

# “BELOVED” BY TONI MORISSON

## Discussion questions

1. Consider the extent to which slavery dehumanizes individuals by stripping them of their identity, destroying their ability to conceive of the self. Consider, especially, Paul and how he can't determine whether screams he hears are his or someone else's. How do the other characters reflect self-alienation?
2. Discuss the different roles of the community in betraying and protecting the house at 124. What larger issue might Morrison be suggesting here about community.
3. What does Beloved's appearance represent? What about her behavior? Why does she finally disappear—what drives her departure? And why is the book's title named for her?
4. Talk about the choice Sethe made regarding her children when schoolteacher arrives to take them all back to Sweet Home. Can her actions be justified—are her actions rational or irrational?
5. What does the narrator mean by the warning at the end: this is not a story to pass on." Is he right...or not.

