***Jane Eyre***

***Chapter 13***

***Summary and Analysis***

***Summary:***

* Jane doesn’t see Mr. Rochester again that evening—he’s in bed with his sprained ankle. She and Adèle continue their lessons in a new upstairs room instead of the library, where Mr. Rochester is conducting business.
* Jane’s excited about all the new activity in the household, all the people coming and going to see Mr. Rochester. The place is coming alive, and she prefers it that way.
* Adèle is having a lot of trouble concentrating when she knows Mr. Rochester is downstairs—she keeps trying to sneak downstairs to see him or to guess what presents he might have brought her. Adèle tells Jane that Mr. Rochester has been asking about her: especially what she looks like.
* In the early evening, Mr. Rochester invites Jane and Adèle to have tea with him. Jane changes into her second-best dress, which is almost as plain as her regular dress, and puts on her only piece of jewelry, a simple pearl pin.
* As soon as she comes into the dining room, Jane recognizes Mr. Rochester as, of course, the stranger whom she helped after his horse slipped on the ice.
* Mr. Rochester is once again somewhat rude to Jane, or at least abrupt and preoccupied, but she prefers that to flattery and polished manners. Jane thinks it’s more interesting this way.
* As Jane gives Rochester his teacup (he’s lying down on a couch because of his sprained ankle), Adèle asks him if he has a present for Jane.
* He starts asking Jane whether she likes presents, and her subtle but saucy replies draw his interest. When he compliments her on how much she’s taught Adèle, she claims that that’s the best gift she could have. Aww, how sweet.
* Mr. Rochester asks Jane about her past history; when he hears that she was at Lowood for eight years, he says that must be why she looks so eerie and unworldly.
* He compares her to the fairies and sprites of the wood, and suggests that she bewitched his horse to make it fall the day before.
* Mrs. Fairfax, who doesn’t get the joke, is confused, but we’re sure that *you* know just how serious Rochester actually is.
* Rochester keeps quizzing Jane about her background: she has no immediate family, came to Thornfield by answering Mrs. Fairfax’s ad, has never lived in a town or known many people, and has only read the few books that were available to her here and there. She sounds pretty green, really.
* Once again Jane surprises Rochester, this time by being harsh and honest about Mr. Brocklehurst.
* Next Rochester examines Jane’s various achievements, listening to her play the piano and examining her sketches. He, like Jane, is harsh and honest about the merits of her work; her piano playing, he says, is okay, but some of her sketches and paintings seem to really impress him—three of them in particular.
* The three of Jane’s watercolors that Rochester finds really fascinating are each of landscapes that she painted from her imagination; one is of a stormy sea and a shipwreck with a corpse, one is of a grassy hill with the Evening Star personified as a shadowy woman, and one is of an icy arctic scene with a strange, pale, despairing figure in the foreground.
* Jane admits to Rochester that she enjoyed painting these images, but that she was "tormented by the contrast" (1.13.115) between what she was actually able to paint and what she saw in her head.
* Rochester tells Jane that her paintings are intriguing and strange, but that she’s not an artistic master. He keeps getting drawn in by the images, though, and seems to think that she’s managed to paint real places without knowing it.
* Suddenly, Rochester sends Jane off to put Adèle to bed, and retires for the night himself.
* Jane talks with Mrs. Fairfax about Rochester, who is far stranger than the housekeeper previously implied. Mrs. Fairfax tells Jane that they should make allowances for him because of his family problems: his elder brother died nine years before, and then he inherited the estate.
* Apparently, there was some sort of problem between the current Mr. Rochester, whose name is Edward; his brother, Rowland Rochester; and his father, Old Mr. Rochester. Old Mr. Rochester and Rowland put Edward in a bad position so that he would make money, but it’s unclear what exactly happened.
* Now that his father and brother are gone, Mr. Edward Rochester tends to stay away from Thornfield and only visit it for short periods, perhaps because of bad memories. A mystery!

***Short Summary:***

Mr. Rochester's presence at Thornfield brings a stream of visitors. Jane and Adèle are forced to move their studies from the library to an upstairs room. Adèle is interested only in seeing Mr. Rochester and what gifts he may have brought her. Adèle and Jane are invited to dinner and Jane is encouraged to wear something other than black. When they enter the dining room, Mr. Rochester acknowledges Jane rather gruffly, which oddly, makes Jane feel more comfortable than if he had been overly polite.

Mr. Rochester does not attempt to join the small talk but asks Jane if she liked the gifts. They quietly verbally spar, each trying to sum up the other. Mr. Rochester comments that Jane has done well with Adèle, to which Jane replies that the compliment is the best gift he could give. Mr. Rochester quizzes Jane about her family and educational background, has her play the piano, which seems offensive to him, then asks to see her artwork. He calls her work "peculiar" and her thoughts "elfish" and then scolds Jane for allowing Adele to stay up so late.

When Jane remarks to Mrs. Fairfax that Rochester was peculiar, a fact Mrs. Fairfax had denied, she says she has gotten used to him. There were family squabbles and he only gained Thornfield after his father and brother died. Mrs. Fairfax consoles Jane by saying he only stays a few days at a time.

***Short Analysis:***

Jane becomes acquainted with the man who is to be her soul mate. Although he is coarse and gruff, Jane is not offended or hurt by his attitude. Instead the two carry on a type of intellectual banter which Mrs. Fairfax does not understand. It is interesting to note that when he comes upon Jane sitting on the stile in the lane, his thoughts turned to those of fairy tales; just as Jane's had when she heard his horse coming up the lane. With a twist, however, he accuses her of putting a spell on his horse, causing it to fall and giving him the sprain.

***Summary in detail:***

The day following his arrival, Mr. Rochester invites Jane and Adèle to have tea with him. He is abrupt and rather cold toward both of them, although he seems charmed by Jane’s drawings, which he asks to see. When Jane mentions to Mrs. Fairfax that she finds Rochester “changeful and abrupt,” Mrs. Fairfax suggests that his mannerisms are the result of a difficult personal history. Rochester was something of a family outcast, and when his father died, his older brother inherited Thornfield. Rochester has been Thornfield’s proprietor for nine years, since the death of his brother.

***Analysis in Detail:***

This lesson provides an overview of chapter 13 of ''Jane Eyre,'' in which we see what Thornfield Hall is like with Mr. Rochester at home, and we see Jane meet him for the first time.

Thornfield with Mr. Rochester

Jane does not see Mr. Rochester at all the night of his arrival or for much of the day after. His presence substantially alters things at Thornfield, however. Jane and Adele are made to vacate the library, which they have been using for their schoolroom. Instead, they use a room upstairs. Adele has trouble paying attention to her lessons. Mr. Rochester has told her that a gift will arrive for her along with his luggage, and she is eager to find it!

The sameness of days past at Thornfield is broken by a suddenly steady stream of business visitors to see Mr. Rochester. The day is filled with knocks on the door, ringing bells, strange voices and activity. Jane's summation of the change made to Thornfield is: 'a rill from the outer world was flowing through it; it had a master: for my part, I liked it better.' It seems this change relieves somewhat Jane's boredom and loneliness.

Jane is Summoned to Tea

After the school day has ended, as Jane is drawing, Mrs. Fairfax enters to announce that Jane and Adele are invited to have tea with Mr. Rochester that evening. Jane is a little flustered by this announcement--it is required that she 'dress for the evening,' meaning that she has to change her everyday dress for one of the two others she possesses. Aside from her short sojourn at Gateshead (where she was not much included), the society of Lowood Institute is all Jane has known, and she is nervous about and unaccustomed to these formalities. She laments, 'it was rather a trial to appear thus formally summoned.'

Mr. Rochester's reception of Jane is a little unorthodox. He does not look up when the two ladies enter, and the only greeting Jane receives is a 'forced stiff bow' and the injunction 'Let Miss Eyre be seated.' This seems to suit her, though, as she says, 'A reception of finished politeness would probably have confused me.'

The conversation Mr. Rochester offers proves no less bizarre than his greeting. At one point, he accuses Jane of being an elf or some other fairy tale creature. Jane answers him calmly, as though the things he says are perfectly reasonable. Mrs. Fairfax, however, sits dumbfounded in the corner with her eyebrows raised. Mr. Rochester grills Jane next about her family and her home. She professes to have neither and says nothing at all about the Reeds or about her early childhood at Gateshead.

Later, Jane's artwork becomes a topic of conversation. Mr. Rochester insists she go get her portfolio and allow him to peruse it. Jane complies. Mr. Rochester becomes particularly interested in three watercolor paintings. He accuses Jane at first of copying her subjects, but Jane insists it is all her own work. Mr. Rochester is clearly intrigued by them and by the mind which produced them. He admits her limitations, 'you had not enough of the artist's skill and science to give it full being,' but he obviously sees something in them of worth: 'who taught you to paint wind?' It seems Jane is able somehow to capture even the invisible in her art.

Mr. Rochester remains absorbed by the art until he suddenly says 'There,--put the drawings away!' and then, 'It is nine o'clock: what are you about, Miss Eyre, to let Adele sit up so long? Take her to bed.' With that, he abruptly dismisses them all. The reader is left thinking, just as Jane must be, 'Hmmm....that was strange!'

Questions about Mr. Rochester

Jane's comments to Mrs Fairfax reveal that she was, indeed, thinking this encounter had been a bit odd. 'He is very changeful and abrupt,' Jane observes. Mrs. Fairfax speaks in his defense, saying that any peculiarities should be excused either because it is his nature, and because 'he has painful thoughts...to harass him.' This intrigues Jane, and she tries to discover more.

***Critical Analysis:***

Life at Thornfield changes following Rochester's arrival. Jane and Adèle are forced to abandon the library because Rochester needs to use it as a meeting room. Before, silence had ruled; now, the house it filled with new voices. Jane likes the place better now that it has a master. Adèle finds it impossible to concentrate on her lessons because she's so busy wondering what presents Rochester has brought for her.

Jane isn't pleased with the "additional ceremony" of dressing up for tea with Rochester. Jane again notes the firm, decisiveness of his face, which is imposing rather than beautiful. Rochester's stiff, impatient formality with Jane intrigues her more than "finished politeness" would have. Questioning her about her family and discovering that her parents are dead, Rochester concludes that Jane is a fairy. He then judges her accomplishments, her piano playing and drawing. While he finds her playing average, Rochester is impressed by Jane's drawings. At nine o'clock, Rochester dismisses the women.

Mrs. Fairfax tells Jane more of Edward Rochester's history. His father, Old Mr. Rochester, and brother, Rowland, plotted against him, so Edward was forced into a painful position, of which Mrs. Fairfax knows nothing. Edward broke away from the family, only returning to Thornfield nine years ago when his brother died and he thus inherited the property.

The relationship between Jane and Rochester develops in this chapter. Rochester is a grim and unfriendly man, but Jane enjoys his gruffness, because she wouldn't have known how to respond to grace, elegance, or politeness. Because Rochester is so natural, not acting a part, Jane feels she can also be open and honest during her interactions with him. Continuing with the mythic, almost supernatural theme of their initial encounter, Rochester reveals that he thought Jane was a fairy who had bewitched his horse when they first met. Rochester repeatedly refers to Jane as a sprite or elfin character, claiming that the "men in green" are her relatives, repeating the associations between Jane and fairies that began early in the novel, and emphasizing the mystical aspects of her personality. As an orphan, Jane's past and future are both open; she is not required to cater to anyone else's desires for her; if she wants to claim fairies for kin, she can. Significantly, both Jane and Rochester give their initial meeting a fairy-tale significance, suggesting their relationship will be ideal or special in some way.

After gazing at her drawings, Rochester finds that they, too, are "elfish." Jane confides to her readers that her "spiritual eye" provided her with the images for the drawing, which are only "a pale portrait of the thing I had conceived." Jane's daydreaming has been channeled into her artistic productions, so that her passion and restlessness have a creative outlet. As Rochester notes, the drawings are not typical schoolgirl productions, but have strange, sometimes violent subjects: a drowned corpse; a vision of the Evening Star with dark and wild eyes; and a colossal head resting upon an iceberg. Rochester immediately wonders if Jane was happy when she created these images, and she replies that to paint them was "to enjoy one of the keenest pleasures I have ever know." For her, happiness comes through artistic creation, and the starkness and beauty of the pictures signals the depth of her character. Despite her pleasure in creative work, Jane is upset by the contrast between her ideas and the actual pictures. Is this also true of the autobiography? Is this also an artistic product that doesn't fulfill the artist's desires? Still, Rochester is impressed by the glimpses the drawings give of Jane's inner visions. As "elfish" productions, they have spiritual and magical power over him.

Glossary

ami a friend.

Et cela doit . . . n'est-ce pas, mademoiselle? And this must mean there's a present inside for me, and perhaps for you also, miss. Mr. Rochester asked about you: He wanted to know the name of my governess, and if she was petite, rather thin, and a bit pale. I said yes: because it's true, isn't it, miss?

N'est-ce pas . . . petite coffre? Sir, isn't there a present for Miss Eyre in your little trunk?

***Critical Study(Ch 12-13):***

The next day Thornfield becomes a lively place as people come and go to do business with Mr. Rochester. In the evening he asks Jane, Mrs. Fairfax, and Adèle to have tea with him. Mr. Rochester says his first sight of Jane on the road made him think of fairy tales and suggests that she "had bewitched [his] horse" to make it fall. He questions Jane about her family, Lowood, and her accomplishments, having her play piano and taking particular interest in her drawings, including a "bird and mast ... [and] a drowned corpse," a "woman's shape" as "the Evening Star," and "an iceberg ... [and] colossal head" with a crown. Mr. Rochester adopts a bantering tone with Jane, and she falls in with it. Jane is intrigued by him. She learns later from Mrs. Fairfax that Mr. Rochester was the younger son of his family and he inherited Thornfield nine years ago. Before that he'd been estranged from his father and brother because they put him in a "painful position" for the sake of money.

At Thornfield Jane has more freedom than she has ever had before, yet she feels confined and isolated. There is no one at Thornfield like Miss Temple, with whom she can have lively, thoughtful conversations about books and ideas. Aware that some people think women should be content with household chores and light entertainment, Jane believes that women need just as much excitement and intellectual stimulation as men: "women feel just as men feel." Jane's views about women's roles and needs, which are at odds with prevailing attitudes, show how she has grown. She thinks for herself and does not simply accept the judgment of others. Her independent mind is one factor that makes her such an appealing heroine.

Jane observes the rising moon just before Rochester comes thundering down the road and lingers to watch it before reentering Thornfield. The moon had appeared to Jane on the night of Helen's death at Lowood. It appears here once again to signal an important change in Jane's life: Mr. Rochester's appearance on the scene dramatically alters the regularity of Jane's routine, and he will be a major factor in her life from this point on. Mr. Rochester has the air of mystery, moodiness, and unpredictability typical of the hero of gothic romance fiction. His characterization of Jane as an elfish, fairy-tale creature capable of "bewitch[ing his] horse" picks up the supernatural thread that is woven throughout the novel.

***Significance:***

With Mr. Rochester home, Thornfield becomes a noisier, busier place, much to Jane's liking. He invites Jane and Adèle to have tea with him and Mrs. Fairfax. Adèle immediately asks if he has a gift for Jane; Jane asserts that the best gift that he can give her is praise of Adele’s progress. Mr. Rochester coldly interrogates her about her background but demonstrates more warmth when he looks at Jane’s watercolor sketches. After the meal, Jane and Mrs. Fairfax discuss Mr. Rochester. His older brother died nine years ago, whereupon Mr. Rochester inherited the estate, though he avoids the place as much as possible. Mrs. Fairfax's justification that Mr. Rochester finds the place "gloomy" does not satisfy Jane, and Mrs. Fairfax is evasive about Rochester's other "family troubles."

The mystery concerning Mr. Rochester deepens, and this constitutes the major dramatic thrust of the novel. Gothic novels usually have a romantic component that revolves around passionate, unrequited love; as a stereotypical Byronic hero with a dark, brooding nature and secretive past, Mr. Rochester is an ideal candidate for such a love.

Part of Jane's struggle with Mr. Rochester over the course of the novel will be the assertion of her independence and equality. As we can already see, Rochester only begrudgingly admits Jane's positive qualities, criticizing her even when praising her watercolors. Nevertheless, he demonstrates an obvious interest in her and seems to appreciate her intellectual. As Jane continues to grow in terms of self-reliance and begins to develop feelings for Mr. Rochester, she will undergo a constant struggle between her position as Mr. Rochester’s servant and her desire to be something more.

***Summary and Analysis Part by Part:***

***Summary Part 1:***

The next evening, [Jane](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters/jane-eyre) and [Adèle](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters) join Rochester for tea. Rochester seems distant and moody, and speaks in commands, sometimes impolitely. They talk of Adèle's progress and Jane's personal history.

***Analysis Part 1:***

Rochester's language and manner identify him as a man accustomed to having power.

***Summary Part 2:***

When he learns that Jane can draw, [Rochester](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters/edward-fairfax-rochester) is intrigued and asks to see her work. [Jane](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters/jane-eyre)'s [pictures](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/symbols/portraits-and-pictures) show sublime and desolate scenes, including a drowning on a bleak ocean, storm clouds behind a young woman's luminous face, and a cloaked grim reaper near arctic icebergs. The viewing wraps up the evening.

***Analysis Part 2:***

The pictures are all characteristic of a Romantic interest in the visionary and the sublime. They also suggest the isolation and turmoil of Jane's mind. The coming storm image forecasts the emotional turmoil ahead.

***Summary Part 3:***

[Jane](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters/jane-eyre) mentions to [Mrs. Fairfax](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters) that she finds [Rochester](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters/edward-fairfax-rochester) unpleasantly abrupt. Mrs. Fairfax explains that Rochester has a difficult personality because of his troubled past. He inherited Thornfield from his older brother nine years earlier. Before that, their father had given his entire estate to Rochester's older brother, but had wanted to set up Rochester (who's fist name is Edward) to be wealthy too, and arranged some scheme that didn't work out and continues to be problematic and painful. Mrs. Fairfax is evasive about the scheme and the matter remains a mystery.

***Analysis Part 3:***

Rochester is a product of class rules. When Jane Eyre was written, the first-born son of wealthy families usually inherited everything, while other children were set up to be rich through specific careers or lucrative marriages. Later in the novel, Jane goes against this tradition by sharing her inheritance equally with her cousins.

***Quotations:***

***Quotation 1:***

Mr. Edward Rochester

"Oh, don’t fall back on over-modesty! I have examined Adèle, and find you have taken great pains with her: she is not bright, she has no talents; yet in a short time she has made much improvement."  
  
"Sir, you have given me my 'cadeau'; I am obliged to you: it is the meed teachers most covet; praise of their pupils' progress." (1.13.30-31)

***Explanation:***

This little moment where Rochester tells Jane she’s a good teacher is important, because Jane never tells us so herself. It’s one of the things she forgets to mention, or maybe leaves out—her modesty is getting in the way of telling her own story. It won’t be the last time that Jane can’t be trusted to depict herself accurately.

***Quotation 2:***

Mr. Edward Rochester

"No wonder you have rather the look of another world. I marvelled where you had got that sort of face. When you came upon me in Hay Lane last night, I thought unaccountably of fairy tales, and had half a mind to demand whether you had bewitched my horse: I am not sure yet. Who are your parents?"  
  
"I have none."  
  
"Nor ever had, I suppose: do you remember them?"  
  
"No."  
  
"I thought not. And so you were waiting for your people when you sat on that stile?  
  
"For whom, sir?"  
  
"For the men in green: it was a proper moonlight evening for them. Did I break through one of your rings, that you spread that damned ice on the causeway?"  
  
I shook my head. "The men in green all forsook England a hundred years ago," said I, speaking as seriously as he had done. "And not even in Hay Lane or the fields about it could you find a trace of them. I don’t think either summer or harvest, or winter moon, will ever shine on their revels more." (1.13.40-47)

***Explanation:***

At Jane’s second meeting with Rochester, he accuses her, playfully, of being a fairy or a sprite who enchanted his horse and caused the accident in which he sprained his ankle. Jane isn’t about to be outdone and banters with him readily and quick-wittedly, seeming to take fairy tales as seriously as he himself is pretending to do.

Although Jane’s unearthly fairy qualities are mostly a joke here, there is definitely something strange and uncanny about her quiet demeanor, plain dress, and strong personality. Rochester has met his match—and she is a little bit eerie.