Jane Eyre

By
Don Fleming

Based on the Story by
Charlotte Brontë

Dracula was first presented by Seattle Children’s Theatre for the Summer Season.

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Jane Eyre

Characters, in order of first appearance

Evening Star/Helen Burns
Jane Eyre
Mary Rivers
The Reverend Anderson Rivers
Mary Rivers
Young Jane
John Reed
Mrs. Sarah Reed
Mr. Brocklehurst
Miss Temple
Mrs. Fairfax
Leah
Grace Poole
Bertha Antoinetta Mason Rochester
Adele Varens
Edmund Fairfax Rochester
Joseph Eyre
Lady Ingram
Miss Blanche Ingram
Mr. Rake
Frederick Lynn
Richard Mason
SCENE. OUTSIDE THE CHURCH

HELEN BURNS, ANGEL-LIKE, IN SILHOUETTE, NO FEATURES REVEALED, SINGS AS STORM RAGES. TUNE IS ‘I AM WEARY, LET ME REST’ WHILE YOUNG JANE DRAWS DS HER SKETCH OF THE EVENING STAR

HELEN
Heartsick and sore. My body grows weary;
Hard is my way, the weather blows wild:
Soon will the darkness come moonless and dreary
Over the head of this poor orphan child.

Why did they send me so far and so lonely,
Here where the gloomy and grey rocks are piled?
Men are false-hearted, and kind angels only
Keep watch on the steps of this poor orphan child.

THE STORM GROWS IN INTENSITY, AND FLASHES OF LIGHTING REVEAL A DESPERATE AND EXHAUSTED JANE EYRE, POUNDING WITH THE LAST OF HER FAILING STRENGTH ON A CHURCH DOOR.

JANE
God help me. I will die. Take me to you, Helen.

YOUNG JANE CLOSES THE PORTFOLIO. LIGHTS OUT ON THE EVENING STAR AND YOUNG JANE. JANE COLLAPSES. THE STORM RAGES. THE DOOR OPENS.

ANDERSON, A CLERGYMAN, KNEELS DOWN, LIFTS HER UP.

ANDERSON
My God. My God, it is she! Back here!

MARY GASPS WHEN SHE SEES WHO IT IS

JANE
Hide me. Give me sanctuary.

MARY
Her. Back here! She is white as death.

JANE
I have no one. Nowhere.

MARY
We must get her inside quickly. Reverend Anderson Rivers, how can you stand like a statue? The poor thing is near breathing her last breath. Miss Eyre. It is Miss Eyre, isn't it? Do you
remember me? I am Mary Rivers. The sister of Reverend Rivers. Are you ill? You poor thing. We shall help you.

THE STORM MODERATES. HELEN SINGS. ANDERSON AND MARY PUT JANE TO BED AS THE LIGHTS FADE AND THE EVENING STAR SINGS

HELEN
But now much more gently the night breeze is blowing, I see the clouds part, and bright stars beam mild, God through his merciful grace is bestowing Comfort and hope to this poor orphan child.

SCENE. INSIDE THE PARSONAGE OF THE VILLAGE CHURCH

DAWN BREAKS. JANE LIES IN BED

ANDERSON
Has she recovered?

MARY
She is waking. I believe we might talk to her. Tell her...

ANDERSON
How do you do, Miss Eyre? You appear to be much recovered.

JANE
How long have I lain here?

MARY
Miss Eyre, you have been in this bed for a week.

JANE
A week?

MARY
Asleep or delirious all the time. But now you wake --there is much to tell you …

ANDERSON
Mary.

MARY
We must!

JANE
A week! And - does anyone. Does he—know that I am here?
ANDERSON
I have concealed your presence. It was not easy for me. Neither practically nor morally. But you appealed for sanctuary, and sanctuary I gave. Miss Eyre. What will you do now?

MARY
Anderson. Tell her. She has ...

ANDERSON

JANE
Reverend Rivers. If you will help find me work, however humble, I shall go far away. Far away.

MARY
Hush... be still. You shall stay here as long as you wish.

ANDERSON
Mary, She has involved me in scandal. With more to come, it may be. I have been deceived once already. Miss Eyre. I must know more in order to determine how and whether to help you.

MARY
Whether! Reverend Anderson Rivers, how can you be so hard-hearted? Tell her!

ANDERSON
Enough, Mary! We know almost nothing about this young woman. And what we do know is scarcely a recommendation. I am not vindictive. But I must strive to do what is right.

MARY
You blame the innocent.

MARY
I will not be party to --

JANE
No. He is right, Miss Rivers.

MARY
Miss Eyre?

JANE
I will relate my tale, truthfully as I can, and you shall judge what is to be done with Jane Eyre.
JANE DRAWS BREATH

THE SCENE SHIFTS TO GATESHEAD, HELEN SINGS AGAIN AS YOUNG JANE — TEN YEARS OLD — READS. LIGHTING

HELEN
Why did they send me so far and so lonely ...

SCENE. GATESHEAD.

JOHN REED (FROM OFF)
Jane! Jane Eerie! Little Miss Mope! Where do you hide?

JANE HIDES — JOHN REED, A FOURTEEN-YEAR OLD BULLY, ENTERS WITH A STICK.

JOHN REED
Where are you, rat? Come out of your hole. It will go the worse for you if you don’t, I promise. Come out. Now.

JANE PULLS BACK THE CURTAIN, STEPS OUT. JOHN STRIKES HER.

That was for your impudence in answering Mama a while since. And for your sneaking way of getting behind curtains. And for the look in your eyes right now. What were you doing behind that curtain?

YOUNG JANE
I was reading.

JOHN REED
Show the book.

JANE SHOWS THE BOOK.

You have no business to take our books. Give it me. Bring it over here.

YOUNG JANE
I am not a servant.

JOHN REED
No, you are less than that. For you do nothing to earn your keep. You are a dependent, Mama says. Just because Mama used to be married to your uncle that doesn’t make you a real relation. You ought not to live here with a gentleman’s child like me. Give it me.
JANE CROSSES, HANDS HIM THE BOOK. HE GRABS HER WRIST.

I’ll teach you to rummage my book-shelves, for they are mine. All the house belongs to me, or will do in a few years.

HE TAKES THE BOOK. LETS HER GO.

Turn round.

JANE TURNS AROUND. JOHN BELTS HER FROM BEHIND WITH THE BOOK. JANE FALLS. SOMETHING IN JANE SNAPS. SHE ATTACKS HIM IN A MAD RAGE.

YOUNG JANE
Wicked and cruel boy! Tyrant! Nero! Caligula!

JOHN
Mamma! Mamma!

JANE BITES HIM. HE SCREAMS. MRS. REED RUSHES IN, MR. BROCKLEHURST ENTERING SEDATELY BEHIND. SIPPING TEA.

JOHN
Mamma! She ... she bit me.

MRS. REED ENTERS WITH MAID AND BROCKLEHURST. DRAGS JANE OFF JOHN, STRIKING HER.

MRS. REED
For shame! Nasty little cat. Be still. If you don't sit still you must be tied down!

JANE SITS.

YOUNG JANE
I shall sit still.

MRS. REED
You wretched imp. You—you are not even a real relation. You are not fit to associate with my son.

YOUNG JANE
He is not fit to associate with me.

MRS. REED
What?
YOUNG JANE
What would my Uncle John, your husband, say to you if he was alive? I am glad you are not a real relation of mine. I will never call you aunt again as long as I live. I will never come to see you when I am grown up. You treat me with miserable cruelty.

MRS. REED
How dare you affirm that, Jane Eyre?

YOUNG JANE
How dare I, Mrs. Reed? How dare I? Because it is the truth. You think I have no feelings, and that I can do without one bit of love or kindness, but I cannot live so. People think you a good woman, but you are bad. And if I ever escape from here I will say so to anyone who asks me.

MRS. REED
Mr. Brocklehurst, she does have faults of character, I regret to say. And chief among them is a slanderous tongue. As you have heard, she is a liar.

MR. BROCKLEHURST
Then I have come not a moment too soon. Jane Eyre. No sight so sad as that of a naughty child. Do you know where the wicked go after death?

YOUNG JANE
They go to hell.

MR. BROCKLEHURST
And what is hell?

YOUNG JANE
A pit full of fire.

MR. BROCKLEHURST
And should you like to fall into that pit, and to burn there forever?

YOUNG JANE
No, sir.

MR. BROCKLEHURST
What must you do to avoid it?
JANE THINKS

YOUNG JANE
I must keep in good health, and not die.

MRS. REED
As I said. Not the character one would wish. I long to be relieved of this ... responsibility. Mr. Brocklehurst, will you accept her as a pupil at Lowood school?

MR. BROCKLEHURST
Madam, I will.

MRS. REED
I wish her brought up in a manner befitting her prospects. To be made useful. To be made humble. As for vacations, she will, with your permission, spend them all at Lowood. Farewell, Jane Eyre.

A MAID HAS ENTERED WITH YOUNG JANE’S PORTFOLIO AND A SMALL CARPET BAG. SHE HANDS THEM TO JANE and EXITS.

YOUNG JANE
If I were a liar, I would say ‘farewell, dear aunt, I love you and shall miss you.’ But I hate you worse than anyone in the world. Except your son. So I do not bid you fare well. And I am glad I shall never see you again.

MRS. REED EXITS. MR BROCKLEHURST AND JANE DO NOT MOVE, BUT THE SCENE CHANGES AROUND THEM TO LOWOOD SCHOOL. JANE IS FRIGHTENED. THE GIRLS SING AS THEY ENTER, LED BY MISS TEMPLE AND HELEN BURNS. THE SAME SONG, BUT IT SOUNDS LIKE A FRIGHTENING DIRGE.

SCENE. LOWOOD. SCHOOLROOM.

LOWOOD GIRLS
If I were to fall, from cliff top or tower
Or wander in marshes, by false light beguiled,
Still will my Savior, with promise and power,
Take to his bosom this poor orphan child.

BROCKLEHURST
Miss Temple, Fetch the stool.

MISS TEMPLE GOES TO FETCH A HIGH STOOL.

Place the child upon it.
SOME OF THE GIRLS PLACE JANE ON THE STOOL.

We have a new pupil here at Lowood. Jane Eyre. She seems ordinary enough, a plain-feathered bird indeed. Who would think her an agent of the evil one? But I have learned from the good and pious woman who adopted this girl as an orphan that her she has a sharp, wicked and deceitful tongue. Eyre. On this pedestal of infamy you will remain all this day. Of food and drink you shall have none, for you must learn how barren is the life of the sinner. Children, shun her from your sports, exclude her from your conversation, withhold your friendship and deny your love from this day forth. This - girl - is - a - liar!

BROCKLEHURST LEAVES. MISS TEMPLE LEADS THE OTHER GIRLS OUT. HELEN BURNS SNEAKS OUT OF THE LINE.

HELEN
Would you like some bread?

JANE TAKES IT GRATEFULLY. SHE IS STARTLED BY HELEN’S APPEARANCE.

YOUNG JANE
Who are you?

HELEN
Burns. Why do you start?

YOUNG JANE
You remind me of-- May I show you?

HELEN HELPS JANE OFF THE STOOL. JANE GETS THE PORTFOLIO. SHOWS THE PICTURE TO HELEN

HELEN
What is it meant to be?

YOUNG JANE
I meant it to be the evening star. But, looking at you, it seems to me that it was your face I was trying to draw. What is your name besides Burns?

HELEN
Helen.

YOUNG JANE
Helen Burns. Why do you stay with a girl whom everybody believes to be a liar?
HELEN
I cannot think everybody believes you a liar.

YOUNG JANE
After what Mr. Brocklehurst said before the whole school?

HELEN
Mr. Brocklehurst is not God. Nor is he even a great or good man. And suppose all the world did think you wicked. If your own conscience absolved you from guilt, you would still have friends, Jane Eyre.

YOUNG JANE
You, Helen?

HELEN
Yes, me. And yourself. And God.

LOWOOD GIRLS RUN BACK ACROSS THE STAGE. THEY BANG INTO JANE AND SCATTER HER DRAWINGS THEN RUN OFF TAUNTING “LIAR, LIAR”. MISS TEMPLE FOLLOWS THEM ON AND HEARS THEM.

HELEN
Jane, perhaps you feel as though you have come to a terrible place. Perhaps you feel hate towards those who sent you here. But life is too short to spend in nursing animosity.

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

HELEN
You are loved, Jane. An invisible world surrounds you, a kingdom of spirits commissioned to guard you.

MISS TEMPLE HAS PICKED UP A FEW OF JANE’S DRAWINGS. SHE HOLDS THEM UP.

MISS TEMPLE
Do you not see them? Here they are. You have been blessed with talent and intelligence. Not everyone at Lowood is cruel. One can learn here. Intelligence and a proper education will give you independence. Independence of mind.
LOWOOD GIRLS ENTER. BROCKLEHURST STANDS AT A DISTANCE AS A DOCTOR EXAMINES THE GIRLS. SOME OF THE GIRLS ARE MARKED AS ILL AND ISOLATED FROM THE OTHER GIRLS. THEY SLOWLY FAIL AND ARE CARRIED OFF. HELEN ENDS UP IN BED. MRS. REED APPEARS IN GATESHEAD, READING A LETTER. SHE BEGINS TO COMPOSE HER OWN.

MRS. REED
Dear Mr. Brocklehurst,

I extend my sympathy for the sufferings that have been visited upon you and your institution. I rejoice to hear that you and your family have removed to a place of safety, where the epidemic of typhoid fever cannot reach you.

In reply to your query: It is NOT possible for me to remove Miss Eyre from Lowood School. I will not risk bringing her under my roof, to infect to my own dear boy, and I have no other place to keep her. In God we all trust, and I do not doubt that the moral education you have imparted to the child will enable her to bear whatever fate the Almighty has in store.

Most Sincerely Yours etc.,

Mrs. Sarah Reed

SCENE. LOWOOD. DORMITORY BED.

YOUNG JANE
Helen.

HELEN
Is it you, Jane? What are you doing here? It is almost midnight.

YOUNG JANE
I couldn’t sleep until I saw you. They said—they said you--

JANE TAKES HELEN’S HAND.

HELEN
You’re freezing. Your little feet are bare. Come here beneath my quilt.

JANE CLIMBS INTO BED NEXT TO HELEN.

YOUNG JANE
Oh, it is warm. They said you were sick. But you look so happy, so peaceful. I am glad it wasn’t true.
HELEN
I am happy, too, Jane. I’m going home.

YOUNG JANE
Oh, Helen, I shall miss you, but I am glad. You will come back, when the typhus epidemic has ended? You’re lucky. I know Mrs. Reed would never send for me, even if I become ill.

HELEN
No, Jane. To my last home, where all is light. I am going to God.

JANE FEELS HER FOREHEAD. RECOILS AT THE HEAT.

HELEN
Don’t be sad. I’m happy.

YOUNG JANE
But I could not bear it if you .. I cannot bear it.

HELEN
Do not say so. You have a passion for living, Jane. You must remain in good health, and not die.

YOUNG JANE
Don’t leave me. Don’t leave me. We should never see one another again.

HELEN
Don’t cry. Don’t cry, Jane. One day, one day, you will join me in the region of bliss...

YOUNG JANE
Do you really believe so?

HELEN
The Everlasting will never destroy a mind that he has created. I believe in Almighty Power. I trust to Eternal Love. I could sleep now. Don’t leave me. I like to have you near.

YOUNG JANE
I will not leave you, Helen.

HELEN KISSES JANE.

YOUNG JANE
No one shall take me from you.

THE BELLS TOLL. DAWN BREAKS. MISS TEMPLE COMES AND PRIES JANE ARMS OFF OF HELEN’S LIFELESS FORM. OTHERS COME AND BEAR OFF HELEN’S BODY. HELEN ASCENDS TO HER EVENING STAR STATION TO WATCH OVER JANE.

ADULT JANE ENTERS WITH CARPET BAG AND PORTFOLIO AND A NEWSPAPER.

YOUNG JANE TAKES OFF HER BONNET AND HANDS IT TO BARELY ADULT JANE AS JANE SPEAKS.

JANE
A young lady is desirous of a situation as governess. She received her education at Lowood Academy, where she has been a student six years, head girl for the last three, and teacher for two. She is qualified to teach the usual elements of a good British curriculum, together with Drawing and French.

Please direct responses to Miss J.E. at the Yorkshire village post office.

MISS FAIRFAX APPEARS WITH A NEWSPAPER.

MISS FAIRFAX
If J.E., who advertised in the Yorkshire Herald of last Thursday, is in a position to give satisfactory references, and can guarantee spoken fluency in French, a situation can be offered to her. There is but one pupil, a little girl, under 10 years of age. The salary is 30 pounds per annum. Please send references, address and all particulars to Mrs. Fairfax, Thornfield Hall.

DURING THIS READING THE TRANSITION IS COMPLETED, MAINLY BY LEAH WHO RUNS ABOUT WITH GREAT ENERGY AND SOMEWHAT LESS EFFICIENCY. JANE STANDS BEFORE MISS FAIRFAX AT THORNFIELD. SHE WITH HER BAG AND PORTFOLIO, IN TRAVELLING CLOAK. COLD.

SCENE. THORNFIELD.

LEAH
She’s come! Mrs. Fairfax, she’s come. The governess! She’s right here. This is her. I don’t know her name. Wotcha name?

MRS. FAIRFAX
Thank you, Leah. How do you do, my dear?

JANE
Are you Mrs Fairfax?

MRS FAIRFAX
Indeed I am.

JANE
I am Jane Eyre

MRS FAIRFAX
What a tedious journey you must have had. In winter. Leah, please take up Miss Eyre’s things!

LEAH
Yes, Mrs. Fairfax! Uh ... where am I to put her? She not being exactly--

MRS FAIRFAX
The room we made up for her a week ago, Leah. Second floor, front.

LEAH
Oooh! Second floor, front. I remember now, Mrs Fairfax. Second floor front it is.

LEAH EXITS UP STAIRS WITH JANE’S LUGGAGE.

MRS FAIRFAX
Here. Your poor hands must be numb.

MRS FAIRFAX UNDOES THE RIBBON ON JANE'S BONNET.

MRS FAIRFAX
My goodness... How young you are.

JANE
I am eighteen. I have been teaching at Lowood for two years.

MRS FAIRFAX
Oh yes. And I am sure we are very lucky to have you. Do sit down. Here, by the fire. I've put you on the second floor, just above. Small room, but very cozy and convenient.

JANE
I thank you, Mrs. Fairfax. I had heard that governesses were often consigned to a garret in the attic.

MRS FAIRFAX
Oh, no! There are rooms higher up, of course, but we keep them shut up, for the most part.

**GRACE POOLE ENTERS WITH A MUG OF PORTER, TAKING SIPS**

Grace! This is Miss Eyre, the new governess. Jane, Grace Poole.

**GRACE SIPS. JANE INCLINES HER HEAD.**

**JANE**
Mrs. Poole.

**MRS. FAIRFAX**
Grace does the sewing.

**GRACE**
Right. And I had better be back at it, Mrs. Fairfax. Miss Eyre.

**JANE**
Mrs. Poole.

**GRACE EXITS**

**MRS. FAIRFAX**
I'm so glad you are come, Miss Eyre. To be sure this is a grand old house but I must confess that in winter one can feel a little dreary and alone.

**LEAH REENTERS**

Leah, would you make a little hot port and cut some sandwiches?

**LEAH**
Oh, yes, Mrs. Fairfax! I’ll just go and make a little hot port and cut some sandwiches. That would be lovely. Thank you, Mrs. Fairfax.

**MRS FAIRFAX**
Leah! ... and then bring them in here. For Miss Eyre and myself.

**LEAH**
Oh. Oh.

**LEAH EXITS**

**MRS. FAIRFAX**
Leah is a very nice girl and Grace Poole is—but, well, they are servants—and one cannot talk to them on terms of equality. Last winter not a soul came to the house from November to February. I thought I should go distracted.

JANE
And am I meeting Miss Fairfax tonight?

MRS FAIRFAX
Who?

JANE
Miss Fairfax—my pupil?

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

JANE
Who is Mr Rochester?

MRS FAIRFAX
Why, the owner of Thornfield. Mr Edward Rochester.

JANE
I thought Thornfield Hall belonged to you.

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

JANE
Will Mr. Rochester wish to see me?

MRS FAIRFAX
Lord no, he’s away on the continent. Hard to say when he’ll return. Even then, he doesn’t like speaking much to anyone. No, no.

MRS FAIRFAX LAUGHS. HER LAUGHTER IS ECHOED BY LAUGHTER OF A DIFFERENT SORT. BUT SO SOFT THAT NEITHER WE IN THE AUDIENCE NOR JANE ARE SURE WE HEARD ANYTHING.

ADELE RUSHES INTO THE ROOM, FOLLOWED BY A HARRIED LEAH, POSSIBLY WITH FOOD OR HALF-HEATED PORT OR SOMETHING.
LEAH
Adele! Adele!

MRS. FAIRFAX
Leah.

LEAH
Oh, I am sorry, Mrs. Fairfax, I did remember - ‘present her properly, Leah, after the new governess had a chance to gather her wits’, but she is so wild ...

ADELE
Ah, Mademoiselle, Mademoiselle! Est-il vrai que vous soyez vraiment ma nouvelle institutrice et pouvez-vous vraiment parler ma langue?

Oh, Miss, miss, is it true that you are really my new governess and can you really speak my language

LEAH
Sorry, Miss Eyre. She don’t speak no English.

MRS. FAIRFAX
She is French.

JANE
So I see. (FRENCH)
Oui, enfant, je parle français.
Yes, child. I speak French.

ADELE
Ah, Et vous êtes jeune ! Vous n'êtes pas joli. Quelle domage ! Mais je peux supporter cela. Est-ce que je peux chanter pour vous?
Oh, And you are young! Not pretty, no. But that is all right. May I sing for you?

JANE
Pas maintenant, svp. Peut-être après que nous ayons été présentés.
Not now, please, child. We have not yet been introduced.

ADELE
Ah, vous comprenez ! Vous parlez ma langue aussi bien que M. Rochester ! Je suis comme un oiseau laissé hors d'un camp. Svp. Je dois chanter.
Oh, you understand! You speak my language as well as Mr. Rochester! I am like a bird let out of a cage. Please. I must sing.

JANE
Plus tard. En quelques minutes, Adele. Si vous montrez la patience.
Later. In a little while, Adele. If you show patience.

ADELE SHOWS PATIENCE. MRS. FAIRFAX AND LEAH ARE ASTONISHED. IT IS LIKE A MAGIC SHOW TO THEM.

LEAH
Bless me. Miss, can you really understand her when she runs on like that?

JANE
Yes, ah...

JANE IS UNSURE HOW TO ADDRESS LEAH. MRS. FAIRFAX TELLS HER.

MRS FAIRFAX
Leah, Miss Eyre.

JANE
Yes, Leah. I can understand her.

Vous pouvez m'appeler Miss Eyre.
I am indeed your new governess. You may call me Miss Eyre.

ADELE
Enchante, Miss Eyre. Je me presente. Je m'appelle Adele Varens.
I am pleased to meet you, Miss Eyre. My name is Adele Varens.

JANE
Enchante, Adele.
I am pleased to meet you, Adele.

LEAH
Oooh! Miss, ask her about ... (Remembering her place, to Mrs. Fairfax) you know. Please. (ASIDE) You want to know bad as I do.

MRS FAIRFAX
Miss Eyre. Mr. Rochester left Adele with us. But he told us almost nothing about her and, as you can see, we cannot converse. Would you ask her about her parents?
Adele was living with her mother before coming to Thornfield. Where did you live Adele, before you came to Thornfield?

Adele

Adele, my mother, but she is ... to the Holy Virgin now

Adele

And after that, Mr. Rochester came and took me here. He and Mama were in a liason, you know.

Adele

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

Adele

Elle me laissait toujours m'assoir sur les genoux des messieurs qui venaient la visiter, et chanter pour eux. Puis-je chanter pour toi?

Adele

Adele is going to show us her accomplishments.

Adele adopts a lovelorn pose. She sings and acts out a song not really appropriate to her age about a lady plotting vengeance on her lover (Gluck’s ‘Venez, Venez, Haine Impraticable’ from ‘Armide’—could also use ‘Der Holle Rache’—Mozart, or ‘Odio! Furor! Dispetto!’—Haydn—could be recited, rather than sung.)
SAUVEZ-MOI DE L'AMOUR, RIEN N'EST SI REDOUTABLE.
SAVE ME FROM LOVE, NOTHING IS SO FORMIDABLE.
CONTRE UN ENNEMI TROP AIMABLE
AGAINST AN ENEMY TOO AMIABLE,
RENDEZ-MOI MON COURROUX, RALLUMEZ MA FUREUR.
GIVE ME BACK MY RAGE, REKINDLE MY FURY.
VENEZ, VENEZ, HAINES IMPLACABLE,
COME, COME, Implacable HATE.
SORTEZ DU GOUFFRE ÉPOUVANTABLE
FROM THE FRIGHTFUL ABBYSS
OÙ VOUS FAITES RÉGNER UNE ÉTERNELLE HORREUR.
WHERE YOU REIGN OVER ETERNAL HORROR.

DURING THE SONG, GRACE POOLE ENTERS, DRAWN BY THE SOUND. BEFORE
IT IS OVER, A VERY SOFT SOUND FROM ABOVE (IT COULD BE A MOAN, IT
COULD BE THE WIND) MAKES HER HURRY AWAY, SHAKING HER HEAD IN
DISAPPROVAL.

MRS FAIRFAX
How very French. Bedtime now. Leah, take Adele up.

ADELE
No! No no no no no no no!

LEAH
Oh, she won’t never mind me! I shall go distracted. Adele --

JANE
Adele, je suis fatigué. Je dois aller au lit maintenant, aussi.
Nous serons ensemble journaliers. Si vous allez au lit avec Leah
maintenant, comme un petit agneau.

Adele. I am tired. I must go to bed now, too. We will have every
day together. If you go to bed with Leah now, like a little
lamb.

ADELE
Très bien, Mlle.
Very well, miss.

LEAH
Oh, it’s like a miracle, having you here, Miss.

LEAH LEADS ADELE OFF

MRS FAIRFAX
You must be tired as well. Should you like to go up?
Jane
Thank you, Mrs. Fairfax.

They go up stairs. The mad laugh is heard again. Soft, but clear this time. Jane is startled. Mrs Fairfax sees her reaction

Mrs Fairfax
Grace!

Grace enters, coming down the stairs, carrying an empty tankard. A little sooner than would be quite believable had she uttered the laugh herself.

Mrs. Fairfax
Grace! Too much noise, Grace. Remember instructions.

Grace stares at Jane

Grace
Should have given us notice. New, young governess. Got to prepare for new things about. Songs and such, haven’t we?

Mrs. Fairfax
Miss Eyre arrived earlier than expected, Grace.

Grace
Well. We’re calm for the moment.

Grace exits

Jane
Mrs. Poole seems …

Mrs. Fairfax
Yes. Objectionable in some ways, but she does a difficult job well, I will allow that.

Jane
Sewing.

Mrs Fairfax
Yes. A fine old house, Thornfield. But difficult to maintain.

Jane shivers

Mrs Fairfax
Sleep well, Miss Eyre.

THE LIGHTS BEGIN TO FADE. GRACE POOLE GOES BACK UP THE STAIR, HER MUG NOW FULL. SHE TAKES A DRAUGHT AS SHE WALKS. THE WIND BLOWS. THE MOANS OF MADNESS MIX WITH THE WUHERING OF WINTER.

THE FOLLOWING IS AN OLD JAMAICAN FOLK SONG. I CAN’T FIND A TUNE, BUT I HEAR IT IN MY HEAD LIKE A SLOW VERSION OF ‘DIG A TUNNEL’ FROM LION KING 1½.

BERTHA
Bungo Moolatta, Bungo Moolatta
Who de go married you?
You hand full a ring an' you can't do a t'ing
Who de go married you?

A HINT OF BERTHA ANTOINETTE’S TORTURED SILHOUETTE FLASHES BY.

SCENE. THORNFIELD HALL. THREE MONTHS LATER

ADELE
Svp. Svp Mlle. Svp?

Please. Please Miss. Please, won’t you?

JANE
En anglais, Adele.
English, Adele

ADELE
More Please. Please Miss. Please read to me more the --
How do you say ‘le conte de fées’ in English?

JANE
Fairy Tale

ADELE
Please read to me more the fairy tale. I learn the English more fast in that way.

JANE
Very well. But it is all nonsense, you must realize.

JANE READS

JANE
‘Oh do not force me to go,’ the gypsy woman begged, ‘For the gytrash walks these hills...’
ADELE
Gytrash. Qu'est-ce?
(What's that?)

JANE
Hush. 'Gytrash?' he asked scornfully. 'What is that?'

She replied 'A spirit of the North that lies in wait for those who walk after dark. It appears as a great black horse. But it has eyes which burn as red as hot coal and if one should find you -

AS JANE READS, LEAH ENTERS, CLEANS. ALSO LISTENS TO THE STORY.

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

JANE
English, Adele

ADELE
Miss, what will he do to me, this Gytrash? How to escape him?

JANE
Adele, it is a mere story. There are no such spirits.

ADELE
But of course there are! All around us are spirits.
–Ne les croyez-vous pas existez-vous, Mlle Eyre ?
Do you not believe in them, Miss Eyre?

JANE
English. Yes. Yes, I believe in them. But they are good and gentle.

ADELE
But if the good ones, they are true, then also we must believe in the wicked, no?

JANE
Adele ..

ADELE
And there is in this house. Miss Leah has told me: The night lady who wanders here these halls. Sometime I hear:
ADELE IMPERSONATES GHOSTLY BREATHING. LEAH EDGES AWAY, TRYING TO LEAVE INCONSPICUOUSLY.

ADELE
At night I lock the door. If she get in she bite you with her teeth and suck the blood.

JANE
Leah. Have you told Adele such stories?

LEAH
I ... sometimes, to get her to behave. She doesn’t mind me like she does you, Miss Eyre, and --

JANE
Leah. You must not frighten Adele like that.

LEAH
Sorry. I am sorry, Miss Eyre.

JANE
It’s all right. Just tell her it is not true.

LEAH
I ... tell her it is (LEAH HESITATES) not true?

JANE
I must insist. Do you wish me to report this to Mrs. Fairfax?

LEAH
No! I will say it. (AN OBVIOUS LIE) It is not true.

LEAH FLEES BEFORE JANE CAN EXTRACT A MORE CONVINCING DENIAL

JANE
You see. Only fairy tales. No more of this. Go to the nursery, Adele. Mrs. Fairfax asked me to post some letters, so I must walk to town and back before dark. Go on.

ADELE
Oui, Mlle Eyre.

THEN, REMEMBERING TO SPEAK ENGLISH...

Yes, Miss Eyre.
ADELE LEAVES, A BIT NERVOUS. JANE EYRE SETS OUT. THE EVENING STAR APPEARS AND SINGS

HELEN
And should I fall while the broken bridge crossing,
Or stray in the marshes, by false lights beguiled …

THE SONG MIXES WITH THE WUTHERING MOANS OF CHANGING WEATHER. THE LIGHT DARKENS. HORSE HOOVES GROW LOUDER. JANE BEGINS TO HUM ALONG WITH THE SONG. SUDDENLY THERE IS A LOUD CRY OF BOTH MAN AND HORSE. THE HORSE STUMBLES AND THE MAN IS THROWN.

SCENE. A DELL NEAR THORNFIELD.

ROCHESTER (FROM OFF)
Hellfire. Damnation. Up, you cursed beast!

THE HORSE SCRAMBLES TO ITS FEET AND CHARGES IN, TERRIFYING JANE. ROCHESTER LIMPS IN AFTER, COLLAPSES. SEES JANE. THEY ARE BOTH TRANSFIXED.

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

ROCHESTER
Where did you come from, you unearthly creature? What are you?

JANE
Just below.

ROCHESTER
Below?

JANE
Thornfield Hall.

ROCHESTER
Thornfield? You?

JANE
I am the governess.

ROCHESTER
The governess.

ROCHESTER TRIES TO STAND. HIS ANKLE WILL BEAR NO WEIGHT. HE LETS OUT AN INVOLUNTARY CRY. IT ECHOES.
JANE
I am on my way to post a letter. May I fetch someone to help?

ROCHESTER
Help me yourself.

JANE
Excuse me?

ROCHESTER
Come here.

JANE BRIDLES AT HIS IMPERIOUS TONE. ROCHESTER

ROCHESTER
I am in distress and I must beg of you to please come here, Miss Governess.

JANE APPROACHES. ROCHESTER INSTANTLY LEANS ALL HIS WEIGHT ON HER. SHE ALMOST CRUMPLES UNDER IT; THE FIRST TIME SHE HAS EVER TOUCHED AND BEEN TOUCHED BY A MAN. SHE HOLDS HIM UP. AND WALKS HIM CLOSER TO HIS HORSE. ROCHESTER CALMS IT. HE SPRINGS INTO THE SADDLE, GRIMACING AS HE WRENCHES HIS SPRAIN.

ROCHESTER
Easy, now. Easy, there. Ah! Make haste with your letter. For who knows what might lurk in these dark woods...

ROCHESTER GRINS, THEN SPURS HIS HORSE.

Yah!

THE LIGHTS TIGHTEN ON JANE AS THE SOUND OF GALLOPING HOOF BEATS INDICATE ROCHESTER’S DEPARTURE. JANE GAZES AFTER HIM.

HELEN
And should I fall while the broken bridge crossing,
Or stray in the marshes, by false lights beguiled
Still will my Savior, with promise and blessing,
Take to his bosom this poor orphan child.

HELEN FREEZES IN PLACE.

SCENE. THORNFIELD