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Judging a Juror

Upon reading “Twelve Angry Men”, a play written by Reginald Rose, readers get a taste of a typical jury deliberation and how varying jurors’ words make an impact on a young murder suspect. Among the twelve jurors, the reader sees a melting pot of diverse beliefs and personalities. Despite their diversity, they must find common ground with one another while finding a verdict. One juror who is completely dedicated to giving a fair trial is juror nine. In fact, he subtly puts his whole heart in the case; if he was to be put on the stand, the judge could clearly see his dedication to this case. Juror nine believes in the suspect when no one else does, so he uses his wisdom and passion to persuade his fellow jurors to find a verdict based on the protocol that “all are innocent until proven guilty”.

Having wisdom is a very important aspect when serving as a juror because this trait ensures the defendant a fair trial. In Act two, a group of quarreling jurors are making hypocritical assumptions of the young defendant when juror nine says, “Remember, it is ‘guilty beyond reasonable doubt’ this is an important thing to remember”(Rose 30), which shows his wisdom of the court system. The twelve members of the jury tend to quarrel and only see through a fogged up mirror, however juror nine clears up their vision with his knowledge concerning the legal system. In a society of ignorance, juror nine thinks it is important for people to have an understanding of what is right and what is expected. For example, the jurors are expected to suspect the defendant is innocent unless there is valid proof or

evidence that suggests otherwise. Juror nine not only shows wisdom when it comes to the legalistic aspects of the case, but he also shows wisdom in the way he lives. In Act II, Juror number nine tries to contradict an old man's unrealistic testimony while relating the witness to himself by saying, "(Low but firm) I speak from experience"(Rose 34), which demonstrates his wisdom from a long life. Having a lingering and full life, juror nine understands what the witness has gone through and he has knowledge of why his testimony may be false. Many people can have intelligence, however juror nine is one of the few who has used his personal life as a learning experience. His insight affects the whole play because it is contagious, meaning once he starts revealing key points more jurors begin to question what they thought was right; therefore, they begin to gain wisdom on the case. Although wisdom is very important, juror nine puts his wisdom into action because he has passion for what he has conceived from his understanding.

Even if someone has wisdom, it is worthless without the passion to act on one's knowledge; juror nine uses his passion to express himself on what he knows to be right. After taking a vote, juror nine defends his reasoning for voting innocent when he says, "It takes a great deal of courage to stand alone even if you believe in something very strongly."(Rose 28), which illustrates his obvious emotional pull towards individualism. Passion is said to be any feeling or emotion so strong that one is compelled to act on it, meaning that this juror felt compelled to speak up for his belief in individualism. He felt that having true courage meant embracing who one is as an individual, even though everyone around them may hinder them for their differences. Juror nine also shows his passion when it comes to living with no regrets. After the old man's testimony, Juror nine is explaining the predicament the witness is in when he says, "Nobody knows him after seventy-five years. This is a very sad thing. A man like this needs to be recognized- to be questioned, and listened to, and quoted just once. This is very

important”(Rose 34), which demonstrates his passion and compassion for what the old man is feeling. After examining the jurors’ words carefully, one will see his obvious concern for a man who is coming near the end of his life. He feels very strong about the need to be recognized because sometimes recognition is the symbol of a life lived to the fullest. He clearly sympathizes with this mans’ want to think he left his mark on the world, even if it was just a simple quote. Juror nines’ passion for uniqueness and living each day like it was the last, is illustrated in “Twelve Angry Men” as a lesson to its’ readers to have passion for something that means a lot to them.

Juror nine’s wisdom and passion stand as such valuable lessons in life. The play takes the readers through an insightful journey about what it means to make decisions based on ones’ personal morals and values. Juror nine finds solutions based on his perspective and knowledge because he’s a strong believer in justice. Due to his strong qualities, he would most likely be choosen again for jury duty because any judge would be smitten with his life morale. His life moto is shown when he continues to mention the importance of being an individual and standing out from the crowd. Life brings choices, and the best decisions are the ones individuals make even when no one else does, because it takes true courage, wisdom, and passion, to be the one voice in a sea of whispers.