOHN (CONT'D)

Help us to choose the harder path, for
as our master is long-suffering so
must we be. Amen.

The women stand.

MARY

Good night.

St John kisses Mary. He kisses Diana.

ST JOHN

Good night.

He seems to be waiting for something from Jane.

DIANA

Is Jane not our sister?

Jane turns to Diana, mortified.

As she turns back, she finds St John's face right in front of
her. He kisses her. A kiss with no warmth; an experiment. It
almost makes her recoil. He examines its effect, satisfied.

ST JOHN

Good night.

129

INT. NIGHT. MOOR HOUSE - JANE'S BEDROOM.

129

Jane closes the door. She puts her hand across her lips. The
icy kiss has agonised her with the full force of her
loneliness. The tiny bedroom suddenly seems to imprison her.
Then a low knock at the door makes her start. She opens it.
St John is on the narrow threshold.

ST JOHN

I go to India in six weeks.

St John draws Jane even closer.

ST JOHN (CONT'D)

I can see what your gifts are and why
they were given. God intended you for
a missionary's wife. I want to claim
you. Come to India.

Jane is utterly crestfallen.

JANE

I'm not fit for it.

ST JOHN

I trust you unreservedly. And know this; in you, I recognise a fellow soul, a soul that would revel in the flame of sacrifice. Be my wife.

Jane is chilled to the bone by his words. She backs away.

CUT TO:

Jane leaning against the closed door, trying to think, trying to compose herself.

130 DELETED. 130

131 EXT. EVENING. MOOR HOUSE - THE HEATH. 131

The sun is setting. Jane meets St John, walking home from his parish.

JANE

I'll go with you to India.

St John contains his delight. They walk along the crest of a hill back towards the house.

JANE (CONT'D)

If I may go free.

ST JOHN

Free?

JANE

I used to long for a life of action, to see beyond the horizon. Perhaps God is sending me this. I'll go - but I cannot marry you.

St John couldn't be more amazed.

ST JOHN

Why not? How can I take out to India a girl of nineteen, unless she is my wife?

He dismisses her objections and walks on.

JANE

I love you as a brother. As a husband, no. My heart is mute.

ST JOHN

Then I must speak for it. You've said that you will come. We'll marry. And undoubtedly enough of love would follow...

Jane is shocked.

JANE

Enough of love?

ST JOHN

Yes, quite enough.

JANE

Of love?

ST JOHN

In all its forms.

JANE

I scorn your idea of love...

St John is mortified. A slow rage begins to boil in him.

ST JOHN

I've done nothing that deserves your scorn.

JANE

Forgive me but the very name of love is an apple of discord between us. My dear brother, abandon your scheme of marriage.

ST JOHN

Why this refusal? It makes no sense!

JANE

I earnestly wish to be your friend -

ST JOHN

You can't give half a sacrifice; you must give all.

JANE

To marry you would kill me!

ST JOHN

Kill you? That is violent, unfeminine and untrue.

I know where your heart turns and to what it still clings. Say his name. Say it.

Jane hears a whisper on the wind; her own name.

ST JOHN (CONT'D)
Why have you not yet crushed this
lawless passion? It offends me and it
offends God!

A cry, very far away. She strains to hear.

ROCHESTER (V.O.)
Jane...

She moves away from St John.

ROCHESTER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Jane!

JANE
(In reply)
What is it?

St John stares at her, bewildered.

JANE (CONT'D)
Wait for me... Where are you?

She looks wildly about the moor. A desperate cry escapes her
as she searches for the source of the voice.

ST JOHN
What have you heard? Why do you speak
to the air?

Jane glances at him, seeing him for what he is; a repressed,
controlling, ill-guided man. She shouts:

JANE
I am coming!

Jane runs further on to the moors.

132 DELETED. 132

133 EXT. DAY. THE ROAD APPROACHING THORNFIELD. 133

Jane is in a trap, being driven along the lane to Thornfield.
She looks well-off and confident, much more mature than the
raw schoolgirl who first arrived.

The driver stops, Jane dismounts, running towards Thornfield.

133A EXT. DAY. THORNFIELD ESTATE 133A

Jane turns a corner and at last Thornfield is visible. But instead of the battlemented mansion, Jane sees a vast blackened ruin.

134 EXT. DAY. THORNFIELD - THE RUINS. 134

Jane approaches the house. The roof has completely gone. The great walls and battlements are blackened with fire. Empty windows gape on a hollow shell. The inside of the house has collapsed. Through the hanging door, only its charred remains can be seen. Jane gazes in horror and distress. She goes in.

135 INT. DAY. THORNFIELD - THE RUINS 135

Jane wanders into the great hall. Everything is black with smoke damage. Weeds grow in patches of light. It is silent, eerie.

Jane peers into Rochester's study. Through the damage some of the old bits of furniture and artefacts can still be seen: The piano, half on its side. Rochester's chair and there, in the filth on the floor, a blackened toy of Adele's.

Jane picks it up, stricken.

A noise reverberates through the house; perhaps a beam falling, a door slamming. Perhaps an unquiet ghost. Jane suddenly feels watched. She goes back out into the hall. Out of the corner of her eye she sees something move in a doorway.

Standing on the threshold is Mrs Fairfax. Mrs Fairfax looks more shocked than she does.

MRS FAIRFAX

Jane Eyre...

Jane's great distress escapes her.

MRS FAIRFAX (CONT'D)

I thought gypsies were come. Then I saw you, and I thought, it cannot be, you are a ghost.

136 INT. DAY. THORNFIELD - THE RUINS. 136

Mrs Fairfax and Jane walk together through the ruins.

MRS FAIRFAX

He sought you as if you were a lost and precious jewel. He didn't rest. And as the days turned into weeks and no word came, he grew quite savage in his disappointment. He sent Adele away to school, cut himself off from all society. I was frightened to go near him. He was wretched.

Mrs Fairfax leads Jane into a room that could have once been her parlour. She has cleared a small area in front of the hearth.

MRS FAIRFAX (CONT'D)

No one knows how it started. I expect Mrs Poole took too much of the gin and water and while she slept the lady, Mrs Rochester, unhooked her keys. She did what she failed to do last year; set the whole place to fire. We would have perished in the smoke but Mr Rochester did not rest until we all were safe. Then he went back in for her. The flames were tearing up so high they brought men running from the village.

Jane is looking up at the battlemented vault. Nothing of the roof remains.

MRS FAIRFAX (CONT'D)

I saw her standing on the roof. The very edge. I heard Mr Rochester beg her to come down. But she did not. She jumped.

The drop is dizzying.

Mr Rochester remained, as if he would not move until the fire consumed him.

Jane is devastated.

MRS FAIRFAX (CONT'D)

I didn't know... I didn't know it was his wife, I promise you. Why did you run away? I would have helped you. I had some money saved. You could have come to me...

JANE

Where is he?

137 EXT. DAY. THORNFIELD - THE GROUNDS.

137

Jane is walking the route that she and Rochester took to the church on the morning they almost married. Her steps have an urgency.

There, under the broken tree, sits Edward Fairfax Rochester. For a moment she watches him, hardly able to breathe.

ROCHESTER

Pilot.

He is on his guard, his expression wary. We finally see what the fire has done to him. His eyes are burned, his right hand hidden in his coat.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

Who's there?

Jane steps to him, putting her hand on his. Rochester feels her hand with his own.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

This hand... Her hand...

Jane moves into his arms. She holds him.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

Jane Eyre - Jane Eyre.

Neither is able to speak.

JANE

Edward, I am come back to you.

He holds her.

JANE (CONT'D)

Fairfax Rochester with nothing to say?...

ROCHESTER

You are all together a human being, Jane?

JANE

I conscientiously believe so, sir.

ROCHESTER

A dream.

Jane kisses him, impressing on him her physical reality.

JANE

Awaken then.

At last Rochester believes.

THE END.