**Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte**

***Chapter XI***

Mounting to it by two broad steps, and looking through, I thought I caught a glimpse of a fairy place, so bright to my novice-eyes appeared the view beyond. Yet it was merely a very pretty drawing-room, and within it a boudoir, both spread with white carpets, on which seemed laid brilliant garlands of flowers; both ceiled with snowy mouldings of white grapes and vine-leaves, beneath which glowed in rich contrast crimson couches and ottomans; while the ornaments on the pale Parian mantelpiece were of sparkling Bohemian glass, ruby red; and between the windows large mirrors repeated the general blending of snow and fire.

‘In what order you keep these rooms, Mrs. Fairfax!’ said I. ‘No dust, no canvas coverings: except that the air feels chilly, one would think they were inhabited daily.’

‘Why, Miss Eyre, though Mr. Rochester’s visits here are rare, they are always sudden and unexpected; and as I observed that it put him out to find everything swathed up, and to have a bustle of arrangement on his arrival, I thought it best to keep the rooms in readiness.’

‘Is Mr. Rochester an exacting, fastidious sort of man?’

‘Not particularly so; but he has a gentleman’s tastes and habits, and he expects to have things managed in conformity to them.’

‘Do you like him? Is he generally liked?’

‘Oh, yes; the family have always been respected here. Almost all the land in this neighbourhood, as far as you can see, has belonged to the Rochesters time out of mind.’

‘Well, but, leaving his land out of the question, do you like him? Is he liked for himself?’

‘I have no cause to do otherwise than like him; and I believe he is considered a just and liberal landlord by his tenants: but he has never lived much amongst them.’

‘But has he no peculiarities? What, in short, is his character?’

‘Oh! his character is unimpeachable, I suppose. He is rather peculiar, perhaps: he has travelled a great deal, and seen a great deal of the world, I should think. I dare say he is clever, but I never had much conversation with him.’

‘In what way is he peculiar?’

‘I don’t know—it is not easy to describe—nothing striking, but you feel it when he speaks to you; you cannot be always sure whether he is in jest or earnest, whether he is pleased or the contrary; you don’t thoroughly understand him, in short—at least, I don’t: but it is of no consequence, he is a very good master.’

This was all the account I got from Mrs. Fairfax of her employer and mine. There are people who seem to have no notion of sketching a character, or observing and describing salient points, either in persons or things: the good lady evidently belonged to this class; my queries puzzled, but did not draw her out. Mr. Rochester was Mr. Rochester in her eyes; a gentleman, a landed proprietor—nothing more: she inquired and searched no further, and evidently wondered at my wish to gain a more definite notion of his identity.