

Beloved Book Notes

Beloved by Toni Morrison

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Author/Context

Toni Morrison (Chloe Anthony Wofford) was born in Loraine, Ohio, on Feb. 13, 1931. Descended from pre-Civil War slaves, storytelling and reading were important parts of her childhood, and the supernatural was considered part of everyday life. Morrison graduated from Lorain High School in 1949, and went to Howard University in Washington, D.C. She graduated from Howard in 1953 with a B.A. in English Literature, and a minor in Classics. From there, she went on to Cornell University to earn an M.A. in English in 1955. She taught English at the university level for several years before becoming an editor at Random House in 1967.

Her promising first novel, *The Bluest Eye*, was published in 1970. Since *The Bluest Eye*, Morrison has written six novels: *Sula*, *Song of Solomon*, *Tar Baby*, *Beloved*, *Jazz*, and *Paradise*, as well as a book of criticism entitled, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*. Morrison also edited *Race-ing Justice, En-gendering Power*.

The Abridged Encyclopedia of World Biography says, "*Beloved*, Morrison's fifth novel, has been called her most technically sophisticated work to date. Using flashbacks, fragmented narration and shifting viewpoints, Morrison explored the story of events that have led to the protagonist Sethe's crime." Published in 1987, the novel made *The New York Times* Best Seller List in its first week, and by the third week, the novel was Number 3. Surprisingly, *Beloved* was ignored for the National Book Award and the National Book Critics' Award the year it was published. Appalled at the dismissal of the novel, forty-eight prominent African American writers and critics signed a tribute to Morrison's achievement that was published in the *New York Times* in January 1988. Since then, Morrison has received numerous awards including the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction for *Beloved*, the National Book Awards NBF Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters, and the Nobel Prize for Literature.

In *Black Women Writers: A Critical Evaluation*, Morrison wrote that fiction "should be beautiful, and powerful, but it should also work. It should have something in it that enlightens; something in it that suggests what the conflicts are. But it need not solve those problems because it is not a case study, it is not a recipe."

An article in *Major Twentieth-Century Writers* claims that "[t]hrough works such as *The Bluest Eye*, *Song of Solomon*, and *Beloved*, Morrison has earned a reputation as a gifted storyteller whose troubled characters seek to find themselves and their cultural riches in a society that warps or impedes such essential growth."

Charles Larson's article about *Beloved* in the *Chicago Tribune* states that "[i]n her darkest and most probing novel, Toni Morrison has demonstrated once again the stunning powers that place her in the first ranks of our living novelists."

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Plot Summary

The book begins in 1873, in the aftermath of slavery and the Civil War. The story begins just before Paul D comes to stay with Sethe and Denver at 124. Much of the information that weaves the story together, however, is told with the memories of these three characters. This summary is in chronological order to make it easier to understand.

In 1848, Baby Suggs left Sweet Home plantation in Kentucky and was driven to Cincinnati, Ohio, after her son, Halle, purchased her freedom from Mr. Garner, the plantation owner. Sethe arrived at Sweet Home as Baby Suggs' replacement. A year after her arrival, she married Halle and bore him 3 children: two sons and a daughter, over the next few years at Sweet Home.

Mr. Garner died and his wife became ill; she asked a schoolteacher to run Sweet Home. The schoolteacher treated the slaves like animals and abused them, and they all planned to run away. Sethe sent her children to Ohio and stayed to wait for Halle, because he wasn't where they agreed to meet when they planned to run. In the days she spent waiting for Halle, the schoolteacher and his nephews took Sethe, who was six months pregnant with her fourth child, to the barn and nursed the milk from her breasts. Sethe was beaten the next day, and that night she ran away alone.

As she tries to walk to Ohio, a white girl finds Sethe and helps her to the Ohio River where Sethe has her baby, Denver. The next day, Sethe and Denver make it to Baby Suggs at 124 and are reunited with Sethe's other children. Twenty-eight days after her arrival at 124, the schoolteacher shows up to take them back to Sweet Home. Sethe, fearing her children are to be sold into slavery, snaps, killing her first daughter with a saw and injuring her sons before anyone can stop her. She goes to jail and takes Denver with her. When she gets out of jail, she prostitutes herself for a headstone for the baby's grave that reads only, "Beloved." The baby's ghost makes itself a constant presence at 124 and Sethe's sons run away, while Baby Suggs lays in bed waiting to die. No one in the community will have anything more to do with 124 or the people in it, so when Baby Suggs dies in 1865, Sethe and Denver are alone until Paul D shows up in 1873.

Paul D scares away the ghost of 124 and he, Sethe, and Denver begin a new life together, until Beloved shows up at 124. No one has any idea who she is or from where she came. Sethe and Denver take her in. Beloved becomes instantly attached to Sethe. Denver becomes intensely devoted to Beloved because she thinks she is her baby sister's ghost come to life to keep her company. Beloved breaks Paul D down, seducing him against his will. He leaves after Stamp Paid informs him of the murder of Sethe's daughter. When Paul D leaves, Sethe begins to believe that Beloved is her reincarnated daughter because of coincidental connections between Beloved and the baby ghost.

Beloved and Sethe become interested only in one another. Later, they become angry and violent with each other because Beloved thinks Sethe abandoned her; she begins to dominate Sethe with her anger. Sethe starts to waste away as Beloved's pregnant

stomach grows, and Denver is forced to seek help for her mother outside of 124. Denver gets a job with the Bodwins, the white folks who rented 124 to Baby Suggs. As Denver waits on the porch for Bodwin to pick her up, a group of colored women come to 124 to rescue Sethe from Beloved, the ghost haunting 124. Beloved and Sethe step onto the porch to see what's going on, and when Sethe sees Mr. Bodwin, she tries to kill him, believing the schoolteacher has returned. Beloved runs away because she thinks Mr. Bodwin is the white man that has come back for her, and Sethe has abandoned her again. With Beloved gone, Sethe gives up on life because she has lost her child, the best part of herself, again. Paul D comes back to 124 to help Denver take care of Sethe. Time passes and Beloved is forgotten.

Major Characters

Sethe: She was a slave at Sweet Home plantation who escaped to Cincinnati, OH, so scarred by slavery, that at the threat of returning, she tried to kill her children. Only one of her daughters died. Sethe is haunted by her memory and her daughter's ghost until Paul D, a fellow slave at Sweet Home, comes to live with her. When Beloved shows up at 124, Sethe's house, Sethe becomes devoted to the woman she eventually comes to believe is the reincarnate of her murdered daughter.

Denver: Denver is Sethe's 18-year-old daughter born on the Ohio River with the help of a whitegirl as Sethe was escaping to freedom. She survived her mother's attempted murder and stayed in jail with Sethe because she was still nursing. Denver is lonely at 124 (Sethe's house) because she hasn't gone beyond the yard in 10 years. The townspeople avoid Sethe and her family after the murder. When Beloved comes, Denver is possessive of her because she believes Beloved to be her sister's ghost come to life to keep her company. Denver tries to protect Beloved from Sethe because she is afraid that Sethe may try to kill one or both of them again. Denver ends up being the one to go outside of 124 to get help in the end and takes care of Sethe once Beloved leaves.

Baby Suggs: Baby Suggs is Sethe's mother-in-law who was bought out of slavery by her son, Halle, at Sweet Home. Sethe was her replacement on the plantation, and Baby Suggs took Sethe and her children into 124, her home in Cincinnati. Among the Negro community of Cincinnati, Baby Suggs was an informal spiritual leader, referred to as Baby Suggs, holy. She was respected in the community, and her home was a way station for news and refuge and company until Sethe murdered her daughter there. After that, the neighbors shunned the family, and Baby Suggs gave up her faith and resigned to her bed to contemplate color until she died.

Paul D Garner: Paul D is the only still-living Sweet Home man, and he shows up at 124, Sethe's home. He had been sold and then imprisoned in Alfred, GA, until he escaped to the north. Since gaining his freedom, he has become restless, fearing being tied down. He has locked the horror of his experiences as a slave away in his tobacco tin heart, until he moves in to 124. He wants to stay and make a life with Sethe because he has wanted her since she moved to Sweet Home as a girl. When Beloved shows up, she diverts Sethe's attention and seduces Paul D. He is disgusted by his own weakness in having sex with Beloved, but he can't seem to control himself when she tempts him. When he learns of Sethe's crime, he leaves 124, but once Beloved disappears, he returns to care for Sethe.

Beloved: She is an approximately 19-year-old girl who shows up at 124, Sethe's home, in new shoes and a fancy dress. She cannot remember anything about herself or where she's from. All she can tell them is that her name is Beloved. Sethe and Denver take her in and notice that she is childlike; her walk is unsteady, her skin looks new and uncallused, and her voice sounds harsh because it hasn't been used. She likes stories and sweets, as a child would, and she attaches herself to Sethe. Jealous of the

attention Sethe gives Paul D, Beloved seduces him and wants to drive him away from 124. Sethe and Denver begin to believe that Beloved is the reincarnation of the ghost that haunted 124 before Paul D came, and they pamper and obey her, until she becomes unmanageable and angry because she thinks Sethe abandoned her when she was younger. She has memories of being locked away somewhere small and dark and of whitemen who mistreated her; she remembers a bridge and the face of a woman she wanted to reach but couldn't; and she remembers a man being dead on top of her. These are the memories of the whiteman who kept her locked in a closet and sexually abused her. She escaped when he died and found her way to 124 and Sethe. Her identity becomes blended with that of the little girl murdered at 124, remembered only by a headstone that reads 'Beloved.'

Schoolteacher: Schoolteacher took over managing Sweet Home when the owner, Mr. Garner, died. His wife asked Schoolteacher, her brother-in-law, to run things when she fell ill, and he treated the slaves as animals and abused them. He allowed his grown nephews to hold Sethe down and nurse her when she was pregnant with Denver, and he beat the scars onto her back. He sold Paul F and dismembered Paul A, burned Sixo, and eventually sold Paul D. What he did to Halle is unknown, but seeing him coming for her and her children is what prompted Sethe to try to kill her children.

crawling-already? girl: Crawling-already? girl is how Sethe refers to the approximately 18-month-old daughter that she murdered in the woodshed when she saw Schoolteacher coming to take them back to Sweet Home. The ghost that haunts 124 is her spirit. Sethe sent crawling-already? girl and Buglar and Howard on ahead to Ohio before she got there, and she asked the woman caring for the children to feed the girl sugar water as a substitute for Sethe's milk until she could get to Ohio to be with her children. When she saw Schoolteacher coming for them, Sethe sawed the girl's neck open because Sethe thought she would suffer less being dead than she would as a slave.

Minor Characters

Buglar: Buglar is Sethe's son who she attempted to kill to protect him from being taken back into slavery. He ran away from 124 after about 9 years because he feared his mother might try to kill him again. Before running away, Buglar used to play and sleep without letting go of Howard's (his brother) hand. They did this ever since Sethe tried to kill them in the woodshed.

Howard: Howard is Sethe's other son, who she also attempted to kill to protect him from Schoolteacher. He also ran away from 124 after Buglar left.

Halle: Halle is Baby Suggs' son and Sethe's husband. He was a slave at Sweet Home who was allowed to work to buy his mother out of slavery. He is the father of all of Sethe's children, and he was supposed to meet her to run away to Ohio, but disappeared. Sethe learned from Paul D that Halle was trapped in the loft when Schoolteacher and his nephews pinned Sethe down and sucked the mother's milk from



her breasts, but he did nothing to stop it. Just before he was sold away, Paul D saw Halle sitting by a butter churn looking vacant with butter spread all over his face.

Mr. Garner: Mr. Garner owned Sweet Home and was kind to his slaves, calling them the Sweet Home men. He educated them if they wanted to learn, allowed them to marry rather than breed, allowed Halle to buy Baby Suggs' freedom, took their advice for planting, and trusted them to carry guns. Despite his kindness, he left Sweet Home in debt when he died of a stroke, so his wife called in Schoolteacher to run the plantation.

Mrs. Garner: The wife of Mr. Garner, she was also kind to Baby Suggs and Sethe who helped her in the kitchen. When Sethe wanted to marry Halle, Mrs. Garner gave her crystal earrings as a gift. She sold Paul F after she was widowed and then called in Schoolteacher to run Sweet Home. She fell ill soon after he arrived, and Sethe cared for her. She cried when Sethe told her about how Schoolteacher and his nephews stole the milk she had for her baby, but Mrs. Garner was too ill to speak, much less do anything about it.

Paul F Garner: Paul F was a brother of Paul A and Paul D -- all three slaves who grew up at Sweet Home. He was sold away from Sweet Home when Mr. Garner died.

Paul A Garner: Paul A was Paul F and Paul D's brother who also grew up at Sweet Home, but Schoolteacher dismembered him the day that Paul D, Halle, Sixo, Sethe, and Paul A planned to run away.

Sixo: Sixo was an indigo-colored slave brought to Sweet Home. He would sneak away from the plantation at night to roam and meet his woman who lived 30 miles away (the Thirty-Mile Woman). He never laughed until he and Paul D were caught trying to escape and Schoolteacher decided to burn him. As his feet were burning, he laughed out loud and shouted 'Seven-O!' because his Thirty-Mile Woman escaped being caught and was pregnant with his child.

Amy Denver: Amy Denver is the whitegirl with enough hair for five heads and good hands. She was headed to Boston for carmine (red) velvet, when she came across Sethe lying in the grass. She took Sethe to an abandoned shed and massaged her bloodied, swollen feet and soothed the whelps on her back with cobwebs. The next day she helped Sethe deliver Denver in the Ohio River; Denver is named for her.

Stamp Paid: Stamp Paid is an ex-slave who changed his name from Joshua when his white master took Stamp's wife as his mistress. He became part of the Underground Railroad and helped Sethe and Denver across the Ohio River to safety. He knows all the Negroes in Cincinnati and only asks as repayment for his assistance, that the door is always open for him in their homes. A friend of Baby Suggs, he was at her home when Schoolteacher came for Sethe, and he saved Denver from her mother. After Paul D moves in to 124, Stamp tells him about Sethe's crime and Paul D leaves 124 that day.

Ella: Ella is a sexually abused ex-slave once held captive by a whiteman and his son. She took Sethe and Denver from the riverbank where Stamp Paid left them, and brought them to Baby Suggs at 124. Until Sethe killed her little girl, she and Ella were

friends, but Ella would have nothing to do with Sethe because she thinks she is too complicated and too proud. In the end, however, Ella gathers the Negro women of the community to rescue Sethe when they learn that Beloved is the ghost come to life to torment her.

Lady Jones: Lady Jones is a racially mixed woman who was educated at a colored girls' school in Pennsylvania. She then began her own school from her home in Cincinnati to educate those who couldn't go to school. Denver attended her school for a year until one of the students asked her about the murder. Denver later turns to Lady Jones for help when Sethe is falling ill, and Lady Jones gets the women of the community to leave food for Denver on the stump in front of 124. They leave these offerings because Denver can't leave the house long enough to get a job to support herself, Sethe, and Beloved, out of worry that they might hurt each other.

Nelson Lord: Nelson Lord is the boy at Lady Jones' school who asks Denver whether or not Sethe murdered one of her kids and brought Denver to prison with her. It's this question that halts her hearing for two years and ends her schooling. His question brings to the surface all of Denver's fears of her mother, and intensifies her focus on the ghost. Denver meets him again later in the story when she is seeking help outside of 124, and he tells her to take care of herself.

Brandywine: Brandywine is the man who bought Paul D from Sweet Home. Paul D is later taken away from Sweet Home like an animal, with an iron bit in his mouth, sent to prison in Alfred, GA, for trying to kill Brandywine.

Edward and Miss Bodwin: Edward Bodwin and his sister, Miss Bodwin, are white abolitionists who rented 124 to Baby Suggs and helped her to find work as a cobbler and laundress after her freedom was bought. They also helped Sethe to find work as a cook at a restaurant when she got out of prison. He worked to keep Sethe from hanging when she went to prison. When Denver needs work, they hire her to stay nights with them when they're elderly and need assistance. Sethe mistakes him for Schoolteacher when he drives up in his wagon to pick up Denver for her first day of work, and she rushes at him with an ice pick. The Negro women stop her and save him. He seems unaware of the attempt on his life because he was staring at Beloved standing on the porch of 124 pregnant and naked when Sethe came after him.

Janey Wagon: Janey Wagon is the colored girl who works for the Bodwins when Baby Suggs is brought from Sweet Home to freedom. She helps Denver get the night job with the Bodwins when she needs to support Sethe and Beloved. Denver tells Janey about Sethe's declining health and says that Beloved is a visiting cousin who fell ill, but Janey tells all the colored women of the community that Sethe is being held prisoner and tortured by the ghost of her baby girl.

Thirty-Mile Woman: Thirty-Mile Woman was a slave on a plantation neighboring Sweet Home, and Sixo thinks that this woman is 'a friend of his mind,' so he sneaks away from Sweet Home to meet her sometimes. When Sixo, Paul D, and the other Sweet Home slaves are planning to escape, Thirty-Mile Woman is leaving with them. Although

schoolteacher caught Sixo and Paul D, she escaped. Sixo cries, 'Seven-O!' while he is burning because she is pregnant with his child and she got away to freedom.

Schoolteacher's Nephews: Schoolteacher's nephews are his pupils to whom he teaches slave control. They are also the men who nursed the milk from Sethe's breasts when she was pregnant with Denver and needed milk for her other daughter. Then they beat Sethe so badly the scars left her back numb.

Objects/Places

124: 124 Bluestone Road is the house rented to Baby Suggs by the Bodwins when she moves to Cincinnati after her son, Halle, buys her freedom. 124 is a way station for news, refuge, and companionship for colored people of the Cincinnati community, until Sethe murders her daughter in the woodshed to protect her from Schoolteacher. After Sethe returns from prison and buys a headstone for the little girl's grave, the little girl haunts the house and no one in the community will come visit.

Sweet Home: Sweet Home is a plantation in Kentucky where Mr. Garner and then Schoolteacher enslaved Baby Suggs, Halle, Sethe, Paul D and his brothers, and Sixo. Only Baby Suggs, Sethe, her children, and Paul D escaped Sweet Home.

Sethe's Tree: Sethe has a tree of scars on her back where Schoolteacher beat her for telling Mrs. Garner that his nephews took the milk from her breasts. Amy Denver, the white girl who helped her get to the Ohio River and delivered Denver, told her that the web of whelps looked like a chokecherry tree.

Headstone: Sethe prostituted herself for the pink headstone that marks her daughter's grave. The only word on it is 'Beloved' because she couldn't afford both words of 'Dearly Beloved,' which was the only part of the funeral service for her daughter that Sethe heard.

Brother: Brother is the tree that Paul D picked out at Sweet Home to talk to.

Emerald Closet: The emerald closet is an enclosure made by boxwood trees that Denver goes to. She hides cologne there and it is her special place.

The Clearing: The Clearing is a place in the woods where Baby Suggs, holy, held her revival-like meetings of emotional outpouring. Weekly in the warm seasons, she would call the children of the community to laugh, the men to dance, and the women to cry until they had all tired themselves out with emotion. Then Baby Suggs would preach informal sermons.

Sethe's Earrings: Mrs. Garner gave Sethe crystal earrings as a wedding gift when she married Halle, and Sethe never wore them until she arrived at 124. They were taken away from her in prison and she never got them back. When Beloved asks her where her diamonds are, Sethe thinks she's talking about the earrings, something which a perfect stranger couldn't have known about.

Tobacco Tin Heart: Paul D thinks his heart as a rusted tobacco tin into which he has locked the horrors of past memories and feelings. When he has sex with Beloved, the tin opens and he has to confront the memories and the pain that are released.

Alfred, Georgia: Alfred, Georgia, is where Paul D was imprisoned for attempting to kill Brandywine. The cells were dug into trenches and the 46 prisoners were chained to

each other each day to work. The guards would wake them at sunrise with a gunshot and demand oral sex from the prisoners. Paul D and the others, all chained together, escaped during a mudslide.

Ohio River: The Ohio River is the river Sethe had to cross to reach freedom, and it is also where she gave birth to Denver. Stamp Paid helped her across the river the next day with her newborn baby.

Quotes

Quote 1: "124 was spiteful. Full of a baby's venom." Chapter 1, pg. 3

Quote 2: "'My first-born. All I can remember of her is how she loved the burned bottom of bread. Can you beat that? Eight children and that's all I remember.'" Chapter 1, pg. 5

Quote 3: "a pool of red and undulating light that locked him where he stood." Chapter 1, pg. 8

Quote 4: "If a Negro got legs he ought to use them. Sit down too long, somebody will figure out a way to tie them up." Chapter 1, pg. 10

Quote 5: "'I got a tree on my back and a haint in my house, and nothing in between but the daughter I am holding in my arms. No more running -- from nothing. I will never run from another thing on this earth. I took one journey and I paid for the ticket, but let me tell you something, Paul D Garner: it cost too much! Do you hear me? It cost too much.'" Chapter 1, pg. 15

Quote 6: "the house itself was pitching." Chapter 1, pg. 18

Quote 7: "A man ain't nothing but a man. But a son? Well, now, that's *somebody*" Chapter 2, pg. 23

Quote 8: "'The picture is still there and what's more, if you go there -- you who never was there -- if you go there and stand in the place where it was, it will happen again; it will be there for you, waiting for you. So, Denver, you can't never go there. Never. Because even though it's all over -- over and done with -- it's going to always be there waiting for you.'" Chapter 3, pg. 36

Quote 9: "Would it be all right? Would it be all right to go ahead and feel? Go ahead and *count on something?*" Chapter 3, pg. 38

Quote 10: "To Sethe, the future was a matter of keeping the past at bay. The 'better life' she believed she and Denver were living was simply not that other one." Chapter 3, pg. 42

Quote 11: "Denver hated the stories her mother told that did not concern herself, which is why Amy was all she ever asked about. The rest was a gleaming, powerful world made more so by Denver's absence from it. Not being in it, she hated it and wanted Beloved to hate it too, although there was no chance of that at all." Chapter 6, pg. 62

Quote 12: "Why was there nothing it refused? No misery, no regret, no hateful picture too rotten to accept? Like a greedy child it snatched up everything. Just once, could it say, No thank you? I just ate and can't hold another bite? . . . But my greedy brain says, Oh thanks, I'd love more . . . my brain would go right ahead and take it and never say, No thank you. I don't want to know or have to remember that. I have other things to do:



worry, for example, about tomorrow, about Denver, about Beloved, about age and sickness not to speak of love. But her brain was not interested in the future. Loaded with the past and hungry for more, it left her no room to imagine, let alone plan for, the next day." Chapter 7, pg. 70

Quote 13: "'Come on, you may as well just come on,'" Chapter 8, pg. 74

Quote 14: "'Those white things have taken all I had or dreamed,' she said, 'and broke my heartstrings too. There is no bad luck in the world but whitefolks.'" Chapter 9, pg. 89

Quote 15: "Bit by bit, at 124 and in the Clearing, along with others, she had claimed herself. Freeing yourself was one thing; claiming ownership of that freed self was another." Chapter 9, pg. 95

Quote 16: "She had been so close, then closer. And it was so much better than the anger that ruled when Sethe did or thought anything that excluded herself. She could bear the hours -- nine or ten of them each day but one -- when Sethe was gone. Bear even the nights when she was close but out of sight, behind walls and doors lying next to him. But now -- even the daylight time that Beloved had counted on, disciplined herself to be content with, was being reduced, divided by Sethe's willingness to pay attention to other things. Him mostly." Chapter 9, pg. 100

Quote 17: "[T]hey killed the flirt whom folks called Life for leading them on. Making them think the next sunrise would be worth it; that another stroke of time would do it at last. Only when she was dead would they be safe. The successful ones -- the ones who had been there enough years to have maimed, mutilated, maybe even buried her -- kept watch over the others who were still in her cock-teasing hug, caring and looking forward, remembering and looking back." Chapter 10, pg. 109

Quote 18: "'touch [her] on the inside part and call [her] [her] name.'" Chapter 11, pg. 116

Quote 19: "This is worse than when Paul D came to 124 and she cried helplessly into the stove. This is worse. Then it was for herself. Now she is crying because she has no self . . . She doesn't move to open the door because there is no world out there. She decides to stay in the cold house and let the dark swallow her like the minnows of light above. She won't put up with another leaving, another trick. Waking up to find one brother then another not at the bottom of the bed, his foot jabbing her spine. Sitting at the table eating turnips and saving the liquor for her grandmother to drink; her mother's hand on the keeping-room door and her voice saying, 'Baby Suggs is gone, Denver.' And when she got around to worrying about what would be the case if Sethe died or Paul D took her away, a dream-come-true comes true just to leave her on a pile of newspaper in the dark." Chapter 12, pg. 123

Quote 20: "had all the children she needed. If her boys came back one day, and Denver and Beloved stayed on -- well, it would be the way it was supposed to be, no? Right after she saw the shadows holding hands at the side of the road hadn't the picture altered? And the minute she saw the dress and shoes sitting in the front yard, she broke

water. Didn't even have to see the face burning in the sunlight. She had been dreaming it for years." Chapter 13, pg. 132

Quote 21: "It made them furious. They swallowed baking soda, the morning after, to calm the stomach violence caused by the bounty, the reckless generosity on display at 124. Whispered to each other in the yards about fat rats, doom and uncalled-for pride." Chapter 15, pg. 137

Quote 22: "I would have known right away who you was when the sun blotted out your face the way it did when I took you to the grape arbor. I would have known at once when my water broke. And when I did see your face it had more than a hint of what you would look like after all these years. I would have known who you were right away because the cup after cup of water you drank proved and connected to the fact that you dribbled clear spit on my face the day I got to 124. I would have known right off, but Paul D distracted me. Otherwise I would have seen my fingernail prints right there on your forehead for all the world to see. From when I held your head up, out in the shed. And later on, when you asked me about the earrings I used to dangle for you to play with, I would have recognized you right off, except for Paul D." Chapter 20, pg. 203

Quote 23: "All the time, I'm afraid the thing that happened that made it all right for my mother to kill my sister could happen again. I don't know what it is, I don't know who it is, but maybe there is something else terrible enough to make her do it again. I need to know what that thing might be, but I don't want to. Whatever it is, it comes from outside this house, outside the yard, and it can come right on in the yard if it wants to. So I never leave this house and I watch over the yard, so it can't happen again and my mother won't have to kill me too." Chapter 21, pg. 205

Quote 24: "I am Beloved and she is mine. I see her take flowers away from leaves she puts them in a round basket the leaves are not for her she fills the basket she opens the grass I would help her but the clouds are in the way how can I say things that are pictures I am not separate from her there is no place where I stop her face is my own and I want to be there in the place where her face is and to be looking at it too a hot thing" Chapter 22, pg. 210

Quote 25: "I see the dark face that is going to smile at me it is my dark face that is going to smile at me the iron circle is around our neck she does not have sharp earrings in her ears or a round basket she goes in the water with my face" Chapter 22, pg. 212

Quote 26: "I am not dead I sit the sun closes my eyes when I open them I see the face I lost Sethe's is the face that left me Sethe sees me see her and I see the smile her smiling face is the place for me it is the face I lost she is my face smiling at me doing it at last a hot thing now we can join" Chapter 22, pg. 213

Quote 27: "'Seven-O! Seven-O!'" Chapter 24, pg. 226

Quote 28: "[A]nybody white could take your whole self for anything that came to mind. Not just work, kill, or maim you, but dirty you. Dirty you so bad you couldn't like yourself anymore. And though she and others lived through and got over it, she could never let it

happen to her own. The best things she was, was her children. Whites might dirty *her* all right, but not her best thing, her beautiful, magical best thing -- the part of her that was clean." Chapter 26, pg. 251

Quote 29: "her best thing" Chapter 27, pg. 272

Quote 30: "'You your best thing, Sethe. You are.'" Chapter 27, pg. 273

Quote 31: "Everybody knew what she was called, but nobody anywhere knew her name. Disremembered and unaccounted for, she cannot be lost because no one is looking for her, and even if they were, how can they call her if they don't know her name? Although she has claim, she is not claimed." Chapter 28, pg. 274

Topic Tracking: Anger

Chapter 1 & 2

Anger 1: "124 was spiteful. Full of a baby's venom." Chapter 1, pg. 3 The ghost that haunts 124 is angry about her death, and throughout the story the representations of the baby's spirit -- the ghost and Beloved -- use anger as a weapon to bend Sethe and Denver to her will. The anger is a result of being abandoned or hurt, and that's why so many of the characters throughout the novel harbor anger toward each other.

Anger 2: Denver also feels a lot of anger, but her anger is from being left alone and abandoned. She is even angry at Baby Suggs for dying. She has been left alone with her mother, a woman who tried to kill her when she was small, and she has no allies because everyone she trusted has left her.

Anger 3: Denver feels left out because Paul D and her mother are discussing events that came before her time. This exclusion makes her angry. Much of Denver's anger throughout the story stems from feeling abandoned or excluded. She is very possessive of the little attention she gets because she has no life outside of 124. Having all of Sethe's attention is very important to her.

Chapter 3 & 4

Anger 4: Denver is angry because Paul D decides to stay at 124, thus drawing Sethe's attention away from herself, leaving her lonely again. She confronts her loneliness by sparking a fight between Sethe and Paul D. Sethe is protective of the only child she has left. Denver's anger is inspired by a sense of loss.

Chapter 5 & 6

Anger 5: Denver gets mad because Beloved asks Sethe about stories that have nothing to do with Denver; she dislikes feeling excluded. "Denver hated the stories her mother told that did not concern herself, which is why Amy was all she ever asked about. The rest was a gleaming, powerful world made more so by Denver's absence from it. Not being in it, she hated it and wanted Beloved to hate it too, although there was no chance of that at all." Chapter 6, pg. 62

Chapter 7 & 8

Anger 6: Paul D grows angry that Beloved is staying at 124 and interfering with their attempts at being a family. He doesn't want her there, and he and Sethe have an argument over Beloved. Once again, a feeling of loss prompts anger in the characters. Paul D feels his chance at having something he's never had before, a family, is being taken away by Beloved's presence. He feels as if a dream of his has been stolen.

Anger 7: Beloved gets mad at Denver for telling her what to do. Denver has no right to boss her around; Sethe is the only one for whom Beloved has interest. Denver angers



Beloved by trying to convince her not to reveal her identity to Sethe. This would bring Beloved closer to Sethe, the woman she feels she has lost. Beloved knows her anger is a weapon against Denver, who will do anything to keep her happy, afraid of losing her companionship.

Chapter 9 & 10

Anger 8: Sethe decides that the ghost fingers that tried to choke her in the Clearing belonged to the baby ghost who had become angry at being sent away from 124. The ghost was forced to leave its home, and it wants revenge.

Anger 9: Beloved sees Sethe and Paul D fooling around and is angry that Sethe is spending time with him instead of with her. She's losing her place of importance to Sethe. "She had been so close, then closer. And it was so much better than the anger that ruled when Sethe did or thought anything that excluded herself. She could bear the hours -- nine or ten of them each day but one -- when Sethe was gone. Bear even the nights when she was close but out of sight, behind walls and doors lying next to him. But now -- even the daylight time that Beloved had counted on, disciplined herself to be content with, was being reduced, divided by Sethe's willingness to pay attention to other things. Him mostly." Chapter 9, pg. 100

Chapter 13 & 14

Anger 10: Paul D meets Sethe at work to walk her home. They are having a wonderful time by themselves until they approach 124, and Beloved comes up to them and takes Sethe's attention away from Paul D. This angers him. Paul D feels Beloved is deliberately wedging herself between him and Sethe, in an attempt to keep Sethe's attention all to herself.

Chapter 15 & 16

Anger 11: The next day, after Baby Suggs and Sethe have a party at 124, the neighbors begin to turn on them because they think Baby Suggs and Sethe are too proud. "It made them furious. They swallowed baking soda, the morning after, to calm the stomach violence caused by the bounty, the reckless generosity on display at 124. Whispered to each other in the yards about fat rats, doom and uncalled-for pride." Chapter 15, pg. 137 Baby Suggs believed that the neighbors were so angry with her after the party, they refused to warn her or Sethe that schoolteacher was coming to 124. The same animosity resurfaces at Baby Suggs' funeral when the townspeople won't eat any of the food Sethe prepared.

Chapter 19 & 20

Anger 12: Stamp Paid decides that the voices he hears around 124 aren't the voices of ghosts particular to that house, but rather the voices of abused and tortured souls everywhere who are angry about their mistreatment. They are angry at their loss of freedom, family, and life.

Chapter 25 & 26

Anger 13: Beloved and Sethe grow angry with one another because Beloved thinks Sethe abandoned her at the river when she was smaller. Sethe can't make Beloved understand why death was better for her daughter than being forced into slavery. Again, Beloved is angry about losing Sethe, and she uses her anger to make Sethe feel guilty.

Topic Tracking: Loss

Chapter 1 & 2

Loss 1: In explaining the situation at 124, the loss of several family members is described. The boys, Buglar and Howard, left, and Baby Suggs died. Sethe and Denver have lost several people who were important to them. Loss appears throughout the story with every major character, and it seems to characterize the time in which they lived. Slavery separated families and deprived the characters from living their own lives, leaving them without a sense of self-worth.

Loss 2: Sethe remembers the baby girl who died before she was two-years-old, and Baby Suggs talks about losing all of her children with the exception of Halle. They were taken away too young for her to know them well enough to remember them in great detail. Slavery took away her children, and time took away any detailed memories she had of each of them.

Loss 3: Sethe describes schoolteacher and his nephews taking the milk she was saving for her baby girl to Paul D. A substance her own body made to nourish her child was taken from her by whitemen just for sport. She not only lost the one resource she could give her baby, but also lost any dignity she had left before that moment. This event and her subsequent beating, are the catalysts for her solo escape to Ohio.

Loss 4: Denver is distraught and angry after Paul D scares away the ghost. It was the only companion she had after losing her brothers and Baby Suggs. Loss of companionship is a large part of Denver's life, because life at 124 has become so lonely.

Loss 5: Baby Suggs learned not to love anything too much after realizing her children could be taken away from her at the whims of whitefolks. She didn't that slaveowners could be so cruel until her first child was taken away from her. The realization that her children were marketable, and subject to being sold, was a hard lesson for Baby Suggs to learn. Afterwards, she became cautious not to become too close when caring for people.

Chapter 5 & 6

Loss 6: Sethe tells Beloved about the mother she never really knew. The one memory she has of speaking with her mother, was when the woman showed her a brand on her rib that was a circle around a cross to identify her if anything were to happen. Not long after that, the woman was hanged and Sethe was pulled away before she was able to see the brand. The loss of her own family as a small girl, motivated Sethe to love her children more than Baby Suggs, Paul D and even Ella.

Chapter 9 & 10



Loss 7: Denver loses her hearing and her ability to leave 124 after Nelson Lord asks her if her mother went to jail for murder and took Denver with her. She had been attending Lady Jones' school and was doing well, but when she lost her hearing, she also lost her life outside of 124. This is another example of how Denver has lost companionship.

Chapter 11 & 12

Loss 8: When Beloved seems to disappear, Denver is distraught. She has lost too much, and losing one more companion would be too much for her to take. She has lost her father, her sister, her brothers, her grandmother, the company at Lady Jones' school, the ghost and now Beloved; this final loss makes her want to die.

Chapter 15 & 16

Loss 9: The story of Sethe murdering her baby reveals Sethe's desperation to prevent her daughter from being owned by someone and subjected to their whims and cruelties. As much as she loved the little girl, and even though she had walked so far to get to her, killing her is easier than losing her to slavery.

Chapter 19 & 20

Loss 10: Sethe has endured another loss after Paul D left. The man who she was planning her future around has abandoned her because he can't reconcile Sethe's killing of her own child to prevent her being sold into slavery. Although slavery has been abolished, she is still subject to the loss of friends and family because of the aftermath.

Chapter 21 & 22

Loss 11: Beloved describes how she can see the woman she yearns for, but can't reach her. Something is always in the way. And then, just when she thinks the woman is going to smile at her, she leaves. This woman has abandoned Beloved; Beloved has lost her. Enslaved alone for most of her life, Beloved feels the loss she remembers as a constant reminder of the cruelty of slavery.

Chapter 27 & 28

Loss 12: Sethe is convinced that when Beloved left, she lost "her best thing." Chapter 27, pg. 272 This loss has left her resigned to waste away in bed because she has finally lost everything; she has lost her baby girl twice. Sethe is destined to lose anything that means too much to her. She never learned to deal with the fact slaves, even ex-slaves, shouldn't care too much for anything because whitefolks control everything and can take that loved thing away on a whim.

Loss 13: Beloved is lost forever because she had no real identity. No one knew her, loved her, or remembered her when she left 124. There is no one to know that she was ever a real person, and for that reason, she is forever lost. This loss of identity and loss of family is a direct result of being enslaved. She was taken away from her family and locked away alone for much of her lifetime by a man who did not even consider her

human enough to name her. She has no name, and no family, and therefore no identity. Beloved herself is lost.

Topic Tracking: Memory

Chapter 1 & 2

Memory 1: Baby Suggs discusses the sadness of remembering only scraps and fragments of her eight children. When someone dies or disappears, those who loved that person feel his or her presence with their memories. When there aren't even memories to pay tribute to their existence, it's almost as if they were never really alive.

Memory 2: Denver asks why Paul D and Sethe keep talking about Sweet Home if it was so terrible a place that they had to run away from it. Sethe explains that memories sometimes come back without permission. Memory has a way of sneaking up at the oddest moments and sometimes the memory of a bad thing has elements of goodness in it. Sethe and Paul D remember that Sweet Home wasn't a good place, but the people they knew were good people. In order to picture friends and relatives, they must remember Sweet Home because that's where they knew each other.

Memory 3: Paul D remembers how much he wanted Sethe when she was at Sweet Home, adding to his desire when he arrives at 124. The memory of his desire affects how he looks at her eighteen years later. It's almost as if he's having sex with his memory of her. His desire is fueled by his memory of her.

Chapter 3 & 4

Memory 4: Sethe explains to Denver the power of memories and how they are immortal. Memories have an effect on the present because they change the way we look at the world around us. The power of some experiences can be so strong that it seems that even the memory of it is enough to make the horrible incident happen again. Remembering what happened at a place generations before, if the event was powerful enough, can bring back the horror of what happened. "The picture is still there, and what's more, if you go there -- you who never was there -- if you go there and stand in the place where it was, it will happen again; it will be there for you, waiting for you. So, Denver, you can't never go there. Never. Because even though it's all over -- over and done with -- it's going to always be there waiting for you." Chapter 3, pg. 36

Chapter 7 & 8

Memory 5: Paul D tells Sethe about how Halle went crazy after he saw schoolteacher and his nephews nursing milk from Sethe's breasts. Although she has no memory of this event, the picture of it becomes like a memory in her mind from which she can't get escape. The image she conjures up is just as haunting as her memories of Sweet Home. "Why was there nothing it refused? No misery, no regret, no hateful picture too rotten to accept? . . . I don't want to know or have to remember that. I have other things to do: worry, for example, about Denver, about Beloved, about age and sickness not to speak of love. But her brain was not interested in the future. Loaded with the past and



hungry for more, it left her no room to imagine, let alone plan for, the next day." Chapter 7, pg. 70

Chapter 9 & 10

Memory 6: Paul D thinks about how survival means not thinking about the past. It means to lock away all the memories; he decides to put them all away and keep the lid closed tightly. Remembering the pain of Sweet Home and his past would only bring him lower; he must forget to survive in the harsh and degrading conditions of Alfred, Georgia. Paul D's memories are significant because he must lock them away and forget about them in order to survive each day without going crazy.

Chapter 11 & 12

Memory 7: Paul D unwittingly opens the box of his memories when he has sex with Beloved. He now must face the horror of the past, fight with it, and bury it again before he can move on.

Chapter 21 & 22

Memory 8: Beloved remembers her life before arriving at 124 in fragmented pictures. The strongest of these pictures is her reaching for a woman's face. She believes this picture signifies a memory of Sethe leaving her. These memories are the basis for her anger and accusations of Sethe's abandonment. Some of the memories she sees aren't her own, though, because she was locked away in a closet for most of her life. Some of the pictures she describes signify memories of other slaves before her. She seems to be a sort of medium for the memories of other lost souls to channel through.

Chapter 23 & 24

Memory 9: Paul D is forced to relive all the moments of the past he has tried to forget. His memories are the story of slave life, and they are brutal. All the things he has spent so much time trying to forget are resurfacing and now he has to face them down before he can find a way to move forward. He has to make peace with his horrible past.

Chapter 25 & 26

Memory 10: Sethe's memory plays a trick on her when she sees Mr. Bodwin driving up to 124 in his wagon. She confuses the past, when schoolteacher came to take them back to Sweet Home, with the present in which Bodwin is coming to take Denver to her first day of work. Because the traumatic memory of schoolteacher is so strong for Sethe, she sees a whiteman at 124 and immediately assumes that he's there to harm her or her children. That's why she rushes at him with the ice pick. This time she's going to kill him instead of her child. In Sethe's mind, the past and present have converged. Her memory of the day schoolteacher came to take her back to Sweet Home is so powerful, a whiteman at the door instantly vaults her mind back to the past, and she is relives the day she killed her daughter.

Memory 11: Beloved is also overcome by the memory of the past when she sees Mr. Bodwin. She believes him to be the whiteman coming for her, and she sees Sethe rush at him and remembers being abandoned again. She believes that the past is recurring in the present, and she runs away to escape it. Her strongest memory has also caused her mind to lapse, believing she is being hunted by a man who is already dead.

Chapter 27 & 28

Memory 12: Because there is no memory of Beloved, it seems that she never existed. Her life is unrecorded and unacknowledged once she is forgotten. As painful as memories often are, they act as a record of life, a mark of existence, and make people and events immortal. Because Beloved is not remembered, she never existed.

Topic Tracking: Supernatural

Topic Tracking: Supernatural

Chapter 1 & 2

Supernatural 1: The description of the baby ghost knocking a pot of chickpeas to the floor, shattering a mirror, putting handprints in a cake, and leaving a line of crumbled crackers near the doorsill, introduces the element of the supernatural in the story. This presence of the unexplainable is a key element of the story because it makes possible the blending of Beloved with the daughter Sethe murdered. The supernatural becomes a part of everyday reality.

Supernatural 2: The family hasn't kept the ghost a secret, and belief in the supernatural extends beyond just this family and into the community. This makes it possible for them to also believe that Beloved is the reincarnate of Sethe's dead daughter.

Supernatural 3: When Paul D is walking in 124 for the first time, he encounters, "a pool of red and undulating light that locked him where he stood." Chapter 1, pg. 8 The light is the baby's ghost, and when he walks through it, he is overcome by a wave of grief. When he is introduced to the supernatural in 124, it paves the way for his belief that Beloved has a power over him and that she is an evil spirit.

Supernatural 4: The baby ghost picked up the dog and flung him against the wall so hard that it dislocated his eye, and broke two of his legs, sending him into convulsions that made him chew up his tongue. Here the ghost is given physical power so that it becomes not only a presence, but also a violent element in the household.

Supernatural 5: When Paul D is kissing Sethe's back, the house reacts. The floorboards were trembling and "the house itself was pitching." Chapter 1, pg. 18 He grabs a table that flew at him and swings it around like a weapon while shouting at the ghost to leave Sethe alone. When he's done, the house is quiet. This seems hard to believe, but the ghost has been established as physically powerful and violent; we either have to believe that the house really moved, or all the main characters are suffering from some sort of mass delusion brought on by the trauma of their lives as slaves.

Chapter 3 & 4

Supernatural 6: Denver looks in the window at her mother kneeling beside Baby Suggs' bed, and a white dress kneels beside her with its sleeve around Sethe's waist. Denver thinks it's a sign that the baby ghost has plans. Denver is the only one who sees this ghost, and she is also the one who is desperate for company, so it is still questionable whether the audience should believe in ghosts or see that the characters are projecting their own hopes and fears into hallucinations.

Chapter 7 & 8



Supernatural 7: Beloved invites Denver to dance with her by saying, "'Come on, you may as well just come on,'" Chapter 8, pg. 74 which is the phrase Sethe and Denver used to call out to the ghost after Baby Suggs died. Denver makes the connection and asks Beloved to describe where she was before she came to 124 because Denver is convinced that Beloved is the baby girl come back from the dead.

Chapter 9 & 10

Supernatural 8: Sethe feels Baby Suggs' fingers massaging her neck when she goes to the Clearing to talk to her about what's she's learned about Halle. The fingers start out gentle, but then they strangle her and she has to break away. Once she has broken away, Beloved is rubbing the bruises and she leans up to kiss them, but Sethe jerks away because her breath smells like new milk, the way a baby's breath would smell after nursing. She thinks that Beloved was behaving like a two-year-old, roughly the same age as Sethe's daughter when she killed her. She also notices that Beloved and Denver behave like sisters. All of these connections pave the way to Sethe's belief that Beloved is her daughter come back from the dead. Sethe needs to believe that her daughter will come back and forgive her and understand why Sethe killed her.

Supernatural 9: Denver thinks that Beloved choked Sethe in the Clearing, and that she used the powers she had as a ghost to hurt Sethe. Again, Denver is on her own with this belief; she is still the only one who considers Beloved the ghost in the flesh.

Chapter 11 & 12

Supernatural 10: Paul D has always felt that there's something strange about Beloved, but it hasn't affected him until she starts pushing him away from Sethe. He believes she is using her power to move him farther and farther from Sethe's bed at night. It could be a supernatural occurrence, or it could be a way for Paul D to shed the blame for his indiscretions with Beloved.

Supernatural 11: Denver and Beloved are in the cold house when Beloved seems to disappear. Denver opens the door and looks around the small room, but can't find her anywhere. Just as Denver is about to unhinge because she thinks Beloved left her, Beloved reappears. Denver experiences several moments of a supernatural nature with Beloved. Perhaps these experiences are real, or perhaps Denver is emotionally detached because of her past. She has grown up alone in a house, with a mother who tried to kill her when she was a baby, and who successfully killed her older sister. Such a past is bound to have some harmful psychological effects.

Chapter 19 & 20

Supernatural 12: Stamp Paid hears voices around 124 whenever he passes by, and he believes the ghost has come back since Paul D left. Also an ex-slave, this man has seen the hideous injustice of slavery and the horror that whitefolks have inflicted on his race. Belief in the supernatural is psychologically necessary in order to survive through the loss and pain the characters have suffered.

Supernatural 13: When Sethe, Denver, and Beloved return from ice-skating, they warm themselves by the fire and Beloved begins humming a song Sethe made up for her children years before. In her mind, Sethe's children are the only ones who could know that song. This is what finally makes Sethe believe Beloved is her daughter. Sethe is so psychologically and emotionally weakened from loss, it becomes easy for Beloved to fill the emptiness of her lost daughter.

Chapter 21 & 22

Supernatural 14: Denver remembers that during the time when she was deaf, she could hear the sound of the baby ghost breathing in time with her own. Her hearing finally came back when she heard the sound of the ghost crawling up the stairs she loved to climb when she was alive. Denver is the only one who can attest to her loss of hearing. The supernatural, in the form of the ghost, becomes Denver's only companion.

Chapter 27 & 28

Supernatural 15: The townspeople aren't certain what happened to Beloved, but some of them (those who thought she was a ghost) believed that she exploded or simply vanished from the front porch of 124. Others think she ran away, a theory that is supported by the fact that a boy, at the stream behind 124, saw a naked woman running through the woods. Many characters believe in the supernatural explanation for Beloved's disappearance. However, the fact that a boy saw Beloved running through the woods, exposes a more realistic explanation. It also supports the idea that the supernatural elements of the novel are psychological creations of the main characters that help them to deal with the pain, loss, and terror of life as a slave.

Part 1, Chapter 1

In 1873, at 124 Bluestone Road in Cincinnati, Ohio, a house is tormented by a baby's ghost. Of the five people who once lived there, only two still remain -- Sethe and her daughter, Denver. Sethe made her way to 124 with her mother-in-law, Baby Suggs, in 1855 when she and her children escaped slavery. Baby Suggs died in 1865 shortly after Sethe's sons, Buglar and Howard, ran away from 124. While Baby Suggs waited to die, she developed a fascination with color; it seemed a harmless thing to think about after all the evil things she'd seen as a result of slavery.

Topic Tracking: Supernatural 1

Topic Tracking: Loss 1

Topic Tracking: Anger 1

Sethe refers to the ghost of her first daughter as crawling-already? girl. Since she began haunting 124, no one comes by the house. After the death of Baby Suggs, Sethe and Denver tried to negotiate peace with the ghost, but got no answer. Now thinking about the color pink, Sethe recalls the rose colored headstone used to mark the baby girl's grave for which she prostituted herself. The marker reads "Beloved," the only word she had for the approximately 18-month-old girl she loved so much. Remembering other colors, Sethe recognizes the irony in how her memory highlights the beauty of Sweet Home, the Kentucky plantation from which she ran away, instead of the lynchings she witnessed, or the abuse she experienced there. Sethe remembers that memory was just as cruel to Baby Suggs -- "My first-born. All I can remember of her is how she loved the burned bottom of bread. Can you beat that? Eight children and that's all I remember." Chapter 1, pg. 5

Topic Tracking: Supernatural 2

Topic Tracking: Memory 1

Topic Tracking: Anger 2

Topic Tracking: Loss 2

Paul D, a fellow Sweet Home ex-slave, is waiting on the porch of 124 when Sethe comes home from work one afternoon. Walking into 124, he encounters the red light of the ghost and mistakes it for Baby Suggs. Sethe explains that it's her first daughter, but explains no further. Paul D notices the changes in Sethe since the 18 years before when they were together at Sweet Home -- her face seems older and softer, but her eyes are still hard and dark. He recalls when Sethe arrived to replace Baby Suggs after her son, Halle, bought her freedom with his labor. All the men at Sweet Home desired Sethe when she arrived, but she married Halle, and for the six years they were married, she was always pregnant, even when she ran away.

Topic Tracking: Supernatural 3

Denver meets Paul D and notices that her mother acts differently around him; she seems girlish and distracted. Sethe looks away when Paul D looks at her, and Denver's



never seen her mother look away from anything -- not even when the baby ghost knocked the dog's eye out of its socket. This change makes Denver feel lonely and ignored, so she mentions the ghost to participate in the conversation. When Paul D steers the conversation back to Sweet Home, a place she can't talk about because she was never there, she sasses the adults and then bursts into tears. She says she's crying because no one visits them or likes them, and she blames Sethe for their isolation.

Topic Tracking: Supernatural 4

Topic Tracking: Memory 2

Topic Tracking: Anger 3

Paul D suggests that they move away from the haunted house, and Sethe refuses. She says:

"I got a tree on my back and a haint in my house, and nothing in between but the daughter I am holding in my arms. No more running -- from nothing. I will never run from another thing on this earth. I took one journey and I paid for the ticket, but let me tell you something, Paul D Garner: it cost too much! Do you hear me? It cost too much." Chapter 1, pg. 15

Sethe remembers vividly the story she tells Paul D about sending her first daughter away while she was still nursing her and pregnant with Denver. While she was still at Sweet Home, her milk was nursed by the grown nephews of Schoolteacher, the man who took over Sweet Home when Mr. Garner, the original owner, died. Before she escaped, they beat her for telling Mrs. Garner that the boys took her milk. The scars left a chokecherry tree on her back that has stayed with her for eighteen years.

Paul D listens to the story and then holds Sethe, kissing the scars on her back. And while he's holding her, the floorboards start to shake. The house pitches back and forth. Paul D commands the ghost to leave the house, to leave Sethe alone after all she has suffered. 124 is quiet.

Topic Tracking: Supernatural 5

Topic Tracking: Loss 3

When Sethe and Paul D go upstairs to have sex, Denver thinks about how all her companions in 124 have left her -- her brothers ran away; Baby Suggs died; and now Paul D has chased away the ghost. Denver doesn't appreciate his intrusion.

Topic Tracking: Loss 4

Chapter 2

Sethe and Paul D have sex, and it's over before they're even completely undressed. The memory of his longing for her when they were at Sweet Home intensifies his desire, so it doesn't last very long. In the awkwardness that follows, they remain silent. Paul D, looking at the tree of scars on Sethe's back, is suddenly revolted, where only moments before he was kissing them. His desire for her, dating back over eighteen years, seems quenched by this encounter. Her chokecherry tree scar reminds him of Brother, the tree he talked to at Sweet Home, and of Sixo, another slave at Sweet Home who used to cook potatoes near Brother for their lunch.

Topic Tracking: Memory 3

While Paul D is thinking about Brother, Sethe thinks of Baby Suggs' conclusion that "A man ain't nothing but a man. But a son? Well, now, that's somebody." Chapter 2, pg. 23 In Baby Suggs' lifetime, her eight children were fathered by six different men and they were all moved around like checkers -- her children just as easily bought and sold as their fathers. The fact that she got to be with her son, Halle, for 20 years was a gift -- having and keeping a son was special. Despite this, Sethe thinks that even Halle turned out to be just a man because he left her alone to run away, and if the man who bought his mother's freedom was imperfect, Paul D can't be much different.

Topic Tracking: Loss 5

Chapter 3

One day before Paul D showed up at 124, Denver was playing in her emerald closet, her special spot enclosed by boxwood trees where she went to be alone. It started to snow, so she walked back to 124 and thought about the story of her birth. She remembers it the way her mother told it to her. Sethe, six months pregnant and walking into the hills on feet so swollen she couldn't see the arches, was making her way to the Ohio River and freedom. Her body was heavy and tired. When she was too tired to take another step, she laid out in the grass and decided to die until a whitegirl came along and helped her to a shed and massaged her feet.

That's as far as Denver got in the story because when she looked in the window to Baby Suggs' room, she saw her mother kneeling by the bed to pray. A white dress kneeled beside her with its sleeve around her waist, and Denver believed it meant that the ghost of 124 had plans. Denver told her mother about the dress and asked what she was praying for. Sethe explained that she was just talking about the power of memories.

"The picture is still there, and what's more, if you go there -- you who never was there -- if you go there and stand in the place where it was, it will happen again; it will be there for you, waiting for you. So, Denver, you can't never go there. Never. Because even though it's all over -- over and done with -- it's going to always be there waiting for you."

Chapter 3, pg. 36

Topic Tracking: Supernatural 6

Topic Tracking: Memory 4

Now that Paul D has come to 124 and scared the ghost away, he's ruined whatever plans it had. Without having to worry about the ghost, Sethe feels like making plans of her own for the first time since she ran away from Sweet Home. "Would it be all right? Would it be all right to go ahead and feel? Go ahead and count on something?" Chapter 3, pg. 38 Sethe wants to plan a future, and Paul D wants to stay because he has feelings for her, despite his need to keep moving ever since his escape from prison in Alfred, GA. He thinks that "[i]f a Negro got legs he ought to use them. Sit down too long, somebody will figure out a way to tie them up." Chapter 1, pg. 10 He worries about how Denver will handle his presence in the house, but Sethe explains that Denver has been charmed since birth and will be fine. She mentions having taken Denver with her to jail, but doesn't explain why she went to jail, and Paul D doesn't ask. Things are looking so bright that Sethe starts to feel a little hope for the future. "To Sethe, the future was a matter of keeping the past at bay. The 'better life' she believed she and Denver were living was simply not that other one." Chapter 3, pg. 42

Chapter 4

Denver, feeling neglected, sparks a fight between Sethe and Paul D by asking him how long he's planning to hang around 124. Sethe and Paul D argue over the way she handles her daughter. Sethe's defense of Denver's behavior leads Paul D to wonder whether there is room for him in their lives. He convinces Sethe to give it a try, and they decide to kick off their future by going to a carnival the next day. At the carnival, all three of them have fun and people even speak politely, if hesitantly, to Denver and Sethe because Paul D is so friendly.

Topic Tracking: Anger 4

Chapter 5

When Sethe, Denver, and Paul D return from the carnival, there is a strange, young woman (Beloved) on the stump outside 124. She came, fully-clothed, from the river, finding her way to 124 with her shoes untied. The oddest part about the shoes is that they look new, like she didn't have to walk very far in them, and her feet aren't swollen or blistered. She has three scratches on her forehead; these remind Sethe of baby hair. Her voice is rough from not being used, and her skin looks unwrinkled, without calluses -- unusual for someone who is approximately nineteen years old. Sethe notices that her clothes also seem too old for her. The girl can't seem to stay awake and her breathing sounds raspy, like she might have croup or cholera -- both childhood illnesses. Not only does her voice and skin seem new, her walk is unsteady, like it's a skill she's just learning.

When Sethe sees her sitting on the stump, she suddenly has to run to the outhouse. She doesn't quite make it there before she starts peeing so uncontrollably that it reminds her of when her water broke giving birth to Denver in the boat on the Ohio River.

The girl tells them her name is Beloved, and Sethe is reminded of the word on her murdered daughter's tombstone. Beloved doesn't know where she came from or whether or not she has a last name. She keeps falling asleep in the middle of their questions, so they take her to the keeping room to rest. Denver sees Beloved as the answer to her loneliness and sits at the bedside while Beloved sleeps for 4 days. Denver won't leave her to eat, or to visit the emerald closet, and she turns possessive and waspish whenever Sethe tries to offer advice or help care for Beloved. Once, when Beloved wakes, Denver has sweet bread that she gives to her, and at this point, sugar becomes a pacifier for Beloved, in the same way sweets soothe a child. Time passes and Beloved stays at 124. Paul D feels that there's something strange about Beloved, but when he asks Denver to confirm his suspicion to Sethe, Denver lies and distances herself further from Paul D.

Chapter 6

Beloved becomes attached to Sethe, constantly following and watching her, even haunting her. She waits for her in the kitchen in the mornings before she leaves for work, and then meets her on the road on her way home. Sethe is flattered by her devotion. Beloved is happiest when Denver gives her sweets and Sethe tells her stories, so Sethe tells her the stories of her past, even though they're painful stories that she hasn't told Denver or anyone else. Beloved asks Sethe where her diamonds are, and Sethe tells her about the crystal earrings that Mrs. Garner, Sweet Home's mistress, gave her when she married Halle, Denver's father. Sethe also tells Beloved about the wedding dress that she made for herself from Mrs. Garner's sewing scraps and mosquito netting. Beloved asks Sethe about her own mother, and Sethe tells her the only memory of her mother was of a brand -- a circle around a cross -- over her rib used as her identifying mark. Shortly after that encounter, Sethe remembers that the woman was hanged. Sethe explains that the wet nurse that cared for her told her that she was the only baby her mother kept because she was the only child conceived with a man for whom her mother cared. While Sethe tells these stories, Denver is unhappy. She hates the stories that aren't about her, and notices that Beloved asks odd questions about things she shouldn't know about -- the earrings and Sethe's mother, for instance.

Topic Tracking: Anger 5

Topic Tracking: Loss 6

Chapter 7

Paul D notices that Beloved has changed into something sensual, and it makes him uncomfortable. He wonders why only he noticed the change in her, and his discomfort makes him even more suspicious of her intentions. When he asks her how she found 124 and how her shoes appeared new even though she walked to the house, she admits the dress and shoes were stolen, and that she didn't know how to tie them. She tells him that some woman at the bridge told her how to get to 124. She refuses to answer any more questions. Paul D is angry at the timing of her arrival; Sethe, Denver, and he were just becoming a family, and he wants her to leave. He resents that she is still with them, disrupting their lives, but he can't throw her out because 124 belongs to Sethe. He considers having Beloved hired out to someone's home to work as a way to get rid of her, but as soon as he thinks it, she begins to choke. Sethe and Denver rush to take care of her. Denver takes Beloved upstairs to Denver's bedroom to keep a close eye on her.

Topic Tracking: Anger 6

In an angry confrontation about Beloved, Paul D tells Sethe about how Halle saw the boys nursing her and it drove him crazy. Sethe, on the other hand, can't forget the mental image of Halle watching those men abuse her from his place in the loft above and not stopping them. She also keeps picturing him sitting by the churn with butter smeared all over his face with empty eyes. She thinks:

"Why was there nothing it refused? No misery, no regret, no hateful picture too rotten to accept? Like a greedy child it snatched up everything. Just once, could it say, No thank you? I just ate and can't hold another bite? . . . But my greedy brain says, Oh thanks, I'd love more . . . my brain would go right ahead and take it and never say, No thank you. I don't want to know or have to remember that. I have other things to do: worry, for example, about Denver, about Beloved, about age and sickness not to speak of love."
Chapter 7, pg. 70

Topic Tracking: Memory 5

Paul D explains that he couldn't help Halle because he had an iron bit in his mouth and was on his way to Brandywine's place. He begins telling her about the shame of seeing himself as less than an animal, a barnyard rooster even, but before he gets too far, she stops him. There is only so much tragedy that can be heard at once. When she stops him, he locks those feelings and memories back in his chest in the tobacco tin that has rusted shut and replaced his red heart.

Chapter 8

When Denver and Beloved are upstairs together, Beloved invites Denver to dance with her by saying, "Come on, you may as well just come on," Chapter 8, pg. 74. That's the phrase Denver and Sethe used when they were calling to the ghost after Baby Suggs died. The ghost didn't answer them then, but now Denver believes Beloved to be their answer -- she is the ghost. Beloved talks to Denver about what it's like where she's been -- where it's dark and hot and so small that she had to curl up in a fetal position. Denver believes that Beloved is describing death, and when she asks why she came back, Beloved tells her that she returned to see Sethe's face, that Sethe had left her behind. Convinced that Beloved is the flesh version of her murdered sister, Denver reminds her of a time when they played by the stream together, but Beloved remembers only being left behind. Denver tells Beloved not to reveal her identity to Sethe, and Beloved is rankled by the idea of Denver telling her what to do. Beloved says Sethe is the only one she needs. Then Denver, looking for some way to regain Beloved's favor, tells the story of her birth because Beloved likes it. She recounts how Amy Denver found Sethe in the grass and helped her to the Ohio River. Denver was delivered in an old boat in the middle of the river that night.

Topic Tracking: Anger 7

Topic Tracking: Supernatural 7

Chapter 9

Sethe feels overwhelmed by the news about Halle, and she misses Baby Suggs' counseling, so she decides to go down to the Clearing, where Baby Suggs used to have her revival meetings. She became a preacher when she arrived in Cincinnati because her heart had remained intact, even though slavery had nearly destroyed the rest of her body. But as great as her heart was, the persecution by whitefolks finally got to her, too. "Those white things have taken all I had or dreamed," she said, "and broke my heartstrings too. There is no bad luck in the world but whitefolks." Chapter 9, pg. 89 Those were her final words; after Schoolteacher came to 124 and Sethe killed her daughter, Baby Suggs lost her faith and her will to live.

Sethe takes Denver and Beloved to the Clearing with her; on the way, she remembers the rest of the story of Denver's birth and their escape to Ohio. Sethe remembers that Amy Denver left her on the wrong side of the Ohio River and she found Stamp Paid, an ex-slave and Underground Railroad agent, to take her and Denver across the river. From there, Ella took them to Baby Suggs and 124, reuniting Sethe with her children. Sethe had to explain to her mother-in-law that she'd waited for Halle, but he never showed up, so she left alone.

Sethe remembers the twenty-eight days of freedom, friendship, and support she had after arriving at 124. "Bit by bit, at 124 and in the Clearing, along with others, she had claimed herself. Freeing yourself was one thing; claiming ownership of that freed self was another." Chapter 9, pg. 95 She doesn't have that companionship anymore, so she has to lean on the spirit of Baby Suggs for support. While she prays in the Clearing, Sethe feels what she assumes to be Baby Suggs' fingers rubbing her neck -- softly at first and then so violently it starts to strangle her. After she breaks away from the ghost fingers, Beloved rubs Sethe's neck to soothe the bruises. When Beloved reaches up to kiss them, Sethe jerks away; Beloved's breath smells of new milk, just like a baby's breath, and her touch reminds Sethe of the baby ghost's touch.

Topic Tracking: Supernatural 8

Topic Tracking: Anger 8

Walking back to 124, Sethe decides that the fingers choking her belonged to the ghost Paul D scared away from the house. After her time in the Clearing, Sethe convinces herself that if she could handle years alone with the ghost, then she and Paul D can handle the weight of their past together. So when she gets home, with the girls not far behind her, she and Paul D start fooling around, not noticing Beloved's presence. When Beloved realizes what's happening, she becomes jealous of Sethe spending time with someone besides her.

Topic Tracking: Anger 9

Beloved walks out of the house and finds Denver outside beside the stream. Beloved tells her that she wants Paul D gone from 124. Denver accuses her of using her powers

as the ghost of crawling-already? girl to choke Sethe, but Beloved acknowledges only trying to ease Sethe's pain. Beloved runs away angry at Denver for the accusation, and Denver reflects on the only other companionship of her life before Beloved, and that was Lady Jones' school. Lady Jones was a racially mixed woman, educated at a colored girls' school who taught colored children who couldn't go to school. As a little girl, Denver had gone to Lady Jones' school for a short time and enjoyed learning. She never noticed that her classmates avoided her until another student, Nelson Lord, asked her if her mother had murdered her sister and then taken Denver to jail with her.

That question unlocked the fears Denver had of Sethe and scared her so much that she lost her hearing for two years and stopped going to school. During the time that her hearing was gone, Denver paid close attention to the ghost; it kept her company while she waited for her father to come get her. But the silence of her deafness was broken by the sound of the baby ghost trying to crawl up the stairs of 124. After that, the ghost turned spiteful. Denver attributes the departure of Buglar and Howard to the fear of Sethe trying to harm them again, not to the fear of the ghost. She remembers that after her hearing came back, life at 124 became bleak for everyone. Buglar and Howard were agitated until they left; Baby Suggs gave up on life and waited for death in her bed; and then Paul D showed up and scared away the ghost. His presence ate up all of Sethe's attention, and Denver was left alone until Beloved showed up.

Starved for love, Denver realizes with some shame that even if Beloved were trying to hurt Sethe, Denver would still be devoted to her because Beloved's companionship eased her loneliness. Deciding that whatever Beloved may be, she's at least hers, Denver goes to find Beloved and seek forgiveness.

Topic Tracking: Loss 7

Topic Tracking: Supernatural 9

Chapter 10

Paul D remembers the trembling that marked his time in an Alfred, GA prison in cages built into trenches. He was sent there after he tried to murder Brandywine, the man Schoolteacher sold him to after he tried to escape from Sweet Home. In Alfred, the men were chained to each other, and they awoke at dawn to first satisfy the guards' desire for oral sex, and then to swing a sledgehammer all day. The only way to survive this routine was to forget hope, the past, and the future.

"[T]hey killed the flirt whom folks called Life for leading them on. Making them think the next sunrise would be worth it; that another stroke of time would do it at last. Only when she was dead would they be safe. The successful ones -- the ones who had been there enough years to have maimed, mutilated, maybe even buried her -- kept watch over the others who were still in her cock-teasing hug, caring and looking forward, remembering and looking back." Chapter 10, pg. 109

He recalls the way the chain united all 46 prisoners when they escaped the prison and headed for safety during a mudslide. They found a band of renegade Cherokees who were in hiding after refusing to sign a treaty to go to Oklahoma, and for a while some of the prisoners camped with them. From the Cherokee camp, Paul D made his way north by following the tree blossoms as the seasons progressed. He landed in Delaware and was taken in by a weaver woman who housed him for eighteen months before he had the urge to start walking again. Before he got to 124, Paul D had put some effort into locking away the memories of his experiences. Once it was done, he was certain that nothing could bring these memories back out again.

Topic Tracking: Memory 6

Chapter 11

Beloved's presence starts to have an effect on Paul D; he starts sleeping further and further away from Sethe, eventually winding up in the cold room off the side of the house. He thinks it's the restlessness he's experienced before, but he loves Sethe and doesn't want to leave her. He isn't ready to walk away, but he can't sleep in the house. He realizes something else is making him want to move, so he waits to find out. One night Beloved comes into his room and tells him to "touch [her] on the inside part and call [her] [her] name." Chapter 11, pg. 116 He tries to resist, but he can't help himself. Having sex with Beloved unlocks the tobacco tin, releasing all the pain and misery of the horrible memories he had locked away.

Topic Tracking: Supernatural 10

Topic Tracking: Memory 7

Chapter 12

Denver remains grateful for the scraps of attention Beloved gives her, although most of Beloved's attention is reserved for Sethe. Sethe speculates that Beloved was locked away by a white man who sexually abused her. Sethe thinks this theory explains why Beloved hates Paul D and doesn't remember anything. Denver believes Beloved is the ghost, but says nothing to Sethe about it. Denver becomes manipulative in finding ways to keep Beloved's attention while Sethe is at work. One day they go to the cold house to get the cider jug, and in the darkness, Beloved playfully seems to disappear. Denver thinks she has lost her own self because Beloved is gone, and she panics.

"This is worse than when Paul D came to 124 and she cried helplessly into the stove. This is worse. Then it was for herself. Now she is crying because she has no self . . . She doesn't move to open the door because there is no world out there. She decides to stay in the cold house and let the dark swallow her like the minnows of light above. She won't put up with another leaving, another trick. Waking up to find one brother then another not at the bottom of the bed, his foot jabbing her spine. Sitting at the table eating turnips and saving the liQUOr for her grandmother to drink; her mother's hand on the keeping-room door and her voice saying, 'Baby Suggs is gone, Denver.' And when she got around to worrying about what would be the case if Sethe died or Paul D took her away, a dream-come-true comes true just to leave her on a pile of newspaper in the dark." Chapter 12, pg. 123

Suddenly Beloved reappears, still playful, and Denver feels better until Beloved curls up on the floor, rocking back and forth and moaning. Beloved points into the darkness to a face only she can see, saying it is her own face. Then, as suddenly as she was sad, she is happy again.

Topic Tracking: Supernatural 11

Topic Tracking: Loss 8

Chapter 13

Paul D, disgusted by his own weakness and Beloved's control over him, meets Sethe at work to walk her home and tell her what's been going on. He wants to explain that Beloved is some evil force. When he tries to do so, Sethe looks so accepting of his failure as a man and so expectant that he is leaving her, he chickens out and instead declares he wants her to have his baby. He sees having a child with her as an excellent way to hang on to her and to break Beloved's power over him at the same time. Their walk home is playful and fun until Beloved comes to meet Sethe, taking her attention away from Paul D. This angers him.

Topic Tracking: Anger 10

That night Sethe asks him to sleep in her room with her for good. Paul D believes Beloved's spell on him is broken because Sethe chose him in front of Beloved. Then Sethe begins thinking he wants a baby because he resents her connection with Denver and wants to have his own family. But Sethe,

"had all the children she needed. If her boys came back one day, and Denver and Beloved stayed on -- well, it would be the way it was supposed to be, no? Right after she saw the shadows holding hands at the side of the road hadn't the picture altered? And the minute she saw the dress and shoes sitting in the front yard, she broke water. Didn't even have to see the face burning in the sunlight. She had been dreaming it for years." Chapter 13, pg. 132

Chapter 14

Beloved pulls a tooth and worries that she is going to explode into pieces. She expects to fall apart and thinks the tooth is the beginning of the disintegration. She cries, and Denver comforts her.

Chapter 15

Shortly after Sethe and Denver had arrived at 124, Stamp Paid picked blackberries for infant Denver and they threw a feast for 90 people. Baby Suggs had a party for the neighbors. They had fun, but later became angry and jealous. Baby Suggs had too much: her son had bought her freedom; she had a real house; and she had her entire family around her. Although Baby Suggs was generous and caring, her neighbors decided that she was proud and too fortunate. The day after the party, Baby Suggs sensed their disapproval and had a premonition of her own death.

Topic Tracking: Anger 11

Chapter 16

The same day that Baby Suggs had her premonition of death, Schoolteacher, the man in charge of Sweet Home and the master who owned Sethe and her children, came to 124 to take them back to Kentucky. Sethe went crazy and grabbed Denver, Buglar, Howard, and crawling-already? girl and ran to the woodshed. She sawed crawling-already? girl's head off, wounded Buglar and Howard, and was swinging Denver through the air to crush her head when Stamp Paid, an ex-slave and Underground Railroad agent, stopped her. Schoolteacher and the men with him left empty-handed; Sethe was useless because she was obviously crazy, and her children were worth nothing to him because they were hurt. Sethe was taken to jail covered in her baby's blood, nursing Denver with blood and milk. Baby Suggs cared for the boys, and the neighbors who saw Sethe leaving the house still considered her a little too proud even in that humbling moment.

Topic Tracking: Loss 9

Chapter 17

Stamp Paid shows Paul D a newspaper clipping and a picture of Sethe from her daughter's murder. Paul D denies that it could be Sethe.

Chapter 18

Paul D confronts Sethe about the newspaper clipping, and she explains that she was protecting her children from a life of slavery, a life she considered worse than dying. Enslaved, they could not be allowed to love anything because nothing would belong to them, not even themselves. Even though Paul D understands, he still thinks she was wrong and leaves her and 124.

Part 2, Chapter 19

Stamp Paid feels bad for scaring Paul D away from Sethe and 124 when he passes 124, he hears voices, again believing the place is haunted. He decides it is his duty to check up on Sethe and Denver because he was close to Baby Suggs and he feels responsible for Paul D's departure. He attempts to do this several times, but can't bring himself to knock on the door; when he finally does, no one answers. He peeks in the window and sees Denver with Beloved, who he doesn't recognize. He asks around to find out the identity of Denver's companion at 124.

Topic Tracking: Supernatural 12

Meanwhile, Sethe is trying to deal with losing Paul D and the plans she was beginning to make. She and the girls go ice-skating as an act of defiance against her loss. Their laughter at skating and falling turns to tears for Sethe, and they walk back to 124. While they're thawing out together, Beloved begins to hum a song that Sethe had made up for her children years before. Everything falls into place in Sethe's mind concerning Beloved's identity.

Topic Tracking: Supernatural 13

Topic Tracking: Loss 10

Stamp Paid understands the weariness that sent Baby Suggs to her bed wishing only to look at color and die; he feels defeated by whitefolks. The hate fueling lynchings, church-burnings, and cruelty from which Sethe tried to save her crawling-already? girl, finally got to Baby Suggs. She realized that hoping for a decent life, free from pain and heartache, was futile when there were whitefolks still hating. Stamp Paid decides that the voices he hears around 124 are the voices of those colored people abused and murdered for no other reason than their color.

Topic Tracking: Anger 12

Sethe believes that her crawling-already? girl has come back from the dead to be with her. If she has indeed come back, she must understand why Sethe killed her. Sethe is happy that she and her daughters are all together, and she's relieved about the memories she won't have to remember anymore -- the woodshed, the headstone, Baby Suggs' collapse, or the isolation brought on by the haunted 124. As time passes, Sethe no longer goes to work. Her world is inside 124 with Denver and Beloved, and the three are left to themselves.

Chapter 20

Sethe believes Beloved is her murdered daughter reincarnated. She takes account of all the coincidences and connections that prove Beloved is her daughter.

"I would have known right away who you was when the sun blotted out your face the way it did when I took you to the grape arbor. I would have known at once when my water broke. And when I did see your face it had more than a hint of what you would look like after all these years. I would have known who you were right away because the cup after cup of water you drank proved and connected to the fact that you dribbled clear spit on my ace the day I got to 124. I would have known right off, but Paul D distracted me. Otherwise I would have seen my fingernail prints right there on your forehead for all the world to see. From when I held your head up, out in the shed. And later on, when you asked me about the earrings I used to dangle for you to play with, I would have recognized you right off, except for Paul D." Chapter 20, pg. 203

Now that they're together, Sethe is going to teach Beloved everything a mother should teach a daughter. Sethe, because her mother was just an unknown woman in a rice field, wishes to become the mother she never had.

Chapter 21

Denver believes Beloved to be the reincarnation of her sister's ghost that kept her company after Paul D had come to 124 and scared the ghost away. The ghost had been Denver's companion while she waited for her daddy to come. Denver had always been scared of Sethe and what she might do to her.

"All the time, I'm afraid the thing that happened that made it all right for my mother to kill my sister could happen again. I don't know what it is, I don't know who it is, but maybe there is something else terrible enough to make her do it again. I need to know what that thing might be, but I don't want to. Whatever it is, it comes from outside this house, outside the yard, and it can come right on in the yard if it wants to. So I never leave this house and I watch over the yard, so it can't happen again and my mother won't have to kill me too." Chapter 21, pg. 205

When Beloved appeared at 124, Denver knew she had to protect her from Sethe. Denver remembers that during the time she couldn't hear, she could hear the ghost breathing with her own; the sound of the baby ghost crawling up the stairs restored her hearing. The ghost kept her company and then Beloved came to her when Paul D scared the ghost away. As a result, Denver loves Beloved devotedly and possessively.

Topic Tracking: Supernatural 14

Chapter 22

"I am Beloved and she is mine. I see her take flowers away from leaves she puts them in a round basket the leaves are not for her she fills the basket she opens the grass I would help her but the clouds are in the way how can I say things that are pictures I am not separate from her there is no place where I stop her face is my own and I want to be there in the place where her face is and to be looking at it too a hot thing" Chapter 22, pg. 210

Beloved goes on in fragments about memories of a dead man on top of her and her fascination with his pointed, white teeth, all the while referring to "a hot thing." She talks about white men who do unspecified things to Beloved and unknown others. She talks about being able to see a woman with a round basket of flowers, then with iron around her neck, and then with diamond earrings -- but she is unable to reach her. She thinks the woman is going to smile at her, but then she says:

"I see the dark face that is going to smile at me it is my dark face that is going to smile at me the iron circle is around our neck she does not have sharp earrings in her ears or a round basket she goes in the water with my face" Chapter 22, pg. 212

Then she talks about standing on a bridge to look at the woman in the water who is going to smile at her and how she expects and wants her face to join that face. But the face in the water eats her own, and her old self floats away on the water. After her old body floats away, she looks for a place to go, and she finds 124.

"I am not dead I sit the sun closes my eyes when I open them I see the face I lost Sethe's is the face that left me Sethe sees me see her and I see the smile her smiling face is the place for me it is the face I lost she is my face smiling at me doing it at last a hot thing now we can join" Chapter 22, pg. 213

Topic Tracking: Memory 8
Topic Tracking: Loss 11

Chapter 23

Beloved explains more coherently, that it was for Sethe she was reaching, but couldn't touch. She thinks she lost Sethe three times before she found her at 124 -- once in clouds of gun smoke, once to the sea, and once under the bridge. These are memories of slave experiences beyond what Beloved has endured. They seem to be memories of other slaves. Beloved tells Sethe that she came from the other side (death) because of Sethe. She tells of a whiteman who was in the house she was in and he hurt her. Beloved keeps mentioning an iron circle around Sethe's neck, a round basket, and diamond earrings.

Denver tells Beloved that they played together by the creek before Sethe killed her and that Beloved came to her when she needed company. She warns Beloved not to love Sethe too much and tells her that their daddy is coming for them.

Chapter 24

Paul D sits drunk and alone at the church he's sleeping in and battles with the freed contents of his tobacco tin heart. He remembers the plan to escape Sweet Home and how it went awry when Schoolteacher and other whitemen caught them leaving. Halle was missing, and so was Paul D's brother, Paul A. Sixo and Paul D made it to the meeting spot where they were caught. Sixo fought back when the whitemen found them, so they burned him. As they lit the fire, Sixo laughed and shouted, "Seven-O! Seven-O!" Chapter 24, pg. 226 because his Thirty-Mile Woman, a slave from a plantation thirty miles from Sweet Home who was pregnant with his child, had escaped. Schoolteacher shackled Paul D and put him in an iron collar until he could sell him. Paul D was wearing the collar when Sethe saw him and told him that she was leaving. She'd already sent her children ahead of her and she was going alone because Halle hadn't come back. From his memory and what he's learned of her story, he pieces together the rest of the events of that night. He realizes that right after she left his quarters, Schoolteacher and his nephews must have taken Sethe to the barn and sucked the milk from her breasts while Halle watched from the loft overhead. Then they beat her and put the chokecherry tree on her back. She ran away before they put the iron bit in Paul D's mouth and sold him, before he saw Halle sitting at the churn with butter all over his face and a vacant look in his eyes.

Topic Tracking: Memory 9

Chapter 25

Stamp Paid comes to speak to Paul D about Sethe. Stamp Paid tries to smooth over what he's done and to explain Sethe's love and fear for her children that prompted her to kill the little girl. Paul D tells Stamp Paid about Beloved's mysterious origins, and Stamp Paid connects the time of Beloved's arrival with news he heard of a girl who escaped from a whiteman's house when the whiteman died.

Part 3, Chapter 26

124 falls into disrepair from neglect because Sethe gives all her attention to Beloved. For a while Beloved and Sethe had been fighting. Beloved accused Sethe of abandoning her, while Sethe tried to explain why she killed the baby girl. Things quiet down when the food supply dwindles.

Topic Tracking: Anger 13

Since Beloved and Sethe were involved with only each other, Denver watched over them like a guardian, but she didn't expect Beloved to become a threat to Sethe. When Beloved becomes dominant, Denver goes out into the neighborhood in search of help because Sethe is growing weak. She is starving herself to feed Beloved, whose stomach is growing rounder and rounder because she's pregnant. Denver seeks help from Lady Jones, the woman who ran the informal school Denver attended for a while as a little girl. Lady Jones can't give her work because Denver has no training, and Denver is afraid to be away from home for too long because Sethe and Beloved might hurt one another. Denver begins finding food, left by women in the neighborhood, on the stump outside 124. She thanks each person who leaves food, and in doing that, Denver begins building a life outside of 124.

Meanwhile, Beloved grows more domineering and Sethe more submissive. Sethe cowers to Beloved to make her stay, and to make her understand that she had to kill her baby to keep it from being dirtied.

"[A]nybody white could take your whole self for anything that came to mind. Not just work, kill, or maim you, but dirty you. Dirty you so bad you couldn't like yourself anymore. And though she and others lived through and got over it, she could never let it happen to her own. The best things she was, was her children. Whites might dirty her all right, but not her best thing, her beautiful, magical best thing -- the part of her that was clean." Chapter 26, pg. 251

Denver decides to seek employment with the Bodwins, abolitionists who originally rented 124 to Baby Suggs and helped both her and Sethe find work. Janey Wagon, their hired coloredgirl, who knew Baby Suggs and Sethe when they first came to Cincinnati, quizzes Denver about her mother. Denver tells her honestly of Sethe's decline, but tells her Beloved is a cousin who was visiting when she fell ill. Janey agrees to help Denver get a job staying the night at the Bodwins' to care for them. Then Janey tells all the women of the community that Sethe's murdered baby girl has come back to life to get even. Ella, who was once friends with Sethe, but avoided her after the murder, rounds up 30 women to rescue Sethe from whatever's haunting her. They gather outside 124 to sing and pray while Denver waits on the porch for Mr. Bodwin to pick her up for her first day of work.

When Beloved and Sethe go on the porch to see the singers, Beloved is naked, and Sethe holds an ice pick she was using to break ice to cool Beloved's swollen body.



Sethe is standing on the porch holding Beloved's hand when she sees Mr. Bodwin's wagon pull up in front of 124. Remembering Schoolteacher and acting to protect Beloved, Sethe rushes at Bodwin with the ice pick, but the crowd of women stop her. Beloved thinks Mr. Bodwin is after her, and that he is the whiteman who held her captive her entire life. Seeing Sethe run away from her, she believes that she has been abandoned again, so she disappears.

Topic Tracking: Memory 10

Topic Tracking: Memory 11

Chapter 27

Paul D sees Denver in town. She tells him that Beloved is gone and that Sethe isn't doing very well. No one is sure what happened to Beloved. Some think she exploded or vanished like the ghost they believed her to be, but a little boy claimed to see a naked, pregnant woman running through the woods behind 124. Paul D goes to visit Sethe and finds her weak and listless in Baby Suggs' bed. She cries because "her best thing" Chapter 27, pg. 272 left her. Moved by his feelings for her, Paul D promises to stay with her and then tells her, "'You your best thing, Sethe. You are.'" Chapter 27, pg. 273

Topic Tracking: Supernatural 15

Topic Tracking: Loss 12

Chapter 28

"Everybody knew what she was called, but nobody anywhere knew her name. Disremembered and unaccounted for, she cannot be lost because no one is looking for her, and even if they were, how can they call her if they don't know her name? Although she has claim, she is not claimed." Chapter 28, pg. 274

After she is gone, Beloved is forgotten. Except for small moments of memory, she disappears. Her story is unknown and untold because she has no identity. She fades away as if she never existed; there is no one who loved her, knew her, or belonged to her, to prove her existence.

Topic Tracking: Loss 13

Topic Tracking: Memory 12