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2. 本期材料录有二十盘录象带

- LX 141—148 简写读物（简爱、罗宾逊一家）
- LX 149—152 实验室练习
- LX 153—156 听力故事（小妇人等）
- LX 157—160 英语报告

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探索大学英语教学的新途径

创刊以来,我们的工作受到了各方面的重视和支持,这对我们是极大的鼓舞和鞭策。

去年四月份我们参加了由教育部在武汉召开的高等学校公共英语课教学经验交流会,作了发言并播放了部分录象带;五月份参加了在天津召开的华北地区高等学校外语电教协会年会,作了专题报告并播放了录象带;十二月应全国铁路系统高等院校外语工作会议的邀请,作了报告并播放了录象带;今年一月又由北京公外教师协会和高等院校电教协会合办了报告观摩会,让我们介绍了情况,播放了录象带。许多院校领导和广大教师对我们倡导的路子表现了强烈的兴趣和热情。武汉大学派了八位教师来京和我们座谈,其他院校也纷纷派人来和我们联系,到现在已经有武汉大学、武汉地质学院、长沙铁道学院、上海外贸学院、大庆市教育学院、天津理工学院、天津财经学院、辽宁大学、哈尔滨医科大学、吉林工学院、北京师范大学、华中工学院、西安交大、华东交大、南开大学、武汉医学院等二十多所院校派人来和我们联系或转录了我们的录象带。这是十分可喜的现象。

为了帮助大家更好利用我们的材料,我们在这里介绍一下我们设想的一些具体做法。

一、关于录象带教学

录象带教学之可行已为实践所证明。北京外语分院在四年的教学过程(78—82年)中约有一半时间(近一千学时)用闭路电视进行(即一位教师讲课,二百人同时看电视)。现在学生毕业了,大部分成绩不错,水平达到预期要求,不低于用传统方法培养出来的学生。清华大学用闭路电视上外语课已有三年历史,也说明这是可行的。

经验证明用录象带上课有下面这些好处:

- 1) **节省人力:** 录象带可承担教师相当一部分工作,可缓和师资力量的不足,减轻教师的负担,教员可把省下的时间用来进一步提高教学效果和业务水平。
- 2) **提高教学质量:** 由于大部分录象课都由外籍教师上课,起码可以听到地道的英语,比较生动,可以引起学生更大兴趣,比用中文讲课偏重分析讲解肯定效果会好一些。
- 3) **改进教学路子:** 由于强调听说,又有录音带配合使用,听说能力有较快发展,这就有利于打好外语基础,有利于全面掌握外语工具。
- 4) **使用可以灵活:** 录象带就象积木,完全可以灵活使用,教师可以选择适合自己需要的材料,组织成适合学生情况的体系。可以课内用,也可课外用,必要时还可反复播放,甚至完全由学生去自学。

因此大部分院校都是可以从中得到好处的。

目前,数以百计的院校都有录象设备,所缺的是录象带,可说是有枪无弹。因此当务之急是大量购进录象带,一所院校购进一千盘都不为多。一千盘购价不过一万多美金,还不到一个外籍专家一年的费用,而它的作用可抵上几个甚至几十个专家。一盘录象带可供成千上万的人使用,可以使用许多年,实际上是很经济的。目前的问题是不易买到。现在广州还可以买,需购买者可与广州西牛路新编一号教育部广州采购站联系。

供应电教软件目前只是开始,从明年起,我们将向大家提供越来越多的软件。希望大家准备充足的录象带,以便来京转录。随着录象带的广泛使用,教师力量不足的院校,情况将发生巨大变化。

二、关于实验室教学

目前不少院校都有了语言实验室,但作用却发挥得不够。实验室是电化教学的关键,对教学质量起着保证作用。为什么说有这么大作用呢,我们的理由是它可以:

- 1) **保证足够的实践量：**语言要掌握不进行操作是不行的。在实验室里许多学生可以同时练，互不干扰。教员只是导演，学生变成了演员，一节课中学生可有三四十分钟讲话的机会。有了较大的实践量，语言技巧就可以较快地培养起来。由于教员可以监听，课后又可审听学生录音，学生一般练得比较认真。如果布置学生每次准备十至二十分钟的讲话，学生在准备过程中听说就得到很好的训练了。只要肯练，语言能力不愁不迅速发展。
- 2) **促使大量吸收：**录象课及其他课中学生可听到很多东西，但这些东西还不是自己的，只有在实验室里让学生“倒出来”，即把听到学到的东西再讲出来，才能真正学到手。在录象课里教员可以说在撒种子，在实验室里可以精耕细作，让种子开花结果。学生的录音既是口头作业本，也是学习有收获的收条。
- 3) **检查教学效果：**在许多情况下教员常常只顾讲课，学生学得如何却不甚了解。有了实验室，学生大量表演，通过听他们的录音他的进步和缺点大部分都能看出来。这样就可针对他们情况调整和改进教学，并给学生做思想工作及业务指导。非如此不足保证教学效果。

实验室的工作应怎样进行呢，以后我们将专文来谈。主要的是“练”，至于材料主要靠教员去编去找，在《视听英语》里也可找到一部分。只有教员最了解自己的学生，任何现成的材料都要靠教员去加工，使用的方法也要靠教员去创造，但只要教员有教好学生的愿望，这些都是不难做到的。

三、关于录音带的使用

并不是所有院校都有录象设备的，有了一时也不一定能买到足够的录象带。这样就不能开展电化教学了吗？可以的。办法就是利用录音带。

有三种办法利用我们的录音带：

1) **全盘用我们的教材进行教学：**

教师可以用我们的材料组织教学。例如每周六节课，第一学期可以用《口语入门》（二节）、《听力练习》（一节）、《实验室练习》（一节）、《阅读》（一节），“辅导及笔语”一节。没有录象带可由本校教师讲，教师不足的可以讲大课，然后放录音给学生听，以自学为主。没有实验室，可以搞“土”实验室，稍稍隔一下音使互不干扰，每人面前放一台录音机，戴一副耳机，照样可上练习课。甚至放一台录音机让每人轮流来录自己的“口头作业”，这样也会有相当效果。

2) **部分利用我们的录音带进行教学：**

选择适合学生的录音带在自己的教学中使用，督促学生听、练，并进行某种形式的考核，这样也可取得一定的效果。

3) **课外利用我们的录音带：**

可以设置听力室，放置我们的录音带，供学生自由选听，或是利用大喇叭播给学生听，这也可收到一定好处。

如果学校没有任何条件，老师能让学生知道有我们这样一份为他们准备的材料，也可起一定的作用。学生自己会找到使用方法的。

* * *

总之，我们希望大家与我们合作，共同探索一条在大学进行外语教学的新途径。“新”新在利用现代化教学手段从传统教学的作法上更进一步，使教学收到更好效果，使我大学生能真正掌握好外语这门工具，为四化披荆斩棘，做出自己的贡献。

由于我们的条件有限，一切工作都处于草创阶段。我们工作中缺陷甚多，但我们将努力工作，不断改进，争取当好外语教学战线的后勤兵。我们相信在广大师生的共同努力下，高校外语教学必然可以打开新局面，更好适应四化的需要。

CONTENTS

目 录

Forum: In Search of a New Path for Teaching of English in College (探索大学英语教学的新途径)

Simplified Reading** (简写读物)1

1. Jane Eyre (简·爱)
2. Swiss Family Robinson (罗宾逊一家)

Material for Reproduction (20 passages)* (复述材料)32

Material for Listening Comprehension* (听力材料)37

1. To Catch a Thief (捉贼)
2. Adventures in London (伦敦经历)
3. Little Women (小妇人)

Laboratory Drills (Units 29-32)* (实验室练习)59

Grammar** (语法)69

1. The Subjunctive Mood (虚拟语气)
2. The Conditional (条件句)

Wordcraft (IV)** (词汇学习)73

1. Glenn (I) (格林)
2. Glenn (II) (格林)
3. Newcomer (婴儿)
4. Conflicts (I) (矛盾)
5. Conflicts (II) (矛盾)

Tests (测验)

A Talk in English:*** (英语报告)80

From Sri Lanka to Hongkong (从斯里兰卡到香港)

Model TOEFL Tests: Listening Comprehension (II) (标准托福听力测验 II) ...87

Simplified Reading

I. Jane Eyre¹

Charlotte Brontë

(Simplified by Rose Mary Border)

Chapter One The Red Room

One November day, my aunt, Mrs Reed, was in her sitting-room by the fire. Her children, John, Georgiana and Eliza were with her. I was not allowed to sit with them.

"Jane," said Mrs Reed. "you cannot sit with us until you become a more lovable child."

I was nine years old. I was often told that I was not a nice child. I knew very well that no-one loved me or wanted me at Gateshead Hall. But I was an orphan² — my parents were dead and I had no other home.

I went into a small room next to the sitting-room. There I found a book with pictures of birds in it. I drew the curtains and sat behind them, looking at my book.

It was a cold, wet day, and the sky was grey. But I was happy to be alone. I thought, "I hope John Reed doesn't find me here."

I was afraid of John Reed. He was four years older than me. He was fat, with an unhealthy skin. His mother gave him far too many sweets. He did not seem to love her, or his sisters very much.³ He often hit me. Mrs Reed took no notice when her dear son attacked me.

I was not alone with my book for long. Soon, as I had feared, John Reed came into the room.

"Where are you, Jane Eyre?" he shouted.

I did not want him to pull me out. So I came from behind the curtains.

"What do you want?" I said.

"Say, 'What do you want, Master Reed?'" he replied. "Stand here, in front of me."

I did so. He put out his tongue at me. I knew he was going to hit me. I thought

to myself, "How ugly he is." He knew what I was thinking, from the expression on my face. Suddenly he hit me, hard.

"That is for hiding behind the curtains," he said, "and for the look on your face, you rat.⁴ What were you doing there?"

I showed him the book.

"That is not your book," he said. "It belongs to us. You don't own anything. My mother gives you all your food and clothes. You ought to be a beggar. You ought not to live here with rich children like us. Go and stand by the door."

I did as he told me. He threw the book at me. It hit me and I fell, cutting my head against the door. The cut bled and the pain was sharp.⁵

All at once, I was not afraid of John Reed. I was angry.

"Bad, cruel boy!" I said. "You're like a murderer!"

"What?" he shouted.

He ran at me and pulled my hair and shook me.

"Rat! Rat!" he screamed.

I fought him, kicking and biting. Mrs Reed heard the noise. She and Bessie, one of the servants, hurried into the room.

"Oh what a bad girl to attack Master John like that!" said Bessie in a shocked voice.

"Take her to the Red Room and lock her in there," said Mrs Reed.

Bessie pulled at me. By now I did not care what I did. I fought Bessie.

"Stop it!" she said. "Shame on you, Miss Jane, for hitting your young master."

"Master?" I said, "am I his servant, then?"

"No," said Bessie. "You're less than a servant,⁶ because you don't work for your food."

By this time she had pulled me upstairs to the Red Room. She pushed me down on a chair.

"Sit still," she said, "or I'll have to tie you to the chair."

"Oh no, don't, don't tie me up, Bessie," I cried.

Bessie looked at me.

"You ought to understand," she said, "that Mrs Reed keeps you. If she didn't, you would have to go to an orphanage.⁷ You should try to be a more lovable child."

I had nothing to say. I had heard words like these many many times before.

"You must learn not to be so violent and rude," Bessie added. "Now, I shall leave you here. Ask God to forgive you, and make you a better girl."

She went away, locking the door behind her.

The Red Room was seldom used. It was full of heavy furniture. The curtains, the carpet and the bed-cover were all a deep red. It was a cold, dark room, a long way from the sitting-rooms and the kitchen. I knew that Mr Reed had died there, nine years ago.

At first I could only think how unfair they all were to me.

I asked myself questions which I could not answer. Why couldn't I please the Reeds? Why was I always suffering? I did nothing wrong. I tried not to make them angry. Yet none of them liked me. The two girls never played with me. John had attacked me, but no-one told him he was wrong. My head was bleeding, but no-one cared.

The truth was, I was different from them, and I was afraid of them. I was not pretty, or playful. They did not understand me, and they were unkind. I disliked them, and they knew it.

It began to get dark. I could hear the rain against the window, and the wind in the trees. I grew as cold as a stone. I thought,

"They say I am a bad child. Perhaps I am. Perhaps God will punish me."

I began to think of the dead Mr Reed.⁸ I couldn't remember him, of course, but I knew he had been my mother's brother. He had been a kind man. When my parents died, he had taken me to live at Gateshead Hall.

On his death-bed,⁹ my uncle had made Mrs Reed promise to give me a home.

I had read about dead men who came back to earth. They were called ghosts.¹⁰ Mr Reed had died in this room. Perhaps his ghost would come back to it.

As I thought this, I saw a moving light on the ceiling. Probably it was someone crossing the garden with a light. But I was too terrified to think of that.

I rushed to the door and shook the handle and screamed and screamed.

I heard footsteps running up the stairs. The key turned and Bessie came in.

"Are you ill, Miss?" she said. "What are you screaming for?"

"I saw a light, there's a ghost here," I sobbed in terror. "Let me out, let me out!"

Mrs Reed arrived. I begged her, in tears, to let me go downstairs. I told her I was afraid of a ghost.

She didn't believe me. She thought it was a trick, to make her let me out.¹¹

"No," she said. "You are telling lies, and I don't like liars. You will stay here one hour longer. And I will only let you out then, if you are quite still and quiet."

"Oh aunt, have pity, forgive me! I can't stay here, I can't! I shall die if I have to stay in this room!"

"Silence!" said Mrs Reed coldly. "I dislike all this violent screaming and shouting. Be quiet."

She pushed me back into the room, locked the door, and went away. I fell on the floor.

The next thing I remember is waking up in my own bed in the nursery. There was a bright fire burning. A man was leaning over me, and Bessie stood at the end of the bed.

The man was not one of the Reed family, and this gave me a feeling of safety. Then I recognised him. It was Mr Lloyd, a doctor.

He smiled at me.

"You'll soon be well," he said. "Bessie, let her sleep now. I'll come and see her again tomorrow."

He left, and my heart sank when the door closed behind him. But Bessie spoke to me quite gently.

"Would you like something to eat or drink, Miss?"

"No thank you, Bessie."

"Then I shall go to bed, because it's past midnight. But you may call me if you want anything in the night."

She was so unusually gentle and polite that I felt brave enough to ask a question.¹²

"What is the matter with me? Am I ill?"

"You cried and screamed too much in the Red Room. I suppose you made yourself ill."

Then she went to her own bedroom, next to the nursery. I heard her say to another servant.

"I'm almost afraid to be with Miss Jane. She might die. I wonder if she really saw a ghost in the Red Room?"

The next day I was up and dressed by noon. I sat by the fire in the nursery. I wasn't ill, but I had had a shock.¹³ I felt very weak. I couldn't stop crying. The Reeds didn't come near me, and Bessie was still unusually kind. But still the tears ran down my cheeks.

Bessie brought me a book to look at, but I couldn't read. She sang me a song called 'The Poor Orphan Child.' Usually I liked to hear her sing, but this only made me cry more. I was crying when Mr Lloyd arrived.

"Well, how is she?" he said.

"She's doing quite well, sir," said Bessie.

"Then she ought to look happier. Tell me why you're crying, Jane."

"I'm very unhappy," I said.

The good doctor seemed a little puzzled.¹⁴ He looked at me for some time.

"What made you ill yesterday?" he said.

"I was knocked down. Then I was shut up in a room where there is a ghost, until after dark."

"Ghost?" said Mr Lloyd, smiling. "Are you afraid of ghosts?"

"I'm afraid of Mr Reed's ghost. He died in that room. It was cruel to shut me up there alone, without a candle. I shall never forget it."

"Nonsense!" said Mr Lloyd. "Come now. Tell me why you're so unhappy."

"I am an orphan."

"But you have a kind aunt and cousins."

"John Reed knocked me down, and my aunt shut me up in the Red Room."

"Gateshead Hall is a beautiful house. Aren't you thankful to live here?"

"They say I'm less than a servant here, because I don't work."

"Have you any other relations¹⁵?"

"Mrs Reed once told me I might have some relations called Eyre. But she said they were probably very poor, and she knew nothing about them."

"H'm," said Mr Lloyd. "Would you like to go to school?"

I thought about it. If I went away to school, I would leave Gateshead Hall and the Reeds. I would have a new life. I might learn painting, and music, and French.

"Yes," I said. "I would indeed like to go to school."

"Well," said Mr Lloyd, getting up, "who knows what may happen?"

As he left the room, I heard him say to himself,

"That child needs a change of air."¹⁶

After this conversation, several weeks passed. I got better. My aunt, and Georgiana and Eliza, spoke to me as little as possible. John Reed attacked me once, but I hit him hard on the nose. He ran crying to his mother.

"That horrible Jane Eyre. . . ." he began.

Mrs Reed stopped him.

"I told you not to go near her, John. She is not good enough to be with you."

I was listening. I shouted,

"You are not good enough to be with me."

Mrs Reed ran up the stairs after me and pushed me down on my bed.

"You will not move from here or speak one word more all day," she said.

"What would my uncle say to you, if he were alive?"

"What?"

"My uncle is dead," I said, "and so are my parents. But they know you hate me. They know you wish I were dead, too."¹⁷

Mrs Reed looked almost frightened. She went away without a word. Bessie said,

"Without doubt, Miss Jane, you're the worst child that ever lived."

I half-believed her. Certainly I had only bad feelings.

One day in the middle of January, Mrs Reed sent for me. I had not been inside the sitting-room for three months. I was shaking with fear as I stood outside the door. I could hear voices inside.

"What does she want me for?" I thought. "Who's with her?"

I turned the handle and went in. I found myself looking up at a man of the church — a tall clergyman,¹⁸ with a face as hard as stone.

Mrs Reed sat by the fire. She said to the stranger,

"This is Jane Eyre, Mr Brocklehurst, the little girl I wrote to you about."

The stony stranger looked down at me.

"Are you a good girl, Jane Eyre?"

I was silent.

"I'm afraid not, Mr Brocklehurst," said Mrs Reed.

"Oh how sad," he said, shaking his head.

"How sad. Jane Eyre, do you know where bad children go when they die?"

"Down to hell," I said.

"And what must you do, to avoid going to hell?"¹⁹

I thought for a moment.

"I must keep in good health and not die," I said.

This did not seem to be the right answer.

"Do you read the Good Book — your Bible?"²⁰

"Sometimes," I said.

"I have a little boy," said Mr Brocklehurst. "He is younger than you. Sometimes I ask him, 'Would you rather read the Bible or have a piece of cake to eat?' And he chooses to read the Bible. He then gets two pieces of cake."

"The Bible is not always interesting," I said.

"Jane Eyre, you have a bad heart. You must ask God to take away your heart and give you a new one."

I wanted to ask how God could do this. But Mrs Reed said,

"Mr Brocklehurst, if you take this child into Lowood School, I would like you to remember that she is a liar. I am sorry to say she tells lies."

I tried to hide my tears. Mrs Reed went on,

"Jane will have to earn her own living,²¹ Mr Brocklehurst. She must learn to behave better. Of course, she will stay at Lowood for the holidays, if you take her."

"You are quite right, madam," said Mr Brocklehurst. "The girls at Lowood are taught to understand their low place in the world."

"Then you will take her?"

"I will tell the Headmistress,²² Miss Temple, to be ready for a new pupil next week."

When he had gone I looked at Mrs Reed with hatred.

"Go out of the room," she said.

I stayed where I was.

"I am not a liar," I said. "If I were, I would say I loved you. I don't."²³

"Go on," said Mrs Reed coldly.

"I'm glad you're not my real aunt. I will never come to see you when I'm grown-

up. I shall always remember how you locked me in the Red Room. I shall remember that till my dying day."

Mrs Reed looked frightened. "I wish to be your friend, Jane," she said.

"No you don't. You told Mr Brocklehurst that I am a liar. I am not. You are a liar."

"Go back to the nursery, my dear, and lie down and rest."

"I am not your dear. I don't want to rest. Send me to school soon; I hate living here."

"I shall indeed send you to school soon," said Mrs Reed, and she got up and left the room.

Chapter Two

Lowood School

One dark night a week later, I arrived at Lowood School in a coach. Rain, wind and darkness filled the air. When I got out of the coach, I could just see a house with many windows.

I was taken up a wet path, and through a door, into a room with a fire. There I was left alone.

Then the door opened and a tall lady, with dark hair and eyes, came in. Another lady followed her.

The tall lady said,

"This child is very young to travel seventy-five kilometres in a coach quite alone. Are you tired?" she asked, putting her hand on my shoulder.

"A little, madam."

"And you're hungry, too, I expect. Give her some supper before she goes to bed, Miss Miller."

"Yes, Miss Temple."

Miss Miller, I discovered, was one of the teachers. She took my hand and led me through many passages to a wide, long room. I heard voices. About eighty girls sat round four large tables. They were all dressed alike, in plain brown dresses. It was the study-hour, and they were whispering their lessons to themselves.¹

Miss Miller told me to sit down near the door. Then she raised her voice.

"Put the lesson-books away!"

Four big girls got up and took the books away.

"Fetch the supper trays!" commanded Miss Miller.

The four tall girls went out and returned with four trays. On each tray was some water and a cup. There were some thin pieces of bread. Everyone had a piece of bread and a drink of water. I was thirsty, but I was too tired to eat.

After this meal Miss Miller read from the Bible. Then the girls went upstairs to bed. The bedroom was a very long room, with forty beds. Each bed held two girls. I found that I had to share Miss Miller's bed. In ten minutes everyone was in bed. The candle was put out, and I fell asleep.

When I opened my eyes, a loud bell was ringing. It was still dark, but the girls were up and dressing. Shaking with cold, I washed and put on my clothes. The bell rang again. Two by two we went downstairs to the schoolroom.²

We sat down at the tables. For an hour we read the Bible. Then the bell rang again. It was daylight now, and we marched into another room for breakfast.

By now I was very hungry. There was some hot porridge on the tables, but it smelt terrible. I heard a girl say,

"How horrible. The porridge is burnt again!"³

"Silence!" said one of the teachers.

I could not eat even one spoonful of the burnt porridge. No-one could, but we were not given anything else.

We gave thanks to God for the breakfast we had not eaten. The bell rang again and we returned to the classroom. The clock rang out nine, and Miss Temple appeared.

I admired Miss Temple very much. The other teachers seemed ordinary, but she was not.

Lessons began. They continued until the bell rang at noon. Then Miss Temple rose.

"I have something to say to you," she said. "This morning you had a breakfast which you could not eat. I have ordered some bread and cheese for you."

The teachers looked at her in surprise.

"No," Miss Temple said to them; "I have not asked Mr Brocklehurst. I gave the order myself."

We were all glad to have the bread and cheese. Afterwards, we went into the cold garden. Some of the girls ran about and played games. The others tried to find shelter and keep warm. Many of them had bad coughs.

No-one spoke to me. A girl was sitting on a stone seat near me. She was reading.

She looked up from her book and I said to her,

"Can you tell me something about this school?"

"It is a place where orphans are educated," she said.

"But who pays for us?"

"Our friends pay fifteen pounds a year. That is not enough, of course. So rich ladies and gentlemen, who want to do good, pay for us."⁴

"Who is Mr Brocklehurst?"

"He is the son of the rich lady who built Lowood. He looks after the money, and buys our food and clothes."

"Not Miss Temple?"

"Oh no. I wish she did. But she has to ask Mr Brocklehurst about everything."

"Is he a good man?"

"He is a clergyman," she said. "They say he does a great deal of good."

"Are you happy here?" I asked.

The girl said, "You ask too many questions."

At that moment the bell rang, and we went into the house for dinner. Dinner was a mess of potatoes and small pieces of meat, cooked together. It wasn't very nice, but I ate what I could.

After dinner we went back to the schoolroom. We had lessons till five, then another meal; a small cup of coffee and half a piece of brown bread, without butter. Then we had a free half-hour. We all tried to get near the fire, but the big girls stood in front of it.

Then the study-hour; then the supper of bread and water, and bed. Such was my first day at Lowood. Every day was the same, except Sundays. Then, of course, we went to church.

I did not find life easy. It was a very cold, snowy winter; no-one had enough to eat. Often the big girls forced the little ones to give them their food. Sometimes I was in tears because I was so hungry.⁵

I noticed that the girl I had spoken to in the garden was always in trouble.⁶ Her name was Helen Burns. Sometimes the teachers hit her. This made me very angry; but Helen never seemed angry. I said to her, "Helen, don't you want to leave Lowood?"

"No, why should I? I was sent here to be educated."

"But the teachers are unkind to you."

"Not at all. They are right. I have many faults."

"If a teacher hit *me*," I said, "I would take a stick and break it under her nose."

"Then Mr Brocklehurst would send you away. Do you want that? Besides, the Bible says we must return good for evil."⁷

I listened to her in surprise. I didn't understand.

"If people hit us, we should hit them back, shouldn't we?"

Helen smiled.

"You're only a little girl."

"If people hate me, I hate *them*."

"But the Bible says, 'Love your enemies.'"

"Love Mrs Reed, and John?"

"Who are they?"

I explained about the Reeds. She said,

"But Jane, you've remembered every little thing. You would be happier if you tried to forget. Life is too short to nurse hatred."⁸ You must learn to forgive and forget."⁹

Three weeks later the school had a visit from Mr Brocklehurst. I was both worried and afraid. Would he remember what Mrs Reed had said? Would he tell Miss Temple I was a liar?

He came into the schoolroom, and we all stood up. He began to speak to Miss Temple. I listened. I was glad to find that he was not talking about me. He was asking about the bread and cheese she had given us, my first day at Lowood.

Miss Temple explained. He said,

"Madam, you were wrong. In this school, the girls must learn to get over little disappointments."¹⁰ They must learn to suffer, as Christ suffered for us."¹¹

At that moment his wife, Mrs Brocklehurst, and his two daughters came into the room. They wore fashionable, expensive silk dresses. I did not think they ate burnt porridge for their breakfast.

I was sitting at the back of the room. I hoped Mr Brocklehurst would not notice me. Unluckily, I dropped a book.

"Who is that careless girl?" said Mr Brocklehurst.

Then he recognised me.

"Ah! The new pupil, Jane Eyre. Come forward, Jane Eyre."

He told me to stand on a chair, so that everyone could see me.

My face was level with his.¹² Shame and anger filled me. I was not Helen Burns;

I could not forgive people who made me suffer.

Mr Brocklehurst said,

"Can you all see this girl? Even though she is still young, she is a very bad child indeed."

They all looked at me. Their eyes seemed to burn me.

"Teachers," he continued, "you must watch this girl carefully. Girls, you must not play with her. This girl is — a liar."

Mrs Brocklehurst and her daughters looked shocked.

Mr Brocklehurst said,

"Jane Eyre will stand on this chair for half an hour. No-one will speak to her for the rest of the day."

They went away, and I stood there. Helen Burns smiled at me. It was strange; her smile made me feel brave, and I lifted up my head.

I did not really mind the hardships at Lowood School.¹³ I wanted the teachers to like me. I wanted to learn my lessons well, and please them. And now, no-one would love me.

When the bell rang the girls and teachers left the room. I got down from the chair. I lay on the floor and cried.

Helen came in. She had brought my coffee and bread.

"Helen," I said, "why do you stay with a girl like me? Everyone thinks I'm a liar."

"Everyone?"

"No-one will like me now."

"Jane," she said smiling, "Mr Brocklehurst is not a god. No-one really likes him. And Jane. . . ."

"Yes?"¹⁴

"If you're not a liar, then you have one friend — yourself."

"I know. But that isn't enough."

"You think too much of human love, Jane."

Miss Temple came in. She looked at me very kindly.

"Jane," she said, "if what Mr Brocklehurst said about you is not true, I will inform the whole school. So tell me the whole story."

I told her about the Red Room, and I mentioned Mr Lloyd.

"He knows the truth," I said.

"Then I will write to him," said Miss Temple. "And Jane — I believe you. I don't think you're a liar."

She took Helen and me to her room, and gave us tea and cake by the fire. I felt comforted.

When, a week later, Mr Lloyd replied to Miss Temple's letter, I felt even more comforted. He said I had spoken the truth; and Miss Temple sent for the whole school, and told them.

After that, I began to be happier. I worked very hard, and made good progress in music and drawing and French.

Spring came; it was a little warmer, and there were flowers in the garden.

But the Spring brought other changes to Lowood. The school was built in an unhealthy place. The girls didn't get enough to eat, of course. First one became ill, then another; then half the school. Many pupils died. I was not ill, and as there were no lessons, I sat in the garden with my books. I wanted to talk to Helen Burns, but I was told she too was ill.

One night I saw the doctor leaving the house. With him was a nurse.

I ran up to her and said,

"What does the doctor say about Helen Burns?"

"He says she won't be here long,"¹⁵ said the nurse.

I knew Helen was in Miss Temple's room. That night, when everyone was asleep, I went to see her.

"Helen? Are you awake?"

"Is that you, Jane? You shouldn't come here. It's very late."

"I wanted to see you."

"You came to say good-bye."

"Good-bye?"

"Yes Jane. Don't cry. I'm not in pain. I'm glad to die young. I'm going to God."

"Where is God? What is God?"

"He made us. I believe in His goodness, and soon I shall know Him."

"Shall I never see you again?"

"Death isn't the end of us, Jane. I'm sure of that. One day, you will come to the same happy place where I am going. The same great Father will meet you."

She seemed to be falling asleep, and I stayed with her. Next morning Miss Temple found us together. I was sleeping, but Helen was dead.

For fifteen years after her death, there was no stone over her grave.¹⁶ Now I have put a stone there. It has her name, and the Latin word 'Resurgam', which means 'I shall rise again.'

After so many pupils had died there, people began to ask questions about Lowood School. In the end, a new school was built. Although Mr Brocklehurst still looked after the money he was not allowed to give the pupils bad food. Lowood became a good school.

For the next six years I was a pupil there. Then for two years I was a teacher. Miss Temple left us to be married. And then one day I looked out of my window, and I suddenly thought,

"I want to see more of the world. I want freedom. I want a new job, in a new place, among new faces."

So I advertised in a newspaper for a job as a teacher.¹⁷ I received a reply from someone called Mrs Fairfax. She lived at a house called Thornfield, which was about a hundred kilometres away. She offered me a job teaching a little girl.

I told Mr Brocklehurst, who wrote to Mrs Reed. Mrs Reed replied that I could do as I liked. She said she was no longer interested in what I did.

So I said good-bye, and left Lowood, to begin a new life.

Chapter Three Thornfield Hall

It was a cold October day when I travelled to Thornfield. I had many doubts and fears. But I told myself that I was independent. If Mrs Fairfax did not like me, I could leave. And, after all,¹ I was beginning an adventure.

The coach stopped at a hotel in Millicote, a town about nine kilometres from Thornfield.

A servant with a carriage was waiting for me and took me to the Hall. It was dark; I could see it was a large house. There was a light in only one of the windows.

I rang the doorbell; the door opened, and a servant-girl invited me to come in.

She led me to a comfortable sitting-room. A bright fire burned, and the room was well-lit with candles.²

Sitting at a round table was a little, rather old lady. She was making a pair of woollen stockings, and a large cat sat at her feet. She got up and came to meet me with a smile.

"How do you do," she said. "Come to the fire and get warm."

"Are you Mrs Fairfax?" I said.

"Yes. Do sit down. Leah, the girl who opened the door to you, will bring you something to eat and a hot drink. Then she will take your boxes to your room."

"She behaves as if she is my hostess and not my employer," I thought. I said,

"Shall I have the pleasure of meeting Miss Fairfax soon?"

"Miss Fairfax? Oh, you mean Miss Varens. Miss Adèle Varens is the name of your pupil. I have no children myself."

I thought it would not be polite to ask more questions.

Mrs Fairfax took the cat on her knee and continued,

"I am so glad you have come, Miss Eyre. Thornfield is a fine old house, but in winter it is lonely. Little Adèle arrived here with her nurse, only a few weeks ago. A child makes a house alive at once. Now you are here too, I shall feel quite happy."

Leah brought me some cakes and hot tea. When I had finished them, Mrs Fairfax took me to my room. It seemed a big, empty, lonely house, but my room was comfortable. Mrs Fairfax seemed a kind and gentle little lady. She wished me good night. I thanked God, and asked Him to make me worthy of such kindness.⁴ I went to sleep, peaceful and happy.

When I awoke, the sun shone brightly between blue curtains. I saw that there was pretty paper on the walls, and a carpet on the floor.

I felt hopeful. I felt that something pleasant was going to happen to me, if not at once, then at some time in the future.

I put on my plain black dress with its white neck, and brushed my hair carefully. Sometimes I wished I was pretty. I knew I was small, with not enough colour in my cheeks and rather a large mouth and nose.⁵ I could not be pretty, so I tried always to be smart.

I went downstairs. The front door was open and I went outside. Thornfield Hall did seem very large. Fields and woods surrounded it. It was quiet and I saw no other houses.

Just then Mrs Fairfax joined me. She shook my hand and kissed me.

"How do you like Thornfield?"

"It's a beautiful old house," I said.

"Yes, but I wish Mr Rochester would come here more often."

"Mr Rochester?"

"The owner, my dear. I am only the housekeeper."

"And Miss Adèle?"

"Mr Rochester sent her to live here. Look — here she is."

A little girl of perhaps eight came running across the grass. She was pretty, almost like a toy. Her nurse followed her.

"Are you my governess?" said Adèle to me, in French.

"Yes, I am," I told her, with some surprise.

"I am so glad you can speak French, Miss Eyre," said Mrs Fairfax. "I have little French, and she has little English.⁶ Ask her about her parents."

"Adèle," I said, "do you remember your mama and papa?"

"Mama has died and gone up to heaven," said Adèle. "I do not remember my papa."

I translated her words for Mrs Fairfax.

"Ask Adèle to take you to the schoolroom, Miss Eyre, and then come down to breakfast."

I liked the schoolroom. It pleased me to see so many books.

"Now come with me to the dining room for breakfast," said Adèle.

After breakfast we went back to the schoolroom. I found Adèle very ready to learn, though she did not like working hard. But I talked to her, and we became friends. When I had taught her a little English, I sent her to her nurse.

Then I went to my room. I wanted to draw and paint some pictures for Adèle, to help her with her lessons. I put my pencils and paints⁷ in the schoolroom, and then went to find Mrs Fairfax.

"Can you tell me about Mr Rochester?" I said. "What sort of a man is he?"

"Well, he is a gentleman, and rich. He has travelled a lot. He is clever, and a good master. But I find him a little hard to understand. Now Miss Eyre, would you like to see the rest of the house?"

We visited all the grand rooms of Thornfield Hall, and then we went up to the third floor. Here there was a narrow passage, with closed doors on each side.

A staircase led to the roof.⁸ From there I could look out over the fields. I was level with the treetops, and I could look down among the branches.

Mrs Fairfax stayed behind to lock the door. I walked slowly down the passage. Then I heard something.

It was a strange laugh, not a happy one. I stood still. The laugh came from one of the rooms with closed doors. It became louder, until it was a noisy shout.

"Mrs Fairfax, what is it?" I said.

"Oh, one of the servants. Probably Grace Poole. I often hear her. She sits and works in that room."

The laugh was repeated.

"Grace!" called Mrs Fairfax.

A door opened and a woman came out. She had a plain, hard face.

"Too much noise, Grace," said Mrs Fairfax.

Grace bent her head without a word, and went back into the room, shutting the door.

"By the way," said Mrs Fairfax, "how do you get on with Adèle?"

We talked about Adèle till we were downstairs, and Grace Poole was forgotten.

October, November and December passed away. I was not unhappy. I liked both Mrs Fairfax and Adèle.

But I was restless. Often I looked through a window and wished I could see the busy world beyond. I was safe. But I wanted more friends, more life.

One afternoon Mrs Fairfax asked me to take a letter to post in Hay, our nearest village. It was about five kilometres away. I was glad to go.

When I had walked two kilometres. I stopped to lean against a gate and rest.

It was late. The moon was rising, and a cold wind blew in the trees.

I heard a horse coming. Then there was a noise among the bushes at the roadside, and a large black and white dog appeared. It passed me quietly, and, looking up, I saw a tall horse and rider coming round a bend in the road.⁹

Horse and rider passed without seeing me. But a moment later I heard a crash, and a shout, and a noisy dog. Horse and rider were down. The horse had fallen on the icy road. I ran to them.

"Can I get help, sir?"

"Thank you. I can manage." With difficulty the horse got on to its feet again. The man made his way to the roadside, pulling a painful leg along the ground.

"I seem to have broken no bones," he said.

The moon was shining brightly by now, and I could see his face more clearly.

He was about thirty-five, not good-looking, but he had a strong face. I thought he was a man who could be very angry if he wished.¹⁰ But strangely enough, I was not afraid.

He waved at me to go away,¹¹ but I did not move.

"I cannot leave you, sir, until I can see you are able to get on your horse again."

"Where do you come from?" he said.

"I live at Thornfield Hall."

"Whose house is that?"

"Mr Rochester's."

"You are not a servant. Then who are you?"

"The governess, sir."

"Ah, the governess. Of course. I had forgotten. You need not fetch help, if you can give me a little help yourself. Try to get hold of the horse and lead him to me."

I tried, but it would not let me.

"Come here then," said the rider, "and let me lean on you."¹² I cannot walk without help."

He put a heavy hand on my shoulder and managed to catch and mount his horse.

"Thank you," he said.

In a moment, it seemed, horse, rider and dog disappeared.¹³

I hurried on to Hay and then back to Thornfield. It was strange, but I found I did not want to go inside the house.

I stood looking up at the moon and stars. Then I went in.

I went into the sitting-room. Adèle was sitting in front of the fire, playing with a big black and white dog.

"Look, Miss Eyre," she said. "This dog's name is Pilot."

"Whose dog is it?"

"Why, Mr Rochester's, of course."

"Mr Rochester?"

"Yes. Oh Miss Eyre, I am so happy. Mr Rochester has come at last!"

Chapter Four

Grace Poole

Next morning, Thornfield Hall seemed a different place. It was no longer as silent as a church. There were knocks at the front door, footsteps crossing the hall, new voices talking. Thornfield Hall had a master, and I liked it better now.

I did not see Mr Rochester all day, though I knew the doctor had been sent for to see to his leg.¹ In the evening, Mrs Fairfax said to me,

"Mr Rochester would be glad if you and Adèle would have tea with him in the sitting-room this evening. You must change your dress. We always dress for the evening when he is here."

I went upstairs and helped Adèle to dress. Then I put on my black silk dress and we went down to the sitting-room.

Mr Rochester sat with one leg up on a chair. I knew him at once; the dark hair, the eyes, the strong mouth and chin.

"Sit down, Miss Eyre," he said, without looking at me. He was watching Adèle and Pilot. Adèle said,

"Haven't you brought a present for Miss Eyre?"

"Did you expect a present, Miss Eyre?"

"No sir."

"I have been talking to Adèle. I have found that you have taught her very well. She is not very clever, but in a short time she has learned a lot."

"Then you did bring me a present, sir," I replied. "All teachers like to hear admiration for their pupils. Thank you."

Leah brought the tea tray. We drank in silence.

Then Mr Rochester said,

"Where did you live before you came here?"

I told him.

"Lowood School? So that's why you look as if you came from another world. On the road last night I thought I had met someone from a story-book. Tell me about your parents."

I told him I was an orphan.

"What did you learn at Lowood? Adèle told me you made some drawings for her. Go and fetch them."

I brought them. My pictures were painted in water-colour.³ There was one of a wrecked ship, with a bird on the mast, holding a jewel in its mouth. Another showed the head of a woman, against an evening sky. Mr Rochester looked at them carefully.

"You have not been taught to draw well. But these are interesting," he said. "There is wind in that sky. Who taught you to paint wind?"

He gave me back the pictures. Then he said, "Go now. It is Adèle's bedtime."

I did not see him again for several days. Then one evening he sent for me again, with Mrs Fairfax and Adèle. Adèle had a big box of presents, and she showed them all to Mrs Fairfax. Mr Rochester talked to me. I was watching the firelight on his face.

"Well, Miss Eyre," he said, "do you think I am good-looking?"

"No sir."

"Then am I a fool?"

"No sir."

"You are right. But all the same, I have wasted my life."

I was silent.

"There are not many school-girl governesses who would have answered me as you do," he said. "But I will not try to please you with foolish admiration. You have faults, no doubt."

"And so may you," I thought. He seemed to read my mind.⁵

"Tell me, Miss Eyre. I am a man who is full of sadness, of sorrow for past sins.⁶ It poisons my life. Can such sorrow be cured?"

"Yes," I said. "I think so. If you are really sorry for your wrongs."

I stood up. The conversation made me uncomfortable, and it was Adèle's bedtime.

"I'll explain to you some day," he said. "Good night."

I did not see him again for several days. Then, one morning, I was in the garden with Adèle and he came up to me. Adèle ran off to play with Pilot. We looked at the house.

"I like Thornfield," he said. "It is so old, so lonely, so grey. And yet, for a long time I have hated it."

He went on,

"Do you know who Adèle is? I was once the lover of a French dancer, and Adèle is her daughter. Adèle may be *my* daughter. I cannot be sure."

He told me the whole story of his life in Paris, with Adèle's mother. She had left him for another man.

That night when I was in my own room, I thought about what he had told me. I found I was pleased that he had allowed me to know his private story.⁷

After this he was more friendly. He even smiled at me when we met. I no longer thought he was ugly. His face became the object I liked best to see.⁸

One night something woke me up. It was the strange laugh I had heard before. It was Grace Poole. But where was she?

"I must go to Mrs Fairfax," I thought. I dressed quickly and opened the door.

In the passage I saw smoke coming from Mr Rochester's room. I forgot Grace and ran into the room. The curtains round his bed were on fire. He lay without moving. The smoke had made him unconscious.⁹

"Wake up, wake up," I cried. He did not move.

I fetched water and poured it on the burning curtains. At last I managed to put out the fire. Mr Rochester opened his eyes.

"Jane Eyre?" he said. "Where am I? What is happening?"

I told him about the laugh, and how I had seen smoke coming from his room.

"Jane Eyre," he said, "stay here, please. Don't move or call anyone. Lock the door after me."

He went and I was left in darkness. When he came back his face was very white.

"Did you see Grace Poole, sir?"

"Grace Poole? Yes, I saw her. Now, Jane, in the morning I will explain to the servants about the fire. I will say a candle fell over. Now return to your room. But first, shake hands with me. You have saved my life. I owe you more than thanks.¹⁰"

"You owe me nothing, sir. Good night."

Next day, no-one mentioned Grace Poole. I wanted to talk to Mr Rochester, but I did not see him.

Mrs Fairfax and I had tea together.

"Mr Rochester has had a fine day for his journey," she said.

"What journey?"

"He has gone to a friend's house, fifty kilometres away."

"Will he be back tonight?"

"No. He will probably stay a week or more. Miss Blanche Ingram will be there."

"Who is she?"

"Lord Ingram's daughter. She is a very fine and fashionable lady."

"Does Mr Rochester like her?"

"Yes, I think he does."

That night, alone in my room, I told myself that I was a fool. I said to myself, "You are mad, Jane Eyre. How could he love you? You are not rich or pretty. You must not allow yourself to hope for anything."

Later, I was glad that I had controlled my feelings. Thanks to this,¹¹ I was able to meet what happened next, quietly and without fear.

Chapter Five

The Man from Jamaica¹

Two weeks later, Mrs Fairfax received a letter from Mr Rochester.

"Well," she said, "we are going to be busy now. Mr Rochester is coming home in three days, and bringing eight of his friends with him. Miss Blanche Ingram is coming."

I felt cold and sick. But I told myself, "You are here to teach Adèle. That is what you are paid for.² So do not give your heart to someone who doesn't want it."

We were all very busy. Adèle had a holiday, and I helped Mrs Fairfax.

Grace Poole came downstairs for an hour every day, to sit in the kitchen and eat with the other servants. It was strange, though, that no-one talked about her. Only once I heard Leah talking to another servant.

"Doesn't Miss Eyre know, then?" said the woman.

Leah shook her head.

So there was a mystery³ at Thornfield, but I was not allowed to know it.

Mr Rochester and his guests arrived, and the house was full of laughter and talk. One evening Mr Rochester sent me a message. I was asked to go to the sitting-room, that night, after dinner.

I felt a little frightened. However, I put on my best dress, of silver-grey silk. The ladies and gentlemen were still at dinner when I went to the sitting-room. So I was able to choose a window-seat.⁴ I hoped no-one would notice me.

The visitors came in. I stood up and lowered my eyes. One or two smiled in return. The others only studied me coolly.⁵

Blanche Ingram came in with her mother. Her mother was not unlike Mrs Reed. Miss Ingram had dark eyes, and shining dark hair, and a most beautiful white dress. But I thought her face was like her mother's; hard, with cold eyes.

I listened to the talk, until Mr Rochester came in. He did not look at me, but talked to Blanche Ingram. They were laughing together.

"He doesn't really belong to these people," I thought. "I think he is one of my sort. It will lead to nothing, but while I breathe and live, I will love him."

Miss Ingram commanded him to sing with her at the piano. He had a fine, deep voice. When the song was over, I went quiet-

ly out of the room. Mr Rochester followed me.

"What is the matter?" he said. "You look tired. You look sad. Why?"

"Nothing, nothing sir. I am not sad."

"But you are. There are tears in your eyes. I must go back to the others—but remember, you must come to the sitting-room every night. Good night, my" He bit his lip and left me.

I still thought he might marry Blanche Ingram. He talked to her often, and she bent her head till it almost touched his cheek.

One day Mr Rochester was sent for to go to Millcote on business. They believed he would not return until late. While he was away, a strange gentleman arrived to see him. He said his name was Mason, that he was an old friend, that he lived in Jamaica, and that he would wait.

When Mr Rochester returned, he was told about Mr Mason. I was watching him, and saw the colour leave his face.⁶ He left the room.

That night I was nearly asleep when I heard a cry.

"Help! Help! Rochester, for God's sake come!"

Everyone woke up. I saw Mr Rochester go up to the third floor, where Grace Poole lived.

After a few minutes, he came down again. He said to his visitors,

"A servant had a bad dream, that's all. Now please, go back to your rooms."

I went back to my room, but I dressed, and waited.

There was a light knock at my door. It was Mr Rochester.

"Jane? Are you up, and dressed? Come with me."

We went upstairs to the third floor, and Mr Rochester unlocked a door. I heard Grace Poole's laugh. Mr Rochester went in, then came out, closing the door. He took me to another room. Mr Mason was leaning back in a chair. His shirt, and one arm, were covered with blood.

"Hold the candle, Jane, while I wash this blood away."

"Is it a bad wound?" whispered Mr Mason.

"No no, not serious. Now Jane," said Mr Rochester, "I want you to stay here while I fetch a doctor."

He went, and I heard him lock the door.

I sat there in silence. What mystery was

there at Thornfield—breaking out once in fire, and now in blood?⁷

After two hours Mr Rochester returned with the doctor. They bandaged the wound, and then took Mr Mason downstairs and put him into the doctor's carriage. The carriage soon drove away.

It was almost morning.

"Come, Jane, and walk in the cool garden," said Mr Rochester. He picked a rose. "Will you have a flower?"

"Thank you, sir."

"Jane, I wish to tell you about a problem. Once there was a rich young man. This young man made a mistake. The mistake darkened his whole life. In order to be happy again, he had to do something. Not a crime, but something which the world might say was wrong.⁸ Should he do it?"

I did not know what to say. Mr Rochester went on,

"Suppose this man was sorry for what he had done, could he then do something which ordinary people would think wrong?"

I replied at once.

"You must ask God for the answer to that question."

"My little friend," he said, "Don't you think that marriage to Miss Ingram would make her husband a new man?"

I was silent.

"Jane, your hands are cold. You must go back to the house and rest. But Jane, I know you are truly my friend. I can talk to you again about—Blanche Ingram."

Chapter Six

The Garden of Eden¹

When I was a little girl of six, I heard Bessie say that she had dreamed of a little child. It was a sure sign of trouble,² she said.

Every night of the week after Mr Mason went away, I dreamt of a child.

One morning I was told that someone in Mrs Fairfax's room wanted to see me. It was a man dressed in black.

"I don't suppose you remember me, Miss," he said. "I was a servant at Gateshead, and I still work there."

"Of course I remember you, Robert. How is Bessie?"

"Very well Miss, thank you. We are married and have three children."

"And the Reed family? Are they well?"

"No, Miss. They are in great trouble. Mr John died a week ago."

"I am very, very sorry. Is his mother well? Over it yet?"

"No, Miss. You see, Mr John owed money to so many people but he could not pay. He was put in prison, and now they say he killed himself."

I was silent.

"Mrs Reed is very ill, Miss. She wants to see you. I have come to fetch you, Miss, if you could come with me."

I went to find Mr Rochester. He was talking to Blanche Ingram, who looked very beautiful. She saw me first.

"Does this person want you?" she said to him.

He saw me, and made a strange face. I told him what I wanted to do. He did not want me to go.

"Promise me you will stay only a week," he said.

"Yes sir. Good-bye for the present."

At Gateshead, Bessie was pleased to see me. The two daughters, Georgiana and Eliza, looked me up and down,³ but spoke no words of welcome.

Bessie took me upstairs.

"Mrs Reed has been calling for you, Miss."

I went to the bedside.

"Jane Eyre?"

"Yes, dear Aunt." I kissed her. "How are you?"

"Jane Eyre," she said. "Oh I had such trouble with that child. But twice I did her a great wrong.⁴ I promised my husband to bring her up as my own child. I did not."

"Dear Aunt, it was all a long time ago. Do not be sad now."

She seemed very weak. She looked for something behind her head, and brought out a letter.

"Read it."

The letter was dated three years back,⁵ and it came from Madeira.

"Dear Madam," I read. "Will you have the goodness to send me the address of my niece Jane Eyre. I wish her to come to me in Madeira. I plan to leave her money when I die."

The letter was signed 'John Eyre'.

"I wrote and told him you had died at Lowood," said Mrs Reed. "And now in my last hours I am ashamed. But you were such a difficult child."

"Kiss me, dear Aunt. I don't want revenge.⁶ Don't be unhappy."

I stayed at Gateshead almost a month, until my aunt died. During that time, I had a letter from Mrs Fairfax. She said Mr Rochester had gone to London, to make arrangements for his wedding to Miss Ingram. But I had never loved him so much!

Midsummer came, and the sun shone every day. I returned to Thornfield. Mr Rochester was there. But he did not mention his marriage. And he did not go to see Miss Ingram at her house. I wondered why.

One evening I was walking in the cool garden, sweet with the smell of roses. A voice behind me said,

"Come and walk with me."

I did not want to be alone with him in the evening. We sat on a wooden seat under a huge old tree. He began,

"I am sorry Jane, that you will be leaving Thornfield so soon. I am going to send Adèle to school."

"I think you should, sir. I will leave when you wish."

"But do you want to go?"

"I don't want to leave Thornfield, or Adèle, or — or you, sir." I was crying.

"Don't cry Jane. Listen, there is a bird singing."

I could not listen to the birdsong. I could not hide my tears. When I left Thornfield, it would be a kind of death.

"Jane," he said, "I am not going to marry Miss Ingram."

"You are not?"

"No. Jane, I offer you my hand⁷ and my heart and everything I own."

I could not answer.

"I do not love Miss Ingram, Jane, and she does not love me. She only wants my money. Jane, say 'Yes' quickly. Say 'Yes, Edward, I will marry you.'"

"Yes," I said. "Yes, I will marry you."

"You will make my happiness, and I will make yours."

He looked up at the sky and said,

"God will pardon me. I know He allows me to marry you."

But what had happened to the night? The low voice of the wind cried in the trees. There was a crash of thunder and the sky was dark.

We hurried indoors.⁸ Next morning, Adèle came running to tell me that the huge old tree where we sat had fallen in the storm.