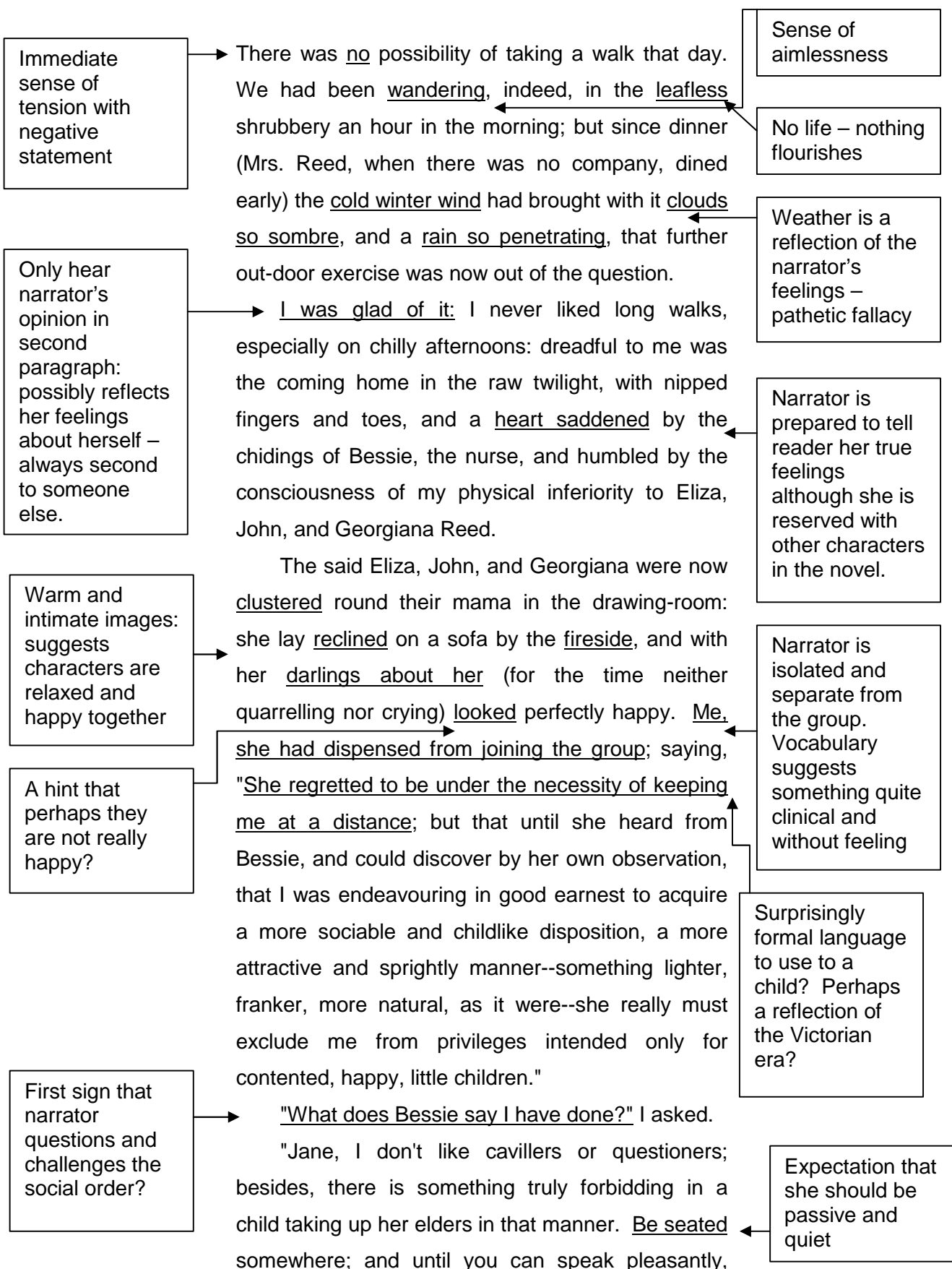


The Opening Pages



remain silent." A breakfast-room adjoined the drawing-room, I slipped in there. It contained a bookcase: I soon possessed myself of a volume, taking care that it should be one stored with pictures. I mounted into the window-seat: gathering up my feet, I sat cross-legged, like a Turk; and, having drawn the red moreen curtain nearly close, I was shrined in double retirement.

Idea of secrecy and hiding places

Ability to entertain herself – enjoys solitude?

Sounds secure

References to red. Hints of Gothic genre? Look ahead to next chapter for more references

Folds of scarlet drapery shut in my view to the right hand; to the left were the clear panes of glass, protecting, but not separating me from the drear November day. At intervals, while turning over the leaves of my book, I studied the aspect of that winter afternoon. Afar, it offered a pale blank of mist and cloud; near a scene of wet lawn and storm-beat shrub, with ceaseless rain sweeping away wildly before a long and lamentable blast.

Weather: again a Gothic connection

Window image; again the idea of being isolated and kept away from something narrator is aware of. Think as well about a reflection in a window. Looking and being looked upon are often cited in feminist commentaries.

Why this book? Ability of birds to fly away? Freedom?

I returned to my book--Bewick's *History of British Birds*: the letterpress thereof I cared little for, generally speaking; and yet there were certain introductory pages that, child as I was, I could not pass quite as a blank. They were those which treat of the haunts of sea-fowl; of "the solitary rocks and promontories" by them only inhabited; of the coast of Norway, studded with isles from its southern extremity, the Lindeness, or Naze, to the North Cape--

Idea of storms and chaos

"Where the Northern Ocean, in vast whirls,
Boils round the naked, melancholy isles
Of farthest Thule; and the Atlantic surge
Pours in among the stormy Hebrides."

Description mirrors her own emotions – isolated yet passionate

Nor could I pass unnoticed the suggestion of the bleak shores of Lapland, Siberia, Spitzbergen, Nova Zembla, Iceland, Greenland, with "the vast

All references to cold and ice: reflection of the way Jane is treated? Does not have the warmth of others' love?

sweep of the Arctic Zone, and those forlorn regions of dreary space,--that reservoir of frost and snow, where firm fields of ice, the accumulation of centuries of winters, glazed in Alpine heights above heights, surround the pole, and concentrate the multiplied rigours of extreme cold." Of these death-white realms I formed an idea of my own: shadowy, like all the half-comprehended notions that float dim through children's brains, but strangely impressive. The words in these introductory pages connected themselves with the succeeding vignettes, and gave significance to the rock standing up alone in a sea of billow and spray; to the broken boat stranded on a desolate coast; to the cold and ghastly moon glancing through bars of cloud at a wreck just sinking.

Sophisticated imagination? Morbid?

The enclosed space of the window seat is contrasted vividly with Jane's imagination which is wild and free

I cannot tell what sentiment haunted the quite solitary churchyard, with its inscribed headstone; its gate, its two trees, its low horizon, girdled by a broken wall, and its newly-risen crescent, attesting the hour of eventide.

Death image: again a Gothic connection

The two ships becalmed on a torpid sea, I believed to be marine phantoms.

The fiend pinning down the thief's pack behind him, I passed over quickly: it was an object of terror.

Reminder that narrator was a child at this point

So was the black horned thing seated aloof on a rock, surveying a distant crowd surrounding a gallows.

Death image: again a Gothic connection

Image of one person isolated although surrounded by others.