***Jane Eyre***

***Vol-2 Chapter 2***

***Chapter 17***

***Summary and Analysis***

***Summary:***

* For a week, Jane doesn’t hear anything about what Rochester’s doing; she tries to discipline herself and stop thinking about it, but she can’t. She starts wondering if she should quit her job as Adèle’s governess and get a new one somewhere else.
* After another week (so now two weeks have gone by since the fire and Rochester’s sudden departure), Mrs. Fairfax receives a letter from Rochester telling her that he’s coming back to Thornfield in a few days with a bunch of friends.
* Everyone spends the three days making frantic preparations for all the guests—except Adèle, who is an absolute pest and keeps getting underfoot.
* Jane is also helping Mr. Fairfax get the house ready for everyone, which is why Adèle has nothing better to do than flounce around being obnoxious.
* When Jane isn’t busy working, she wonders what’s going on with Grace Poole, who spends almost all her time alone on the third floor and doesn’t help anyone with anything.
* Jane overhears a conversation between one of the maids, Leah, and another servant, a charwoman (house cleaner). Apparently Grace Poole gets paid more than anyone else at Thornfield, and Leah thinks that what Grace does for Mr. Rochester is well worth the money. Jane doesn’t learn any more than that, because they notice her listening and stop talking. The charwoman is surprised that Jane doesn’t know Thornfield’s secret, but nobody seems to want to tell her.
* Finally it’s Thursday, the day Mr. Rochester said he would arrive with his guests. Everyone puts on their nicest clothes and sits around waiting for them to arrive. When they finally ride up, some in carriages and some on horses, a beautiful woman in a purple dress is riding beside Rochester. It’s Blanche Ingram!
* The visitors enter, and Jane sits with Adèle, half-listening to their noise and trying to keep Adèle from running down and bothering them.
* The women come upstairs to change their clothes after the trip, and Jane sneaks downstairs to get something that she and Adèle can eat for dinner. She’s not sneaking because she isn’t supposed to have dinner—she’s sneaking because she doesn’t want anyone to see her.
* Unfortunately, Jane doesn’t make it back upstairs before the ladies start coming down, so she has to stand still at the end of a dark hallway and hope they don’t notice her.
* The women pass, and Jane and Adèle both feel pretty awed by their fancy clothes and even fancier attitudes. Jane, Adèle, and Adèle’s nurse, Sophie, eat the food Jane’s scrounged up in the kitchen, forgotten by pretty much everyone and listening a little to the bustle downstairs.
* Adèle can’t sleep for all the noise and excitement, so Jane sits with her at the top of the stairs listening to the women play on the piano and to Blanche and Mr. Rochester singing duets. Eventually Adèle falls asleep and Jane puts her to bed.
* The party doesn’t break up until one in the morning, and Jane still hasn’t seen Rochester at all. He seems to have forgotten her completely.
* The next day, Rochester and his guests take advantage of the nice weather and go out riding to see something or other nearby, Jane doesn’t know what. Jane watches them leave and come back from her window, noticing how Mr. Rochester and Blanche Ingram are riding together on their own, apart from everyone else.
* Mrs. Fairfax tells Jane that Mr. Rochester wants Adèle and Jane to come and socialize with everyone after dinner this evening. Jane tries to make an excuse, but Mrs. Fairfax tells her that Rochester insisted she come and that he said he would fetch her if she refused.
* Adèle shows her true prissy-princess colors and goes crazy getting herself ready when she hears that she’s going to make an appearance at the party. She keeps Jane and Sophie busy getting her ready, and then Jane and Adèle go and wait in a the drawing room for the guests to finish their dinner.
* The guests finish eating and the ladies enter the drawing room; Jane curtseys to them, and some of them nod to her, while others pretty much ignore her. (The men are still in the dining room; it was traditional at formal Victorian dinner parties for the women to leave the table first, go to another room, and chat or read; the men stayed behind, drinking and talking separately. Then, when the men felt ready, they came and joined the women.)
* Jane explains who the different women are. There are eight of them, four older women and four younger: Mrs. Eshton and her daughters Amy and Louisa; the Dowager Lady Ingram and her daughters Blanche and Mary; Lady Lynn; and Mrs. Colonel Dent. "Dowager" means that Lady Ingram is a widow, and "Mrs. Colonel" means that Mrs. Dent’s husband is, you guessed it, a Colonel.
* We’ll tell you now that most of these women are minor characters and aren’t too important to the plot of the novel. Important points to notice:
* The Dowager Lady Ingram reminds Jane of Mrs. Reed, which probably means she’s just as spiteful and malicious.
* Blanche is incredibly beautiful, and she looks just the way Mrs. Fairfax described her to Jane—which means that she looks like the portrait Jane drew of her without having seen her yet. Creepy.
* Blanche is also really clever, but in a nasty, Mean Girls way instead of a quiet, dorky, Jane Eyre way.
* Jane decides that Blanche is "majestic" but possibly not Rochester’s type.
* Adèle, in her usual bratty way, starts demanding attention from the ladies. A few of them start spoiling her and petting her and she’s as happy as a pig in… um, let’s just say she’s being a little princess and loving it.
* After a little while, the gentlemen come in to join the ladies and everyone drinks coffee. There are six men, including Mr. Rochester; the others are Henry and Frederick Lynn, Colonel Dent, Mr. Eshton, and Lord Ingram. Henry and Frederick are Lady Lynn’s sons; Colonel Dent, obviously, is Mrs. Colonel Dent’s husband; Mr. Eshton is Mrs. Eshton’s husband and the father of Amy and Louisa; and Lord Ingram is the Dowager Lady Ingram’s son and the brother of Blanche and Mary.
* Got all that? Don’t worry, it’s not super-important. Just focus on Blanche and her mom. And Jane and Rochester, of course.
* As Mr. Rochester comes in, Jane tries to focus on her knitting (she’s making a beaded silk purse). She remembers the last moment she saw him, where he didn’t want to let go of her hand and they were alone together, and wonders what’s happened to change everything and make him so distant.
* When Jane’s sure that Mr. Rochester isn’t looking at her, she lets herself look up and stare at him. Even though he’s not handsome in the usual way, she realizes that to her he’s waaay hot. She also figures out something we’ve known for a few chapters now: despite her best efforts, she’s in love with him.
* Jane compares Rochester to the other men in the room; even though most people would probably think they’re more handsome than he is, she has different taste.
* Jane decides that she and Rochester are alike; they have more in common with each other than he does with anyone else in the room. They’re kindred spirits. Still, she doesn’t think he’ll ever be interested in her—she’s too far beneath him.
* Everyone pairs off to chat, and Blanche flirts with Rochester. Unfortunately, Blanche’s idea of flirting is to talk about how "detestable" and "ridiculous" governesses are, basically insulting Jane right to her face (although she’s talking to Rochester, not Jane).
* Blanche and her brother tell stories about how they (and, to a small extent, their sister Mary) used to torment their previous governesses. Let’s see, who do they sound like? Where else in this novel have we seen a brother, two sisters, and a widowed mother who are all vicious and selfish? Hmm, sounds like John, Eliza, and Georgiana Reed and their mother, doesn’t it?
* Some of the other women start talking about their experiences with their governesses, and Blanche changes the subject; she doesn’t want anyone else to have a chance to say something clever. She asks Rochester to sing a duet with her.
* Before Blanche and Rochester begin singing, they banter about what sort of man Rochester is and Blanche hints that he’s just the type of man she wants for a husband: an ugly guy who worships her, instead of someone as handsome as she is.
* Blanche and Rochester sing, and Jane wants to leave, but she’s mesmerized by Rochester’s voice. As soon as he finishes, she slips out into the hallway, but she has to stop and retie her sandal.
* Rochester comes out after Jane and asks why she didn’t come and talk to him in the drawing room. He wants her to come back, but he can tell she’s about to cry, so he lets her go—but first he insists that she join the party every night while they’re there. He stops just short of calling her by some term of endearment—and then leaves.

***Synopsis:***

After two weeks absence and Jane considering finding a new position, Mr. Rochester writes saying he is coming back in three days and bringing guests. Jane notices that Grace does not join the flurry of preparations, staying mostly on the third floor. Mr. Rochester and Blanche lead the party of guests. While the guests freshen up, Jane goes down and gets dinner for her and Adèle. Jane is forced to attend a party that evening. Although Blanche is beautiful she is prideful and full of herself. Jane studies the face and actions of Mr. Rochester. The ladies speak poorly of governesses. Jane stays to hear Rochester sing, then slips from the room. Mr. Rochester meets her in the hall, questioning why she did not speak to him at the party and asking if she is all right. He insists she join the party each night in the drawing room.

After the midnight fire, Jane both dreads and looks forward to her next encounter with Mr. Rochester. However, he chooses this time to take an unexpected trip. When he returns, he brings with him a party of friends including the prideful Blanche. Jane believes Blanche to be a competitor for Mr. Rochester's attention. In fact, she goes so far as to suggest to Mrs. Fairfax that Mr. Rochester may be considering marrying Blanche. With this introduction of a third female, Jane's interest in Mr. Rochester seems to deepen. However, as is shown by the broken off farewell at the end of the chapter, suspicions arise that Mr. Rochester has feelings for Jane also. It is already known that he called Celine by the affectionate name "my angel"; is this perhaps what he almost called Jane?

Rochester has been gone for a week, and Jane is dismayed to learn that he may choose to depart for continental Europe without returning to Thornfield—according to Mrs. Fairfax, he could be gone for more than a year. A week later, however, Mrs. Fairfax receives word that Rochester will arrive in three days with a large group of guests. While she waits, Jane continues to be amazed by the apparently normal relations the strange, self–isolated Grace Poole enjoys with the rest of the staff. Jane also overhears a conversation in which a few of the servants discuss Grace’s high pay, and Jane is certain that she doesn’t know the entire truth about Grace Poole’s role at Thornfield.

Rochester arrives at last, accompanied by a party of elegant and aristocratic guests. Jane is forced to join the group but spends the evening watching them from a window seat. Blanche Ingram and her mother are among the party’s members, and they treat Jane with disdain and cruelty. Jane tries to leave the party, but Rochester stops her. He grudgingly allows her to go when he sees the tears brimming in her eyes. He informs her that she must come into the drawing room every evening during his guests’ stay at Thornfield. As they part, Rochester nearly lets slip more than he intends. “Good-night, my—” he says, before biting his lip.

***Critical Analysis***:

Jane is sickeningly disappointed when Rochester hasn't returned in a week, and Mrs. Fairfax suggests that he might go directly to Europe, not returning to Thornfield for a year or more. After two weeks, Rochester sends a letter telling Mrs. Fairfax that he will arrive in three days, along with a party of people. Jane is still amazed by Grace Poole's erratic behavior, yet no one else in the house seems to notice her odd habits, her isolation, or her drinking. One day, Jane overhears some of the servants discussing Grace, emphasizing how much Grace is being paid. From this conversation, Jane concludes that there is a mystery at Thornfield from which she is being purposely excluded.

On Thursday evening, Rochester and his guests arrive. Together, they give Jane an impression of upper-class elegance, unlike anything she has ever experienced. When Rochester summons Jane and Adèle to meet the party, Adèle is ecstatic, but Jane is nervous and remains inconspicuously in a window-seat. Jane gives her impressions of the guests, including the dark, majestic Blanche Ingram, whom she thinks Rochester must admire. Jane tries to sneak away from the party, but Rochester stops her. He notices she looks depressed and wonders why. At first he insists that she return to the drawing room, but when he sees tears in her eyes, he allows her to leave. In future, though, she must appear in the drawing room every evening. He says goodnight, stopping himself from adding a term of endearment.

In this chapter, the negative attributes of Blanche's character become apparent, at least in Jane's eyes. While Blanche's beauty lives up to Mrs. Fairfax's description of her, it also contains a "haughtiness," a "fierce and hard eye" that resembles her mother's. According to Jane, Blanche is "the very type of majesty." But majesty is hard to live with, and Jane wonders if Rochester truly admires her. Blanche appears to dislike both children — she notices Adèle with a "mocking eye" — and governesses. Her dislike of governesses goes beyond economizing: She rudely (because she knowingly speaks so Jane can hear her) calls them "detestable," "ridiculous" incubi, sucking the lifeblood from the family. Blanche's mother supports her, arguing "there are a thousand reasons why liaisons between governesses and tutors should never be tolerated a moment in any well-regulated house." Not only are these employees subject to constant persecution, but they are desexualized, not allowed to fall in love. Other members of the party join in with their stories of governess abuse; obviously, it was not pleasant to be responsible for teaching the children of the upper classes. The Ingrams' cruelty is similar to the Reeds', and Jane says Lady Ingram's "fierce and hard eye" reminds her of Mrs. Reed's.

Jane's gaze is active, almost masculine in this chapter: "I looked, and had an acute pleasure in looking — a precious yet poignant pleasure; pure gold, with a steely point of agony: a pleasure like what the thirst-perishing man might feel . . . ." Generally gazing is a power men have over women, appropriating women by looking at them, cataloguing their beauty. But here Jane appropriates that power for herself. While Blanche is looking for Rochester's gold coins, Jane finds her gold in gazing at her beloved. The mixture of pleasure and pain in her description — "poignant pleasure" and "steely point of agony" — suggest the erotic appeal of Rochester to her; this isn't an innocent glance, but a gaze tinged with sexual tension.

Glossary

passées out-of-style.

Elles changent de toilettes The women are changing their clothes.

Chez maman . . . comme cela on apprend. At my mother's house . . . when we had company, I followed them everywhere, to the drawing-room and their bedrooms; often I watched the maids fixing their ladies' hair or helping them dress, and it was very entertaining; I learned to imitate them.

Mais oui, mademoiselle: voilà cinq ou six heures que nous n'avons pas mangé. But of course, Miss: We haven't eaten for five or six hours.

et alors quel dommage! that's too bad.

Est-ce que je ne puis . . . ma toilette. Can't I take one of these magnificent flowers, miss? It would complete my outfit.

minois chiffonné darling; pretty face.

Bon jour, mesdames good day, ladies.

père noble de théâtre a grand patriarch of the theatre.

Tant pis too bad.

charivari clatter; noise.

belle passion beautiful passion.

Au reste besides.

Donna Bianca Miss Blanche.

Signior mister.

con spirito with spirit.

Gardez-vous-en bien take care.

***Critical Study:***

In Rochester's absence Jane continues to observe Grace Poole's habits and feels she acts suspiciously, noticing that Poole comes through the third-floor staircase door, for instance. She overhears a conversation between two servants that suggests she is being "purposely excluded" from knowing the secret related to Poole. Steeling herself in further demonstration of her self-control, she starts to consider her future without Rochester. After more than two weeks, he sends word that he will be returning to Thornfield with guests "in three days."

Blanche Ingram is one of the guests who arrive at Thornfield with Rochester. A day later Miss Ingram and Rochester pair up when they go horseback riding, and Mrs. Fairfax comments to Jane that he seems to admire Miss Ingram. At Rochester's request, Adèle and Jane go to the drawing room where the guests gather after dinner (Adèle and Jane have eaten separately). From a perch on the window seat, Jane observes that Miss Ingram is indeed beautiful, but she is also "haughty" and "self-conscious." When Jane first sees Rochester, all of her passionate feelings for him rush back, though she tries to hide them. Knowing that Jane can hear them, Miss Ingram talks with the other guests, including her mother, in an insulting way about governesses.

At the first opportunity, after listening to Rochester sing, Jane "slip[s] away" from the drawing room, but Rochester follows and tries to persuade her to come back. He notices that she seems depressed and, when tears fill her eyes, he allows her to go. He tells her that she and Adèle must come to the drawing room every night while the guests are there. He then says, "Good-night, my—" and bites his lip before turning away abruptly.

Jane's discovery that the servants are hiding a secret about Grace Poole deepens the mystery surrounding the woman and continues to emphasize this important plot element. It also adds to the mystery surrounding Rochester—what is he not telling Jane? Why is he withholding the truth from her? That he is not being completely forthcoming with her heightens her sense of separation from him—and also keeps her interested in him.

Jane manages to maintain her composure when she sees Rochester, even though she feels that there is little hope for a relationship with him. She closely watches his interactions with Miss Ingram and tries to determine how he feels about her. Her leaving the room soon after hearing Ingram's insulting words shows both the depth of her upset and her self-control. Rather than confronting the woman—a behavior that is precluded by their differences in class and station—Jane simply distances herself from her.

In one section of this chapter—as Jane relates where she took position in the room, observes the guests, and both waits for Rochester to enter and then comments on his appearance—the narrator switches to the present tense. The change in tense gives the scene an immediacy and emotional impact.

***Significance:***

Jane is concerned that Mr. Rochester will leave for Europe without returning to Thornfield, something that [Mrs. Fairfax](https://www.gradesaver.com/jane-eyre/study-guide/character-list#mrs-fairfax) acknowledges that he frequently does. However, Jane’s fears are allayed when Mr. Rochester sends word that he will be returning to Thornfield in a few days with guests. The servants busily prepare the house for his arrival, and Jane takes the opportunity to observe Grace Poole. She notices that Grace spends nearly all her time on the third-floor and also overhears the servants discussing Grace's high salary and difficult job

Mr. Rochester finally arrives in the company of Miss Ingram and several other men and women. Jane and Adèle keep out of their way as they socialize and dine, and Jane feels particularly out of place among the elegance and sophistication of the visitors. She also notices with increasing dismay that Mr. Rochester appears to prefer the company of Miss Ingram to that of the other ladies. That night, Mr. Rochester invites Jane and Adèle to socialize with the guests after dinner. Jane observes the scene from a distance, paying special attention to Miss Ingram, as Adèle charms the crowd. Miss Ingram and the others speak dismissively of Jane and governesses in general. Miss Ingram goes on to criticize male vanity; beauty should be the domain solely of women, and her future husband will not be her aesthetic equal. She then plays piano, commanding Mr. Rochester to sing. He does, beautifully, and Jane leaves inconspicuously. Rochester meets her outside and beseeches her to return, as she seems "depressed," but Jane declines and turns away before he can see the tears in her eyes. Although he finally allows her to leave, Mr. Rochester informs her that she must come into the drawing room to socialize with the guests every night. He then bids her goodnight, nearly using a term of endearment before stopping himself.

Although Miss Ingram's beauty and confident manner take center stage in the drawing room, the attraction between Mr. Rochester and Jane is evident, especially in his parting words to her. Mr. Rochester cannot help but notice Jane’s distress, but he perhaps does not realize that it is because of his attention to Miss Ingram. Similarly, Jane seems to be unwilling to accept the fact that Mr. Rochester nearly said “Good-night, my love.” Jane’s biggest obstacle to Mr. Rochester remains her own insecurity about her social position and class. Mr. Rochester seems to have feelings for Jane, it is still unclear if he will ever be able to act on them.

Miss Ingram demonstrates the snobbery and classism that strikes at the heart of Jane's curious position that she holds both at Thornfield and previously at Gateshead: poverty in the midst of great wealth. The flip comments of the society ladies about their governesses - and their casual ignorance of Jane in the room - make Jane a virtual prisoner of her social standing. Miss Ingram’s lack of intelligence and personal cruelty are particularly upsetting to Jane because she believes that Mr. Rochester deserves better.

This chapter also continues with the mystery of Grace Poole and the third-story attic. Although Jane accumulates some additional clues about Grace’s presence at Thornfield, she is still largely ignorant of the role that Grace plays. Yet, she begins to think of Grace with some pity because of her constant presence on the third floor: she is “as companionless as a prisoner in his dungeon.” "Prisoner" is a loaded word, suggesting imprisonment far beyond physical confines. However, the mysterious events and hints surrounding Grace suggest that she may not be companionless, after all.

***Notes:***

In chapter 17 of ''Jane Eyre,'' Mr. Rochester returns to Thornfield with an accompaniment of guests, and poor Jane struggles to adhere to her resolve to disentangle herself from her affection for him.

## ***Trying to Get On With Life***

We left Jane at the end of chapter 16 trying to squelch her feelings for Mr. Rochester. Chapter 17 picks up with her still struggling with this goal. Mrs. Fairfax casually mentions that she would not be surprised if Mr. Rochester didn't return to Thornfield for a year or more, as he often does such things. Hearing this, Jane suffers 'a sickening sense of disappointment.' Frustrated, Jane again tells herself: 'You have nothing to do with the master of Thornfield, further than to receive the salary he gives you for teaching his protegee.'

## ***Mr. Rochester's Return***

After nearly two weeks, Mrs. Fairfax receives a letter from Mr. Rochester announcing his return and the arrival of several guests with him. Poor Jane's struggle is still apparent as this letter makes her hand shake and causes her to spill her coffee. She joins in helping with the household preparations for company, though, and the activity helps to keep her mind off things. Three whole days are spent busily cleaning, polishing, dusting, and arranging. In the midst of it, Jane says, 'I believe I was as active and gay as anybody.' Despite this cheerfulness, her mind is still occasionally 'thrown back on the region of doubts and portents, and dark conjectures.' In addition to thoughts of Mr. Rochester, there is another source of trouble for Jane's peace of mind.

## ***Grace Poole, Still Lurking***

Jane believes Grace Poole to be the one responsible for setting fire to Mr. Rochester's bedclothes some nights ago, but the woman still sits in her third story chamber unmolested, blithely appearing now and then to dine with her fellow servants and wander briefly through the house. Her mere presence is unnerving to Jane, but in this chapter the plot thickens further as Jane overhears some servants' gossip and is given even more to wonder about.

## ***A Mystery at Thornfield***

In the midst of preparing for visitors, Jane happens upon Leah, one of the housemaids, talking with a charwoman (a hired cleaning lady) about Grace Poole. They talk of her wages--which are enviable, it seems. Jane also hears them say things like, 'she understands what she has to do,' and 'it's not everyone could fill her shoes, not for all the money she gets.' Jane believes Grace's primary job is sewing, but if that were true, these ominous statements wouldn't make any sense. It becomes clear that there is more to the story when Leah sees Jane approaching and cuts the conversation short. Confused, the charwoman asks, 'Doesn't she know?' at which Leah shakes her head. Clearly, Grace is not just a seamstress. What else could she be doing up there on the third floor?

|  |
| --- |
| Charwoman |
| Servants talk. |

## ***Company Arrives at Thornfield***

Eventually, the guests arrive with Mr. Rochester, including Blanche Ingram, whom Mr. Rochester is suspected to like especially. The ladies and gentlemen spend their time riding horses and traveling in carriages, eating sumptuous food, and enjoying music and conversation. As is always the case with 19th century upper classes, they also spend a considerable amount of time changing into different outfits.

## ***Evening in the Drawing Room***

One evening, Mr. Rochester sends a message asking Jane to bring Adele to the drawing room to join his guests after dinner. She doesn't want to go, but he insists. Adele is thrilled to be there, but Jane tries to hide herself in a corner and devote her attention to a sewing project. Mr. Rochester does nothing to show the kind of friendship he and Jane have been enjoying. He doesn't speak to or even look at her. Instead, he talks, laughs, flirts, and sings with his guests as though he scarcely notices Jane. He doesn't even defend her against his guests' insults.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

[Rochester](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters/edward-fairfax-rochester) is gone for a week when [Jane](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters/jane-eyre) is upset to learn from [Mrs. Fairfax](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters) that he may go to Europe for a year. But a week later, Mrs. Fairfax reports a new plan—Rochester will be returning to Thornfield in three days with a group of guests.

***Analysis Part 1:***

The prospect of Rochester's absence forces Jane to confront her feelings for him more fully.

***Summary Part 2:***

Meanwhile, [Jane](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters/jane-eyre) keeps an eye on [Grace Poole](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters), who spends most of her time alone upstairs. Jane is amazed that Grace interacts normally with the other servants. She becomes convinced that there's something odd going on when she overhears one servant gossiping that Grace gets paid more than the other servants.

***Analysis Part 2:***

Jane begins to piece together the mystery of the "supernatural" events that have been blamed on Grace Poole.

***Summary Part 3:***

When Rochester's party arrives, they go into the parlor. [Adèle](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters), starry eyed, wanders through an adoring crowd in a French dress while [Jane](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters/jane-eyre), wearing a Quakerish frock, retreats to a corner to observe.

***Analysis Part 3:***

Jane's "Quakerish" dress contrasts the more flashy dress of the aristocrats. It represents her modesty and moral purity.

***Summary Part 4:***

[Blanche Ingram](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters) is the belle of the ball and looks as beautiful as Jane imagined. The flirty Blanche hones in on [Rochester](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters/edward-fairfax-rochester) and, taking a crack at Jane, loudly discusses all of the dreadful governesses that she's had. She then makes Rochester sing a duet with her.

***Analysis Part 5:***

Blanche's class-based crack about governesses indicates that she senses that Jane is a potential competitor for Rochester.

***Summary Part 6:***

Watching [Rochester](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters/edward-fairfax-rochester) with Blanche, [Jane](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters/jane-eyre) realizes that she's helplessly in love with him. She sneaks away, about to cry, but Rochester catches her in the hallway. He lets her leave when he sees that she's about to cry, but demands that she come to the nightly parties for as long as his guests remain at Thornfield. He finishes with the words, "Good-night, my—" before cutting himself off.

***Analysis Part 6:***

Jane's emotion comes from her belief that her social position will make it impossible for Rochester to love her. Rochester almost reveals his own feelings for Jane. Yet, by commanding her to attend the parties, he still doesn't treat her as an equal.

***Quotations:***

***Quotation 1:***

"You have nothing to do with the master of Thornfield, further than to receive the salary he gives you for teaching his protégée, and to be grateful for such respectful and kind treatment as, if you do your duty, you have a right to expect at his hands. Be sure that is the only tie he seriously acknowledges between you and him: so don’t make him the object of your fine feelings, your raptures, agonies, and so forth. He is not of your order: keep to your caste; and be too self-respecting to lavish the love of the whole heart, soul, and strength, where such a gift is not wanted and would be despised." (2.2.2)

***Explanation:***

Here Jane’s trying to sort out her relationship to Rochester, and it’s a lot harder because she’s developed several different relationships to him that aren’t entirely compatible. She’s reminding herself that (1) she’s his employee, (2) she’s lower-class than he is, and (3) he hasn’t necessarily shown a serious romantic interest in her.

But that highly rational assessment really doesn’t cover the instant connection they made in the forest on their first meeting, when he leaned on her shoulder to limp back to his horse and she began taking care of him.

***Quotation 2:***

"Whenever I marry," she continued, after a pause which none interrupted, "I am resolved my husband shall not be a rival, but a foil to me. I will suffer no competitor near the throne; I shall exact an undivided homage: his devotions shall not be shared between me and the shape he sees in his mirror." (2.2.128)

***Explanation 2:***

Blanche Ingram’s idea of a good marriage is one in which the partners are distinctly different and one partner is far superior to the other. As a stunning beauty, she doesn’t want a handsome husband, but a hideous one: that way she’ll always get all the attention. Notice how different this is from Jane’s and Rochester’s ideas about love and marriage—they’re drawn together because they are alike. Blanche thinks that opposites attract, but Jane knows that kindred spirits attract more strongly.

***Quotation 3:***

"He is not to them what he is to me," I thought: "he is not of their kind. I believe he is of mine;—I am sure he is,—I feel akin to him,—I understand the language of his countenance and movements: though rank and wealth sever us widely, I have something in my brain and heart, in my blood and nerves, that assimilates me mentally to him. […] I must, then, repeat continually that we are for ever sundered:—and yet, while I breathe and think I must love him." (2.2.85)

***Explanation 3:***

Seeing Rochester among his high-class houseguests, Jane realizes that he has more in common with her than he does with them. Despite Jane’s and Rochester’s different class backgrounds, their master-servant relationship, and the strict gender roles of Victorian society, Jane can tell that they share something intangible—but she doubts that they can overcome all the social obstacles keeping them apart. This isn’t the first time Jane has felt affection for someone—but it may be the first time she’s felt like somebody else.