

Janie Crawford, the main character of Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, strives to find her own voice throughout the novel and, in my opinion, she succeeds even though it takes her over thirty years to do it. Each one of her husbands has a different effect on her ability to find that voice.

Janie discovers her will to find her voice when she is living with Logan. Since she did not marry him for love, tensions arise as time moves on and Logan begins to order her around. But Janie is young and her will has not yet been broken. She has enough strength to say "No" and to leave him by running away with Joe. At this point, Janie has found a part of her voice, which is her not willing to be like a slave in her husband's hands.

After Janie marries Joe, I think that she discovers that he is not the person she thought he was. He tells her what to do the same way Logan did, just a little bit more delicately by saying that it is not a woman's job to do whatever he does not want her to do. Throughout her twenty years of life with Joe, Janie loses her self-consciousness because she becomes like a little kid being told what to do by an adult, Joe. She does it without even questioning herself, which is why I think that she loses the part of her voice that she has discovered by running away from Logan. At times, she has enough courage to say no to Joe, but he always has something to say back that discourages Janie from continuing her argument. But, in my opinion, Janie does not lose her will to find herself and it might have even become stronger because the reader can see that Janie is not happy with the way things are now and that she will probably want to change them in the future.

When Joe dies and Janie marries Tea Cake, she feels free because even though Tea Cake asks for her opinion when he does something and cares about her. Since this is Janie's first marriage where she actually loves her husband, she feels free and discovers many new things in life that she has not noticed before. She becomes more sociable, wants to go places with Tea Cake, enjoys working with other people, and likes shooting game. Although she never shot a rifle before, she becomes a better shooter than Tea Cake, and he respects her for that, which allows Janie to get back her self-respect which she had lost while being with her previous husbands. In a way, Janie's spiritual awakening begins when she lives with Tea Cake.

As the reader can see, Janie has a hard life where she has to struggle in order not to become inferior to her husbands. She succeeds when she is with Tea Cake, which also marks the time when her inner voice starts to awaken. But not until after Tea Cake's death does she realize that she has understood her place in life, or in other words, she has found her voice.

