

Teacher Guide

Grades 7–8

Heaven

Angela Johnson

NOVEL UNITS[™]

NEW WAYS TO TEACH READING,
WRITING, & CRITICAL THINKING



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HEAVEN

by
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Teacher Guide

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Note

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Thinking

Attribute webs, analysis,
code word

Vocabulary

Word wall, sentences,
synonym match, vocabulary
sort, vocabulary around the
world, charades

Listening/Speaking

Discussion, drama, role play,
interviewing

Comprehension

Predicting, emotion map,
cause/effect, inference

Literary Elements

Character, setting, plot
development, story
mapping, foreshadowing,
point of view, conflict, theme

Writing

Character journey, personal
opinion, diary entry,
description, dialogue, new
story ending

Other

Geography, drawing, collage,
mural, music, personal boxes,
health, mobile

Part Two—Pages 40-65

Vocabulary

tragedy (43)	honeysuckle (44)	scorching (44)	classic (45)
sheers (46)	astrophysics (46)	funeral (48)	faith (49)
chaos (51)	baptismal (51)	fortunate (51)	baptism (51)
glimpses (52)	wraith (54)	alternative (54)	medium (56)
polite (60)	opera (64)	mentor (64)	Zen (64)

Discussion Questions

1. What does Marley mean that she can feel the flames from the burning of the churches one thousand miles away? *(Answers will vary.)*
2. What does “burning dark when the morning comes up” mean? What image does that create? *(Answers will vary.)*
3. Why is it important that Marley notices the change in the mail and the fact that she does not remember ever hearing of someone named Monna Floyd? *(It indicates the importance of the letter and foreshadows the new money going to receive.)*
4. What did Marley mean that the wall in her bedroom on the day of the letter would be the last time she entered her room knowing anything about who she was? *(After that day she would no longer feel completely aware of her history, and everything she had known about herself would be questioned.)*
5. What does the idea of six degrees of separation mean? *(It is the idea that through six people each person is connected to everyone else—each and who knows a friend, who knows a friend, etc.)*
6. On the night of the storm, what is the meaning behind the idea that, “it was a night that started to go down before the sun”? *(Things started happening that made things go “down hill” even before the sun went down.)*
7. At the end of dinner why does Marley think to herself, “It isn’t just the storm”? *(Marley senses something is about to happen since her parents do not seem to be acting like themselves.)*
8. Why is it important that we are told about the movie in which the man believes he is the only human left? *(Answers will vary.)*
9. How does Marley react about the fact that her parents waited so late to tell her the truth? What does she decide to do as a result? *(She thinks people wait too late to tell the truth. She decides that she will always tell the truth throughout her life. Thus, she won’t have to think about what to do.)*
10. What do the Majors hope the Carrolls can do for them? *(Mail them a copy of Monna’s baptismal certificate; their record of baptism was burnt in the fire.)*
11. Who is Monna? *(Marley)* What is the relation between Marley’s Uncle Jack and Monna? *(Jack is her father.)*
12. Why does Marley again think that she can feel the flames—of scorching her? *(Now all the burnings have had a direct effect on Marley’s life.)*
13. What does Marley mean about walking in a house where the new house? *(She now feels as if everything is foreign to her. Everything she believed to be true is now a lie.)*
14. Marley always thought she had Momma’s hands; what realization does she have about her hands? *(They might be her mother’s hands, but her mother is Christine and not Momma.)*
15. Why does Marley want to see a movie about the man who refuses to change? *(Marley is about to face some changes. Perhaps she wants to learn how to do the same thing.)*

16. How can changes “drag you somewhere you didn’t want to go”? *(Answers will vary.)*
17. What does it tell us about Marley that she has not cried even though it has been two weeks? *(Perhaps she is refusing to accept the truth, and therefore, it is not affecting her.)*
18. How does Marley’s opinion change about the shadow ghost Shoogy sees around Pops? *(She decides maybe it really is there, and that the ghost is there to punish Pops for what he did and what is to come.)*
19. Do you think he should be punished? *(Answers will vary.)*
20. What is Marley referring to when she thinks that it would never be as simple as it is with Feather and Bobby? Why? *(The relationship between herself and her parents has been complicated.)*
21. Why does Bobby give Marley the advice, “Just think about tomorrow”? *(Things are easier to manage in small amounts.)*
22. We are told that Bobby comes from a twelve-step background. What does that mean? *(Counseling programs designed to help people free themselves from addiction provide twelve steps to follow to help people work through their problems.)*
23. Why does Bobby tell Marley the story about parents? *(He is trying to explain that all parents make stupid mistakes even though children expect them to make any at all. He is telling her that her parents did make a mistake, but perhaps it isn’t as bad as it may seem.)*
24. What is Bobby’s reaction to Marley telling him that she hates her parents? *(He tells her that it must be hard to hate people whom you have loved your whole life.)* Why is it important that he says that? *(Answers will vary.)*
25. Why does Marley think that she will see many things for the first time, like Momma putting her hand on her hip? *(Answers will vary.)*
26. Where does Marley find Butchy? What is he looking for? Why? *(He is in Momma’s closet looking for a box with the birth certificates. He wants to find out if Momma and Pops really had other parents.)*
27. Why is Butchy’s comment about being armed with the truth important? *(Not only does it deal with how he feels about wanting to know the truth, but perhaps it will also make Marley feel better about the fact that she knows the truth even though it is not pleasant.)*
28. Why is it important that we are told about how Marley’s father comforted her during her nightmares? *(It shows a deep connection to her and is an example of loving “fatherly” behavior.)*

Supplementary Activities

1. **Writing:** Have students write a diary entry from Marley’s perspective on the day she discovered the truth. Have students choose another perspective (Momma, Pops, Butchy, Uncle Jack) to write about the same instance.
2. **Art:** Have students create a mural expressing Marley’s feelings about her life.
3. **Geography:** Have students continue to plot all of the places mentioned in the story on a map.
4. **Research:** Have students research the church buildings that occurred in the 90s and present this information to the class.
5. **Research:** Have students research the culture and lifestyle of the Amish. Ask them to compare the Amish way of life to their own using a Venn diagram.
6. **Music:** Have students create a musical collage expressing Marley’s emotions in the book.
7. **Critical Thinking:** Have students consider if it would have been better for Marley to have never known the truth. Have them discuss this in small groups, and then with the whole class.

Using Predictions in the Novel Unit Approach

We all make predictions as we read—little guesses about what will happen next, how the conflict will be resolved, which details given by the author will be important to the plot, which details will help to fill in our sense of a character. Students should be encouraged to predict, to make sensible guesses. As students work on predictions, these discussion questions can be used to guide them: What are some of the ways to predict? What is the process of a sophisticated reader's thinking and predicting? What clues does an author give us to help us in making our predictions? Why are some predictions more likely than others?

A predicting chart is for students to record their predictions. As each subsequent chapter is discussed, you can review and correct previous predictions. This procedure serves to focus on predictions and to review the stories.

Use the facts and ideas the author gives.

Use your own knowledge.

Use new information that may cause you to change your mind.

Predictions:

Attribute Web

The attribute web below is designed to help you gather clues the author provides about what a character is like. Fill in the blanks with words and phrases which tell how the character acts and looks, as well as what the character says and what others say about him or her.

Acts

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Feels

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Character

LOOKS

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Says

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____