



# Learn English Through Stories

A Series

A41

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## **Contents**

- 1. Jane Eyre**  
**Chapters 1, 2 and 3**

# Jane Eyre

## Chapter 1: My Story Begins

In 1825, I was ten years old. My father and mother were dead. I lived with my aunt and uncle, Mr and Mrs Reed. Their house was called Gateshead Hall. The house was in Yorkshire, in the north of England. My Aunt and Uncle Reed had two children – a boy, John, and a girl, Eliza.

I liked my Uncle Reed and he liked me. But in 1825, my uncle died. After that, I was very unhappy. My Aunt Reed did not like me. And John and Eliza were unkind to me.

It was a cold, rainy day in December. All of us were in the house. I wanted to be alone. I wanted to read. I opened a book. Then I heard my Cousin John's voice.

'Jane! Jane Eyre! Where are you?' John shouted. He came into the room and he saw me.

'Why are you reading my book?' he asked. 'Give it to me!'

John took the book. He hit my head with it. I screamed. John hit me again. I pulled his hair and I kicked him.

'Help! Help, Mamma!' John shouted. 'Jane Eyre is hurting me!' Aunt Reed ran into the room. She pulled me away from John.

'John hit me with a book,' I said. 'I hate him. And I hate you too!'

'You are a bad girl, Jane,' my aunt said. 'Why do you hate me?'

'You don't like me,' I replied. 'John and Eliza are unkind to me. I want to leave Gateshead Hall.'

'You want to leave!' Aunt Reed said. 'Where will you go? Your parents are dead. You cannot live alone.'

Aunt Reed thought for a moment.

'My friend, Mr Brocklehurst, is the owner of a school,' she said. 'I will send you to Mr Brocklehurst's school.'

A few days later, Mr Brocklehurst came to Gateshead Hall. He was a very tall man. His eyes were dark and his face was cruel.

'Jane Eyre,' he said to me. 'God does not like bad children. God punishes bad children, Jane Eyre.'

'God will punish John Reed,' I replied. 'John Reed hits me and he shouts at me.'

'That is not true. You are a liar, Jane Eyre,' Mr Brocklehurst said. 'You must not tell lies. And you must not live here with your cousins. You will come to Lowood School. You will become a good girl.'

'I want to come to your school, sir,' I said. 'I want to leave this house.'

'Bad girls are punished at my school, Jane Eyre,' Mr Brocklehurst said. 'The girls work very hard at Lowood.'

'I will work hard. I will be a good pupil, Mr Brocklehurst,' I said.

Two weeks later, I left Gateshead Hall. I went to Lowood School.

## Chapter 2: Lowood School

It was the month of January. I arrived at Lowood School at night. A servant took me up some stairs and into a big bedroom. There were many beds in the room. The girls in the beds were asleep. The servant took me to an empty bed. I put on my nightclothes and I got into bed. Soon, I was asleep too.

I woke up very early. A loud bell was ringing. The bedroom was dark and cold. I watched the other girls. They washed in cold water and they dressed quickly.

There was a plain brown dress next to my bed. And there was a pair of ugly, heavy shoes. I washed quickly. Then I put on my new clothes.

I was very hungry. I followed the other girls down the stairs. We sat down at long tables in a large dining-room. Our food was terrible.

‘The food is bad again,’ one of the girls said.

‘Stand up!’ a teacher shouted. ‘Don’t talk!’

We stood up. We did not speak. We walked into a big schoolroom and we sat down.

There were about eighty girls in the schoolroom. And there were four classes. The oldest girls were in the fourth class. I was in the first class.

Four teachers came into the room and we began our lessons. The lessons were not interesting. First, we read some pages in a book. Then our teacher asked us questions about those pages.

After four hours, we went outside. It was very cold. Very soon, a bell rang. Lessons started again.

Three weeks passed. One afternoon, the head teacher came into the schoolroom. The head teacher’s name was Miss Temple. Mr Brocklehurst was with her. We all stood up. I stood behind an older girl. I did not want Mr Brocklehurst to see me.

Mr Brocklehurst walked slowly round the room. Everybody was very quiet. And then I dropped my book!

Mr Brocklehurst stopped walking. He looked at me.

‘Ah! The new girl,’ he said. ‘Come here, Jane Eyre!’ Then he pointed at two of the older girls. ‘You two girls — put Jane Eyre on that high chair!’ he said.

'Look at Jane Eyre, everybody!' Mr Brocklehurst said. 'This child is bad. She is a liar. She will be punished! Miss Temple! Teachers! Girls! Do not talk to this child.'

Then he spoke to me again.

'Jane Eyre, you must stand on that chair for two hours,' he said. 'You are a bad girl!'

That evening, I cried and cried. But Miss Temple was kind to me.

'You are a good pupil, Jane,' she said. 'And you are not a bad girl. I am your friend, Jane.'

'Thank you, Miss Temple,' I said.

Lowood School was in an unhealthy place. The buildings were wet and cold. Mr Brocklehurst owned the school. He was a rich man. But he did not buy warm clothes for us. And he did not buy good food for us. Everybody hated him.

In the spring, many of the girls became sick. Some of them left the school. They never came back. Many of the girls died.

That spring was a terrible time. We had no lessons. Miss Temple and the other teachers took care of the sick pupils. Mr Brocklehurst had to buy better food for us. And he had to buy warm clothes for us. Mr Brocklehurst never came to the school.

The next year, Lowood School moved to a better place. It was a healthier place. There were new schoolrooms, new bedrooms and a new dining-room. The new buildings were bright and clean. The teachers were happy. After that, I was happy at Lowood School too.

I was a pupil at Lowood School for six years. Then I became a teacher. I was a teacher at the school for two years. But I never returned to Gateshead Hall. And the Reeds never wrote to me.

## Chapter 3: Thornfield Hall

In 1833, I was eighteen years old. In the summer, Miss Temple left Lowood School. She got married. I wanted to leave Lowood too. I wanted a new life.

'I will be a governess,' I thought.

I put an advertisement in a newspaper.

October, 1833. Lowood.

A young woman wants to teach one or two children in their home. She teaches English, Arithmetic, Geography, Religion, French, Drawing and Music.

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I had a reply to my advertisement. The reply was from Mrs Fairfax of Thornfield Hall, near Millcote. Millcote was about seventy miles from Lowood School. Mrs Fairfax wanted a governess for a little girl.

I wrote to Mrs Fairfax immediately. I was going to be a governess at Thornfield Hall!

I travelled to Millcote in a coach. At Millcote, a servant met me. He took me to Thornfield Hall. At Thornfield Hall, another servant opened the door. She was smiling. She took me into a small, warm room. A lady was in the room. She was sitting by the fire.

'Are you Mrs Fairfax?' I asked her.

'Yes, my dear,' she said. 'And you are Miss Eyre. Are you cold? Sit by the fire, Miss Eyre, A servant will bring you some food.'

'Mrs Fairfax is very kind,' I said to myself. 'I will be happy here.'

'Will I see Miss Fairfax tonight?' I asked.

Mrs Fairfax looked at me. She smiled.

'Miss Fairfax? No, no,' she said. 'Your pupil's name is not Miss Fairfax. Your pupil is Adele Varens. Adele's mother was a Frenchwoman. Adele is Mr Rochester's ward. He takes care of her.'

'Mr Rochester? Who is Mr Rochester?' I asked.

‘Mr Edward Rochester is the owner of Thornfield Hall,’ Mrs Fairfax said. ‘I am his housekeeper. I take care of Thornfield Hall. Mr Rochester is not here now. He does not like this house. He is often away from home.’

I was very tired. Mrs Fairfax took me up the wide stairs. She took me to my room. I went to bed immediately. And I slept well.

The next morning, I woke early. The sun was shining. I put on a plain black dress. I opened my bedroom door. I walked along a corridor and down the wide stairs. I walked out into the sunny garden.

I turned and I looked up at my new home. Thornfield Hall was a beautiful house with many large windows. The garden was beautiful too.

After a few minutes, Mrs Fairfax came into the garden. She spoke to me.

‘Good morning, Miss Eyre,’ she said. ‘You have woken early. Miss Adele is here. After breakfast, you must take her to the schoolroom. She must begin her lessons.’

A pretty little girl walked towards me. She was about eight years old. She spoke to me in French and I replied in French.

After breakfast, I took Adele to the schoolroom. We worked all morning. Adele enjoyed her lessons and I was happy.

In the afternoon, Mrs Fairfax took me into all the rooms of Thornfield Hall. We looked at the paintings and at the beautiful furniture. We walked along the corridors.

‘Come up onto the roof, Miss Eyre,’ Mrs Fairfax said. ‘You will see the beautiful countryside around Thornfield Hall.’

We walked up many stairs. At last, we were at the top of the house. We walked along the top corridor. Mrs Fairfax opened a small door and we walked onto the roof.

‘Look, Miss Eyre,’ Mrs Fairfax said. ‘You can see for many miles.’

We stood on the roof for a few minutes. Then we went back into the house. We walked carefully towards the stairs. The top corridor was narrow and dark.

Suddenly, I heard a strange laugh.

‘Who is that, Mrs Fairfax?’ I asked.

Mrs Fairfax did not reply. She knocked on a door.



'Grace!' she said. The door opened. Behind the door was a small room. A servant was standing at the door.

'Be quiet, Grace, please,' Mrs Fairfax said.

The woman looked at Mrs Fairfax. Then she closed the door.

'That was Grace Poole,' Mrs Fairfax said. 'She works up here. Sometimes she laughs and talks with the other servants. Don't worry about Grace. Please come downstairs now, Miss Eyre.'