***Jane Eyre***

***Vol-3 Chapter 1***

***Chapter 27***

***Summary and Analysis***

***Summary:***

* Jane stays in her room for most of the day with a debate raging in her head: does she really have to leave Thornfield?
* When Jane finally emerges from her room, Rochester is waiting for her outside. She is faint and dizzy, and Rochester carries her downstairs to a sofa in the library and gives her a glass of wine.
* Jane won’t let Rochester embrace her, although she doesn’t say much.
* Rochester guesses that Jane is planning to remain at Thornfield as Adèle’s governess, but cut off their intimate relationship. He proposes an alternate plan: he’ll send Adèle to school, and he and Jane will go off somewhere else together.
* At this point, Rochester explains a little more about his behavior toward Bertha. He ordered the servants to keep Bertha a secret from the governess because the thought no governess would stay at Thornfield if she knew there was a madwoman there.
* Rochester says that he could have sent Bertha to another house he owns, Ferndean Manor, but he was afraid that it was too damp and unhealthy there and that it would kill her. Hmm, remember how the problem with Lowood was that it was built in a damp, unhealthy spot that caused an epidemic of typhus? (See [**Volume 1, Chapter 9**](https://www.shmoop.com/jane-eyre/volume-1-chapter-9-summary.html).)
* Rochester thinks aloud, making plans to leave Thornfield and Bertha in the care of Mrs. Poole and her son. Jane rebukes him for being so cruel in his attitude toward Bertha; after all, she can’t help being crazy.
* Rochester tells Jane that he doesn’t hate Bertha because she’s mad, and claims that, if Jane were mad, he would still take tender care of her and never abandon her to other people.
* Anyway, Rochester says he’ll leave tomorrow. Jane refuses to go with him, but also realizes that he’s half-wild and about to get violent, so she coaxes him into sitting down with her to talk it through.
* Jane hasn’t cried yet, but now she lets herself weep and weep. She hopes that it will irritate Rochester and keep him from being so absorbed in his own sadness. It works.
* After they’re both calm, Rochester asks Jane if she’s upset because she just wanted his fortune and rank, instead of his love. Jane’s insulted—of course she loves him, but they can’t indulge in that anymore.
* Jane breaks it to Rochester that she has to leave him—permanently.
* Rochester wants Jane to go with him to France and live with him in a villa there as his "virtual" wife. He claims that he’s not really married and that Jane would basically be his wife, not his mistress.
* Jane refuses this arrangement, and tells him that, with his wife alive, she would be his mistress if they ran off to France together, and saying anything else is just a lie.
* Rochester decides that Jane might change her mind if she knew the circumstances under which he married Bertha, so he tells the story:
* Edward Rochester’s father didn’t want to divide his fortune, so he left it all to his eldest son, Rowland, but he wanted Edward to be wealthy, too. He found the rich Mason family in Jamaica and arranged for Edward to marry Bertha Mason.
* Edward only saw Bertha at parties and for brief moments, and she was beautiful and could play the piano, sing, and so on. Everyone encouraged him, and she seemed to be great, so he married her, the way the two families wanted.
* After his marriage, Rochester found out that Bertha’s mother was in an insane asylum and that her two brothers had mental problems, too.
* Rochester lived with Bertha in Jamaica for four years, even though she was hot-tempered, violent, and coarse. She was also "intemperate and unchaste"—aka drunk and promiscuous.
* Rochester’s father and brother died, and Rochester inherited the family fortune and lands.
* Rochester wanted to divorce Bertha for her behavior, but he couldn’t because she had been diagnosed as insane.
* One evening, in stormy, hot weather, Rochester was woken by Bertha’s curses and profanity and decided that he couldn’t live this way anymore.
* Rochester considered suicide, but decided to go back to Europe, lock Bertha up at Thornfield, and travel on the continent. Nobody in England knew about his marriage in Jamaica.
* Rochester also decided that he wouldn’t recognize Bertha as his wife anymore and that his only responsibility toward her was to make sure that she was cared for properly.
* Rochester did all this, and only Grace Poole, who has taken care of Bertha at Thornfield, and the doctor, Mr. Carter, knew about Bertha—not even Mrs. Fairfax knew, although she might have suspected.
* Bertha has been secretive and cunning, and whenever Grace Poole turns her back, she gets into mischief—most recently, of course, by trying to burn Rochester alive in his bed, stabbing her brother, and tearing Jane’s wedding veil.
* After Rochester found Grace to take care of Bertha, he went to the European continent and traveled, lookin’ for love in all the wrong places. He was planning to get married again, without telling the new wife or anyone else that, legally, he was committing bigamy.
* Rochester bummed around Europe for ten years. Okay, he’s rich, so it wasn’t exactly bumming, but you get the idea. He looked for the right girl everywhere, but couldn’t find anyone. He got depressed and drank a lot.
* Eventually Rochester tried having mistresses, since he couldn’t find anyone he wanted to marry. He had three—Céline Varens, Giacinta, and Clara (French, Italian, and German), but none of them suited him for long.
* Rochester interrupts his own story to notice that Jane disapproves of his having mistresses. He says that he regrets it and wouldn’t do it again, because it made him feel like he was buying slaves. Then he finishes the story:
* Last January, after getting rid of the last mistress, Rochester came back to England, grumpy and depressed. The first person he met, before he even got back to Thornfield, was Jane (see [**Volume 1, Chapter 12**](https://www.shmoop.com/jane-eyre/volume-1-chapter-12-summary.html)).
* Rochester was immediately attracted to Jane and glad to find out that she was the new governess and therefore living at his house.
* The next day Rochester secretly spied on Jane while she was teaching Adèle and when she was alone, and he liked what he saw.
* Rochester was first interested in what kind of person Jane was, because she was different from everyone else he had known, and then gradually became fond of her.
* Jane interrupts Rochester and asks him not to talk about the past and how they fell in love anymore. Rochester asks her if she understands, now, that he doesn’t really have a wife, despite being married to Bertha. He asks Jane to promise to be his—but she won’t.
* Rochester tries his best persuasions—being sweet, being seductive, and pleading—but Jane won’t do something that she thinks is wrong.
* Next Rochester reminds Jane that the only thing she’ll be doing wrong if she agrees to stay with him is to break a social rule—she doesn’t have any family who would be upset or harmed by her choice.
* Jane realizes that what matters most is her own respect for herself, and that it’s even more important for her to cling to her principles at this difficult moment.
* Rochester is furious, and he grasps Jane tightly in his arms. He’s frustrated by the fact that he could overpower her physically, but he could never capture the part of her that he’s most interested in.
* Despite Rochester’s pleadings, Jane leaves, giving him a kiss on the cheek and a blessing as she goes.
* That night, Jane dreams about being in the red room at Gateshead and seeing the spirit of the moon come to her and warn her to "flee temptation."
* Jane wakes up early and packs a few small things, leaving all the presents Rochester bought her. She sneaks out of the house, pausing outside Rochester’s door, tempted to relent and go to him—but she forces herself to leave. She takes a little bread and water from the kitchen as she goes.
* Jane walks along the road in the opposite direction to the local town, Millcote. She goes until she faints down on the ground, crawls for awhile, then gets back up and walks some more. Eventually a coach comes along that’s on its way to a place Jane’s never heard of, and she pays the last of her money to get on it.

***Synopsis:***

After falling asleep for a short while, Jane awakes to the realization that she must leave Thornfield. When she steps out of her room, she finds Rochester waiting in a chair on the threshold. To Rochester’s assurances that he never meant to wound her, and to his pleas of forgiveness, Jane is silent, although she confides to the reader that she forgave him on the spot. Jane suddenly feels faint, and Rochester carries her to the library to revive her. He then offers her a new proposal—to leave England with him for the South of France, where they will live together as husband and wife. Jane refuses, explaining that no matter how Rochester chooses to view the situation, she will never be more than a mistress to him while Bertha is alive. Rochester realizes that he must explain why he does not consider himself married, and he launches into the story of his past.

Unwilling to divide his property, Rochester’s father left his entire estate to his other son, Rowland, and sent Rochester to Jamaica to marry Bertha, who was to inherit a massive fortune—30,000 pounds. Bertha was beautiful, and although she and Rochester spent hardly any time alone, the stimulated, dazzled, and ignorant youth believed himself to be in love and agreed to the marriage. Shortly after the wedding, Rochester learned that Bertha’s mother was not, as he had been led to believe, dead, but mad and living in an insane asylum. Bertha’s younger brother was a mute idiot. Rochester’s father and brother had known about the family’s unpromising genetic legacy, but they had promoted the marriage for the sake of the money. Bertha soon revealed herself to be coarse, perverse, and prone to violent outbreaks of temper and unhealthy indulgences. These excesses only hastened the approach of what had been lurking on her horizon already: absolute madness. By this time, Rochester’s father and brother had died, so Rochester found himself all alone with a maniacal wife and a huge fortune. He considered killing himself but returned to England instead. He resolved to place Bertha at Thornfield Hall “in safety and comfort: [to] shelter her degradation with secrecy, and leave her.” Rochester then drifted around the continent from one city to the next, always in search of a woman to love. When he was met with disappointment, he sank into debauchery. He was always disappointed with his mistresses, because they were, as he puts it, “the next worse thing to buying a slave.” Then he met Jane. Rochester retells the story of their introduction from his point of view, telling her that she enchanted him from the start.

Tolkien was obsessed with languages and loved nothing more than inventing new ones. In fact, he was still developing the history and complexities of the Elvish language Quenya right up until his death. Given this information, I'm not saying my cat strutting elegantly…

Jane feels torn. She doesn’t want to condemn Rochester to further misery, and a voice within her asks, “Who in the world cares for you?” Jane wonders how she could ever find another man who values her the way Rochester does, and whether, after a life of loneliness and neglect, she should leave the first man who has ever loved her. Yet her conscience tells her that she will respect herself all the more if she bears her suffering alone and does what she believes to be right. She tells Rochester that she must go, but she kisses his cheek and prays aloud for God to bless him as she departs. That night, Jane has a dream in which her mother tells her to flee temptation. She grabs her purse, sneaks down the stairs, and leaves Thornfield.

***Analysis:***

Jane finally calms down a bit and decides she will leave. She opens her door and finds Rochester sitting outside the door. He apologizes, although Jane has already forgiven him. She knows he loves her and she does not want to leave him. He discusses options—he wants to send Adèle to a school and then travel with Jane. He says he could have put Bertha in a mental home, but it would have meant an early death, and he did not feel it was right for him to do. Rochester explains that Bertha was an arranged marriage and he did not learn of the insanity in her family until later. His father knew of it beforehand, but only wanted the large dowry that came with Bertha. She became more and more insane and Rochester could not divorce her because she had been diagnosed as insane and according to the laws, one could not divorce an insane spouse.

He moves Bertha to Thornfield and hires Grace to care for her. He then decides he will find a second wife. He describes his search up until the point that he met Jane, whom he observed at great length. Jane stops him at this point and says she must leave Thornfield and she wants to hear no more of the past. She wakes in the middle of the night to a voice telling her to leave, and she does.

In this chapter Mr. Rochester attempts to explain himself and his plan to Jane. The tone and mood of the chapter are one of quiet resolution. Although Mr. Rochester begs her to run away with him, Jane knows she must leave him. Jane forgives Mr. Rochester for his crime and feels he is truly remorseful for what he has done to her. Despite his unhappiness and the lack of fulfillment he finds with Bertha, he is too kind to put her in a living situation that will be harmful to her, a characteristic that is in his favor. Further, Mr. Rochester commanded his employees not to tell Jane about his wife in the attic. This may perhaps explain the servants' and especially Mrs. Fairfax's unusual behavior when Mr. Rochester and Jane's plan for marriage is announced. Again Jane's true nature and her respect for herself shines through as she chooses to accept her pain and leave, despite her desire to stay with the one she loves.

***Short study(Ch 24-25):***

Later that afternoon, Jane awakes, wondering what she should do: Leave Thornfield at once is the answer. At first, she doesn't think she can leave Rochester, but an inner voice tells her she both can and should. Jane leaves her room, tripping over Rochester, who sits in a chair outside the door. He carries her down to the library, offering her wine and food. Rochester plans to lock Thornfield up, send Adèle away to school, and escape with Jane to a villa in the south of France, where they would live "both virtually and nominally" as husband and wife. Jane won't accept his logic; if she lived with him, she would be his mistress, a position she doesn't want. Afraid of his passionate nature, Jane calls to God for help.

Rochester tells Jane the history of his family: His greedy father left all of his estate to Rochester's older brother Rowland, so that the property wouldn't be divided. When Rochester left college, he was sent to Jamaica to marry Bertha, who supposedly would receive a fortune of thirty thousand pounds. Bertha was a beautiful woman, tall and majestic like Blanche Ingram. Bertha seemed to be a dazzling woman and Rochester was aroused by her. He mistook this lust for love. Before he knew it, they were married. After the honeymoon, Rochester learned that Bertha's mother was shut in an asylum and her younger brother was mentally challenged. Ultimately, Bertha's excesses led her into premature insanity. Rochester contemplates suicide, but then decides to return to Europe with Bertha. Both his father and brother are dead, and no one else knows of his marriage. Rochester spends the next ten years searching for a woman to love, but finds only mistresses. From his story, Jane realizes she can never live with Rochester; she would become simply another of his now-despised mistresses.

That night, Jane dreams her mother, transformed from the moon, whispers into her heart, "My daughter, flee temptation." Jane does. She packs up a few trinkets, grabs her purse, which contains a mere twenty shillings, and steals away. Walking past Rochester's room, Jane knows she could find a "temporary heaven" there, but she refuses to accept it. Instead, she sneaks out of the house, beginning a journey far away from Thornfield.

In this chapter, Jane learns more about Rochester's past, particularly his relationship with Bertha. Much of this information hinges on the problem of excessive sexuality. As Rochester constantly reminds Jane, he is not "cool and dispassionate"; instead, he seems to devour her with his "flaming glance." His passionate nature seems to have contributed to his marriage, and to his current problems. When he first arrived in Spanish Town, Rochester found Bertha dazzling, splendid, and lavish, all qualities that excited his senses. But he soon discovers that she is sexually excessive: "coarse," "perverse," "intemperate," and "unchaste." Rochester implicitly suggests his inability to control Bertha then (as now) hinges on her sexuality: She chose her own sexual partners, refusing to maintain the monogamy required by British moral standards. While he criticizes Bertha's sexual excess, Rochester participates in his own with his three mistresses — Céline, Giacinta, and Clara — and his current attempt to make Jane part of the harem. When he tries to accuse Jane of flinging him back to "lust for a passion — vice for an occupation," she reminds him that these are his choices. She senses that his passion is out of control — he's in a "fury" and glowing like a furnace, with "fire" flashing from his eyes — and Jane needs to walk away from the relationship until he has learned self-control and until she can enter the relationship on a more equal footing.

These are not lessons Jane wants to learn. To keep herself from the "temporary heaven" of Rochester's bedroom, Jane hears prophetic voices that guide her on the path of moral righteousness. When the chapter begins, a voice instructs her to leave Thornfield at once. Later, a kinder voice, the moon transformed into the "white human form" of her mother, insists she flee the temptations in Rochester's thorny field. Therefore, Jane sets out on the next stage of her quest: to regain her personal identity, almost lost through her consuming passion for Rochester. Significantly, when she leaves Thornfield, Jane takes only a few trinkets with her — no extra clothes, nothing to remind her of her past life, nothing associated with the "visionary" bride she had almost become. Jane is slowly stripping herself down to nothing, so she'll be able to rebuild herself from nothing. Her future is now "an awful blank: something like the world when the deluge was gone by." Just like the passengers on Noah's Ark after the rains subsided, Jane is beginning life with nothing but a great emptiness.

***Critical Analysis***:

Jane struggles with what to do next, self-control and moral principles contending with passion. When she finally leaves her room, she finds Rochester waiting by her door. He begs for her forgiveness and she sees that he's truly sorry. In her heart she forgives him completely, but she doesn't admit this to him. He says he'll send Adèle to school, shut up Thornfield, and take Jane to France, where they can live as a married couple. Rochester explains that his father and brother deceived him when they arranged his marriage to Bertha in Jamaica. The marriage benefited them financially, so they didn't tell him about the madness in Bertha's family. After a few years, Rochester inherited Thornfield. Because no one outside of Jamaica knew about his marriage to Bertha, he hid her in hopes of finding a new life for himself. Then he began to search, unsuccessfully, for the ideal woman with whom he could share a real relationship—the woman who, after he had three mistresses, he found in Jane. Rochester recaps their early relationship and explains how he fell in love with her. He begs her to consider staying with him.

Jane is tempted to give in to Rochester, but in the end says she must leave him. That night she recalls the torment of the red-room scene recounted early in the book. She sees the moon and it transforms into the vision of a woman who sends a message to her heart: "My daughter, flee temptation!" Early the next morning, she steals away and arranges with a coachman to get as far away from Thornfield as her last 20 shillings will take her.

Rochester clings to the hope that Jane will come to see his situation as he does. He wants her to think that, although he was unfairly tricked into his marriage with Bertha, he has treated his insane wife fairly. By taking responsibility for her physical care and safety, he has done all that can be done for her, and he should be allowed to find a fulfilling life for himself.

Jane relates her forgiveness with direct address: "Reader, I forgave him," again foreshadowing her statement in the final chapter. She uses it again at the chapter close, calling forth all the reader's sympathy over her crushed hopes and dashed dreams: "Gentle reader, may you never feel what I then felt! ... Never may you, like me, dread to be the instrument of evil to what you wholly love."

As much as Jane believes that Rochester deserves to be happy, she cannot respect herself if she flouts the laws of God and man. Religious principles and self-control triumph. She will not succumb to passion if it means abandoning morality. The reappearance of the red-room and the moon underscores the fact that Jane's departure is a moment of crisis.

Although Jane's departure from Thornfield is her third major exit from a place after Gateshead and Lowood, it is by far her hardest decision. If she stays, she enjoys the love of a man whom she admits that she worships, as well as the luxury that his wealth affords. However, if she stays and becomes his mistress, she feels that she will lose self-respect. As we have seen throughout the novel, Jane’s quest is for self-love and independence as much as it is to attain the love of others. As she puts it to herself, "I care for myself. The more solitary, the more friendless, the more unsustained I am, the more I will respect myself."

Why will marriage destroy Jane's independence? Jane continually uses the excuse of Mr. Rochester's marriage to Bertha, but this is most likely not the true reason; after all, she was at times hesitant about marriage before she learned about Bertha. Rather, we can view Mr. Rochester's marriage to Bertha as a symbol of the inequalities of Victorian marriage, especially in the way it imprisons (literally, in Bertha's case) the female. Jane is worried about similar imprisonment, particularly because of Rochester's higher social standing and the proprietary feelings he has for her (note his frequent pet names for her).

***Critical Study:***

After the revelation of Mr. Rochester’s previous marriage, Jane returns to her bedroom and wrestles over whether or not she should leave Thornfield. When she leaves her room, Mr. Rochester is waiting for her and earnestly asks for her forgiveness. Jane privately grants it to him, but remains silent. Moreover, she does not allow him to kiss her, as he already has a wife. She begins to feel faint, and Mr. Rochester takes her into the library to recover and apologizes for bringing Jane to Thornfield and for concealing his wife from her. He then proposes that they move to the south of France and live together as man and wife. Adèle will be sent off to school and Grace will remain at Thornfield to watch over Bertha. Jane refuses and begins to cry, saying that though she loves him, she will never be more than a mistress as long as Bertha is alive.

Mr. Rochester explains the conditions surrounding his union to Bertha in order to explain why he does not consider their marriage to be valid. His father left his entire estate to Mr. Rochester's older brother, Rowland, but did not want to leave his second son completely penniless. He sent Mr. Rochester to Jamaica to marry [Bertha Mason](https://www.gradesaver.com/jane-eyre/study-guide/character-list#bertha-mason), the daughter of an old acquaintance, and thus gain her inheritance of 30,000 pounds. Bertha was beautiful and desirable, and although he spent little time alone with her, Mr. Rochester was overwhelmed by her beauty and promptly agreed to the marriage. Soon after the wedding, Mr. Rochester discovered Bertha's mother was in an insane asylum, while her younger brother was a mute idiot. He also realized that his father and brother had been aware of the hereditary madness in the Mason family but had ignored it for the sake of Bertha Mason’s vast fortune. Over the four years, Mr. Rochester lived with Bertha in Jamaica and watched her grow increasingly insane, perverse, and violent. In the meantime, Mr. Rochester's father and brother died, leaving him with their fortune. Despairing of his life, Mr. Rochester’s contemplated suicide but decided to return to England instead and situated Bertha in the attic cell of Thornfield Manor. Mr. Rochester then traveled the world, searching for a woman to love and being met with disappointment time after time. Finally, he met Jane and instantly knew that she was the one for him.

Jane is torn by Mr. Rochester’s confession. She does not want to increase Mr. Rochester’s unhappiness, and she doubts that she will ever find anyone who loves her as much as he does. Yet, she realizes that she will always be unhappy with herself if she decides to stay at Thornfield under these circumstances. She kisses Mr. Rochester on the cheek and leaves him, incensed and desperate, in the room alone. That night, Jane dreams that her mother urges her to resist temptation. When she wakes up, she quickly packs her things and leaves Thornfield, all the while resisting the temptation to express her love to Mr. Rochester and stay.

***Notes:***

## Jane Eyre Chapter 27

Jane Eyre is a Victorian novel written by Charlotte Bronte and first published in 1847 with the title Jane Eyre: An Autobiography. There are 38 chapters in the book, so Chapter 27 is a little over halfway through the story.

In the preceding chapter, Jane is dressing for her wedding to Mr. Rochester. They walk to the church together and encounter two strangers, one of whom objects to the ceremony since Mr. Rochester is already married. Though he initially tries to proceed with the ceremony anyways, eventually, he admits that it's true and that his wife is still alive and living in the attic.

In Chapter 27, Jane discovers the full story of what happened to Mr. Rochester and why he doesn't consider himself truly married. After his confession, Jane is momentarily torn but ultimately realizes that despite her love for Mr. Rochester, she must do what she believes is right or else she will lose respect for herself. She leaves the Thornfield estate.

## Jane Eyre Chapter 27 Summary

The whole of Chapter 27 centers on Jane needing to decide what to do now that she's found out the truth of her situation, that Mr. Rochester is already married and that his wife Bertha has been upstairs in the attic the whole time.

### Plot Summary

Most of the plot and action in Chapter 27 occur through the dialogue between Jane and Mr. Rochester. This chapter fills in all of the missing details for her on Mr. Rochester's past.

* Jane wakes up from a nap and stumbles into Mr. Rochester, who is already at her door
* Mr. Rochester apologizes for hurting her
* Jane faints and is carried to the library
* Mr. Rochester proposes they leave England so that they can be together in seclusion
* Jane refuses and explains she does not want to be his mistress
* Mr. Rochester recounts his past with his wife Bertha, including her family history of mental illness and how she eventually went mad herself
* Mr. Rochester says he has always felt lonely and has unsuccessfully tried to find love in the form of mistresses
* Mr. Rochester tells Jane he fell for her when he first met her
* Jane considers the situation and then decides to leave Thornfield to avoid temptation

In the end, this chapter contains a pivotal plot point when Jane decides to leave Thornfield and Mr. Rochester. Jane steals out stealthily in the early morning before anyone else is awake within Thornfield.

## Analysis of Jane Eyre Chapter 27

The chapter opens with Jane contemplating the circumstances, asking herself what she should do. Her conscious proclaims, "Leave Thornfield at once." While she knows herself and her own values, leaving is not a light decision.

Her whole life has been filled with loneliness until her time at Thornfield. She suffered abuse at her childhood home and school, where she spent most of her formative years. Her childhood best friend passed away young, and she did not feel like she belonged anywhere.

Now, she's found herself a home that she truly loves. On top of that, she is deeply in love with Mr. Rochester, and he is in love with her in return. Finding out that she was deceived pales compared to the thought of giving up her home, her new friends, and the love of her life. Mr. Rochester's pleas offer her a solution; they could live elsewhere and live as husband and wife.

Mr. Rochester explains the circumstances that led up to his situation, and while trying to justify his actions, he also takes some responsibility for the situation. Though the marriage was arranged by his father, who wanted the monetary gain offered by the Masons' fortune, Rochester admits it was also his own youthful ignorance that allowed him to be taken advantage of by Bertha's family. She was prone to drinking and infidelity and mistreated him even before she went completely mad.

Jane trusts his love and believes he would treat her as a wife. And he promises her that he will be faithful to her. But she cannot be his true wife in the eyes of God or the eyes of the law. Even though Jane loves Mr. Rochester and forgives him for deceiving her, she cannot go against her conscience. Her decision to leave Thornfield and uphold her own values and sense of morality is important.

This is the turning point in the novel where Jane is being given what she has always wanted, love, a home of her own, security, and comfort. She will be taken care of and looked after. But she chooses to let it go to retain her self-respect. At this stage in the novel, there is a power imbalance between Jane and Mr. Rochester, and even though he assures her she would not be a mistress in his eyes, she feels no different than the other women he has described.

The remaining chapters of the book are about her grappling with her decision and developing a deeper understanding of herself, her relationship with God, and achieving self-actualization and acceptance.

### When Does Jane Find Out About Bertha?

It's important to note that Jane learns about Bertha because of strangers. Mr. Rochester has silenced everyone else, and even as Jane is preparing to wed him, they all remain quiet. It's not until they reach the church that Mr. Briggs, a solicitor, provides evidence that confirms Mr. Rochester is, in fact, still married. Mr. Mason then corroborates the story and it's only then that Mr. Rochester comes clean. He admits that he's aware that Jane would technically be his second wife, which is against the law.

He brings everyone back to Thornfield, including Jane. He explains that Bertha is mad and prone to violence, she even stabbed and bit her own brother. That was the same man who Jane had watched over for Mr. Rochester one night. While in the room, Bertha tries to strangle Mr. Rochester, proving that her madness is real. Though Mr. Rochester says they have never consummated the marriage, this and Bertha's madness is not enough to invalidate the marriage.

While it's true that Jane has been comfortable and felt welcomed at Thornfield, she has also been kept out of the loop when it comes to Bertha. It's not just that Mr. Rochester didn't tell her about his wife, the fact is, Mrs. Fairfax had lied to her claiming that Grace Poole had accidentally set the fire in Mr. Rochester's chambers in an earlier chapter. But in reality, while Grace does drink it was not her drinking that caused the accident. It was Bertha, who had escaped her rooms.

## Jane Eyre Chapter 27 Quotes

The key quotes for Chapter 27 are those that demonstrate Jane's internal conflict and dilemma. The following quotes are centered around Jane grappling with being given her heart's desire, but in a format she cannot in good faith accept.

"But the answer my mind gave - "Leave Thornfield at once" - was so prompt, so dread, that I stopped my ears. I said I could not bear such words now. "That I am not Edward Rochester's bride is the least part of my woe," I alleged: "that I have wakened out of most glorious dreams, and found them all void and vain, is a horror I could bear and master; but that I must leave him decidedly, instantly, entirely, is intolerable. I cannot do it."

* This is near the opening of the chapter, and it's clear that Jane's conscious is clear on what she must do. Even so, she struggles to accept it because taking control of her own fate and doing what is right means giving up everything she stands to gain.

"But, then, a voice within me averred that I could do it and foretold that I should do it. I wrestled with my own resolution..."

* Though she argues with herself and doubts her ability to leave everything behind, her conscious remains firm and reminds her that she is strong and resilient.

"Jane! will you hear reason?" (he stooped and approached his lips to my ear); "because, if you won't, I'll try violence." His voice was hoarse; his look that of a man who is just about to burst an insufferable bond and plunge headlong into wild license...But I was not afraid: not in the least. I felt an inward power; a sense of influence, which supported me. The crisis was perilous; but not without its charm..."

* Even though Mr. Rochester threatens violence and is in a fit of passion, Jane does not believe he will hurt her. Despite his claims that he is not gentle, he has proven himself to be a good man in his own way. He has kept his mad wife and has not abused her or mistreated her, even if he speaks ill of her.

"I was experiencing an ordeal: a hand of fiery iron grasped my vitals. Terrible moment: full of struggle, blackness, burning! Not a human being that ever lived could wish to be loved better than I was loved; and him who thus loved me I absolutely worshipped: and I must renounce love and idol. One drear word comprised my intolerable duty - "Depart!"

* After hearing Mr. Rochester's backstory Jane is still resolved that she cannot be his which is a testament to her willpower. He offers her solutions to every anticipated problem with their situation, it's the ultimate test of temptation.

"Still indomitable was the reply - "I care for myself. The more solitary, the more friendless, the more unsustained I am, the more I will respect myself. I will keep the law given by God; sanctioned by man."

* This is significant because it demonstrates that though Jane has always desired to find comfort, a home, and companionship, throughout the trials of her life and the abuse and hardships she's endured she has developed a strong sense of self-love and self-respect.

"I longed to be his; I panted to return: it was not too late; I could yet spare him the bitter pang of bereavement. As yet my flight, I was sure, was undiscovered."

* Even after Jane has fled the hall, she questions her decision at every step. Even though her heart and mind are torn up over her decision to leave, she continues her journey away step by agonizing step.

## Lesson Summary

Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre is still considered a literary classic today. In Chapter 27, Jane is at a turning point in her character's development. She is reeling from the abrupt cancellation of her wedding to Mr. Rochester due to finding out the truth about Bertha, who is still alive and living upstairs at Thornfield. When Jane leaves her room, she stumbles into Mr. Rochester, who is impatiently waiting for her to wake up. Jane finds out that Mr. Rochester's marriage was arranged by his father to secure money for their family. Before Bertha went mad, she was prone to drinking and infidelity and mistreated Mr. Rochester.

Throughout the chapter, Jane knows she must leave Thornfield to retain her self-respect, but she grapples with the decision. Mr. Rochester offers her the opportunity to move to another country and live as husband and wife in seclusion. In Jane's eyes, she would still be little more than a mistress to him. Ultimately, Jane sticks with her initial decision and leaves stealthily while everyone else is still asleep.

***Summary and Analysis Part by Part:***

***Summary Part 1:***

Jane realizes that she must leave Thornfield. But when she steps out of her room, she finds [Rochester](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters/edward-fairfax-rochester) waiting for her. He asks her forgiveness. Jane doesn't respond, though she secretly forgives him immediately. Rochester then pleads with her to come live with him in southern France. Though she still loves him deeply, Jane refuses to go with him and become his mistress.

***Analysis Part 1:***

Jane loves Rochester, and so forgiving him is easy. Yet she knows that love is not everything, and that becoming Rochester's mistress would ruin her in the eyes of the law and God. A mistress can never be the equal of her lover, so Jane refuses to go with him.

***Summary Part 2:***

[Rochester](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters/edward-fairfax-rochester) admits that he acted cowardly and wrong and tells [Jane](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters/jane-eyre) the full truth about his past. Rochester's father left his entire fortune to his eldest son, Rochester's older brother. Rochester's father tried to secure a fortune for Rochester by making him a partner with [Mason](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters) in the West Indies and arranging a marriage for him to [Bertha](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters/bertha-mason), who was promised a huge inheritance. Rochester met Bertha only briefly, but was dazzled by her exoticism and beauty. However, after marrying her, Rochester learned that Bertha's mother was not dead, as he had been told. Rather, she was insane. Bertha is herself violent, coarse, and profoundly self-indulgent. Before long, she also followed her mother into insanity.

***Analysis Part 2:***

Aside from Jane, Rochester never respected the women in his life as thinking individuals, and in turn he paid an awful price. Like Adèle, Bertha inherits bad traits from her foreign mother—an example of typical Victorian prejudice against foreigners. Whereas Brontë characterizes the French as fickle, she portrays people from the West Indies as exotic, sensual, and temperamental.

***Summary Part 3:***

By this point [Rochester's](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters/edward-fairfax-rochester) father and brother had died. Legally bound to [Bertha](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters/bertha-mason), Rochester returned to England, secretly installed her at Thornfield, and hired [Grace Poole](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters) to watch over her. He then left Thornfield and spent years looking for another wife, specifically a European woman. Finding no one, Rochester plunged into debauchery with many mistresses, including [Céline Varens](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters). In the end, consorting with mistresses made him disgusted with himself, as it seemed almost like buying a slave. Eventually, he returned to England with [Adèle](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters). Then he met Jane, whom he loved from the first moment.

***Analysis Part 3:***

Rochester tries to escape his past by covering it up, and then by hiding from it through cheap pleasures and mistresses. He comes to realize that taking mistresses can only cover up his pain for so long, since it is itself sinful and exploitative. While his generous act of taking in Adèle shows his underlying goodness, his inability to reveal his secrets shows his pride.

***Summary Part 4:***

For an instant, [Jane](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters/jane-eyre) considers staying with [Rochester](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre/characters/edward-fairfax-rochester), reasoning that she deserves a devoted man after a life of isolation and neglect. She also fears that she may never find another. Yet at the same time she knows that she will respect herself only if she does what she knows is right. Still, she remains at Thornfield. But that night, Jane's mother appears to her in a dream and tells her to flee temptation. Fighting her own desires, Jane sneaks away from Thornfield with her modest belongings and hires a carriage on an unknown road.

***Analysis Part 4:***

Jane's mother is a spirit, a supernatural entity, yet Jane's dream could also just be an expression of her subconscious. Either way, the spirit carries a religious message. It helps Jane to renounce temptation and give up what she loves most in order to preserve her virtue. In the end, Jane prizes her independence and self-worth above her love for Rochester.