***Jane Eyre***

***Vol-2 Chapter 6***

***Chapter 21***

***Summary and Analysis***

***Summary:***

* Jane tells the reader about the different strange moments in her life where she and people she knew seemed to be a little bit psychic—to have premonitions, or to sense what’s going on with their distant friends and family.
* Lately, Jane’s been having strange nightmares about a baby. Every night for a week, she’s played with this weird baby in her dreams, and it is totally creeping her out.
* One afternoon, Jane is visited by Robert Leaven, Mr. Reed’s coachman, who married Jane’s nursemaid Bessie. (Remember how we learned that in [**Volume 1, Chapter 10**](https://www.shmoop.com/jane-eyre/volume-1-chapter-10-summary.html)?)
* Robert tells Jane that John Reed is dead, possibly by suicide because of his gambling debts, and that Mrs. Reed had a stroke when she heard. On her deathbed, Mrs. Reed has been asking to see Jane.
* Jane goes to ask Mr. Rochester for time off work (after all, she’s still Adèle’s governess) so that she can visit Mrs. Reed. Rochester makes her explain everything about the situation, and at first refuses to let Jane go a hundred miles away to see someone who was so cruel to her.
* Eventually Jane persuades Rochester to let her go, although she can’t promise when she’ll be back.
* Rochester realizes Jane will need some money so that she can travel safely; he hasn’t paid her yet for any of her work as a governess. He’s not cheating her; it’s just that there’s no need for Jane to have money while living at Thornfield, so he hasn’t bothered.
* Jane only has five shillings total in the whole world, so Rochester offers her fifty pounds. It’s tough to say exactly what that means in hard cash today, but remember that Jane’s annual salary is thirty pounds a year, and she’s only worked six months so far, so he only owes her fifteen, and he’s being far too generous, basically paying her three times what he owes.
* Jane won’t take more than she’s earned, and Rochester ends up giving her ten pounds because he doesn’t have exact change for fifteen. He tells her maybe it will help that he owes her five more—it will make her come back.
* While they’re doing business, Jane tells Rochester that she’s going to advertise for a new governess job, because she knows that after he marries Blanche they will send Adèle to school.
* Rochester’s pretty upset about the possibility of losing Jane, and teases her by trying to make her give back the ten pounds.
* When Jane refuses to give back her salary, Rochester makes her promise that she won’t place an ad applying for other jobs. She agrees, but makes him promise that she and Adèle will both be out of Thornfield before he marries Blanche.
* Jane and Rochester say goodbye; Rochester seems to want to say more, but doesn’t.
* The next morning, Jane leaves for Gateshead very early and arrives at the lodge a few days later at five in the afternoon. Bessie and Robert are there with their children, and Jane has tea with them. Lots of old memories of Bessie as a nursemaid come flooding back to Jane. Jane tells Bessie all about Mr. Rochester and Thornfield.
* After tea, Bessie and Jane walk to the main house. This is the first time Jane’s been back since she left for Lowood nine years ago.
* When Jane enters the house, everything looks just the same, except for the people. She sees Eliza and Georgiana Reed. Eliza is super-uptight, dressed all in black with her hair pulled back tight and a sour expression. Georgiana is plump, blonde, and blue-eyed, also dressed in black because they’re mourning their brother’s death, but much more fashionable.
* Eliza and Georgiana chat snobbily with Jane for a little bit, making it clear that they think she’s definitely their inferior. Jane, however, is all grown up now, and she doesn’t care what they do or say.
* Jane asks her cousins about Mrs. Reed, and they seem offended to be asked a direct question and uninterested in arranging Jane’s visit. Jane ignores them and arranges her own visit, deciding to stay until Mrs. Reed is better or until she has died.
* Jane goes in to see Mrs. Reed, who is, of course, lying ill in bed. Jane’s interested to realize that she doesn’t feel bitter toward Mrs. Reed anymore—just sorry for her and willing to forgive her.
* Mrs. Reed is still harsh and bad-tempered, but she does want Jane to stay so that they can talk things over. Unfortunately, Mrs. Reed is also losing her mind a little—sometimes she starts talking to Jane about Jane as though she were someone else.
* While Mrs. Reed is raving, Jane gets her to explain why she always hated her niece. Apparently, Jane’s mother was Mr. Reed’s sister, and when the family disowned her for marrying a man of low status, Mr. Reed defended her. Mr. Reed was always attached to his sister and her child, Jane Eyre, and Mrs. Reed seems to have been jealous.
* It becomes clear that Mrs. Reed doesn’t really know that her son has committed suicide—she’s still worried about his money problems and his threats to kill himself or her.
* Mrs. Reed falls into a sort of coma, and Jane doesn’t get a chance to talk to her for ten days. In the meantime, Eliza sews and reads, Georgiana talks to the canary, and Jane sketches pictures of landscapes and fairies and elves.
* One day, Jane sketches a portrait of Mr. Rochester. She’s so absorbed in staring at it that she doesn’t notice her cousins come up and take a look. They’re surprised that she’s such a good artist and she ends up sketching their portraits.
* Jane’s sketches seem to have broken the ice; Georgiana, in particular, starts to talk to Jane more and more. Unfortunately, Georgiana is completely superficial; she only talks about herself and her romances and her own problems, and never even mentions her mother’s illness or her brother’s suicide or anything else.
* Eliza doesn’t really hang out with Jane, but it’s not that she hates Jane; she’s just kind of a loner. She has super-organized days where she does particular tasks—reads a prayer book, works in the garden, sews—at specific times, and that’s pretty much all she wants. She says that she’s planning to retire to somewhere like a nunnery after her mother dies.
* Eliza and Georgiana don’t really get along; sometimes Eliza lectures Georgiana about how vain and superficial she is and tells her to make herself a schedule of activities so that she can be independent and not need company. Georgiana thinks, maybe correctly, that Eliza is just jealous of her looks and romances. Eliza makes it clear that she won’t have anything to do with Georgiana after their mother dies.
* One day, Eliza is at church and Georgiana has fallen asleep on the sofa, and Jane goes up to check on Mrs. Reed. Jane remembers Helen Burns’ death and thinks about the afterlife.
* Mrs. Reed speaks for the first time in days. She doesn’t believe who Jane is at first, but is slowly convinced.
* As she’s dying, Mrs. Reed apologizes to Jane for two things: first, for not treating her like a daughter, which is what she promised Mr. Reed she would do; second, for concealing a letter from Jane’s uncle, John Eyre, that came three years ago.
* Mrs. Reed lets Jane read the letter, in which John asked where Jane was so that he could write a will making her the heir of his fortune when he died. Mrs. Reed didn’t tell Jane about it because she held a grudge against Jane for being ungrateful to her.
* Then Mrs. Reed admits something else: she wrote to John Eyre and told him Jane died of typhus during the epidemic at Lowood.
* Jane forgives Mrs. Reed and asks Mrs. Reed to forgive her in return, but Mrs. Reed refuses to kiss her cheek.
* Mrs. Reed loses consciousness again; Bessie and a nurse come in and take care of her, and Jane stays with them, but Mrs. Reed dies that evening without saying anything else. Neither Jane nor Eliza cries.

***Synopsis:***

Jane has heard that it is a bad omen to dream of children, and now she has dreams on seven consecutive nights involving babies. She learns that her cousin John Reed has committed suicide, and that her aunt, Mrs. Reed, has suffered a stroke and is nearing death. Jane goes to Gateshead, where she is reunited with Bessie. She also sees her cousins Eliza and Georgiana. Eliza is plain and plans to enter a convent, while Georgiana is as beautiful as ever. Ever since Eliza ruined Georgiana’s hopes of eloping with a young man, the two sisters have not gotten along. Jane tries to patch things up with Mrs. Reed, but the old woman is still full of hostility toward her late husband’s favorite. One day, Mrs. Reed gives Jane a letter from her father’s brother, John Eyre. He declares that he wishes to adopt Jane and bequeath her his fortune. The letter is three years old; out of malice, Mrs. Reed did not forward it to Jane when she received it. In spite of her aunt’s behavior, Jane tries once more to smooth relations with the dying woman. But Mrs. Reed refuses, and, at midnight, she dies.

***Analysis(Ch17-21):***

Jane’s situation in Chapter 17 manifests the uncomfortable position of governesses. Jane, forced to sit in the drawing room during Rochester’s party, must endure Blanche Ingram’s comments to her mother about the nature of governesses—“half of them detestable and the rest ridiculous, and all incubi.” (“Incubi” is the plural of “incubus,” an oppressive or nightmarish burden.)

By this stage of the story, the narrative has begun to focus increasingly on the potential relationship between Jane and Rochester. Blanche’s presence, which threatens the possibility of a union between the two, adds tension to the plot. Blanche is not only a competitor for Jane, she is also a foil to her, as the two women differ in every respect. Jane Eyre never seems to possess the degree of romantic tension that runs throughout Emily Brontë’s Wuthering Heights because the signs of Rochester’s affection for Jane are recognizable early on. The most telling tip-off occurs at the end of Chapter 17, when Rochester nearly calls Jane “my love” before biting his tongue. The tension surrounding Jane’s and Rochester’s relationship derives not from the question of whether Rochester loves Jane, but from whether he will be able to act upon his feelings. So far, two obstacles—Blanche and the dark secrets of Thornfield Hall—stand in Rochester’s way.

These obstacles, and the potential marriage that they impede, constitute the romantic plot of Jane Eyre. As in many romances, the norms of society and the protagonists’ conflicting personalities must either be changed or ignored in order for marriage to be possible. But Rochester’s dark past, most importantly his secret marriage to Bertha, adds a Gothic element to the story. Unlike the marriage plot, which leads toward the public, communal event of a wedding, the “Gothic plot” of Rochester’s struggle with his own past focuses on Rochester’s private consciousness. The physical world of Thornfield Hall reflects his interior state—the house, the landscape, and Bertha can all be seen as external manifestations of his dangerous secrets. These Gothic elements suggest that the story will lead to death or madness rather than the happy occasion of a wedding.

Disguised as a gypsy woman, Rochester wields an almost magical power over Jane, and the scene reveals how much he controls her emotions at this stage of the novel. He also controls the plot, and his masquerading as a gypsy woman allows him to overcome the obstacle Blanche poses. Like the game of charades the group plays earlier, Rochester’s disguised appearance suggests his disguised character. Mr. Mason’s unexplained wounds, like the earlier mysterious fire in Rochester’s bedroom, further the larger Gothic plot that will soon unfold. By allowing Jane upstairs to see Mason, Rochester seems to be inviting her to help cure the ills inflicted by Bertha, and he attempts for the first time to talk with Jane about his past as they take a walk together following Mason’s stabbing. Although he speaks to Jane about his determination to redeem himself, his references to a grave error and a dissipated youth suggest that Jane risks great danger not only by continuing to live at Thornfield but by falling in love with him. Her emotional welfare as well as her physical welfare may soon be in jeopardy. Adèle and Bertha already serve as living legacies of Rochester’s past licentiousness, and Jane could be next in line, as her prophetic dream seems to suggest.

***Short study:***

Jane writes of premonitions, which she believes in. Once after Bessie has a dream about a baby, her younger sister dies. For a week now, Jane has been dreaming of a baby. Bessie's husband, Robert, arrives at Thornfield to say that Robert has killed himself and Mrs. Reed has had a stroke from the shock and is asking for Jane. Rochester elicits a promise that she will return. She asks that he send Adèle to a school if he marries Blanche. The parting is awkward.

Jane arrives at Gateshead and is greeted coldly by one sister and sarcastically by the other and told Jane cannot see Mrs. Reed that evening. Bessie shows Jane to Mrs. Reed's room anyway. Mrs. Reed rambles, saying that Mr. Reed loved Jane more than his own children. Ten days pass before Jane can visit Mrs. Reed again. She passes her time drawing. The sisters take notice of her drawings and open up some to Jane. One wants to marry well and the other to join a convent. When Mrs. Reed realizes Jane is in her room, she directs her to a letter from an uncle John who wished to adopt Jane and leave her his estate. Mrs. Reed told him Jane had died. Jane tries to reconcile with Mrs. Reed, but she is unwilling and passes away in the night.

Despite the injustice served her by the Reeds, Jane returns to Gateshead at Mrs. Reed's request where she conducts herself in a mature and loving manner. In her last moments alive, Mrs. Reed refuses to forgive Jane for the wrongs she believes Jane committed. During her time with her aunt, however, Jane learns she does have an uncle who cares for her and at one point wanted to adopt her.

During the time she is at Gateshead again, Jane also gets a chance to know the grown up versions of Eliza and Georgiana Reed. The two are a study in opposites. Eliza is religious but cold and uncaring. Georgiana, on the other hand, cares only for having fun and going to parties. Neither seems to have much grief for their dead brother or their dying mother.

***Critical Analysis***:

Jane remembers Bessie Leaven saying that dreams of children are a sign of trouble, either to oneself or one's kin. Jane is worried because she has been dreaming of infants for the past seven successive nights, including the night she was roused by Mason's cry. It also happens on the day Jane learns of her cousin John's death. The news of her son's death has caused Mrs. Reed to have a stroke, and she is now asking for Jane.

Jane arrives at Gateshead at five o'clock on May 1, greeted by Bessie, who prepares tea for them both. As they sit discussing old times, Jane realizes that the flame of her old resentments against the Reeds has been extinguished. She walks into the main house and meets her two cousins again: Eliza is tall and ascetic looking, while Georgiana is buxom and beautiful. Bessie takes Jane to see Mrs. Reed, whose face is as stern and restless as ever. While Jane would like to be reconciled with her aunt, Mrs. Reed won't relinquish her animosity. Jane learns the source of Mrs. Reed's anger toward her: Mrs. Reed was jealous of the relationship that Jane's mother, Mr. Reed's favorite sister, had with her husband, and of the fact that he showed Jane more attention than he ever showed his own children.

To pass the time, Jane sketches. Both Eliza and Georgiana are surprised with her skill, and Jane volunteers to draw their portraits. This breaks the ice between Jane and her cousins, and Georgiana begins confiding in her. Eliza is busy all day, every day; she plans to enter a convent when her mother dies. One rainy day, Jane sneaks upstairs to her aunt's room. Awaking from her lethargy, Mrs. Reed gives Jane a letter from her uncle, John Eyre. Written three years earlier, the letter reveals that he wishes to adopt Jane and leave her his fortune. Mrs. Reed didn't send it to Jane because she hated her too much and wanted to get revenge. One final time, Jane tries to seek reconciliation with her aunt, but Mrs. Reed refuses to forgive her. Her aunt dies at midnight.

This chapter develops the characters of the Reeds, who haven't changed much in the years since Jane last saw them. The three Reed women are models of three different types of unacceptable female behavior. Eliza's ascetic appearance and crucifix signal her religious rebirth. Extremely rigid, Eliza has every aspect of her day planned out, yet Jane cannot find any "result of her diligence." When her mother dies, she plans to join a convent. Despite her seeming devotion, Eliza knows as little about compassion or love as does Mr. Brocklehurst. An angry, bitter woman, Eliza offers another negative image of Christianity. All of her work is self-centered, and she has little interest in her mother's health, not even shedding a tear when she dies. Always cold, rigid, impassible, Eliza is an example of a character who is too icy, too lacking in generous, passionate feeling. Jane's belief is that "judgement untempered by feeling is too bitter and husky a morsel for human deglutition"; Jane seeks a balance between judgment and feeling that will allow her a full, but healthy share in human joy.

While Eliza has too much judgment, too little feeling, Georgiana has the opposite: feeling without judgment. Where Eliza has consecrated herself to excessive asceticism, Georgiana has devoted herself to an immoderate fashionableness. Where Eliza is tall and extremely thin, Georgiana is buxom and voluptuous. Vain and shallow, Georgiana shows no interest in her brother's death or in her mother's illness. In a fashion similar to Céline Varens, Georgiana's mind is fully devoted to recollections of past parties and "aspirations after dissipations to come." Neither Eliza's nun-like life nor Georgiana's fashionable fluff interests Jane.

Aunt Reed is also a negative model. Refusing forgiveness or compassion, her aunt cherishes only ill feelings for Jane. While Jane's fiery passions have been extinguished, her aunt maintains a heated hatred for Jane until the moment of her death. In fact, she wishes Jane had died in the typhus outbreak at Lowood. This animosity is based on jealousy: She couldn't accept her husband's love of his sister or her child. Despite her attempts to keep John Eyre away from Jane, his repeated appearance in the story foreshadows his role later in her life, a role that will center on money. Aunt Reed's revenge attempt will be unsuccessful.

***Critical Study:***

Jane begins the chapter by reflecting on the value of "presentiments," or premonitions, and signs. The day after the incident with Mason, Jane receives the news that John Reed has died, a possible suicide, after leading a "wild" life. Mrs. Reed has had a stroke and wants to speak to Jane. Before Jane leaves she requests permission to do so from Rochester. As they talk Jane asks about Adèle's future when Rochester marries (she thinks to Miss Ingram).

Jane goes to Gateshead and has a pleasant reunion with Bessie. Georgiana and Eliza are as cold as ever, but this no longer upsets Jane. Mrs. Reed is expected to live only for a few weeks. Ten-plus days pass before Jane learns why her aunt sent for her. In the meantime Jane and her cousins develop a more tolerable relationship, though the two of them despise each other. When she finally speaks with Mrs. Reed, her aunt expresses no regret for the way she treated Jane. She shows Jane a letter she received three years earlier from John Eyre, Jane's uncle. He wanted to find Jane so he could adopt her and have her come to Madeira. He has been successful in business and wants to leave his fortune to Jane. Not wanting to see Jane become wealthy, Mrs. Reed replied to John Eyre that Jane had died of typhus at Lowood. This, she says, was her revenge for Jane's outburst against her before she left Gateshead. Jane asks for Mrs. Reed's forgiveness but is refused. Nevertheless Jane forgives her aunt, who dies just a few hours later.

This chapter highlights how much Jane has changed and matured since she left Gateshead at the age of 10. Although she had sworn to never again to call Mrs. Read her aunt or come to see her, she does both. Although her aunt refuses to forgive Jane's childish excesses, Jane forgives her aunt for the treatment she received. No longer defensive, angry, or dependent, Jane is now confident, forgiving, and independent. She has internalized the message that [Helen Burns](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Jane-Eyre/character-analysis/#Helen_Burns) taught her. The differences between her aunt and her highlight the difference between hypocrisy and true Christian values. At the same time, Jane does not grieve over her aunt's death.

Jane's female cousins provide a counterpoint to her. Georgina and Eliza want nothing to do with her at first, though, when they see Jane's skill in portraiture, they become more interested in her and agree to pose so that Jane can draw their portraits. Over time they open up to Jane. Georgina adores fashion and society and speaks often of a possible match with a titled suitor. Eliza is much more devout and contemplative and spends her time largely by herself. The two reveal their mutual ill-feeling when Eliza attacks Georgiana for being overly caught up in society, causing her sister to accuse her of spreading rumors out of jealousy to torpedo her own chances at receiving a desired marriage proposal. Jane, it seems, is preferred by each of them to her own sister. Yet the coldness they initially show her and the bitterness they display toward each other contrasts with what we later see in the Rivers sisters, who accept Jane from the start.

The letter from Jane's uncle raises to the reader the possibility that Jane's position in life may change in the future, though that is not something she thinks about. If she inherits wealth, how will her life change? Or did her aunt's response to her uncle dash any chance of her inheriting that wealth? Jane's mention of the value of presentiments and signs alerts the reader to look for some in the coming chapters.

***Significance:***

Robert Leaven, the coachman at Gateshead who is now married to Bessie, visits Jane. He brings news that Jane’s cousin, John, has committed suicide. [Mrs. Reed](https://www.gradesaver.com/jane-eyre/study-guide/character-list#mrs-reed) has suffered a stroke from shock and is close to death and asking for Jane. Mr. Rochester grants his permission for Jane to leave Thornfield for a week and gives her some money. Jane arrives at Gateshead in the early evening and reunites with Bessie, who tells her that Mrs. Reed is expected to last only another week or two. Jane also talks with Eliza and Georgiana, who are as cold as ever, though their rudeness no longer hurt Jane's feelings. The girls are reluctant to let Jane see their ailing mother, but Jane insists and Bessie arranges a meeting.

Mrs. Reed, her mind clearly elsewhere, does not recognize Jane and speaks harshly of Jane's character. Jane prompts her to discuss her feelings, and Mrs. Reed reveals that she always disliked Jane's mother, her husband's sister, because [Mr. Reed](https://www.gradesaver.com/jane-eyre/study-guide/character-list#mr-reed) always favored her and, subsequently, the orphaned Jane. Mrs. Reed is also under the impression that John is still alive. Jane leaves her bedside.

For ten days Jane does not see Mrs. Reed again, and busies herself with sketching. One day she sketches a portrait of Mr. Rochester that attracts the attention of the Reed girls, whom she also sketches. The episode fosters new intimacy between Jane and Georgiana, who is hung up on her former life in high society London. Eliza maintains her distance from both of them; one night she lashes out at Georgiana for her immaturity and slothfulness, and vows that they will have nothing to do with each other after their mother's death.

Jane visits Mrs. Reed one afternoon while no one is around and reveals her identity. Mrs. Reed apologizes for not bringing her up as one of her own but is still extremely resentful to her because of the late Mr. Reed’s preference. Mrs. Reed also gives Jane a letter from her uncle, [John Eyre](https://www.gradesaver.com/jane-eyre/study-guide/character-list#john-eyre). Mr. Eyre had wanted to adopt Jane and bring him to Madeira with him, but Mrs. Reed had withheld the letter from Jane out of spite. Though Jane offers her forgiveness, Mrs. Reed is unable to let go of her hatred for Jane, and she dies later that night.

The extent of Jane’s development over the course of the novel is demonstrated when she returns to Gateshead. Whereas [John Reed](https://www.gradesaver.com/jane-eyre/study-guide/character-list#john-reed) fell into a dissolute lifestyle of gambling and debauchery, Georgiana became a spoiled debutante, and Eliza became aloof and emotionless, Jane has transformed into a patient and compassionate woman, dedicated to helping others with humility. The initial cold reception from the Reed girls, then, does not disturb Jane as it once might have, nor does Mrs. Reed's unforgiving hatred on her deathbed.

In fact, Jane openly forgives her aunt, telling her that "you have my full and free forgiveness: ask now for God's; and be at peace." Jane seems to have found a third kind of religion, far from the evangelical posturing of [Mr. Brocklehurst](https://www.gradesaver.com/jane-eyre/study-guide/character-list#mr-brocklehurst) but still removed from the all-encompassing and self-destructive tolerance of [Helen Burns](https://www.gradesaver.com/jane-eyre/study-guide/character-list#helen-burns). Jane is forgiving for the past ills done to her by Mrs. Reed; they did not destroy her, but made her stronger. In Jane’s version of Christianity, the meek shall not inherit the earth, but neither will the powerful.

In the midst of this emotional chapter, Brontë throws in a twist with the letter from John Eyre. He hints at having accumulated a fortune in Madeira, so Jane's economic status is again complicated. Although she has existed as a poor governess dependent on others for her keeping, perhaps now she has the possibility of achieving personal independence.

***Notes:***

This lesson provides an overview of Chapter 21 of ''Jane Eyre,'' in which Jane receives some news from Gateshead which causes her to ask Mr. Rochester for a leave of absence.

Jane's Past Returns

At the start of this chapter Robert Leaven, the coachman from Gateshead, arrives at Thornfield with a message for Jane. Her cousin, John Reed, has died and her aunt, Mrs. Reed now lies on her deathbed. The reader will remember that Jane's time with the Reeds at Gateshead was not pleasant, and there has never been fondness between Jane and her aunt or her cousins. However, when Robert tells Jane that Mrs. Reed would like to see her, she agrees and goes immediately to ask Mr. Rochester for a leave of absence.

Jane Asks for Leave

To find Mr. Rochester, Jane must interrupt a game of billiards between him, Miss Ingram, and the rest of the guests of the house. Miss Ingram does not appreciate the interruption. She sneers at Jane and asks Mr. Rochester, 'Does that person want you?' as if Jane is something despicable. Mr. Rochester leaves Miss Ingram and the game and goes into the schoolroom with Jane.

Mr. Rochester does not seem eager to let Jane go. He asks her many questions about where she will be going, why, and for how long. Through Jane's answers, Mr. Rochester is startled to discover Jane's family ties with the Reeds, who are wealthy and respected. 'You always said you had no relations,' Mr. Rochester says. 'None that would own me, sir,' Jane clarifies.

Mr. Rochester tries at first to talk Jane out of leaving. When that doesn't work, he tries instead to make her promise to stay no longer than a week. 'I had better not pass my word,' Jane says to that request, 'I may be obliged to break it.' Resigned to the fact that he cannot change Jane's course of action, Mr. Rochester settles on making sure she has money, provisions, and company for her journey.

A More Permanent Farewell?

In the course of their discussion about Jane's time away, Jane speaks to Mr. Rochester of eventually leaving in a more permanent way. Mr. Rochester has implied several times that he is planning to marry Miss Ingram. Jane, despite her own love for Mr. Rochester, has accepted this as an inevitable future event. With this in mind, Jane tells Mr. Rochester she thinks it would be wise for Adele to be sent to school. Miss Ingram has never liked the child and is often overtly mean to her. When Adele goes to school, Jane plans to advertise for a new position. Mr. Rochester despises this idea and asks her to promise not to advertise, but to allow him to find her a new position. She agrees only if he will promise to make sure she and Adele 'shall be both safe out of the house before your bride enters it.'

Eliza and Georgiana

Once Jane arrives at Gateshead, she is confronted with past memories and also the present versions of her cousins. The two ladies, Eliza and Georgiana, are much changed physically. Eliza is tall, skinny, and severe. Georgiana is very fat, soft, and pink. Eliza has adopted a severe, religious life full of structure and discipline. Georgiana languishes and wallows and has very few assets besides her pretty face. The two sisters are equally unpleasant people, and they despise each other. Jane patiently bears their company for the month she spends at Gateshead.

Mrs. Reed's Confessions

In her sick stupor, Mrs. Reed tells Jane she has committed two wrongs for which she would like to apologize. The first is breaking her vow to her husband that she would raise Jane as her own child. The second involves new information for Jane: It turns out she has a living uncle who, after having made himself financially secure, wrote to Mrs. Reed expressing a desire to adopt Jane and make her his heir. Mrs. Reed, filled with spite, wrote back to him that Jane died in the typhus outbreak at Lowood. 'Why did I never hear of this?' Jane asks her aunt. 'Because I disliked you too fixedly and thoroughly to ever lend a hand in lifting you to prosperity,' Mrs. Reed replies. What a nasty woman!

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

***Summary Part 1:***

One afternoon, a messenger from Gateshead brings [Jane](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters/jane-eyre) some shocking news. [John Reed](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters), heavily in debt from gambling, has committed suicide. Now Mrs. Reed is deathly ill and demands to see Jane, who travels from Thornfield to Gateshead.

***Analysis Part 1:***

With his debts, drinking, and suicide, John Reed contrasts with Jane's learning and poise, showing that virtues are not based on class.

***Summary Part 2:***

At Gateshead, [Jane](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters/jane-eyre) has a pleasant reunion with [Bessie](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters). The Reed sisters, meanwhile, have grown into two very different types of people. [Eliza](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters) is stern, organized, and highly religious, while [Georgiana](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters) is a social butterfly who gushes about her romances.

***Analysis Part 2:***

The Reed sisters are caricatures of judgment and feeling taken to extremes. Jane has learned to avoid extremes and instead seeks balance.

***Summary Part 3:***

Though she's on her deathbed, Mrs. Reed shows no remorse for her treatment of Jane. On the tenth day of Jane's visit, [Mrs. Reed](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters) calls [Jane](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters/jane-eyre) into her room and confesses to keeping a letter from Jane. Jane's uncle—[John Eyre](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters), a successful wine merchant—had requested custody of Jane three years ago. But Mrs. Reed, hoping to squash any chance of Jane's getting ahead in life, told him that Jane had died of fever at Lowood. Jane is upset and angry, but nonetheless tries to heal her relationship with Mrs. Reed. She rebuffs Jane, and dies that night.

***Analysis Part 3:***

Mrs. Reed is a liar and lacks the religious virtue of repentance. Like Rochester in the attack on Mr. Mason and the fire in his room, Mrs. Reed has created a cover-up. He wants things his way, just as Mrs. Reed does, and is willing to lie to get what he wants. In contrast to them, and like a good Christian, Jane is able to forgive Mrs. Reed despite her awful actions.