***Jane Eyre***

***Vol-2 Chapter 9***

***Chapter 24***

***Summary and Analysis***

***Summary:***

* The next morning, Jane is blissfully happy and wonders if this is all a dream. She gives away all the money she has (a few shillings) to some beggars so they can share in her happiness.
* At breakfast, Jane feels a little uncomfortable because Rochester hasn’t explained their engagement to Mrs. Fairfax yet, and Mrs. Fairfax seems a bit sad and upset about what she saw the night before, but Jane knows she’ll just have to wait for Rochester to tell the housekeeper what’s going on.
* When Jane goes to the school-room to teach Adèle, she discovers that Rochester has sent Adèle to the nursery and met her in the school-room himself.
* They embrace, and Rochester tells Jane that they will get married in four weeks. He calls her "Jane Rochester" and "Mrs. Rochester," teasing her a little with what will be her new name.
* Next, Rochester starts telling Jane about all the fancy jewelry and clothes he’s going to give her—he plans to deck her out in the best there is and make everyone think she’s beautiful. This makes Jane very uncomfortable and she tells him not to flatter her, but he keeps going.
* Rochester is also planning an elaborate honeymoon in Europe—Paris, Rome, Naples, Florence, Vienna, and more. Jane’s excited at the prospect of traveling, especially together with the man she loves, but she insists that he shouldn’t think of her as an angel.
* Jane presses Rochester to think about his own inconsistencies; she reminds him that he’s capricious, which means his mood and behavior change frequently, and that she knows he won’t be constant in the way he loves her.
* Rochester insists that he will be constant in his love for Jane, because she’s different from all the other women he’s known. She behaves submissively, but in doing so she actually masters him. Does that sound familiar? Jane thinks it sounds like the legend of Hercules or the story of Samson; we think it sounds a bit like [***The Taming of the Shrew***](https://www.shmoop.com/taming-of-the-shrew/)… with Rochester as the shrew!
* Rochester tells Jane that she has only to ask, and he’ll do any favor she wants. She asks him to answer a question. He seems very nervous at first about what it might be, but then she asks why he made her think he was going to marry Blanche Ingram, and he seems relieved.
* Rochester explains that he pretended to be interested in Blanche so that Jane would be jealous and fall more in love with him*—*he was already in love with her (Jane).
* Jane asks about Blanche’s feelings, and Rochester says her only feeling is pride, and that needs to be trampled on. He reminds Jane that he circulated a rumor that his fortune was actually very small, and then Blanche and her mother stopped being interested in him—so they’re just gold-diggers anyway.
* Jane asks Rochester for another favor: tell Mrs. Fairfax about their engagement. Rochester sends Jane upstairs to put on her bonnet so they can go into town, and while she’s gone he talks to Mrs. Fairfax.
* Jane comes back downstairs and, when she hears Mr. Rochester leave Mrs. Fairfax’s room, she goes in. Mrs. Fairfax is shocked; she’s not upset, exactly, but really confused about why someone like Rochester—wealthy and nearly forty—would be interested in Jane, who is poor, plain, and young. Mrs. Fairfax cautions Jane about some of the problems that might turn up in her relationship with Rochester, but Jane is insulted by her suggestions.
* Adèle interrupts and insists on going with Jane and Rochester in the carriage. At first Rochester refuses, because he wants to be alone with Jane, but when he sees how upset she is that he’s still ordering her around, he agrees.
* Adèle asks questions about what will happen now that Jane and Rochester are going to get married; Rochester says that Adèle will go to school on her own, and he and Jane will fly to the moon and live in a cave together, alone.
* Adèle doesn’t believe Rochester’s silly claims about living on the moon, eating manna, and wearing clouds and rainbows, so he tells her a story instead. The "story" is his version of the moment when Jane found him sitting on the stile writing—and in his version, Jane is a fairy, who offers him a golden ring that can make him fly to another world.
* Adèle’s too old for these fairy stories, and laughs at Rochester.
* In Millcote, Rochester wants to buy Jane six new gowns in bright colors to replace her plain Lowood-style wardrobe of grey and black. Jane manages to argue him down to two new gowns, black satin and grey silk. Then Rochester starts buying her fancy jewelry, but Jane feels degraded.
* Suddenly, Jane remembers her uncle, John Eyre, who wanted to leave her his fortune. Even if it’s not very much, Jane thinks it would be nice to have a little financial independence; that way Rochester can’t dress her like a doll all the time. She regains her composure, looks him in the eye, and tells him that, if he keeps decking her out in expensive clothes and jewelry and behaving so badly about it, she’ll never wear anything he buys her.
* Rochester laughs, and says that Jane is better than a whole harem. Jane tells him that, if he wants a harem, he should go east and start buying slave girls, because she’s certainly not going to be one for him.
* Rochester asks what she would do if he did, and she says she’d become a missionary and go and preach to his slaves and foment a rebellion. They’re teasing each other, but something serious is going on here, too.
* Rochester asks what terms Jane wants in their relationship, and she tells him that she’s not going to be like his previous mistress, Céline Varens—a kept woman who is given lots of expensive presents by her lover.
* She wants to keep being Adèle’s governess, earning her wages, and not getting any extra presents until she is actually Rochester’s wife. She even refuses to have dinner with him—as governess, she never had dinner with the master before, and she won’t start now.
* Rochester tells Jane that she can make her terms now, but once they’re married, he’ll run the show. Again, he’s teasing… but he’s also serious.
* Jane knows how to manage Rochester. They arrive home in the carriage, and Jane puts Adèle to bed. They dine separately, as they have done in the past, and then Rochester sends for Jane after dinner. But Jane’s got a plan to keep him occupied and prevent him from behaving seductively.
* Jane teases Rochester into playing the piano and singing a song. At first he doesn’t want to, but when she plays and sings herself, he can’t help but push her aside and do better.
* Rochester sings a love song that pretty much summarizes his relationship with Jane; at the end of it, they’re both feeling pretty lovey-dovey, but Jane forces herself to keep teasing him and keeping him at a distance; she doesn’t want another inappropriate show of affection, like when Mr. Rochester kissed her in the hallway in front of Mrs. Fairfax.
* When Rochester tries to get Jane to be all sentimental with him, she argues with him and makes him angry and irritated instead. She’d rather they were verbally sparring than being nauseatingly mushy.
* Jane can tell that this is the right approach for Rochester—if she let him make their relationship into a smoochy Hallmark cuddle-fest, he’d get bored with it really fast, and so would she.
* Jane also notices that Mrs. Fairfax approves of her keeping Rochester at arm’s length.
* It’s difficult for Jane to keep this up, though, because she’s falling so deeply in love with him—even idolizing him and putting him between herself and God. Uh-oh.

***Synopsis:***

Preparations for Jane and Rochester’s wedding do not run smoothly. Mrs. Fairfax treats Jane coldly because she doesn’t realize that Jane was already engaged to Rochester when she allowed him to kiss her. But even after she learns the truth, Mrs. Fairfax maintains her disapproval of the marriage. Jane feels unsettled, almost fearful, when Rochester calls her by what will soon be her name, Jane Rochester. Jane explains that everything feels impossibly ideal, like a fairy-tale or a daydream. Rochester certainly tries to turn Jane into a Cinderella-like figure: he tells her he will dress her in jewels and in finery befitting her new social station, at which point Jane becomes terrified and self-protective. She has a premonitory feeling that the wedding will not happen, and she decides to write her uncle, John Eyre, who is in Madeira. Jane reasons that if John Eyre were to make her his heir, her inheritance might put her on more equal footing with Rochester, which would make her feel less uncomfortable about the marriage.

***Analysis:***

Jane wakes the next morning in a jubilant mood and greets Rochester, who says they will be married in four weeks. He wants her to wear the family jewels, and she declines. He asks her what she expects of him and she says he will love her for a while and then like her. He denies that, saying he has found a treasure he will always cherish. When Jane asks about Blanche, Mr. Rochester said he hoped to make Jane jealous and discover her true feelings for him; he reassures Jane that Blanche was not hurt and chose to end the engagement.

After Rochester explains the situation, Mrs. Fairfax warns Jane not to be too trustful of Mr. Rochester. They go shopping and Rochester tries to get Jane to buy lots of colorful gowns; she settles for one black and one grey. She decides to write her uncle and tell him she is marrying. She insists on retaining her salary and position as governess until they are married. She maintains this reserve up to the wedding date.

Again, the tone of this chapter is happy and loving. There is only a slight bit of discord when Mr. Rochester insists on dressing Jane up and covering her with jewels, but Jane soon convinces him she is not happy being treated this way. The only foreshadowing in this chapter comes from Mrs. Fairfax's warning that Jane needs to be careful of Mr. Rochester's intentions. Although it is uncertain exactly to what Mrs. Fairfax is referring, it can be assumed she knows something about his character or position Jane does not know. As a result, Jane does hold Mr. Rochester at a distance throughout their four week engagement period.

The politics of love and marriage are addressed by Mrs. Fairfax in this chapter. When Mrs. Fairfax talks to Jane about the unusual nature of their marriage, she stresses the need for equality of position and fortune in a marriage. However, Mr. Rochester and Jane are not on equal terms in their positions or fortunes. Jane believes, however, it is more important the two have an equality of intelligence and feeling than possessions.

***Short study:***

The next morning, Jane wakes, wondering if the previous night was just a dream. She feels transformed; even her face looks different, no longer plain. Believing Jane has taken an immoral turn, Mrs. Fairfax is cool and quiet at breakfast, but Jane feels she must let Rochester give explanations. When she walks up to the schoolroom in search of Adèle, Jane finds Rochester instead. He calls her "Jane Rochester," which she finds frightening, and tells her the wedding will be in four weeks. Jane doesn't believe the wedding will actually happen — it would be a "fairy-tale," too much happiness for a real human.

Rochester vows to make the world recognize Jane's beauty, but she worries that he's trying to transform her into a costumed ape. Jane is upset by Mrs. Fairfax's response to the news of the engagement. Rather than being delighted with the relationship, Mrs. Fairfax warns Jane to maintain a distance from Rochester, because she's worried about the differences between their ages and social classes. Later that day, Jane and Rochester drive to Millcote to make purchases for the wedding, and Adèle rides with them. They shop for silk and jewels, making Jane feel like a "doll." She vows to write her uncle in Madeira when she returns home, reasoning that she'd be more comfortable accepting Rochester's gifts if she knew she'd one day have her own money to contribute to the relationship. That evening, Rochester sings Jane a romantic song, but she has no intention of sinking into a "bathos of sentiment." She plans to keep her distance until after the wedding vows.

***Critical Analysis***:

The next day, Rochester is full of plans for their life together. He wants to shower Jane with jewels and expensive clothing, but she objects. She has a short discussion with Mrs. Fairfax, who doesn't seem pleased with the news of the impending marriage and warns her off, even though she clearly likes Jane. While Jane is out shopping with Rochester and Adèle, he once again compares her to a fairy, building a fanciful story around the idea. Jane feels uncomfortable about making purchases using Rochester's money and, suddenly recalling her uncle's letter, thinks how much more at ease she would feel if she had an independent fortune. She tells Rochester that she wants to continue as Adèle's governess and she'll use her pay to purchase her own clothing.

Much as Jane loves Rochester, she doesn't want to fall into a sentimental type of relationship with him, which, she thinks, will soon become boring. "Lamb-like submission and turtle-dove sensibility" don't suit her personality. Both Jane and Rochester enjoy the element of teasing banter that marks much of their conversation. The chapter closes with Jane observing irreverently that Rochester "stood between me and every thought of religion," adding "I could not, in those days, see God for this creature: of whom I had made an idol."

***Critical Study:***

The next morning, Jane is radiant in her love for Mr. Rochester. She feels that she looks prettier, and Mr. Rochester gladly compliments her. He has the wedding for four weeks and tells Jane that he is sending for jewels from London for her to wear. Jane is immediately anxious about the prospect of wearing such ostentation and makes him rescind the order. Mr. Rochester acquiesces but then vows to take her traveling with him around Europe. Once again pledging his love to her, Mr. Rochester finally confesses that he feigned interest in Miss Ingram in order to make Jane jealous.

Jane gets ready to drive to Millcote with Mr. Rochester, and he tells Mrs. Fairfax about their upcoming marriage. Mrs. Fairfax expresses her shock to Jane and warns her to be on her guard, as wealthy men rarely marry their governesses. Jane is hurt by Mrs. Fairfax’s insinuations and feels even more unsettled when Mr. Rochester refers to her as Jane Rochester. Adèle wants to go to Millcote with them, and Jane convinces Rochester to bring her along. They ride off, and Rochester jokes to Adèle that he is bringing Jane with him to the moon, and makes a veiled reference to their marriage that Adèle does not understand.

In Millcote, the clothing and jewelry that Mr. Rochester lavishes on Jane embarrasses her. She tells Mr. Rochester that she will not be his "English [Céline Varens](https://www.gradesaver.com/jane-eyre/study-guide/character-list#c%C3%A9line-varens)," but will continue to work as Adèle's governess and maintain her financial independence. She also declines his dinner invitation, though she spends time with him in the evening as he sings and plays piano. He sings a love song and advances toward her, but she refuses to submit to his charms. Jane maintains this distance between them as she falls deeper in love with Mr. Rochester, believing it will serve them better in the weeks before their wedding. Jane also decides to write to her uncle in Madeira, hoping that being John Eyre’s heir might make her feel more equal to Mr. Rochester.

Analysis:

Jane already feels somewhat uneasy about her upcoming marriage to Mr. Rochester. Although she loves Mr. Rochester desperately, she is puzzled and hurt by Mrs. Fairfax’s disapproval and somehow fears that the wedding will not take place. She also dislikes being dressed in jewels and elegant clothes by Mr. Rochester, feeling as if his presents to her are steadily stripping away her independence. Moreover, Jane wants to ensure that she is not just another mistress in Mr. Rochester’s long line of lovers. She also wants to maintain her power over Mr. Rochester as a demonstration of her independence. By rebuffing his passionate advances, Jane is able to hold on to some semblance of control, while simultaneously guaranteeing that she does not become a submissive mistress.

Bronte chooses to highlight Jane’s shock at hearing Mr. Rochester call her “Mrs. Rochester.” She reminds us that the title of the book is [Jane Eyre](https://www.gradesaver.com/jane-eyre), and that this name will always define Jane’s identity as an independent woman. Interestingly, "Eyre" is a 14th-century word that means "a circuit traveled by an itinerant justice in medieval England or the court he presided over," and derives from the Old French word "errer," "to travel." If this etymology was Brontë's intention, then the name is ironic. While Jane travels far mentally as she develops into a woman - she is an avid reader, an artist, a musician - her physical journeys are quite circumscribed compared to those of the globe-trotting Mr. Rochester. However, Jane clings to her name, and worries that her independence and perhaps even her identity will be lost when she assumes Mr. Rochester’s name.

***Notes:***

This lesson provides an overview of the 24th chapter of ''Jane Eyre,'' in which Jane struggles to keep her head out of the proverbial clouds, despite her delirious happiness at the prospect of becoming Mr. Rochester's wife.

## Was it a Dream?

Jane awakes in a haze, almost afraid to believe it could be true. Did Mr. Rochester--the man she has loved so well for so long--really propose to her last night beneath the tree? Just as last night's violent rain storm has transformed into a beautiful summer morning, perhaps the hard chapters of Jane's life are turning now to pleasanter themes. Jane surveys the lovely weather with rapture, and on a joy-filled whim she gives all the money in her purse to a passing beggar and her son. Jane is so happy that she wants these passing wanderers to have a share of her jubilation.

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| --- |
| summer morning |
| Happiness in summer. |

## A Reaffirmation and a Plan

It is confirmed for both Jane and the reader that the happy events of last night were not figments of the dream world when Mr. Rochester greets her the next morning with 'an embrace and a kiss.' His affection for her and his intentions with it are made very clear, indeed. He waxes on about his love for Jane and his happiness at marrying her. He tells her she is 'soon to be Jane Rochester...in four weeks, Janet; not a day more.' As if to solidify these plans, Mr. Rochester proposes a journey to Millcote in order to begin purchasing clothes and things for the impending nuptials. Jane and Mr. Rochester are engaged, a date is set, and all seems quite determined.

## Realism in Romance

Despite her delirious happiness, Jane remains in full command of her sense and reason. In the midst of Mr. Rochester's rhapsodizing she asserts, 'human beings never enjoy complete happiness in this world.' Jane doesn't like it when Mr. Rochester waxes on about how beautiful she is, telling us, 'he was either deluding himself, or trying to delude me.' When he talks at length of dressing her in jewels and fine satin she exclaims the would then be 'an ape in a harlequin's jacket.' She would much rather have reality and the truth unvarnished than poetic hyperbole. Jane will not allow Mr. Rochester to bestow all his family's jewels on her and she considerably restrains his efforts to buy her fancy clothes when he takes her to Millcote.

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| diamond necklace |
| No family jewels for Jane. |

## Mrs. Fairfax's Warning

The reader will recall that Mrs. Fairfax had discovered Jane and Mr. Rochester coming in together very late the previous night. This spectacle would have been quite scandalous by Victorian standards, and Mrs. Fairfax was shocked and worried. Her fears are a bit assuaged after Mr. Rochester reveals he and Jane are soon to be married, but she still has these words of caution for Jane: 'You cannot be too careful. Try and keep Mr. Rochester at a distance: distrust yourself as well as him. Gentlemen in his station are not accustomed to marry their governesses.'

In a typically understated Victorian fashion, Mrs. Fairfax is essentially telling Jane she should be on the lookout as Mr. Rochester's intentions may be less than honorable. In this time period, it would have been a sizable scandal for a wealthy landowner to marry his governess, but it would have been little more than ordinary gossip for the same wealthy landowner to sleep with and then abandon the very same governess. Mrs. Fairfax knows this and just wants to look out for Jane.

## Employing Caution

At first, Jane is hurt by Mrs. Fairfax's warning and its insinuations, but ultimately she sees the wisdom in it. Her first act in heeding Mrs. Fairfax's advice is to ask Adele to accompany her and Mr. Rochester on their trip to Millcote. This way, instead of a solitary carriage ride along secluded roads, they are a party of three, with no two ever alone.

Jane also insists on keeping up her duties as governess until they are married, and she proposes keeping their daily routine largely unaltered. She refuses to begin dining with him, as she has never done so before. She also insists, 'I shall keep out of your way all day, as I have been accustomed to do.' Jane does consent to join Mr. Rochester in the evenings, however, with whatever regularity he would like.

Even during these evening hours together, Jane is careful to keep Mr. Rochester at a distance. 'I was determined not to spend the whole time in a tete-a-tete conversation,' she tells us, and she succeeds in this endeavor. One evening, Mr. Rochester sings and plays for her a passionate love song. At its close, Mr. Rochester walks purposefully and passionately toward Jane, but she tells us firmly 'soft scene, daring demonstration, I would not have,' and so she rebuffs him with sarcasm and repartee.

While all of this caution and distance keep Mr. Rochester 'rather cross and crusty,' Jane can also tell he is 'excellently entertained.' Thus, Jane succeeds both in protecting herself and keeping her relationship with Mr. Rochester alive and vibrant.

## Lesson Summary

In this chapter, the reader shares in Jane's bliss as her Mr. Rochester's proposal of marriage becomes a reality. Mr. Rochester slathers on affection and compliments, and Jane responds (after some effort) with restraint and reason. Heeding Mrs. Fairfax's kindly given warning, Jane employs various strategies to protect herself from being unkindly used. Is it possible that Jane will achieve such happiness after a life of so much hardship?

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

***Summary Part 1:***

[Rochester](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters/edward-fairfax-rochester) promises a wedding in four short weeks. After the engagement is announced, [Mrs. Fairfax](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters) congratulates [Jane](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters/jane-eyre) weakly and warns her about men and marriages between unequal parties. Jane is irritated with Mrs. Fairfax's assumptions, but is also still a little suspicious of her fiancé.

***Analysis Part 1:***

In Brontë's time, it would have been scandalous for a gentleman to marry his governess. It's unclear if Mrs. Fairfax knows about Bertha, but even if not, she has reason to be suspicious of his rush to marry.

***Summary Part 2:***

Feeling like she's living a fairy tale, [Jane](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters/jane-eyre) is exuberantly happy—at first. But when [Rochester](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters/edward-fairfax-rochester) starts lavishing expensive gifts and flattering compliments on her, Jane feels objectified and degraded. She demands to be treated normally, to live on the salary she earns as a tutor, and to dress in her plain outfits.

***Analysis Part 2:***

Rochester treats Jane like Céline Varens. Jane refuses to be his love object, dependent on his gifts and money. Her self-respect stems from independence, not inflated self-esteem.

***Summary Part 3:***

[Jane](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters/jane-eyre) privately decides to answer the letter from her uncle, [John Eyre](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters), which [Mrs. Reed](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters) had kept from her. She does so because she thinks that if John Eyre made her his heir, as the letter stated, she would be closer to Rochester's equal in terms of class.

***Analysis Part 3:***

Unlike Blanche, Jane doesn't value money for its own sake. She needs it to be independent, to meet Rochester as an equal. Despite her love for Rochester, she senses the match isn't right.

***Summary Part 4:***

Throughout the wedding planning process, [Jane](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters/jane-eyre) resists [Rochester](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters/edward-fairfax-rochester)'s romantic overtures. To put him off, she argues with him and aggravates him. But even so, she still worships him like an idol.

***Analysis Part 4:***

Jane puts Rochester before her love of God, which is a serious sin in Christianity and will require her repentance.