

*(The library; the Gypsy is seated in an easy-chair at the chimney-corner. She has on a red cloak and a black bonnet, tied down with a striped handkerchief under her chin. An extinguished candle stands on the table; she is bending over the fire, and reads in a little black book by the light of the blaze. She mutters to herself.)*

Gypsy: Well, and you want your fortune told?

Jane: I don't care about it, mother; you may please yourself: but I ought to warn you, I have no faith.

G: It's like your impudence to say so: I expected it of you; I heard it in your step as you crossed the threshold.

J: Did you? You've a quick ear.

G: I have; and a quick eye and a quick brain.

J: You need them all in your trade.

G: I do; especially when I've customers like you to deal with. Why don't you tremble?

J: I'm not cold.

G: Why don't you turn pale?

J: I am not sick.

G: Why don't you consult my art?

J: I'm not silly.

G: (laughs) You are cold; you are sick; and you are silly.

J: Prove it.

G: I will, in few words. You are cold, because you are alone: no contact strikes the fire from you that is in you. You are sick; because the best of feelings, the highest and the sweetest given to man, keeps far away from you. You are silly, because, suffer as you may, you will not beckon it to approach, nor will you stir one step to meet it where it awaits you.

J: You might say all that to almost any one who you knew lived as a solitary dependant in a great house.

G: I might say it to almost any one: but would it be true of almost any one?

J: In my circumstances.

G: Yes; just so, in YOUR circumstances: but find me another precisely placed as you are.

J: It would be easy to find you thousands.

G: You could scarcely find me one. If you knew it, you are peculiarly situated: very near happiness; yes, within reach of it.

J: I don't understand enigmas. I never could guess a riddle in my life.

G: If you wish me to speak more plainly, show me your palm.

J: And I must cross it with silver, I suppose?

G: To be sure.

G: It is too fine. I can make nothing of such a hand as that; almost without lines: besides, what is in a palm? Destiny is not written there.

J: I believe you.

G: No, it is in the face: on the forehead, about the eyes, in the lines of the mouth. Kneel, and lift up your head.

J: Ah! Now you are coming to reality. I shall begin to put some faith in you presently.

G: I wonder with what feelings you came to me to-night. I wonder what thoughts are busy in your heart during all the hours you sit in yonder room with the fine people flitting before you like shapes in a magic-lantern.

J: I feel tired often, sleepy sometimes, but seldom sad.

G: Then you have some secret hope to buoy you up and please you with whispers of the future?

J: Not I. The utmost I hope is, to save money enough out of my earnings to set up a school some day in a little house rented by myself.

G: A mean nutriment for the spirit to exist on: and sitting in that window-seat (you see I know your habits) —

J: You have learned them from the servants.

G: Ah! You think yourself sharp. Well, perhaps I have: to speak truth, I have an acquaintance with one of them, Mrs. Poole —

J: You have — have you? There is devilment in the business after all, then!

*(The gypsy goes on to ask about the other people in the house.)*

G: You don't know the gentlemen here? You have not exchanged a syllable with one of them? Will you say that of the master of the house!

J: He is not at home.

G: A profound remark! He went to Millcote this morning, and will be back here to-night or to-morrow: does that circumstance exclude him from the list of your acquaintance — blot him, as it were, out of existence?

J: No; but I can scarcely see what Mr. Rochester has to do with the theme you had introduced.

G: Never mind. Is it known that Mr. Rochester is to be married?

J: Yes; and to the beautiful Miss Ingram.

G: Shortly?

J: They will be a superlatively happy pair. He must love such a handsome, noble, witty, accomplished lady; and probably she loves him, or, if not his person, at least his purse. I know she considers the Rochester estate eligible to the last degree. But, mother, I did not come to hear Mr. Rochester's fortune: I came to hear my own; and you have told me nothing of it.