***Jane Eyre***

***Vol-3 Chapter 11***

***Chapter 37***

***Summary and Analysis***

***Summary:***

* Jane goes to Ferndean to find Rochester. When she comes up to the house, she sees him coming out and watches him for a long time without letting him know she’s there. He looks like "some wronged and fettered wild beast or bird, dangerous to approach in his sullen woe"—in other words, he’s really let himself go.
* Jane goes into the house and talks to the servants, John and Mary. She arranges to bring a tray in to Rochester in Mary’s place.
* When Jane enters the parlor, the dog, Pilot, recognizes her. Rochester realizes something is up and demands to know what’s going on, but he doesn’t know it’s Jane yet.
* Rochester reaches out, trying to touch her, and she takes his hand in hers. When he feels her fingers, he clasps her to him and figures out who she is based on her shape. Sexy, eh?
* Rochester can hardly believe that it’s really Jane, but when she tells him about her inheritance he decides this is reality—he would never imagine something boring about wills and money.
* Jane offers to be Rochester’s nurse or housekeeper, convinced that he will immediately ask her to marry him again, but he doesn’t.
* Jane insists that Rochester eat supper, which he usually doesn’t. They eat and talk together, but Jane won’t tell him yet where she was or what she was doing. Rochester’s still worried that she’s a spirit or ghost or hallucination. Jane combs his hair, which he’s allowed to get a bit wild.
* Jane heads to bed without answering any of Rochester’s questions. She decides to tease him for a while and let him think she fell in love with someone else in order to distract him from his depression.
* In the morning, Jane comes down to breakfast, and then takes Rochester outside so they can stroll in the wood and meadows.
* They sit down in a dry place and Rochester asks Jane to tell him where she’s been and what’s happened to her. She tells the story, but doesn’t emphasize how hungry she got during the first three days.
* When Jane tells Rochester about Moor House, he cross-examines her about St. John Rivers. Jane answers with the truth, but very sparingly, and he becomes convinced that she’s in love with St. John.
* When Jane finally reveals that she has no feelings for St. John—and that St. John was only interested in her because she’d be a good missionary wife—Rochester is ecstatic. He laments his blindness and lost hand, but asks Jane to marry him anyway. She accepts gladly.
* Rochester is worried that Jane will find it unpleasant to wait on him and deal with his blindness, but she says she’s even more happy to be his wife now, when she can be really useful to him.
* As they walk back to the house for dinner, Rochester tells Jane that he understands why she had to leave him, and that he feels remorse and repentance for his behavior in the past.
* Rochester also tells Jane that, four days before, between eleven and twelve at night, he called her name three times frantically*—and he heard her respond*. He thinks that perhaps they met in spirit.
* Jane doesn’t tell Rochester that she heard him call her name and responded to him while she was sitting, miles away, with St. John. She doesn’t want him to get obsessed with the supernatural.

***Synopsis:***

Jane goes to Ferndean. From a distance, she sees Rochester reach a hand out of the door, testing for rain. His body looks the same, but his face is desperate and disconsolate. Rochester returns inside, and Jane approaches the house. She knocks, and Mary answers the door. Inside, Jane carries a tray to Rochester, who is unable to see her. When he realizes that Jane is in the room with him, he thinks she must be a ghost or spirit speaking to him. When he catches her hand, he takes her in his arms, and she promises never to leave him. The next morning they walk through the woods, and Jane tells Rochester about her experiences the previous year. She has to assure him that she is not in love with St. John. He asks her again to marry him, and she says yes—they are now free from the specter of Bertha Mason. Rochester tells Jane that a few nights earlier, in a moment of desperation, he called out her name and thought he heard her answer. She does not wish to upset him or excite him in his fragile condition, and so she does not tell him about hearing his voice at Moor House.***Short Study:***

When Jane arrives at Ferndean, she watches as Rochester comes out of the door and stands there, though a servant urges him back inside. He stumbles around in the yard a while and then returns inside. Jane knocks and is admitted, though Mary, John's wife, says Mr. Rochester will see no one. Jane takes his tray of food to him and they talk. She cleans up Rochester and the room and tells him briefly of her life and says she will tell him more in the morning. She promises him more of her story the next day.

The next morning Jane tells Mr. Rochester everything that has happened since she left Thornfield. He says she would not want a cripple, but proposes and Jane accepts. Rochester says he has begun to see the hand of God in the path of his life. As proof, he relates an experience he had a few days before, on a Monday night. Mr. Rochester said he had been longing for Jane, and finally called out for her out loud. He then heard the response, "I am coming: wait for me," and "Where are you?" Mr. Rochester believes these responses strange because no voice could penetrate the deep woods surrounding Ferndale. He expresses the belief that perhaps Jane unconsciously comforted him even from her distance. Although Jane does not speak, she realizes that she had her strange experience of hearing Mr. Rochester's voice at the same time on the same day that he had his.

Although Ferndale is described as being dark and mouldy, and Jane's initial reaction to her walk down the lane that leads into the woods is that she is lost and the home must be uninhabited, the tone of this chapter begins to lift as Mr. Rochester realizes his beloved Jane is home to stay. The most supernatural part of the chapter occurs with Mr. Rochester's description of the events of Monday night when he felt as if Jane were answering him when he called for her. Also note how Jane hides the knowledge of her similar experience that same night in her heart.

***Analysis:***

Jane rushes to Ferndean, a building buried deep in the woods. While she watches the building, the door slowly opens, and Rochester reaches out a hand to see if it's raining. She notes that his body hasn't changed, but his face looks "desperate and brooding." After Rochester has returned to the house, Jane knocks on the door. Mary is surprised to see her so late at night and in this lonely place.

Mary is taking a tray with candles and a glass of water to Rochester, and Jane volunteers to carry it instead. As she walks into the parlor, Rochester's dog, Pilot, is excited to see Jane, almost knocking the tray from her hand. Rochester wonders what is wrong. Realizing Jane is in the room with him, Rochester initially thinks she is only a disembodied voice. He grabs her hand, and wraps her in his arms. She assures him she's not a dream and promises to stay with him forever.

The next morning, as they wander through the woods, Jane tells Rochester the story of her experiences during the year they've been apart. Rochester is jealous of St. John Rivers, believing she has fallen in love with her handsome cousin. Jane assures him she could never love the cold and despotic St. John. He proposes to her, and she accepts. Rochester then apologizes for trying to make Jane his mistress; he now regrets that decision. He reveals that four nights earlier, during a low point in his life, he had frantically called Jane's name and thought he heard her answer. Jane doesn't tell him about her similar experience, because she doesn't want to upset him in his weakened state. Rochester thanks God for his mercy, vowing to live a purer life from then on.

Jane has now reached her final destination: Ferndean. Her description of Ferndean emphasizes its isolation. It is deep in the woods, unsuitable and unhealthy. Recall that earlier in the novel, Rochester chose not to send Bertha there, because he didn't want her to hasten her death. The woods surrounding the building are thick, dark and gloomy, as if lost in a fairy-tale realm; Jane can barely find an opening through the dense trees to the house. Here, Jane and Rochester create the "private island" he longed for earlier in the novel.

In describing Rochester, Jane uses language Rochester often used in the past to characterize her: he is a "wronged" bird, a "caged eagle." But now their positions are reversed: Jane is free, and he is fettered. In their first conversation, Jane emphasizes her independence: "I am independent, sir, as well as rich: I am my own mistress." While earlier Rochester treated Jane as object — his possession — he now accepts her independent subjectivity; thus, when he proposes marriage this time he says, "Never mind fine clothes and jewels, now: all that is not worth a fillip." Like Jane, Rochester needed to "pass through the valley of the shadow of death" in order to become the perfect mate; his fire and virility are tamed and he becomes the ideally docile husband. Rochester suffers more than Jane — blinding, maiming, and complete isolation — because his sins were greater than hers. In fact, critics have often noted that both Bertha and Rochester can be viewed as victims of the forces Jane uses to acquire identity and independence; Bertha's life is sacrificed, as well as Rochester's vision, so that Jane can have her ideal, non-threatening relationship.

Ensconced in Ferndean's desolation, the lovers have also achieved spiritual isolation. While Jane emphasizes Rochester's atonement for the sin of trying to make Jane his mistress, she also reminds readers of the ideal telepathic bond between the lovers. This psychic sympathy leads Jane to hear Rochester's frantic call for her, and for Rochester to pick her response out of the wind. In fact, he even correctly intuits that her response came from some mountainous place. Jane cannot find the words to explain this awful coincidence to Rochester: His mind is already dark, and doesn't need the "deeper shade of the supernatural." Yet the reader's mind evidently doesn't suffer the same deficiency as Rochester's, because Jane is happy to share this odd occurrence with her audience. In some sense, Jane seems to be patronizing Rochester here. If their minds are supposedly in "perfect concord," why can't she share this information with Rochester? Although Brontë used this psychic affinity to emphasize the spiritual bond between the lovers, critics have often argued that the novel relies too heavily on coincidence.

Glossary

faux air false appearance.

jeune encore still young.

***Critical Study:***

Jane arrives at Ferndean, deep in the woods, at dusk. Rochester is living a solitary life, attended by two servants. Jane interacts with one of the servants and arranges to surprise Rochester. He seems subdued and resigned when she first sees him, but when he realizes she is there, he's delighted: "I cannot be so blest, after all my misery; it is a dream." Jane states her intention to "stay with him" and tells him about inheriting her uncle's fortune. Rochester thinks his injuries will prevent Jane from wanting to marry him; she has to reassure him. They dine together. He says he missed her more than he cared about his physical condition: "Yes: for her restoration I longed, far more than for that of my lost sight." A day later, as Jane narrates her experiences since their separation, Rochester assures Jane that he never could have made her his mistress; he wanted their relationship to be one of equality and respect. He compares himself to the chestnut tree and proposes to Jane again. They decide to marry in three days.

Rochester tells Jane that religion has become more important to him and he's begun to pray, in his own way. On the past Monday night, he says, he asked God to take him from this life to a world where he might reunite with Jane. He stood by the window, with the moon shining in, and suddenly shouted, "Jane! Jane! Jane!" He thought he heard her voice reply: "I am coming: wait for me."

Until now each event that has seemed to have a supernatural aspect has turned out to have a rational explanation. For example, the light Jane saw in the red-room was from a lantern someone was carrying outside; the shrieks from Thornfield's third floor were produced by Bertha; the vampire-like figure wearing Jane's wedding veil was Bertha as well. However, there is no rational explanation for how Jane and Rochester could have heard each other's voices calling across the many miles that separated them. This telepathic experience seems to convey that the lovers are fated to be together; it shows the strength of their bond. The chapter ends with the pair reflecting on this. Jane says, "The coincidence is too awful ... to be communicated." Rochester faithfully praises "my Maker."

Interestingly, Rochester's reaction to Jane's appearance is that it "must be a dream." When reality is so wonderful, it can only be unreal, a dream.

Significance:

Jane travels to the desolate Ferndean and observes Mr. Rochester from a distance. Although his body is unchanged, his face seems so much more tortured and despairing than it was before. Jane knocks on the door, and Mary invites her in. Jane brings a tray to Mr. Rochester, and he eventually realizes who she is. He is overjoyed by her return, and she tells him that she is now independently wealthy and offers to stay with him as his nurse; she contends she does not care about marrying anyone. Mr. Rochester anxiously asks if she is revolted by his blindness and by the loss of one of his hands, but she assures him that she is not and promises never to leave him.

The next day, Jane tells Mr. Rochester of everything that had happened to her in the past year, including St. John’s marriage proposal. Mr. Rochester is obviously jealous of St. John, and insists that he would never have treated her as his subjugated mistress, but as his equal. Jane assures him that she does not love her cousin, and that her heart belongs only to Mr. Rochester. He asks her to marry him, and she agrees. As they walk together, finally able to achieve happiness together, Mr. Rochester reveals that four nights before, he had prayed to God for a reunion with Jane and involuntarily recited Jane's name three times. Jane admits that she heard his voice in her own mystical vision that night and answered him in turn.

Jane's search for religion culminates with the mystical union between her and Mr. Rochester. Their bond is based on a profound, spiritual connection that passes through God and is formed by love. Mr. Rochester’s spiritual development over the course of the novel also helps to make him a more suitable match for Jane; now he possesses much of the same reverence toward God that Jane had always exhibited. Together in their love, Jane and Mr. Rochester are able to fulfill God’s calling while simultaneously attaining their own happiness.

Brontë also takes this opportunity to assert Jane's independence once again. Jane proudly admits to her autonomy, asserting: “I am an independent woman now,” but also demonstrates it by a symbolic action at the end of the chapter: "I took that dear hand, held it a moment to my lips, then let it pass round my shoulder: being so much lower of stature than he, I served both for his prop and guide." Though Jane is of "much lower stature" than Rochester - she comes from humbler origins - she now has sufficient strength and independence to lead Rochester and, indeed, he is dependent on her for it. Her quest for autonomy is complete, and it does not exclude a happy marriage to someone she loves.

***Notes:***

This lesson provides an overview of chapter 37 of Jane Eyre. In this chapter, Jane finally finds Mr. Rochester and the two are reunited. Does a happy ending await them after so much hardship?

## Ferndean Manor House

The inn keeper wasn't kidding in the previous chapter when he told Jane that Ferndean Manor is secluded. In her determination to find Mr. Rochester, Jane travels through thick forest to reach this remote hunting lodge. She travels as far as she can in a chaise, which is a small, two-wheeled carriage drawn by horse. The last mile she covers on foot. Jane describes Ferndean as 'a building of considerable antiquity, moderate size, and no architectural pretensions.' It sounds like it is far from a five-star accommodation!

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| Chaise |

## Jane's First Glimpse of Mr. Rochester

After trudging through the trees, Jane finally reaches Ferndean and sees Mr. Rochester outside. She observes that he is still tall, strong, and strapping despite the loss of his left hand and his recent blindness. Her heart breaks to see his strong frame so restricted, thinking he looks like 'a wronged and fettered beast.' Jane watches as Mr. Rochester refuses help from his servant and struggles to find his own way outside. Unsuccessful, he soon gives up and goes back inside alone.

Instead of revealing herself at once to Mr. Rochester, Jane goes inside unobserved and makes arrangements for herself with Mary, the housekeeper. After securing a place to stay for the night, Jane offers to bring Mr. Rochester the water and candles he has asked for. She does this without announcing her presence and it takes Mr. Rochester a little while to figure out that she is not Mary due to his blindness. The result is quite charming. 'Is it Jane?' Mr. Rochester asks, 'What is it? This is her shape--this is her size--' Jane answers, 'And this is her voice...she is all here.'

## A Joyful Reunion

Jane and Mr. Rochester immediately pick up their characteristic banter, with Jane commenting, 'I see you are being metamorphosed into a lion, or something of that sort' upon observing his uncut hair. The two share a meal and some light conversation. Jane also tells Mr. Rochester of her newfound financial independence, but she coquettishly refuses to divulge details about how she has spent her time away until the next day. Each makes tentative expressions of the love that still exists between them, and Jane skips away up the stairs to sleep, laughing mischievously.

## Full Disclosure

The next day, Jane does tell Mr. Rochester all as she promised. He asks with a lover's jealousy where she has been and with whom. In telling him of her struggles with hunger and penury, she softens the details for him, but still he is anguished by her suffering. Jane tells Mr. Rochester of her rescue from homelessness and her subsequent employment as a schoolmistress. In telling of Mary, Diana, and St. John, she delights in teasing Mr. Rochester a little about St. John and his proposal of marriage, but she eventually admits that she loves and has always loved Mr. Rochester and no other.

## Things are Settled

In the conclusion of this chapter, Mr. Rochester realizes the error of his ways in trying to marry Jane when he was married already, and he sees her departure and his various misfortunes as the work of God: 'I would have sullied my innocent flower--breathed guilt on its purity: the Omnipotent snatched it from me.' The two resolve to marry now that Mr. Rochester's first wife is dead.

Again alluding to the supernatural, Mr. Rochester tells Jane he had cried out her name in despair some nights previous. Just as Jane had heard Mr. Rochester's voice calling out to her, he says he heard her voice answering with the very words, 'I am coming: wait for me!' which she uttered in reply that night. It looks as though Jane and Mr. Rochester are heading toward that 'happy ending' so typical of Victorian novels. Will they find happiness at last?

## Lesson Summary

In chapter 37, Jane hunts down Mr. Rochester in his secluded home in the woods. She observes him first from afar, and then gradually makes herself known to him. The two experience acute joy in being reunited. Jane tells of all that has passed for her since she left. Mr. Rochester expresses remorse for attempting to marry her while he was already married, thus nearly committing bigamy at her expense. Each professes continued love for the other and the two agree to be married now that Mr. Rochester's wife is dead.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

[Jane](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters/jane-eyre) travels to Ferndean, which is deep in the forest. When she arrives, she sees Rochester in the yard. He looks physically strong still, but now his face looks desperate and sad. Rochester shrugs off the help of a servant, wanders hesitatingly around the yard, and returns inside.

***Analysis Part 1:***

In crisis, Rochester ends up in the woods, just as Jane wandered in the wilderness during her crisis. Though diminished, Rochester still tries to remain independent, refusing all help.

***Summary Part 2:***

[Jane](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters/jane-eyre) knocks and talks with the servants at the door. Jane then takes to [Rochester](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters/edward-fairfax-rochester) a tray with a glass of water that he had asked a servant to bring him. Jane enters the parlor and offers him the water. He recognizes Jane's voice and thinks at first that she is a ghost, but then catches her hand and takes her into his arms, brimming with emotion.

***Analysis Part 2:***

Jane literally takes the place of the servant by bringing the tray—she returns to Rochester to serve him forever. Rochester may be physically powerless, but he is still her master.

***Summary Part 3:***

[Jane](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters/jane-eyre) updates Rochester about her new wealth and leads him on about [St. John](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters/st-john-rivers), jokingly using jealousy to distract him from misery. Rochester mentions all of his infirmities, and advises Jane to go her own way. But Jane, loving him more than ever, promises never to leave him again. Rochester asks her to marry him. Jane joyfully accepts.

***Analysis Part 3:***

Jane's teasing and Rochester's newfound humility show that Jane is also Rochester's master. They are equals—each other's masters—and so their marriage is a joining of two independent people.

***Summary Part 4:***

[Rochester](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters/edward-fairfax-rochester) tells [Jane](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters/jane-eyre) about his new repentant relationship with God. He feels punished for his pride and now prays regularly. One evening, asking for God's help in restoring his happiness, he had involuntarily called out for "Jane! Jane! Jane!" and felt as if he heard her respond. Jane is awed by their shared connection. Serving as "his prop and his guide," she leads him home.

***Analysis Part 4:***

Rochester was punished for his pride and arrogance through divine justice. Rochester finally finds redemption through religion. Like Jane after her time of trials that led her to Moor house, Rochester is chastened, prayerful, and humble.