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# To Walk Invisible: The Bronte Sisters

By Sally Wainwright

"We wove a web in childhood,  
A web of sunny air.  
"We dug a spring in infancy  
Of water pure and fair.  
"We sowed in youth a mustard seed,  
"We cut an almond rod;  
"We're now grown up to riper age -  
Are they withered in the sod?  
"Are they blighted failed and faded,  
"Are they moulded back to clay?  
"For life is darkly shaded;  
And its joys fleet fast away."  
What the hell is going on?  
Qui sont ces gens?!  
They'll tear us limb from limb.  
I've crossed the Arctic  
and seen nothing like it.  
Down on them! Instantly! Run!  
Know you that I give into your  
protection - but not for your own -  
these mortals whom  
you hold in your hands.  
What's yours called? Wellesley.  
This is Gravey.  
Because he looks a bit grave.  
Mine's called...  
Waiting Boy. Is it? Why?  
Because he's a queer looking little  
thing, Anne. Much like yourself.  
Look who's talking. This is Sneaky.  
Thou art under my protection.  
I will watch over thy life,  
for I tell you all - one day...  
you shall be kings.  
Yes!

**BELL TOLLS:**

"Dear Ellen.  
It was ten o'clock when I got home.  
"I found Branwell ill.  
"He is so very often these days,  
owing to his own fault.  
"I was not therefore surprised at  
first, but when Anne informed me of

"the immediate cause of his present illness, I was greatly shocked."  
Charlotte! How was the journey?  
Pleasant.  
How was Miss Nussey? Well.  
Did my box arrive safely?  
In our room, we took it up,  
me and Emily. What's...? Branwell.  
He's been drinking.  
He's had a letter. From Mr Robinson.  
This last Thursday.  
He's been dismissed.  
How does he do it?  
It's every job he's ever had.  
I know, but this is different. How?  
Nothing was spelled out  
in the letter. But he...  
Him and Mrs Robinson...  
I had reason to know  
that they were...  
carrying on.  
With one another. And I don't know,  
I can only assume,  
that Mr Robinson's found out,  
and that's what it's about.  
Carrying on? How?  
Congress? Mr Robinson's wife?  
It's why I resigned.  
I couldn't look people in the face.  
I've known for months.  
Papa doesn't know.  
He just knows he's been dismissed,  
he doesn't know why.  
Emily does. I told her.  
And of course we don't know  
that IS the reason. Where is Emily?  
You must have some idea  
what this is about!  
You think repeating the question  
enough times, over and over,  
is suddenly going to make me  
able to answer it?  
And if not then someone  
must write to the man

and ask for an explanation!  
He hates me! He's not going  
to give any kind of an explanation.  
It's an excuse to get rid of me!  
He's a monster, he's a bully, he's  
a law unto himself. He's an idiot.  
Why does he hate you? Why does  
he need a reason to get rid of you?  
Because he's old, he's ill  
and he's jealous of me!  
No, no, no.  
That doesn't make any sense!  
There must have been  
a misunderstanding.  
Has someone misrepresented you  
to him?  
Just... GOD!  
This HOUSE! Just go to bed and stop  
asking me fucking questions!  
If you don't like this house,  
don't stay in it.  
There's none of us'll miss you,  
not when you're like this.  
I NEED TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENED!  
Tell him.  
Branwell's been at it.  
With his employer's wife.  
She was lonely.  
She was lonely!  
THE CHILDREN YELL  
'Tis a shame you're embarked on this  
course of myopic self-destruction,  
for I imagine you and I might -  
under better circumstances -  
have made very stimulating  
company for one another!  
I despise everything you stand for!  
Revolution is in the air!  
Only a fool like you, sir,  
would ignore it!  
If the parson and your Aunt Branwell  
were in,  
you'd noan make so much din!  
They all think you're right quiet

and studious down  
in t'village, y'know!  
YELLING CONTINUES  
Mr Brown's here.  
"Another outrage  
has happened in Ireland.  
"A party of Orangemen at Armagh,  
on the 12th,  
"unhappily disregarding  
the advice given them,  
"of abstaining from processions..."  
Are you fit, lad?  
Yeah, I'm just...  
"..conducting themselves  
with propriety."

**KNOCK AT DOOR:**

John's here. We're off.  
Don't get up.  
No, no. I'd like to see him.  
How are you today, John?  
I'm very well, thank you, Mr Bronte.  
Good, good.  
Well, travel safely.  
Picked a fine day for it, eh?  
You, er, look after yourself.  
Thank you.  
Well...  
I think, with kindness  
and understanding and prayer,  
we might still be able...  
in spite of his naivety  
and...his nonsense...  
..be able to get him back  
onto a proper path.  
Will you bring us all something  
back from Liverpool, Father?  
You behave yersen.  
And then we'll see.  
You dozy bastard.  
Getting caught.  
"Anne left her situation at Thorp  
Green of her own accord, June 1845.  
"Branwell...left.

"We are all in decent health  
only that Papa  
"has a complaint in his eyes  
and with the exception of Branwell,  
"who I hope will be better  
and do better here after.  
"I am seldom more ever troubled  
with nothing to do  
"and merely desiring that everybody  
could be as comfortable as myself  
"and as undesponding of them,  
"we should have  
a very tolerable world of it."  
They've set off.  
Good. Call me old-fashioned,  
but I think it's nice  
having everybody back at home.  
In theory. What happened?  
You heard the shouting.  
I had my pillow over my ears  
so I didn't catch the details.  
Lucky you.  
So he's...been mucking about,  
and by way of punishment,  
he's packed off on holiday  
for a week with Martha's father?  
Packed off on holiday for a week,  
or got shot off for a few days.  
It's all a question of  
how you might choose to look at it.  
Tabby. Well, if that's how you feel.  
Do you still write stories?  
Sometimes.  
About Gondal?  
When we can.  
Emily as well? You've been here  
with her more than I have, surely.  
We never talk about it.  
Never?  
Do you? Write?  
Still? Not so much.  
What about the infernal world?  
I relinquished my pen.  
Why? Because it frightened me.

Threatened to make  
the real world seem...  
pointless.  
And colourless and drab.  
And that way lies madness.  
You know, the real world is what it  
is, but we must live in it, so...  
You should write, if it makes you  
happy. I worry about my eyes.  
And I think, as well...  
when I got that reply from Southey -  
"Literature cannot be the business  
of a woman's life."  
At the time I brushed it off.  
But the longer I've dwelt on it,  
the older I've got,  
the more I've thought...  
..what's the point?  
The point...for me...  
..I'm never more alive  
than when I write.  
You're the same, surely.  
But with no prospect of publication?  
It's just playing at it, isn't it?  
Are we playing then, or what?  
Does it ever bother you  
that we might be getting...  
a bit old? For that.  
You weren't saying that  
two weeks ago in York. No, well...  
I didn't want to spoil things  
in York.  
It's something  
I've been thinking for a while.  
Well, what did you come out  
with me for then? To talk.  
What about? Things. At home.  
Do you never think about...?  
What?  
The future!  
What are we  
without Papa and Branwell?  
Papa won't... He won't live forever.  
And he's blind,

and that house, our house,  
it belongs to  
the Church trustees, not us.  
And Branwell! What's he doing?  
What's he thinking  
that he has such a hopeless grasp  
on the realities of what comes next?  
Are we nothing to him?  
Does he even see us?  
If we don't make  
something of ourselves,  
and God knows we've been trying,  
I've been trying...  
I was a governess at that  
ludicrous place for five years!  
What will we do, Emily?  
What will...  
What will we be?  
It was when I came back  
from Roe Head.  
And he was there, at home,  
Branwell.  
And he wasn't supposed to be.  
You'd gone. You and Charlotte.  
You'd gone off back to Roe Head.  
And he was supposed to be in London,  
trying to get his foot in the door  
at the Royal Academy.  
That's when I knew  
what a liar he was.  
Sharpers? Thieves! So what?  
They attacked you? You were robbed?  
Four of them?! I think four.  
In broad daylight? That's...  
Well, surely someone saw  
what happened?  
You didn't even get there? No!  
It was just after I arrived  
at the coaching inn  
at St Martin Le Grand,  
and I knew my way around.  
From the maps in my head.  
But London...the whole thing is  
so much bigger than I imagined.



And you didn't tell me  
how big it was, did ya?  
And I didn't know who to turn to,  
with no money. So, I came home!  
Well, er... Witnesses.  
Surely someone must have seen  
what happened.  
There were no witnesses.  
Everyone just turned around  
and went about their business!  
So all 30 shillings?  
Gone? YES!  
Oh!  
Then, when Aunt Branwell went to bed  
and Papa went back to his study,  
I said to him, "You're lying."  
And he admitted it.  
He didn't even make it to London,  
never mind any business  
at any Royal Academy.  
He said he was about to get on  
the high-flier, in Bradford,  
with his paintings and his sketches.  
But then, when he was faced with the  
reality of setting off for London,  
he realised that they just...  
weren't that good.  
They might look well enough at home,  
but next to a Lawrence,  
or a Gainsborough...  
So he fortified himself, he said,  
to get courage to get on the next  
coach, which was his intention.  
But he didn't.  
He spent four days in Bradford.  
Drunk and miserable  
and dreaming up some trash  
that he thought everyone at home  
would be blown enough to believe.  
He spent 30 shillings on drink,  
in four days?  
I could've cheerfully murdered him,  
to start with. And then...  
Actually I felt sorry for him.

They always expected so much of him.  
More, probably,  
than he was ever capable of.  
And I just thought,  
"Thank God I'm not you."  
It's disappointing, I know.  
And I'm angry with him too.  
He humiliated me at Thorp Green,  
and he knew what he was doing.  
But we shouldn't give up on him,  
should we?  
No, we shouldn't give up on him. But  
we should see him for what he is.  
Not what he isn't.  
It's not fair on him.  
I sometimes think  
Charlotte despises him. Mm, well...  
Charlotte has her own demons.  
What demons?  
Look, you know how low she's been?  
For months.  
To the point of making herself ill,  
and convincing herself  
she's going blind.  
Yes? Well, you know  
when we were in Brussels?  
Monsieur Heger? Yes.  
Well...she was very...  
taken...with him.  
Not when I was there.  
This was after Aunt Branwell died,  
when I stayed at home.  
She became...  
..obsessed with him.  
He was married.  
That's why she left. At finish.  
"My dear Leyland,  
"I returned yesterday  
"from a week's journey  
to Liverpool and North Wales,  
"but I found, during my absence,  
"that wherever I went,  
a certain woman, robed in black  
"and calling herself Misery,

walked by my side,  
"and leant on my arm  
as affectionately  
"as if she were my legal wife.  
"Like some other husbands,  
I could have spared her presence."  
For the food  
we are about to receive,  
may the Lord make us  
truly thankful. Amen.  
Is she feeding those dogs again? No.  
Chicken, please.  
More tea.  
Branwell...  
Yeah? Tell us something  
about...Liverpool.  
All right. Well,  
the docks were extraordinary.  
Uh-huh? We saw a black man.  
A blackamoor, a Creole.  
He really was black. So dark, Papa.  
Ah? And I spoke to him.  
Didn't really understand  
what he was saying  
and I don't think he understood  
a word I was saying either  
but it was just...fascinating.  
I think he was something  
on one of the ships.  
MUFFLED LAUGHTER

**CHUCKLING:**

Yes?  
If you...  
If you don't...  
get on top of...  
of this habit...  
when things don't go right for you,  
if you can't exercise  
some restraint,  
then it'll take over your life,  
Branwell. Don't be ridiculous.  
I'm not being ridiculous.  
It'll destroy you. Mm.

Potentially, you still have  
so much to offer, Branwell.  
You need a plan.  
I've got plans. Have you?  
And can you share them? With anyone?  
D'you know what I've realised? What?  
There's no money in poetry.  
Novels.  
That's where the money is.  
Whilst the composition of a poem  
demands the utmost stretch  
of a man's intellect...  
..and for what?  
10 at best.  
I could hum a tune  
and smoke a cigar  
and I'd have a novel written.  
No-one will publish a novel  
by an unknown author.  
I've had nine poems published  
in the Halifax Guardian.  
It's only Halifax, I know,  
but it is widely enough read.  
You'd need a good story for a novel.  
Oh, when was I ever  
short of a story?  
Are you still thinking about going  
to Paris? I don't think it's likely.  
At the moment.  
Why? It might do you good.  
Are you still hell-bent  
on making yourself poorly?  
I'm not...poorly.  
I'm just struggling to...  
Why is it that a woman's lot  
is so very different to a man's?  
I've never felt inferior.  
Have you? Intellectually?  
Why is it that we have  
so very few opportunities?  
You or I could do almost anything  
we set our minds to. But no.  
All we can realistically plan  
is a school, a modest enough school,

that no-one wants to come to.  
Why is it that the woman's lot  
is to be perpetually infantilised...  
..or else invisible and powerless  
to do anything about it?  
Did he never write back  
to you, then?  
Heger?

No.

Anne says

you've written some poems.  
Have you ever thought about  
publishing them? No.

It's just the...

The thing is, you see...

I've written some verses too...

and if between us we could  
accumulate enough material  
to think about publishing  
a small volume...

And have it pored over  
and rubbished and ridiculed  
by anyone who might choose to waste  
their money on it? Not likely.

"He comes with Western winds,  
with evening's wandering airs,  
"With that clear dusk of heaven  
that brings the thickest stars.

"Winds take a pensive tone,  
and stars a tender fire,  
"And visions rise, and change,  
that kill me with desire."

"High waving heather  
'neath stormy blasts bending,  
"Midnight and moonlight  
and bright shining stars;

"Darkness and glory  
rejoicingly blending,

"Earth rising to heaven  
and heaven descending,

"Man's spirit away from  
its drear dungeon sending,

"Bursting the fetters  
and breaking the bars."

"Then dawns the Invisible;  
the Unseen its truth reveals;  
"My outward sense is gone,  
my inward essence feels;  
"Its wings are almost free -  
its home, its harbour found,  
"Measuring the gulf, it stoops  
and dares the final bound."  
"O dreadful is the check -  
intense the agony -  
"When the ear begins to hear,  
and the eye begins to see;  
"When the pulse begins to throb -  
the brain to think again -  
"The soul to feel the flesh,  
and the flesh to feel the chain.  
"Yet I would lose no sting,  
would wish no torture less;  
"The more that anguish racks  
the earlier it will bless;  
"And robed in fires of hell,  
or bright with heavenly shine,  
"If it but herald Death,  
the vision is divine."

**BANGING:**

FOOTSTEPS ON STAIRS

What's the matter?

What's the matter?

Somebody has been in my room!

Somebody?

Somebody has been through my things.

And not had the wit,

when they put them back,

to realise that everything was

in a certain order Well, who?

We haven't, I haven't.

You haven't.

You wouldn't. I know that.

Branwell's in Halifax.

It's safe to assume

Papa couldn't see to do it,

and anyway why would he bother?

Tabby's got better things to do

and Martha can't read that well.  
Yet, she also has too much dignity  
and respect  
for other people's things!  
I shouldn't have...I know.  
But I'm not sorry.  
I mean, I am sorry!  
Look, Emily.  
Your poems are...  
They're extraordinary.  
I know they're private,  
I know they're personal -  
they're 1,001 things, but they're  
not something to keep hidden.  
I admit it was curiosity,  
but not idle curiosity, I hope,  
but something more...noble. Noble?!  
Going in people's bedrooms?  
Going through people's things?  
No woman, no-one, has ever  
written poetry like this!  
Nothing I've read,  
nothing I can think of,  
nothing published, is its equal.  
Emily...they're exceptional.  
They're...astonishing.  
I couldn't breathe  
when I was reading them.  
I know you're angry and  
I know what I did is unforgivable.  
Except, please, see that it isn't.  
You...disgust me.  
You can't begin to imagine how much.  
You stay out of my room  
and you don't speak to me.  
You don't speak to me generally and  
you don't speak to me specifically  
about your misguided, tedious,  
grubby little publishing plans.  
What on earth is the matter?  
She has been in people's bedrooms  
going through people's things!  
I'm putting a lock on that door!  
She? What happened?

Charlotte? Nothing.  
It was nothing.  
I went in her bedroom.  
Oh!

**HE SIGHS:**

And, um, where is Branwell?  
Halifax. He's where? Halifax.  
Oh. And is he due in? Tonight?  
Or have we to lock the back door?  
I imagine he's taken a key.  
Right.  
All right! I made a mistake.  
Except I didn't!  
They're...  
Have you read them?  
No.  
She's never asked me to.  
What did she mean about your  
"grubby little publishing plans?"  
They're not without charm.  
It's not just the poems, you see.  
I'm writing this, too.  
It's a novel.  
It's not Gondal and Gaaldine.  
It's more about how things are  
in the real world.  
It's about being a governess,  
it's all...  
things I've seen and heard  
and witnessed.  
The thing is, you see, I...  
This is beautifully written.  
I would be ready.  
To try and publish.  
I would be ready to risk failure.  
And who knows? This is what  
we've done all our lives.  
Write. We've lived in our heads.  
I don't regard the attempt  
to do something with it as venal.  
It's more venal selling ourselves  
as governesses  
when we find it such a trial.



So long as we approached  
it carefully, wisely,  
and not make fools of ourselves,  
then surely... The plan...  
would be to try to publish  
a volume of poetry first.  
And, then, if that met with  
a modicum of success,  
and something of a name  
was established,  
then we could each risk  
a work of fiction.  
I've toyed with writing  
something about...Brussels.  
I mean, I don't even know  
if that's the etiquette.  
But I could write to  
a publishing house and find out.  
Your poems are competent...  
and charming.  
And I'm no great poet myself,  
but Emily's contribution could  
elevate a small volume  
into something...  
..actually worth spending  
a few shillings on.  
I feel sorry for her. Why?  
Same reason I feel sorry  
for Branwell.  
So much is expected of her.  
Being the eldest.  
And not even the eldest.  
By accident the eldest.  
Bossiest. She was bossy when Maria  
and Elizabeth were still alive,  
I remember it. Vividly.  
It's being so bossy  
that's stunted her growth.  
She's ambitious.  
For all of us.  
And I can see  
nothing wrong with that.  
I realise some people might think  
it's vulgar, but, Emily,

we were born writing, and if we're cautious, if we're clever, and we are, and if we disguise our real selves and our sex... Right, that's done.

Tabby! I'm off down the...hill. It's wonderful how quiet they all think she is in t'village and how loud she is at home. You can come with me, if you want. Have you ever thought about writing something that's not Gondal? Something more...not princesses and emperors, more just... what happens in the real world. You know when I worked in Halifax? At that school at Law Hill. Yes. Miss Patchett, that ran it, she told me this tale. And I've often thought it'd make a story. A novel. What was it about? This man, this lad. Jack Sharp. Have I never told you this? It serves us well enough, but it's not an attractive building, I know. It has a rather curious history. It was built out of spite, apparently, 60 years ago, by a man called Jack Sharp. So, there's this family, the Walkers. They own Walterclough Hall, this big house, just above Halifax, it's been in the family for generations. They're woollen manufacturers - aren't they all? Anyway, John Walker has four children - two boys and two girls - and he's adopted this nephew, Jack Sharp. Richard and John, the two sons, were educated well,

and they ended up  
making their livings in London.  
Jack stayed at home with the girls,  
Grace and Mary,  
and he was trained up  
to take over the family business  
which suited everyone, because,  
it seems, he'd always been  
old Mr Walker's favourite,  
the truth be told.  
Then when Richard,  
the eldest son, dies  
in some tragic accident somewhere,  
old Mr Walker decides to leave  
the district and he leaves Jack  
in charge of his business  
and Walterclough Hall.  
Eventually, some years later,  
old Mr Walker himself dies,  
and the remaining son, John,  
in London, inherits everything  
and gives Jack Sharp,  
who he'd never liked, notice  
to vacate the property forthwith.  
But John Walker Jr  
has the law on his side,  
and after enough wrangling,  
in court, Jack Sharp has to  
vacate the property,  
whether he likes it or not.  
But not before he'd trashed the  
place and taken anything of value.  
Furniture...  
..the silver, the plate, the linen.  
You can only imagine  
what they all went through.  
The anger and the bitterness.  
And then he built his own home,  
a new house.  
Here, at Law Hill.  
The spot chosen very carefully,  
people believed,  
because it looks down  
on Walterclough Hall.

And then he filled it with the stash  
he'd purloined from the Hall.  
Like he was goading John Walker  
to come and fetch it. If he dared.  
And did he dare? I doubt it.  
But the worst thing Jack Sharp did,  
one of old Mr Walker's sisters  
had a son,  
grown up by then, called Sam Stead.  
And Jack Sharp apprenticed him  
in the trade,  
like he himself had been apprenticed  
by old Mr Walker.  
And he cleverly,  
calculatedly, bit by bit,  
indulged and degraded Sam Stead  
with gambling and drink,  
and the lad was too feckless  
to know any better.  
Why would you do that?  
He did it to cause as much misery  
and humiliation  
to the Walkers as he could.  
That's... I know. All that anger.  
It's so...rich.  
Anyway, if we're writing novels.  
I imagine we'll need more paper.

**BELLS PEAL:**

Of course we're not going to  
use our real names!  
But must they be men's names?  
When a man writes something, it's  
what he's written that's judged.  
When a woman writes something,  
it's her that's judged.  
We must select the poems  
we want to use and then...  
yes, if we're to be taken seriously  
and judged fairly  
and make anything resembling  
a profit...  
..we must walk invisible.  
What about names that are

neither men's nor women's?  
"Dear Ellen. I reached home  
a little after 2 o'clock  
"all safe and right yesterday.  
"Emily and Anne were gone  
to Keighley to meet me.  
"Unfortunately,  
I had returned by the old road  
"while they were gone by the new,  
and we missed each other."

**KNOCK ON DOOR:**

I'm back home.  
Ah, Charlotte...  
Miss Bronte!  
Mr Nicholls.  
"I went into the room where  
Branwell was, to speak to him.  
"It was very forced work  
to address him.  
"I might have spared myself  
the trouble as he took no notice..."  
Branwell?  
"..and made no reply."  
Branwell.  
"He was stupefied."  
What's this?  
Branwell? What's this?  
That's for you.  
I opened it by mistake.  
It said "Esquire."  
Give me that.  
Proof pages!  
How much are you paying them for  
the privilege of being published?  
I assume you're paying them.  
I assume you've all  
clubbed together.  
I assume they're not paying you.  
You've been sick.  
I didn't confirm or deny,  
I made no reply.  
I don't care about him knowing  
we're paying them,

it's a means to an end  
as far as I'm concerned.  
I care about him talking to people.  
About us. Where's he got the money  
from anyway? To get into that state?  
He screwed a sovereign out of Papa,  
yesterday. He claimed to have  
some pressing matter, and Papa said  
no. And the next thing you know  
he's given it to him. God knows how  
or why and he's trotting off  
down the hill to get it changed  
at the Black Bull.

Perhaps, when he's sober,  
he'll not even remember he's seen  
our proof sheets. I'll write to  
Aylott and Jones and ask them  
to address our correspondence  
differently in future.

Was he angry, Branwell?

What can we do?

We can't include him, the way  
he is now! He's unmanageable!  
We'd never get anything  
agreed or done!

Anyway, why would Northangerland  
want to publish with his sisters?  
He certainly couldn't afford  
to contribute to the costs.

We're doing the right thing, Anne.

It's hard, it's tough,  
but I'm sorry, he'd drag us down  
with him if we let him.

Right, come on, you big oaf.

That way. Shift.

TRAIN WHISTLE BLOWS

**HAMMERING:**

Hello, Joe.

Well, I never.

Eh?

How y'doing, lad? I've resolved  
this morning to keep myself busy.

Good.

Good!

Me too.

I thought I'd go and see  
John Frobisher.

I thought I might write  
something to set to music.

And he'd be the man.

He is still here, isn't he?

At the church?

So far as I know, yeah.

Have y'not thought any more  
about going abroad?

Not... No...

I haven't seen any vacancies,  
at least nothing, you know...

Not with the way things are  
at the moment.

How are things at home?

It's like living with people  
who don't speak

the same language as I do.

Honestly, Joe.

I could be with some tribe  
from some far flung corner  
of the globe  
for all I have in common with them.

They despise me,  
and I...

I only live there because  
I'm such a fucking pauper.

They need to get married,  
those three.

Only, who'd have 'em?

Who'd have any of us?

What a ridiculous set we've become.

And we used to be  
quite a nice little family.

She...she does love me, you know,  
Joe, Lydia.

Yeah. Well...

You know, I don't know.

I wasn't there, I can't say.

I know everyone thinks I'm...

God knows, but if you saw her,

if only for a moment,  
you'd get it, you'd see.  
What would I see?  
That she's the kind of woman  
that can change a man's life.  
His whole...everything.  
You've got to look forward,  
though, eh? Not back.  
We've talked about this.  
Am I boring you, Leyland?  
No, lad. No. You're not boring me.  
I worry that you're kidding yerself.  
Eh?  
A woman her age, in her position.  
My only hope is that he'll be dead  
soon and I'll be asked back.  
Hello.  
Hello.  
Look.  
I know.  
Ahh, it's beautiful!  
The same moon that's shone down  
since we were children.  
Since our ancestors were children.  
We're so tiny, really.  
Aren't we? So...  
..so unimportant.  
All of us.  
That's right.  
DOGS BARK IN THE DISTANCE  
Bloody dogs.

**HE HOWLS:**

**SHE JOINS HIM:**

A CACOPHONY OF HOWLING

**HE LAUGHS:**

THEY CONTINUE HOWLING  
There's a fella in Black Bull  
lookin' for thee. Who?  
He says he's from Thorp Green.  
Who?  
I'll get my coat.



Shift!

Is there a fella looking for me?

Aye, he's through there.

Mr Bronte.

Someone's dead. Mr Robinson.

He passed away three weeks  
this last Tuesday.

Did you not know?

No. How could I?

Well, it's been in t'papers.

We don't get the York papers.

You're advised...

..to stay away.

Does she not...want me  
to go to her?

She didn't say that.

No, it isn't her.

It's Mr Evans.

One of the trustees  
of Mr Robinson's will.

Apparently...he's said  
if he sees you, he'll shoot you.

Did he send you?

No. No.

She did.

She was concerned you might turn up.

And that Mr Evans might feel  
obliged to do as he's threatened.

But, as well as that,  
you should know

by the terms of the will...

..that if she marries again,  
she'll forfeit any right  
to her husband's fortune.

What?

Every penny.

And the house.

She...

She asked me not to tell you  
how wretched she is.

You'd not recognise her, Mr Bronte.

She's worn herself out these past  
few months in attendance upon him.

And then, the last few days

before his death,  
his manner was so mild, so, er...  
..conciliatory.  
It's a pity to see her,  
kneeling at her prayers.  
In tears.  
I suppose we can only guess at  
what torments of conscience  
she might be going through...  
..now.  
But...she sent you.  
Hm.  
To beg you to think of  
your own safety, Mr Bronte.  
And her sanity.  
Which...  
below stairs,  
we fear hangs by a thread.  
I don't give a damn  
about my own safety.  
No.  
But the thing is...  
..it's never going to happen,  
Mr Bronte.  
Do you understand?  
You're advised to stay away.  
Mr Brown! Mr Brown!  
Mr Brown! What do you want,  
you little bugger?  
You've to come! Mr Thomas at  
Black Bull says you've to come!  
Now what? God knows.  
There were a fella here.  
Paddy? Come on, lad. What's up?  
I sent for thee.  
Look at state he's in...  
No, you've done right.  
Come on, lad.

**BRANWELL WEEPS:**

Come on, you're all right.  
Nothing I do, John.  
You're just tired. Nothing I do.  
Let's get you home. Come on.

Why are we going up here?  
It's where you live.  
I don't want to go home,  
I don't want to go home.  
Well, where d'you want to go, then?  
Keighley.  
I think meself  
you'd be better off at home.  
No, no! I need to go to  
Thorp Green, John.  
I need to go to Thorp Green.  
Fair enough, but not just now,  
not today, not in this state.  
Yes, in this state.  
This is the right state.  
Well, you can. I can't, obviously,  
it's two o'clock in the afternoon,  
I've to get to work.  
Ah, Mr Nicholls.  
He's... He's had a bad do,  
he's had a bit of bad news.  
Down you go.  
Nearly there.  
Careful. Nearly there.

**BRANWELL SOBS:**

Calm down. Get off me!  
Please, keep your voice down.  
Shut up, I hate you!  
Tell me to calm down  
in my own house!  
I want to kill you!  
Get your hands off me! Calm down.  
Don't tell me to calm down.  
I don't want you  
to tell me anything.  
My house!  
Nothing wrong with me.  
Look at them, all looking at me!  
They're always looking at me!  
With your stupid, empty faces!  
Please, stop looking at me!  
Just stop.  
And him!

What do you want, eh?  
You've had everything!  
You've had everything  
you're getting.  
You just stand there  
staring at me all the time!  
I hate you!

**BRANWELL WEEPS:**

AND MUMBLES INCOHERENTLY  
Come on upstairs, have a lie down.  
Have a few knock-out drops, eh?  
Eh? Come on.  
Ohh...I feel sick.  
Come on.  
Up we go. You heard him. Lift me up.  
I can do it!  
Sorry. Sorry.  
"Dear Ellen.  
"We have been somewhat  
more harassed than usual lately.  
"The death of Mr Robinson has served  
Branwell for a pretext  
"to throw all about him  
into hubbub and confusion.  
"He's become intolerable.  
"To Papa he allows rest  
neither day nor night and  
"he's continually screwing money  
out of him, sometimes threatening  
"that he'll kill himself  
if it's withheld from him."

**BELL RINGS:**

BRANWELL AND FATHER ARGUE IN ROOM  
Morning, Miss Bronte. Thank you.

**BRANWELL:**

as well as blind?  
There's nothing out there!  
Not for someone  
who's fit for nothing, like me!  
"He says Mrs Robinson is now insane,  
that her mind is a complete wreck,

"owing to remorse for her conduct  
towards Mr Robinson,  
"whose end it appears was hastened  
by distress of mind,  
"and grief for having lost him.  
"I do not know how much to believe  
of what he says.  
"He now declares that he neither can  
nor will do anything for himself.  
"Good situations have been offered  
more than once,  
"for which by a fortnight's work  
he might have qualified himself,  
"but he will do nothing except  
drink and make us all wretched."

**BRANWELL:**

BRANWELL AND FATHER CONTINUE ARGUING

I beg you to recognise it -  
you are ill!  
Two reviews. One from The Critic  
one from The Athenaeum.  
Both anonymous,  
but both really, really quite good.  
Especially about you.  
"Refreshing, vigorous poetry,  
no sickly affectations,  
"no namby-pamby, no tedious  
imitations of familiar strains."  
Are they still fighting?  
Are you going to be all right?  
When I go to Manchester with Papa?  
It's only three weeks. I'm more  
concerned about when he comes back.  
He'll need rest and quiet.  
Not...  
Oh, did you get what you wanted?  
Yeah, you!  
Are you proud of yourself, eh?  
Wangling money out of a blind man?  
A man practically in his 70s.  
Fuck off. Eh! Come back here and say  
that. Yeah, go on. Have a go.  
See what happens. I haven't time.

No? Just the blind and the elderly  
then, is it?  
Otherwise I would.  
Course you would!  
It's nothing.  
Did he just hit you?  
Don't make a fuss.  
I'm still aiming to finish my story  
by the end of this week.  
There's a handful of passages  
I'd like to look at again,  
but then, depending on where  
you and Anne are with yours...  
Oh, The Professor's finished.  
As much as it ever will be.  
Perhaps we could aim to get them off  
to a publisher  
before you set off for Manchester.  
Emily.  
Good luck.  
And you.  
Keep him wrapped up, see.  
All the bags on?  
Everything's under control, Papa.  
Has she heard? Yes! I've heard.  
Emily, Emily.  
You know where the gun is?  
Yes.  
We're all in. Thank you.  
I'll send you the address  
as soon as we know what it is.

**DRIVER:**

Branwell doesn't know  
where the gun is. Does he?  
Not any more.  
Is he still abed?  
Daft question.  
You give him no money.  
Whatever sob stories  
he comes up with.  
All right?  
He won't hit you.  
And if he hits me,

I'll hit him back. Harder.

"Dear Ellen. Papa and I came here on Wednesday.

"We saw Mr Wilson, the oculist, the same day.

"He pronounced Papa's eyes quite ready for an operation

"and has fixed next Monday for the performance of it."

HE SIGHS WITH PAIN

"Think of us on that day, dear Nell.

"Mr Wilson says we will have to stay here a month at least.

"It will be dreary.

"I wonder how poor Emily and Anne will get on at home with Branwell."

KNOCK ON DOOR, BELL RINGS

Thank you.

"...not able at present to consider publication."

Do you think

they actually read them?

Do they look like they've been read?

Who's next on the list?

Chapman and Hall,  
186 Strand, London.

RAINFALL, THUNDER RUMBLES

#### **RAIN PATTERS:**

"There was no possibility...

"..of taking a walk that day."

Do you think it's wrong to write about something very close to home?

Like what?

A woman...

..forced to abandon her home.

A good, well-off home,  
to protect her child and herself,  
because of a change in her husband's character when he sinks into...

You know, addictive behaviour.

And then forced to make her own way in the world.

No. I don't think it's wrong.

I'd never have invented Hindley  
if I hadn't been set  
such a fine example at home.  
Have you seen Branwell today?  
No.  
Have you heard him?  
"I see a corpse  
upon the waters lie,  
"With eyes turned,  
swelled and sightless, to the sky  
"And arms outstretched,  
to move as wave on wave  
"Upbears it  
in its boundless billowy grave.  
"Not time, but Ocean thins  
its flowing hair;  
"Decay, not sorrow,  
lays its forehead bare;  
"Its members move,  
but not in thankless toil,  
"For seas are milder  
than this world's turmoil.  
"Corruption robs its lip  
and cheeks of red,  
"But wounded vanity grieves  
not the dead;  
"And, though those members  
hasten to decay,  
"No pang of suffering takes  
their strength away;  
"With untormented eye,  
and heart, and brain,  
"Through calm and storm  
it floats across the main.  
"Though love and joy  
have perished long ago,  
"Its bosom suffers  
not one pang of woe;  
"Though weeds and worms  
its cherished beauty hide,  
"It feels not wounded vanity  
or pride."

**WIND BLOWS:**



Where's ye going, lad?  
Haworth.

**HORSE WHINNIES:**

Whoa. Whoa!  
Go on!  
Oh, hello.  
Branwell!  
Branwell's here! He's collapsed!  
He's outside!  
Branwell?  
Branwell.  
Branwell?  
One of you go and fetch  
Dr Wheelhouse.  
Get a cloak on!  
Let's get him inside.  
Branwell, eh?  
Come on, son, sit up.  
Let's get him in the house. Come on.

**DOOR OPENS:**

You know where I am. Yes, yes.  
Thank you for coming, Doctor.

**DOOR CLOSES:**

There is hope.  
He's home, he's back with us.  
And, with nourishment  
and abstinence,  
and prayer, and peace and quiet,  
we may yet hope for better things.  
His body has suffered the ravages  
of gross neglect. And...  
abuse.  
Self inflicted.  
And I cannot, in all conscience,  
do other than blame that woman.  
That...sinful, hateful woman.  
Who, with her more mature years  
and social advantages,  
surely should have shown  
better responsibility.  
He has come very low.

But, you know, sometimes  
a man must sink to the bottom  
before he can turn his life around.  
And perhaps that's what's happened,  
what's happening.

Here. Where's he been?

How's he been living?

Does he want to abstain?

Oh, he has to. He has to abstain.

Halifax, I assume.

I don't know. That's where  
John always imagined he was.

Or where John knew  
damned well he was.

Have you talked to him?

About abstention?

He's asleep.

It'll only work if he's determined  
to do it himself.

Anne. Ssh!

I...

Anne.

I should have done more.

At Thorp Green.

I should have stopped him,

I should've told someone,

I should've...

I'm...complicit in their sin.

No, you're not.

You were in an impossible position.

I let it happen.

All I did was leave, in the end...

I was a coward.

A moral coward, before God.

**WOMAN LAUGHS:**

CHORUS OF LAUGHTER

LAUGHTER BECOMES MORE RIOTOUS

Are you all right, lad?

Lydia.

Wake up! Wake up! There's a fire.

**HE SHIVERS:**

I think I've put it out.

Branwell! Branwell! Branwell!

Look at me.

Branwell!

Delirium tremens.

It's when someone

who's been drinking solidly

for weeks suddenly stops.

Either through choice

or, more usually, lack of funds.

The body doesn't know how

to respond, so it goes into spasm.

Will it happen again?

With care...no.

But you do need

to keep an eye on him.

He's lucky.

You could've been sending

for the undertaker this morning,

Mr Bronte, not me.

I think

rather than come back in here,

he should stay

in my bedroom with me.

For the time being.

I wrote a rhyme for you.

Did you?

Well, I wrote it, and I was thinking

about you, after I'd written it.

So...

It goes...

D'you want to hear it?

Yes.

It starts, it's...

The first line is...

It goes...

"No coward soul is mine

"No trembler in the world's

storm-troubled sphere

"I see Heaven's glories shine

"And Faith shines equal

arming me from Fear..."

Take your time.

"Oh, God, within my breast...

"Oh, God, within my breast

"Almighty ever-present Deity  
"Life  
That in me hast rest,  
"As I Undying Life,  
have power in Thee  
"Vain are the thousand creeds  
That move men's hearts  
"Unutterably vain,  
"Worthless as withered weeds  
"Or idlest froth  
amid the boundless main  
"To waken doubt in one...  
"To waken doubt in one  
Holding so fast by thy infinity,  
"So surely anchored on  
The steadfast rock of Immortality  
"With wide-embracing love  
"Thy spirit animates eternal years  
"Pervades and broods above  
"Changes, sustains, dissolves,  
creates and rears  
"Though earth and moon were gone  
"And suns and universes ceased to be  
"And Thou wert left alone  
"Every existence would exist in thee  
"There is not room for Death  
"Nor atom that his might  
could render void  
"Since thou art Being and Breath  
"And what thou art  
may never be destroyed."  
There's nothing  
to be frightened of.  
Not for someone like you.  
I love you.  
Good.  
I love you.  
Who? Currer. Bell.  
There's no-one of that name here.  
No, I know that, Mr Bronte,  
only it's addressed to here, so...  
That's a mystery.  
There's no-one of that name  
in the entire parish,

as far as I'm aware.  
No, well, that's why I thought  
happen a visitor.  
No, no. No visitors.  
Not at the moment.  
Fair enough, I'll take it back  
to sorting office then.  
Ah, morning, Miss Bronte.  
Did I hear the name?  
Currer Bell? Yes.  
Good. That's not me. Obviously.  
But if I could take it,  
I can make sure it reaches him.  
Him.  
You see, he... Papa, he forgets.  
He's... Mr Bell, he's not here.  
He was here. But now...he isn't.  
So, I can forward it to him.  
I have his address.  
It's a funny name.  
Currer. I thought happen it were  
summat to do wi' Mr Nicholls.  
Arthur Bell Nicholls. No.  
No, no, no, that's... It's just...  
That's just coincidental.  
Can I take it?  
Good! Well, that saves me filling in  
a docket back at sorting office.  
I'm much obliged. And so will he be.  
How's your...brother? Is he...?  
Oh, he...  
He's...you know.  
Till tomorrow, then! Miss Bronte.  
Bye! Bye. Bye.  
Where's Emily?  
Kitchen. D'you want her?  
Letter from a publisher.  
Emily!  
Thomas Cautley Newby  
is offering to publish  
Wuthering Heights and Agnes Grey.  
His terms are steep,  
but he's offering to publish them,  
which is more than anyone else

has done, so...

What about The Professor?

No.

No, he's not offering  
to publish that. Why?

So you need to think about how you  
want to approach this. No, that's...

We should publish them  
all together or not at all. Surely.

That's sentimental, it's kind,  
but it's nonsense.

This is a solid offer,  
not a generous one, as I say,  
but I'll persevere in sending out  
The Professor

and with the other one  
that I've been writing.

But in the meantime, you've got  
a choice to make. Read it.

He's asking for you to provide  
an advance of 50

towards the cost of publication.

But clearly he believes it's viable  
or he wouldn't make the offer.

This is addressed to Currer Bell.

Yes. That was interesting.

You didn't...

Of course not! I had to...

..fib.

50.

Perhaps that's normal. Perhaps  
whoever undertook to publish it  
would ask for an advance  
of that sort.

We're a risk, we're unknown, despite  
the poems. Because of the poems.

Two copies sold.

You will...persist?

Oh, yes.

**BANGING ON DOOR:**

Yes?

I'd like to speak to Mr Bronte.

The Reverend Bronte?

Mr Patrick Bronte.

What shall I say it's to do with?

Is he in?

Who wants to know?

I'm a bailiff of the county

appointed by Mr Rawson,

the magistrate at Halifax.

I'm here about an unpaid debt.

Is Mr Bronte in?

I'll...

You'll just have to

give me a minute.

SHE KNOCKS ON DOOR

Yes?

The's a man at the door, Mr Bronte.

He says he's here about

an unpaid debt.

He says he's been sent

by a magistrate at Halifax.

Now, then, gentlemen. How may I help

you? Mr Patrick Bronte? Yes.

I'm appointed by the Magistrate

at Halifax to collect a debt of

14, 10s 6d,

owing to Mr Crowther of the

Commercial in Northgate, Halifax,

and now outstanding

for a total of eight months.

What's going on?

Branwell, what's going on?

Branwell...

Shift. Shift...

Whoa, whoa, whoa!

Not so fast, little fella.

Steady now!

You don't want me to hurt you.

And you don't want to hurt me,

cos, if you do,

there'll be bother. Get off me!

I think it must be

my son that you want.

Your son? Right, well,

where is your son, Mr Bronte?

I've got him, Mr Riley!

Emily! Get him off me! I can't  
breathe, Emily! Stop wriggling!  
Stop struggling! You're not going  
anywhere! I've done nothing wrong!  
You've got the wrong man!  
What were you legging it for then?  
And why did you try and hit me,  
you little twat.  
Get your hands off me!  
Are you Patrick Bronte? Up!  
Are you Patrick Branwell Bronte?  
Answer the man!  
I have no idea who these people are.  
You owe money  
to some publican in Halifax.  
And if the debt isn't paid,  
they'll take you  
to the debtors' prison.  
You'd best pay up then, eh?  
Take him.  
What?  
No! Papa, I'm sorry!  
I'm sorry! I'm sorry!  
I didn't mean it! I'm sorry!  
Charlotte! Emily!  
We have money. We have money!  
We have money, please stop them.  
Please. Hang on, boys!  
Bring him back. If it's all right  
with you, Reverend,  
my colleagues'll keep hold of him  
until I've got the remittance.  
I shall require a receipt.  
I shall give you one.  
Come on.  
It's all right.  
"Gentlemen. I have received  
your communication  
"of the 5th instant,  
for which I thank you.  
"Your objection to the want of  
varied interest in The Professor is,  
"I am aware, not without grounds.  
"I have a second narrative



in three volumes now completed,  
"to which I have endeavoured  
to impart a more vivid interest  
"than belongs to The Professor.  
"I send you per rail a manuscript,  
entitled Jane Eyre,  
"a novel in three volumes  
by Currer Bell."

VOICES IN ANOTHER ROOM

**BRANWELL:**

leave that room alive!  
I will either kill you  
or I will kill myself!  
Do you want me to kill myself? Eh?  
Cos if I do, old man,  
you can rest assured  
that you'll have driven me to it  
with your endless prayers  
and your drivel!  
Can you not understand,  
can you not get the idea  
that the only...only respite I have  
from the misery of my existence  
is being allowed  
a little bit of something to drink.  
I'm only asking for a shilling,  
for God's sake!  
Just...just take it.  
He'll just go on and on until  
he gets what he wants anyway.  
And I just...  
..I don't always have the energy...  
..any more.  
I know this is contradicting  
what I've said before, but...  
..my second thoughts are,  
occasionally,  
better than my first ones.  
I think you should tell Papa  
about Jane Eyre.  
About how successful it's been.  
Why?  
I think it would help him to know

that we now seem to have found  
a means of supporting ourselves,  
possibly, in the event of...  
whenever something happens to him.  
Why Jane Eyre?  
No, we'll tell him about everything,  
but just...as a way in.  
But then...he'll read it.  
Now?

**SHE KNOCKS:**

Hello?  
Papa?  
Have you got a moment?  
Yeah, quickly.  
I've...  
I've...I've been writing a book.  
A book. And... Oh, well...  
Would you like to read it?  
No, I can't.  
I don't have time.  
And you know, with your tiny,  
little writing, I can't see it.  
But well done.  
The thing is, you see...  
it's published.  
It's been published,  
it's a properly published...  
it's a book in three volumes.  
Well, well!  
Currer Bell.  
No, he's famous, he's...  
No, that's me.  
That's you? What's you?!  
That...  
I've published under a pseudonym.  
Currer Bell.  
You see, it's the same initials.  
And the thing is, it's just about  
to go into a second edition.  
It's...sold a lot of copies.  
It's been really  
quite unusually successful.  
There's a stage play of it

in rehearsal as we speak  
at a theatre in...  
the Victoria Theatre, in fact,  
in London.  
It's been so, um...  
hugely well received.  
But I...  
So...you're...?  
You're...?! Yes.  
And...I've made money.  
With the prospect of making  
quite a lot more.  
And if we...if I continue  
to work hard  
and produce the kind of writing  
that people are prepared  
to pay money for,  
then it should furnish us  
with a comfortable existence.  
Would you like me to read you  
some of the reviews?  
Well, I...

**HE LAUGHS:**

Why have you kept it such a secret?  
To protect ourselves.  
We've been accused of  
vulgarity and coarseness.  
I have "forfeited my right to be  
called a member of the fairer sex"  
according to Lady Eastlake,  
who speculates that Currer Bell  
might actually be a woman  
and complicit in the revolutions  
throughout Europe.  
"We do not hesitate to say  
that the tone of mind and thought  
"which has overthrown authority  
and violated every code -  
"human and divine - abroad,  
"and fostered Chartism  
and rebellion at home,  
"is the same which has also written  
Jane Eyre."

Jane Eyre.

And why is it vulgar?

It isn't, Papa!

People are just squeamish about  
the truth, about real life.

Our work is clever.

It's truthful.

It's new, it's fresh, it's vivid  
and subtle and forthright.

But...more importantly,  
the point is...

..we didn't want Branwell to know.

That's first and foremost  
why we've kept it a secret.

It's not that he'd be scathing,  
we can stand that.

It's because it's what  
he always wanted to do.

And now it looks less and less  
likely that he ever will,  
it'd be like rubbing salt  
into a wound.

No-one can ever know who we are.

We've agreed.

We just didn't want you  
to worry that we weren't  
doing anything with ourselves,  
because we have been. We are!

So, who else knows, besides me?

No-one. I've not even told Ellen.

Tabby?

No-one. The publishers  
don't even know who we are.

They think we're three men.

We'd like to keep it that way.

We just wanted you to know.

**HE SIGHS:**

Little Helen Burns.

That's your little sister, Maria.

Maria was our big sister.

Yeah. Of course she was.

Of course she was.

Not a day passes

when I don't think about her.

And little Elizabeth.

And your mother.

I am very proud of you.

I always have been.

CHURCH BELLS RING

"Sunday.

"Dear John, I shall feel

very much obliged to you

"if can contrive to get me

"fivepence-worth of gin

in a proper measure.

"Should it be speedily got, I could

perhaps take it from you or Billy

"at the lane top or what would be

quite as well, sent out for, to you.

"I anxiously ask the favour because

I know the good it will do me.

"Punctually, at half past nine

in the morning, you will be paid

"the fivepence out of a shilling

given me then.

"Yours, PBB."

CHURCH BELLS RING

**HE COUGHS:**

BELLS CONTINUE RINGING

(Have you got a minute?)

What?

We're going to have to go to London.

Who is? We are. All three of us.

When? Today.

Why?

Your...

Mr Newby must've... I don't know...

sold the first few pages of

The Tenant Of Wildfell Hall

to an American publisher

on the understanding

that it was written Currer Bell.

Well, it's obviously

a misunderstanding.

No. Will you...

please...see

that this man is a con man.

A rogue!

How many mistakes did  
he print in Wuthering Heights?  
Proofs that you painstakingly  
corrected that he ignored,  
and now this.

My publisher is livid  
that I could have sold my next novel  
to another publisher.

They have first refusal  
of my next two novels,  
and now they think I'm some kind of  
unscrupulous double-dealer!

Well, just write and explain. No.

No, we have to go to London  
and give ocular proof  
that we are three separate people,  
the novels are not all the work  
of one person,  
and that this is absolute trash.

Well, I'm not going.

Why? Because you can write a letter  
and explain all that,  
and just say that Newby's made  
a mistake. This is not a mistake!

This is a deliberate  
and deceitful attempt  
to cash in on the success  
of Jane Eyre. Sorry.

It isn't! It is!

Newby has made the mistake,  
along with a lot of other people,  
of assuming we're all one person,  
that is all it is.

Why are you so obtuse?

Why are you so melodramatic?

Emily!

I don't want The Tenant  
Of Wildfell Hall promoted and sold  
on a deceitful...

misunderstanding, whichever,  
that it's by anyone other than me.  
We have to go to London.

Now.

Today.

And explain to Mr Smith and Mr  
Smith Williams what's happened.

It's intolerable to imagine they  
could think I could be so slippery.

But, wait, look, you can't.

You can't go to London  
and explain who you are  
because they will see you.

That's the whole point.

Yes, and you promised -

you promised me -

that we would never reveal ourselves  
to anyone. Ever.

Well...

I'm afraid because of  
your...Mr Newby...

..we now find ourselves in a...  
situation.

Emily...I think we should go.

No! You're not going, either.

No, I am! No, you're not.

Newby's compromised my integrity  
just as much as Charlotte's.

I shan't publish with him again.

If you won't come with us,  
that's...that's your choice.

We don't need to fall out  
about this, Emily.

It's about your novel -  
and your name.

It's got NOTHING to do with me!

Don't be like that, Em...

What's the matter?

Emily.

Yes, but you do know her bark's  
worse than her bite, don't you?

TRAIN WHISTLE BLOWS

Charlotte...

Jane Eyre.

Look.

Can I help you, ladies?

Yes.

Yes, I'd...  
We'd like to speak to  
Mr George Smith, please.  
Mr Smith?  
Mr Smith's very busy.  
Yes...  
But the thing is, you see...  
It's important.  
Can I tell him what it's about?  
Just...  
Just that it's a matter  
of importance.  
I'll, er... I'll see what...  
I'll see if he's got a minute.  
Who should I say is asking  
to see him? It's...  
That's delicate.  
He is a very busy man.  
We've been travelling  
for 17 hours,  
and we'll take up less than  
one minute of his time.  
Sir, two ladies asking to see you.  
What ladies?  
Didn't give a name, sir.  
What's it about?  
The only thing I could prise out,  
sir, is that it's important.  
To me or to them? They've asked for  
no more than a minute of your time.  
They say they've travelled  
for 17 hours.  
Ladies. How can I help you?  
Am I addressing Mr George Smith?  
Yes.  
It's a confidential matter.  
We're...  
We're here to address  
a misunderstanding,  
which, once accomplished,  
will be to everyone's advantage,  
yours as much as ours.  
And so we apologise  
for what must be an interruption



to your morning's work.  
But perhaps if I gave you this,  
it would clarify who we are.  
Where did you get this letter?  
In the post. From you.  
You sent it to me.  
I am...Currer Bell.  
C Bronte, that's me.  
And this is Acton Bell,  
author of Agnes Grey.  
The point is, author of  
The Tenant Of Wildfell Hall, not me.  
And Ellis couldn't come.  
Ellis didn't want to come.  
Ellis is... Anyway...the point is...  
we are three sisters.  
I have not sold the first few pages  
of my next novel  
to an America publisher, as claimed  
by Mr Thomas Cautley Newby.  
That is not my novel, it's Acton's.  
I...Mr Smith, have nothing, exactly  
nothing, to do with Mr Newby.  
And nor will my sister, now she has  
seen him in his true colours.  
We are people of integrity.  
And probity.  
And that is why we are here.  
To set matters straight.  
Sorry, you're...  
You are Currer Bell?  
What makes you doubt it, Mr Smith?  
My accent? My gender? My size?  
Oh, good heavens!  
Oh, good Lord!  
Forgive me, I'm sorry.  
I'm sorry, too,  
we've caught you off-guard.  
But you see, we felt it best  
to come and see you in person,  
given the tone of your letter.  
I wanted no room left for any  
further misunderstanding or doubt.  
That's deeply, deeply appreciated,

Miss...

**BOTH:**

And a great relief, of course.

Have you really been travelling  
for 17 hours?

Through the night. Such was  
the tone of your letter that..

You must be exhausted.

Oddly, Mr Smith,

I feel extraordinarily awake.

Where are you staying?

We've booked into the Chapter  
Coffee House. In Paternoster Row.

Our father stayed there briefly  
before he went up to Cambridge.

And my sister and I,  
my other sister, Ellis, did once,  
before we travelled to Brussels.

You've taken my breath away.

Miss Bronte.

Oh, you have to meet people.

Have you any idea how many people  
want to... Thackeray!

Thackeray, Thackeray...

Thackeray will have to meet you.

Er...Kent, Kent.

Kent! Fetch Smith Williams!

You have to meet Smith Williams.

He...he is such an admirer  
of...of...of...

He was...

..of your genius.

He was the one that read...that read

The Professor, and saw instantly,  
before Jane Eyre -

which is glorious, by the way -  
um, he saw...

he saw, he saw, Miss Bronte.

The whole of literary London -

the whole of London -

will fall over itself

to spend a minute

in the company of Currer Bell.

Um, somebody really needs  
to do something about this Mr Newby,  
though, Mr Smith.  
Absolutely, indeed.  
He will be dealt with.  
Please, please, come through  
to my office.  
Ah, Smith Williams!  
This...  
This is...  
Curren Bell.  
Oh, how perfect.  
How delightful.  
And this is Acton...Bell.  
Ellis couldn't come.  
Do you like opera?

**BRANWELL COUGHS:**

I'll see to him,  
I'll sit with him.  
Are you sure?  
You go sleep in their bed.  
Branwell.  
I'm going to be sick.

**HE VOMITS:**

You're back!  
That was quick!  
All the way to London.  
How were things here? Oh, well,  
we've had sad work with Branwell.  
But other than that...  
Good. Good.  
You're the last person in the world  
I want to fall out with.  
I know.  
We only told Mr Smith  
and Mr Smith Williams.  
Well, and Newby, later.  
No-one else. We made it clear they  
hadn't to tell anyone else either.  
They took us  
to the Royal Opera House,  
Mr Smith and Mr Smith Williams did,

with Mr Smith's mother  
and his sisters,  
and us with nothing to wear  
but what we'd gone in.  
They'd no idea who we were!  
Heaven alone knows what  
they must have thought about us.  
He's...  
What?  
Branwell.  
He's been vomiting blood.  
"Dear Ellen,  
"I received your letter informing us  
"of the time of your arrival  
in Keighley with great delight.  
"Emily and Anne anticipate  
your long-delayed visit  
"as eagerly as I do, myself.  
"We will be outside the Devonshire  
Arms promptly at two o'clock.  
"Wishing you a safe  
and comfortable journey."  
Anyone for Keighley?  
Ellen!  
Charlotte!  
Emily!  
Anne! Miss Nussey.  
Which one's your box?  
Is it this one?  
Yes, that one there.  
How was your journey?  
Long, tiresome.  
We haven't seen you for so long.  
I know, I've missed you.  
Shall we go? Yes.  
In the end I realised  
we'd delay your visit forever  
if we weren't careful.  
And he's so quiet now.  
We barely see him during the day.  
He just sleeps.  
I think more people have crosses  
to bear than we realise.  
On the domestic side.

On the quiet.  
The oddest thing -  
I think I told you -  
The Robinson girls, you know the  
youngest two, Elizabeth and Mary?  
They've started writing to Anne.  
About six months after  
their father died.  
I mean, they're very fond of Anne,  
more than she imagined.  
Then they wanted to visit. Here.  
So we let them,  
and they came last week.  
Of course, Branwell knew  
nothing about it.  
What were they like? Oh.  
You know.  
Pretty. Vacuous.  
Non-stop yak-yak-yak.  
Emily popped her head in,  
purely to satisfy her own curiosity,  
of course,  
and then, after approximately  
four seconds, withdrew.  
It's one of the few occasions  
I've really enjoyed her surliness.  
Anyway, the point is,  
they told us last week...  
..that their mother...  
What?  
..is going to marry...  
Sir Edward Scott.  
So much for contrition  
and guilt and madness  
and clauses in people's wills.  
He's been very sadly used, Branwell.  
You didn't tell him?  
What purpose would it serve?  
I'm sorry to inflict  
all this on you, Ellen.  
Charlotte, I'm your oldest friend.  
You can tell me anything,  
you know that.  
Look!

What is that? It's extraordinary.

It's three suns!

What is it? It's beautiful.

It's you three.

You can go now.

You'll have to sit him up

to get his shirt off.

'Tis a shame you're embarked on this  
course of myopic self-destruction!

'I despise everything you stand for!

'Revolution is in the air!

'Only a fool like you, sir,  
would ignore it!'

..this is the famous

dining room table,

at which the sisters used to sit

and write.

Have you been inspired by the story  
of the Bronte sisters?

To unlock your own creativity, and  
watch behind-the-scenes interviews  
with the cast and crew go to...

..and follow the links  
to the Open University.