

# JANE EYRE

A Dramatic Reading

Arranged from the novel by Jeannette Ruth Temple



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Edward Rochester, master of Thornfield, where Jane Eyre is employed as a governess, falls in love with her and asks her to marry him. At the altar, in the midst of the marriage ceremony, it is publicly revealed that the service cannot be completed because Mr. Rochester has a living wife who is insane. Jane leaves Thornfield. The lunatic wife, Bertha, sets fire to the west wing of the home place and ends her own miserable existence by jumping from the three-story mansion to the stone pavement below. In an effort to save everyone from the flames, including his mad wife, Mr. Rochester suffers the loss of one arm and the sight of both eyes. He retires to Ferndean to spend the remainder of his unhappy days under the care of old servants, John and his wife, Mary. Jane does not know of his misfortune, but is seized with an impulse to see her Master again. She finds him at Ferndean.

He rings the parlor-bell for Mary to bring him a glass of water. Jane asks to carry it to him. Mr. Rochester says:

“Give me the water, Mary.”

JANE: “Mary is in the kitchen.”

ROCH: “Who is this? Who is this? Answer me—speak again!”

JANE: “Will you have a little more water, sir? I spilt half of what was in the glass.”

ROCH: “Who is it? Who speaks?”

JANE: “I came only this evening.”

ROCH: “Great Gods! What delusion has come over me? What sweet madness has seized me?”

JANE: “No delusion—no madness; your mind, sir, is too strong for delusion, your health too sound for frenzy.”

ROCH: “And where is the speaker? Is it only a voice? Oh! I cannot see, but I must feel, or my heart will stop and my brain burst. Whatever—whoever you are—be perceptible to the touch or I cannot live!”

He gropes; Jane arrests his wandering hand and prisons it in both of hers.

“Her very fingers! her small, slight fingers. If so there must be more of her.”

The muscular hand breaks from her custody; her arm is seized, her shoulder—neck—waist—she is entwined and gathered to him.

“Is it Jane! This is her shape—this is her size—”

JANE: “And this is her voice. She is all here; her heart too. God bless you, sir! I am glad to be so near you again.”

ROCH: “Jane Eyre! Jane Eyre!”

JANE: “My dear master. I am Jane Eyre. I am come back to you.”

ROCH: “In truth? In the flesh? My living Jane?”

JANE: “You touch me, sir—you hold me, and fast enough. I am not cold like a corpse, nor vacant like air, am I?”

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