

Jane Eyre

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CHAPTER XXXIII Chinese

WHEN Mr. St. John went, it was beginning to snow; the whirling storm continued all night. The next day a keen wind brought fresh and blinding falls; by twilight the valley was drifted up and almost impassable. I had closed my shutter, laid a mat to the door to prevent the snow from blowing in under it, trimmed my fire, and after sitting nearly an hour on the hearth listening to the muffled fury of the tempest, I lit a candle, took down Marmion, and beginning-

'Day set on Norham's castled steep,

And Tweed's fair river broad and deep,

And Cheviot's mountains lone;

The massive towers, the donjon keep,

The flanking walls that round them sweep,

In yellow lustre shone'-

I soon forgot storm in music.

I heard a noise: the wind, I thought, shook the door. No; it was St. John Rivers, who, lifting the latch, came in out of the frozen hurricane- the howling darkness- and stood before me: the cloak that covered his tall figure all white as a glacier. I was almost in consternation, so little had I expected any guest from the blocked-up vale that night.

'Any ill news?' I demanded. 'Has anything happened?'

'No. How very easily alarmed you are!' he answered, removing his cloak and hanging it up against the door, towards which he again coolly pushed the mat which his entrance had deranged. He stamped the snow from his boots.

'I shall sully the purity of your floor,' said he, 'but you must excuse me for once.' Then he approached the fire. 'I have had hard work to get here, I assure you,' he observed, as he warmed his hands over the flame. 'One drift took me up to the waist; happily the snow is quite soft yet.'

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'But why are you come?' I could not forbear saying.

'Rather an inhospitable question to put to a visitor; but since you ask it, I answer simply to have a little talk with you; I got tired of my mute books and empty rooms. Besides, since yesterday I have experienced the excitement of a person to whom a tale has been half-told, and who is impatient to hear the sequel.'

He sat down. I recalled his singular conduct of yesterday, and really I began to fear his wits were touched. If he were insane, however, his was a very cool and collected insanity: I had never seen that handsome-featured face of his look more like chiselled marble than it did just now, as he put aside his snow-wet hair from his forehead and let the firelight shine free on his pale brow and cheek as pale, where it grieved me to discover the hollow trace of care or sorrow now so plainly graved. I waited, expecting he would say something I could at least comprehend; but his hand was now at his chin, his finger on his lip: he was thinking. It struck me that his hand looked wasted like his face. A perhaps uncalled-for gush of pity came over my heart: I was moved to say-

'I wish Diana or Mary would come and live with you: it is too bad that you should be quite alone; and you are recklessly rash about your own health.'

'Not at all,' said he: 'I care for myself when necessary. I am well now. What do you see amiss in me?'

This was said with a careless, abstracted indifference, which showed that my solicitude was, at least in his opinion, wholly superfluous. I was silenced.

He still slowly moved his finger over his upper lip, and still his eye dwelt dreamily on the glowing grate; thinking it urgent to say something, I asked him presently if he felt any cold draught from the door, which was behind him.

'No, no!' he responded shortly and somewhat testily.

'Well,' I reflected, 'if you won't talk, you may be still; I'll let you alone now, and return to my book.'

So I snuffed the candle and resumed the perusal of Marmion. He soon stirred; my eye was instantly drawn to his movements; he only took out a morocco pocket-book, thence produced a letter, which he read in silence, folded it, put it back, relapsed into meditation. It was vain to try to read with such an inscrutable fixture before me; nor could I, in my impatience, consent to be dumb; he might rebuff me if he liked, but talk I would.

'Have you heard from Diana and Mary lately?'

'Not since the letter I showed you a week ago.'

'There has not been any change made about your own arrangements?'

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You will not be summoned to leave England sooner than you expected?"

'I fear not, indeed: such chance is too good to befall me.' Baffled so far, I changed my ground. I bethought myself to talk about the school and my scholars.

'Mary Garrett's mother is better, and Mary came back to the school this morning, and I shall have four new girls next week from the Foundry Close- they would have come to-day but for the snow.'

'Indeed!'

'Mr. Oliver pays for two.'

'Does he?'

'He means to give the whole school a treat at Christmas.'

'I know.'

'Was it your suggestion?'

'No.'

'Whose, then?'

'His daughter's, I think.'

'It is like her: she is so good-natured.'

'Yes.'

Again came the blank of a pause: the clock struck eight strokes. It aroused him; he uncrossed his legs, sat erect, turned to me.

'Leave your book a moment, and come a little nearer the fire,' he said.

Wondering, and of my wonder finding no end, I complied.

'Half an hour ago,' he pursued, 'I spoke of my impatience to hear the sequel of a tale: on reflection, I find the matter will be better managed by my assuming the narrator's part, and converting you into a listener. Before commencing, it is but fair to warn you that the story will sound somewhat hackneyed in your ears; but stale details often regain a degree of freshness when they pass through new lips. For the rest, whether trite or novel, it is short.'

'Twenty years ago, a poor curate- never mind his name at this moment- fell in love with a rich man's daughter; she fell in love with him, and married him, against the advice of all her friends, who consequently disowned her immediately after the wedding. Before two years passed, the rash pair were both dead, and laid quietly side by side under one slab. (I have seen their grave; it formed part of the pavement of a huge churchyard surrounding the grim, soot-black old daughter, which, at its very birth, Charity received in her lap- cold as that of the snow-drift I almost stuck fast in to-night.

Charity carried the friendless thing to the house of its rich maternal relations; it was reared by an aunt-in-law, called (I come to names now) Mrs. Reed of Gateshead. You start- did you hear a noise? I daresay it is only a rat scrambling along the rafters of the adjoining schoolroom: it was a barn before I had it repaired and altered, and barns are generally haunted by rats.- To proceed. Mrs. Reed kept the orphan ten years: whether it was happy or not with her, I cannot say, never having been told; but at the end of that time she transferred it to a place you know- being no other than Lowood School, where you so long resided yourself. It seems her career there was very honourable: from a pupil, she became a teacher, like yourself- really it strikes me there are parallel points in her history and yours- she left it to be a governess: there, again, your fates were analogous; she undertook the education of the ward of a certain Mr. Rochester.'

'Mr. Rivers!' I interrupted.

'I can guess your feelings,' he said, 'but restrain them for a while: I have nearly finished; hear me to the end. Of Mr. Rochester's character I know nothing, but the one fact that he professed to offer honourable marriage to this young girl, and that at the very altar she discovered he had a wife yet alive, though a lunatic. What his subsequent conduct and proposals were is a matter of pure conjecture; but when an event transpired which rendered inquiry after the governess necessary, it was discovered she was gone- no one could tell when, where, or how. She had left Thornfield Hall in the night; every research after her course had been vain: the country had been scoured far and wide; no vestige of information could be gathered respecting her. Yet that she should be found is become a matter of serious urgency: advertisements have been put in all the papers; I myself have received a letter from one Mr. Briggs, a solicitor, communicating the details I have just imparted. Is it not an odd tale?'

'Just tell me this,' said I, 'and since you know so much, you surely can tell it me- what of Mr. Rochester? How and where is he? What is he doing? Is he well?'

'I am ignorant of all concerning Mr. Rochester: the letter never mentions him but to narrate the fraudulent and illegal attempt I have adverted to. You should rather ask the name of the governess- the nature of the event which requires her appearance.'

'Did no one go to Thornfield Hall, then? Did no one see Mr. Rochester?'

'I suppose not.'

'But they wrote to him?'

'Of course.'

'And what did he say? Who has his letters?'

'Mr. Briggs intimates that the answer to his application was not from Mr. Rochester, but from a lady: it is signed "Alice Fairfax."'

I felt cold and dismayed: my worst fears then were probably true: he had in all probability left England and rushed in reckless desperation to some former haunt on the Continent. And what opiate for his severe sufferings- what object for his strong passions- had he sought there? I dared not answer the question. Oh, my poor master- once almost my husband- whom I had often called 'my dear Edward!'

'He must have been a bad man,' observed Mr. Rivers.

'You don't know him- don't pronounce an opinion upon him,' I said, with warmth.

'Very well,' he answered quietly: 'and indeed my head is otherwise occupied than with him: I have my tale to finish. Since you won't ask the governess's name, I must tell it of my own accord.'

Stay! I have it here- it is always more satisfactory to see important points written down, fairly committed to black and white.'

And the pocket-book was again deliberately produced, opened, sought through; from one of its compartments was extracted a shabby slip of paper, hastily torn off: I recognised in its texture and its stains of ultra-marine, and lake, and vermilion, the ravished margin of the portrait-cover. He got up, held it close to my eyes: and I read, traced in Indian ink, in my own handwriting, the words 'JANE EYRE'- the work doubtless of some moment of abstraction.

'Briggs wrote to me of a Jane Eyre:' he said, 'the advertisements demanded a Jane Eyre: I knew a Jane Elliott.- I confess I had my suspicions, but it was only yesterday afternoon they were at once resolved into certainty. You own the name and renounce the alias?'

'Yes- yes; but where is Mr. Briggs? He perhaps knows more of Mr. Rochester than you do.'

'Briggs is in London. I should doubt his knowing anything at all about Mr. Rochester; it is not in Mr. Rochester he is interested.'

Meantime, you forget essential points in pursuing trifles: you do not inquire why Mr. Briggs sought after you- what he wanted with you.'

'Well, what did he want?'

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'Merely to tell you that your uncle, Mr. Eyre of Madeira, is dead; that he has left you all his property, and that you are now rich- merely that- nothing more.'

'!!- rich?'

'Yes, you, rich- quite an heiress.'

Silence succeeded.

'You must prove your identity of course,' resumed St. John presently: 'a step which will offer no difficulties; you can then enter on immediate possession. Your fortune is vested in the English funds; Briggs has the will and the necessary documents.'

Here was a new card turned up! It is a fine thing, reader, to be lifted in a moment from indigence to wealth- a very fine thing; but not a matter one can comprehend or consequently enjoy, all at once.

And then there are other chances in life far more thrilling and rapture-giving: this is solid, an affair of the actual world, nothing ideal about it: all its associations are solid and sober, and its manifestations are the same. One does not jump, and spring, and shout hurrah! at hearing one has got a fortune; one begins to consider responsibilities, and to ponder business; on a base of steady satisfaction rise certain grave cares, and we contain ourselves, and brood over our bliss with a solemn brow.

Besides, the words Legacy, Bequest, go side by side with the words, Death, Funeral. My uncle I had heard was dead- my only relative; ever since being made aware of his existence, I had cherished the hope of one day seeing him: now, I never should. And then this money came only to me: not to me and a rejoicing family, but to my isolated self.

It was a grand boon doubtless; and independence would be glorious- yes, I felt that- that thought swelled my heart.

'You unbend your forehead at last,' said Mr. Rivers. 'I thought Medusa had looked at you, and that you were turning to stone.'

Perhaps now you will ask how much you are worth?'

'How much am I worth?'

'Oh, a trifle! Nothing of course to speak of- twenty thousand pounds, I think they say- but what is that?'

'Twenty thousand pounds?'

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Here was a new stunner- I had been calculating on four or five thousand. This news actually took my breath for a moment: Mr. St. John, whom I had never heard laugh before, laughed now.

'Well,' said he, 'if you had committed a murder, and I had told you your crime was discovered, you could scarcely look more aghast.'

'It is a large sum- don't you think there is a mistake?'

'No mistake at all.'

'Perhaps you have read the figures wrong- it may be two thousand!'

'It is written in letters, not figures,- twenty thousand.'

I again felt rather like an individual of but average gastronomical powers sitting down to feast alone at a table spread with provisions for a hundred. Mr. Rivers rose now and put his cloak on.

'If it were not such a very wild night,' he said, 'I would send Hannah down to keep you company: you look too desperately miserable to be left alone. But Hannah, poor woman! could not stride the drifts so well as I: her legs are not quite so long: so I must e'en leave you to your sorrows. Good-night.'

He was lifting the latch: a sudden thought occurred to me.

'Stop one minute!' I cried.

'Well?'

'It puzzles me to know why Mr. Briggs wrote to you about me; or how he knew you, or could fancy that you, living in such an out-of-the-way place, had the power to aid in my discovery.'

'Oh! I am a clergyman,' he said; 'and the clergy are often appealed to about odd matters.' Again the latch rattled.

'No; that does not satisfy me!' I exclaimed: and indeed there was something in the hasty and unexplanatory reply which, instead of allaying, piqued my curiosity more than ever.

'It is a very strange piece of business,' I added; 'I must know more about it.'

'Another time.'

'No; to-night!- to-night!' and as he turned from the door, I placed myself between it and him. He looked rather embarrassed.

'You certainly shall not go till you have told me all,' I said.

'I would rather not just now.'

'You shall!- you must!'

'I would rather Diana or Mary informed you.'

Of course these objections wrought my eagerness to a climax: gratified it must be, and that without delay; and I told him so.

'But I apprised you that I was a hard man,' said he, 'difficult to persuade.'

'And I am a hard woman,- impossible to put off.'

'And then,' he pursued, 'I am cold: no fervour infects me.'

'Whereas I am hot, and fire dissolves ice. The blaze there has thawed all the snow from your cloak; by the same token, it has streamed on to my floor, and made it like a trampled street. As you hope ever to be forgiven, Mr. Rivers, the high crime and misdemeanour of spoiling a sanded kitchen, tell me what I wish to know.'

'Well, then,' he said, 'I yield; if not to your earnestness, to your perseverance: as stone is worn by continual dropping. Besides, you must know some day,- as well now as later. Your name is Jane Eyre?'

'Of course: that was all settled before.'

'You are not, perhaps, aware that I am your namesake?- that I was christened St. John Eyre Rivers?'

'No, indeed! I remember now seeing the letter E. comprised in your initials written in books you have at different times lent me; but I never asked for what name it stood. But what then? Surely-'

I stopped: I could not trust myself to entertain, much less to express, the thought that rushed upon me- that embodied itself,- that, in a second, stood out a strong, solid probability. Circumstances knit themselves, fitted themselves, shot into order: the chain that had been lying hitherto a formless lump of links was drawn out straight,- every ring was perfect, the connection complete. I knew, by instinct, how the matter stood, before St. John had said another word; but I cannot expect the reader to have the same intuitive perception, so I must repeat his explanation.

'My mother's name was Eyre; she had two brothers; one a clergyman, who married Miss Jane Reed, of Gateshead; the other, John Eyre, Esq., merchant, late of Funchal, Madeira. Mr. Briggs, being Mr. Eyre's solicitor, wrote to us last August to inform us of our uncle's death, and to say that he had left his property to his brother the clergyman's orphan daughter, overlooking us, in consequence of



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a quarrel, never forgiven, between him and my father. He wrote again a few weeks since, to intimate that the heiress was lost, and asking if we knew anything of her. A name casually written on a slip of paper has enabled me to find her out. You know the rest.' Again he was going, but I set my back against the door.

'Do let me speak,' I said; 'let me have one moment to draw breath and reflect.' I paused- he stood before me, hat in hand, looking composed enough. I resumed-

'Your mother was my father's sister?'

'Yes.'

'My aunt, consequently?'

He bowed.

'My uncle John was your uncle John? You, Diana, and Mary are his sister's children, as I am his brother's child?'

'Undeniably.'

'You three, then, are my cousins; half our blood on each side flows from the same source?'

'We are cousins; yes.'

I surveyed him. It seemed I had found a brother: one I could be proud of,- one I could love; and two sisters, whose qualities were such, that, when I knew them but as mere strangers, they had inspired me with genuine affection and admiration. The two girls, on whom, kneeling down on the wet ground, and looking through the low, latticed window of Moor House kitchen, I had gazed with so bitter a mixture of interest and despair, were my near kinswomen; and the young and stately gentleman who had found me almost dying at his threshold was my blood relation. Glorious discovery to a lonely wretch! This was wealth indeed!- wealth to the heart!- a mine of pure, genial affections. This was a blessing, bright, vivid, and exhilarating;- not like the ponderous gift of gold: rich and welcome enough in its way, but sobering from its weight. I now clapped my hands in sudden joy- my pulse bounded, my veins thrilled.

'Oh, I am glad!- I am glad!' I exclaimed.

St. John smiled. 'Did I not say you neglected essential points to pursue trifles?' he asked. 'You were serious when I told you you had got a fortune; and now, for a matter of no moment, you are excited.'

'What can you mean? It may be of no moment to you; you have sisters and don't care for a cousin; but I had nobody; and now three relations,- or two, if you don't choose to be counted,- are born into

my world full-grown. I say again, I am glad!"

I walked fast through the room: I stopped, half suffocated with the thoughts that rose faster than I could receive, comprehend, settle them:- thoughts of what might, could, would, and should be, and that ere long. I looked at the blank wall: it seemed a sky thick with ascending stars,- every one lit me to a purpose or delight. Those who had saved my life, whom, till this hour, I had loved barrenly, I could now benefit. They were under a yoke,- I could free them: they were scattered,- I could reunite them: the independence, the affluence which was mine, might be theirs too. Were we not four? Twenty thousand pounds shared equally, would be five thousand each,- enough and to spare: justice would be done,- mutual happiness secured. Now the wealth did not weigh on me: now it was not a mere bequest of coin,- it was a legacy of life, hope, enjoyment.

How I looked while these ideas were taking my spirit by storm, I cannot tell; but I perceived soon that Mr. Rivers had placed a chair behind me, and was gently attempting to make me sit down on it. He also advised me to be composed; I scorned the insinuation of helplessness and distraction, shook off his hand, and began to walk about again.

'Write to Diana and Mary to-morrow,' I said, 'and tell them to come home directly. Diana said they would both consider themselves rich with a thousand pounds, so with five thousand they will do very well.'

'Tell me where I can get you a glass of water,' said St. John; 'you must really make an effort to tranquillise your feelings.'

'Nonsense! and what sort of an effect will the bequest have on you? Will it keep you in England, induce you to marry Miss Oliver, and settle down like an ordinary mortal?'

'You wander: your head becomes confused. I have been too abrupt in communicating the news; it has excited you beyond your strength.'

'Mr. Rivers! you quite put me out of patience: I am rational enough; it is you who misunderstand, or rather who affect to misunderstand.'

'Perhaps, if you explained yourself a little more fully, I should comprehend better.'

'Explain! What is there to explain? You cannot fail to see that twenty thousand pounds, the sum in question, divided equally between the nephew and three nieces of our uncle, will give five thousand to each? What I want is, that you should write to your sisters and tell them of the fortune that has accrued to them.'

'To you, you mean.'

'I have intimated my view of the case: I am incapable of taking any other. I am not brutally selfish, blindly unjust, or fiendishly ungrateful. Besides, I am resolved I will have a home and connections.'

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I like Moor House, and I will live at Moor House; I like Diana and Mary, and I will attach myself for life to Diana and Mary. It would please and benefit me to have five thousand pounds; it would torment and oppress me to have twenty thousand; which, moreover, could never be mine in justice, though it might in law. I abandon to you, then, what is absolutely superfluous to me. Let there be no opposition, and no discussion about it; let us agree amongst each other, and decide the point at once.'

'This is acting on first impulses; you must take days to consider such a matter, ere your word can be regarded as valid.'

'Oh! if all you doubt is my sincerity, I am easy: you see the justice of the case?'

'I do see a certain justice; but it is contrary to all custom.

Besides, the entire fortune is your right: my uncle gained it by his own efforts; he was free to leave it to whom he would: he left it to you. After all, justice permits you to keep it: you may, with a clear conscience, consider it absolutely your own.'

'With me,' said I, 'it is fully as much a matter of feeling as of conscience: I must indulge my feelings; I so seldom have had an opportunity of doing so. Were you to argue, object, and annoy me for a year, I could not forego the delicious pleasure of which I have caught a glimpse- that of repaying, in part, a mighty obligation, and winning to myself life-long friends.'

'You think so now,' rejoined St. John, 'because you do not know what it is to possess, nor consequently to enjoy wealth: you cannot form a notion of the importance twenty thousand pounds would give you; of the place it would enable you to take in society; of the prospects it would open to you: you cannot-'

'And you,' I interrupted, 'cannot at all imagine the craving I have for fraternal and sisterly love. I never had a home, I never had brothers or sisters; I must and will have them now: you are not reluctant to admit me and own me, are you?'

'Jane, I will be your brother- my sisters will be your sisters- without stipulating for this sacrifice of your just rights.'

'Brother? Yes; at the distance of a thousand leagues! Sisters? Yes; slaving amongst strangers! I, wealthy- gorged with gold I never earned and do not merit! You, penniless! Famous equality and fraternisation! Close union! Intimate attachment!'

'But, Jane, your aspirations after family ties and domestic happiness may be realised otherwise than by the means you contemplate: you may marry.'

'Nonsense, again! Marry! I don't want to marry, and never shall marry.'

'That is saying too much: such hazardous affirmations are a proof of the excitement under which you labour.'

'It is not saying too much: I know what I feel, and how averse are my inclinations to the bare thought of marriage. No one would take me for love; and I will not be regarded in the light of a mere money speculation. And I do not want a stranger- unsympathising, alien, different from me; I want my kindred: those with whom I have full fellow-feeling. Say again you will be my brother: when you uttered the words I was satisfied, happy; repeat them, if you can, repeat them sincerely.'

'I think I can. I know I have always loved my own sisters; and I know on what my affection for them is grounded,- respect for their worth and admiration of their talents. You too have principle and mind: your tastes and habits resemble Diana's and Mary's; your presence is always agreeable to me; in your conversation I have already for some time found a salutary solace. I feel I can easily and naturally make room in my heart for you, as my third and youngest sister.'

'Thank you: that contents me for to-night. Now you had better go; for if you stay longer, you will perhaps irritate me afresh by some mistrustful scruple.'

'And the school, Miss Eyre? It must now be shut up, I suppose?'

'No. I will retain my post of mistress till you get a substitute.'

He smiled approbation: we shook hands, and he took leave. I need not narrate in detail the further struggles I had, and arguments I used, to get matters regarding the legacy settled as I wished. My task was a very hard one; but, as I was absolutely resolved- as my cousins saw at length that my mind was really and immutably fixed on making a just division of the property- as they must in their own hearts have felt the equity of the intention; and must, besides, have been innately conscious that in my place they would have done precisely what I wished to do- they yielded at length so far as to consent to put the affair to arbitration. The judges chosen were Mr. Oliver and an able lawyer: both coincided in my opinion: I carried my point. The instruments of transfer were drawn out: St. John, Diana, Mary, and I, each became possessed of a competency.

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### 第三十三章

英文

圣.约翰先生走掉后，天开始下雪了。暴风雷刮了整整一夜。第二天刺骨的风又带来茫茫大雪，到了黄昏，雪积山谷，道路几乎不通。我关了窗，把一个垫子挂在门上，免得雪从门底下吹进来，整了整火，在炉边坐了近一个小时，倾听着暴风雪低沉的怒吼，我点了根蜡烛，取来了《玛米昂》，开始读了起来——

残阳照着诺汉那城堡峭立的陡壁，

美丽的特威德河又宽又深，

契维奥特山孑然独立；

气势雄伟的塔楼和城堡的主垒，

两侧那绵延不绝的围墙，

都在落日余辉中闪动着金光。

我立刻沉浸在音乐之中，忘掉了暴风雪。

我听见了一声响动，心想一定是风摇动着门的声音。不，是圣.约翰.里弗斯先生，从天寒地冻的暴风雪中，从怒吼着的黑暗中走出来，拉开门栓，站在我面前。遮盖着他高高身躯的斗篷，像冰川一样一片雪白，我几乎有些惊慌了，在这样的夜晚我不曾料到会有穿过积雪封冻的山谷，前来造访的客人。

“有什么坏消息吧？”我问。“出了什么事吗？”

“没有，你那么容易受惊！”他回答，一边脱下斗篷，挂在门上。他冷冷地推了推进来时被他弄歪了的垫子，跺了跺脚，把靴子上的雪抖掉。

“我会把你干净的地板弄脏的，”他说，“不过你得原谅我一回。”随后他走近火炉。“说真的，我好不容易到了这儿，”他一面在火焰上烘着手，一面说，“有一堆积雪让我陷到了腰部、幸亏雪很软。”

“可是你干嘛要来呢，”我忍不住说。

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“这么问客人是不大客气的。不过既然你问了，我就回答，纯粹是想要同你聊一会儿。不会出声的书，空空荡荡的房间，我都厌倦了。此外，从昨天起我便有些激动不安，像是一个人听了半截故事，急不可耐地要听下去一样。”

他坐了下来。我回想起他昨天奇怪的举动，真的开始担心他的理智受到了影响。然而要是他神经错乱了，那他的错乱还是比较冷静和镇定的。当他把被雪弄湿的头发从额头搔到旁边，让火光任意照在苍白的额角和脸颊上时，我从来没有看到过他那漂亮的脸容，像现在这样酷似大理石雕像了。我悲哀地发现这张脸上清晰地刻下了辛劳和忧伤的凹陷痕迹。我等待着，盼着他会说一些我至少能够理解的事，但这会儿他的手托着下巴，手指放在嘴唇上，他在沉思默想。我的印象是，他的手跟他的脸一样消瘦。我心里涌起了一阵也许是不必要的怜悯之情，感动得说话了：

“但愿黛安娜或玛丽会来跟你住在一起，你那么孤零零一个人，实在太糟糕了，而你对自己的健康又那么草率。”

“一点也没有，”他说，“必要时我会照顾自己的，我现在很好，你看见我什么地方不好啦？”

他说这话的时候心不在焉，神情漠然。表明我的关切，至少在他看来是多余的。我闭上了嘴。

他依然慢悠悠地把手指移到上嘴唇，依然那么睡眼朦胧地看着闪烁的炉格，像是有什么要紧的事儿要说。我立刻问他是不是感到有一阵冷风从他背后的门吹来。

没有，没有，”他有些恼火，回答得很简捷，

“好吧，”我沉思起来，“要是你不愿谈、你可以保持沉默，我就不打扰你了，我看我的书去。”

于是我剪了烛芯，继续细读起《玛米昂》来。不久他开始动弹了，我的眼睛立刻被他的动作所吸引。他只不过取出了一个山羊鞣皮面皮夹子，从里面拿出一封信来，默默地看着，又把它折起来，放回原处，再次陷入了沉思。面前站着这么一个不可思议的固定物，想要看书也看不进去。而在这种不耐烦的时刻，我也不愿当哑巴。他要是不高兴，尽可拒绝我，但我要同他交谈。

“最近接到过黛安娜和玛丽的信吗？”

“自从一周前我给你看的那封信后，没有收到过。”

“你自己的安排没有什么更动吧？该不会叫你比你估计更早离开英国吧？”

“说实在恐怕不会。这样的机会太好了，不会落到我头上。”我至此毫无进展，于是便掉转枪头——决定谈学校和学生了。

“玛丽·加勒特的母亲好些了，玛丽今天早上到学校里来了，下星期我有四个从铸造场来的新同学——要不是这场雪今天该到了。”

“真的？”

“奥利弗先生支付其中两个的学费。”

“是吗？”

“他打算在圣诞节请全校的客人。”

“我知道了。”

“是你的建议吗，”

“不是。”

“那么是谁的？”

“他女儿的，我想。”

“是像她建议的，她心地善良。”

“是呀。”

谈话停顿了下来，再次出现了空隙。时钟敲了八下。钟声把他惊醒了，他分开交叉的腿，站直了身子，转向我。

“把你的书放一会儿吧，过来靠近点火炉”他说。

我有些纳闷，而且是无止境地纳闷，于是也就答应了。

“半小时之前，”他接着说，“我曾说起急于听一个故事的续篇。后来想了一下，还是让我扮演叙述者的角色，让你转化为听众比较好办。开场之前，我有言在先，这个故事在你的耳朵听来恐怕有些陈腐，但是过时的细节从另一张嘴里吐出来，常常又会获得某种程度的新鲜感。至于别的就不管了，陈腐也好，新鲜也好，反正很短。”

“二十年前，一个穷苦的牧师——这会儿且不去管他叫什么名字——与一个有钱人的女儿相爱。她爱上了他，而且不听她所有朋友的劝告，嫁给了他。结果婚礼一结束他们就同她断绝了关系。两年未到，这一对草率的夫妇双双故去。静静地躺在同一块石板底下（我见过他们的坟墓，它在××郡的一个人口稠密的工业城市，那里有一个煤烟一般黑、面目狰狞的老教堂，四周被一大片墓地包围着，那两人的坟墓已成了墓地人行道的一部份）。他们留下了一个女儿，她一生下来就落入了慈善事业的膝头——那膝头像我今晚陷进去几乎不能自拔的积雪一样冰冷。慈善把这个没有朋友的小东西，送到母亲的一位有钱亲戚那里。被孩子的舅妈，一个叫做（这会儿我要提名字了）盖茨黑德的里德太太收养着。——你吓了一跳——听见什么响动了？我猜想不过是一个老鼠，爬过毗邻着的教室的大梁。这里原先是个谷仓，后来我



## 学英语，练听力，上听力课堂！

整修改建了一下，谷仓向来是老鼠出没的地方。说下去吧。里德太太把这个孤儿养了十年，她跟这孩子处得愉快还是不愉快，我说不上，因为从来没听人谈起过。不过十年之后，她把孩子转送到了——一个你知道的地方——恰恰就是罗沃德学校，那儿你自己也住了很久。她在那儿的经历似乎很光荣，象你一样，从学生变成了教师——说实在我总觉得你的身世和她的很有相似之处——她离开那里去当家庭教师，在那里，你们的命运又再次靠拢，她担当起教育某个罗切斯特先生的被监护人的职责。”

“里弗斯先生！”

“我能猜得出你的情感，”他说，“但是克制一会儿吧，我差不多要结束了。听我把话讲完吧。关于罗切斯特先生的为人，除了一件事情，我一无所知。那就是他宣布要同这位年轻姑娘体面地结成夫妇。就在圣坛上她发觉他有一个妻子，虽然疯了，但还活着。他以后的举动和建议纯粹只能凭想象了。后来有一件事非得问问这位家庭女教师时，才发现她已经走了——谁也不知道什么时候走的，去了什么地方，怎么去的。她是夜间从桑菲尔德出走的。她可能会走的每一条路都去查看过了，但一无所获。这个郡到处都搜索过，但没有得到一丁点她的消息。可是要把她找到已成了刻不容缓的大事，各报都登了广告，连我自己也从一个名叫布里格斯先生的律师那儿收到了一封信，通报了我刚才说的这些细节，难道这不是一个希奇古怪的故事吗？”

“你就是告诉我这点吧，”我说，“既然你知道得那么多，你当然能够告诉我——罗切斯特先生的情况怎么样？他怎样了？他在哪儿？在干什么？他好吗？”

“我对罗切斯特先生茫无所知，这封信除了说起我所提及的诈骗和非法的意图，从没有谈到他。你还是该问一问那个家庭女教师的名字。——问问非她不可的那件事本身属于什么性质。”

“那么没有人去过桑菲尔德府吗？难道没有人见过罗切斯特先生？”

“我想没有。”

“可是他们给他写信过吗？”

“那当然。”

“他说什么啦？谁有他的信？”

“布里格斯先生说，他的请求不是由罗切斯特先生，而是由一位女士回复的，上面签着‘艾丽斯·费尔法克斯。’”

我觉得一时心灰意冷，最怕发生的事很可能已成事实。他完全可能已经离开英国，走投无路之中，轻率地冲到欧洲大陆上以前常去的地方。他在那些地方能为他巨大的痛苦找到什么麻醉剂呢？为他如火的热情找到发泄对象吗？我不敢回答这个问题。呵，我可怜的主人——曾经差点成为我的丈夫——我经常称他“我亲爱的爱德华！”



“他准是个坏人，”里弗斯先生说。

“你不了解他——别对他说三道四。”我激动地说。

“行呵，”他平心静气地答道，“其实我心里想的倒不是他。我要结束我的故事。既然你没有问起家庭女教师的名字，那我得自己说了——慢着——我这儿有——看到要紧的事儿，完完全全白纸黑字写下来，往往会更使人满意。”

他再次不慌不忙地拿出那个皮夹子，把它打开，仔细翻寻起来，从一个夹层抽出一张原先匆忙撕下的破破烂烂的纸条。我从纸条的质地和蓝一块、青一块、红一块的污渍认出来，这是被他抢去、原先盖在画上那张纸的边沿。他过它代表什么。不过那又怎么样？当然——”

我打住了。我不能相信自己会产生这样的想法，更说不上加以表达。但是这想法闯入了我脑海——它开始具体化——顷刻之间，变成了确确实实可能的事情。种种情况凑合起来了，各就各位，变成了一个有条有理的整体，一根链条。以前一直是一堆没有形状的链环，现在被一节节拉直了——每一个链都完好无缺，链与链之间的联结也很完整。圣·约翰还没有再开口，我凭直觉就已经知道是怎么回事了。不过我不能期望读者也有同样的直觉，因此我得重复一下他的说明。

“我母亲的名字叫爱，她有两个兄弟，一个是位牧师，他娶了盖茨黑德的简·里德小姐；另一个叫约翰·爱先生，生前在马德拉群岛的沙韦尔经商。布里格斯先生是爱先生的律师，去年八月写信通知我们舅父已经去世，说是已把他的财产留给那个当牧师的兄弟的孤女。由于我父亲同他之间一次永远无法宽恕的争吵，他忽视了我们。几周前，布里格斯又写信来，说是那位女继承人失踪了，问我是否知道她的情况。一个随意写在纸条上的名字使我把她找到了。其余的你都知道了。”他又要走，我将背顶住门。

99 嗽 罢庖徊讲换嵯惶裁蠢 选K婧竽懂梢粤12.椿竦盟 腥ǎ 愕牟撇 蹲试谟9.

希 祭肭谿拐乒茺乒胖靛捅匾 奈募 ! ?br>

这里偏偏又翻出一张新牌来了！读者呀，刹那之间从贫困升迁到富裕，总归是件好事——好是很好，但不是一下子就能理解，或者因此就能欣赏的。此外，生活中还有比这更惊心动魄，更让人销魂的东西。现在这件事很实在，很具体，丝毫没有理想的成份。它所联系着的一切实实在在，朴朴素素，它所体现的也完全一样。你一听到自己得到一笔财产，不会一跃而起，高呼万岁！而是开始考虑自己的责任，谋划正经事儿。称心满意之余倒生出某种重重的心事来了——我们克制自己，皱起眉头为幸福陷入了沉思。

此外，遗产、遗赠这类字眼伴随着死亡、葬礼一类词。我听到我的叔父，我唯一一位亲戚故去了。打从知道他存在的一天起，我便怀着有朝一日要见他的希望，而现在，是永远别想见他了。而且这笔钱只留给我。不是给我和一个高高兴兴的家庭，而是我孤孤单单的本人。当然这笔钱很有用，而且独立自主是件大好事——是的，我已经感觉到了——那种想法涌上了我心头。

“你终于抬起头来了，”里弗斯先生说，“我以为美杜莎已经瞧过你，而你正变成石头——也许这会儿你会问你的身价有多少？”

“我的身价多少？”

“呵，小得可怜！当然不值一提——我想他们说二万英镑——但那又怎么样？”

“二万英镑！”

又是一件惊人的事情——我原来估计四、五千。这个消息让我目瞪口呆了好一会儿。我从没有听到过圣·约翰先生的笑声，这时他却大笑起来。

“嗯，”他说，“就是你杀了人，而我告诉你你的罪行已经被发现了，也不会比你刚才更惊呆了。”

“这是一笔很大的款子——你不会弄错了吧？”

“一点也没有弄错。”

“也许你把数字看错了——可能是二千？”

“它不是用数字，而是用字母写的——二万。”

我再次感觉到颇象一个中等胃口的人，独自坐在可供一百个人吃的盛宴面前。这会儿里弗斯先生站起来，穿上了斗篷。

“要不是这么个风雪弥漫的夜晚，”他说，“我会叫汉娜来同你作伴。你看上去太可怜了，不能让你一个儿呆着。不过汉娜这位可怜的女人，不像我这样善于走积雪的路，腿又不够长。因此我只好让你独自哀伤了。晚安。”

他提起门栓时，一个念头蓦地闪过我脑际。

“再呆一分钟！”我叫道。

“怎么？”

“我不明白为什么布里格斯先生会为我事写信给你，或者他怎么知道你，或者设想你住在这么个偏僻的地方，会有能力帮助他找到我呢。”

“呵，我是个牧师，”他说，“而奇奇怪怪的事往往求牧师解决。”门栓又一次格格响了起来。

“不，那不能使我满意！”我嚷道，其实他那么匆忙而不作解释的回答，不但没有消除我的好奇心，反而更刺激了它。

“这件事非常奇怪，”我补充说，“我得再了解一些。”

“改天再谈吧。”

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“不行，今天晚上！——今天晚上！”他从门边转过身来时，我站到了他与门之间，弄得他有些尴尬。

“你不统统告诉我就别想走？”我说。

“现在我还是不讲为好。”

“你要讲！——一定得讲！”

“我情愿让黛安娜和玛丽告诉你。”

当然，他的反复拒绝把我的焦急之情推向了高潮：我必须得到满足，而且不容拖延。我把这告诉了他。

“不过我告诉过你，我是个铁石心肠的男人，”他说，“很难说服。”

“而我是个铁石心肠的女人——无法拖延。”

“那么，”他继续说，“我很冷漠，对任何热情都无动于衷。”

“而我很热，火要把冰融化。那边的火已经化掉了你斗篷上的所有的雪，由于同样原因，雪水滴到了我地板上，弄得像踩踏过的街道。里弗斯先生，正因为你希望我宽恕你毁我砂石厨房的弥天大罪和不端行为，那你就把我想知道的告诉我吧。”

“那么好吧，”他说，“我让步了，要不是向你的真诚屈服，就是向你滴水穿石的恒心投降。另外，有一天你还得知道，早知晚知都一样。你的名字是叫简·爱吗？”

“当然，这以前已全解决了。”

“你也许没有意识到我跟你同姓？我施洗礼时被命名为圣·约翰·爱·里弗斯？”

“确实没有！现在可记起来了，我曾在你不同时间借给我的书里，看到你名字开头的几个字母中有一个E，但我从来没有问过它代表什么。不过那又怎么样？当然——”

我打住了。我不能相信自己会产生这样的想法，更说不上加以表达。但是这想法闯入了我脑海——它开始具体化——顷刻之间，变成了确确实实可能的事情。种种情况凑合起来了，各就各位，变成了一个有条有理的整体，一根链条。以前一直是一堆没有形状的链环，现在被一节节拉直了——每一个链都完好无缺，链与链之间的联结也很完整。圣·约翰还没有再开口，我凭直觉就已经知道是怎么回事了。不过我不能期望读者也有同样的直觉，因此我得重复一下他的说明。

“我母亲的名字叫爱，她有两个兄弟，一个是位牧师，他娶了盖茨黑德的简·里德小姐；另一个叫约翰·爱先生，生前在马德拉群岛的沙韦尔经商。布里格斯先生是爱先生的律师，去

## 学英语，练听力，上听力课堂！

年八月写信通知我们舅父已经去世，说是已把他的财产留给那个当牧师的兄弟的孤女。由于我父亲同他之间一次永远无法宽恕的争吵，他忽视了我们。几周前，布里格斯又写信来，说是那位女继承人失踪了，问我是否知道她的情况。一个随意写在纸条上的名字使我把她找到了。其余的你都知道了。”他又要走，我将背顶住门。

“请务必让我也说一说，”我说，“让我喘口气，好好想一想。”我停住了——他站在我面前，手里拿着帽子，看上去够镇静的。我接着说：

“你的母亲是我父亲的姐妹？”

“是的。”

“那么是我的姑妈了？”

他点了点头。

“我的约翰叔父是你的约翰舅舅了？你，黛安娜和玛丽是他姐妹的孩子，而我是他兄弟的孩子了？”

“没有错。”

“你们三位是我的表兄表姐了。我们身上一半的血都流自同一个源泉？”

“我们是表兄妹，不错。”

我细细打量着他。我似乎发现了一个哥哥，一个值得我骄傲的人，一个我可以爱的人。还有两个姐姐，她们的品质在即使同我是陌路人的时候，也激起了我的真情和羡慕。那天我跪在湿淋淋的地上，透过沼泽居低矮的格子窗，带着既感兴趣而又绝望的痛苦复杂的心情，凝视着这两位姑娘，原来她们竟是我的近亲。而这位发现我险些死在他门槛边的年轻庄重的绅士，就是我的血肉之亲。对孤苦伶仃的可怜人儿来说，这是个何等重大的发现！其实这就是财富！——心灵的财富！——一个纯洁温暖的感情矿藏。这是一种幸福，光辉灿烂，生气勃勃，令人振奋！——不像沉重的金礼物：其本身值钱而受人欢迎，但它的份量又让人感到压抑。这会儿我突然兴奋得拍起手来——我的脉搏跳动着，我的血管震颤了。

“呵，我真高兴——我真高兴！”我叫道。

圣·约翰笑了笑。“我不是说过你拣了芝麻丢了西瓜吗？”他问。“我告诉你有一笔财产时，你非常严肃，而现在，为了一件不重要的事，你却那么兴奋。”

“你这话究竟什么意思呢？对你可能无足轻重，你已经有妹妹，不在乎一个表妹。但我没有亲人，而这会儿三个亲戚——如果你不愿算在内，那就是两个——降生到我的世界来，已完全长大成人。我再说一遍，我很高兴！”

我快步穿过房间，又停了下来，被接二连三涌进脑子，快得我无法接受、理解和梳理的想法，

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弄得差点喘不过气来——那就是我可以做什么，能够做什么，会做什么和应当做什么，以及要赶快做。我瞧着空空的墙，它仿佛是天空，密布着冉冉升起的星星——每一颗都照耀着我奔向一个目标或者一种欢乐。那些救了我性命的人，直到如今我还毫无表示地爱着，现在我可以报答了。身披枷锁的，我可以使他们获得自由；东分西散的，我可以让他们欢聚一堂。我的独立和富裕也可以变成是他们的，我们不是一共四个吗？二万英镑平分，每人可得五千——不但足够，而且还有余。公平对待，彼此的幸福也就有了保障。此刻财富已不再是我的一种负担，不再只是钱币的遗赠——而是生命、希望和欢乐的遗产了。

这些想法突然向我的灵魂袭来时，我的神态加何，我无从知道。但我很快觉察到里弗斯先生已在我背后放了一把椅子，和和气气地要我坐在上面。他还建议我要镇静。我对暗示我束手无策、神经错乱的做法嗤之以鼻，把他的手推开，又开始走动起来，

“明天就写信给黛安娜和玛丽，”我说，“叫她们马上回家来，黛安娜说要是有一千英镑，她们俩就会认为自己有钱了，那么有了五千英镑，就很有钱了。”

“告诉我哪儿可以给你弄杯水来，”圣约翰说，“你真的得努力一下，使你的感情平静下来。”

“胡说！这笔遗赠对你会有什么影响呢？会使你留在英国，诱使你娶奥利弗小姐，像一个普通人那样安顿下来吗？”

“你神经错乱，头脑胡涂了。我把这个消息告诉得太突然，让你兴奋得失去了自制。”

“里弗斯先生！你弄得我很有些不耐烦了。我十分清醒。而正是你误解了我的意思，或者不如说假装误解我的意思。”

“也许要是你解释得再详细一点，我就更明白了。”

“解释！有什么需要解释？你不会不知道，二万英镑，也就是提到的这笔钱，在一个外甥，三个外甥女和侄女之间平分，各得五千？我所要求的是，你应当写信给你的妹妹们，告诉她们所得的财产。”

“你的意思是你所得的财产。”

“我已经谈了我对这件事的想法，我不可能有别的想法。我不是一个极端自私、盲目不公和完全忘恩负义的人。此外，我决心有一个家，有亲戚。我喜欢沼泽居，想住在沼泽居，我喜欢黛安娜和玛丽，要与她们相依为命。五千英镑对我有用，也使我高兴；二万英镑会折磨我，压抑我。何况尽管在法律上属于我，在道义上不该属于我。那么我就把完全多余的东西留给你们。不要再反对，再讨论了，让我们彼此同意，立刻把它决定下来吧。”

“这种做法是出于一时的冲动，你得花几天考虑这样的事情，你的话才可算数。”

“呵，要是你怀疑我的诚意，那很容易，你看这样的处理公平不公平？”

“我确实看到了某种公平，但这违背习惯。此外，整笔财产的权利属于你，我舅舅通过自己



## 学英语，练听力，上听力课堂！

的努力挣得这份财产，他爱留给谁就可以留给谁。最后他留给了你。公道毕竟允许你留着，你可以心安理得地认为它完全属于你自己。”

“对我来说，”我说，“这既是一个十足的良心问题，也是个情感问题。我得迁就我的情感。我难得有机会这么做。即使你争辩、反对、惹恼我一年，我也不能放弃已经见了一眼的无上欢乐——那就是部份报答大恩大德，为我自己赢得终身的朋友。”

“你现在是这样想的，”圣·约翰回答，“因为你不知道拥有财富或者因此而享受财富是什么滋味；你还不能想象二万英镑会使你怎样变得举足轻重，会使你在社会中获得怎样高的地位，以及会为你开辟怎样广阔的前景。你不能——”

“而你，”我打断了他，“绝对无法想象我多么渴望兄弟姐妹之情。我从来没有家，从来没有兄弟或姐妹。我现在必须，也不一定要有，你不会不愿接受我承认我，是吗？”

“简，我会成为你的哥哥——我的妹妹会成为你的姐姐——而不必把牺牲自己的正当权利作为条件。”

“哥哥？不错，相距一千里路之遥！姐姐们？不错，为陌生人当牛做马！我，家财万贯——装满了我从未挣过，也不配有的金子。而你，身无分文！这就是赫赫有名的平等和友爱！多么紧密的团聚：何等亲切的依恋！”

“可是，简，你渴望的亲属关系和家庭幸福，可以不通过你所设想的方法来实现。你可以嫁人。”

“又胡说八道啦！嫁人！我不想嫁人，永远不嫁。”

“那说得有些过分了，这种鲁莽的断言证实了你鼓动起来的过度兴奋。”

“我说得并不过分，我知道自己的心情。结婚这种事儿我连想都不愿去想。没有人会出于爱而娶我，我又不愿意当作金钱买卖来考虑。我不要陌路人——与我没有共同语言，格格不入，截然不同。我需要亲情，那些我对他们怀有充分的同胞之情的人。请再说一遍你愿做我的哥哥。你一说这话，我就很满意很高兴，请你重复一下，要是你能够真诚地重复的话。”

“我想我能够。我明白我总是爱着我的妹妹们，我也明白我的爱是建立在什么基础上的——对她们价值的尊重，对她们才能的钦佩。你也有原则和思想。你的趣味和习惯同黛安娜与玛丽的相近。有你在我总感到很愉快。在与你交谈中，我早已发现了一种有益的安慰。我觉得可以自然而轻易地在我心里留出位置给你，把你看作我的第三个和最小一个妹妹。”

“谢谢你，这使我今晚很满意。现在你还是走吧，因为要是你再呆下去，你也许会用某种不信任的顾虑再惹我生气。”

“那么学校呢，爱小姐？现在我想得关掉了吧。”

“不，我会一直保留女教师的职位，直到你找接替的人。”

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他满意地笑了笑。我们握了手，他告辞了。

我不必再细述为了按我的意愿解决遗产问题所作的斗争和进行的争辩。我的任务很艰巨，但是因为我下定了决心——我的表兄妹们最后看到，我要公平地平分财产的想法已经真的不可改变地定了下来——还因为他们在内心一定感到这种想法是公平的，此外，也一定本来就意识到他们如处在我的地位，也一样会做我希望做的事——最后他们让步了，同意把事情交付公断。被选中的仲裁人是奥利弗先生和一位能干的律师。两位都与我的意见不谋而合。我实现了自己的主张，转让的文书也已草成：圣·约翰、黛安娜、玛丽和我，各自都拥有一份富裕的收入。

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