2

3

First light. Jane Eyre is running 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/COACH.

The sun is higher in the sky. Jane exhausted, now running down a main road. A coach approaches. She flags it down.

Jane, breathless, harassed, empties her purse into the GUARD'S hand. A teenage boy. He looks at her with impertinent suspicion. A nod indicates she can get in.

Jane sinks into a dark corner. Her fellow passengers look at her, disapproving. Straight-backed Derbyshire gentlefolk, among them a curious LITTLE GIRL. Jane is hot, dishevelled. She undertakes a tremendous effort not to betray her emotional state. She doesn't sob, she doesn't howl - although her breathing threatens to. Unable to bear the day, she closes her eyes.

#### 3 EXT. EVENING. WHITCROSS.

Sunset. A whitewashed, stone pillar set up where four roads meet on a barren moor. The guard opens the door. With a curt nod he indicates that Jane must get out.

She looks around, dismayed. In each direction there is open moorland for as far as the eye can see. The driver sets off at a good pace. Jane puts her hand to her side for her bag of belongings. It is not there.

She runs as fast as she can after the coach. It is receding towards the horizon. 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.

#### 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.

#### 5 EXT. DAY. THE MOOR.

5

4

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

#### EXT. TWILIGHT. THE MOOR. 6

6

Jane squats in the heather and eats bilberries as the light fades. She hungrily licks the juice from her hand.

#### 7 EXT. DAWN. THE MOOR.

7

Jane is asleep in the heather, her shawl wrapped around her. A red-haired child in a white night gown lies by her side, watching her. It is Helen Burns.

Helen reaches out. She touches Jane's hand. Jane wakes. She sits up. She is alone. The sky is overcast. The first big drops of rain land on the stones. Jane makes no movement.

#### DELETED. 8

8

#### EXT. TWILIGHT. A FARM 9

9

It is raining hard. Jane sees a small girl come out of the farm with some left overs. She drops them into a pigpen.

CUT TO:

Jane leaning into the pigpen. She picks a stiffened mould of porridge out of the mud. She lets the rain wash it. She eats it ravenously.

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

10

It has stopped raining. 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.

CUT TO:

Jane looks over the moor. It rises away above her up to the horizon. The clouds are red and gold.

She sees the small red-haired girl in a white night gown walking barefoot on the moors ahead of her. The girl turns, looks back at Jane. Jane follows.

11 DELETED. 11

#### 12 EXT. EVENING. THE MOOR.

12

Dark clouds are banking up; the rain starts again. 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.

The girl's bare feet walk close by, as if waiting for her. Jane looks up. Where the child should be, she sees a light shining across the moor. Jane starts crawling.

# 13 EXT. NI GHT. THE MOOR/ MOOR HOUSE.

13

Jane is toiling through the lashing rain towards the light. It has become a window. A brief flash of lightning shows her a low stone cottage. Helen Burns is sitting on the gate.

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

# 14 I NT. NI GHT. MOOR HOUSE - THE KI TCHEN.

14 \*

A fire is roaring in the stove. Hannah is bent over it.

HANNAH We've had a beggar woman come, Mr 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.

DI ANA

Your name?...

Jane is deeply troubled. She is losing consciousness. She sees a fright ened 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 I NT. 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. 44 Tm - 0. 202 To

Jane opens the book. It is full of beautifully drawn birds.

Her feminine attire belies her strength. She pulls Jane off John by her hair and holds her.

MRS REED

You wretched imp, you ingrate, you fury.

(To Bessie and Mss 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 I NT. DUSK. GATESHEAD - CORRI DOR / THE RED ROOM

16

Jane is carried struggling down the corridor by Mss 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!

M SS 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 for ehead. She has some compassion. Mss Abbot has none.

BESSI E

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

M SS ABBOT

Pray for forgiveness Mss 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. Beside it, a full length looking-glass in which her pale reflection stares out. Jane looks away. Behind her, a bed supported on pillars of mahogany, hung with red. The piled up pillows and mattresses glare in cold white. Jane's breathing is the only sound in the room

A sudden gust sends rain pelting against the windows like fingernails.

A distant moan of wind seems to breathe out of the black hearth. Jane reverts her nervous gaze to the pitted mirror. Her eyes lock on the small figure trapped there; her white, bleeding face; eyes glittering with fear.

It is a phantom The eyes are black, the skin a deathly grey. A drop of blood falls from her own forehead and on to the floor.

Jane Eyre adapted by Moira Buffini February 2010 9.

JANE

Please - I cannot bear it -

MRS REED

Silence. This violence is repulsive.

JANE

Have mercy, Aunt Reed -

MRS REED

Get back!

JANE

Have Mercy, Please, Please -

Mrs Reed throws her back into the room, slams the door and turns the key. We hear Jane's unspeakable howls of terror, her anguished bangs upon the door.

Bessie is looking at Mrs Reed aghast. Mrs Reed withers her with a frozen glare.

#### 17 I NT. DUSK. GATESHEAD - THE RED ROOM

17

We see Jane banging the door in her panic and distress, hysterically glancing at the looking glass. There is no reflection in it at all. The terrified child has been fetched away.

There's a fall of soot in the chimmey, 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. Her arms and legs move beyond her control. She is having a fit. When it is over, we see Jane unconscious. She is lying in a pool of ghostly light.

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

Child of wrath, I shall leave you with this:

He thrusts a pamphl et into Jane's hand.

BROCKLEHURST (CONT'D)

Read it with prayer, especially the sudden death of the girl addicted to falsehood. Jane Eyre, be ready to meet your judge.

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

MRS REED

Go out of the room Return to the nursery.

JANE

You said I was a liar. I am not a liar. If I were I should say that I loved you and I don't. I dislike you worst of anybody in the world except your son, John Reed.

She thrust the leaflet at Mrs Reed.

JANE (CONT'D)

It is he who should read this, for he is the liar; not I.

MRS REED

How dare you!

JANE

I'll never call you Aunt again as long as I live and if anyone asks how I liked you, I'll say you treated me with miserable cruelty.

MRS REED

I have cared for you since infancy -

JANE

I'll remember how you thrust me back into the Red Room to my dying day! Even when you knew it was haunted and I begged to be let out. 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

Jane Eyre adapted by Moira Buffini February 2010 13.

BESSI E

Why would I? I'm fonder of you than of anyone.

Jane embraces Bessie with even greater force. Bessie returns the embrace, surprised, moved.

BESSIE (CONT'D)

Come now...

Bessie has to prise Jane away. Jane will not let go.

CUT TO:

As the coach picks up speed, Jane peers out of the window at Bessie. Gateshead is behind her.

22 DELETED. 22

23 EXT. DAY. A ROAD THROUGH FARMLAND.

23

From Jane's P. O. V. we see fields passing in gentler countryside. Jane is watching workers plough and plant. A little girl her own age works alongside them

23A EXT. DAY. A HUMPBACKED BRI DGE.

23A

The coach crosses a humpbacked bridge over a canal. A dog on the top of a narrow boat barks at her. A woman, smoking a pipe, hushes it. Jane is transfixed.

24 DELETED. 24

25 I NT/ EXT. NI GHT. 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; Mss Scatcherd.

M SS SCATCHERD What's your name, child?

25A INT. NIGHT. LOWOOD - DORM TORY.

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 fine boots, as if she comes from a different world.

CUT TO:

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

# 25B I NT. NI GHT. LOWOOD - THE DORM TORY.

25B

A bitter wind, which how s around the roof. Jane is in a bed which is already occupied by a much larger girl. The other girl makes no attempt to give her room. She pulls the blanket away from Jane. Jane is shivering from shock as well as cold. She is beyond tears.

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

JANE

Then I spent eight years at school, the last two as a teacher. I left to be a private governess -

MARY

Diana, didn't I say she was a governess?

DI ANA

We did wonder. We mean no offence but you have a certain look. Mary and I are governesses too.

JANE

Are you?

St John has no patience with the change of subject.

ST JOHN

Why did you leave your place of employment?

Jane sinks back in the pillows. St John is exasperated.

ST JOHN (CONT'D)

Mss Elliott -

The name sounds strange to Jane.

ST JOHN (CONT'D)

Why did you start?

JANE

Because that is not my name.

DI ANA

You haven't given us your real name?

Jane shakes her head.

ST JOHN

Why not?

JANE

I must n't ever be found.

Di ana and Mary glance at each other, fascinated.

27 I NT. EVENING. MOOR HOUSE - THE BEDROOM

27 \*

Jane is dressing herself. She stops, weakly holding the

# 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

Jane Eyre adapted by Moira Buffini February 2010 16A.

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

JANE

I trust 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?

DI ANA

#### 31 INT. DAY. LOWOOD - THE HALL.

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

M SS SCATCHERD

Helen Burns.

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

M SS 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.

The door bursts open and Mss Temple, a kind and intelligent woman, leads in Brocklehurst.

M SS TEMPLE

All rise.

The girls rise. Brocklehurst peruses the punishment. Miss Scatcherd looks ashamed.

BROCKLEHURST

I see you are mortifying this girl's flesh.

M SS SCATCHERD

She failed in her repetitions, sir.

**BROCKLEHURST** 

It is your mission to render her contrite and self-denying. Continue.

Mss Scatcherd prepares to oblige. Helen's eye drops a tear; subtle, but visible to Jane. As the twigs are raised, Jane lets fall her slate. It breaks on the floor.

Brocklehurst's eyes land on her.

BROCKLEHURST (CONT'D)

The new girl. Step forward, Jane Eyre.

Jane steps forward. Helen's last stroke is forgotten.

BROOKLEHURST (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.

31 \*

# 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 Mss 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.

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.

#### INT. DAY. LOWOOD - THE HALL - LATER. 32

32

The sun is setting. The hall is empty but for the small figure of Jane, high on her stool, feeling her isolation like pain. She is holding back her tears with all the force of her being. Across the room is Helen, shoulders hunched, the skin on her neck blistering. A hollow cough racks her.

The two girls look at each other. Helen smiles weakly at Jane, trying to give the younger girl fortitude. This tiny act of kindness brings the tears welling up in Jane's eyes.

#### 33 EXT. DAY. LOWOOD - THE GROUNDS.

33

The girls are outside in the freezing cold. Snowlies 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 for no one will speak to her. Icy water seeps on her feet.

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

#### JANE

What are you reading?

Helen looks up; thinks about how to sum up what she's read.

# HELEN

It's about an Abyssinian prince... in search of happiness.

JANE

Does he find it?

Helen coughs, low and raw.

**HELEN** 

Don't know, yet.

Jane can't articulate what she wants to say. Helen returns to her book.

JANE

How do you bear being struck?

HELEN

Mss Scatcherd hits me to improve me.

JANE

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

HELEN

She'd find another soon enough. You can't beat cruelty with anger, nor violence with hate. Life is too short to spend in nursing animosity.

JANE

And what of those who are cruel or unjust - like Mr Brocklehurst?

HELEN

We must endeavour to forgive them

JANE

But he has no heart, his soul is made of iron and whalebone. He told the whole world I'm a liar and I'm not.

HELEN

The whole world? But eighty girls. And half of them do not believe it.

JANE

I hate to be so solitary and despised. If others don't love me I would rather die than live.

Helen beckons Jane to sit next to her.

JANE (CONT'D)

I would rather have my arms broke or stand behind a kicking horse and let it dash my heart - Helen is separated from everyone else, in another section of Lowood that Jane can just see at the edge of the window's view, on a verandah wrapped in blankets. She looks very pale. Jane longs to be with her.

36 I NT. NI GHT. LOWOOD - THE DORM TORY.

36

Jane is creeping down a corridor in her night dress. She peers in through the dormitory door. It has been turned into a sanitarium Jane peers at the sick, feverish girls.

Mss Temple is tending to them

37 I NT. NI GHT. LOWOOD - M SS TEMPLE' S ROOM

37

Jane opens the door. A small bed has been set up at the foot of M ss Temple's. In it lies Helen Burns. A candle is set on a table at her side.

JANE

Hel en.

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

My father has a new wife, a new family. He'll not miss me much.

JANE

Then where?

HELEN

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

Jane is devast at ed.

HELEN (CONT'D)

Do not grieve... God is relieving me of great sufferings.
(MORE)

You are so passionate Jane, but I have no such qualities. I'd always be... continually at fault...

Jane cannot articulate her distress at Helen's words.

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, Mss 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. Diana goes to hug Jane. Jane, unused to such affection, takes it gratefully.

Mary has burst into tears. She is clinging to St John. He finds it painful and it aggravates him

DI ANA

(confidentially)

We may not see him again for many years. Our brother looks quiet but he hides a fever of ambition. He will never make his way here; our poverty prevents him And if he cannot be great in the eyes of men, he will sacrifice his all to God. He means to go to India and be a missionary.

Jane takes this in, looking at St John anew. St John helps Mary into the trap.

ST JOHN

Come, Mary. This passion will do no good.

DI ANA

Our brother sets himself above all

DI ANA (CONT'D)

I fear he doesn't care for himself at all.

Jane understands; Diana is asking her to look after him

CUT TO:

The trap receding. St John watches it disappear.

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.

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 I / E. NI GHT. MORTON - JANE'S COTTAGE.

43

Jane tips out the dust and watches it fly on the wind. She stares up at the darkening night and the stark winter trees.

43A DELETED. 43A

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

43B \*

Jane enters. 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 on 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.

As her eyes adjust to the moonlight, the wind blows the branches, scratching at her windows. Her mind drifts...

#### 45 EXT. NI GHT. THORNFI ELD - 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

Thor nf i el d.

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 FAI RFAX 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 FAI RFAX

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 eight een. I've been teaching at Lowood for two years.

MRS FAIRFAX
Of course you have... I was most impressed with your references. I'm sure we're very lucky to have you. Leah, would you ask Martha to make a

JANE

Mss Fairfax - my pupil?

MRS FAIRFAX

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

JANE

Who's Mr Rochester?

MRS FAI RFAX

Why, the owner of Thornfield.

JANE

I thought Thornfield Hall belonged to you.

MRS FAI RFAX

(bursting into laughter)
Ch bless you child, what an idea. To
me? I am only the housekeeper.

JANE
Forgive me

WRS FAI RFAX
There is a distant connection
between Mr Rochester and I - his
mother was a Fairfax - but I'd
mever presume on it. Heavens, me,
owner of Thornfield?

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

# 47 I NT. NI GHT. THORNFI ELD - STAI RCASE / CORRI DOR.

47

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

MRS FAI RFAX

We shall have a cheerful house this winter...

Light is thrown on portraits of long dead ancestors. Mrs Fairfax is as warm as Tj 1 0 0 cdl Tj 1 0 0 1 96 322.44 Tm .19 0.194

Dark heavy drapes, 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

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.

Mrs Fairfax leads Jane through the wood-panelled darkness.

MRS FAI RFAX (CONT'D)
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

# JANE

I've never seen anything half as imposing. What order you keep.

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

# MRS FAI RFAX

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 Mss Varens. Did I mention she was French?

51 I NT. DAY. THORNFI ELD - THE LI BRARY.

51

Jane Eyre adapted by Moira Buffini February 2010 32.

ADELE (CONT'D)

When gentlemen came to see her I used sit on their knees and sing. May I sing for you now?

JANE

(In French)

Well `- that would be lovely. (To Mrs Fairfax)

Adelè is going to show us her accomplishments.

Adel e adopts a lovel orn 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 I NT. NI GHT. THORNFI ELD - MRS FAI RFAX'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 FAI RFAX

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** 

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

ADELE

(In French) 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** 

(in French)
What? What will it do?

Jane sees that she has scared Adel e.

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 you can hear her. She comes to suck your blood.

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

JANE

What nonsense.

54 I NT. NI GHT. THORNFI ELD - A GALLERY.

54

Jane holds a candle, the shawl around her; the moaning sound of a gale outside. Her breath vapourises. She holds her candle up to the portrait of the voluptuous woman, curious both as a girl and as an artist. She brings the candle close, to see how the brushwork has achieved the effect of flesh. She hears a sound in the darkness behind her. 'Shhhh...' She is startled.

JANE

Who's there?

Jane's own huge shadow is the only thing that moves. Her candle seems to catch the vapour of another person's breath. Then she hears a whisper further away. She follows it through the darkness, alert with fear.

A moth-eaten chair. A pitted mirror in which a figure

#### 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 FAI RFAX

Now, exercise is a great cure 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 on a nearby stile.

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.

Jane is confounded.

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

Jane resists the imperious tone.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)
I must beg of you to please come here, Mss 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)

Jane Eyre adapted by Moira Buffini February 2010 39.

MRS FAIRFAX (CONT'D)

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 I NT. NI GHT. THORNFI ELD - 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** 

(In French)

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.

Adel e 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** 

Par don?

#### ROCHESTER

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

(Slightly insulted)
I was brought up by my Aunt, Mrs
Reed of Cateshead, 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 Gat eshead 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 FAI RFAX

(placing his tea)

I daily thank providence for sending us Mss 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 FAI RFAX

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 at that stile?

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 gone. The elves have all left England for some wilder country where the woods are still savage and the population scant.

ROCHESTER

You lie. I broke through one of your rings and you spread that causeway with your ice.

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

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

Adel e 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?

**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 breathlessly enters.

MRS FAI RFAX

Sorry to disturb. He wants to show your art to his company.

Jane looks at her in disbelief.

JANE

He cannot!

MRS FAI RFAX

Is this it here? Thank you.

Jane watches helplessly as Mrs Fairfax takes her portfolio.

Jane Eyre adapted by Moira Buffini February 2010 44.

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!

Her excitement grates on Rochester's nerves.

ROCHESTER

Take it away and disembowel it.

ADELE

Oh Oiel! Que c'est beau!

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

**ROCHESTER** 

Mss 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 simpleminded 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.

Adel e, 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...

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, Mss Eyre? D'you think me handsome?

JANE

No sir.

Rochest er 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 Mss 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, Mss 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**

I have a right to be abrupt and exacting - on the grounds of my superiority in age and experience.

#### JANE

Your claim to superiority depends on the use you've made of your age and experience.

## ROCHESTER

Which is indifferent. And this is why I sit, galled by my own thoughts - and order you to divert me. 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 - even for a salary.

#### ROCHESTER

Humbug. 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 school girl governesses would have answered me as you've just done.

#### JANE

Then you've not spent much time in the company of school girl governesses, 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 eight een 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?

Mrs Fairfax notes the awkward silence between Jane and Rochester, concerned.

## 66 EXT. DAY. THORNFIELD - THE GROUNDS. SPRING.

66

Jane is playing battledore and shuttlecock with Adele under a great horse chest nut tree. A rustic bench wraps around it. 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.

## JANE

Just as it turns to come down - that's when you hit it.

Adel e serves. The game continues apace. Jane notices Rochester. He is looking up at the battlements, his features clouded with shame and detestation. Jane misses her shot.

## JANE (CONT'D)

Mademoiselle has got to rest. Play with Pilot for a while.

She approaches Rochester.

## JANE (CONT'D)

Is our game disturbing you, sir?

He looks round. A hard and cynical expression has mastered his countenance, something resolute. Jane is taken aback.

#### ROCHESTER

On the contrary. I like your game. I like this cold, hard day. I like Thornfield.

Rochester starts to walk across the grounds at a fast pace. Jane follows.

## ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

I've been arranging a point with my destiny, Mss Eyre. My destiny stood up there by that chimmey, like one of the hags who appeared to Macbeth. 'You like Thornfield?' She said. 'Like it if you dare'. Well, I dare. It's felt like a plague house for years -

He turns, the whole house now in his sights. He shouts:

## ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

But Thornfield is my home and I shall like it!

Adel e is running after them

#### **ADELE**

Mademoiselle - II faut jouer -

Rochester snaps at her, taking out all his anger on the hapless child.

#### **ROCHESTER**

(in French)
Can't you see she is speaking with
me?

(in English)
Keep your distance child, or go in!

Adele's face crumples into fear. Rochester walks away. He expects Jane to accompany him She does not. Instead she turns and watches Adele run back to their game. Sophie is sitting nearby, sewing. Adele seeks her comfort. Jane is about to follow when she suddenly finds Rochester back at her side. He seems contrite.

# ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

She's the daughter of an opéra dancer, Celine Varens. A beauty. She professed to love me with great ardour. So I installed in her in a hotel, gave her gowns, cashmeres, diamonds - in short, I was an idiot.

#### JANE

To fall in love, sir?

# **ROCHESTER**

You've never felt love, have you Mss Eyre? Your soul still sleeps. You're floating gently in the stream of life, unaware e0fTc s6nF Jane Eyre adapted by Moira Buffini February 2010 50.

# ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

Some years later, I heard that Celine had abandoned the brat, disappeared to Italy and left it destitute.

Jane involuntarily takes a step towards Adele.

# ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

So I lifted it from the mud and slime of Paris and brought it here, to grow up in the wholesome soil of an English country garden... expiating all my sins with one good work.

Jane looks up at Rochester trying to fathom his tone.

# ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

You listen, Mss Eyre, as if it was the most usual thing in the world for a man like me to tell stories of his opera-mistresses to an inexperienced girl like you.

Sophie is watching Jane and Rochester with more interest than seems polite. Jane runs back to Adele. Rallies her. Rochester watches. The effect his story has had is apparent in Jane's kindness.

# 67 INT. DUSK. THORNFIELD - GALLERY / THE RED ROOM

67

Jane is in the long gallery looking at the portrait of the half-naked lady. She hears a noise. She turns. Rochester is striding past her. He disappears through the latched door at the end of the corridor. Jane follows. She opens the door and finds herself in the Red Room

It is cold and empty, just as it was at Gateshead. Jane walks to the mirror. Her ten year old reflection comes to meet her. She searches the face of her child-self. The child looks as if she is trying to tell her something. A murmur seems to come down the gaping chimmey; a woman's deep sigh. The reflection is terrified.

Something moves in the shadows behind Jane. She hears a low thump. It seems to be right next to her. She tries to scream -

## 68 INT. NIGHT. THORNEI ELD - JANE'S BEDROOM / CORRI DOR.

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.

Jane Eyre adapted by Moira Buffini February 2010 51.

There is a single candle burning in its holder on the rush matting, flickering in the draft. A fly is buzzing next to it, dying.

Jane picks up the candle. She walks up the corridor. Behind a pillar we see a shadowed figure watching. Jane is silent, her breath making vapour. The buzz of the dying fly.

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.

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 (CONT'D) 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!!

Rochest er wakes, coughing.

JANE (CONT'D) It is I, Jane Eyre, sir.

ROCHESTER

What in the name of all the elves in Christendom -

JANE

Your room is set on fire.

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 (CONT'D)

I'll light the lamp.

**ROCHESTER** 

Light the lamp at your peril.

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.

сит то

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 not alking fool.

JANE

But -

ROCHESTER

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

JANE

Yes, sir.

(She takes of f his coat.)

ROCHESTER

Is that how you would leave me?

Rochester is between Jane and the door.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

Jane, fire is a horrible deáth. 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.

Jane Eyre adapted by Moira Buffini February 2010 54.

#### MRS FAIRFAX

Mr Rochester put it out with the water from his stand. We must thank providence he awoke. If it were not for his swift actions we could have all been burnt alive in our beds.

Mrs Fairfax's outrage seems directed particularly at Grace. Grace is unaffected. She passes her and goes.

## 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. We're you not aware? He left after breakfast.

Jane takes this piece of news like an invisible shock.

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

JANE

Ch?

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

74

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, mademoi selle?

Jane turns.

73 DELETED. 73

# 74 I NT. EVENI NG. MORTON - THE SCHOOL ROOM

Jane finds herself in front of St John Rivers. She is in her little schoolroom at the end of the day. 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

free and honest. I wonder at the goodness of God and 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 firm y 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 -

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)

Jane Eyre adapted by Moira Buffini February 2010 57.

ST JOHN

Is that what you seek, to be happy?

St John senses the struggle in her lack of answer.

ST JOHN (CONT'D)

I wonder if we do not share the same alloy...

JANE

What do you mean?

He is about to say more, when he suddenly snatches up a piece of paper.

ST JOHN

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

Not hing.

He folds the paper and takes it.

ST JOHN (CONT'D)

Good night.

He goes. Jane I ooks after him, dumbfounded.

# 74A INT. NIGHT. MORTON - JANE'S COTTAGE.

74A

Jane is washing. It is very cold. She kneels over a basin of water in front of her tiny fire. She quickly takes her chemise off and washes her top half. Then quickly into the towel. She pulls it around herself. Her brief nakedness has brought up a host of painful emotions; shame, desire, an agony of love.

She goes into her dark bedroom and curls up on the bed.

# 75 I NT. DAY. THORNFI ELD - JANE'S BEDROOM

75

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

MRS FAI RFAX

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. Mss 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.

She enters Rochester's room with an armful of bed linen. It has been returned to its former glory. Adele follows. Jane gives Sophie the sheets.

INT. DAY. THORNFIELD - THE KITCHENS. 77

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

(in French) They are here!

Adele makes a bee-line for the kitchen window.

ADELE

Regardez! Regardez!

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

Adel e flies out of the corridor into the great hall. Jane follows Mrs Fairfax into the hall, helping her to until 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...

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

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

JANE

Adele, come away. He will not ask for you today.

Adele's face falls.

77C INT. DAY. THORNFIELD - A STAIRWELL

77C

Jane walks down towards the kitchen. In a dark recess, one of the visiting valets is making fun of Sophie. She is giggling, blushing. Her laughter dries up as Jane passes.

## 78 I NT. NI GHT. THORNFI ELD - THE KI TCHENS.

78 \*

Jane enters. The staff are just finishing their meal - eaten before the guests have theirs. Mrs Fairfax doesn't lose a single opportunity to give out instructions.

#### MRS FAIRFAX

And for those of you who are new to Thornfield I'd like to remind you that the third floor is absolutely out of bounds. The floors are very old and quite unsafe...

The visiting servants stare at Jane as she passes, unsure of her status. Martha ignores her, too focussed on the meal she is preparing.

Jane threads her way through to the larder, picks up a tray and begins to load it with cold food. Leah comes in.

LEAH

Is everything all right, miss?

JANE

It seems that in the excitement, Adel e and I have been for gotten.

Leah looks momentarily contrite - and is gone.

## 79 I NT. NI GHT. THORNFI ELD - THE GALLERY.

79

Jane comes on to the gallery with her tray, just as the ladies start to issue from their rooms. She stands in a corner. An approach of chatter; subdued vivacity. A flurry of multicoloured silks, lace and velvets. They descend the staircase as noiselessly as a bright mist.

Jane steps out. She walks into the path of Blanche Ingram, who is stunning - and ghostly - in white. They both startle.

JANE

Excuse me, miss.

Rochester is at the top of the stairs.

ROCHESTER

You dazzle me quite.

They turn, unsure of whom he is addressing. Jane instantly sees by his expression that it is Blanche. He pays no heed to Jane who sinks into the shadows.

#### BLANCHE

All these old houses have a grey lady. I think I've just met yours.

JANE

I don't have a dress.

MRS FAI RFAX

Don't worry child; who will notice?

81A DELETED. 81A

82 I NT. NI GHT. THORNFI ELD - 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, monsi eurs.

Adel e makes a dainty curtsey - pink frock, ringlets, lace gloves. In the midst of the crowd is Blanche.

BLANCHE

Why, what a little puppet.

Adel e blissfully disappears into a moving sea of dresses. Jane watches her go, proud of her charge. Rochester is with the men. Jane watches him She hears a smattering of his conversation.

COLONEL DENT

You simply must replace it, Fairfax. That conveyance you brought us in has been around since the last crusade I should think.

Rochester laughs a low easeful laugh. Jane smiles to see it. Only one guest is looking in her direction; Blanche.

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

BLANCHE

I thought you weren't fond of children?

ROCHESTER

I'm not. She was left on my hands.

BLANCHE

Why don't you send her to school?

**ROCHESTER** 

She has a governE. 52 Tm - 0. 197 onR yoTo - 0Eu (\*) Tj 1 w pul

## BLANCHE

On the poor child. I had half a dozen governesses in my day - detestable, ridiculous incubi -

#### LADY INGRAM

Did you say governesses? Mr Rochester... I ache for you. I've been a martyr to their incompetence and quite hysterical caprice. It's a miracle they didn't send me quite demented. At best they're constant weepers and at worst they're morally degenerate -

#### ROCHESTER

How?

LADY INGRAM

You can imagine.

# **ROCHESTER**

My imagination fails me.

## LADY INGRAM

But I see that one of the tribe is hidden there behind the curtain.

#### ROCHESTER

Yes but my curiosity is past its appetite. It must have food.

#### LADY I NGRAM

I will tell you all about them in your own private ear...

## **ROCHESTER**

(Closer to her)
Pray tell me now.

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

#### BLANCHE

Madame Joubert... I couldn't help myself. I was a curious child and I had a scientific interest in the way her face would redden and her veins pop out.

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, if you please. Signor Eduardo, what shall it be?

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

## ROCHESTER

Beaut y...

#### BLANCHE

Why there's nothing new to be said. I give you back male beauty. Mamma, what's your idea of male beauty?

LADY INGRAM

My son, of course.

LORD I NORAM

Hear hear.

#### BLANCHE

Ch, Tedo's quite typical of the young men of today. They're so absorbed in the pursuit of fashion that they've forgotten how to be men at all.

LORD I NORAM

I say -

#### BLANCHE

A man should pay no heed to his looks.

(Glancing at Rochester)
He should possess only strength and valour; a gentleman or a highwayman.
His beauty lies in his power.

## ROCHESTER

So a pirate would do for you?

#### BLANCHE

(Qui et I y)

As long as hé resembled you.

Rochester laughs quietly. Jane is heading for the door.

## 83 EXT. NI GHT. THORNFI ELD - THE GREAT HALL/STAI RWELL

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 amtired, 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** 

Jane Eyre adapted by Moira Buffini February 2010 65A

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 condernation 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

Ri char d.

MASON

Fairfax...

They embrace. Mason is genuinely moved as if reunited with

Jane, the innocent, doesn't realise what is going on at first. Then she turns, mortified.

85 I NT. DAY. LOWOOD - THE HALL.

85

Helen Burns is walking towards Jane with something in her arms. Jane is standing on the pedestal of infamy, ten years old. The rising sun is all around her.

Jane looks down at the bundle. In it, is a newborn boy. Jane looks up to ask Helen for help. But Helen has gone.

The baby starts to cry. Jane panics.

The crying becomes deafening, terrifying. It is not a baby's cry but a MAN's scream

86 INT. NIGHT. THORNFIELD - JANE'S BEDROOM THE GALLERY.

86

Jane wakes, hearing 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 starts to pull on her dress.

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

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 I NGRAM

## ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

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

He is speaking to Blanche gently, as if she's a child. He pushes her hair aside; an intimacy that causes a pang to Jane. She looks down; sees by the light of her candle that Rochester's dressing gown is smeared with blood.

# ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

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

#### BLANCHE

Is there anything I might do?

## ROCHESTER

Mss Ingram, ladies, please return to your nests like the doves that you are. I assure you, all is well. ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

Here. Bring the water.

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.

MASON

Am I dying?

ROCHESTER

Not at all.

MASON

She bit me - while the knife was in - Bit me -

**ROCHESTER** 

It was folly to see her tonight and alone.

MASON

I thought I might have done some good.

ROCHESTER

Richard -

MASON

She sucked the blood. Said she'd drain me -

ROCHESTER

You must think of her as dead, dead and buried -

MASON

How can I?

He starts to cry. Rochester is silenced, infuriated. He turns to Jane.

**ROCHESTER** 

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 tendrops 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. 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 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. Mason makes her start by taking her wrist. He is trying to say something. He sinks back, unable.

CUT TO:

Jane is gazing at the carved wooden cabinet; the faces of the apostles, a crucifix at the top; the suffering of Christ. The buzzing of the fly. In the distance the church bell tolls four. A lock turns in the inner door. It opens. Jane is paralysed. Mrs Poole comes out. She locks the door behind her, walks across the room and disappears.

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

88 DELETED. 88 <sup>3</sup>

## 89 EXT. DAY. THORNFI ELD - THE GROUNDS.

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

89

MASON

Fairfax - Let her be treated as tenderly as may be -

ROCHESTER

I do my best and have done it and will do it!

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 (CONT'D)

That house is a dungeon.

JANE

It is a splendid mansion, sir.

ROCHESTER

It is slime and cobwebs.

Dawn light illuminates the trees. Rochester keeps walking.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

It's a strange night 'you' ve passed.

JANE

Yes sir.

**ROCHESTERROCHESTER** 

JANE That woman - Grace Poole -

ROCHESTER
Grace is not the danger! Jane...

Jane Eyre adapted by Moira Buffini February 2010 73.

Rochester is stunned at her miscomprehension.

## **ROCHESTER**

So... You've noticed my tender feelings for Mss Ingram?

Jane takes this confirmation like a blow.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

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**

(Cently)

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 hands it to Jane, his face bitter.

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.

He turns a corner and is gone. Jane is left alone.

89A DELETED. 89A

90 INT. DAY. THORNFIELD - JANE'S BEDROOM

Jane is lying staring at the ceiling, confounded by Rochester, wondering what he means, what he will do and what lives above her. There is a knock at the door. Leah is there.

90

LEAH Letter for you, Mss. Jane approaches with the 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.

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

Fifteen 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 five.

**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)

## 92A INT. DAY. THORNFIELD - THE GALLERY.

92A \*

Jane is walking back to her room As she passes Blanche's door, she cannot help but overhear a conversation between Blanche and Lady Ingram

#### LADY INGRAM

Your beauty is beguiling him but not your conversation. The worst is that you give and have opinions, Blanche. He wants to know that he can mould and shape you in his vein.

#### BLANCHE

You named me well... I am to be white canvas upon which he may paint.

Bl anche sighs, deeply. Jane turns for her room

### 93 I NT. DAY. GATESHEAD - BESSIE'S PARLOUR.

93

Bessie, now housekeeper, is moving forward to meet Jane.

#### BESSI E

Bless you! - I knew you'd come.

They embrace.

JANE

Bessie... Shall I see her now?

## BESSI E

Look at you. What a lady you've become. Why, you're almost pretty.

# 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. You sent for me, and here I am

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. The fever at Lowood. She should have died!

JANE

Why do you hat e her so?

MRS REED

Her mother. Reed's sister - his beloved. When news came of her death he wept like a fool. Sent for the baby.

(MORE)

Sickly thing - not strong like mine. But Reed loved it. Kept it by his bed. Made me vow to bring the creature up. Why did he not love mine?

The words are a revelation to Jane. Mrs Reed gazes at her.

 $$\operatorname{MRS} \operatorname{REED} (\operatorname{CONT'}\operatorname{D})$$  Who are you?

JANE

Jane Eyre adapted by Moira Buffini February 2010 78.

This dreadful revelation confounds Jane.

MRS REED (CONT'D)

You fury. You were born to be my torment.

Jane is about to rage at her aunt. But the words die on her tongue. Sitting on the nurse's chair is Helen Burns.

MRS REED (CONT'D)

(to herself)

You called the names of the dead down upon me.

Jane forces herself to forgive.

MRS REED (CONT'D)

You cursed me.

JANE

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

MRS REED

My life has been cursed.

JANE

Please, let us be reconciled.

Mrs Reed shrinks from Jane's touch. Jane wipes her tears.

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 - THE RED ROOM

95

The morning sun is pouring in. Jane looks at herself in the mirror, a calm young woman dressed in pale grey. She goes to the bed. She puts her hand upon it, gently, as if thanking her uncle for all he did. She notices a picture on the wall. A miniature of a brown-haired woman with elfin eyes. Jane takes it off the wall. Bessie appears at the door.

JANE

My mother...

Bessi e nods. Jane clasps the picture, looking round the room

JANE (CONT'D)

Why ever was I so afraid?

Jane Eyre adapted by Moira Buffini February 2010 80.

JANE (CONT'D)

I'm strangely glad to get back again. Wherever you are is my home.

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 I NT. EVENING THORNFI ELD - MRS FAI RFAX'S PARLOUR

98

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

MRS FAI RFAX

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 M ss Ingram favours so well. We'll hear their announcement soon, I'm sure.

Jane cannot endure it. She leaves.

99 DELETED. 99

99A EXT. EVENING. THORNFIELD - THE GARDENS

99A

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

Adel e 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.

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.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

Don't struggle -

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?

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

## 101 EXT. DAY. THORNFLELD - 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 FAI RFAX

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.

Adel e 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 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 I NT. DAY. THE LI BRARY.

102

Jane is curled up in a window seat with Adele. They are looking through a kaleidoscope together.

JANE (V.O.)

Human beings were not meant to enjoy such happiness on earth. To imagine such a lot befalling me... It's too much like a fairy tale.

Jane Looks up to find Rochester watching.

## 102A INT. DAY. THE GREAT HALL - BALCONY

102A

Jane is on her way to her room Rochester is barring her way. He will not let her pass without a kiss. She will not let him have one.

Jane Eyre adapted by Moira Buffini February 2010 85.

ROCHESTER (V.O.)

I shall pour my jewel's into your lap.

Jane wriggles out of his arms and runs away.

102B DELETED.

102B

102C EXT. DAY. THORNFIELD - THE GARDEN.

102C

Rochester is walking with Jane.

ROCHESTER (V.O.)

I'll put my diamond chains around your neck. And clasp my bracelets on your wrists...

He takes her hand and kisses it. He draws her close. Her resistance is crumbling. At last she pulls away.

102D DELETED.

102D

102E INT. NIGHT. ROCHESTER'S STUDY.

102E

Rochester is at his piano playing an augmented forth over and over, brooding.

Jane approaches him She takes him in her arms and kisses his head, like a mother would. He clings to her.

ROCHESTER (V.O.)

I will cover the head I love best with a priceless veil...

103 INT. DAY. THORNFLELD - MRS FALREAX'S PARLOUR.

103 \*

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

ROCHESTER (V.O.)

For you are a beauty in my eyes...

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

ROCHESTER

And I will make the world acknowledge you a beauty too.

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

JANE (V.O.)

Then you will not know me, sir.

Adele wraps the veil around herself.

Jane is waiting, pale with anxiety. Rochester approaches on horseback, Pilot at his side. He is grinning. He pulls Jane up on the horse in front of him She curls into his arms. Rochester senses her distress. He slows the horse.

**ROCHESTER** 

What is it?

Jane cannot articulate.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

Jane Eyre with nothing to say?

Jane Eyre adapted by Moira Buffini February 2010 88.

#### ROCHESTER

When we've been married a year and a day, I promise I'll tell you. Be satisfied Jane. When we're man and wife and far from here, I will tell you...

Jane has no choice but to accept. Rochester takes her in his arms.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

Dear God. It was only the veil...

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...

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

109 I NT/ EXT. DAY. THORNFI ELD - 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 I NT. DAY. THE CHURCH

112 \*

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

WM

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.

**BRI GGS** 

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

**ROCHESTER** 

Proceed.

Wood is utterly dismayed.

**BRI GGS** 

An insurmountable impediment exists.

ROCHESTER

Proceed!

BRI GGS

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

Jane Eyre adapted by Moira Buffini February 2010 90.

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! There will be no wedding today.

Adel e 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.

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.

Jane Eyre adapted by Moira Buffini February 2010 92.

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, finds the door, exits.

115 INT. DAY. THORNFIELD - THE LONG GALLERY.

115

Briggs is trying to catch up with Jane.

### **BRI GGS**

You are clearly not to blame - and your uncle will be glad to hear it. I came at his request in order to prevent this false, dishonourable marriage. Mss Eyre?

Jane is too numb with shock to hear him She hurries towards the sanctuary of her room, leaving Briggs standing in her wake.

116 INT. DAY. THORNFIELD - JANE'S BEDROOM

116

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

CUT TO:

Jane slowly puts her arms around her black dress, as if it is her old self. She sits on the bed. She lies down.

117 DELETED. 117

118 NI GHT. THORNFI ELD - JANE'S BEDROOM

118

Jane wakes.

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. Behind her reflection in the looking-glass room, Jane sees Helen Burns watching her with deep concern.

She turns. No one is there.

## 120 INT. NIGHT. THORNFIELD - SECOND FLOOR.

120 \*

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

Jane falls forward - she has tripped over Pilot - and Rochester springs up catching her in his arms.

ROCHESTER

Jane... For give me. How could I? I'm worthless.

Jane comforts him Her face is full of compassion but she says nothing. Rochester releases her.

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 shakes her head.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

I pledge you my honoùr, 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 can only articulate the betrayal with a moan.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

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 i gnorant and raw. I hardly spoke with her before the wedding...

I brought her here, instead... put her under the care of Mrs Poole. No one knew her relation to me. They thought her a bastard sister or a mistress, long cast-off.

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? 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 -

He holds her.

JANE

Do not say it -

ROCHESTER

It is love.

JANE

I must go apart from you.

ROCHESTER

You cannot mean to I eave 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 of fers no resistance.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

Jane...

u. 195 Tc 0 Tw (5 19 Tc 04n51aso resistance.) TowensNJANETj 1 0 0 1

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

You have never called me by my name. My name is Edward. Say it. Who would you offend by living with me? Who would care?

Jane is almost lost. She speaks in a small voice.

JANE

I would.

Jane's resolve grows. She resists.

ROCHESTER

Will you listen to me?

JANE

I must start again.

ROCHESTER

Will you hear reason?

JANE

I care for myself.

Rochester cries out in frustration. His hold on her becomes violent. Jane looks at him with utter shock.

### ROCHESTER

I could bend you with my finger and thumb; a mere reed you feel in my hands.

He is above her. 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 She stands. He remains, his face buried.

She goes to the door. Rochester turns his eyes to her, willing her to remain.

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

Jane Eyre adapted by Moira Buffini February 2010 97.

## 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 Jane Rochester.

Rochester approaches the door, carrying a candel abra. In the room Jane puts her scant belongings in a bag. She goes to the window, looks down. Sees that she can jump onto the bal cony below.

She looks at her horizon. At the edge of the grounds, a small red-haired girl is waiting for her.

#### **ROCHESTER**

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 down one of the great buttresses at the side of the house.

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

123A

Jane is running; flushed, breathless, her dress soaked with dew. She has her bag of belongings over her shoulder. She trips; falls to her knees.

She looks back. For a moment she seems paralysed. She returns her gaze to the route ahead. She crawls forwards until she is able to raise herself to her feet.

123B DELETED. 123B

### 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.

## 124A EXT. DAY. THORNFIELD - THE GROUNDS

124A

Rochester comes striding out of the house.

Jane Eyre adapted by Moira Buffini February 2010 98.

**ROCHESTER** 

Jane...

He cries out.

ROCHESTER (CONT'D)

JANE!

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

125

Jane is lit by the candlelight and the flames from her fire, her eyes are closed in the painful memory. Outside, a snowstorm how s.

JANE

Edwar d. . .

On her knee is a sketchbook. There is a knock on the door.

CUT TO:

Jane opening the door. Rochester is there, standing in the frozen hurricane and howling darkness. 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 (CONT'D)

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

He takes off his cloak; stamps the snow off his boots.

ST JOHN

I've heard half a story and I'm most impatient to find out the end.

JANE

Please... sit down.

ST JOHN

I know who you are... Jane Eyre...

Jane starts.

ST JOHN (CONT'D)

And I know from whom you hide... a certain Mr Fairfax Rochester.

JANE

Mr Rivers! -

ST JOHN

I can guess your feelings but please hear me. Of Mr Rochester's character I know not hing but he professed to offer honourable marriage to you and he had a wife already.

Jane can hardly bear to hear him say it.

JANE

How did you find out?

ST JOHN

You told me so yourself.

St John opens his pocket book and removes the drawing he took from the school room. A sketch of Adele with her name written absently at the bottom, "Jane Eyre."

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 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. And so I wrote to him

Jane still cannot respond.

ST JOHN (CONT'D)

Are you not going to enquire why he

Jane Eyre adapted by Moira Buffini February 2010 100.

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

ST JOHN (CONT'D)

Your forehead unbends at last; I thought you were turning to stone. 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. She has never seen him laugh before.

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.

JANE

My uncle... I never met him I'd forgotten him It cannot be. I've done nothing to earn it.

ST JOHN

That's a rare reply, Mss Eyre.

Jane is deeply moved.

ST JOHN (CONT'D)

Sit down. I have shocked you.

St John goes into Jane's tiny kitchen. He sees her dinner things as yet unwashed. He rinses out her mug, slightly fastidious, and brings her water. Jane stands.

JANE

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

ST JOHN

Is not hing.

JANE

You saved my life.

Jane drinks. She is thinking hard.

JANE (CONT'D)

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

ST JOHN

Certainly not.

JANE

We could open up Moor House again. And if they would accept me as a sister perhaps I could live there with them

ST JOHN

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

JANE

Twenty thousand is a burden but five thousand each...

ST JOHN

You must compose yourself.

JANE

I never had a brother or sisters - Please, let me be yours.

ST JOHN

You don't have to buy our affection.

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

127 DELETED. 127

INT. NIGHT. MOOR HOUSE - THE PARLOUR. 128

128

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. Help us to choose the harder path, for as our master is longJane Eyre adapted by Moira Buffini February 2010 103.

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. As my wife.

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.

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)

I'll go with you, if I may go free.

ST JOHN

Fr ee?

JANE

You and I should not marry.

St John couldn't be more amazed.

ST JOHN

How can I take out to India a girl of nineteen, unless she is my wife?

He dismisses her objections and walks on.

ST JOHN (CONT'D)
You have said you will come; that is all that matters. We shall marry.
And undoubtedly enough of love would follow.

Jane is shocked.

She hears her name.

ROCHESTER (V. O.)

Jane.

She moves away from St John.

ROCHESTER (V.O.)

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.

She looks all around her at the moonlit landscape.

We see Jane's desperate face. Rochester is not there. But on the horizon, showing her the way is a barefoot red haired girl, wearing a thin white night gown.

Jane's decision is made.

132 DELETED. 132 \*

EXT. DAY. THE ROAD APPROACHING THOR360.48 1 964see Jane's desperate f

Jane Eyre adapted by Moira Buffini February 2010 106.

### 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.

She stares at the ruin aghast.

## 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 Adel e'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. She turns around, watching. Out of the corner of her eye we sees something move in a doorway.

Jane can't tell if what she has seen is real or not. But she wants to find out, to question it. She approaches the doorway with urgency - and some trepidation.

There is nothing there. She walks into the room An old blackened wardrobe is there, its door creaking open. Hanging off the back of it is Rochester's fire-damaged dressing gown. The sound of water dripping. Jane hears a footstep and spins round, startled.

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

MRS FAI RFAX

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 FAI RFAX

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, Sophie and I to the village. He cut himself off from all society. He didn't leave the house.

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. Mr Rochester was in his study. He raised up John and Martha, cleared the house of people; did not rest until they were all safe. But then he went back in. The house was dry as tinder and 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)

By the time that I arrived, she was standing on the roof. The very edge. Mr Rochester was there, reaching out to her. I heard him call her name and beg her to come down. But she did not. She jumped, her arms spread out - in a bid to fly.

The drop is dizzying.

I thought that Mr Rochester would jump down too. But he stood as if he would not move until the fire consumed him Jane is devastated.

MRS FAI RFAX (CONT'D)
Why did you run away in the night
like that, child? I would have
helped you. I had some money saved.
You could have come to me -

They both sob.

JANE

Where is he?

### 137 EXT. DAY. FERNDEAN - THE GROUNDS.

137 \*

Jane is walking through forest, along a grass grown track. She comes to a pair of iron gates. She walks through them

She finds herself in front of a decrepit manor; no garden, just a sweeping semi circle of meadow grass. Jane stops.

John is scything the grass. He falls still when he sees her. He knows exactly why she's there and he motions to the woods at the side of the house.

Jane walks on. It is a family graveyard John has pointed to; the tombstones of the Rochesters. She walks through the stones and looks up over the last.

There, being led by Pilot, is Edward Fairfax Rochester. For a moment she watches him, hardly able to breathe.

Pilot recognises her.

**ROCHESTER** 

Neither is able to speak. The emotions rise on both their faces, overwhelming them

JANE

Edward, I am come back to you.

He holds her.

138 DELETED. 138