***Jane Eyre***

***Vol-3 Chapter 6***

***Chapter 32***

***Summary and Analysis***

***Summary:***

* Jane keeps teaching at the village school in Morton. At first it’s really difficult work, but soon she starts making progress and feeling good about it. Everyone in the area seems to like her, which makes things even more pleasant.
* At night, however, Jane has weird dreams about Mr. Rochester.
* Rosamond Oliver goes to the school regularly, usually in the morning at the same time that St. John is there giving the girls a religious lesson. He blushes intensely and almost angrily when she comes in.
* Miss Oliver knows that St. John is in love with her—he doesn’t hide it, but he refuses to act on his feelings. Rosamond pouts about this.
* Miss Oliver also visits Jane at her cottage. Jane decides that she is "coquettish, but not heartless; exacting, but not worthlessly selfish" (3.6.7)—which means that she’s a little bit superficial and demanding, but not a bad person. Jane thinks she’s a bit like Adèle (but older, of course).
* Rosamond likes Jane and suspects that there’s an exciting romantic story in her past. One evening, Rosamond goes through Jane’s things and finds some French and German books and sketches.
* Rosamond asks Jane to do a portrait of her and Jane agrees.
* Jane gets to know Rosamond’s father, Mr. Oliver, and the two of them comment on the fact that she seems smart enough to be a governess. Jane also learns that Mr. Oliver respects St. John and his family background, but thinks that St. John becoming a missionary is a waste.
* On a school holiday, Jane is sitting alone at home, finishing the picture of Rosamond Oliver, when St. John drops by to bring her a new book to read. When he sees the portrait, he becomes disturbed.
* Jane asks St. John about the portrait for a bit, and eventually he admits that he knows it’s of Rosamond. She offers to make a copy for him—if he will admit that he wants one.
* St. John admits that he wants a copy of the picture, but says that it wouldn’t be good for him to have it.
* Jane decides to play matchmaker. She knows Rosamond loves St. John, she knows St. John loves Rosamond, and she knows Rosamond’s father would be okay with their marriage.
* St. John isn’t angry—actually, he seems glad to be able to talk about it for once. He takes out his watch and puts it on the table, telling Jane that they can talk about Rosamond for fifteen minutes. He imagines what his life would be like if he decided to marry her and forget his plan of being a missionary.
* When the fifteen minutes are over, he stops thinking about this temptation. He tells Jane that he knows Rosamond could never be a missionary’s wife—she wouldn’t like it or be good at it. He knows that, on a practical level, he would regret marrying her.
* Jane reminds St. John how much he loves Rosamond—he blushes and shakes whenever she comes in the room. He tells her that’s just a fleshly thing and that really he’s a "cold, hard man."
* Jane doesn’t believe him, and he tells her that, for example, he only takes an interest in her because she is hardworking and diligent—not because she suffered.
* St. John pulls a piece of scrap paper over the portrait so that he doesn’t have to look at it anymore—and then he sees something on the paper that really surprises him. Jane can’t figure out what it is, but he tears off a piece and keeps it.

***Synopsis:***

The community befriends Jane and she is still content except with the grief of Rochester always present below the surface. Rosamond visits the school and Jane often, though St. John pays her no mind. Rosamond asks Jane to do a portrait for her father, which she does. They are so impressed, they invite Jane to their home.

On a following holiday Jane is finishing the portrait of Rosamond when St. John knocks on her door. They talk about his feelings for Rosamond and how she is not the type to be a missionary's wife. Jane offers to do a portrait of Rosamond for him, but he declines. Just as he is about to leave, he notices something, tears off a piece of writing from her book and leaves quickly.

Although St. John loves Rosamond and she loves him also, he refuses to marry her or even show any interest in her. Despite the fact they love each other, St. John is looking for a mate who will be able to serve him as a missionary's wife.***Short Study(Ch 29-32):***

Jane’s students become more familiar and endeared to her, and Jane becomes quite popular among them. At night, though, she has troubling nightmares that involve Rochester. Jane continues to pay attention to the relationship between St. John and Rosamond, who often visits the school when she knows St. John will be there. Rosamond asks Jane to draw her portrait, and as she is working on it one day, St. John pays her a visit. He gives her a new book of poetry (Sir Walter Scott’s Marmion) and looks at the drawing. She offers to draw him a duplicate, and then boldly declares that he ought to marry Rosamond. St. John admits that he loves her and is tempted by her beauty, but he explains that he refuses to allow worldly affection to interfere with his holy duties. The flirtatious, silly, and shallow Rosamond would make a terrible wife for a missionary. Suddenly, St. John notices something on the edge of Jane’s paper and tears off a tiny piece—Jane is not certain why. With a peculiar look on his face, he hurries from the room.

Marsh End and Morton are the setting of the novel’s fourth phase. Here Jane develops a new sense of belonging, and proves herself capable of finding like-minded companions with whom she is not romantically involved.

The fact that Diana and Mary Rivers are also governesses puts them on an equal footing with Jane. Although Jane left Thornfield convinced that she had made the right decision, she harbored uncertainty as to whether she would ever find a sense of belonging without sacrificing her autonomy. Jane’s stay at Marsh End proves to her that she is not doomed to be forever alienated from the world, that a balance between community and autonomy can be achieved. Now, as an integrated member of the Rivers household, Jane realizes that one may give and accept love from others in equal exchange.

When St. John gives Jane Sir Walter Scott’s Marmion, and Jane-the-narrator comments that this was a new book, it seems as if Brontë is providing a definitive statement about when the events of the novel take place, since Marmion was first published in 1808. However, other characters in Jane Eyre refer to books published after this date. Blanche Ingram, for instance, refers to Byron’s poem The Corsair in Chapter 33, but Byron’s book wasn’t published until 1814. Brontë was obviously not especially concerned with fixing her story in a precise and consistent relation to historical dates, and perhaps she selected the texts mentioned in her novel for other reasons.

***Analysis:***

After working with her students for a while, Jane discovers some intelligence among them. Jane is even surprised by their progress and begins personally to like some of the girls — and they like her. Jane teaches them grammar, geography, history, and needlework. Despite her popularity within the community and her growing happiness with her job, Jane is still troubled by strange dreams at night in which she always meets Rochester. Rosamond Oliver visits the school almost every day, usually when St. John is giving his daily catechism lesson. Although he knows Rosamond loves him, and he obviously loves her, St. John is not willing to sacrifice his heavenly ambition for worldly pleasure. When Rosamond learns that Jane can draw, she asks her to make a portrait.

St. John visits Jane while she is working on Rosamond's portrait. He has brought her a book of poetry, Sir Walter Scott's Marmion. While St. John gazes at Rosamond's picture, Jane offers to make him a copy, then, being bold, she suggests that he marry Rosamond at once. For exactly fifteen minutes, St. John imagines himself yielding to Rosamond, allowing human love to overwhelm him with its pleasures. Although St. John loves Rosamond wildly, he knows she wouldn't be a good wife for him, and he'd probably tire of her in twelve months. Rosamond wouldn't make an effective missionary's wife, and St. John isn't willing to relinquish his goals, because he is a cold, hard, ambitious man. As they sit talking, St. John suddenly notices something on Jane's blank piece of paper. She doesn't know what it is, but he snatches the paper, then shoots Jane a "peculiar" and "inexpressible" glance. He replaces the paper, tearing a narrow slip from the margin, then bids Jane "good-afternoon."

Both Jane and St. John suffer from unrequited love in this chapter. While Jane is pleased with her "useful existence," she isn't fully satisfied with her new, safe life, and her repressed desires manifest at night in strange dreams: "dreams many-coloured, agitated, full of the ideal, the stirring, the stormy." Filled with adventure and romance, these dreams often lead her to Rochester. Similarly, St. John's "repressed fervour" for Rosamond shows in a subtle glow in this "marble-seeming features." A statesman, priest, and poet, St. John is unable to limit himself to a single passion or to "renounce his wide field of mission warfare" for the tamer pleasures of love. For St. John, missionary work won't involve compassion or joy, but "warfare."

This chapter also provides us with a short explanation of the role of art in modern life. Looking at the copy of Sir Walter Scott's poem Marmion, Jane calls it "one of those genuine productions so often vouchsafed to the fortunate public of those days — the golden age of modern literature." Scott's poetry belonged in the era of Romanticism, and it isn't surprising Jane should view the Romantics as the ideal of modern literature. Her own narrative inherits many themes and landscapes from them: the hills and moors of Scott and the romantic and passionate hero of Byron. In the Victorian era, the artist seemed in danger of becoming caught in the capitalist marketplace, as the industrial revolution ushered in a new focus on profitability. Jane assures her reader that neither poetry nor genius are dead, "nor has Mammon gained power over either, to bind or slay." Even in a capitalist age, art will maintain its freedom and strength: "they not only live, but reign and redeem: and without their divine influence spread everywhere, you would be in hell — the hell of your own meanness." These quotes indicate Brontë's own anxieties about the position of the artist in the modern world, yet she vehemently maintains art's spiritual power, which keeps it separate from mundane contamination. Art and genius are "[p]owerful angels, safe in heaven" that will redeem and enlighten.

Glossary

lusus naturae a freak of nature; something with some abnormal characteristic. [Latin]

Cui bono? To what good? [Latin]

***Critical Study:***

Jane begins to take pride in the positive changes she sees in her students. She is accepted and well-liked by the villagers. Rosamond and Jane interact. Rosamond sees and admires Jane's paintings, and Jane draws her. The heiress introduces Jane to her father at their home. Jane's nights are troubled by vivid dreams of being with Rochester. Rosamond continues to flirt with St. John, and although it's obvious he's attracted to her, he doesn't reciprocate. St. John visits Jane, and after they talk and he prepares to leave, Jane attempts to play matchmaker by suggesting that marrying Rosamond and staying in Morton could make him a happy man. He responds that Rosamond would not enjoy being the wife of a missionary, and he will not give up his ambition to become one. Before St. John leaves the cottage, he seems startled by something he sees on a scrap of Jane's drawing paper, which covers her sketch of Rosamond (a sketch he has admired). He tears a strip off the paper and takes it with him, leaving Jane puzzled about what he found.

The role of mentor that Jane takes with her students is similar to the one Miss Temple played in her life. Some of Jane's comments about her students reveal that she is not immune to class snobbery but she begins to overcome it, recognizing in just a short while that "some of these heavy-looking, gaping rustics wake up into sharp-witted girls enough."

Jane's dreams about Rochester reveal that life is not complete for her without the passionate, fulfilling relationship she has lost. She recognizes in St. John a passionate nature that he is repressing. A match with Rosamond, she thinks, will channel his passion into a human bond and give him the kind of happiness that she once had with Rochester. But St. John knows that he is ruled by an ambition "to rise higher" and "do more than others." Seeing this as a defect, he has decided to channel his ambition into missionary work in order to serve a higher purpose.

***Significance:***

Jane adjusts to the rigors of teaching and eventually finds her students to be able and amiable. She becomes a well-liked fixture in the community and finally feels that she has found a place to prosper. Still, some nights, Jane still dreams being with Mr. Rochester. Miss Oliver frequently visits her, and Jane can see the effect that she has on St. John, who does his best to conceal his feelings; though he clearly desires her, he has devoted himself to his religion. Jane visits her and [Mr. Oliver](https://www.gradesaver.com/jane-eyre/study-guide/character-list#mr-oliver) at Vale Hall and learns that Mr. Oliver wants his daughter to marry St. John.

One day, St. John visits while Jane is working on a portrait of Miss Oliver she has been asked to do. He is transfixed by the portrait, and Jane tells him of Miss Oliver's affection for him before boldly suggesting that he marry her. St. John confesses that he loves Miss Oliver but cannot relinquish his calling from God. Miss Oliver may be beautiful, but she would be a terrible missionary, and thus, St. John cannot even consider her to be his wife. Suddenly, St. John notices something on the edge of the portrait’s canvas – Jane is not sure what it is - and furtively rips it off and leaves.

St. John is similar to Jane in that he is unwilling to give up his independence for love. Although Miss Oliver loves him, her beauty and higher social status would hamper his quest to be a missionary; he would rather seek his own calling in life than be beholden to someone else, even someone he might love passionately. However, when she discovers St. John’s love for Miss Oliver, Jane’s first impulse is not to support St. John’s decision to reject love, but rather to urge St. John to marry her. She believes that a couple with such passionate love for one another should ultimately be together, a belief that clearly speaks to Jane’s subconscious feelings for Mr. Rochester.***Notes:***

This lesson provides an overview of Chapter 32 of Jane Eyre, in which Jane persists in her job as mistress of the village school despite her continued struggle with her past. We also learn more about St. John and Rosamond Oliver.

## Progress in the Schoolroom

Jane presses on with her teaching duties, despite the difficulty of adjusting to a different kind of student. While she has trouble at first seeing past her pupils' unrefined manners, Jane gradually becomes fond of her students and is eventually able to appreciate what they have to offer. The students, likewise, grow accustomed to Jane and learn to think themselves capable of more than they had originally imagined.

As was the custom for teachers in small villages in this time period, Jane enjoys the company of her students and their families as they often invite her to dine with them in their homes. In short, Jane is experiencing professional satisfaction and enjoying some community companionship thanks to her job. She even thinks to herself, 'I would far rather be where I am than in any high family in the land.'

## Jane Still Struggles

Despite the contentment Jane finds teaching, she has not completely escaped her past. Her dreams are troubled, where she 'again and again met Mr. Rochester.' Being with him in her dreams like this, Jane once again experiences 'the sense of being in his arms, meeting his eye, touching his hand and cheek...' Upon waking, these things are torn from her afresh, reviving old wounds and prolonging her torture. Jane describes the feeling as 'the convulsion of despair.' In the wake of these nighttime terrors, Jane tells us 'by nine o'clock the next morning I was punctually opening the school, tranquil, settled, prepared for the steady duties of the day.' Anyone who has lived through something awful knows the strenuous effort it takes to function normally on the outside while experiencing agony on the inside.

## Rosamond and St. John

As Jane strives to overcome her sorrow, she observes the interactions of St. John and Rosamond Oliver. The reader will remember meeting Rosamond in the previous chapter. She is the very beautiful and charming daughter of Mr. Oliver, who owns the needle factory in the village and is extremely wealthy. St. John, being the community's religious leader, comes to the school each day to teach the children about the Bible. Rosamond conveniently times her visits to coincide with his. She lavishes attention and smiles upon St. John and is chagrined when he, with some strenuous effort, resists them. The events of this chapter confirm Jane's earlier suspicion that there exists some romantic tension between St. John and Rosamond.

## Jane's Talents Discovered

In addition to her obvious pursuit of St. John, Rosamond develops a friendship with Jane. In doing so, she discovers that Jane knows French and German and is rather more educated than village schoolmistresses usually are. Rosamond also discovers Jane's artistic talent and begs Jane to paint her portrait, which Jane is happy to do. While Jane is working on Rosamond's miniature, St. John stops by. A miniature is a tiny portrait usually painted on ivory which was very popular in and around the 19th century. It usually looked something like this:

|  |
| --- |
| 19th Century Miniature |

Before photographs existed, miniatures served as mementos and keepsakes that could be carried around or even worn. When he visits Jane, St. John finds Rosamond's miniature and is clearly affected by it. Jane, feeling bold, decides to ask him bluntly about his affection for the lovely woman.

## St. John in Love

St. John is a little shocked by Jane's forward way of speaking, but he eventually opens up to Jane about Rosamond, saying 'You have taken my confidence by storm.' Jane gets St. John to admit that he is quite in love with Rosamond, and she frankly asks him why he doesn't marry her. St. John responds oddly, telling Jane he is going to allow himself 15 minutes to think about how nice that would be. He even gets out his watch to keep the time. Jane thinks this is weird, but she goes on with her art while she waits for him.

After the allotted time is over, St. John composes himself and explains to Jane that, despite his ardent feelings for her, he knows that Rosamond and he would not ultimately be a good match. 'Rosamond a missionary's wife?' he asks, incredulously. He answers himself with finality: 'No!' Jane suggests he could simply not be a missionary, which he refuses, explaining 'it is dearer than the blood in my veins.'

## Enigmatic Behavior

As St. John prepares to leave Jane's cottage, he suddenly sees one of Jane's scraps of paper: 'he took it up with a snatch; he looked at the edge; then shot a glance at me, inexpressibly peculiar.' Jane has no idea what he is up to and doesn't understand why he tears off a piece of this paper and hides it away in his glove. It seems at this point she is used to odd behavior from him, so she doesn't think much about it. She says goodbye and goes on with her work.

## Lesson Summary

In this chapter, Jane seems to be doing quite well with her work and in her community, but she still struggles with the internal agony of missing Mr. Rochester. Meanwhile, she observes the interplay between St. John and Rosamond Oliver. It is clear that they like each other quite a bit. Jane asks St. John bluntly why he doesn't marry Rosamond. St. John explains they would not be a good match because she is not suited to life as a missionary, a career he is unwilling to give up. The chapter ends with mystery: St. John tears a bit off of one of Jane's scraps of paper and takes it. What was it? Why did he take it? Jane doesn't know, but perhaps we'll soon find out.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

As the days pass, [Jane](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters/jane-eyre) starts to enjoy her teaching, makes progress with her students, and becomes a respected favorite in the community. She enjoys her new life, but is unsettled by persistent and stirring dreams of [Rochester](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters/edward-fairfax-rochester).

***Analysis Part 1:***

Unlike St. John, Jane can't leave her true feelings behind. Jane's dreams are a window into her emotions and spirituality.

***Summary Part 2:***

[Rosamond](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters) makes frequent visits to the school, conveniently arriving when [St. John](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters/st-john-rivers) is also there. [Jane](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters/jane-eyre) notices that St. John is visibly affected by Rosamond's presence. At home, Jane draws a [portrait](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/symbols/portraits-and-pictures) of Rosamond and offers it to St. John, hoping to learn more about his feelings. Infatuated, St. John gazes at the portrait and daydreams for a blissful 15 minutes. Jane sees her opportunity and boldly suggests that St. John marry Rosamond. St. John admits his love for her, but doubts that Rosamond would take well to missionary work. St. John says that he will not exchange earthly delights for the heavenly kingdom he is working so hard to reach. Suddenly, [St. John](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters/st-john-rivers) spots something on the edge of [Jane](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters/jane-eyre)'s drawing paper. He tears off a corner of it and, looking agitated, leaves abruptly. Jane, confused, dismisses the act as meaningless.

***Analysis Part 2:***

Jane surprises St. John in speaking to him more boldly and directly than women typically do. Jane wants St. John and Rosamond to marry in part because their happiness would substitute for the marriage that Jane cannot have. The portrait Jane draws represents passion and imagination. St. John's eventual rejection of these things reveals the main difference between St. John and Jane—Jane won't completely reject her feelings. What St. John sees on Jane's drawing paper is not immediately clear.