



Jane Eyre  
By  
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**A Short Story for ESOL & Functional  
Skills Learners**



Jane Eyre is an orphan who lives with her aunt, Mrs. Reed, and her cousins at Gateshead Hall. Mrs. Reed does not love Jane, and her cousins often treat her badly. One day, Jane stands up to her cruel cousin John after he bullies her. As punishment, Mrs. Reed locks Jane in the frightening “red room,” where her uncle died, and Jane becomes ill with fear.



Mrs. Reed decides to send Jane away to Lowood School. Before leaving, Jane bravely tells her aunt that she will never forget how badly she treated her. Life at Lowood is hard. The girls are often cold and hungry, and the strict headmaster, Mr. Brocklehurst, treats Jane badly. However, Jane finds a kind friend called Helen Burns.



Helen teaches Jane about patience, forgiveness and inner strength. Sadly, Helen becomes seriously ill and dies, but Jane never forgets her friend.



Conditions at Lowood improve, and Jane receives a good education. After eight years there as a pupil and then a teacher, she decides that she wants a new life. Jane becomes a governess at Thornfield Hall, where she teaches a young girl called Adèle. She enjoys her independence and is treated kindly by the housekeeper, Mrs. Fairfax.



One evening, Jane helps a mysterious man after he falls from his horse. Later, she discovers that he is Edward Rochester, the wealthy owner of Thornfield Hall. Rochester enjoys Jane's company because she speaks to him honestly. Although he is rich and Jane is only a governess, they become close, and Jane falls in love with him.



Strange things happen at Thornfield, and Jane often hears a mysterious laugh from upstairs. One night, Rochester's bed catches fire, and Jane saves his life. Rochester invites several wealthy guests to Thornfield, including the beautiful Blanche Ingram. Jane believes he will marry Blanche and feels heartbroken, although she hides her feelings.



To Jane's surprise, Rochester tells her that he does not love Blanche—he loves Jane. He asks Jane to marry him, and she happily accepts. On their wedding day, a man suddenly stops the ceremony. He reveals that Rochester is already married and that his wife, Bertha Mason, is still alive.



Rochester explains that Bertha has a serious mental illness and has secretly been kept in a locked part of Thornfield. Jane now understands the mysterious laughter and the fire, but Rochester begs her not to leave him. Jane still loves Rochester, but she refuses to stay with a married man. She chooses her principles and self-respect and leaves Thornfield, although it breaks her heart.



Jane travels alone with almost no money or food until St John Rivers and his sisters, Diana and Mary, help her. Later, Jane discovers that they are actually her cousins. Jane learns that her uncle has died and left her a large fortune. Now financially independent, she shares the money with her new-found cousins.



St John asks Jane to marry him and travel to India with him as a missionary. Jane respects him but does not love him, so she refuses and decides to find Rochester again.



Jane returns to Thornfield and finds that the house has been destroyed by a fire started by Bertha. Bertha died in the fire, while Rochester was badly injured trying to save others and lost his sight.



Jane finds Rochester and tells him that she still loves him. Now they are free to marry, and Jane chooses him as an independent woman. They marry and build a happy life together, and Jane finally finds love without losing her dignity and self-respect.