

CHAPTER XIII

MR. ROCHESTER, it seems, by the surgeon's orders, went to bed early that night; nor did he rise soon next morning. When he did come down, it was to attend to business: his agent and some of his tenants were arrived, and waiting to speak with him.

Adele and I had now to vacate the library: it would be in daily requisition as a reception-room for callers. A fire was lit in an apartment upstairs, and there I carried our books, and arranged it for the future schoolroom. I discerned in the course of the morning that Thornfield Hall was a changed place: no longer silent as a church, it echoed every hour or two to a knock at the door, or a clang of the bell: steps, too, often traversed the hall, and new voices spoke in different keys below; a rill from the outer world was flowing through it; it had a master: for my part, I liked it better.

Adele was not easy to teach that day; she could not apply: she kept running to the door and looking over the banisters to see if she could get a glimpse of Mr. Rochester; then she coined pretexts to go downstairs, in order, as I shrewdly suspected, to visit the library, where I knew she was not wanted; then, when I got a little angry, and made her sit still, she continued to talk incessantly of her 'ami, Monsieur Edouard Fairfax de Rochester,' as she dubbed him (I had not before heard his prenomens), and to conjecture what presents he had brought her: for it appears he had intimated the night before, that when his luggage came from Millcote, there would be found amongst it a little box in whose contents she had an interest.

'Et cela doit signifier,' said she, 'qu'il y aura la dedans un cadeau pour moi, et peut-etre pour vous aussi, mademoiselle.'

Monsieur a parle de vous: il m'a demande le nom de ma gouvernante, et si elle n'etait pas une petite personne, assez mince et un peu pale. J'ai dit qu'oui: car c'est vrai, n'est-ce pas, mademoiselle?'

I and my pupil dined as usual in Mrs. Fairfax's parlour; the afternoon was wild and snowy, and we passed it in the schoolroom. At dark I allowed Adele to put away books and work, and to run downstairs; for, from the comparative silence below, and from the cessation of appeals to the door-bell, I conjectured that Mr. Rochester was now at liberty. Left alone, I walked to the window; but nothing was to be seen thence: twilight and snowflakes together thickened the air, and hid the very shrubs on the lawn. I let down the curtain and went back to the fireside.

In the clear embers I was tracing a view, not unlike a picture I remembered to have seen of the castle of Heidelberg, on the Rhine, when Mrs. Fairfax came in, breaking up by her entrance the fiery mosaic I had been piecing together, and scattering too some heavy unwelcome thoughts that were beginning to throng on my solitude.

'Mr. Rochester would be glad if you and your pupil would take tea with him in the drawing-room this evening,' said she: 'he has been so much engaged all day that he could not ask to see you before.'

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'When is his tea-time?' I inquired.

'Oh, at six o'clock: he keeps early hours in the country. You had better change your frock now; I will go with you and fasten it. Here is a candle.'

'Is it necessary to change my frock?'

'Yes, you had better: I always dress for the evening when Mr. Rochester is here.'

This additional ceremony seemed somewhat stately; however, I repaired to my room, and, with Mrs. Fairfax's aid, replaced my black stuff dress by one of black silk; the best and the only additional one I had, except one of light grey, which, in my Lowood notions of the toilette, I thought too fine to be worn, except on first-rate occasions.

'You want a brooch,' said Mrs. Fairfax. I had a single little pearl ornament which Miss Temple gave me as a parting keepsake: I put it on, and then we went downstairs. Unused as I was to strangers, it was rather a trial to appear thus formally summoned in Mr. Rochester's presence. I let Mrs. Fairfax precede me into the dining-room, and kept in her shade as we crossed that apartment; and, passing the arch, whose curtain was now dropped, entered the elegant recess beyond.

Two wax candles stood lighted on the table, and two on the mantelpiece; basking in the light and heat of a superb fire, lay Pilot- Adele knelt near him. Half reclined on a couch appeared Mr. Rochester, his foot supported by the cushion; he was looking at Adele and the dog: the fire shone full on his face. I knew my traveller with his broad and jetty eyebrows; his square forehead, made squarer by the horizontal sweep of his black hair. I recognised his decisive nose, more remarkable for character than beauty; his full nostrils, denoting, I thought, cholera; his grim mouth, chin, and jaw- yes, all three were very grim, and no mistake. His shape, now divested of cloak, I perceived harmonised in squareness with his physiognomy: I suppose it was a good figure in the athletic sense of the term- broad chested and thin flanked, though neither tall nor graceful.

Mr. Rochester must have been aware of the entrance of Mrs. Fairfax and myself; but it appeared he was not in the mood to notice us, for he never lifted his head as we approached.

'Here is Miss Eyre, sir,' said Mrs. Fairfax, in her quiet way. He bowed, still not taking his eyes from the group of the dog and child.

'Let Miss Eyre be seated,' said he: and there was something in the forced stiff bow, in the impatient yet formal tone, which seemed further to express, 'What the deuce is it to me whether Miss Eyre be there or not? At this moment I am not disposed to accost her.'

I sat down quite disembarassed. A reception of finished politeness would probably have confused me: I could not have returned or repaid it by answering grace and elegance on my part; but harsh caprice laid me under no obligation; on the contrary, a decent quiescence, under the freak of manner, gave me the advantage. Besides, the eccentricity of the proceeding was piquant: I felt

interested to see how he would go on.

He went on as a statue would, that is, he neither spoke nor moved. Mrs. Fairfax seemed to think it necessary that some one should be amiable, and she began to talk. Kindly, as usual- and, as usual, rather trite- she condoled with him on the pressure of business he had had all day; on the annoyance it must have been to him with that painful sprain: then she commended his patience and perseverance in going through with it.

'Madam, I should like some tea,' was the sole rejoinder she got.

She hastened to ring the bell; and when the tray came, she proceeded to arrange the cups, spoons, etc., with assiduous celerity. I and Adele went to the table; but the master did not leave his couch.

'Will you hand Mr. Rochester's cup?' said Mrs. Fairfax to me;

'Adele might perhaps spill it.'

I did as requested. As he took the cup from my hand, Adele, thinking the moment propitious for making a request in my favour, cried out-

'N'est-ce pas, monsieur, qu'il y a un cadeau pour Mademoiselle Eyre dans votre petit coffre?'

'Who talks of cadeaux?' said he gruffly. 'Did you expect a present, Miss Eyre? Are you fond of presents?' and he searched my face with eyes that I saw were dark, irate, and piercing.

'I hardly know, sir; I have little experience of them: they are generally thought pleasant things.'

'Generally thought? But what do you think?'

'I should be obliged to take time, sir, before I could give you an answer worthy of your acceptance: a present has many faces to it, has it not? and one should consider all, before pronouncing an opinion as to its nature.'

'Miss Eyre, you are not so unsophisticated as Adele: she demands a "cadeau," clamorously, the moment she sees me: you beat about the bush.'

'Because I have less confidence in my deserts than Adele has: she can prefer the claim of old acquaintance, and the right too of custom; for she says you have always been in the habit of giving her playthings; but if I had to make out a case I should be puzzled, since I am a stranger, and have done nothing to entitle me to an acknowledgment.'

'Oh, don't fall back on over-modesty! I have examined Adele, and find you have taken great pains with her: she is not bright, she has no talents; yet in a short time she has made much improvement.'

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'Sir, you have now given me my "cadeau"; I am obliged to you: it is the meed teachers most covet-praise of their pupils' progress.'

'Humph!' said Mr. Rochester, and he took his tea in silence.

'Come to the fire,' said the master, when the tray was taken away, and Mrs. Fairfax had settled into a corner with her knitting; while Adele was leading me by the hand round the room, showing me the beautiful books and ornaments on the consoles and chiffonnières.

We obeyed, as in duty bound; Adele wanted to take a seat on my knee, but she was ordered to amuse herself with Pilot.

'You have been resident in my house three months?'

'Yes, sir.'

'And you came from-?'

'Ah! a charitable concern. How long were you there?'

'Eight years.'

'Eight years! you must be tenacious of life. I thought half the time in such a place would have done up any constitution! No wonder you have rather the look of another world. I marvelled where you had got that sort of face. When you came on me in Hay Lane last night, I thought unaccountably of fairy tales, and had half a mind to demand whether you had bewitched my horse: I am not sure yet. Who are your parents?'

'I have none.'

'Nor ever had, I suppose: do you remember them?'

'No.'

'I thought not. And so you were waiting for your people when you sat on that stile?'

'For whom, sir?'

'For the men in green: it was a proper moonlight evening for them. Did I break through one of your rings, that you spread that damned ice on the causeway?'

I shook my head. 'The men in green all forsook England a hundred years ago,' said I, speaking as seriously as he had done. 'And not even in Hay Lane, or the fields about it, could you find a trace of them. I don't think either summer or harvest, or winter moon, will ever shine on their revels more.'

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Mrs. Fairfax had dropped her knitting, and, with raised eyebrows, seemed wondering what sort of talk this was.

'Well,' resumed Mr. Rochester, 'if you disown parents, you must have some sort of kinsfolk: uncles and aunts?'

'No; none that I ever saw.'

'And your home?'

'I have none.'

'Where do your brothers and sisters live?'

'I have no brothers or sisters.'

'Who recommended you to come here?'

'I advertised, and Mrs. Fairfax answered my advertisement.'

'Yes,' said the good lady, who now knew what ground we were upon, 'and I am daily thankful for the choice Providence led me to make.

Miss Eyre has been an invaluable companion to me, and a kind and careful teacher to Adele.'

'Don't trouble yourself to give her a character,' returned Mr. Rochester: 'eulogiums will not bias me; I shall judge for myself.

She began by felling my horse.'

'Sir?' said Mrs. Fairfax.

'I have to thank her for this sprain.'

The widow looked bewildered.

'Miss Eyre, have you ever lived in a town?'

'No, sir.'

'Have you seen much society?'

'None but the pupils and teachers of Lowood, and now the inmates of Thornfield.'

'Have you read much?'

'Only such books as came in my way; and they have not been numerous or very learned.'

'You have lived the life of a nun: no doubt you are well drilled in religious forms;- Brocklehurst, who I understand directs Lowood, is a parson, is he not?'

'Yes, sir.'

'And you girls probably worshipped him, as a convent full of religieuses would worship their director.'

'Oh, no.'

'You are very cool! No! What! a novice not worship her priest! That sounds blasphemous.'

'I disliked Mr. Brocklehurst; and I was not alone in the feeling.'

He is a harsh man; at once pompous and meddling; he cut off our hair; and for economy's sake bought us bad needles and thread, with which we could hardly sew.'

'That was very false economy,' remarked Mrs. Fairfax, who now again caught the drift of the dialogue.

'And was that the head and front of his offending?' demanded Mr. Rochester.

'He starved us when he had the sole superintendence of the provision department, before the committee was appointed; and he bored us with long lectures once a week, and with evening readings from books of his own inditing, about sudden deaths and judgments, which made us afraid to go to bed.'

'What age were you when you went to Lowood?'

'About ten.'

'And you stayed there eight years: you are now, then, eighteen?' I assented.

'Arithmetic, you see, is useful; without its aid, I should hardly have been able to guess your age. It is a point difficult to fix where the features and countenance are so much at variance as in your case. And now what did you learn at Lowood? Can you play?'

'A little.'

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'Of course: that is the established answer. Go into the library- I mean, if you please.- (Excuse my tone of command; I am used to say, "Do this," and it is done: I cannot alter my customary habits for one new inmate.)- Go, then, into the library; take a candle with you; leave the door open; sit down to the piano, and play a tune.'

I departed, obeying his directions.

'Enough!' he called out in a few minutes. 'You play a little, I see; like any other English school-girl; perhaps rather better than some, but not well.'

I closed the piano and returned. Mr. Rochester continued- 'Adele showed me some sketches this morning, which she said were yours. I don't know whether they were entirely of your doing; probably a master aided you?'

'No, indeed!' I interjected.

'Ah! that pricks pride. Well, fetch me your portfolio, if you can vouch for its contents being original; but don't pass your word unless you are certain: I can recognise patchwork.'

'Then I will say nothing, and you shall judge for yourself, sir.' I brought the portfolio from the library.

'Approach the table,' said he; and I wheeled it to his couch. Adele and Mrs. Fairfax drew near to see the pictures.

'No crowding,' said Mr. Rochester: 'take the drawings from my hand as I finish with them; but don't push your faces up to mine.'

He deliberately scrutinised each sketch and painting. Three he laid aside; the others, when he had examined them, he swept from him.

'Take them off to the other table, Mrs. Fairfax,' said he, 'and look at them with Adele;- you' (glancing at me) 'resume your seat, and answer my questions. I perceive those pictures were done by one hand: was that hand yours?'

'Yes.'

'And when did you find time to do them? They have taken much time, and some thought.'

'I did them in the last two vacations I spent at Lowood, when I had no other occupation.'

'Where did you get your copies?'

'Out of my head.'

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'That head I see now on your shoulders?'

'Yes, sir.'

'Has it other furniture of the same kind within?'

'I should think it may have: I should hope- better.'

He spread the pictures before him, and again surveyed them alternately.

While he is so occupied, I will tell you, reader, what they are: and first, I must premise that they are nothing wonderful. The subjects had, indeed, risen vividly on my mind. As I saw them with the spiritual eye, before I attempted to embody them, they were striking; but my hand would not second my fancy, and in each case it had wrought out but a pale portrait of the thing I had conceived.

These pictures were in water-colours. The first represented clouds low and livid, rolling over a swollen sea: all the distance was in eclipse; so, too, was the foreground; or rather, the nearest billows, for there was no land. One gleam of light lifted into relief a half-submerged mast, on which sat a cormorant, dark and large, with wings flecked with foam; its beak held a gold bracelet set with gems, that I had touched with as brilliant tints as my palette could yield, and as glittering distinctness as my pencil could impart.

Sinking below the bird and mast, a drowned corpse glanced through the green water; a fair arm was the only limb clearly visible, whence the bracelet had been washed or torn.

The second picture contained for foreground only the dim peak of a hill, with grass and some leaves slanting as if by a breeze.

Beyond and above spread an expanse of sky, dark blue as at twilight: rising into the sky was a woman's shape to the bust, portrayed in tints as dusk and soft as I could combine. The dim forehead was crowned with a star; the lineaments below were seen as through the suffusion of vapour; the eyes shone dark and wild; the hair streamed shadowy, like a beamless cloud torn by storm or by electric travail.

On the neck lay a pale reflection like moonlight; the same faint lustre touched the train of thin clouds from which rose and bowed this vision of the Evening Star.

The third showed the pinnacle of an iceberg piercing a polar winter sky: a muster of northern lights reared their dim lances, close serried, along the horizon. Throwing these into distance, rose, in the foreground, a head,- a colossal head, inclined towards the iceberg, and resting against it. Two thin hands, joined under the forehead, and supporting it, drew up before the lower features a sable veil; a brow quite bloodless, white as bone, and an eye hollow and fixed, blank of meaning but for the glassiness of despair, alone were visible. Above the temples, amidst wreathed turban folds of black

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drapery, vague in its character and consistency as cloud, gleamed a ring of white flame, gemmed with sparkles of a more lurid tinge.

This pale crescent was 'the likeness of a kingly crown'; what it diademed was 'the shape which shape had none.'

'Were you happy when you painted these pictures?' asked Mr. Rochester presently.

'I was absorbed, sir: yes, and I was happy. To paint them, in short, was to enjoy one of the keenest pleasures I have ever known.'

'That is not saying much. Your pleasures, by your own account, have been few; but I daresay you did exist in a kind of artist's dreamland while you blent and arranged these strange tints. Did you sit at them long each day?'

'I had nothing else to do, because it was the vacation, and I sat at them from morning till noon, and from noon till night: the length of the midsummer days favoured my inclination to apply.'

'And you felt self-satisfied with the result of your ardent labours?'

'Far from it. I was tormented by the contrast between my idea and my handiwork: in each case I had imagined something which I was quite powerless to realise.'

'Not quite: you have secured the shadow of your thought; but no more, probably. You had not enough of the artist's skill and science to give it full being: yet the drawings are, for a school-girl, peculiar. As to the thoughts, they are elfish. These eyes in the Evening Star you must have seen in a dream. How could you make them look so clear, and yet not at all brilliant? for the planet above quells their rays. And what meaning is that in their solemn depth? And who taught you to paint wind? There is a high gale in that sky, and on this hill-top. Where did you see Latmos? For that is Latmos. There! put the drawings away!'

I had scarce tied the strings of the portfolio, when, looking at his watch, he said abruptly-

'It is nine o'clock: what are you about, Miss Eyre, to let Adele sit up so long? Take her to bed!'

Adele went to kiss him before quitting the room: he endured the caress, but scarcely seemed to relish it more than Pilot would have done, nor so much.

'I wish you all good-night, now,' said he, making a movement of the hand towards the door, in token that he was tired of our company, and wished to dismiss us. Mrs. Fairfax folded up her knitting: I took my portfolio: we curtsied to him, received a frigid bow in return, and so withdrew.

'You said Mr. Rochester was not strikingly peculiar, Mrs. Fairfax,' I observed, when I rejoined her in her room, after putting Adele to bed.

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'Well, is he?'

'I think so: he is very changeful and abrupt.'

'True: no doubt he may appear so to a stranger, but I am so accustomed to his manner, I never think of it; and then, if he has peculiarities of temper, allowance should be made.'

'Why?'

'Partly because it is his nature- and we can none of us help our nature; and partly because he has painful thoughts, no doubt, to harass him, and make his spirits unequal.'

'What about?'

'Family troubles, for one thing.'

'But he has no family.'

'Not now, but he has had- or, at least, relatives. He lost his elder brother a few years since.'

'His elder brother?'

'Yes. The present Mr. Rochester has not been very long in possession of the property; only about nine years.'

'Nine years is a tolerable time. Was he so very fond of his brother as to be still inconsolable for his loss?'

'Why, no- perhaps not. I believe there were some misunderstandings between them. Mr. Rowland Rochester was not quite just to Mr. Edward; and perhaps he prejudiced his father against him. The old gentleman was fond of money, and anxious to keep the family estate together. He did not like to diminish the property by division, and yet he was anxious that Mr. Edward should have wealth, too, to keep up the consequence of the name; and, soon after he was of age, some steps were taken that were not quite fair, and made a great deal of mischief. Old Mr. Rochester and Mr. Rowland combined to bring Mr. Edward into what he considered a painful position, for the sake of making his fortune: what the precise nature of that position was I never clearly knew, but his spirit could not brook what he had to suffer in it. He is not very forgiving: he broke with his family, and now for many years he has led an unsettled kind of life. I don't think he has ever been resident at Thornfield for a fortnight together, since the death of his brother without a will left him master of the estate; and, indeed, no wonder he shuns the old place.'

'Why should he shun it?'

'Perhaps he thinks it gloomy.'

The answer was evasive. I should have liked something clearer; but Mrs. Fairfax either could not, or would not, give me more explicit information of the origin and nature of Mr. Rochester's trials. She averred they were a mystery to herself, and that what she knew was chiefly from conjecture. It was evident, indeed, that she wished me to drop the subject, which I did accordingly.

第十三章

遵照医嘱，罗切斯特先生那晚上床很早，第二天早晨也没有马上起身。他就是下楼来也是处理事务的，他的代理人和一些佃户到了，等着要跟他说话。

阿黛勒和我现在得腾出书房，用作每日来访者的接待室。楼上的一个房间生起了火，我把书搬到那里，把它辟为未来的读书室。早上我觉察到桑菲尔德变了样，不再像教堂那么沉寂，每隔一两个小时便回响起敲门声或拉铃声，常有脚步声越过大厅，不同声调的陌生话音也在楼下响起，一条潺潺溪流从外面世界流进了府里，因为府上有了个主人。就我来说，倒更喜欢这样。

那天阿黛勒不大好教。她静不下心来，不往往门边跑，从栏杆上往下张望，看看能不能瞧一眼罗切斯特先生。随后编造出一些借口来，要到楼下去，我一下就猜到是为了到书房去走走，我知道那儿并不需要她。随后，见我有点儿生气了，并让她好好儿坐着，她就不断唠叨起她的“*A mi, Monsieur Edouard Fairfax de Rochester*”，她就这么称呼他（而我以前从未听到过他的教名），还想象着他给她带来了什么礼物。因为他似乎在前天晚上提起过，他的行李从米尔科特运到后，内中会有一个小匣子，匣子里的东西她很感兴趣。

“*Et cela doit signifier,*”她说“*qu'il y aura la dedans un cadeau pour moi, et peut etre pour vous aussi Mademoiselle. Monsienn a parle de vous: il m'a demande le nom de ma*”“坐到火炉边来，”这位主人说。这时托盘已经端走，费尔法克斯太太躲进角落忙着编织，阿黛勒拉住我的手在房间里打转，把她放在架子和柜子上的漂亮的书籍和饰品拿给我看，我们义不容辞地服从了。阿黛勒想坐在我膝头上，却被吩咐去逗派洛特玩了。午风雪交加，我们呆在读书室里。天黑时我允许阿黛勒放下书和作业，奔到楼下去，因为下面已比较安静，门铃声也已消停，想必罗切斯特先生此刻有空了。房间里只剩下了我一个人，我便走到窗子跟前，但那儿什么也看不见。暮色和雪片使空气混混沌沌，连草坪上的灌木也看不清楚了。我放下窗帘，回到了火炉边。

在明亮的余烬中，我仿佛看到了一种景象，颇似我记得曾见过的莱茵河上海德堡城堡的风景画。这时费尔法克斯太太闯了进来，打碎了我还在拼凑的火红镶嵌画，也驱散了我孤寂中开始凝聚起来的沉闷而不受欢迎的念头。

“罗切斯特先生请你和你的学生，今晚一起同他在休息室里用茶点，”她说，“他忙了一天。

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没能早点见你。”

“他什么时候用茶点？”我问。

“呃，六点钟。在乡下他总是早起早睡，现在你最好把外衣换掉，我陪你去，帮你扣上扣子。拿着这支蜡烛。”

“有必要换外衣吗？”

“是的，最好还是换一下。罗切斯特先生在这里的时候，我总是穿上夜礼服的。”

这额外的礼节似乎有些庄重，不过我还是上自己的房间去了。在费尔法克斯太太的帮助下，把黑色呢衣换成了一件黑丝绸衣服，这是除了一套淡灰色衣服外，我最好的，也是唯一一套额外的衣装。以我的罗沃德服饰观念而言，我想除了头等重要的场合，这套服装是过于讲究而不宜穿的。

“你需要一枚饰针，”费尔法克斯太太说。我只有一件珍珠小饰品，是坦普尔小姐作为临别礼物送给我的，我把它戴上了。随后我们下了楼梯。我由于怕生，觉得这么一本正经被罗切斯特先生召见，实在是活受罪。去餐室时，我让费尔法克斯太太走在我前面，自己躲在她暗影里，穿过房间，路过此刻放下了窗帘的拱门，进了另一头高雅精致的内室。

两支蜡烛点在桌上，两支点在壁炉台上。派洛特躺着，沐浴在一堆旺火的光和热之中，阿黛勒跪在它旁边。罗切斯特先生半倚在睡榻上，脚下垫着坐垫。他正端详着阿黛勒和狗，炉火映出了他的脸。我知道我见过的这位赶路人有着一片浓密的宽眉，方正的额头，上面横流着的一片黑发，使额头显得更加方正。我认得他那坚毅的鼻子，它与其说是因为英俊，倒还不如说显出了性格而引人注目。他那丰满的鼻孔，我想，表明他容易发怒。他那严厉的嘴巴、下额和颅骨，是的，三者都很严厉，一点都不错。我发现，他此刻脱去斗篷以后的身材，同他容貌的方正很相配。我想从运动员的角度看，他胸宽腰细，身材很好，尽管既不高大，也不优美。

罗切斯特先生准已知道，费尔法克斯太太和我进了门，但他似乎没有兴致来注意我们，我们走近时，他连头都没有抬。

“爱小姐来了，先生，”费尔法克斯太太斯斯文文地说。他点了下头，目光依旧没有离开狗和孩子。

“让爱小姐坐下吧，”他说。他僵硬勉强的点头样子，不耐烦而又一本正经的说话语气，另有一番意思，似乎进一步表示，“活’见鬼，爱小姐在不在同我有什么关系？现在我不想同她打招呼。”

我坐了下来，一点也不窘。礼仪十足地接待我，倒反会使我手足无措，因为在我来说，无法报之以温良恭谦。而粗鲁任性可以使我不要拘礼，相反，行为古怪又合乎礼仪的沉默，却给我带来了方便。此外，这反常接待议程也是够有意思的，我倒有兴趣看看他究竟如何继续下去。

他继续像一尊塑像般呆着，既不说话，也不动弹。费尔法克斯太太好像认为总需要有人随和些，于是便先开始说起话来，照例和和气气，也照例很陈腐。对他整天紧张处理事务而表示同情；对扭伤的痛苦所带来的烦恼表示慰问；随后赞扬了他承受这一切的耐心与毅力。

“太太，我想喝茶，”这是她所得到的唯一的回答，她赶紧去打铃，托盘端上来时，又去张罗杯子，茶匙等，显得巴结而麻利。我和阿黛勒走近桌子，而这位主人并没离开他的睡榻。

“请你把罗切斯特先生的杯子端过去，”费尔法克斯太太对我说，“阿黛勒也许会泼洒出去的。”

我按她的要求做了。他从我手里接过杯子时，阿黛勒也许认为乘机可以为我提出个请求来，她叫道：

“N'est ce pas, Monsieur, qu'il y a un cadeau pour Mademoiselle Eyre, dans votre petit coffre?”

“谁说起过 cadeaux?”他生硬地说。“你盼望一份礼物吗，爱小姐？你喜欢礼物吗？”他用一双在我看来阴沉恼怒而富有穿透力的眼睛，搜索着我的面容。

“我说不上来，先生，我对这些东西没有什么经验，一般认为是讨人喜欢的。”

“一般认为：可是你认为呢？”

“我得需要一点时间，先生，才能作出值得你接受的答案。一件礼物可以从多方面去看它，是不是？而人们需要全面考虑，才能发表关于礼物性质的意见。”

“爱小姐，你不像阿黛勒那么单纯，她一见到我就嚷着要‘cadeau’，而你却转弯抹角。”

“因为我对自已是否配得礼物，不像阿黛勒那么有信心，她可凭老关系老习惯提出要求，因为她说你一贯送她玩具，但如果要我发表看法的话，我就不知道该怎么说了，因为我是个陌生人，没有做过什么值得感谢的事情。”

“啊，别以过份谦虚来搪塞！我已经检查过阿黛勒的功课，发现你为她花了很大力气，她并不聪明，也没有什么天份，但在短期内取得了很大进步。”

“先生，你已经给了我‘cadeau’，我很感谢你，赞扬学生的进步，是教师们最向往的酬劳。”

“哼！”罗切斯特先生哼了一声，默默地喝起茶来。

“坐到火炉边来，”这位主人说。这时托盘已经端走，费尔法克斯太太躲进角落忙着编织，阿黛勒拉住我的手在房间里打转，把她放在架子和柜子上的漂亮的书籍和饰品拿给我看，我们义不容辞地服从了。阿黛勒想坐在我膝头上，却被吩咐去逗派洛特玩了。

“你在我这里住了三个月了吧？”

学英语，练听力，上听力课堂！

“是的，先生。”

“你来自——”

“××郡的罗沃德学校。”

“噢！一个慈善机构。你在那里呆了几年？”

“八年。”

“八年！你的生命力一定是够顽强的。我认为在那种地方就是呆上一半天，也会把身体搞跨！怪不得你那种样子像是从另外一个世界来的。我很奇怪，你从哪儿得来了那种面孔，昨晚我在海路上碰到你的时候，不由得想到了童话故事，而且真有点想问问你，是不是你迷住了我的马。不过我现在仍不敢肯定。你父母是谁？”

“我没有父母。”

“从来没有过，我猜想，你还记得他们吗？”

“不记得。”

“我想也记不得了。所以你坐在台阶上等你自己的人来？”

“等谁，先生？”

“等绿衣仙人呗，晚上月光皎洁，正是他们出没的好时光。是不是我冲破了你们的圈子，你就在路面上撒下了那该死的冰？”

我摇了摇头。“绿衣仙人几百年前就离开了英格兰，”我也像他一样一本正经地说，“就是在海路上或者附近的田野，你也见不到他们的一丝踪迹。我想夏天、秋夜或者冬季的月亮再也不会照耀他们的狂欢了。”

费尔法克斯太太放下手中的织物，竖起眉毛，似乎对这类谈话感到惊异。

“好吧，罗切斯特先生继续说，“要是你没有父母，总应该有些亲人。譬如叔伯姑嫂等？”

“没有，就我所知，一个也没有。”

“那么你家在哪儿？”

“我没有家。”

“你兄弟姐妹住在哪儿？”

学英语，练听力，上听力课堂！

“我没有兄弟姐妹。”

“谁推荐你到这里来的呢？”

“我自己登广告，费尔法克斯太太答复了我。”

“是的，”这位好心的太太说，此刻她才弄明白我们谈话的立足点。“我每天感谢主引导我作出了这个选择。爱小姐对我是个不可多得的伙伴，对阿黛勒是位和气细心的教师。”

“别忙着给她作鉴定了，”罗切斯特先生回答说，“歌功颂德并不能使我偏听偏信，我会自己作出判断。她是以把我的马弄倒在地开始给我产生印象的。”

“先生？”费尔法克斯太太说。

“我得感谢她使我扭伤了脚。”

这位寡妇一时莫名其妙。

“爱小姐，你在城里住过吗？”

“没有，先生。”

“见过很多社交场合吗？”

“除了罗沃德的学生和教师，什么也没有。如今还有桑菲尔德府里的人。”

“你读过很多书吗？”

“碰到什么就读什么，数量不多，也不高深。”

“你过的是修女的生活，毫无疑问，在宗教礼仪方面你是训练有素的。布罗克赫斯特，我知道是他管辖着罗沃德，他是位牧师，是吗？”

“是的，先生，”

“你们姑娘们也许都很崇拜他，就像住满修女的修道院，崇拜她们的院长一样。”

“啊，没有。”

“你倒很冷静！不！一位见习修女不崇拜她的牧师？那听起来有些亵渎神灵。”

“我不喜欢布罗克赫斯特先生，有这种感觉的不只我一个。他是个很严酷的人，既自负而又爱管闲事，他剪去了我们的头发，而为节省，给我们买了很差的针线，大家差点都没法儿缝。”

学英语，练听力，上听力课堂！

“那是种很虚假的节省，”费尔法克斯太太议论道，此刻她又听到了我们的一阵交谈。

“而这就是他最大的罪状？”罗切斯特先生问。

“他还让我们挨饿，那时他单独掌管供应部，而委员会还没有成立。他弄得我们很厌烦，一周一次作长篇大论的讲道，每晚要我们读他自己编的书，写的是关于暴死呀，报应呀，吓得我们都不敢去睡觉。”

“你去罗沃德的时候几岁？”

“十岁左右。”

“你在那里待了八年，那你现在是十八岁罗？”

我表示同意。

“你看，数学还是有用的。没有它的帮助，我很难猜出你的年纪。像你这样五官与表情相差那么大，要确定你的年纪可不容易。好吧，你在罗沃德学了些什么？会弹钢琴吗？”

“会一点。”

“当然，都会这么回答的，到书房去——我的意思是请你到书房去——（请原谅我命令的口气，我已说惯了‘你作这事’，于是他就去作了。我无法为一个新来府上的人改变我的老习惯）——那么，到书房去，带着你的蜡烛，让门开着，坐在钢琴面前，弹一个曲子。”

我听从他的吩咐走开了。

“行啦！”几分钟后他叫道，“你会一点儿，我知道了，像随便哪一个英国女学生一样，也许比有些人强些，但并不好。”

我关了钢琴，走了回来。罗切斯特先生继续说：

“今天早上阿黛勒把一些速写给我看了，她说是你画的，我不知道是不是完全由你一个人画的，也许某个画师帮助了你？”

“没有，说真的！”我冲口叫了起来。

“噢，那伤了你的自尊。好吧，把你的画夹拿来，要是你能担保里面的画是自己创作的。不过你没有把握就别吭声，我认得出拼拼凑凑的东西。”

“那我什么也不说，你尽可以自己去判断，先生。”

我从书房取来了画夹。

“把桌子移过来，”他说，我把桌子推向他的睡榻，阿黛勒和费尔法克斯太太也都凑近来看画。

“别挤上来，”罗切斯特先生说，“等我看好了，可以从我手里把画拿走，但不要把脸都凑上来。”

他审慎地细看了每幅速写和画作。把其中三幅放在一旁，其余的看完以后便推开了。“把它们放到别的桌子上去，费尔法克斯太太，”他说，同阿黛勒一起看看这些画。你呢，”（目光扫视了我一下）“仍旧坐在你位置上，回答我的问题。我看出来这些画出自一人之手，那是你的手吗？”

“是的。”

“你什么时候抽时间来画的？这些画很费时间，也得动些脑筋。”

“我是在罗沃德度过的最后两个假期时画的，那时我没有别的事情。”

“你什么地方弄来的摹本？”

“从我脑袋里。”

“就是现在我看到的你肩膀上的脑袋吗？”

“是的，先生。”

“那里面没有类似的东西吗？”

“我想也许有。我希望——更好。”

他把这些画摊在他面前，再次一张张细看着。

趁他看画的时候，读者，我要告诉你，那是些什么画。首先我得事先声明，它们并没有什么了不起。画的题材倒确实活脱脱地浮现在我脑海里。我还没有想用画来表现时，它们就已在心灵的目光下显得栩栩如生。然而在落笔时，我的手却不听我想象的使唤，每次都只能给想象中的东西勾勒出一个苍白无力的图象来。

这些都是水彩画。第一张画的是，低垂的铅色云块，在波涛汹涌的海面上翻滚，远处的一切黯然无光，画面的前景也是如此，或者不如说，靠得最近的波涛是这样，因为画中没有陆地。一束微光把半沉的桅杆映照得轮廓分明，桅杆上栖息着一只又黑又大的鸬鹚，翅膀上沾着斑驳的泡沫，嘴里衔着一只镶嵌了宝石的金手镯，我给手镯抹上了调色板所能调出的最明亮的色泽，以及我的铅笔所能勾划出的闪闪金光。在鸟和桅杆下面的碧波里，隐约可见一具沉溺的尸体，它身上唯一看得清清楚楚的肢体是一只美丽的胳膊，那手镯就是从这里被水冲走或是给鸟儿啄下来的。

第二张画的前景只有一座朦胧的山峰，青草和树叶似乎被微风吹歪了。在远处和上方铺开了一片薄暮时分深蓝色的浩瀚天空。一个女人的半身形体高耸天际，色调被我尽力点染得柔和与暗淡。模糊的额头上点缀着一颗星星，下面的脸部仿佛透现在雾气蒸腾之中。双目乌黑狂野、炯炯有神。头发如阴影一般飘洒，仿佛是被风爆和闪电撕下的暗淡无光的云块。脖子上有一抹宛若月色的淡淡反光，一片片薄云也有着同样浅色的光泽，云端里升起了低着头的金星幻象。

第三幅画的是一座冰山的尖顶，刺破了北极冬季的天空，一束束北极光举起了它们毫无光泽、密布在地平线上的长矛。在画的前景上，一个头颅赫然入目，冰山退隐到了远处，一个巨大无比的头，侧向冰山，枕在上面。头部底下伸出一双手，支撑着它，拉起了一块黑色的面纱。罩住下半部面孔。额头毫无血色，苍白如骨。深陷的眼睛凝视着，除了露出绝望的木然神色，别无其他表情。在两鬓之上，黑色缠头布的皱褶中，射出了一圈如云雾般变幻莫测的白炽火焰，镶嵌着红艳艳的火星，这苍白的新月是“王冠的写真”，为“无形之形”加冕。

“你创作这些画时愉快吗？”罗切斯特先生立刻问。

“我全神贯注，先生。是的，我很愉快。总之，画这些画无异于享受我从来没有过的最大乐趣。”

“那并不说明什么问题，据你自己所说，你的乐趣本来就不多。但我猜想，你在调拌并着上这些奇怪的颜色时，肯定生活在一种艺术家的梦境之中，你每天费很长时间坐着作这些画吗？”

“在假期里我没有别的事情可做，我坐着从早上画到中午，从中午画到晚上。仲夏白昼很长，有利于我专心致志。”

“你对自己饱含热情的劳动成果表示满意吗？”

“很不满意。我为自己的思想和手艺之间存在的差距而感到烦恼。每次我都想象了一些东西，但却无力加以表达。”

“不完全如此。你已经捕捉到了你思想的影子，但也许仅此而已。你缺乏足够的艺术技巧和专门知识，淋漓尽致地把它表达出来。不过对一个女学生来说，这些画已经非同一般了。至于那些思想，倒是有些妖气。金星中的眼睛你一定是在梦中看见的，你怎么能够使它既那么明亮，而又不耀眼呢？因为眼睛上端的行星淹没了它们的光。而那庄严的眼窝又包含着什么意思？是谁教你画风的，天空中和山顶上都刮着大风。你在什么地方见到拉特莫斯山的？——因为那确实是拉特莫斯山。嗨，把这些画拿走！”

我还没有把画夹上的绳子扎好，他就看了看表，唐突地说：

“已经九点了，爱小姐，你在磨蹭些啥，让阿黛勒这么老呆着？带她去睡觉吧。”

阿黛勒走出房间之前过去吻了吻他，他忍受了这种亲热，但似乎并没比派洛特更欣赏它，甚至还不如派洛特。

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“现在，我祝你们大家晚安，”他说，朝门方向做了个手势，表示他对我们的陪伴已经感到厌烦，希望打发我们走。费尔法克斯太太收起了织物，我拿了画夹，都向他行了屈膝礼。他生硬地点了点头，算是回答，这样我们就退了出去。

“你说过罗切斯特先生并不特别古怪，费尔法克斯太太。”安顿好阿黛勒上床后，我再次到了费尔法克斯太太的房间里时说。

“嗯，他是这样？”

“我想是这样，他变幻无常，粗暴无礼。”

“不错。毫无疑问，在一个陌生人看来，她似乎就是这样。但我已非常习惯于他的言谈举止，因此从来不去想它。更何况要是他真的脾气古怪的话，那也是应当宽容的。”

“为什么？”

“一半是因为他生性如此，——而我们都对自己的天性无能为力；一半是因为他肯定有痛苦的念头在折磨着他，使他的心里不平衡。”

“什么事情？”

“一方面是家庭纠葛。”

“可是他压根儿没有家庭。”

“不是说现在，但曾有过——至少是亲戚。几年前他失去了哥哥。”

“他的哥哥？”

“是的，现在这位罗切斯特先生拥有这份财产的时间并不长，只有九年左右。”

“九年时间也不算短了，他那么爱他的哥哥，直到现在还为他的去世而悲伤不已吗？”

“唉，不——也许不是。我想他们之间有些隔阂。罗兰特·罗切斯特先生对爱德华先生不很公平，也许就是他弄得他父亲对爱德华先生怀有偏见。这位老先生爱钱，急于使家产合在一起，不希望因为分割而缩小。同时又很想让爱德华先生有自己的一份财产，以保持这名字的荣耀。他成年后不久，他们采取了一些不十分合理的办法，造成了很大麻烦。为了使爱德华先生获得那份财产，老罗切斯特先生和罗兰特先生一起，使爱德华先生陷入了他自认为痛苦的境地，这种境遇的确切性质，我从来都不十分清楚，但在精神上他无法忍受不得不忍受的一切。他不愿忍让，便与家庭决裂。多年来，他一直过着一种漂泊不定的生活。我想打从他哥哥没有留下遗嘱就去世，他自己成了房产的主人后，他从来没有在桑菲尔德一连住上过两周。说实在，也难怪他要躲避这个老地方。”

学英语，练听力，上听力课堂！

“他干嘛要躲避呢？”

“也许他认为这地方太沉闷。”

她的回答闪烁其辞。我本想了解得更透彻些，但费尔法克斯太太兴许不能够，抑或不愿意，向我进一步提供关于罗切斯特先生痛苦的始末和性质。她一口咬定，对她本人来说也是个谜，她所知道的多半是她自己的猜测，说真的，她显然希望我搁下这个话题，于是我也就不再多问了。