

BRANWELL (AND THE OTHER BRONTËS):  
AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY EDITED BY CHARLOTTE BRONTË  
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BRANWELL (AND THE OTHER BRONTËS): AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY EDITED BY CHARLOTTE BRONTË was first produced at Loft Ensemble (Artistic Directors, Adam Chambers and Vel Stacy). It was executive produced by Emma Latimer and Marc Leclerc, produced by Bree Pavey, directed by Sarah Nilsen, with scenic design by Madylin Sweeten, lighting design by Tor Brown, costume design by Linda Muggerridge, properties mistress by Natasha Renee Potts, properties consulting by Arthur M. Jolly, educational coordination by Danielle Ozymandias, magic consultation by Micah Cover, production design by Christine Cavagnaro, and graphic design by Amanda Chambers. The rehearsal stage manager was Silas Jean-Rox and production stage manager was Ignacio Navarro. The cast was as follows:

CHARLOTTE BRONTË ..... Maia Luer  
 ANNE BRONTË ..... Natasha Renae Potts  
 EMILY BRONTË ..... Sarah Sommers  
 BRANWELL BRONTË ..... Marc Leclerc, Calvin Picou  
 MARIA BRONTË ..... Naomi Rose  
 ELIZABETH BRONTË ..... Jessica Dowdeswell

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## CHARACTERS

CHARLOTTE BRONTË—female

ANNE BRONTË—female

EMILY BRONTË—female

BRANWELL BRONTË—male

MARIA BRONTË—female, eleven

ELIZABETH BRONTË—female, ten

## PLACE

A space where anything can happen.  
Possibly September 24, 1848, but not necessarily.

## NOTES

An ellipsis “...” is a breath, a pause, a beat.

A slash “/” specifies an overlap in dialogue, when the next line should start.

Though the siblings were originally Caucasian, this is not a history play and there is no reason that they need to be of the same race, look like each other, or be their accurate ages at the time of the play. This includes the two youngest sisters, who only need to have the essence of appearing younger than the other four.

# BRANWELL (AND THE OTHER BRONTËS): AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY EDITED BY CHARLOTTE BRONTË

## Prologue

*An empty space. Darkness. The deep strains of a cello. Low, mournful, mysterious. Then a harp. Magic.*

*A sharp light isolates a woman in the darkness—Charlotte Brontë. She watches a single sheet of paper flutter to the ground. She picks it up and looks at it, then lovingly folds and places it inside her dress, close to her heart. She then pulls out a pen and a tiny book, slightly larger than a book you'd find in a dollhouse. She begins to write in the tiny book.*

**CHARLOTTE.** Gentle Reader, right now, I am...I am...

...

*(With certainty.)* Right now, I am Charlotte Brontë. *(Beat.)* And right now, I am...

...

*She fumbles with her tiny book.*

...

*(Clutches book firmly.)* Right now, I am in a shadow-besotted bedroom at the very top of the stairs. An old maid auntie, whose eyesight is only a tad worse than her hearing, has embroidered simple stitched curtains attempting feebly to keep out the painful chill of night. There is a single, bleak gas lamp whose weak illumination fails to reach the dusty corners of a room tinged with the smell of

lilies whose own decay fails to mask the sour odors of the putrefying and suffering soul at rest beneath a duvet that is damp...

*She scratches out the word.*

...

...sodden...

No...

*She scratches out the word.*

...

...soaked with sweat.

...

...

No. That's not it. That can't be it.

...

I shall start again.

...

*(Returns to the first page in the tiny book.)* Gentle Reader, right now I am back in our father's parsonage in Haworth, hampered among the never-ending nothingness of the moors. I stand in a tiny nursery-study. A place where magic can occur.

It was Maria's, but when she died it became ours. It is only six foot by four—tiny. Just like the books we create there. *(Holds up the tiny book.)* Tiny so they belong solely to us. Frustratingly undecipherable to anyone else who may attempt to infiltrate. But in each an entire world. A universe. And in this universe I conjure a tiny room. *(Beat.)* Can you see it? The scuffed oak floors, trampled and caressed by our stocking feet and the deep marks in the wood from the imprint of our writing utensils that father complained about but we know really loved. All of it. Permanently engraved. Here, Gentle Reader, set forth now for your eyes, displayed in all its glory.

*Anne Brontë appears.*

**ANNE.** I believe you mean maple.

**CHARLOTTE.** What's that? *(Tucks the tiny book away in her dress.)*

**ANNE.** The floors. Scuffed maple. You said oak.

**CHARLOTTE.** Did I?

**ANNE.** Yes. Maple is a much honey-er color.

**CHARLOTTE.** Honey-er. (*Smiles.*) Right now, this is my youngest sister, Anne Brontë.

*Emily Brontë appears, gruffer than her sisters.*

**EMILY.** Is Anne not enough? Must you constantly flaunt our surname.

**CHARLOTTE.** Dear sweet sister, are you not proud of being a Brontë?

**EMILY.** I do not care for it to be bandied about.

**CHARLOTTE.** Bandied? I hardly think I was *bandying* anything about.

**ANNE.** It was a bit of a bandy.

*Emily shoots Charlotte a smug look.*

**CHARLOTTE.** And right now, our third sister, Emily. (*To the others.*) Is that better? Just Emily? Not Emily Brontë—no *bandying*—just plain. Old. / Emily.

**EMILY.** Really, Charlotte. Why must you always be so...

**CHARLOTTE.** So...what? (*Beat.*) As usual, are you having difficulty determining which word is the perfect fit? Why must I always be so...?

**ANNE.** Can we please not / have a row—

**EMILY.** Bitchy. That is the word I was looking for.

**ANNE.** (*Beseechingly.*) Emily!

**EMILY.** (*Repeating her tone.*) Anne!

**CHARLOTTE.** All right then, right now we are—

**ANNE.** Let's let Branii decide.

**CHARLOTTE.** Decide what?

**ANNE.** Where we are.

*Beat.*

**CHARLOTTE.** You'd like for Branwell to decide?

**EMILY.** I believe that is what our sweet sister just said.

**CHARLOTTE.** Anne, darling, do you really think that's a wise idea?

**EMILY.** I don't believe she would have said it if she didn't think it wise.

**CHARLOTTE.** I don't know, Emily, you certainly tend to utter many things that belie any sense of wisdom.

**ANNE.** Charlotte!

**CHARLOTTE.** (*Repeating her tone.*) Anne!

*Charlotte and Emily share a smirk.*

**ANNE.** I think, if he cares to, it would be nice to let Branwell decide.

*Beat.*

**CHARLOTTE.** All right. You'll get no quibble from me.

**EMILY.** Says the quotidian quibbler.

**CHARLOTTE.** (*Genuinely approving.*) Bravo.

**EMILY.** Thank you.

**CHARLOTTE.** Quite alarming alliteration.

*Charlotte and Emily giggle. Anne stares at them, disapproving. The two stop giggling and fall into silence. They wait.*

**ANNE.** Maybe we should call him.

**EMILY.** No. We let Branwell decide. Your rule. No untoward influencing.

**ANNE.** Calling him is not influencing.

**EMILY.** I beg to differ, dear sister, that is exactly what it is. If Branii wanted to tell the story, he would. So, we wait. Your decision, not mine.

*Silence. They wait. Charlotte keeps her cool. Emily gets more and more agitated. Until, finally—*

Oh, hang it all.

*She heads off to get him.*

**CHARLOTTE.** Just like you to cave so quickly.

**ANNE.** Can we please not—

**EMILY.** You always do this—run things / as if—

**CHARLOTTE.** Well then maybe someone else should take initiative.

**EMILY.** How can they when you're always doing it for them?

**ANNE.** Let's just get Branwell.

**BRANWELL.** I'm here.

*Branwell Brontë appears. He is half in the shadows.*

**ANNE.** Branii!

**EMILY.** How long have you been here?

**BRANWELL.** ...

Always.

**EMILY.** Didn't you hear Anne's call to arms for you to be the one to decide where we are instead of little Miss "I'll-Decide-For-Everyone"?

**ANNE.** If you want to. I just thought that maybe you would like to... If you want to.

**CHARLOTTE.** Maybe he doesn't.

**EMILY.** No. I believe Anne's idea was smashing. Right now, who and where are you?

**BRANWELL.** Now?

**EMILY.** Yes. Right now, are you Branwell or Branwell *Brontë*? Will you bandy it about as well?

**BRANWELL.** Who am I?

**ANNE.** Maybe it isn't the best idea to—

**EMILY.** And furthermore, where are you? Right now, *where* are you?

**BRANWELL.** ...

...

I...

**ANNE.** I didn't mean to—

**EMILY.** Right now, you are...?

**BRANWELL.** Right now, I am... Right now I am...General Genzia Hapatensio.

*Charlotte smiles. Anne is uncertain. Emily's reaction is undecipherable. Now that Branwell has announced his character, a new confidence overtakes him. He is happy to be in a new role.*

And right now, we are in—

*He reaches up in the air, flicks his hand, then opens his palm to reveal a new tiny book has appeared in it, seemingly magic, out of nowhere. All look at it.*

**ANNE, BRANWELL, and CHARLOTTE.** Glass Town.

## Glass Town

*African tribal drums begin beating and we are now in Glass Town, in the deep heat of Africa. The lighting here should be different. We are in a very different place.*

*The siblings do not change clothing or costumes for any of their transitions—they simply become their new characters.*

**CHARLOTTE.** Yes! Right now, we are in Glass Town and, right now, I am General Arpad Amatasia. (*Takes the Glass Town book and writes in it.*)

**BRANWELL/HAPATENSIO.** It is good to see you brother.

**CHARLOTTE/AMATASIA.** And you, as well, brother.

**EMILY.** All right then. Glass Town. (*Heading to write in the book.*)  
In that case, right now, I am—

**CHARLOTTE/AMATASIA.** You are my servant. A lad named (*Emphasizing how boring it is.*) Robert.

**EMILY.** You can't name me. You did not bring us here.

**CHARLOTTE/AMATASIA.** You're right. (*Handing Branwell back the book.*) Hapatensio, who is this?

**EMILY.** I want to be a general as well.

**CHARLOTTE/AMATASIA.** Ah no good sir, the last general wreaked terrible havoc on the kingdom if you recall. Hapatensio?

**BRANWELL/HAPATENSIO.** Right now, you are...Robert.

*Branwell and Charlotte laugh. He writes in the book.*

And where is my trusted advisor, Old Colonel Totentotenstead?

**ANNE/TOTENTOTENSTEAD.** Right now, I am here, you young whippersnapper.

**EMILY.** But that's not fair! You're all generals and colonels and I'm stuck as a servant!

**CHARLOTTE.** Emily!

*The drums stop. The two sisters stare each other down. Neither will let the other win.*

**ANNE.** Perhaps, instead I can be—

**EMILY/ROBERT.** No. Right now, I am...Robert.

*The drums resume.*

I am so sorry, Lord and Master. I forget my place.

**BRANWELL/HAPATENSIO.** That's quite all right, Robert. I am glad that you've come on this journey with us.

**EMILY/ROBERT.** I as well. Were I not forced to grovel so low, I would not be able to see this. (*Pulls out a large "snake."*) Right now, this be the Deadly Nightshade Crawler. (*To Branwell.*) So sorry, master General Hapatensio, but could not slice in time to prevent from biting and injecting abominable poison into you as you sleep. Right now, you are dying.

*All pause.*

I speak only what is truth. 'Twas not my choice to come to Glass Town. And in Glass Town be the Deadly Nightshade Crawler. I simply follow decisions of others. And your decisions lead to right now.

**ANNE/TOTENTOTENSTEAD.** But surely, there is an antidote to the crawler's poison.

**EMILY/ROBERT.** No. We all know that there is no cure once the crawler has loosed its sweet poison.

**ANNE/TOTENTOTENSTEAD.** The four genii can restore any soldier back to life.

**EMILY/ROBERT.** But the four genii are not here.

*Pause. Then Charlotte gasps.*

**ANNE/TOTENTOTENSTEAD.** What? What is it?

**CHARLOTTE/AMATASIA.** It's only that— (*Gasps again.*)

**ANNE.** (*Dropping character.*) Are you all right?

**CHARLOTTE/AMATASIA.** (*To Branwell.*) Dear brother—'twas not you that the Deadly Nightshade Crawler sank its fangs into—'twas me!

**EMILY/ROBERT.** You?

**CHARLOTTE/AMATASIA.** Yes! Me. (*To Branwell.*) Your mattress is so much firmer than mine and you know how my back aches from all the ordeals—the heavy, loadsome ordeals—so I snuck under your

coverlet to ease my aching bones—woe that I was there to be bitten rather than you!

**ANNE/TOTENTOTENSTEAD.** So *you* received the venom?

**CHARLOTTE/AMATASIA.** Yes, dear Totentotenstead—'twas I. Not my dear brother, Hapatensio. So, right now, *I* am dying.

**EMILY/ROBERT.** Ah— (*Pulls out another snake.*) —but there be *two* Deadly Nightshade Crawlers.

**CHARLOTTE/AMATASIA.** (*Gasping and grabbing the other side of her neck.*) That explains the second bite! It bit me in the neck. *Both* bit me in the neck.

**EMILY/ROBERT.** (*Dryly.*) Did they now?

*Anne looks at Branwell, who has been noticeably silent and still through all of this.*

**ANNE/TOTENTOTENSTEAD.** Perhaps, Hapatensio, we should leave while Amatasia endures his...his...

**EMILY/ROBERT.** Final moments? Nothing to be disturbed about. 'Tis simply the consequences of a life wastefully lived. (*To Branwell.*) Isn't that right...General Hapatensio?

**BRANWELL/HAPATENSIO.** (*Beat.*) Yes.

**CHARLOTTE/AMATASIA.** Oh! Help me! I'm so dizzy!

**EMILY/ROBERT.** Yes. Because first comes the dizziness followed by the mania.

**CHARLOTTE/AMATASIA.** (*Immediately shifting and becoming manic.*) Oh! (*Laughing hysterically.*) The pain! The pain! (*Suddenly moaning.*) To have come all this way only to meet my final end like this! (*Suddenly shivering.*) How much longer must I endure this sorrowful ordeal?!

**ANNE/TOTENTOTENSTEAD.** Really, now, can't this / stop—

**EMILY/ROBERT.** Then after the mania, the poison attacks the insides. Oh, how the intestines burn and shrivel.

*Charlotte grabs her stomach and moans louder than ever before.*

Starting slowly.

*Charlotte stops the loud moan as her pain is now that of a pinprick.*

Almost imperceptibly.

**CHARLOTTE/AMATASIA.** What could that be? It's like a tickling deep within my stomach.

**EMILY/ROBERT.** Then the sharp pain.

*Charlotte screams.*

Then it dissipates.

**CHARLOTTE/AMATASIA.** *(Suddenly calm.)* Oh, thank you Lord in Heaven for letting it go away. I could not bear it a moment longer.

**EMILY/ROBERT.** And just when hope finally bubbles back to the surface—

*A young girl, eleven years old, appears. She is Maria Brontë. The drums immediately cease. Only Branwell can see her. He stares at her, terrified.*

**CHARLOTTE/AMATASIA.** Dear brother Hapatensio. What happens next?

*Maria approaches him, simply looking at him, no discernible expression on her face.*

Hope has bubbled back to the surface so I know that everything is—

*Maria stands face to face with Branwell. She reaches out her hand to touch his face.*

**BRANWELL.** *(Pulling back violently from Maria.)* No!

*He anxiously searches his pockets.*

**CHARLOTTE/AMATASIA.** What are you looking for?

*Branwell pulls out a small red bottle.*

**ANNE.** No! *(Harshly to Charlotte.)* You said you destroyed them all! That there was no more!

*Hands shaking, Branwell attempts to unscrew the bottle.*

*(Reaching for him.)* No! You mustn't!

**EMILY/ROBERT.** Smart thinking, Master Hapatensio!

**ANNE.** *(To Emily.)* No! He can't!

**EMILY/ROBERT.** That be for your brother, yes, Master?

**BRANWELL.** Brother?

**EMILY/ROBERT.** Yes. Give me that. It be antidote for the bites. Yes?

**CHARLOTTE/AMATASIA.** Yes! That's what it is! Give him the antidote, dear brother.

**BRANWELL.** There is no antidote—there is no—

**EMILY/ROBERT.** (*Gently taking the bottle from him.*) Ah. Thank you for this.

**CHARLOTTE/AMATASIA.** Yes! Thank you, darling. Now I can—

*Branwell lunges for the bottle. Rather than let him get it, Emily smashes it on the floor. Branwell rages and gets on all fours, attempting to salvage anything he can of the contents.*

**ANNE.** Stop it! You'll cut yourself!

*Charlotte lets out a horrified shriek. This distracts Branwell. The drums return, louder and faster, as Charlotte sways frantically and collapses to the floor in her final throes of death.*

*Silence. Anne looks at Branwell who stares at the "dead" Charlotte.*

Are you all right?

*Branwell continues to stare.*

**ANNE/TOTENTOTENSTEAD.** Bran—I mean... Young Hapatensio, are you all right?

*Branwell looks at her now.*

Hapatensio, we must now do something before we attract the Nightshade Crawler's mates.

...

Hapatensio, what now?

*Branwell still stares at her.*

You are in charge of this expedition now. You can change things.

...

Right now, you are in charge. Tell us what to do.

...

Tell us right now.

**BRANWELL/HAPATENSIO.** *(Slowly coming back.)* Yes.

**ANNE/TOTENTOTENSTEAD.** Good. Because right now, you are—

**BRANWELL/HAPATENSIO.** Right now...right now, I am General Genzia Hapatensio. *(To Maria.)* Right now, I am Hapatensio and I am in control of this land. *(Holds out the Glass Town book and Maria disappears.)* And we must...we must address the situation at hand. We honor my fallen comrade—my brother both in adventure and in life. Right now, we must...we must—

**EMILY/ROBERT.** We must bury him before his dead body rots.

**ANNE/TOTENTOTENSTEAD.** *(Pulling out a rag.)* First we ought to clean up the grounds. Sanctify them. *(Begins to clean up some of the glass and spilled liquid.)* To remove any shards of unholliness from this fair land before they prove to be another...distraction from our task at hand.

**BRANWELL/HAPATENSIO.** Old Colonel Totentotenstead, you are aged and lack stamina, let me assist you.

*Branwell gets on his knees to clean up the glass.*

**EMILY.** No! Hapatensio would not get on all fours and clean up. He would make Robert do it.

**ANNE/TOTENTOTENSTEAD.** Robert...why are you talking about yourself in third person?

**EMILY.** Oh drop it, Anne.

**ANNE.** Emily!

**EMILY.** No! If he wants to play, he has to play right. You gave him the choice and so he chose, but that doesn't give him the right to break the rules. *(To Branwell.)* Robert is a lowly servant and Hapatensio disrespects him. You know that. You can't break the rules!

**ANNE.** You broke the rules first when you didn't accept your christening as Robert. And then when you brought up burial, even though Hapatensio was the one in charge.

**EMILY.** In charge?! You call what he's doing being "in charge"?

**ANNE/TOTENTOTENSTEAD.** Come, Hapatensio, let us—

**EMILY.** I didn't choose Glass Town. (*To Branwell.*) When you name the land, you play by its rules. You know that. (*Dismissively kicking the "dead" Charlotte who does not move in response.*) Charlotte's the inconsistent one. Come, Anne.

*Emily begins to exit.*

**BRANWELL.** You're leaving?

**EMILY.** If you're not going to play right, then yes.

**BRANWELL.** Where are you going?

**EMILY.** Wouldn't you like to know? Anne—let's go.

**ANNE.** But—

**EMILY.** No buts. You promised me we could finish it.

**BRANWELL.** Finish what?

**ANNE.** (*Not fully realizing what she's saying.*) We're creating our own secret world.

**EMILY.** Anne!

**ANNE.** Oh! I didn't mean to—

**EMILY.** A secret world is no longer secret if others know of it.

**ANNE.** I didn't tell the name.

**BRANWELL.** What do you mean your own secret world?

**EMILY.** Exactly what it sounds like.

**BRANWELL.** Without us?

**EMILY.** Yes. A land with no servants or slaves. It's lovely. (*To Anne.*) Let's go.

*Emily exits.*

**ANNE.** Branii—

**EMILY.** (*Offstage.*) Anne!

*Anne remains where she is, unsure of what to do. Her eyes linger over the remaining shattered glass. Branwell's eyes follow her gaze.*

**BRANWELL.** I can clean it up, Anne.

*Anne looks at him.*

You don't believe that it was I that...the bottle was Hapatensio's!

*Anne looks at him.*

For his gout. You don't think that it was mine? I don't touch the stuff anymore. I've learned my lesson the hard way. Yes?

**EMILY.** (*Offstage.*) ANNE!

**ANNE.** I'm coming! (*To Branwell.*) Branii—

**BRANWELL.** I'm fine.

**EMILY.** (*Offstage.*) NOW Anne!

**BRANWELL.** She beckons.

**ANNE.** She harangues.

*He smiles. She eventually smiles back.*

I don't want to leave you.

**BRANWELL.** You always took such good care of me.

**ANNE.** I always will. (*Kisses his cheek.*) I'll be back.

*She exits. Branwell remains. Beat.*

**CHARLOTTE.** (*Still lying dead.*) A new world. So that's what they're up to.

**BRANWELL.** You knew?

**CHARLOTTE.** No. Just saw them secreting away and giggling like feckless schoolgirls so I knew something was brewing.

**BRANWELL.** And it doesn't bother you?

**CHARLOTTE.** Of course not. Help me up.

*Branwell helps her up.*

Why should I care? Besides, it's what she wants. If you don't care, or *act* like you don't care, it'll drive her mad. As Thomas Gray says, "Ignorance is bliss." And our feigned ignorance will cause her to blister.

**BRANWELL.** (*Half-heartedly.*) Yes.

**CHARLOTTE.** I'm loathe to admit it, but on one aspect she is correct. In spite of your—...

What I mean to say is, what happened? You seemed...distracted. (*Taking the Glass Town book from him and putting it in her pocket.*) You don't break the rules here. Everywhere else, yes, but—

**BRANWELL.** Nothing happened. It was just a misstep.

*She stares at him.*

A misstep. That's all.

...

*She stares at him.*

...

That's all!

**CHARLOTTE.** And with such vehemence you've revealed yourself.

**BRANWELL.** I've revealed nothing.

**CHARLOTTE.** I know you too well, darling brother. Do not try to obscure with me.

**BRANWELL.** Nothing is wrong, Charlotte.

**CHARLOTTE.** You're a ferocious liar, but all right. (*Beat.*) And one more point of accuracy on her behalf, I am inconsistent.

**BRANWELL.** You are consistent in your inconsistency, therefore you are not inconsistent.

**CHARLOTTE.** Man, you're brilliant. It's no wonder Father loves you best. You are his son. "The future of—"

...

...

Right then. You should rest.

**BRANWELL.** I still see them.

**CHARLOTTE.** See...?

**BRANWELL.** I know I told you it stopped, but it hasn't. On the contrary, it's more.

*Charlotte's eyes glance toward the shattered glass.*

It's not the laudanum! You saw me! I didn't take it!

**CHARLOTTE.** (*Bending over to pick up the glass.*) Of course not, I was simply noting that someone could get hurt with the shards still lying here. Leave it to Emily to make such a mess.

**BRANWELL.** You don't believe me.

**CHARLOTTE.** I believe you're tired and, to you, it appears that they were here.

**BRANWELL.** It was just Maria this time. Elizabeth wasn't there.

**CHARLOTTE.** (*Unable to contain herself and holding up the shards.*)  
Who gave it to you?! I destroyed all the ones you'd hidden!

...

*Branwell looks away.*

...

...

(*Regaining her composure.*) Do you think they're really creating their own land?

**BRANWELL.** What?

**CHARLOTTE.** Emily and Anne. Do you think they're really—

**BRANWELL.** You said you didn't care.

**CHARLOTTE.** I lied.

**BRANWELL.** Anne said it had a name, so—

**CHARLOTTE.** Oh. Well if Anne said it has a name...

...

...

Let's call them.

**BRANWELL.** Call—?

**CHARLOTTE.** Maria and Elizabeth. Let's summon them.

**BRANWELL.** What?

**CHARLOTTE.** If *you* were the one to summon *them*—

**BRANWELL.** Me?

**CHARLOTTE.** If you take charge then you wouldn't be so frightened—

**BRANWELL.** I'm not—

**CHARLOTTE.** You'll see. They're not real.

**BRANWELL.** They are!

**CHARLOTTE.** Right now,—

**BRANWELL.** No.

**CHARLOTTE.** Trust me. Right now,—

**BRANWELL.** Charlotte!

**CHARLOTTE.** I'm not afraid. Remember, I knew them better than you. You were only seven when they died.

**BRANWELL.** You were only nine. And I was almost eight.

**CHARLOTTE.** Yes. That was not a fun birthday for you.

**BRANWELL.** I shouldn't have told you.

**CHARLOTTE.** It's just a game.

**BRANWELL.** Let's find Emily and Anne.

*Mysterious music starts. Something involving rattles.*

**CHARLOTTE.** (*Conjuring.*) Oh, dear sisters!

**BRANWELL.** What are you doing?

**CHARLOTTE.** Dear sweet sisters gone before your time.

**BRANWELL.** Stop it!

*Charlotte continues to chant.*

Charlotte!

**CHARLOTTE.** My dear, departed sisters, please show yourselves so Branii won't be so afraid.

**BRANWELL.** Please...

**CHARLOTTE.** Right now, I want Maria and Elizabeth Brontë to—

**BRANWELL.** I said stop it!

*Charlotte suddenly stops and gazes at something in horror.*

What? What is it?

**CHARLOTTE.** It's them.

**BRANWELL.** (*Looking around in terror.*) Where?! I don't see them!

**CHARLOTTE.** (*As if hearing a voice.*) What? What was that you said, darling Elizabeth? (*To the invisible sister.*) That's very flattering. You're looking beautiful as well if I do say so.

**BRANWELL.** Charlotte—

**CHARLOTTE.** (*To another spot onstage.*) And Maria! Oh, how I've missed you! (*Hugs the invisible sister.*) What? Oh, yes. My waistline has diminished! See, Branii? There's nothing to be afraid of. (*Pretending to hold both sisters' hands and swing them.*) See how I hold their hands?

**BRANWELL.** They're not here.

**CHARLOTTE.** Of course they are! (*Turning to one of them.*) Can you believe that he's afraid of you? Who could be afraid of sweet sister Elizabeth.

**BRANWELL.** Don't mock me.

**CHARLOTTE.** (*Laughing as if one of the sisters has told a joke.*) What a jokester you are, Maria! Branii, did you just hear the yarn that Maria spun about the vicar / and the curate?

**BRANWELL.** This isn't funny!

**CHARLOTTE.** It seems as if the vicar was out of sugar and so he asked the curate—

**BRANWELL.** You don't see them!

**CHARLOTTE.** I do! They're here now and we're having a jolly time.

**BRANWELL.** Stop it!

**CHARLOTTE.** Come play, Branii. There's nothing to—

**BRANWELL.** I said stop it!

*Branwell violently shakes Charlotte. She immediately stops as does the music.*

**CHARLOTTE.** Ow! You hurt me!

**BRANWELL.** (*More to himself.*) They're not real. They're not real.

**CHARLOTTE.** Branii—

**BRANWELL.** It's all in my imagination.

**CHARLOTTE.** You mustn't be—

**BRANWELL.** (*Closes his eyes.*) Right now, I am Lord Northangerland.

**CHARLOTTE.** All right then. Right now, I am—

**BRANWELL.** (*Still with eyes closed.*) I am Lord Northangerland. And I am alone. Utterly alone.

**CHARLOTTE.** You mustn't act so childish—

**BRANWELL.** Right now, I am alone!

**CHARLOTTE.** No! I'm not going to leave you alone! You'll—

**BRANWELL.** (*Opening his eyes.*) I'll what?!

**CHARLOTTE.** ...

I'm not leaving you alone.

**BRANWELL.** (*Closes his eyes again and breathes deep.*) And Lord Northangerland screamed as he was stuck in the pit of hideous crawlers. Lashing and slithering as they smothered him with their leathery skins and flecked tongues.

**CHARLOTTE.** No!

**BRANWELL.** ...

No. Crawlers are only found in Glass Town. They could not have found their way across the sea here. They cannot swim. No. Crawlers are not found here. Not in Angria.

*He pulls out a new tiny book.*

## Angria

*Beautiful and peaceful music plays—harps, flutes, and other floating instruments. It is bright. There is air here.*

*Branwell opens his eyes and sees the new land around him. He smiles.*

**BRANWELL/NORTHANGERLAND.** And so it was that I, Lord Northangerland, awoke from my horrid nightmare to find myself, once again, home. Alone. Safe and sound in Angria. It was only a dream. Only a dream. Difficult to shake but a dream nonetheless. A nightmare. So I stretch and luxuriate in the silken sheets. The only set to be found anywhere on this side of the world. Lovers crawl into this bed simply to feel the sheets—no. It is me they are after. The sheets are just a happy corollary. Everyone loves Lord Northangerland.

*Anne appears. Branwell stares at her.*

**ANNE/CAROLINE.** Right now, I am Caroline, Lord Northangerland's daughter. May I enter, Father?

**CHARLOTTE.** He won't let you in.

**ANNE/CAROLINE.** I'm sorry I went away. I told you I'd be back.

**BRANWELL/NORTHANGERLAND.** Yes. You did.

*Anne looks anxiously at him.*

...

*Branwell smiles and puts the Angria book away.*

My dearest Caroline. I had the most awful dream.

**ANNE/CAROLINE.** Tell me, Papa.

**BRANWELL/NORTHANGERLAND.** I was in a pit swarming with crawlers. (*Anne squeals. Branwell laughs.*) Dear, sweet one, 'twas only a dream.

**ANNE/CAROLINE.** I know, Papa. Crawlers do not exist in Angria.

**BRANWELL/NORTHANGERLAND.** Very true.

**ANNE/CAROLINE.** (*Looking at Charlotte.*) Father, has Mother / arrived—

**BRANWELL/NORTHANGERLAND.** You know your mother is not welcome here.

**ANNE/CAROLINE.** I see. And has the duke visited?

**BRANWELL/NORTHANGERLAND.** Zamorna knows better than to trod my doorstep.

**ANNE/CAROLINE.** But Father—

**BRANWELL/NORTHANGERLAND.** Caroline, he's a bastard. (*Anne squeals again.*) You cannot be my daughter and be so squeamish. Especially in matters involving brutes like Zamorna.

**ANNE/CAROLINE.** Is it true that he plans to usurp?

**BRANWELL/NORTHANGERLAND.** (*Laughing.*) What Zamorna plans to do is between him and his army. They know they cannot overtake me.

*Emily appears.*

**EMILY/ZAMORNA.** Right now, I am Zamorna.

*Anne squeals and hides.*

**BRANWELL/NORTHANGERLAND.** I did not summon you.

**EMILY/ZAMORNA.** No, you didn't.

**BRANWELL/NORTHANGERLAND.** There is a great wall surrounding Angria that is impenetrable by—

**EMILY/ZAMORNA.** —all but me.

**BRANWELL/NORTHANGERLAND.** But that's not how it works.

**EMILY/ZAMORNA.** It worked for me.

**BRANWELL/NORTHANGERLAND.** The wall has been reinforced. You cannot suddenly traverse—

**EMILY/ZAMORNA.** Lady Alice let me in.

**BRANWELL/NORTHANGERLAND.** Lady Alice did not birth this land, I did.

**EMILY/ZAMORNA.** How fertile of you.

**BRANWELL/NORTHANGERLAND.** Angria is mine.

**EMILY/ZAMORNA.** Not when I take over. Lady Alice has granted me—

**BRANWELL/NORTHANGERLAND.** No. I do not allow Lady Alice to—

**CHARLOTTE/LADY ALICE.** Right now, I am Lady Alice.

**EMILY/ZAMORNA.** Lady Alice, you're leaving Northangerland.

**CHARLOTTE/LADY ALICE.** Yes. Yes I am.

**BRANWELL/NORTHANGERLAND.** But—

**EMILY/ZAMORNA.** (*Grabbing Charlotte to her.*) We are madly in love.

**CHARLOTTE/LADY ALICE.** You are too much of a child, Northangerland.

**BRANWELL/NORTHANGERLAND.** If I'm a child then why do you choose this brute, not even half my age?

**CHARLOTTE/LADY ALICE.** Numbers are numbers. Feelings are feelings.

**BRANWELL/NORTHANGERLAND.** I shall create another wall that—

**EMILY/ZAMORNA.** Another wall? How droll.

*Emily and Charlotte laugh.*

**BRANWELL/NORTHANGERLAND.** My army of tiny fighters—

**EMILY/ZAMORNA.** Like the tiny fighters that sprang to life already in far-off Glass Town?

**BRANWELL/NORTHANGERLAND.** A sudden hurricane will prevent you from—

**EMILY/ZAMORNA.** Reminiscent of the tumultuous storm that kept the Flexonians from inhabiting Verdopolis? Really, now.

**CHARLOTTE/LADY ALICE.** It's too late, Northangerland. My bags are packed.

**ANNE/CAROLINE.** (*Emerging from her hiding place and running to Charlotte.*) No! Mother! He's a brute!

**CHARLOTTE/LADY ALICE.** You've been listening to your father.

**EMILY/ZAMORNA.** Come child, I shall raise you as my own.

**BRANWELL/NORTHANGERLAND.** (*Grabbing Anne.*) No! You've taken my wife—

**EMILY/ZAMORNA.** Your third wife.

**BRANWELL/NORTHANGERLAND.** Nevertheless. You shall not take my daughter as well.

**CHARLOTTE/LADY ALICE.** She is my daughter from my first husband.

**BRANWELL/NORTHANGERLAND.** Nevertheless. I've raised her. She calls me papa.

**ANNE/CAROLINE.** Papa!

**BRANWELL/NORTHANGERLAND.** See?

**CHARLOTTE/LADY ALICE.** Caroline, you will obey your mother.

**BRANWELL/NORTHANGERLAND.** She's mine.

**CHARLOTTE/LADY ALICE.** She does not belong to you.

**EMILY/ZAMORNA.** She is ours now.

**BRANWELL/NORTHANGERLAND.** You cannot keep siding against me!

**EMILY/ZAMORNA.** Then do not make it so easy for us to do so.

**CHARLOTTE/LADY ALICE.** Come, sweet girl.

**ANNE/CAROLINE.** What if I want to stay?

**CHARLOTTE/LADY ALICE.** Why on Earth would you want to do that?

**ANNE/CAROLINE.** (*Looking to Branwell.*) Well...

**EMILY/ZAMORNA.** I order you to come. We shall away the three of us.

**BRANWELL.** You can't do that!

**EMILY/ZAMORNA.** Why not?

**BRANWELL.** (*Pulling out the Angria book.*) I started Angria! It's mine.

**EMILY.** Just because you started it—

**ANNE/CAROLINE.** Papa. Do not fall for Zamorna's traps—you know as well as I that—

**BRANWELL.** (*To Emily.*) Shall I write you out of it?

**EMILY.** Try.

**ANNE/CAROLINE.** (*Running to Branwell.*) Help, Papa! A crawler!

**EMILY.** Crawlers do not exist in Angria.

**ANNE/CAROLINE.** Or so we thought!

**EMILY.** It's over, Anne. Branwell ruined things yet again.

**ANNE/CAROLINE.** No! Zamorna, no more of your tricks!

**EMILY.** Anne, I said—

**ANNE/CAROLINE.** (*As pointedly surreptitious as possible to her sisters.*) Put aside your trifling! We mustn't forget the purpose to stay in this land...in all our lands. Yes?

**EMILY.** What "purpose" have we—

*Anne looks concerned at Branwell. He looks back and she averts her eyes.*

**BRANWELL.** What? Why are you looking at me?

**CHARLOTTE/LADY ALICE.** (*Reluctantly.*) Ah, youthful Caroline, as usual, out of the mouths of babes comes the wisdom of the ages. (*To Branwell.*) I do beg your indulgence, dear husband.

**BRANWELL.** What are you doing?

**CHARLOTTE/LADY ALICE.** It was the overwhelming scent of the coriander—it momentarily blinded and confused our thoughts. (*To Anne.*) Thank you for reminding us of our purpose, dear daughter. (*To Branwell.*) What say you husband? What shall occur next?

**BRANWELL.** I'm not a child.

**CHARLOTTE/LADY ALICE.** Of course not. 'Twas profligacy that bade me speak those foul phrases.

**BRANWELL.** I know what you're doing.

**ANNE/CAROLINE.** Yes! Because you are the creator and the all-knowing and—

**BRANWELL.** (*Throws his tiny book on the floor.*) I'm sick of the three of you teaming up against me! It's no wonder you hid your names—I would too rather than have someone connect me with those puerile scribblings you call poetry!

*The sisters look at each other, confused.*

**CHARLOTTE/LADY ALICE.** What mean you, Northanglerand? Has one of us taken up the quill?

**BRANWELL.** Who are Acton, Currer, and Ellis Bell? (*Silence.*) Surely not pseudonyms for Anne, Charlotte, and Emily Brontë? Because why would the three of you be sending out poems of your own and not including me?

**CHARLOTTE/LADY ALICE.** We haven't the foggiest—

**BRANWELL.** You dare deny it? (*Pulling out a larger, normal-sized book from somewhere on the stage.*) "Poems."—Really now, what an inspired title! "Poems by Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell. Publisher: Aylott and Jones, 8 Paternoster Row. London."

**EMILY.** (*Under her breath.*) Note that Currer is first.

*Silence from the others.*

**BRANWELL.** Nothing? No response from my perpetually loquacious dear sisters? (*Silence.*) Was it just another game then? Fine. Let's keep playing. Right now, we are at Aylott and Jones. (*Shoves the "Poems" book into Charlotte's hands.*)

**CHARLOTTE.** That's not—

## Aylott and Jones

*Perhaps the sound of a shopkeeper's bell as a door opens on a tiny London publishing house.*

**BRANWELL/AYLOTT.** Right now, I am the laudable Mr. Aylott. And who might you be? Ah! Right now, you must be Mr. Bell!

*Beat.*

**EMILY/ELLIS.** Yes.

**BRANWELL/AYLOTT.** *My honorable,* Mr. Bell. And right now, this must be your brother, Mr. Bell and your other brother, Mr. Bell.

**ANNE.** (*Quietly.*) You weren't supposed to know.

**BRANWELL/AYLOTT.** Speak up! Right now, you are Acton, isn't that right?

...

What? So silent? Don't you want to play? Play at being the Bell Brothers? Play at being published poets?

**ANNE.** It only sold three copies.

**BRANWELL.** After reading it, I'm not surprised.

**CHARLOTTE.** That's cheeky.

**BRANWELL.** Why not me, too? Is my writing not up to snuff? (*No response.*) I asked you a question! Does my writing not merit a place alongside yours?

...

...

I see.

**CHARLOTTE.** You're a man. You don't need subterfuge to get your work out there.

**BRANWELL.** But all three of you together. Without me.

**ANNE.** It wasn't meant to hurt you. You weren't even supposed to find out.

**BRANWELL.** But I did.

...

So the three of you are sending secret writings out into the world. Your poetry. While my stories and my poetry...

...

...

*Silence.*

**ANNE/CAROLINE.** Papa...

...

...

...

Papa...

*Branwell starts to exit. Anne begins to sing.\* Branwell stops.*

When the roses bloom in nighttime's gloom,  
The wind will rustle by.  
When the lilies fade in the sunshine's glade,  
The whole wide moor will cry.

*Anne looks to the others, especially to Charlotte. Beat.*

**CHARLOTTE/LADY ALICE.** (*Singing quietly.*)

But Angria, the land of pride,  
Where ocean's waves bring in the tide.

*Anne joins in and grabs Charlotte's hand.*

**ANNE/CAROLINE and CHARLOTTE/LADY ALICE.**

Sweet Angria, such joy you bring,  
It's your great shores to which we cling.

*Anne reaches out for Emily to join. Emily stares at them.  
Anne looks even more beseechingly at Emily who refuses to acquiesce.*

**ANNE/CAROLINE.** (*Pleading.*)

Oh Angria, we have no choice  
But offer strong to you our voice.

**EMILY.** You want the truth then?

**ANNE/CAROLINE.** Please Zamorna, join in our song.

**EMILY.** Is that what you want, dear brother? Or are you Mr. Aylott, our publisher? Or is it Northangerland? It's so hard to keep track of who you are these days.

**CHARLOTTE/LADY ALICE.** He is Northangerland, isn't that right, esteemed husband?

**EMILY.** Our brother asked a question about his writing and our writing and I think deserves the truth.

**ANNE.** No!

**EMILY.** Just about the poems. That's all. (*To Branwell.*) That's what you're concerned about, yes? Our "puerile poetry." (*Grabs the "Poems" book from Charlotte.*) Why your writing was not...

\* There is no prescribed melody for the song and each production should come up with their own.

“up to snuff”? (*Picking up the tiny Angria book Branwell threw on the ground.*) For here lies the history of Angria. Every war. Every romance. Every word.

You may have first birthed it, but it takes constant care and devotion and invention and never-ending inception and originality for something this intricate and exquisite to continue to thrive. Things must always be born anew. Not retreaded upon. So, you’re wrong. It’s not yours. You should be grateful we even let you in. We don’t need you—I don’t need you—

**ANNE.** Emily—

**EMILY/ZAMORNA.** (*Throwing the “Poems” book at Anne.*) That’s not my name! I am Zamorna...and I don’t need any of you! I don’t need anybody!

**ANNE.** Please, Emily—

**EMILY/ZAMORNA.** I am Zamorna, talking to my troops. Brave men, you have followed me across the globe as we have fought for the rights that the good Lord has bestowed upon us but have been crushed and trampled by so many tyrants. It is now that I ask you to trust me as we enter another battle.

Right now, I am Capitus, Senior Brigade Man in Zamorna’s most elite force. (*As Capitus.*) Yes General. Anything you say.

(*As Zamorna.*) Thank you, Capitus. I have always known that I could trust you most of all.

**CHARLOTTE/LADY ALICE.** Zamorna, I—

**EMILY.** (*As Capitus.*) I owe my life to you, General Zamorna.

(*As Zamorna.*) And I you. You have fought bravely many a time for me.

**CHARLOTTE/LADY ALICE.** My dear, Capitus, I do think—

**EMILY.** No!!! Lady Alice is not present now.

**CHARLOTTE/LADY ALICE.** But—

**EMILY.** Right now, I am Under-Brigade Man Toadmus. (*As Toadmus, an unsavory character with a lisp.*) Yes. I, too, would do anything for you, General Zamorna.

(*As Zamorna.*) Ah, Toadmus. You dare to speak after the ignominy you’ve already caused.

**CHARLOTTE.** You cannot—

**EMILY.** (*Ignoring Charlotte. As Toadmus.*) Please, General, 'twas all a misunderstanding.

(*As Zamorna.*) I do not call treason, misunderstanding.

(*As Capitus.*) Treason, my lord?! What say you about this?

(*As Toadmus.*) Oh, Capitus. You sniveling, obsequious sycophant.

(*As Capitus.*) How dare you, sir! You shall speak with respect to your senior officer!

(*As Toadmus.*) Senior my foot. I look down upon you as the lick-spittle and toady you are!

(*As Capitus.*) And you should speak! *Toadmus.*

(*As Toadmus.*) How dare you scorn my Christian name!

(*As Capitus.*) I shall scorn as much as I care to! Your mother must have been prescient to know what a *toad* you would turn out to be!

(*As Toadmus.*) Don't you ever speak of my sweet mother! (*Drawing a "sword."*) Draw your sword, mister!

(*As Capitus.*) Gladly! (*Drawing his "sword."*) En garde you foul scallywag!

*Emily fights with herself—running wild all over the stage.*

(*As Toadmus.*) You may think that you can best me, "Captain," but you shall see what a mockery you truly are!

(*As Capitus.*) I have fought near three thousand men and o'er two hundred wild beasts—I shall not be bested by less than a hunk of manhood.

*She continues to fight with herself.*

(*As Toadmus.*) I should not speak of hunks of manhood.

(*As Capitus.*) Really?

(*As Toadmus.*) Really! Especially when your manhood depends on cuckolding General Zamorna!

(*As Zamorna.*) What is this?! Of what does he speak, Capitus?

(*As Capitus.*) Die you toad! (*Drawing the sword and stabbing Toadmus.*) How did you know about that?! Scoundrel! How did you know!

(*As Toadmus; gurgling in death.*) Even a toad knows not to hop all over someone else's lily pad. And with that, I take my final breath, and croak.

*Toadmus dies.*

(As *Zamorna*.) *Capitus*—is what the toad said true?

(As *Capitus*.) My general, my great liege—

(As *Zamorna*.) So it was *you* with Lady Alice! And all this while you led me to believe that she was untrue with Northangerland! (*Draws his sword*.) Have you any final words?

(As *Capitus*.) Pity, my lord, pity!

(As *Zamorna*.) Pity?! I am *Zamorna*! I know no pity!

*Zamorna slays Capitus, slitting his throat. Capitus gurgles and sputters. Zamorna laughs heartily and deafeningly. Capitus collapses. Zamorna takes his sword and licks the blood off of it.*

*Beat.*

(As *Zamorna* to the other soldiers.) And all you other soldiers of mine, take heed! No toad nor no captain shall e'er o'erthrow me! Shall e'er make a mockery of me! I need no one! You think I need any of you?! Ha! I am *Zamorna*! You should thank your insignificant God that I allow you to serve me! I am your master! I am your God! Bow down to me! Me!

*Emily is exhausted.*

I don't need anyone. I don't need anyone at all. How could you possibly believe yourselves to be my equal? I suffer your company and endure your pitiful attempts at creation.

*She throws the tiny book to the floor.*

*Silence as the others simply stare—mesmerized and horrified by her outburst.*

*Then Anne bursts into tears and runs off.*

**CHARLOTTE.** Bravo.

*Charlotte goes off after Anne. Branwell stares at the book, his expression unclear. He addresses it.*

**BRANWELL.** So it's finally the end of brigade men *Capitus* and *Toadmus*?

...

I never liked them.

**EMILY.** Nor did I.

**BRANWELL.** I'm glad to see them go.

...

...

You think I've neglected it?

**EMILY.** ...

Yes.

**BRANWELL.** And that you can do a better job of creating?

**EMILY.** It takes care and perseverance for something to grow. You leave it alone and it rots. It decays.

**BRANWELL.** It dies?

*The two look at each other for a long time.*

*Branwell finally looks away and toward the book.*

*He walks over to the book, staring down at it. Then bends over to pick it up—*

**EMILY.** That's your choice then?

*Branwell hovers.*

**BRANWELL.** I want to go back.

**EMILY.** Back?

**BRANWELL.** To the way it used to be. I don't think I can keep...

...

...

Help me, Emily?

...

I can't...I'm scared to...How are you so confident in your solitude?

**EMILY.** I do not like other people.

...

I love *you*.

**BRANWELL.** Yes?

**EMILY.** But I don't like people.

...

And you...you like people too much. But not yourself. I can't help you with that.

...

...

But I can help you with something else. If you really want it.

...

...

...

**BRANWELL.** Do you really have another kingdom? With Anne?

**EMILY.** Yes. You and Charlotte always had yours and we needed our own.

**BRANWELL.** But I was always part of it.

**EMILY.** You always were. Yes.

**BRANWELL.** ...

Can I come?

...

Purely to see it. I don't have to stay...it won't be for long, I just—

**EMILY.** Branii, I don't think that's—

*Anne appears.*

**ANNE.** Perhaps you could.

**EMILY.** No.

**ANNE.** Why not? Are you ashamed by my part of the pitiful attempt to create it?

*Charlotte appears.*

**CHARLOTTE.** That was hurtful.

**EMILY.** Oh / Lord.

**CHARLOTTE.** You cannot be reckless.

**EMILY.** I?

**CHARLOTTE.** Wherever you go, there lies destruction.

**ANNE.** That's a bit—

**EMILY.** Thank you, Anne, but I don't need—

**CHARLOTTE.** (*Picking up the Angria book still on the floor.*) Branii, this is yours, yes?

*She holds it out to Branwell. He hesitates then takes it. Emily turns away.*

Right then. What shall we do next?

**EMILY.** It's cruel.

**CHARLOTTE.** Cruel?

**EMILY.** What we're doing.

**CHARLOTTE.** And what, pray tell, is that?

**EMILY.** Who is it for? Who is all of this for?

**ANNE.** Emily—

**EMILY.** No! Tell me, Charlotte, who is it for? Really?

*Charlotte stares daggers at Emily.*

All right then, I have an idea of what we shall do next. Branwell, you said you wanted to go back to the way things used to be, yes? Charlotte, we're going to need your help with this as well.

**CHARLOTTE.** Gladly.

**EMILY.** You were always the best of us at how to start.

**CHARLOTTE.** I thought you abhorred our pitiful attempts at—

**ANNE.** We're starting a new one then?

**EMILY.** Not exactly.

**ANNE.** Does it have a name?

**EMILY.** Yes. (*Staring at Charlotte.*) Thornfield Hall.

**CHARLOTTE.** What are you doing?

**BRANWELL.** I know that name. It's from that story you were writing. About the governess.

**EMILY.** Good memory! *Jane Eyre.*

**ANNE.** Emily—

**BRANWELL.** Yes! And that brute that keeps his mad wife locked in the attic and then he goes blind, right?

**EMILY.** Yes! Rochester is his name.

**CHARLOTTE.** Is nothing sacred to you?!

**EMILY.** What's the matter, Charlotte? It's a compliment. It was a lovely story. Wasn't it, Branii?

**BRANWELL.** Yes.

**EMILY.** Wouldn't you like to see what new developments Charlotte has come up with?

**BRANWELL.** (*To Charlotte.*) Yes—you haven't spoken of it in some time. Where is it?

**CHARLOTTE.** What do you mean?

**BRANWELL.** (*Holding up the Angria tiny book.*) Here's Angria, where's the world of *Jane Eyre*?

**ANNE.** How about if we create another world.

**BRANWELL.** No. Let's go to Thornfield Hall.

**EMILY.** Yes! It'll be just like old times. And that's what Branii wants. The way things used to be. And it used to be that we'd sit and regale each other with the twists and turns of the various plots we were all fashioning. Charlotte, you with *Jane Eyre*, Anne, you with *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* and me with my little tale about Heathcliff and Catherine. Don't you ever wonder what became of those stories?

**BRANWELL.** I figured you'd put them away. Were working on something new.

**EMILY.** Shall I tell you a secret?

**CHARLOTTE.** No. We hold no more secrets.

**EMILY.** So that's the way we're going to play it.

**CHARLOTTE.** We're not playing, we are dealing with reality now.

**EMILY.** Reality? You want reality?

**ANNE.** Emily, don't—

**EMILY.** How about you, Branii? How do you feel about reality?

**CHARLOTTE.** That's enough.

**EMILY.** No. It's not. Right now, we are at Thornfield Hall.

## Thornfield Hall

*A gothic mansion. Shafts of light cut through the gloomy, endless halls and the sound of creaking floorboards and a mournful and lonely violin.*

**EMILY.** Charlotte. Name us.

**CHARLOTTE.** Stop it.

**EMILY/ROCHESTER.** All right then. Dear Reader, right now, I am Rochester. (*To Branwell.*) And you are...

**CHARLOTTE.** I'm warning you.

**BRANWELL/JANE EYRE.** It'll be fun, Charlotte. Watch. Right now, I am Jane Eyre.

**EMILY/ROCHESTER.** Lovely! Oh, Jane, you must help me. For I am blind and I lied, keeping my crazy wife locked in the attic, rather than deal with the truth of the matter. Will you ever forgive me, Jane?!

**BRANWELL/JANE EYRE.** Oh, Rochester! I cannot believe it's true!

**EMILY/ROCHESTER.** Would you like me to tell you the truth of what we've all been up to in this house?

**ANNE.** Right now, we are in Glass Town.

## **Glass Town**

*The drums of Glass Town begin.*

**EMILY.** No! You can't change worlds and—!

**ANNE/TOTENTOTENSTEAD.** Right now, I am Old Colonel Totentotenstead.

**EMILY.** Anne!

**CHARLOTTE.** Yes! Glass Town!

**EMILY.** I won't.

**CHARLOTTE.** She said Glass Town. And if more than one of us agrees—

**EMILY.** No! It's not right.

**BRANWELL.** What's going on?

*The drums get louder.*

**CHARLOTTE/LADY GARINA.** Right now, I am Lady Garina, wife of the now deceased General Amatasia, ravaged by vicious Nightshade Crawlers—

**EMILY.** No!

**CHARLOTTE/LADY GARINA.** *(To Emily.)* Robert, I am appalled by your cheekiness! I will not tolerate such behavior!

**EMILY.** I am not your servant! Right now, we are at Thornfield Hall.

## Thornfield Hall

*The sounds and lights of Thornfield.*

**EMILY/ROCHESTER.** (*To Branwell.*) Jane! My dearest! I know it is hard to believe my actions because they are so inconceivably forced and full of artifice, so I shall now tell you the truth.

**CHARLOTTE.** Artifice?! All right then, right now, we are at Wuthering Heights.

## Wuthering Heights

*The crashing sound of the winds on the moor, the lights of flickering candles and the twinkling of chimes.*

**CHARLOTTE/HEATHCLIFF.** Right now, I am Heathcliff! Oh, look at how big and strong I am! (*To Branwell.*) And right now, you are Catherine, a wild, preposterously thrown together and artlessly drawn character.

## Glass Town

*The drums get even louder.*

**ANNE/TOTENTOTENSTEAD.** Right now, we are in Glass Town. (*To Branwell.*) General Hapatensio!

## Wuthering Heights

*The wind picks up.*

**CHARLOTTE/HEATHCLIFF.** Wuthering Heights! Oh no, Cathy! You've been bit by a dog! Right now, I am a dog.

*Charlotte barks.*

## Thornfield Hall

*The gloominess descends.*

**EMILY/ROCHESTER.** Thornfield Hall. Come with me, Jane!

*The three worlds threaten to envelop each other.*

*Branwell stands—unable to move.*

**ANNE/TOTENTOTENSTEAD.** Hapatensio, come, / look at what the natives have done to our camp!

**CHARLOTTE/HEATHCLIFF.** Cathy, the moors / are ever so windy!

**EMILY/ROCHESTER.** I'm here to tell / you the truth!

**ANNE/TOTENTOTENSTEAD.** Hapatensio!

**CHARLOTTE/HEATHCLIFF.** Cathy!

**EMILY/ROCHESTER.** Jane!

*Maria and Elizabeth Brontë, ten years old, appear.*

*All else freezes. Music and fighting sisters.*

*Branwell considers Maria and Elizabeth. It is an eerie and uncertain moment.*

*He closes his eyes and breathes.*

*Maria and Elizabeth consider him.*

*After some time:*

**ELIZABETH.** They're so loud. I don't remember...were they always this loud?

**MARIA.** Yes.

**ELIZABETH.** How obnoxious.

**MARIA.** Yes.

**ELIZABETH.** Were you this loud, too, Branwell?

**MARIA.** They call him Branii.

**ELIZABETH.** But that's not his name. His name is Patrick Branwell, after Father and Mother. You are Maria, after Mother, (*Disappointed.*) and I am Elizabeth after Auntie.

**MARIA.** Thank you for the lesson on genealogy, Elizabeth.

**ELIZABETH.** I am simply saying that Branwell is a much more elegant name than Branii.

*(To Branwell.)* Don't you think?

...

...

*(To Maria.)* He's ignoring us.

*Branwell makes a run for it.*

*Elizabeth steps on his foot. He yelps. She laughs.*

**MARIA.** Elizabeth! *(Holds out her arm to Branwell.)* Are you all right?

**BRANWELL.** You're not real. I do not see you.

**ELIZABETH.** Then why are you talking to us?

**MARIA.** There is nothing to be afraid of, sweet boy.

**ELIZABETH.** Yes. Don't be so milk-livered. Take charge. Why do you let them bicker so? You're the man. You should take control.

**MARIA.** Elizabeth.

**ELIZABETH.** They're women. They have too much independence. It's revolting.

**MARIA.** Times change.

**ELIZABETH.** Thank God I died when I did.

**MARIA.** Yes, had you waited one more day it would've been on poor Branwell's birthday.

**ELIZABETH.** I tried to wait until after, but figured it was better to just get it over with. I didn't want the specter of my sickness creating a pallor over his birthday celebration.

**MARIA.** So instead he had the specter of your death. You are ever the portrait of compassion.

**ELIZABETH.** Have you forgotten that it was you that died first?

**MARIA.** And do you hear me gloating? Thanking God I died when I did?

*Branwell anxiously searches his pockets. His apprehension grows as he cannot find what he is looking for.*

*(Pulling out a small red vial like the one shattered earlier.)* Is this what you are looking for?

*Branwell reaches out to snatch it. Maria pulls it away.*

**BRANWELL.** Give it to me!

**MARIA.** *(Simply.)* No.

*Branwell breaks down crying.*

**ELIZABETH.** Men aren't supposed to cry.

**BRANWELL.** *(To himself.)* This is not real. This is not real. It's the laudanum. That's all that it is. I don't want you here.

**ELIZABETH.** We don't want to be here either.

**MARIA.** That's not true.

**ELIZABETH.** *(To Maria.)* We're only here because we have a purpose.

**BRANWELL.** Purpose? What purpose?

**ELIZABETH.** So now you're talking to us?

**MARIA.** Everyone has a purpose, my dear.

**BRANWELL.** What's wrong with me?

**MARIA.** Nothing is wrong with you.

**BRANWELL.** Why aren't I like them?

**ELIZABETH.** Because you're not loud. Like yippity dogs they are.

**MARIA.** Elizabeth—

**ELIZABETH.** *(As if reciting an old litany.)* You're not like them because "you're special. You're the boy. You're the one who'll exceed us all."

**MARIA.** Stop it.

**BRANWELL.** My worlds are just as—and my poems are—... They did it without me.

...

Why not me?

...

...

I want to...I need to—

**ELIZABETH.** Is it time to go now?

**MARIA.** You want to go? Then stop jabbering yourself and give it to him.

*Elizabeth rolls her eyes and holds out a pen.*

**BRANWELL.** What's this?

**ELIZABETH.** It's a plum pudding. What does it look like?

**MARIA.** *(To Branwell.)* Take it.

**BRANWELL.** No.

**MARIA.** Use it.

**BRANWELL.** No.

**MARIA.** ...

Fine.

*Immediately the noise and action resume.*

*Charlotte, Emily, and Anne all rush to Branwell and grab his arm.*

**EMILY/**

**CHARLOTTE/**

**ANNE/**

**ROCHESTER.**

**HEATHCLIFF.**

**TOTENTOT.**

Jane! You must come  
at once and help me  
fight this horrible  
beast inside—

You must help me  
avenge the wrongs  
that have been done  
to me—

The crawlers may be  
here before we know it  
and we must—

*Branwell throws his arms up in the air, immediately silencing the drums and violins and wind. The sisters stare at him.*

*He breathes heavily. All await his next move.*

*He rushes off the stage. Maria stops him.*

**MARIA.** No!

*Branwell stops.*

*All watch him.*

*Maria pulls out a tiny book. She holds it out.*

*Branwell stares at it.*

Take it.

*He slowly takes it.*

And the pen.

*Annoyed, Elizabeth holds out the pen for him again. He takes it.*

**ANNE.** Is that a new one?

**EMILY.** Where did you get it?

*Charlotte shushes her. Emily glares at her.*

*Branwell stands motionless.*

**MARIA.** Go on. You say your worlds and poems are just as... prove it.

*Branwell remains still and then lies down on the floor, props up on his arms, and opens the book. He pauses for a moment, dips his pen in the inkwell, then starts to write.*

*The writing appears on the walls as he writes, eventually every surface will be covered with his words. Maybe it's through projections, or Maria and Elizabeth writing with chalk, or some other way for the words to feel as if they are coming to life. There is no sound as all five sisters begin reading his words.*

*"Richmond was a boy of extraordinary promise."*

**EMILY.** Who's Richmond?

*Charlotte shushes her again.*

*Branwell continues writing:*

*"His dear parents lavished him with every gift and opportunity they could afford—and afford they could as they were the richest citizens of the province."*

But which one is it?

**ANNE.** Emily.

**EMILY.** Is this Glass Town or Verdopolis or Angria or...?

*Branwell continues writing:*

*"The province of..."*

**CHARLOTTE.** Yes?

*Branwell pauses. He can't think what to call it. What to name it. He looks frightened. Panic sets in. What to write? The writing begins to dissolve as doubt sets in.*

**CHARLOTTE and MARIA.** Go on.

*Branwell looks at them both. He closes his eyes.*

*The writing slowly reappears as the words run through his mind:*

*“His dear parents lavished him with every gift and opportunity they could afford—and afford they could as they were the richest citizens of the province.”*

**ELIZABETH.** You’ve already said that part.

*Maria shushes her.*

*“The province of—”*

*Silence as Branwell’s eyes are still closed. Suddenly he relaxes. He opens his eyes. He writes in huge, proud letters:*

*“Hathorne.”*

**EMILY.** Hathorne? What the hell is Hathorne?

**ANNE.** Is this a new one, Branii?

*Branwell continues writing:*

*“But the most prized and priceless gift was one they could not offer. It was not Father’s golden cufflinks. Or Mother’s Arabian jewel. Or even the grand—”*

*“Grand” gets crossed out.*

*“great—”*

*“Great” is crossed out.*

*Branwell pauses. Thinks. Then writes:*

*“—imposing house that went on for days. No. To poor Richmond, the most prized and priceless gift that his father and mother could never give him was—”*

*Branwell pauses.*

**CHARLOTTE.** “Love.”

**EMILY.** Of course you’d pick love.

**CHARLOTTE.** It’s always love.

**ANNE.** What is it, Branii? What was the most prized gift Richmond’s parents could not offer?

**ELIZABETH.** I’d say “silence” is the most prized gift.

**MARIA.** Elizabeth.

*Branwell stares at the paper and then continues writing:*

“His—”

*The writing dissolves.*

**CHARLOTTE.** His what? What was the most prized and priceless gift?

*Branwell tries to write but nothing appears. He's out of ink. He dips his pen in the inkwell. The writing resumes.*

“His voice.”

**ELIZABETH.** Well that was unexpected.

*“For, despite all of the riches with which he was born, Richmond was also born deaf.”*

**ANNE.** *(Saddened.)* Oh!

*Branwell picks up speed as he writes. And confidence. There is an energy and vitality that take over him. He starts to enjoy himself.*

*“And so their son remained silent. Voiceless. And yet, as the boy grew, he discovered something in this complete silence. No distractions. No interference. And though he could not express his thoughts in words—the deafness having silenced him forever—it was in his head that his voice rang the clearest and truest.”*

*(Satisfied.)* Oh!

*“But, as with all things, this idyllic childhood was not to last. A year after Richmond's fifth birthday, typhus visited Hawthorne Hall and stayed. Richmond's mother and father fought valiantly, but the unwelcome visitor of a disease entered deep into first, the former, then, the latter, taking the infection from her. Both died within a month of each other.”*

*(Saddened again.)* Oh!

**EMILY.** Wait. What happened?

*“With no other close relations, Richmond, at the tender age of seven, was sent to live and be raised by his puritanical Aunt Violetta. And here, under her overpowering and stifling gaze, the extraordinary promise once part of Richmond's very being was sucked out—bit by bit—until the smiling and joyful boy's face showed only tears and strain.”*

**EMILY.** Stop.

**CHARLOTTE.** No. Let him keep going.

**EMILY.** But—

**ANNE.** Yes, Branii. Keep going.

*“But Richmond was embittered greatly and meditated this plan.”*

**EMILY.** No.

**ANNE.** How exciting!

*“Just to glimpse one kind face, if just for a moment—”*

Oh! I want for him to glimpse a kind face—poor Richmond deserves it!

*“and then settle his score with his aunt—no matter the consequence—and then prevent the law by doing execution on his own person.”*

*Branwell looks up from his writing in exultation.*

**CHARLOTTE.** Yes, it's glorious! Keep writing!

It's brilliant!

*Branwell wipes sweat from his brow and jumps back into the writing.*

**ANNE.** It's terribly exciting!

*“Never before had there been such a mixture of hatred and exuberance—”*

**EMILY.** It's mine.

*Branwell stops mid-sentence and looks at her.*

That last bit. It's mine. And before, that's Charlotte's.

**CHARLOTTE.** I don't know what you're—

**EMILY.** You know as well as I do that it's not his, it's yours. Jane Eyre's parents die of typhus and she's sent to live with her domineering and uncaring aunt.

**CHARLOTTE.** Well, yes, but this is clearly not the same story.

**ANNE.** No. Jane is not deaf.

**CHARLOTTE.** And many people die of typhus.

**EMILY.** But it's your story.

**CHARLOTTE.** It's not. It's Branii's.

*Emily grabs Branwell's tiny book. As she reads out loud, the corresponding words on the set brighten, grow bigger, or do something that calls attention to them.*

**EMILY.** (*Reading out loud.*) "A year after Richmond's fifth birthday, typhus visited Hathorne Hall and stayed. Richmond's mother and father fought valiantly, but the unwelcome visitor of a disease entered deep into first, the former, then, the latter, taking the infection from her. Both died within a month of each other." And how goes yours, Charlotte?

**CHARLOTTE.** I don't recall.

*Emily exits.*

Where are you going?

**ANNE.** I like your story a lot, Branii.

**CHARLOTTE.** Yes. There are similarities but I could never have imagined a figure as tragically beautiful as your Richmond.

**ANNE.** I'm on pins waiting to hear what happens to the poor lad.

*Emily enters reading from a large book. The matching words and phrases in Branwell's writing pop out on the walls.*

**EMILY.** "After my mother and father had been married a year—"

**CHARLOTTE.** Give me that!

**EMILY.** (*Keeping the book out of Charlotte's grasp.*) "—the latter caught the typhus fever while visiting among the poor of a large manufacturing town where his curacy was situated, and where that disease was then prevalent: that my mother took the infection from him, and both died within a month of each other."

*Charlotte grabs the book and holds it close.*

**BRANWELL.** (*Referring to the book.*) What is that?

**CHARLOTTE.** It's nothing.

**EMILY.** It's what you stole from.

**CHARLOTTE.** No.

**ANNE.** How could he? He probably simply subconsciously remembers from when you and Charlotte used to tell us the stories as you were working them out and—

*Branwell grabs the book from Charlotte and reads the front page.*

**CHARLOTTE.** No, Branii!

**BRANWELL.** “*Jane Eyre*. An autobiography. Edited by Currer Bell.” (*Looks at them.*) It’s published.

...

...

**CHARLOTTE.** (*Softly.*) Branii—

*Branwell’s words on the walls begin to slowly swirl.*

**ANNE.** Are you all right?

**CHARLOTTE.** (*To Emily.*) That was a low trick.

**EMILY.** Trick? Who’s the one tricking him into thinking his voice is his own?

*Charlotte touches his shoulder to help him up.*

**BRANWELL.** Leave me alone!

**CHARLOTTE.** Darling, I—

**BRANWELL.** How did it—... When did—... You didn’t tell me.

**CHARLOTTE.** ...

No.

**EMILY.** Nor did we tell that—

**ANNE.** No, Emily.

**BRANWELL.** Tell what?

**ANNE.** Nothing.

**EMILY.** You think only Charlotte has talent enough for a published novel?

*Emily pulls out another large book and reads. Again, Branwell’s matching text is highlighted.*

“I meditated this plan—just to have *one glimpse of your face*, a stare of surprise, perhaps, and pretended pleasure; afterwards *settle my score*

with Hindley; and then prevent the law by doing execution on myself' (Hands him the book.) "Wuthering Heights. A novel by Ellis Bell, in three volumes. Volume One. Thomas Cautley Newby, Publisher."

**ANNE.** I know, why don't we go to—

**EMILY.** You think it's fun having to hide away our triumphs simply to save your wispy feelings?! Show him, Anne. Show him yours.

*Anne turns away.*

Show him!

*Anne slowly reveals another large book: The Tenant of Wildfell Hall.*

**BRANWELL.** ...

...

...

Oh God.

*Branwell drops Wuthering Heights as his words on the walls also come crashing down, then slowly dissolve and disappear.*

**CHARLOTTE.** Oh, Emily.

**BRANWELL.** Leave me alone! All of you!!

**EMILY.** Why? So you can escape with your red poison? / Pretend things are not as they are.

**CHARLOTTE.** Emily! That's enough!

**EMILY.** Enough of shielding him!

**BRANWELL.** I didn't know! I didn't know!

**CHARLOTTE.** We know.

**BRANWELL.** I only wanted to—why can't I—I have so little—

**ANNE.** It's all right.

**BRANWELL.** Oh God!

**CHARLOTTE.** (*Turning on Emily.*) Why do you hate him so?

**EMILY.** I do not hate—

**BRANWELL.** (*Rushing to Maria.*) It's your fault! I told you I couldn't do it and you made me!

*She lovingly touches his face. He pulls away.*

Why did you make me do that?!

**EMILY.** Who are you talking to?

**ANNE.** Should we get Father?

**CHARLOTTE.** No.

**BRANWELL.** (*To Maria.*) Why?!

**CHARLOTTE.** Branii, are they here again?

**EMILY.** Is who here?

**CHARLOTTE.** Branii says that he sees Maria and Elizabeth.

**EMILY.** What?

**MARIA.** Calm down.

**BRANWELL.** No!!!

**CHARLOTTE.** Are they there, Branii?

**EMILY.** You've been encouraging this?

**MARIA.** You've got to calm down.

**ANNE.** How long have you seen them?

**EMILY.** Not you, too, Anne.

**CHARLOTTE.** He mentioned it a little whiles back.

**EMILY.** (*To Branwell.*) You are a brainless, weak man! No. A boy! Not even a man.

**ANNE.** Emily, / please.

**EMILY.** You throw everything away and nearly ruin / the family name—

**CHARLOTTE.** I said enough!

**EMILY.** No! I've had enough! Why do you refuse to see him as he truly is? He drinks and drinks and takes that ruddy stuff from that awful flask that makes him think he sees ghosts and he leads a reckless life and then wonders why he never got the acclaim that he feels is automatically due him. And resents any smidgen of success on our part. We have walked around on eggshells trying to protect him because he is so *fragile* and I am sick of it! You are *lazy*, Branwell. You flit from thing to thing—oh, I think I'll be an artist today! I think I'll be a poet!

**ANNE.** Stop it!

**EMILY.** Indolence!

**CHARLOTTE.** He is not indolent.

**EMILY.** You're right—he's a whirling dervish frolicking from one thing to the next without regard for commitment and steadfastness. The three of us worked hard. We worked hard! And I will not apologize or mollify any further. And to watch him sit there and smugly steal / from you—

**CHARLOTTE.** Will you stop / saying that.

**EMILY.** —and begrudge our success. It takes fidelity and fortitude to create. And our brother is a fickle child. Seeing childish things like ghosts and running away when he does not get his way. And you encourage it.

**ANNE.** We're all of us childish.

**EMILY.** Says the baby.

**ANNE.** It's not my fault I was born last.

**EMILY.** And how am I childish?

**ANNE.** What do you call Glass Town? Angria? Gondal?

**CHARLOTTE.** Gondal! Is that the name of your secret new haven then?

**EMILY.** You weren't supposed to tell!

**CHARLOTTE.** What a childish reaction!

**ANNE.** They would've found out eventually.

**EMILY.** But it was ours!

**BRANWELL.** Yes! Yours! The Brontë Sisters. While I'm relegated to a footnote—an inconsequence. Hell! Even as the Bell *Brothers* I'm absent.

**EMILY.** Don't play that. *We* are absent as the Bell Brothers. We have to use mendacity and veneer in order to get what could be so easily attained by you and your masculinity, anemic as it is. Recall that it is Ellis, Acton, and Curren Bell that get the acclaim, not us.

**ANNE.** (*Pulling out a tiny book.*) Let's go to Gondal.

**EMILY.** You can't keep escaping every time—

**ANNE.** (*To Branwell.*) I want to show you Gondal.

**EMILY.** No.

**CHARLOTTE.** Yes! I want to go.

**EMILY.** You're not invited.

**ANNE.** Yes she is. And Branii, you're coming too.

**BRANWELL.** Don't patronize me.

**ANNE.** I'm not. I won't. Gondal is for all Brontës. (*Gesturing to the unseen-to-her Elizabeth and Maria.*) And that includes you.

**EMILY.** To whom are you speaking?

**ANNE.** Maria and Elizabeth are Brontës as well.

**EMILY.** You can't do that.

**ANNE.** Why not?

**EMILY.** Because they're dead!

**ANNE.** In Gondal, there is no death.

*Huge silence. This pronouncement has never been made before.*

**EMILY.** Don't do that.

**ANNE.** Why not?

**EMILY.** It isn't possible.

**ANNE.** Anything is—

**EMILY.** (*Reaching for the tiny book.*) You cannot make rules in my kingdom—

**ANNE.** (*Holding the book back.*) Our kingdom. Gondal is for all. It's different than everywhere else. The genii of Gondal are able to keep death far from its doors. So in Gondal, there is no need to be afraid. No harm may come to anyone. And there is no hiding.

**MARIA.** (*To Elizabeth.*) We must go now.

*They start to exit.*

**EMILY.** No one may hide?

**ANNE.** No.

**MARIA.** Branii, come with us.

**BRANWELL.** ...

I—

**CHARLOTTE.** Do it.

**MARIA.** Let's go, Branwell. It's time.

**CHARLOTTE.** Do it, Anne.

**MARIA.** Now, Branii!

**BRANWELL.** I—

**ANNE.** Right now, we are in Gondal.

## Gondal

*Gondal sounds different from the other lands we've been to. Even more magical and mysterious, yet lovely. Theremins? Zithers?*

*The living and the dead stare at each other. They see each other. A huge smile comes across Anne's face. She made this happen.*

**EMILY.** You're here.

**MARIA.** We are.

*Anne rushes to Maria and hugs her tight.*

**CHARLOTTE.** How is this possible?

**ANNE.** Anything is possible if you believe it. *(To Maria.)* I've missed you.

**ELIZABETH.** You hardly knew us.

**EMILY.** This isn't right.

**CHARLOTTE.** Are you suddenly scared, Emily?

**ANNE.** Don't goad her. *(To Emily.)* It's all right. We're all together now.

**CHARLOTTE.** *(To Elizabeth.)* You look exactly the same.

**ELIZABETH.** And you've gotten old.

**CHARLOTTE.** That I have! Branwell, we can see them! We can, all of us, see them!

**EMILY.** Anne, you've got to stop this.

**ANNE.** Why?

**EMILY.** Charlotte. Please.

**CHARLOTTE.** Try as you might, you're not going to ruin this,

Emily. We are all of us together at last. Anne, in her kingdom, has created a miracle. Now, Anne, name us! Name us all!

**ANNE/QUEEN AUGUSTA.** Yes! Right now, I am Queen Augusta Geraldine Almeda of Gondal—a realm created for all. (*To Charlotte.*) Right now, you are Princess Carlotta—my daughter, betrothed to Duke Dansforth.

*Beat.*

Right now, you are betrothed to Duke Dansforth.

*Beat.*

(*Looking directly at Emily.*) The duke is set to arrive at any moment for it's his wedding day.

...

There is no hiding in Gondal, Duke Dansforth.

**EMILY.** No. There's not.

**ANNE/QUEEN AUGUSTA.** There you are. It must be the pre-wedding jitters that had you holding your tongue.

**CHARLOTTE/PRINCESS CARLOTTA.** There's a first time for everything.

**ANNE/QUEEN AUGUSTA.** (*To Charlotte.*) Now, Princess Carlotta, who else would you like to join us on this exhilarating day?

**CHARLOTTE/PRINCESS CARLOTTA.** It is your Kingdom, Mother.

**ANNE/QUEEN AUGUSTA.** Gondal is for all.

*The two sisters smile and exchange a happy, contented moment.*

**CHARLOTTE/PRINCESS CARLOTTA.** Then we shall both decide. We are joined, right now, by the Grand Dowager Beatova, my grandmother, and...

**ANNE/QUEEN AUGUSTA.** And right now, by her sister, our aunt, the Marchioness of Swanton.

**MARIA/GRAND DOWAGER BEATOVA.** ...

...

How do you do, my dear daughter?

# THIS PLAY IS NOT OVER!



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