



 Prestwick House

Activity Pack

BELOVED

BY TONI MORISON



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Written by Elizabeth Keenan

Name: _____

Date: _____

Pre-Reading**Historical Context**

Objective: Understanding how historical context affects a novel

Activity

Beloved is set before and after the American Civil War. Most of the main characters, at some point in the novel, cross the line between the North and the South. Where the African American characters are at specific points in time greatly affects their legal status as well as their emotional and physical well-being.

Working in groups of three or four, research the states allowed or did not allow slavery in 1860 and 1870. On the following maps of the U.S., identify (with highlighters, markers, etc.) which states had slavery and which did not. Make sure to hold on to your maps as you read the book.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Section 1, Chapter 1**Foreshadowing****Objective:** Identifying foreshadowing**Activity**

Authors frequently foreshadow what events will occur later in the book with hints or suggestions earlier in the book. Foreshadowing can occur in what a character says, how a scene is described, or an event that occurs. For example, Toni Morrison foreshadows future events of *Beloved* when Paul D walks into Sethe's house and into a pool of red light. He asks, "What kind of evil you got in here?" and Sethe responds, "It's not evil, just sad." This dialogue foreshadows the characters' different perceptions and interpretations of the nature of the haunting at 124; some people think it is evil, while others think it is just lonely and needy.

Go through the rest of the first chapter and find three to five places that you think may foreshadow future events. Write a paragraph about each instance of foreshadowing, and explain why you think it is foreshadowing and what you think it might mean.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Section 1, Chapter 4**Personal Identification****Objective:** Relating to characters**Activity**

In Chapter 4 of Section 1, Paul D decides to take Sethe and Denver to the carnival that is in town. While Denver agrees to go, she acts sullen and is not very interested in the carnival at first. But, as the day goes on, Denver eats candy and sees non-judgmental acquaintances, and she sees the carnival shows; she begins to feel better and enjoy herself.

Think about a time when you were unhappy about something and what activity put you in a better mood, and write a few sentences describing it. Then, make a list of three other activities you like to do when you're feeling bad. Finally, take a poll of your classmates to see what activities help them feel better, and, as a class, make a graph of what activities everyone likes.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Section 1, Chapter 7**Metaphor****Objective:** Understanding how metaphor functions in a story**Activity**

Authors frequently employ literary devices to make certain points to the reader. One such literary device is metaphor. A metaphor is an analogy that is stated as if one thing is the other. For example, “her hair was coal” is a metaphor because her hair is not really made of coal, but has similar characteristics. Morrison employs a continuing metaphor about Paul D’s heart, claiming it is a tobacco tin rusted shut. Clearly, Paul D’s heart is not really a tobacco tin; why, then, does Morrison make this comparison?

On the image of the tobacco tin, list the reasons why Paul D envisions his heart as a rusted-shut tin, unable to be opened or penetrated.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Section 1, Chapter 9**Visual Depiction**

Objective: Visually representing complex themes and concepts

Activity

In Chapter 9 of the first section, the narrator describes Baby Suggs' spiritual gatherings in the clearing of the woods. Many of the townspeople joined Baby Suggs in the clearing for the cathartic release her preaching allowed them. During this gathering in the trees, Baby Suggs asks the children to laugh, the men to dance, and the women to cry. Once they begin, everyone does all those things: men laugh, women dance, children cry; men cry, women laugh, and children dance. Eventually, the clearing turns into a celebration of spirituality.

Make a collage that represents this spiritual gathering. Find pictures or words that represent laughing, crying, dancing, and nature, and make a collage. Make sure all of the laughing, crying, and dancing images are surrounded by pictures of nature.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Section 1, Chapter 11**Advice Column****Objective:** Responding to a story**Activity**

In Chapter 11, the narrator describes Paul D's feelings of being pushed out of 124 and away from Sethe. At first, he thinks he is just getting restless, as he has in the past; however, he does not want to leave all together. Rather, he begins by just sleeping in a chair, instead of with Sethe. Then, he moves to the downstairs bedroom. Finally, he ends up sleeping in the store room, where Beloved seduces him.

Imagine that Paul D has written to an advice columnist (such as Dear Abby) to ask what to do about his feelings of being pushed away and out of the house. Paul D wants to understand his feelings better and to know what to do about the situation.

Write a response to Paul D, giving him an explanation that has nothing to do with Beloved's haunting (i.e., give rational reasons for why Paul D wants to leave). Then, advise him on the best course of action. Make sure to use information from the text to support your advice.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Section 1, Chapter 14**Chapter Breaks****Objective:** Understanding how chapter breaks affect a story**Activity**

Chapter 14 is significantly shorter than most of the other chapters; it is only two pages long. Chapter breaks generally have some sort of significance to the overall meaning of the book. Think of one chapter as a unit of meaning, with its own purpose and effect on the story. Why does Morrison devote an entire chapter to action that takes only two pages to describe, while other chapters are much longer?

Write a brief, one paragraph summary of what happens in Chapter 14. Then, write a second paragraph arguing why you think this part of the plot deserves its own chapter and what the reader is supposed to understand from this chapter break.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Section 1, Chapter 18**Quote Analysis**

Objective: Understanding how quotes or dialogue function in a story

Analysis

After Paul D learns that Sethe has murdered her own child to stop her from being returned to slavery, Paul D confronts her. After hearing her explanation, Paul D becomes scared and says to her “your love is too thick” to which Sethe responds, “Too thick...Love is or it ain’t. Thin love ain’t love at all.”

In groups of three, create and conduct an interview of Paul D and Sethe. One person should play the role of interviewer and the other two Paul D and Sethe. Focus on the reasons why Sethe committed her crime, whether love can be “too thick” as Paul D claims, and why this knowledge turns Paul D away.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Section 2, Chapter 2**Question and Answer**

Objective: Answering questions to come to a conclusion

Activity

Chapter 2 of Section 2 is told from Sethe's point of view. Sethe's narrative focuses on her relationship with Beloved and how she feels about her daughter's death. Sethe feels a right to Beloved similar to possession. The chapter starts, "Beloved, she my daughter. She mine" and ends with, "She come back to me, my daughter, and she is mine." The rest of the chapter focuses on Sethe's extreme love for her daughter, her possession. Reread the chapter closely and then answer the following questions:

1. What is one thing you value the most above all else and why?
2. How would feel if you lost that thing?
3. Do you see similar feelings in Sethe? What are they?
4. How are Sethe's feelings complicated by the fact that Beloved is both dead and appears in human form?

After answering these questions, write a reflective paragraph about your thoughts on Sethe's possessive feelings for Beloved.