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## Passion Vs. Reason In Jane Eyre

You might have heard the quote “follow your heart but take your brain with you” at least once in your life. Meaning, love without any hesitation but trust your reasoning when your head fights with you. Throughout Jane Eyre, Jane is described as a passionate but reasonable person. She proved reasonable when confronting her aunt, “You think I have no feelings, and that I can do without one bit of love or kindness; but I cannot live so: and you have no pity” (41). However, her passion devours her as her behavior is described as “Shaking from head to foot, thrilled with ungovernable excitement...” (40) warming up to confront her aunt. Leading up to one of the most difficult situations she's had to encounter, she allows reasoning to do the talking for her, but once it becomes too much to handle, she releases her emotions and allows it to pitch in.

The tension between rational thought and emotions was clear throughout the entire book. In a scene where Rochester was disguised as a fortune teller he describes Jane's character as he says “...reason sits firm and holds the reins, and she will not let the feelings burst away and hurry her to wild chasms” (Brontë 182). At the moment she discovered that Rochester was still married, she realized she couldn't listen to her heart, her love for him was irrelevant at this point. During this difficult situation, Jane questioned herself. Does she leave him? Does she marry him and become a mistress? As she wakes from her slumber the next day, her mind answers her troubles by telling her “?Leave Thornfield at once?” (Brontë 266). She allows reasoning to take control. She follows her head, proving Rochester's description. Before leaving, Rochester continually begged for Jane's forgiveness. Jane forgave him, on the spot. She tells the reader, “?I forgave him all, yet not in words, not outwardly; only at my heart's core” (Brontë 267). Forgiving allows you to move on peacefully, but it isn't always said aloud. The most self preserving way of forgiving, is in the heart. She forgave him for her own peace.

Jane isn't an improviser, she always has a plan before making any big decision. She leaves situations solely by reasoning. But, her decision of leaving Thornfield was spontaneous, it had to be done and soon. And she finds herself leaving due to her passion. Jane tells the reader that reason isn't what guides her out of the town, but her passion. She explains, “As to my own will or conscience, impassioned grief had trampled one and stifled the other (268). Although she had her reasons for leaving the town, her sorrow guided her way.

While she was away from Thornfield, a man named St. John took her in. He eventually offers Jane a trip to India for a missionary trip, under one condition; that she marries him. St. John persists on the question. Jane is conflicted with her inner self. She feels, “Consent, then to his demand is possible: but for one item - one dreadful item. It is ?that he asks me to be his wife...” (361). Jane knows marrying St. John would be dreadful, cold even. It would go against all her values and she wouldn't be her happiest self. But, to her knowledge, Rochester is gone for good. So, even though St. John isn't what she desires, she sees interest in his offer. She could leave her past behind and forever live in England. She ends up, once again, with her heart and mind at war. Jane almost gives in to his request, but something unexpected happens. Many would call it a hallucination, maybe from her heart's deepest desires. A supernatural happening occurred, causing Jane to change her mind: “I saw nothing, I heard a voice somewhere cry ‘Jane! Jane! Jane!’” (374). The voice was too familiar to her, she knew exactly who it was, or maybe her heart made her think it was her former lover, Rochester. She had to break free of St.

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John, as they were spending the day together, “I broke from St. John, who had followed, and would have detained me” (374). She listened to her heart and the so called voice calling her to return to her lover.

Jane originally left Rochester because he deceived her. Now she's running full-speed back to him, seeming as if she's going against herself and her morals. In reality, she is making the biggest decision ever to come across: marry Rochester, or marry St. John. Sure, St. John has never deceived her, but he wanted her hand in marriage for duty and service as a missionary. Jane realized his love wasn't real and felt, “I daily wished more to please St. John, but to do so, I felt daily more and more that I must disown half my nature...” (Brontë -). She wanted a real love, a love for her and not what she could do, which St. John couldn't offer. If she married him, all her morals would be thrown out of the window. Rochester on the other hand, did deceive her, but he offered a marriage full of love and luxury, something Jane deeply desired. Her emotions and thoughts united, because even after leaving Rochester and trying to leave her past behind, he was all she could think of. Jane's heart belonged to Rochester and she did what she thought would be best for her. A relationship with equality and real love. During all this thought, Jane didn't know that Rochester was widowed, her passion overruled her reasoning. Hearing his voice was enough to have her running back.

After making sure he was widowed, she returned for good. But there were some catches, many believe she took advantage of them, however. When she returns to Thornfield, she visits the house she stayed at, only to see that it was burned to the ground. The ex-butler of Thornfield Hall, explained the situation to Jane. Jane sits him down for a few questions and the butler tells her, “?Thornfield Hall is quite a ruin: it was burnt down just about harvest time”... “The fire broke out at dead of night, and before the engines arrived from Millcote, the building was one mass of flame” (379). The butler assured Jane that Rochesters late wife, Bertha, caused the fire out of spite, and it wasn't the first time she tried. After everyone escaped the fire, Bertha jumped from the building, killing herself, leaving Rochester widowed. Now that she is assured she'd be no mistress, she's more interested in Rochester, questioning the butler, “You said he was alive?”... “Where is he?” (382). The butler answers her, telling her he still resides in England, and was unable to ever leave, for he was blind, one eye knocked out, another hand crushed and amputated, and the other eye inflamed. Jane now sees her opportunity of marrying without going against her morals, somewhat, and asks to see Rochester. The butler tells her where he resides and she takes a trip.

After seeing him for the first time after leaving him, she speaks to the reader, “And, reader, do you think I feared him in his blind ferocity? ?if you do, you little know me” (384). She was now reunited with her love and her deepest desires came true. Her decision to return to Rochester after hearing his voice was made solely by her emotions, by the fire she still had in her heart for him. But, after seeing that he was crippled and widowed, her reasoning made the final decision for her, she wouldn't leave him again. Some might say she enjoyed having Rochester finally depend on her. In the Victorian era, it was common for the wife to depend on the husband, but not in this case. Jane never wanted a marriage where she was dependent on a man, she wanted equality, and now that she saw he was crippled and blind (and let's not forget single), she could have her wish. Jane tells the reader, “He saw nature, he saw books through me; and never did I weary of gazing for his behalf”. (-) Jane was depended on by Rochester, this brought her joy, knowing he would do anything for her, anything to marry her and have her as his hand and eyes.

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Needless to say, Jane married him. She addresses the reader informing us, "Reader, I married him" (399). She returned to Rochester and Thornfield where her heart belonged. Without the constant war her heart and head had, she wouldn't have made it as far as she did. She would have married St. John, living an unhappy, dependent life, with no equality. She followed her heart, but dragged her brain along with her. There was always reasoning behind her passion, and always passion behind her reasoning. Without one another, Jane would have continued a long, dreadful life.

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