

In the short story, "Eveline," James Joyce introduces us to the life of a young woman named Eveline. She has the opportunity to escape with Frank, the man she thinks she loves, to a faraway country in search of a new life. Instead, she decides to stay in the dreary and gloomy life she already knows. To understand Eveline's final decision to stay we have to analyze the reasons that prevent Eveline from pursuing a better life. Her fear of the unknown; the fact that she does not know Frank well enough; and the many attachments she has to her home, prompt Eveline to make her decision.

The first reason for Eveline to stay is that she does not have the courage to leave. She tries to convince herself that her life is not "wholly undesirable," but Joyce reveals how hard and undesirable her life actually is when he tells us that she "felt herself in danger of her father's violence." She gets "palpitations" because she is so afraid of her own father. Although he beats her and treats her badly, she still thinks that "sometimes he could be very nice," just because she remembers him making her laugh once, and other time when he took care of her when she was sick. These good memories about her father look insignificant compared to what she has to do for him. Eveline also has to support the mistreatments of her abusive father even when she is asking him for money to buy groceries. Especially on Saturday nights when he is "usually fairly bad," meaning he is drunk. Eveline alone asks herself if it is wise to leave. She thinks that at her home she has "shelter and food; she had those whom she had known all her life." We know she does not feel quite at home in her father's house. For example, after all these years, she does not even know the name of the priest on a photograph in the house she lives in.

Another reason for Eveline to stay is that she does not love Frank enough to escape with him. She does not even know him well enough. What Eveline knows about Frank is only what he tells her. Frank has "tales of distant countries," the word "tales" suggests that all is a false story. Everything she knows about him is what he tells her. She does not know whether he is lying or telling the truth, because she has no way to confirm what Frank tells her. Because Eveline's father does not like Frank, he prohibits her to continue seeing him. Her father says "'I know this sailor chaps'" because of the reputation sailors used to have. When her father and Frank had a squabble, Eveline has to meet Frank secretly, which makes Eveline think of her relationship with Frank in a more romantic and exciting way. Joyce tells us that "first of all it had been an excitement for her to have a fellow and then she had begun to like him." In her tedious life, the fact of going out with someone, to have someone to care about her, is a thrill. In the final sentence we discover that Eveline does not have any feelings for Frank when her eyes "gave him no sign of love or farewell or recognition."

The most important reason is that she has many strong ties to her home. First she has to take care of two children. Also Eveline is the only daughter in the family, that is why when "they were growing up he (her father) had never gone for her, like he used to go for Harry and Ernest, because she was a girl." These beatings by their father when they are younger make easier for Eveline's brothers to leave the house, unlike Eveline who, because she is the only girl, is protected by her mother. Memories make Eveline feel more emotionally attached to her home. Although her favorite brother, Ernest, is dead, she still cares about Harry. She has to many duties in the house. She has to take care of two children, take care of the house, and her abusive father. All because of the promise she made to her dying mother to "keep the home together as long as she could." The love for her mother is too strong to break that promise.

In conclusion Eveline chooses the "odour of dusty cretonne" over a new, but unknown life because the reasons for staying slightly overwhelm the reasons for leaving. For this era her decision might seem bizarre or even foolish; but making

that decision she does what is logical for that epoch.