

SIDE 7- BESSIE / JANE

JANE

Did Mrs. Reed send you here, Bessie?

BESSIE

No, indeed: but I have long wanted to see you, and when I heard that there had been a letter from you, and that you were going to another part of the country, I thought I'd just set off and get a look at you before you were quite out of my reach.

JANE

(Laughs)

I am afraid you are disappointed in me, Bessie.

BESSIE

No, Miss Jane, not exactly: you are genteel enough; you look like a lady, and it is as much as I ever expected of you; you were no beauty as a child. I dare say you are clever enough. What can you do? Can you play on the piano?

JANE

A little.

Jane plays her a tune on the piano.

BESSIE

The Miss Reeds could not play as well! I always said you would surpass them in learning. Can you draw?

JANE

That is one of my paintings over the chimney piece.

BESSIE

Well, that is beautiful Miss Jane! It is as fine a picture as any Miss Reed's drawing master could paint, let alone the young ladies themselves who could not come near it: and have you learnt French?

JANE

Yes, Bessie, I can both read it and speak it.

BESSIE

And you can work on muslin and canvas?

JANE

I can.

BESSIE

Oh, you are quite a lady, Miss Jane! I knew you would be: you will get on whether your relations notice you or not. There was something I wanted to ask you. --- Have you ever heard anything from your father's kinsfolk, the Eyres?

JANE

Never in my life.

BESSIE

Well, you know Missis always said they were poor and quite despicable: and they may be poor: but I believe they are as much gentry as the Reeds are; for one day, nearly seven years ago, a Mr. Eyre came to Gateshead and wanted to see you; Missis said you were at school fifty miles off; he seemed so disappointed, for he could not stay: he was going on a voyage to a foreign country, and the ship was to sail from London in a day or two. He looked quite a gentleman- and I believe he was your father's brother.