

Plays for Young Audiences

A PARTNERSHIP OF SEATTLE CHILDREN'S THEATRE AND CHILDREN'S THEATRE COMPANY-MINNEAPOLIS

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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 dommage ! 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'apelle 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?

JANE

Où vivais-tu Adele, avant de venir à Thornfield.
Where did you live Adele, before you came to Thornfield?

ADELE

Avec Maman, mais elle est avec la Sainte Vierge maintenant...
With Mama - but she is gone to the Holy Virgin now

JANE

Her mother has passed away.

MRS FAIRFAX AND LEAH

Ooooh.

ADELE

And after that, Mr. Rochester came and took me here. He and Mama were in a liason, you know.
Et après ce, M. Rochester est venu me prendre ici. Lui et la maman avaient une aventure amoureuse.

JANE

Her mother was a - good friend - of Mr. Rochester.

MRS FAIRFAX AND LEAH

Ooooh.

ADELE

Elle me laissait toujours m'asseoir sur les genoux des monsieurs qui venaient la visiter, et chanter pour eux. Puis-je chanter pour toi?
When gentlemen came to see her I used sit on their knees and sing. May I please sing for you now?

JANE

Ah... Ce serait ravissant.
Well - that would be lovely

(To Mrs Fairfax and Leah)

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 IMPLACABLE' 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, HAINE IMPLACABLE,
COME, COME, IMPLACABLE HATE.
SORTEZ DU GOUFFRE ÉPOUVANTABLE
FROM THE FRIGHTFUL ABYSS
OÛ 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!

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 POOLE 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 WUTHERING 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