

## Before you read



### 1 Listening

Listen to the first part of Part One. You will hear about a little girl named Jane Eyre and her experiences with her aunt and three cousins. For questions 1-12, complete the sentences.

- 1 Jane came to live at Gateshead after .....
- 2 Mr Reed, Jane's uncle, ..... after Jane arrived at Gateshead.
- 3 Jane felt rebellious, angry and ..... at Gateshead.
- 4 Even though the maid ..... Jane, she did not think she was a good girl.
- 5 Mrs Reed did not think Jane was polite because Jane .....
- 6 Jane ..... in the space between the window and the red curtain.
- 7 John insulted Jane and occasionally he ..... her.
- 8 Jane was ..... as punishment for throwing a book at John.
- 9 Jane thought she saw ..... on the bed.
- 10 Jane's only other relative was a ..... who lived in Madeira.
- 11 Mr Brocklehurst was a tall, severe gentlemen wearing ..... clothes.
- 12 Mr Brocklehurst said that they would teach Jane to ..... at Lowood School.

### 2 Prediction

In this chapter you will read about a school for girls called Lowood. This was not just a product of Charlotte Brontë's imagination. She based her descriptions on her own experiences and those of her sisters. She even told a friend that her description – as bad as it might seem – was not nearly as bad as the reality. With your partner discuss what you think this new school will be like as regards:

- food
- clothing
- punishment



### PART ONE

## From Gateshead to Lowood

When I was a little girl, my parents died. My uncle, Mr Reed, took me to live with his family at Gateshead House, but a year later he died too. Mrs Reed and her children didn't like me. John was fourteen years old, Georgiana was twelve, Eliza was eleven and I was ten. My memories of Gateshead are all of loneliness, pain, anger and rebellion.

I remember my last day there. Mrs Reed was sitting on the sofa by the fire with her three children. They looked happy. I stood at a distance from them.

'You stay there, Jane!' said Mrs Reed. 'Bessie says you're a bad girl, and I prefer you to stay away from me until you learn to be more pleasant.'

Bessie was the maid. She was sometimes kind to me, but she thought I was a difficult, disobedient child.

'What does Bessie say I've done?' I asked.

'How rude you are! Children shouldn't ask adults questions like that!' cried Mrs Reed.

I walked into the next room and found a book. There was a

## PART ONE

space between the window and the red curtain. I sat in that space and began to read. I felt safe behind the red curtain: no one could see me in my hiding place. But then John Reed came into the room. He walked up to my window and ripped the red curtain open. I was frightened, because John often tormented and insulted me, and sometimes he hit me too. When he saw me, he laughed, then he put out his tongue. He was ugly and disgusting. I threw the book at him. It hit him on the forehead.

'Mummy!' he cried. 'Jane threw a book at me!'

A moment later Mrs Reed and Bessie dragged me down the corridor. 'You horrible, violent child!' cried Mrs Reed. 'You must be punished!' They put me into the Red Room and locked the door.

'Aunt Reed!' I cried. 'Please don't leave me here!'

She ignored me and walked away down the corridor with Bessie. There was a big white bed in the middle of the Red Room. That was where my Uncle Reed had died.

'Oh! Please let me out!' I called out. 'This isn't fair!'

The sun was going down, and I was afraid of being in the Red Room in the darkness. The shadows in the corners of the room grew bigger, and the air grew colder. I was sure my uncle's dead body was lying on the bed! Fear and cold and loneliness finally overcame me, and I fainted.<sup>1</sup>

The next day, Bessie let me out of the Red Room and said, 'Mrs Reed wants to talk to you.'

My aunt was sitting on the sofa in the drawing room. In front of her, standing by the fire, was a tall, stern-looking gentleman dressed in black.

'Jane,' said my aunt, 'this is Mr Brocklehurst. He is the

1. **fainted** : lost consciousness.



director of a school for orphan girls. He has come to take you there. I'm sending you away to school, because I can't stand you in the house any longer.'

'Does she have any other relatives?' asked Mr Brocklehurst.

'Just an uncle. He lives in Madeira.<sup>1</sup> I can't send her there.'

Mr Brocklehurst looked at me and said, 'Jane Eyre, I hear that you are a violent, rebellious child. At Lowood School, we'll teach you to be obedient,' he said, 'and if you're disobedient or violent we'll punish you until you change your ways!'

Behind him, my aunt smiled and said, 'Good!'

Lowood was a large house with cold dark rooms. Eighty girls between the ages of nine and twenty lived there. Each dormitory contained twelve beds, and two girls shared each bed. The head teacher was a tall dark-haired lady called Miss Temple. She was kind and I admired her beauty and dignity, but we spent very little time with her. Most of the time, we were with a younger teacher who had a fat red face and shouted orders like 'Silence!' and 'Order!'

I wasn't happy during my first months at Lowood. It was winter, and the place was freezing. The cold made me hungry, but the food was bad and there was never enough of it. Sometimes I was so hungry that I cried secretly. Once, when the breakfast was so bad that we couldn't eat it, Miss Temple ordered bread and cheese to be given to us later in the morning. We all knew that Mr Brocklehurst would be angry with her for doing so, and it made us love and admire her even more.

On Sundays we had to walk through icy wind and snow to church. There we sat for hours, our hands and faces blue with cold. Afterwards, we walked shivering along the dark wet road

1. **Madeira** : a Portuguese archipelago in the North Atlantic Ocean.

back to Lowood. The only sounds were the howling of the wind and the coughing of the smaller, weaker girls. I talked to no one and no one talked to me, but I was used to loneliness. One day, when I was walking in the garden, I heard a cough. I looked around and saw a girl reading a book.

'Is your book interesting?' I asked.

'Yes.'

I sat down beside her and said, 'My name's Jane Eyre. What's yours?'

'Helen Burns.'

'Are you happy here?'

'You ask too many questions,' replied Helen. She was much bigger than me, about thirteen years old. I liked her gentle eyes.

Just then the bell rang and we went in to classes. During history class, Helen answered a question wrongly, and the teacher — Miss Scatcherd — made her stand in the middle of the room as a punishment. I thought to myself, 'How can she bear it? If I had to stand there, with everyone looking at me, I would die of shame! But she seems so serene, as if she were thinking of something else.'

In the weeks that followed, I noticed that Miss Scatcherd often criticised Helen. Once she even hit Helen with a stick. Afterwards, I saw Helen wipe a tear from her eye.

'You must hate this place,' I said to Helen, the next time we had a chance to talk.

'Why?' asked Helen.

'Miss Scatcherd is so cruel to you!'

'No she isn't. She's just severe: she's trying to correct my faults.'

'If she treated me like that, I'd hate her,' I said. 'And if she tried to hit me with a stick, I would take the stick from her and break it in half!'

'The Bible tells us to be kind even to people who are cruel to us.'

I was amazed by her view of the world. She saw things very differently from the way I saw them. I suspected that she was right and I was wrong. 'You say that you have faults,' I said. 'What are they? To me you seem very good.'

'I don't learn my lessons well, I forget things, I'm lazy and I don't stand up straight. Miss Scratcherd is right.'

'And cruel!' I cried. 'Is Miss Temple cruel to you?'

At the mention of Miss Temple's name, Helen smiled.

'Miss Temple is so kind that she can't be severe to anyone. She sees my faults and she tells me about them, but very gently, and if I do anything well she praises me.'

Helen and I became good friends and she and Miss Temple made my years at Lowood bearable. But when I had been at Lowood for four years, poor Helen died of tuberculosis. I missed her very much. At the end of my sixth year at Lowood, Miss Temple told me that I could stay on as a teacher if I would. I stayed there for two more years, and then I put an announcement in the newspaper, offering my services as a governess.

I received a reply from a lady called Mrs Fairfax, the housekeeper of Thornfield Hall, a great old house far away from Lowood. She offered me a position as governess and asked me to come to Thornfield Hall to begin work the following week.

On the morning of my departure from Lowood, I took great care dressing. I wasn't pretty, and my clothes were plain, but at least I could make myself as neat and clean as possible. Miss Temple took me out to the carriage with my bags and kissed me goodbye. The carriage drove off, and I looked out of the window, watching as Miss Temple and Lowood got smaller and smaller in the distance.

## The text and beyond

### FCE 1 Comprehension check

For questions 1-6, choose the best answer – A, B, C or D.

- Jane's aunt thought that she was
  - too plain looking and not intelligent enough.
  - too aggressive and not respectful enough.
  - too emotional and not courageous enough.
  - too weak physically and not healthy enough.
- At Lowood the girls ate very little because
  - they were given little food to eat.
  - Miss Scratcherd did not let them eat.
  - they were given little food that was not bad.
  - they were given little time to eat.
- The girls appreciated it when Miss Temple gave them food because
  - she was going to get into trouble for doing it.
  - she was not going to have enough to eat herself.
  - she had to buy the extra food herself.
  - she was not even their main teacher.
- Jane told Helen that if she had been in her situation she would have
  - rebelled.
  - asked for help.
  - left the school.
  - been totally amazed.
- Helen thought it was ridiculous when Jane said she would not have tolerated Miss Scratcherd's cruelty because
  - Miss Scratcherd was really trying to help Helen.
  - Jane would never be treated so badly by Miss Scratcherd.
  - Jane could not know how she would react.
  - Jane could not change the situation.
- Jane mentioned Miss Temple to Helen because
  - she could not stand listening to Helen talk about Miss Scratcherd.
  - she wanted to know how Miss Temple treated Helen.
  - she wanted Helen to admit that Miss Scratcherd was bad.
  - she loved hearing people talk about Miss Temple.

**FCE 2 Fill in the gaps**

Read the text below about Charlotte Brontë's actual experiences at a boarding school. Use the word given in capitals at the end of some lines to form a word that fits in the gap in the same line.

### The Real Helen Burns

Charlotte Brontë wrote about her (1) ..... experiences at the Clergy Daughter's School at Cowan Bridge some twenty years later in *Jane Eyre*. Its (2) ....., the Reverend Carus-Wilson, became the self-righteous\* Mr Brocklehurst and Charlotte's (3) ..... and patient sister Maria became Helen Burns. Charlotte insisted that her (4) ..... of the school was in no way (5) ..... . Rev. Brontë sent his four daughters there because he knew that they did not have enough money to marry and so they needed to study to find work. In a way, Rev. Wilson too wanted to prepare the girls to work as governesses, but he used (6) ..... and repression. He thought that if he helped their bodies he hurt their immortal souls. So, the girls' hair was cut off; they had to wear plain clothing; and they were given only hard bread and (7) ..... food to eat. Charlotte later wrote that the pain from hunger that she suffered there was (8) ..... to describe. Charlotte's sister Maria did well at her studies, but she was always in trouble for being (9) ..... and dirty (in the winter, the water for washing was usually frozen). She was often hit and insulted in front of the other girls. The 11-year-old Maria, like the (10) ..... Helen, always 'looked beyond life', and so saw no reason to worry about (11) ..... in this world when life is so short 'and death is so certain an entrance to (12) ..... : to glory.' Mary, who died in 1825, became a kind of ideal for Charlotte. However, Charlotte did not accept (13) ..... . She had the courage to say that men like Mr Brocklehurst were hypocritical. This is why many considered *Jane Eyre* an (14) ..... book. Charlotte responded to these critics that 'self-righteousness is not religion.'

\* a self-righteous person believes that he is morally superior to other people.

- HORROR
- FOUND
- RELIGION
- DESCRIBE
- EXAGGERATE
- PUNISH
- BURN
- POSSIBLE
- ORDERLY
- FICTION
- SUFFER
- HAPPY
- BRUTAL
- RELIGION

**3 Speaking**

Charles Dickens, a novelist and Charlotte Brontë's contemporary, said that children were particularly sensitive to injustices. His own semi-autobiographical novel, *David Copperfield* – published two years after *Jane Eyre* – shows this clearly. Do you agree? Can you remember any injustices of your own childhood? For example:

- you were punished for something you didn't do
- you had to share something with another child.

Make a short presentation to the class about an injustice you suffered as a small child.

T: GRADE 8

**4 Speaking: the supernatural**

What mysterious and superstitious things were you afraid of when you were a child?

- monsters under your bed or in your closet
- a 'strange' person who lived near your house
- strange sounds outside your window
- thunder storms
- ghosts

Tell the class about a particularly frightening moment of your childhood.



## Before you read



### 1 Listening

Listen to the beginning of Part Two. For questions 1-5, choose the best answer – A, B or C.

- 1 Adèle became happy when
  - A  Mrs Fairfax told Jane that Adèle was French.
  - B  Jane spoke to her in good French.
  - C  Mrs Fairfax spoke about Mr Rochester.
  
- 2 Adèle had been in England for
  - A  half a year.
  - B  a year and half.
  - C  six weeks.
  
- 3 When was Mr Rochester returning to Thornfield?
  - A  In six months.
  - B  After Christmas.
  - C  Just before Christmas.
  
- 4 Jane thought that her new room was
  - A  too small and scary.
  - B  too cold and sad.
  - C  bright and pleasant.
  
- 5 When Jane asked Adèle about France, Adèle did not say anything about
  - A  her father.
  - B  her mother.
  - C  Mr Rochester.



## PART TWO

# Thornfield

Reader, you can imagine how nervous I was on the journey to Thornfield. Finally the carriage stopped in front of a great house. An old lady and a little girl about eight years old came out to greet me.

The old lady smiled and said, 'Welcome to Thornfield, my dear. I'm Mrs Fairfax, the housekeeper, and this is Miss Adèle Varens, your student. She's French. Say hello, Adèle.'

Adèle hesitated, so I spoke to her in her own language. Her face lit up with pleasure, and she cried, 'Ah! You speak French! You speak it as well as Mr Rochester does!'

'Mr Rochester?'

'Yes,' replied the old lady. 'Mr Rochester is the master of Thornfield, and Adèle is his ward.<sup>1</sup> He brought her here from France six months ago.'

1. ward : adopted daughter.

'Will I meet Mr Rochester today?'

No. He's won't be home until after Christmas.'

'Is there a Mrs Rochester?'

'No. The master isn't married. Come in, Miss Eyre. I'll show you your room.'

We went into the house, through the great hall, and up the cold staircase. My room was small, sunny and comfortable. As I looked around it, I felt sure I would be happy at Thornfield.

'Since you speak French, Miss Eyre, will you ask Adèle about her parents? I've been very curious about them ever since she came here, but her English isn't yet good enough for her to answer my questions.'

I asked Adèle about her life in France, listened to her reply, and translated it for Mrs Fairfax. 'Adèle says she lived with her mother, but then her mother died and Mr Rochester brought her to England. She says her mother taught her how to sing and dance.'

'And were you glad to come to England with Mr Rochester, Adèle?' asked Mrs Fairfax.

'Oh, yes,' replied the little girl. 'I knew him well. He often came to our house when Mama was alive, and every time he came he brought presents for me.'

Adèle went to play in her room while Mrs Fairfax showed me round the house. On the ground floor, she introduced me to the maid, Leah, and her husband John, who took care of the horses. We looked at all the rooms on the first floor and the second, then we climbed the stairs past the third floor and went out onto the roof. From there I could see all the countryside around Thornfield. The park was large and green with some fine old trees.

'Does anyone live on the third floor?' I asked.

'No,' said Mrs Fairfax. 'Shall we go back down? It's nearly time for lunch.'

As I went down the stairs from the roof to the third floor, I heard a strange sound. It was a laugh, but there was no joy in it. The sound frightened me as I stood on the dark staircase. 'Mrs Fairfax!' I cried. 'Did you hear that laugh? Who was it?'

'It was probably one of the servants — Grace Poole. She often comes up here to do her sewing.' Then Mrs Fairfax knocked on a door and called out, 'Grace!'

The door opened and a woman of about forty years of age came out. She was a large, square woman with a plain face and a hard, unfriendly expression.

'Too much noise, Grace,' said Mrs Fairfax. 'Remember what Mr Rochester said.'

Grace Poole nodded her head and went back into the room, closing the door behind her.

The months passed pleasantly at Thornfield. I taught Adèle English, French and music in the mornings. After lunch, I went for a walk on my own, and in the evenings I sat with Mrs Fairfax by the fire.

One day in January, I went for my walk later than usual. The sun set as I was walking on a lonely country road called Hay Lane. It suddenly got dark and cold, so I walked quickly to keep myself warm, listening to the little sounds of the river, the birds and the wind. Suddenly I heard the sound of a horse galloping up the road towards me. Then a big dog ran past me, followed by a large black horse with a rider on its back. Just as the horse galloped past me, it fell, and the rider cried out, 'What the devil is happening?'

The horse stood up again immediately, but the rider remained on the ground. I walked up to him and said, 'Are you hurt, sir? Can I help you?'

'No. Go away and leave me alone!' he cried.

The rider was about thirty-five years old, of medium height, with a broad chest and shoulders. From his clothes I could see that he was a gentleman. His face was dark, strong and angry-looking, but I wasn't afraid. If he'd been a handsome, pleasant gentleman, I wouldn't have stayed to offer my help without being asked, but his angry manner and unfriendly face gave me courage.

'I can't leave you here, sir, until I know that you're well enough to get on your horse and ride home alone.'

He looked at me for the first time. 'You should be at home too. Do you live near here?'

'Yes, sir. I live at Thornfield Hall.'

He looked at my clothes then said, 'You aren't a servant.'

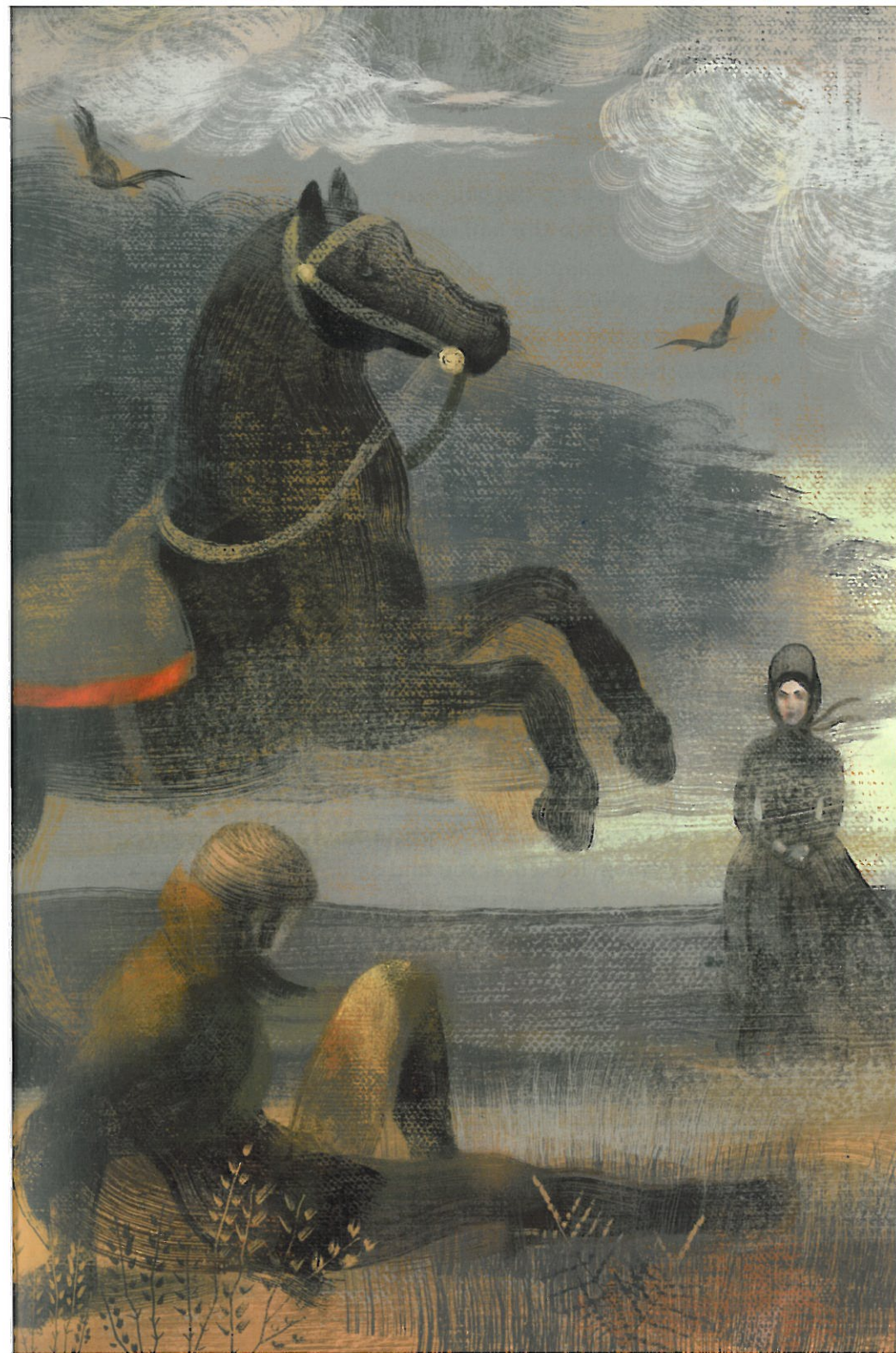
'I'm the governess.'

'Well,' he said, reaching out a hand, 'help me to stand up. I think I've hurt my ankle.'

I walked with him to his horse. He leaned against me heavily, then he leaned on the horse and, closing his eyes because of the pain, pulled himself up on its back.

'Go home now; it's late,' he said to me, then he cried out to the dog, 'Come on, Pilot!', and galloped off down the road.

After the gentleman had gone, I continued walking. I didn't want to go back to Thornfield immediately, because my life there, though comfortable, was always the same. Nothing interesting ever happened. At least this incident with the gentleman had been different.





When I got back to the house, there were more lights on than usual. I walked into the hall and saw the big dog I had seen in Hay Lane.

'Pilot!' I called, and he came up to me in a friendly way. 'Whose dog is this?' I asked Leah, who was passing by.

'Mr Rochester's, Miss,' she replied. 'He's just arrived. Miss Adèle and Mrs Fairfax are in the drawing room talking to him now. I must go and get the doctor, because the master has hurt his ankle.'

I followed Pilot into the drawing room where Mr Rochester — who was indeed the rider I had met on my walk — sat, with his foot up on the sofa, talking to Adèle.

'This is Miss Eyre, sir,' said Mrs Fairfax.

Mr Rochester didn't look at me, but he said, 'Sit down, Miss Eyre.'

I thought, 'at least I'm more polite than he is.'

'Miss Eyre!' cried Adèle. 'Mr Rochester has bought me a lovely present! It's coming in the mail in a few days!'

Then, turning to the gentleman, she said, 'Have you bought a present for Miss Eyre as well?'

Mr Rochester looked at me and said, 'Do you like presents, Miss Eyre?'

'I don't know, sir. I have little experience of them.'

'How long have you been at Thornfield?'

'Three months.'

'And where were you before?'

'Lowood School.'

'Lowood! That's Brocklehurst's school, isn't it? Are you an orphan, then?'

'Yes, sir.'

'And I suppose you admire Mr Brocklehurst. No doubt all the girls at Lowood think he's a saint.'

'Not at all. I dislike Mr Brocklehurst. He's unkind.'

'You are very honest about your opinions, Miss Eyre!' said Mr Rochester in surprise. 'Did they teach you to play the piano at Lowood?'

'A little.'

'Go to the piano in the library and play.'

I obeyed him. After a few minutes, Mr Rochester called out, 'Enough! I see you do play a little, like any other English school girl.'

I closed the piano and returned to the drawing room.

'Do you draw or paint?' he asked.

'Yes.'

'Show me some of your work.'

I went up to my room and returned with a few paintings. Mr Rochester looked through them slowly, then asked, 'Did your drawing teacher help you?'

'No!'

'Ah! I see you're proud of them. Were you happy when you painted them?'

'Yes. I've never been happier, sir.'

Mr Rochester looked at his watch and said, 'Nine o'clock! Miss Eyre, you should take Adèle to bed now. Goodnight.'

As we left the drawing room, I said to Mrs Fairfax, 'Mr Rochester seems very unfriendly.'

'He's had a hard life,' the old lady replied. 'He quarrelled with his father and elder brother, then they both died, and Mr Rochester inherited Thornfield. His life hasn't been a happy one, but he's a good man.'

The text and **beyond**

**1 Comprehension check**

Match the phrases in column A with those in column B to make true sentences. There are four phrases in column B that you do not need to use.

**A**

- 1  Adèle smiled at Jane when they met
- 2  Mrs Fairfax first learned about Adèle's mother when Jane arrived
- 3  Jane had the courage to help Mr Rochester
- 4  Mrs Fairfax did not show Jane the third floor
- 5  Grace Poole was on the third floor
- 6  Mr Rochester knew immediately that Jane was not a servant
- 7  Mr Rochester guessed that Jane's parents were dead
- 8  Jane said that they had taught her a little piano
- 9  Mr Rochester said that Jane played the piano a little
- 10  Mr Rochester knew that Jane was pleased with her paintings

**B**

- A because of the way she was dressed.
- B because nobody lived on the third floor.
- C because she thought he was badly hurt.
- D because Mrs Fairfax mentioned Mr Rochester.
- E because she strongly denied that her teacher had helped her with them.
- F because Adèle could not speak English very well.
- G because Jane spoke to her in French.
- H because she had not received many lessons.
- I because he was not very attractive.
- J because he did not think she played well.
- K because she went there to do her sewing.
- L because her bedroom was located there.
- M because she told him where she had gone to school.
- N because she was so young.

**FCE 2 Fill in the gaps**

Read the text below and think of the word which best fits each gap. Use only one word in each gap.

The miserable life of governesses

The Victorian governess (1) ..... a strange blend of babysitter and live-in teacher. An important English magazine of the time wrote (2) ..... a governess was equal to her upper-class employers in birth, manners and education, but she was inferior to them in wealth. The upper classes of the time wanted to (3) ..... their children taught at home. They (4) ..... not accept someone from the lower classes to teach their children so they hired poor women of their own class. The governess, then, was a paid servant to the family, (5) ..... she was above the social class of the other servants. So, she lived a very lonely and isolated existence. In addition, the other servants and the children themselves also realized that they (6) ..... treat the governess badly if they wanted. The pay was very low. (7) ..... Charlotte Brontë worked as governess, she only got £20 a year (her father's income of £200 per year was considered very low). But many other governesses (8) ..... given room and board with no pay at all. Also, Charlotte did not (9) ..... any free time for herself: when she finished with the children, her employer had her sew all evening. The hard work, the psychological cruelty and low salary (10) ..... that many governesses ended their lives poor and mentally ill. Fortunately, the hard life of the 20,000 governesses in England was discussed in public. This was in part (11) ..... of novels like *Jane Eyre*. The Governesses' Benevolent Association was founded in 1841. This was a first step (12) ..... improving the lives of these women. But even more important was the founding of the Queen's College in London. (13) ..... was the first school to provide an education and qualifications for female teachers.