

# How does jane eyre develop between chapters 11 and 27 of the novel?

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The novel Jane Eyre is predominantly a bildungsroman, Jane's development throughout the novel is one of the most important aspects of the narrative. During Jane's time at Thornfield she makes huge emotional progress through her relationship with Rochester and the discovery of Bertha Mason, eventually resulting in her departure from Thornfield. In chapter 11 when Jane first arrives at Thornfield She is unsure of her surroundings and the description of the thorn trees alludes to fairytales such as Sleeping Beauty and Briar Rose.

This conveys Jane's innocence and shows the reader how childlike Jane is at this stage of the novel in terms of emotional development. The theme of Jane's limitations is also highlighted, and Jane's focus on Mrs Fairfax's "bunch of keys" shows the insecurity she feels about not having control over her present or future. However, Jane draws comfort from the discovery that Mrs Fairfax is also a "dependent".

This shows a departure from the uncertainty she felt when she first arrived at Thornfield, and the use of the same word as was used by John Reed in the first chapter shows how much she has developed since then in order to be able to overcome the distress that the word first caused her. This emphasises the extent to which Jane has already developed and gives the reader an impression for the scope of development still possible for Jane.

In the progression from the eleventh to the twelfth chapter we can see how Jane has used her connection with Mrs Fairfax to allow her to become aware of the positive aspects of the other inhabitants of Thornfield Hall and showing that she has already become more mature and is willing to

reconsider her initial opinions on the residents of Thornfield like Adele and Rochester. Jane begins chapter 12 by saying: " the promise of a smooth career... as not belied on a stronger acquaintance with the place. " She feels secure at Thornfield and that her impression of the place was correct, reading the novel retrospectively the reader can see that Jane's statement underlines her naivety and shows her lack of insight into the true goings on at Thornfield. The emphasis of this is shown by Rochester's omission of the fact that he is Thornfield's owner when Jane sees him fall off his horse.

In chapter 16 we can see Jane beginning to develop feelings for Mr Rochester: " glad at least to go downstairs; for that brought me... closer to Mr Rochester's presence" This marks a stride in her emotional development as in this instance, rather than developing an attachment to a mother figure in the search for a family, Jane is becoming attached romantically which demonstrates that she is thinking in a more adult way and instead of wanting to join a family it seems that she is striving to create one of her own.

Jane's ongoing suspicions regarding Bertha Mason, whose existence she is at this stage unaware of, show her increasing maturity as she is prepared to look deeper into a situation and is clearly no longer as naive as she was when she previously believed Mrs Fairfax's explanation that the laughter was Grace Poole. However, Jane is willing to believe what she is told because of her feelings for Rochester which conveys a certain amount of naivety still present as, in a fairly childlike manner; she is inclined to believe what she is told by superiors as opposed to forming her own opinions or inquiring further.

Jane's reformed perspective shows that she has developed from previous chapters. Her opinion was that at Thornfield, everything was as it seemed, she has revised her opinions in an adult way and also, in not enquiring much further about the matter she is showing a mature attitude to protecting her employment and her future. Chapter 20 shows that Jane is beginning to be seen as a more adult character by Rochester as he confides in her and asks her for advice about his situation: " I'll put a case to you; which you must endeavour to suppose your own".

Jane's reply also shows that she is taking on the trust that Rochester has in her and responding in a mature and conscientious way: " a wanderer's repose or a sinner's reformation should never depend on a fellow-creature... let him look higher than his equals for strength to amend, and solace to heal". Jane encourages Rochester to look to God for answers, by distancing herself from this issue Jane is showing an older attitude towards Rochester's request and the development in her self control can be seen.

Furthermore, Jane showing her increased ability to contain her emotions takes the power from Rochester, who at this point has almost complete control over Jane's emotions, thus empowering Jane and allowing her to overcome the pain caused by the thought of Rochester's marriage to Blanche. The use of the word " sinner" shows that she is considering the problem with a more Christian sensibility, a lesson she has learnt from Helen Burns.

Jane can be seen to be developing this trait throughout the novel but at this juncture her repression of her emotions shows her to be truly taking the lesson on board and conforming more readily to the expectations of Victorian society. Jane's heightened sense of Christian morality is highlighted by her return to Gateshead in Chapter 21, where the extent of her development is emphasised by observation of her behaviour in Chapter 1 of the novel. Her cousins' lack of development merely serves to accentuate Jane's maturity and willingness to forgive Mrs Reed: " you have my full and free forgiveness".

Jane's recently developed ability to suppress her emotions is tested in chapter 23 when Rochester tells her that he has decided to marry Blanche. Jane sobs: " for I could suppress what I endured no longer". This demonstrates that despite the fact that Jane has suppressed her feelings before she is unable to do so all the time and implying that there is room for further development and refinement before she conforms totally to the Victorian ideal of womanhood. Jane adds weight to the argument that she still must mature more before she is at that stage in chapter 24.

Rochester says that he will load her " fairy-like fingers with rings". The use of the description " fairy-like" implies that Rochester considers Jane small and allusions to fairytales seen throughout the novel evoke the image of Jane in a childlike state. Therefore this statement causes Jane to reconsider the levels of equality between her and Rochester, as she feels unable to participate in a marriage where she still feels like a dependent. Jane's feeling on the

subject causes the reader to notice that Jane is aware of her own development and is reluctant to return to the stage she was at as a child.

The discovery of Bertha Mason marks a significant turning point in Jane's development: "In the deep shade, at the farther end of the room, a figure ran backwards and forwards". There are many possible interpretations of this section of the novel, one of which is that Bertha is a metaphor for the trapped emotions which Jane has been suppressing. When Jane sees Bertha at the end of the room it prompts her between chapters 26 and 27 to decide that it is best for her to leave Thornfield. This could be due to the interpretation that Bertha represents Jane's future and the motion of running backwards and forwards symbolizes the entrapment promised by her marriage to Rochester. Jane's maturity in dealing with the situation shows her development and she realises that she needs to retain her autonomy and leave Thornfield. Despite leaving Rochester and regaining her freedom, the way in which Jane executes her actions in a demure manner demonstrates her emotional development and her revised moral views.