

SIDE 8- MRS. FAIRFAX / JANE

MRS. FAIRFAX

How do you do, my dear? I'm afraid you have had a tedious ride; John drives so slowly.

JANE

Mrs. Fairfax, I suppose?

MRS. FAIRFAX

Yes, you are right. Do sit down. May I take your cloak?

MRS. FAIRFAX goes to help JANE with her cloak.

JANE

Oh, do not give yourself so much trouble.

MRS. FAIRFAX

It is no trouble.

JANE removes her cloak and hands it to MRS. FAIRFAX

I dare say your own hands are almost numbed with cold.

Calls off

Leah, make a little hot negus and cut a sandwich or two.

Now, then. Draw nearer to the fire. You've brought your luggage with you, haven't you, my dear?

JANE

Yes ma'am.

MRS. FAIRFAX

I'll have it carried to your room.

JANE

Shall I have the pleasure of seeing Mrs. Fairfax tonight?

MRS. FAIRFAX

What did you say my dear? I am a little deaf.

JANE

Mrs. Fairfax.

MRS. FAIRFAX

Mrs. Fairfax? Oh! You mean Miss Varens! Varens is the name of your future pupil.

JANE

Indeed! Then she is not your daughter?

MRS. FAIRFAX

No, I have no family

There is a pause

I am so glad--- I am so glad you are come. It will be quite pleasant here now with a companion. To be sure it is pleasant any time; for Thornfield is a fine old hall, rather neglected of late years perhaps, but still it is a respectable place; yet you know in winter time, one feels dreary quite alone, in the best quarters. I say alone--- Leah is a nice girl to be sure, and John and his wife are very decent people; but then you see they are only servants and one can't converse with them on terms of equality; one must keep them at due distance, for fear of losing one's authority. I'm sure last winter (it was a very severe one, if you recollect, and when it did not snow, it rained and blew), not a creature but the butcher and postman came to the house, from November till February; and I really got quite melancholy with sitting night after night alone; I had Leah in to read to me sometimes; but I don't think that the poor girl liked the task much: she felt it confining. In spring and summer one got on better: sunshine and long days make such a difference; and then just at the commencement of this autumn, little Adele Varens came and her nurse: a child makes a house alive all at once; and now you are here and I shall be quite gay."

"But I shall not keep you sitting up late to-night. It is on the stroke of twelve now, and you have been travelling all day: you must feel tired and if you have got your feet well warmed I'll shew you your bedroom."