

TEACHING BELOVED
STUDY QUESTIONS
PART ONE
DEDICATION, INSCRIPTION, AND FIRST CHAPTER
PREFACE AND PP. 3-24

1. Elie Wiesel has said that nothing compares to the Holocaust from World War II and has rejected any comparisons. In her dedication, Toni Morrison is drawing a clear parallel to the Holocaust. Is this a valid comparison? If so, why? If not, why not?
2. What is 124?
3. Why are the sideboard moving, the house pitching, and the dog thrown across the room?
4. Who dies on page 5?
5. Why does Sethe want "Dearly Beloved" engraved on the tombstone?
6. Why does she have only "Beloved" engraved?
7. What do you understand from "The picture of the men coming to nurse her"? (p. 7)
8. Do the nephews rape Sethe in addition to taking her milk?
9. Who is Paul D, and what kind of person is he?
10. Why do the male slaves on Sweet Home let Sethe decide which man she wants?
11. Why does Mr. Garner say, "Neither would I." (p. 13)
12. Why does Sethe choose Halle?
13. Why are so many of the slaves named "Paul"?
14. What details are you given about Sweet Home?
15. On page 17, Denver says the baby is "rebuked." What is the connotation of this word?
16. Why is there a tree on Sethe's back?
17. What is the significance of its being a chokecherry tree?
18. What is a tobacco tin?
19. What does Paul D do to the ghost?
20. What is Denver's attitude toward the ghost?
21. Why does Beloved's spirit stay on earth? Why doesn't it go to Heaven or to Hell?

TEACHING BELOVED
STUDY QUESTIONS
PART ONE, SECOND CHAPTER
PP. 25-34

1. What motivates Sixo?
2. What happens to Baby Suggs' other children?
3. How do Sethe and Paul D feel after they make love?

TEACHING BELOVED
STUDY QUESTIONS
PART ONE, THIRD CHAPTER
PP. 35-53

1. Why does Denver like the bower behind 124?
2. Who is in the white dress kneeling down next to Sethe with its sleeve around her waist?
3. What is the significance of the antelope metaphor on page 37?
4. Why does Denver love the part about Amy the best?
5. Why does Sethe lie about her name to Amy?
6. Why does Amy massage Sethe's feet?
7. What is the significance of the colors described on pages 48-49?

TEACHING *BELOVED*
STUDY QUESTIONS
PART ONE, FOURTH CHAPTER
PP. 54-61

1. What is the effect on the reader of having the three shadows holding hands?
2. What is the importance of the dying roses?

TEACHING BELOVED
STUDY QUESTIONS
PART ONE, FIFTH CHAPTER
PP. 62-70

1. Who appears in front of 124?
2. Why is she wearing new shoes?
3. Why is her skin soft and smooth?
4. How does Denver react to Beloved's arrival?
5. Why does Beloved like sugar so much?
6. Why does Denver contradict what Paul D says at the end of the chapter?

TEACHING BELOVED
STUDY QUESTIONS
PART ONE, SIXTH CHAPTER
PP. 71-78

1. Why does Mrs. Garner give Sethe the earrings?
2. What are Sethe's memories of her own mother?
3. Why does her mother have a brand under her breast?
4. What is the meaning of a circle with a cross in it?
5. Why does Sethe's mother throw away all the other babies she had?

TEACHING BELOVED
STUDY QUESTIONS
PART ONE, SEVENTH CHAPTER
PP. 79-85

1. Why is Beloved shining, and how does Paul D feel about it?
2. What is Sethe's reaction when she learns that Halle witnessed the incident in the barn when schoolteacher's nephews took her milk?
3. Why was Halle "sitting by the churn [with] butter all over his face"? (p. 85)
4. Why couldn't Paul D help Halle then?
5. What is a bit?
6. Why does Paul D have such affection and admiration for the rooster, Mister?

TEACHING *BELOVED*
STUDY QUESTIONS
PART ONE, EIGHTH CHAPTER
PP. 91-104

1. What does Denver see when Beloved lets her head fall back?
2. What place is Beloved describing on page 92?
3. Who does Denver think Beloved is at this point in the story?
4. Is Beloved using Denver, or does she genuinely care for her?

TEACHING *BELOVED*
STUDY QUESTIONS
PART ONE, NINTH CHAPTER
PP. 105-129

1. What does Sethe want to lay down?
2. Why purpose does the Clearing serve during Baby Suggs' days?
3. Why does Sethe go to it now?
4. The AME is the African Methodist Episcopal Church. What role has it played in American history?
5. Why does the word "holy" follow Baby Suggs' name on page 106 and elsewhere?
6. What does the word "grace" mean in religious terms?
7. What is the significance of the name "Stamp Paid"?
8. Why does Baby Suggs say not to clean the baby's eyes until she gets the mother's urine?
9. Why is Sethe's older daughter called the "crawling-already? girl"?
10. Why is Beloved given name never mentioned?
11. Who is trying to strangle Sethe in the Clearing?
12. Why is Sethe bothered by the kiss?
13. What are Beloved's feelings toward Paul D in this chapter?
14. Why does Denver accuse Beloved of choking Sethe?
15. Why does Morrison include Lady Jones in the story?
16. Why is Denver deaf for two years?
17. What is the answer Denver cannot bear to hear?
18. Why does Denver feel so possessive about Beloved?
19. What is the importance of the turtle?
20. Why does Denver want Beloved's forgiveness?

TEACHING *BELOVED*
STUDY QUESTIONS
PART ONE, TENTH CHAPTER
PP. 130-139

1. Make a quick sketch of the ditch and boxes where Paul D and the rest of the chain gang are kept.
2. Why is Paul D trembling?
3. How do the guards demean the prisoners?
4. Who is Hi Man?
5. The Bible tells the Flood story in the book of Genesis. How does the story of the rains on the chain gang reflect the Flood story?
6. How do the men escape?
7. What disease do the Cherokees have?
8. Why does the chain gang stay near the Cherokees?
9. What is the significance of the trail of flowers that Paul D is told to follow?

TEACHING BELOVED
STUDY QUESTIONS
PART ONE, ELEVENTH CHAPTER
PP. 140-144

1. Does Beloved consider Paul D a threat?
2. Why does Paul D decide to move out of 124?
3. What is the "confusion Beloved's shining [causes] him"? (p. 141)
4. What are "house-fits"?
5. What is the meaning of the reference to Lot's wife?
6. Why does Paul D call Beloved by her name?
7. What happens to his tobacco tin?
8. Why does he say, "Red heart" over and over again?

TEACHING *BELOVED*
STUDY QUESTIONS
PART ONE, TWELFTH CHAPTER
PP. 145-153

1. Why does Sethe ask Beloved about her mother?
2. Why does Denver believe that Beloved is the baby incarnate but Sethe doesn't see it yet?
3. Why does Beloved always have a "licking fire that seemed always to burn in her"? (p. 147)
4. What is the "original hunger" that Denver feels? (p. 149)
5. Why does Beloved play a cat-and-mouse game with Denver in the cold house?
6. What is Denver's reaction to Beloved's disappearance from the cold house?
7. Whose face does Beloved see?

TEACHING BELOVED
STUDY QUESTIONS
PART ONE, THIRTEENTH CHAPTER
PP. 154-163

1. Why does Paul D feel unable to control his own actions around Beloved?
2. Why doesn't Paul D want to ask Sethe for help?
3. Why does Paul D want Sethe to have his baby?
4. Why does Sethe say, "Mercy." (p. 159)
5. Why is Beloved feeling malicious?

TEACHING BELAVED
STUDY QUESTIONS
PART ONE, FOURTEENTH CHAPTER
PP. 164-165

1. Why is Beloved afraid that her body might be falling apart?
2. Why is Beloved crying?

TEACHING BELOVED
STUDY QUESTIONS
PART ONE, FIFTEENTH CHAPTER
PP. 166-181

1. Why does Stamp Paid gather berries and bring them to Baby Suggs?
2. Why does Morrison include the reference to loaves and fishes?
3. Why is the rest of the community "offended by [the] excess"? (p. 170)
4. What is Baby Suggs' perspective on her other seven children?
5. Why doesn't Mr. Garner call Baby Suggs by her real name?
6. What mixed feelings does Baby Suggs have toward Mr. Garner at the end of the chapter?

TEACHING *BELOVED*
STUDY QUESTIONS
PART ONE, SIXTEENTH CHAPTER
PP. 182-188

1. Why does Morrison use a Biblical allusion in the description of the four men coming to take Sethe back?
2. What is Sethe doing with her children in the shed?
3. What is schoolteacher's reaction to what Sethe does?
4. What is Baby Suggs' reaction?

TEACHING *BELOVED*
STUDY QUESTIONS
PART ONE, SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER
PP. 189-194

1. Why does Stamp Paid decide to show Paul D the newspaper clipping?
2. What is Paul D's reaction to it?
3. Why does Baby Suggs look at the stream and miss the arrival of the four horsemen?
4. Why doesn't the community warn them?
5. How does Sethe justify killing her own child?

TEACHING BELOVED
STUDY QUESTIONS
PART ONE, EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER
PP. 195-203

1. Why does Paul D show Sethe the clipping?
2. What is the importance of the hummingbirds?

TEACHING *BELOVED*
STUDY QUESTIONS
PART TWO, FIRST CHAPTER
PP. 207-245

1. What is the "Misery"?
2. Why does Sethe refuse to attend the service for Baby Suggs?
3. Why does Morrison include the Biblical verse, "Pride goeth before a fall"? (p. 210)
4. What are the voices that Stamp Paid hears as he approaches 124?
5. Why can't he knock on the door?
6. Why does Morrison include the Biblical reference, "Spirit willing, flesh weak"? (p. 212)
7. Why does Sethe decide that the three of them will go ice-skating?
8. Why does Morrison repeat a reference to hands around Sethe's waist? (p. 214)
9. Why does Sethe say, "You finished with your eyes?" (p. 215)
10. When Sethe finally accepts who Beloved is, what is her reaction?
11. Why does Morrison use repeated references to locked boxes? (p. 216)
12. What is the importance of the red ribbon that Stamp finds?
13. What is the "roaring" on page 222?
14. Why don't they open the door when Stamp knocks?
15. Why does he change his name from Joshua?
16. Why does Paul D stay in town and sleep in the church cellar?
17. Why does Sixo say, "Improving your property, sir." (p. 234)
18. Why does Sethe tell the particular stories she does on pages 235-238?
19. What are the "black and angry dead" that Sixo thinks of on page 244?

TEACHING BELOVED
STUDY QUESTIONS
PART TWO, SECOND CHAPTER
PP. 246-251

1. Page 246 starts a series of four chapters that are markedly different in point of view and style from the earlier ones. Why are they different?
2. The point of view is Sethe's, done in first person. What is the effect of this shift of perspective?
3. What does Sethe reflect upon in this chapter?

TEACHING BELoved
STUDY QUESTIONS
PART TWO, THIRD CHAPTER
PP. 252-258

1. This chapter is spoken in first person by Denver. What is the effect of this perspective?
2. What does Denver reflect upon in this chapter?
3. Why does Denver say, "She's mine, Beloved. She's mine." (p. 258)

TEACHING *BELOVED*
STUDY QUESTIONS
PART TWO, FOURTH CHAPTER
PP. 259-263

1. This chapter is spoken in first person by Beloved. What is the effect of this perspective?
2. Morrison chooses a stream of consciousness style for this chapter. How does this affect the reader?
3. Who is taking flowers away from leaves?
4. What pictures is Beloved thinking of?
5. Why does Beloved say, "[H]er face is my own"? (p. 259)
6. What is the "hot thing" Beloved refers to? (p. 259)
7. Why are they crouching?
8. Why is the man on her face dead? (p. 259)
9. What does it mean when the "men without skin bring [them] their morning water to drink"? (p. 259)
10. What does Beloved mean by "[W]e are all trying to leave our bodies behind"? (p. 260)
11. Why is the man's body "a small bird"? (p. 260)
12. Why is the bread "seacolored"? (p. 260)
13. What "little hill of dead people" is she referring to? (p. 260)
14. Why are the dead people being pushed through with poles? (p. 260)
15. What is the circle around the woman's neck? (p. 260)
16. Why is the woman with Beloved's face in the sea? (p. 260)
17. What is the shining in the woman's ears? (p. 261)
18. Why are the clouds in the way? (p. 261)
19. Why does she like his "pretty little teeth"? (p. 261)
20. Why does the woman go in? Where is she going? (p. 261)
21. Why is it Beloved's "dark face that is going to smile at [her]"? (p. 262)
22. Why is Beloved not taken? (p. 262)
23. Where is the bridge that Beloved describes? (p. 262)
24. Why does Beloved go in the water? (p. 263)
25. Why is the woman chewing and swallowing? (p. 263)
26. Why does Beloved say, "Sethe's is the face that left me." (p. 263)

TEACHING *BELOVED*
STUDY QUESTIONS
PART TWO, FIFTH CHAPTER
PP. 264-267

1. Why does this chapter start with the same words as the previous one?
2. What sea does Beloved describe when she says, "Sethe went into the sea". (p. 264)
3. Why does Beloved associate Sethe with the place where they crouched? (p. 264)
4. What gunsmoke does Beloved refer to? (p. 264)
5. Part of this chapter is written in poetic form. What is the effect of this technique?
6. Sethe uses the word "rememory," but Beloved answers, "Yes. I remember you." Why is this Sethe's word alone? (p. 265)
7. On page 266, the point of view becomes more complex. Identify who is speaking each line on this page and the next, and explain why Morrison uses this intermingling of perspectives.
8. "I will take care of you." (p. 267) Who is "I"? Who is "you"?
9. Why does the chapter end with "You are mine" repeated three times?

TEACHING BELOVED
STUDY QUESTIONS
PART TWO, SIXTH CHAPTER
PP. 268-282

1. Why is Paul D's tobacco tin "blown open"? (p. 269)
2. What doubts does Paul D have of his own manhood?
3. What is the shining that lights the Thirty-Mile Woman?
4. Why does Sixo sing?
5. What does Sixo mean when he shouts, "Seven-O! Seven-O!" (p. 278)
6. Why is Sixo laughing when he dies?

TEACHING *BELOVED*
STUDY QUESTIONS
PART TWO, SEVENTH CHAPTER
PP. 283-289

1. What is the tone of the conversation between Stamp and the man who asks about Judy?
2. Where does Stamp think Beloved comes from?
3. What is the tone of the last sentence: "Why? Why" Why? Why? Why?" (p. 289)

TEACHING BELOVED
STUDY QUESTIONS
PART THREE, FIRST CHAPTER
PP. 293-322

1. Why is Denver worried?
2. In what ways have Sethe and Beloved traded places?
3. Why is Beloved becoming tyrannical and vindictive?
4. Why is Beloved's stomach getting larger?
5. Why does the community rally in response to Denver's request for work and the obvious problems at 124?
6. What accounts for Beloved's behavior?
7. Why is Sethe getting smaller as Beloved gets bigger?
8. Why does Janey say, "I guess there's a God after all." (p. 312)
9. Why do the Bodwins have a statue of a black boy that says, "At Yo Service"? (p. 313)
10. Why does Ella change her mind about Sethe and organize the other women to rescue her?
11. How does the singing of the women at the end of the book parallel Paul D's description of the escape of the chain gang?
12. In what ways does the group of neighborhood women serve the same function as the chorus in Greek tragedy?
13. What is the meaning of the Biblical reference, "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof"? (p. 315)
14. Why do the women decide to drive out Beloved?
15. Who was Medusa in Greek mythology? In what ways is Beloved portrayed as Medusa on page 322?
16. Why does Sethe think that Mr. Bodwin is schoolteacher?
17. What is Beloved's reaction to Sethe's running toward the women?

TEACHING BELOVED
STUDY QUESTIONS
PART THREE, SECOND CHAPTER
PP. 323-335

1. Why does Beloved disappear?
2. Why do some people say she exploded?
3. Why are Stamp and Paul D finally able to laugh?
4. Why does Denver change her attitude toward Paul D?
5. Why does Paul D go to 124?
6. In what ways is Beloved's departure in this chapter similar to and different from her death at the beginning?

TEACHING BELOVED
STUDY QUESTIONS
PART THREE, THIRD CHAPTER
PP. 336-338

1. Why does the memory of Beloved disappear?
2. If this is not a story to pass on, why does Toni Morrison write it and "pass it on"?