**Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte**

***Chapter XIX***

‘Rochester! Rochester! for God’s sake, come!’

A chamber-door opened: some one ran, or rushed, along the gallery. Another step stamped on the flooring above and something fell; and there was silence.

I had put on some clothes, though horror shook all my limbs; I issued from my apartment. The sleepers were all aroused: … terrified murmurs sounded in every room; door after door unclosed; one looked out and another looked out; the gallery filled. Gentlemen and ladies alike had quitted their beds; and ‘Oh! what is it?’—‘Who is hurt?’—‘What has happened?’—‘Fetch a light!’—‘Is it fire?’ — ‘Are there robbers?’—‘Where shall we run?’ was demanded confusedly on all hands. But for the moonlight they would have been in complete darkness. They ran to and fro; they crowded together: some sobbed, some stumbled: the confusion was inextricable.

‘Where the devil is Rochester?’ cried Colonel Dent. ‘I cannot find him in his bed.’

‘Here! here!’ was shouted in return. ‘Be composed, all of you: I’m coming.’

And the door at the end of the gallery opened, and Mr. Rochester advanced with a candle: he had just descended from the upper storey. One of the ladies ran to him directly; she seized his arm: it was Miss Ingram.

‘What awful event has taken place?’ said she. ‘Speak! Let us know the worst at once!’

‘But don’t pull me down or strangle me,’ he replied: for the Misses Eshton were clinging about him now; and the two dowagers, in vast white wrappers, were bearing down on him like ships in full sail.

‘All’s right!—all’s right!’ he cried. ‘It’s a mere rehearsal of Much Ado about Nothing. Ladies, keep off, or I shall wax dangerous.’

And dangerous he looked: his black eyes darted sparks.

Calming himself by an effort, he added—

‘A servant has had the nightmare; that is all. She’s an excitable, nervous person: she construed her dream into an apparition, or something of that sort, no doubt; and has taken a fit with fright. Now, then, I must see you all back into your rooms; for, till the house is settled, she cannot be looked after. Gentlemen, have the goodness to set the ladies the example. Miss Ingram, I am sure you will not fail in evincing superiority to idle terrors. Amy and Louisa, return to your nests like a pair of doves, as you are. Mesdames’ (to the dowagers), ‘you will take cold to a dead certainty, if you stay in this chill gallery any longer.’

And so, by dint of alternate coaxing and commanding, he contrived to get them all once more enclosed in their separate dormitories. I did not wait to be ordered back to mine, but retreated unnoticed, as unnoticed I had left it.

Not, however, to go to bed: on the contrary, I began and dressed myself carefully. The sounds I had heard after the scream, and the words that had been uttered, had probably been heard only by me; for they had proceeded from the room above mine: but they assured me that it was not a servant’s dream which had thus struck horror through the house; and that the explanation Mr. Rochester had given was merely an invention framed to pacify his guests.