

SIDE 2: MRS.REED / YOUNG JANE

MRS. REED

Go out of the room; return to the nursery

YOUNG JANE

I am not deceitful: if I were, I should say I loved you; but I declare I do not love you: I dislike you the worst of anybody in the world except John Reed; and this book about the liar, you may give to your girl, Georgiana, for it is she who tells lies, and not I.

MRS REED

What more have you to say?

YOUNG JANE

I am glad you are no relation of mine: I will never call you aunt again as long as I live. I will never come to see you when I am grown up; and if anyone asks me how I liked you, and how you treated me, I will say the very thought of you makes me sick, and that you treated me with miserable cruelty.

MRS REED

How dare you affirm that, Jane Eyre?

YOUNG JANE

How dare I, Mrs. Reed? How dare I? Because it is the TRUTH. You think I have no feelings, and that I can do without one bit of love or kindness; but I cannot live so: and you have no pity. I shall remember how you thrust me back--roughly and violently thrust me back--into the red-room, and locked me up there, to my dying day; though I was in agony; though I cried out, while suffocating with distress, 'Have

mercy! Have mercy, Aunt Reed!' And that punishment you made me suffer because your wicked boy struck me--knocked me down for nothing. I will tell anybody who asks me questions, this exact tale. People think you a good woman, but you are bad, hard-hearted. YOU are deceitful!

Mrs. Reeds works slips from her knee; twisting her face as though she may cry

MRS. REED

Jane, you are under a mistake: what is the matter with you? Why do you tremble so violently? Would you like to drink some water?

YOUNG JANE

No, Mrs. Reed.

MRS. REED

Is there anything else you wish for, Jane? I assure you, I desire to be your friend.

YOUNG JANE

Not you. You told Mr. Brocklehurst I had a bad character, a deceitful disposition; and I'll let everybody at Lowood know what you are, and what you have done.

MRS. REED

Jane, you don't understand these things: children must be corrected for their faults.

YOUNG JANE

Deceit is not my fault!

MRS. REED

But you are passionate, Jane, that you must allow: and now return to the nursery--there's a dear--and lie down a little.

YOUNG JANE:

I am not your dear; I cannot lie down: send me to school soon, Mrs. Reed, for I hate to live here.

MRS. REED

(sotto voce)

I will indeed send her to school soon.