***Jane Eyre***

***Vol-2 Chapter 4***

***Chapter 19***

***Summary and Analysis***

***Summary:***

* Jane enters the library and sees the old gypsy woman reading a prayer-book by the fire. Her hat and handkerchief throw shadows over her face.
* The woman starts telling Jane her fortune; Jane is calm and amused, and doesn’t believe a word of it. When the woman describes Jane as lonely and unloved, Jane points out that almost anyone in her situation (governess at an isolated rural house) would fit that description. We’re guessing Jane wouldn’t believe in horoscopes, either.
* Next the woman tells Jane that she is "very near happiness" and that everything is in place for her happily-ever-after ending, but that something needs to happen first. Jane refuses to be baited, and says she can’t guess the riddle.
* Jane does seem at least a little interested—she pays the woman a shilling. The woman says she can’t read Jane’s palm, and that reading palms doesn’t work anyway, but that she can read Jane’s face. Jane’s much more willing to believe that you can read faces—remember all that phrenology stuff from [**Volume 1, Chapter 14**](https://www.shmoop.com/jane-eyre/volume-1-chapter-14-summary.html)?
* The woman tries to get Jane to tell her what she’s thinking and feeling. She even tries to prove that she knows Jane by describing how Jane likes to sit in the window seat, but Jane laughs at this and says that she must have learned that from the servants.
* The woman admits that she knows Grace Poole. This is getting sinister.
* Jane says that sometimes she thinks about saving up her money and starting a little school of her own, but the woman wants to talk about romance and marriage. Jane says she doesn’t care about those things.
* The gypsy asks Jane about Mr. Rochester, and when she doesn’t say much in response, the gypsy suggests that Mr. Rochester is in love with Blanche Ingram. Jane admits that the rumor is that Rochester and Blanche are engaged, but corrects the woman on one thing—they’re not in love.
* The old woman keeps talking about Mr. Rochester, and Jane says she wants to hear her own fortune, not his.
* The gypsy asks Jane to kneel on the hearthrug and studies her face, describing its features: Jane’s eyes, which are "soft and full of feeling" but show that she’s laughing silently at the woman; Jane’s mouth, which the woman says is meant to laugh and talk and not be so stern all the time; and her forehead, which shows her insistence on reason and ethics.
* In a moment, the woman’s voice changes—the old gypsy woman is Mr. Rochester in disguise, and he’s just been messing with everyone. He can’t bring himself to tease Jane any more, though, and so he lets her know who he is.
* Rochester takes off his costume and asks Jane what she thinks. Jane’s not sure whether she’s upset. It bothers her that Rochester was trying to get her to "talk nonsense," maybe by getting her to admit that she’s attracted to him, but she didn’t end up saying anything embarrassing, so she thinks she can forgive him.
* Rochester asks Jane to stay and tell him what everyone else was saying about the different "fortunes" he told the women and any other news. She tells him about Mason’s arrival, and he’s so horrified that he can’t even stand up anymore. Clearly, Mason’s presence means something terrible has happened, or will happen.
* Jane helps Rochester to a chair. This is the second time he’s had to lean on her shoulder. (Remember the first, in [**Volume 1, Chapter 12**](https://www.shmoop.com/jane-eyre/volume-1-chapter-12-summary.html)?)
* Rochester tells Jane that he wishes they were alone on a deserted island together. She offers to do anything for him—even if she has to sacrifice her own life. He assures her that he’ll let her know if she can help.
* Rochester sends Jane to get him a glass of wine and to see what everyone’s doing in the other room. She comes back and tells him everyone is laughing and chatting as usual; he seems a little relieved.
* Rochester asks Jane what she would do if everyone else in the party rejected him; she says she wouldn’t care at all. He’s a little bit happier after this, and asks her to go and send Mason to see him. She does, and then goes to bed. Lying awake, she hears Mr. Rochester come upstairs with Mr. Mason, show him to a room politely, then go to his own room, and this makes her feel better.

***Synopsis:***

Jane tells the woman she has no faith in the gypsy art. The gypsy then looks at Jane's palm which she can make nothing of, so decides to read Jane's face.The gypsy asks Jane about her aspirations and whether or not she has interest in any gentlemen. The gypsy brings to mind Jane watching Mr. Rochester and Blanche during the evenings in the drawing room. The gypsy questions Jane about how she feels about Blanche and Mr. Rochester and their possible marriage. As Jane is about to leave, she notices the gypsy's finger and realizes it is Rochester. Jane tells Mr. Rochester about Mr. Mason's arrival and he is shocked the man has come to visit. Rochester asks what Jane would do if everyone snubbed him and Jane promises she would stand by him, which seems to please him.

In an amusing twist, it turns out the gypsy is Mr. Rochester in disguise. This light mood is broken, however, when Jane tells Mr. Rochester that Mr. Mason has come to visit. Mr. Rochester's line of questioning foreshadows that Mr. Mason may have some information about Mr. Rochester that might be considered taboo by average society. Identity is a theme in this chapter. Note how the use of disguise allows Mr. Rochester to interview Jane concerning her feelings for him without having to give away his identity. Jane is also torn about the identity of the gypsy. While she doubts the woman is a gypsy, she thinks the woman may be Grace in disguise. While the identity of the gypsy is revealed by the end of the chapter, Mr. Mason's identity, and the news he brings, remains cloaked.

Jane goes in to the library to have her fortune read, and after overcoming her skepticism, she finds herself entranced by the old woman’s speech. The gypsy woman seems to know a great deal about Jane and tells her that she is very close to happiness. She also says that she told Blanche Ingram that Rochester was not as wealthy as he seemed, thereby accounting for Blanche’s sullen mood. As the woman reads Jane’s fortune, her voice slowly deepens, and Jane realizes that the gypsy is Rochester in disguise. Jane reproaches Rochester for tricking her and remembers thinking that Grace Poole might have been the gypsy. When Rochester learns that Mr. Mason has arrived, he looks troubled.

***Critical Analysis(Ch18-19)***:

With guests at Thornfield, life is cheerful. One night, they are preparing for a game of charades. Rochester's group goes first, pantomiming a marriage ceremony with Rochester and Blanche as the happy couple. They then enact the story of Eliezer and Rebecca, and end with Rochester as a prisoner in chains. Colonel Dent's team correctly guesses the overall meaning of the three charades: Bridewell, an English prison. No longer interested in the charades, Jane watches the interactions between Rochester and Blanche. Their intimate style of conversing leads Jane to believe they will soon marry.

But Jane doesn't believe they love each other. Rochester is marrying for social and political reasons, while Blanche is marrying for money. Mr. Mason an old acquaintance of Rochester's, arrives one day. Jane immediately dislikes Mason's "unsettled and inanimate" face. From Mason, she learns that Rochester once lived in the West Indies.

A gypsy woman, old Mother Bunches, arrives from a nearby camp and wants to tell the fortunes of "the quality." Lady Ingram wants the old woman sent away, but Blanche insists upon having her fortune told. After fifteen minutes with the old woman, Blanche returns, and has obviously received disappointing news. Mary Ingram and Amy and Louisa Eschton have their fortunes read together and return laughing, impressed by Mother Bunches' intimate knowledge of their lives. Finally, the gypsy insists upon telling Jane's fortune. Jane isn't frightened, just interested and excited.

Jane enters the library and finds the gypsy woman seated snugly in an easy chair. She sits in front of the fire, reading something that looks like a Prayer Book. Despite Jane's protests to the contrary, the gypsy woman tells Jane she is cold, sick, and silly. Jane, she foretells, is very close to happiness; if Jane made a movement toward it, bliss would result. Soon the gypsy's speech has wrapped Jane in a dream-like state, and she is surprised by how well the old woman knows the secrets of her heart. The gypsy also explains that she (the gypsy) crushed Blanche's marriage hopes by suggesting Rochester isn't as wealthy as he seems. The gypsy then reads each of Jane's features, as the voice drones on it eventually becomes Rochester's. Jane tells Rochester the disguise was unfair and admits she had suspected Grace Poole of being the masquerader. Before leaving, Jane tells Rochester about Mason's arrival; he is visibly upset by this news. Rochester worries that Mason has told them something grave or mysterious about him. Later that night she hears Rochester happily leading Mason to his room.

More aspects of Blanche Ingram's bad behavior are presented in this chapter. For example, she pushes Adèle away with "spiteful antipathy" and her treatment of Jane isn't much better: She "scorned to touch [Jane] with the hem of her robes as she passed" and quickly withdrew her eyes from Jane "as from an object too mean to merit observation." Jane concludes that Blanche is an inferior example of femininity because, like Céline Varens, she is showy, but not genuine. Her heart is "barren," her mind is "poor," and she lacks "freshness," the one trait Rochester claims to be searching for. Qualities Jane admires in women include force, fervor, kindness, and sense.

The chapter contains many prophetic events. Linking marriage with imprisonment, the charade foreshadows the circumstances of Rochester's marriage that has trapped him for life with a mad woman; Rochester is stuck in a "Bridewell" of his own creation. The arrival of Mr. Mason also prefigures change. Immediately disliking the tame vacancy of Mason's eyes, Jane compares him with Rochester, finding they differ like a gander and a falcon. Mason's difference lies in foreignness; recently arrived from the West Indies, Mason appears to suffer from a heat-induced languor. Mason will play a pivotal role in the plot of the story, and his presence provides another example of how foreigners are denigrated in this novel.

In posing as a gypsy woman, Rochester is assuming an ambiguous role — a position of both gender and class inferiority. In his disguise, he is almost denied admittance to his own home, and is referred to here by Jane as "mother" rather than "master." Many critics argue Jane's relationship with Rochester is marked by ambiguities of equality and independence: In their first meeting, for example, Rochester is dependent upon Jane to return to his horse. As gypsy woman, Rochester breaks gender boundaries and further aligns himself with mystical knowledge. During this tale, Rochester wears a red cloak, connecting with other red images in the novel and showing his connection with the element of passion. Given the class differences between them, Rochester can't reveal his feeling for Jane in plain English, but must keep his words, like his face, veiled. As his language becomes plainer, more directly revealing the secrets of her heart, it paradoxically leads her not into reality, but into a dream state: Jane says the gypsy's strange talk leads Jane into "a web of mystification."

Rochester's almost supernatural powers are highlighted in this scene: His ability to weave a magical web around Jane with words and, more importantly, his ability to look almost directly into her heart so she feels an "unseen spirit had been sitting for weeks by my heart watching its workings and taking record of every pulse." He has also seen through Blanche's heart, recognizing her fortune-hunting mission. His witch's skill is being able to peer deeply into women's hearts, extracting their secrets: Notice that he does not tell the fortunes of any of the men in the party.

Glossary

Voilà Monsieur Rochester, qui revient! Look, it's Mr. Rochester returning!

surtout an overcoat.

le cas an occasion.

diablerie witchcraft

ad infinitum endlessly

***Critical Study:***

Jane tells the gypsy that she doesn't believe in fortune-telling, but she'll agree to listen. She says she wants to "save" and "set up a school." The gypsy presses Jane to find out what she thinks of the talk of marriage between Rochester and Miss Ingram. Jane asks if the marriage is planned, and the gypsy says it is. But she says she's told Miss Ingram that she'll be disappointed that Rochester's wealth is not as vast as she has hoped. Eventually Jane realizes that the gypsy is Rochester in disguise. Jane tells him about the arrival of Mr. Mason, and he's startled by the news, saying he'd like to be with her away from "trouble, and danger, and hideous recollections." At Jane's request, Rochester has her aid him by observing Mason and the other guests. He speaks with Mr. Mason in the library before everyone retires for the night.

In Chapter 18 Jane comes to terms with the probability that Rochester will marry Miss Ingram. She doesn't detect anything like the bond that she and Rochester share, so she takes some comfort from that. On the other hand, she cannot forget her own feelings: addressing the reader once again, she says, "I had learnt to love Mr. Rochester: I could not unlove him now."

In his disguise as the gypsy, Rochester's message to Miss Ingram about the fortune she hopes to gain indicates that his assessment of her character is similar to Jane's assessment. He knows that she is shallow, interested only in money, and will soon lose interest in him. Why, then, does he want Jane to think he plans to marry Miss Ingram? Is he trying to prod Jane to reveal her true feelings for him?

Adding to the mystery is Rochester's reaction to Mason. He seems to feel that Mason could somehow threaten his reputation. What secret does Mason hold over Rochester?

***Significance:***

Jane joins the fortune-teller in the library. Although she is initially skeptical of the old woman, Jane becomes entranced by the gypsy’s words. The fortune-teller, who admits she has an inside source in Grace Poole, tells Jane several truths, focusing on her feelings toward Mr. Rochester. The fortune-teller predicts that Mr. Rochester will marry Miss Ingram; her previous implication to Miss Ingram that she wants Mr. Rochester only for his money is what disturbed the young lady. She then gives Jane her own fortune, which revolves around Jane's power of reasoning over her emotions.

Suddenly, the old woman reveals her disguise: it is none other than Mr. Rochester. Jane, who had suspected something was amiss from the start, that perhaps the woman was Grace in disguise, is not too upset. When she tells him that Mason has come to Thornfield, Mr. Rochester is shocked and nearly faints. He asks Jane to go into the dining-room and find out what Mason is doing. She reports that the party, Mason included, is socializing. Mr. Rochester, after assuring himself of Jane's loyalty, asks her to whisper an invitation to Mason to see him. She does so, and goes up to bed; late at night she hears Mr. Rochester cheerfully show Mason to his room.

The Gothic element of fortune-teller mingles with the novel's Gothic romance once Mr. Rochester reveals his disguise; mysticism and the supernatural give way to Mr. Rochester's burgeoning love for Jane. The reader is also delighted to see that he is well aware of Miss Ingram's mercenary designs on his estate. Rochester's ability to disguise himself also speaks of his hidden, secretive identity. The disguise of the gypsy is also significant in the way that it plays with inequalities of social class. Not only is Mr. Rochester no longer superior to Jane when he is disguised as the gypsy, he becomes her inferior in class and social position and is barely able to gain access to Thornfield Manor.

In a novel that otherwise focuses on Jane's internal world, Brontë keeps the action moving by constantly introducing new pieces of the mystery of Mr. Rochester's past. Mason’s arrival seems innocent, but Jane is unable to shake ominous feelings about him. Moreover, he admits that he is a friend from Mr. Rochester’s past, something that even Jane still knows very little about. As if paralleling Jane’s uncertainty about the unexpected visitor, Mr. Rochester's feelings concerning Mason change from anxiety to happiness without any explanation. Still, Mr. Rochester’s insistence of Jane’s loyalty suggests that his seeming ease around Mason later in the evening is only another disguise.

***Notes:***

This lesson provides a summary of chapter 19 of ''Jane Eyre.'' In this chapter, Jane is called in to see the gypsy fortune teller, and we learn that things are not always as they seem!

Not Buying It

After all the other ladies have had their turn, Jane is very interested to see the 'Sybil', or fortune teller, but only out of curiosity. She doesn't buy the hype which sends the other ladies into fits of giggles, and she doesn't put any stock in the gypsy's ability to actually tell fortunes. As Jane enters, we see her in full command of herself. The gypsy is surprised by Jane's calm, collected deportment, and they have this amusing exchange:

'Why don't you tremble?' the gypsy asks.

'I'm not cold,' Jane frankly replies.

'Why don't you turn pale?'

'I am not sick.'

'Why don't you consult my art?'

'I'm not silly.'

In addition to retaining complete composure, Jane effectively tells the woman her 'art' is 'silly.'

Despite Jane's skeptical approach, the gypsy persists in trying to tell her fortune. Jane is not easily convinced, producing rejoinders such as, 'Prove it,' and, 'You might say all that to almost anyone.'

|  |
| --- |
| fortune teller |

Mr. Rochester's Fortune

After trying unsuccessfully to extract information from Jane about how she feels about Mr. Rochester, the gypsy changes tactics and tries instead to give Jane information about him. She tells her that Mr. Rochester and Blanche are soon to announce their engagement and speculates they will be 'a superlatively happy pair.' Of Mr. Rochester, she says, 'He must love such a handsome, noble, witty, accomplished lady.' However, she intimates that Blanche only loves Mr. Rochester for his money--which calls into question the gypsy's assertions about their impending happiness. Jane puts an end to it though with another spicy response, 'I did not come to hear Mr. Rochester's fortune: I came to hear my own: and you have told me nothing of it.'

Jane's Fortune

'Your fortune is yet doubtful,' the gypsy says as if to defend her failure to produce a reading for Jane. She goes on to say, 'Chance has meted you a measure of happiness...She has laid it carefully on one side for you...It depends on yourself to stretch out your hand, and take it up.' This comment makes us wonder if the fortune teller might be speaking of Mr. Rochester. The gypsy then has Jane kneel on the rug before her that she might examine Jane's face. In her eyes, the fortune teller sees loneliness. In Jane's mouth, she reads a reluctance to express true feeling. In her brow, the gypsy sees that Jane will rule her emotions, no matter how strong, with prudence and judgment.

The Gypsy Uncloaked

Perhaps it is the accurate reading the gypsy gives Jane, or maybe it is the old woman's inexplicable shift in tone and sentence structure, such as, 'I wish to foster, not to blight, to earn gratitude, not to wring tears of blood,' that causes Jane's perspective to shift. Suddenly she sees the gypsy woman in a new light, recognizing her identity. She notes, 'The old woman's voice had changed: her accent, her gesture, and all were familiar to me as my own face in a glass.' Thus awakened, Jane observes the woman's hand, noting 'it was no more the withered limb of eld than my own.' Furthermore, she notices a ring on the little finger which she had seen countless times before. This is not an old gypsy woman but Mr. Rochester in disguise!

A Stranger

Now that Mr. Rochester's identity is revealed, he and Jane talk together as the friends they are. It is likely Jane and the reader both may have more specific speculations about just what that 'measure of happiness' could be which lay within Jane's grasp if she would grab onto it. Had Mr. Rochester contrived this entire scheme just to tell Jane these things?

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

***Summary Part 1:***

Alone with [Jane](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters/jane-eyre), the gypsy hides behind a large hat. She describes how Jane feels lonely and represses her feelings. Though initially skeptical, Jane is awed by how much insight the gypsy has into her feelings. The gypsy says that Jane is very close to achieving happiness. She tells Jane that [Blanche's](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters) dismay resulted from the gypsy's telling her that [Rochester](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters/edward-fairfax-rochester) wasn't as rich as he seemed.

***Analysis Part 1:***

The gypsy really does seem to have mystical powers, and can see right into Jane's heart. Blanche, meanwhile, is revealed as totally shallow and interested only in money rather than love or any emotional connection.

***Summary Part 2:***

The gypsy asks [Jane](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters/jane-eyre) about any love interests, which Jane denies having. Jane admits she is alone, but not sad. She says that thoughts of someday building a school cheer her up.

***Analysis Part 2:***

Blanche and the other women asked about love and husbands. Jane focuses on her own independent dreams.

***Summary Part 3:***

As the gypsy woman continues speaking, her voice deepens, and [Jane](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters/jane-eyre) suddenly recognizes the gypsy's voice and hand—the gypsy is [Rochester](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters/edward-fairfax-rochester) in disguise! (For a moment, Jane had suspected that the gypsy was [Grace Poole](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters).)

***Analysis Part 3:***

The disguise represents how Rochester masks the truth about his identity. He plays with people, including Jane, and shows them little respect.

***Summary Part 4:***

Though furious with Rochester for fooling her, Jane still mentions [Mr. Mason](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters)'s arrival at [Rochester](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters/edward-fairfax-rochester). Rochester staggers and Jane holds him up. Rochester asks Jane if she would shun him if he were to experience a scandal. Jane promises to stand by him, and goes to bring Mr. Mason to Rochester.

***Analysis Part 5:***

Rochester's question implies that he doesn't think Jane would accept him for who he really is. It also suggests that he might be linked to the supernatural events at Thornfield. Jane is devoted to Rochester, however, and wants to serve him.

***Quotations:***

***Quotation 1:***

I could talk a while when the evening commenced: but the first gush of vivacity and fluency gone, I was fain to sit on a stool at Diana’s feet, to rest my head on her knee, and listen alternately to her and Mary; while they sounded thoroughly the topic on which I had but touched. Diana offered to teach me German. I liked to learn of her: I saw the part of instructress pleased and suited her; that of scholar pleased and suited me no less. (3.4.4)

*Explanation:*

In her refuge at Moor House, Jane reverts to her Lowood days; Diana is a lot like Miss Temple and Helen Burns combined, a kind and intelligent teacher who also has strong religious beliefs. During this difficult moment, Jane becomes a student—and a child—all over again in order to recuperate after her traumatic experience with Rochester.

***Quotation 2:***

"What tale do you like best to hear?"  
  
"Oh, I have not much choice! They generally run on the same theme —courtship; and promise to end in the same catastrophe—marriage."  
  
"And do you like that monotonous theme?"  
  
"Positively, I don’t care about it: it is nothing to me." (2.4.49-52)

***Explanation 2:***

You remember what’s going on here, right? Rochester, disguised as the old gypsy woman, is trying to get Jane to admit that she’s in love with him. (Go back and read the summary of [Volume 2, Chapter 4](https://www.shmoop.com/jane-eyre/volume-2-chapter-4-summary.html) if you have no idea what we’re talking about.) The real question here is, do we believe Jane’s claim that marriage is "nothing" to her and that she doesn’t care about it? We already know that she’s in love with Rochester, but we also know that she thinks that relationship isn’t going anywhere.