

## Style Analysis

### Chapter 1

*The fat white circles of dough lined the pan in rows. Once more Sethe touched a wet forefinger to the stove. She opened the oven door and slid the pan of biscuits in. As she raised up from the heat she felt Paul D behind her and his hands under her breasts. She straightened up and knew, but could not feel, that his cheek was pressing into the branches of her chokecherry tree.*

*Not even trying, he had become the kind of man who could walk into a house and make the women cry. Because with him, in his presence, they could. There was something blessed in his manner. Women saw him and wanted to weep--to tell him that their chest hurt and their knees did too. Strong women and wise saw him and told him things they only told each other: that way past the Change of Life, desire in them had suddenly become enormous, greedy, more savage than when they were fifteen, and that it embarrassed them and made them sad; that secretly they longed to die--to be quit of it--that sleep was more precious to them than any waking day. Young girls sidled up to him to confess or describe how well-dressed the visitations were that had followed them straight from their dreams. Therefore, although he did not understand why this was so, he was not surprised when Denver dripped tears into the stovefire. Nor, fifteen minutes later, after telling him about her stolen milk, her mother wept as well. Young girls sidled up to him to confess or describe how well-dressed the visitations were that had followed them straight from their dreams. Therefore, although he did not understand why this was so, he was not surprised when Denver dripped tears into the stovefire. Nor, fifteen minutes later, after telling him about her stolen milk, her mother wept as well. Behind her, bending down, his body an arc of kindness, he held her breasts in the palms of his hands. He rubbed his cheek on her back and learned that way her sorrow, the roots of it; its wide trunk and intricate branches. Raising his fingers to the hooks of her dress, he knew without seeing them or hearing any sigh that the tears were coming fast. And when the top of her dress was around her hips and he saw the sculpture her back had become, like the decorative work of an ironsmith too passionate for display, he could think but not say, "Aw, Lord, girl." And he would tolerate no peace until he had touched every ridge and leaf of it with his mouth, none of which Sethe could feel because her back skin had been dead for years. What she knew was that the responsibility for her breasts, at last, was in somebody else's hands.*

*Would there be a little space, she wondered, a little time, some way to hold off eventfulness, to push busyness into the corners of the room and just stand there a minute or two, naked from shoulder blade to waist, relieved of the weight of her breasts, smelling the stolen milk again and the pleasure of baking bread? Maybe this one time she could stop dead still in the middle of a cooking meal--not even leave the stove--and feel the hurt her back ought to. Trust things and remember things because the last of the Sweet Home men was there to catch her if she sank?*

In the first paragraph alone, many archetypes arise. The circles are a recurring element representing wholeness of life, spiritual energy, and passage of time, which can represent the things that happened before with Paul D. The dough represents substance that Paul D has for Sethe. The entire passage shows Sethe's feelings, but it is in third person point of view. The intuition of Sethe also is able to show the relationship between the Sethe and Paul D.

The second paragraph tells of the characteristics of Paul D from Sethe's perspective, which may be biased from her previous experience with her. The author uses the word "cry" and "weep" for what the women want to do in the presence of Paul D, meaning to utter sound of grief or desperation. Since this is from Sethe's point of view this may even refer to her, meaning that she might

make Sethe relieve herself of her grief and any other feelings that she has been holding back. "Blessed" is used to describe the manner of Paul D because it means holy, consecrated giving the description of Paul D a feeling of holiness. When Sethe says that women wanted to tell him their chest and knees hurt, they could symbolize how the chest holds the heart and knees hold up the body and legs, which support the legs. Sethe then goes on to say the even the "strong" and "wise" told things "they only told each other", showing how even the most powerful, the ones with strength and knowledge confess things to Paul D despite the fact that he is male, not female. Whatever Paul D has transcends gender barriers. The description of the "strong" and "wise" is expanded upon, revealing that Sethe is truly describing herself. Sethe compares herself to her "fifteen" year old self, who is less "enormous, greedy" and "savage" all negative traits she usually would not share with just anybody. The change that she sees in herself is evident through the rest of the book throughout various quotes in the book. Other additional things that Sethe secretly wishes to do is seen here: Sethe wants to "die--to be quit of it" because "sleep was more precious to them than any waking day" despite what Sethe does currently in her life. At the time when Paul D came, Sethe made the most of her life with the job that she goes to almost everyday which helps provide for herself and Denver. There is no indication of the desire to be "quit of it", giving up completely on life (similar to Baby Suggs). Additionally, the description of sleep in this passage doesn't exactly match what is happening with Sethe who doesn't sleep every moment of her "waking day[s]", showing how deep and sensitive these thoughts are. Sethe also doesn't even refer to her at all, saying it is the "strong women and wise" that tell him all these things.

The syntax of this section is characterized by long winding sentences, mimicking the through process of Sethe that circles around the main subject, but never gets to the main idea trying to be express. The varied syntax of the punctuation and structure allows for emphasis on certain key parts including the colon after the "strong women and wise", "only told each other" and descriptive list separated by semicolons. The heavy use of dashes provides further emphasis on what seems to be comments or repeats of certain ideas by Sethe. The use of phrases followed by commas in the front of the sentences provide fluidity and specifics.

The continuation of the second paragraph is still talking about Paul D in partly Sethe's view. She believes him to be the kind of guy "young girls sidled up to". This phrase gives an image of girls younger than Paul flirty with him since sidle denotes walking in a furtive or timid manner. It seems that even for young girls the young girls describe how well-dressed they are. The paragraph then shift the limited third person point of view to Paul D, using "he" to show the shift in "although he did...". The author uses Paul D to describe the main part of her sorrow with "the roots of it", convey that there is part of sadness that is from the center, but also referring to the tree the back that has roots. "He knew without seeing them or hearing any sigh" showing the nature of the relationship between Paul D and Sethe in which very little words are exchanged but somehow the other's actions are known. The love between them is developed even further in the word choice of Paul D and Sethe's limited third person point of view. Paul D describes Sethe's scar as a "sculpture" and "the decorative work" that is "too passionate for display", all positive things.

Both of the next two sentences start with an "And" which shows continuity from the thought from before that expanding on the love and relationship between Sethe and Paul D. He then will have nothing else peaceful in his life ("would tolerate no peace") until he has done something that Sethe could not feel, showing a caring gesture on his part. The last sentence in Sethe's point of view shows how she able to relive the responsibility of her breast to someone else "at last" because she doesn't

open up to anyone else, using commas to separate the “at last” which brings emphasis to the words.

The list of questions followed by the previous sentence on how she finally has someone to relieve her burden on show her happiness and thinking process in trying to accept Paul D into her life after not allowing anyone else the same benefit. The plethora of commas create a choppy effect and are mostly to include clarifiers, almost as if she is unsure of how to classify certain things or as if she wants to make sure she add all information she needs. The dash just emphasizes the dedication of Paul D and how she is considering it.

## **Chapter 2**

*Sethe lay on her back, her head turned from him. Out of the corner of his eye, Paul D saw the float of her breasts and disliked it, the spread-away, flat roundness of them that “ And the wrought-iron maze he had explored in the kitchen like a gold miner pawing through pay dirt was in fact a revolting clump of scars. Not a tree, as she said. Maybe shaped like one, but nothing like any tree he knew because trees were inviting; things you could trust and be near; talk to if you wanted to as he frequently did since way back when he took the midday meal in the fields of Sweet Home. Always in the same place if he could, and choosing the place had been hard because Sweet Home had more pretty trees than any farm around. His choice he called Brother, and sat under it, alone sometimes, sometimes with Halle or the other Pauls, but more often with Sixo, who was gentle then and still speaking English. Indigo with a flame-red tongue, Sixo experimented with night-cooked potatoes, trying to pin down exactly when to put smoking-hot rocks in a hole, potatoes on top, and cover the whole thing with twigs so that by the time they broke for the meal, hitched the animals, left the field and got to Brother, the potatoes would be at the peak of perfection. He might get up in the middle of the night, go all the way out there, start the earth-over by starlight; or he would make the stones less hot and put the next day's potatoes on them right after the meal. He never got it right, but they ate those undercooked, overcooked, dried-out or raw potatoes anyway, laughing, spitting and giving him advice.*

*Time never worked the way Sixo thought, so of course he never got it right. Once he plotted down to the minute a thirty-mile trip to see a woman. He left on a Saturday when the moon was in the place he wanted it to be, arrived at her cabin before church on Sunday and had just enough time to say good morning before he had to start back again so he'd make the field call on time Monday morning. He had walked for seventeen hours, sat down for one, turned around and walked seventeen more. Halle and the Pauls spent the whole day covering Sixo's fatigue from Mr. Garner. They ate no potatoes that day, sweet or white. Sprawled near Brother, his flame-red tongue hidden from them, his indigo face closed, Sixo slept through dinner like a corpse. Now there was a man, and that was a tree. Himself lying in the bed and the "tree" lying next to him didn't compare.*

The point of view of this passage is third person limited to Paul D. Morrison chose this point of view in order to be able to delve into his memory of Brother the tree. In the beginning of the passage, Morrison uses negative diction to show a remorseful tone. For example, the words “disliked” and “flat” when talking about Sethe’s breasts both have a negative connotation to show that the situation that Paul D is in isn’t favorable. In the quote “flat roundness of [Sethe’s breasts] that he could definitely live without,” the word “definitely” shows that Morrison used strong diction to create a tone of certainty that Paul D felt as if this incident with Sethe was completely unnecessary. “And the wrought-iron maze he had explored in the kitchen like a gold miner pawing through pay dirt was in fact a revolting clump of scars. Not a tree, as she said,” is a metaphor which is used for comparison

between his initial, eager interpretation of Sethe's scars to his disgusted interpretation of the scars now. This quote can show that Paul D felt deceived since his interpretation changed suddenly. In this quote, the word "pawing" suggests an animal characteristic that is possibly contained in Paul D after a life of slavery. The statement, "revolting clump of scars" shows Morrison's choice of graphic diction to suggest the ghastliness of Sethe's back.

In the phrase "but nothing like any tree he knew" the word but indicates a shift from Paul D's thoughts of the "revolting clump of scars" to the "inviting" memory of Brother. When the passage says, "trees were inviting; things you could trust and be near; talk to if you wanted to," it shows a carefree tone of comfort with the use of the words "inviting" and "trust". Morrison also uses multiple semi-colons to make the passage seem like a thought process of Paul D's as he reminisces on the friendliness of trees. The phrase, "trees were...things you could...talk to if you wanted to as he frequently did since way back when he took the midday meal in the fields of Sweet Home," presents a shift from the present to Paul D's flashback. In the phrase, "Always in the same place if he could," Morrison uses choppy syntax with an incomplete subordinate clause to make the reader feel like they're going through Paul D's thought process. The quote, "Sweet Home had more pretty trees than any farm around. His choice he called Brother, and sat under it, alone sometimes, sometimes with Halle or the other Pauls, but more often with Sixo, who was gentle then and still speaking English," provides lighthearted diction—with the words "pretty" to describe trees and "gentle" to describe Sixo—to suggest peaceful times. In the phrase "more pretty trees," the word "more" suggests abundance of beauty in contrast to not only other farms but Sethe's back as well since it apparently lacks beauty according to Paul D. The fact that in this time, Sixo was "still speaking English" suggests that this was a time before full corruption occurred. Also in this quote, the syntax consists of a long sentence consisting of multiple phrases separated by commas shows that this section is Paul D's thought process. It shows the setting of being with Brother, but with alteration of company. The fact that "Brother" is capitalized is significant because it shows how important and impactful the tree was on Paul D's life because he was at peace with this tree. Sixo is described as "indigo with a flame red tongue" which is significant because these two descriptions contrast completely. Indigo can refer to Spanish indigo plantations that were tended by Native Americans, and this relates to the fact that Sixo was able to communicate with the "Redmen's Presence" when meeting with the thirty-mile woman. The word "flame" foreshadows Sixo being burned to death, and Sixo's tongue being red can symbolize his somewhat rebellious manner since he is known to indirectly talk back to schoolteacher.

The quote, "Sixo experimented with night-cooked potatoes, trying to pin down exactly when to put smoking-hot rocks in a hole, potatoes on top, and cover the whole thing with twigs so that by the time they broke for the meal, hitched the animals, left the field and got to Brother, the potatoes would be at the peak of perfection," shows lengthy syntax consisting of a long sentence that lists the steps Sixo used to cook potatoes, and this type of syntax is used to show Paul D's reminiscence and focus on little details of his memory. The narrative pace is slow when the passage says, "He might get up in the middle of the night, go all the way out there, start the earth-over by starlight". The word "starlight" is significant because it shows that Morrison chooses a word that suggests the world's beauty instead of a negatively-archetypal word such as "night" in order to show the goodness of these times. Light is an archetype for hope, which is what the characters here had in which they hoped and expected to have a somewhat peaceful life as they relaxed by the tree and cooked potatoes. When the passage says, "[Sixo] never got [the potatoes] right, but they ate those undercooked, overcooked, dried-out or raw potatoes anyway, laughing, spitting and giving him advice," the word "laughing" is an example of

lighthearted diction which is used to convey a tone of happiness.

The phrase, "Time never worked the way Sixo thought, so of course he never got it right" shows a shift which uses the word time to create the transition from cooking potatoes to seeking a woman, and the fact that a barely-relevant noun is used as a transition makes the shift seem like a train of thought. The syntax consists of wordy phrases such as, "when the moon was in the place he wanted it to be" to lengthen and slow down the narrative pace in order to delve deep into Paul D's flashback. Later in this paragraph, repetition of the word "seventeen" when describing hours emphasizes the incredible length and ridiculousness of Sixo's journey. In the quote, "[They] spent the whole day covering Sixo's fatigue from Mr. Garner...Sixo slept through dinner like a corpse" the words fatigue and corpse are used to emphasize Sixo's extreme weariness.

Towards the end of the passage when it says, "Now there was a man, and that was a tree. Himself lying in bed and the "tree" lying next to him didn't compare," it shows a sudden shift back to the present. The syntax changes in which the sentences suddenly become short to show that when the story goes back to the present, the narrative pace snaps back to speed, and Paul D's state of mind isn't so peaceful anymore once his mind goes back to Sethe. This section conveys a tone of bitterness and disappointment. Also, the fact that "tree" is surrounded with quotation marks is significant because it shows that Sethe's back is far from what a real tree should be like according to Paul D.

### **Chapter 3**

*She couldn't think clearly, lying next to him listening to his breathing, so carefully, carefully, she had left the bed.*

*Kneeling in the keeping room where she usually went to talk-think it was clear why Baby Suggs was so starved for color. There wasn't any except for two orange squares in a quilt that made the absence shout. The walls of the room were slate-colored, the floor earth-brown, the wooden dresser the color of itself, curtains white, and the dominating feature, the quilt over an iron cot, was made up of scraps of blue serge, black, brown and gray wool--the full range of the dark and the muted that thrift and modesty allowed. In that sober field, two patches of orange looked wild--like life in the raw.*

*Sethe looked at her hands, her bottle-green sleeves, and thought how little color there was in the house and how strange that she had not missed it the way Baby did. Deliberate, she thought, it must be deliberate, because the last color she remembered was the pink chips in the headstone of her baby girl. After that she became as color conscious as a hen. Every dawn she worked at fruit pies, potato dishes and vegetables while the cook did the soup, meat and all the rest. And she could not remember remembering a molly apple or a yellow squash. Every dawn she saw the dawn, but never acknowledged or remarked its color. There was something wrong with that.*

*It was as though one day she saw red baby blood, another day the pink gravestone chips, and that was the last of it.*

*124 was so full of strong feeling perhaps she was oblivious to the loss of anything at all. There was a time when she scanned the fields every morning and every evening for her boys. When she stood at the open window, unmindful of flies, her head cocked to her left shoulder, her eyes searching to the right for them. Cloud shadow on the road, an old woman, a wandering goat untethered and gnawing bramble--each one looked at first like Howard--no, Buglar. Little by little she stopped and their thirteen-year-old faces faded completely into their baby ones, which came to her only in sleep. When her dreams roamed outside 124, anywhere they wished, she saw them sometimes in beautiful trees,*

*their little legs barely visible in the leaves.*

*Sometimes they ran along the railroad track laughing, too loud, apparently, to hear her because they never did turn around. When she woke the house crowded in on her: there was the door where the soda crackers were lined up in a row; the white stairs her baby girl loved to climb; the corner where Baby Suggs mended shoes, a pile of which were still in the cold room; the exact place on the stove where Denver burned her fingers. And of course the spite of the house itself. There was no room for any other thing or body until Paul D arrived and broke up the place, making room, shifting it, moving it over to someplace else, then standing in the place he had made.*

This section is told through a third person limited point of view through Sethe's perspective which enlightens us with her perspective on life at 124 and how nothing was ever truly the same after Beloved died. The tone shifts from being lost in the past to trying to remain oblivious to time passing by and finally to an acknowledgement of the future that Paul D's arrival represents.

In the beginning section, Sethe describes her leaving the bed with Paul D as "carefully, carefully" as the repetition of carefully is supposed to emphasize her actions. She then moves to another room for "talk-think" which is meant to show how muddled Sethe's thoughts are because she combines the two actions into one compound. It is in the room that she realizes how empty the house is and how devoid it is of color with she later describes as being "like life in the raw." Sethe notices the "walls of the room were slate-colored, the floor earth-brown, the wooden dresser the color itself, curtains white, and the dominating feature, the quilt over an iron cot." Morrison uses this list of mundane furniture in order to convey the emptiness of the colors since all of the colors are neutral creating an overall drab feeling for the house. The quilt which is the "dominating feature" had "two orange squares" which made the "absence [of color] shout." The color orange, archetypally, represents adventure and change which is significant because it represents the change that Paul D brought to her life by forcing to acknowledge the past and that in turn caused her to contemplate a possible future with him. The absence of color is personified with the word "shout" which is used to show that the lack of color in the house was deafening to Sethe because she couldn't believe that they lacked so much life in their home. The quilt is later described as being made of "scraps of blue serge, black brown, and gray wool" which is later described as "dark" and "muted" proving that although they did have some color, or life, it was dark and muted due to the overhanging threat of the dead baby ghost, Beloved, that haunted them all and caused them to live their life in permanent pain.

Morrison later describes Sethe's clothing as having "bottle green sleeves" where green archetypally represent renewal and fertility but bottle green is a darker variation of green which could show that her renewal is dampened by the overhanging concern with Beloved and until she gets closure with Beloved she cannot fully accept her new future that Paul D brings along with him. . Also, in this section it is revealed that Sethe stopped seeing color once Beloved dies and only begins to realize how lonely 124 is once Paul D comes back showing how much of an impact he had on her life and the way she perceives things because after she killed Beloved life was dampened because she no longer had one of her "best things" which is why she saw no color in life Sethe notes that it was "strange that she had not missed it the way Baby did" where the "it" in the statement refers to the lacking color showing that she did not miss life outside of 124 like Baby Suggs did because she purposefully isolated herself after killing Beloved by rejecting their friendly advances. She also describes that after she killed Beloved, "After that she became as color conscious as a hen" which is a simile to show that she was not color conscious at all because a hen is color blind. She also contemplates whether or not she deliberately forgot to look at the colors through her repetition of the

word “deliberate” showing how thought out her attempts to forget the past were. She later flashes back to the past where she remembers “the last color she remembered was the pink chips in the headstone of her baby girl” where the pink chips in the headstone for Beloved has a negative connotation since archetypally pink is a mixture of white and red and white represents emptiness while red shows sin and passion which is meant to represent Beloved in her reincarnated form. The dawn represents new beginnings showing that she kept up with life but always felt something was missing because she didn’t acknowledge the liveliness around her or even remember a “molly apple or a yellow squash” from where she work.. Now she is acknowledging that her former behavior was wrong and that she was missing something before because she remarks that because she “never acknowledged or remarked its color. [showed that] There was something wrong with that.”

Sethe later acknowledges that time has elapsed without her knowledge because she describes that “It was as though one day she saw red baby blood, another day the pink gravestone chips, and that was the last of it.” Archetypally red represents passion, sin, sacrifice and taboo representing the horror that she felt when she saw when the baby blood stained her hands and the only other memory with color she has is of “the pink gravestone chips.” Sethe believes that part her reasoning for not remembering color is that “124 was so full of strong feeling perhaps she was oblivious to the loss of anything at all.” The word “full” has a double meaning because full can refer to the house literally being full of emotion or if referring back to the importance of appetite in Morrison’s work, we can assume that 124 is satiated or it’s appetite is fully fed through the inhabitants of 124’s suffering so much that Sethe “was oblivious to the loss of anything at all.” She then flashes back to the past when she “scanned the fields every morning and every evening for her boys. When she stood at the open window, unmindful of flies, her head cocked over her left shoulder, her eyes searching to the right for them.” Archetypally when Sethe turns her head to the “left” Jung describes the “left” as being associated with motherhood, past, and darkness showing that when Sethe is looking for her sons she is immersing herself in the past but filling herself full of her motherly concerns and when she searches to the right she is looking to the future, a future without her boys. It also represents that Sethe is in the darkness looking towards the light because the left is associated with “darkness” and the “right” that she is looking toward represents the “light.”

The past then starts to cloud Sethe in the present because “each one looked at first like Howard—no, Buglar. Little by little she stopped and their thirteen year old faces faded completely into their baby ones, which came to her only in her sleep.” The earlier part of the section where she states how her sons 13 year old faces “faded” into their baby faces showing that she is forgetting them. Also the fact that she only remembers them “in her dreams” shows how muddled her unconsciousness and consciousness are which contributes to how she is still lost in the past but is still oblivious to the changes in time because she still views her children by their “thirteen year old faces” although time has passed. Later when Sethe states, “When her dreams romanced outside 124, anywhere they wished, she saw them sometimes in beautiful trees their little legs barely visible in the leaves” she’s uncertain of her children’s fate because trees, archetypally, represent life and because they are covered by leaves and are “barely visible” it could show how barely visible their life forces are to Sethe. The idea of them possibly being dead is reinforced by the imagery presented in the next line where Sethe remembers that they, “sometimes...ran along the railroad track laughing, too loud, apparently, to hear her because they never did turn around.” This shows that they were uncaring with

Also, when Sethe woke up she felt suffocated by 124 full of the strong emotions because she describes that “the house crowded in on her” personifying the house and showing that it was taking

up her personal space and making her feel uncomfortable so she went to the keeping room where she was presented with images of her past that never changed such as, “the door where the soda crackers were lined up in a row; the white stairs her baby girl loved to climb; the corner where Baby Suggs mended shoes, a pile of which were still in the cold room; the exact place on the stove where Denver burned her fingers. And of course the spite of the house itself.” This shows how despite the eight years that passed since Baby Suggs died, Sethe has not moved a single thing in the house and still remembers everything about 124 like the “white stairs” which hints at Beloved’s return because white, archetypally, represents rebirth. Also the statement “cold room” refers to the room being empty and devoid of life because its occupant, Baby Suggs, is no longer alive.

Then the spell holding everything back in the past was broken by Paul D as shown by the line, “There was no room for any other thing or body until Paul D arrived and broke up the place, making room, shifting it, moving it over to someplace else, then standing in the place he had made.” This entire statement reveals change and Sethe’s acknowledgement of the change and future that Paul D represents because she describes how everything had its own place and nothing ever changed until Paul D came and “broke” that cycle and in turn broke Beloved’s hold over the family because everything then “shift[ed]” and time began to move again because Sethe, the person closest to Beloved, began to notice how time started moving again.

#### **Chapter 4**

*The crickets were screaming on Thursday and the sky, stripped of blue, was white hot at eleven in the morning. Sethe was badly dressed for the heat, but this being her first social outing in eighteen years, she felt obliged to wear her one good dress, heavy as it was, and a hat. Certainly a hat. She didn't want to meet Lady Jones or Ella with her head wrapped like she was going to work. The dress, a good-wool castoff, was a Christmas present to Baby Suggs from Miss Bodwin, the whitewoman who loved her. Denver and Paul D fared better in the heat since neither felt the occasion required special clothing. Denver's bonnet knocked against her shoulder blades; Paul D wore his vest open, no jacket and his shirt sleeves rolled above his elbows. They were not holding hands, but their shadows were. Sethe looked to her left and all three of them were gliding over the dust holding hands. Maybe he was right. A life. Watching their hand holding shadows, she was embarrassed at being dressed for church. The others, ahead and behind them, would think she was putting on airs, letting them know that she was different because she lived in a house with two stories; tougher, because she could do and survive things they believed she should neither do nor survive. She was glad Denver had resisted her urgings to dress up--rebraid her hair at least. But Denver was not doing anything to make this trip a pleasure. She agreed to go--sullenly--but her attitude was "Go 'head. Try and make me happy." The happy one was Paul D. He said howdy to everybody within twenty feet. Made fun of the weather and what it was doing to him, yelled back at the crows, and was the first to smell the doomed roses. All the time, no matter what they were doing-- whether Denver wiped perspiration from her forehead or stooped to retie her shoes; whether Paul D kicked a stone or reached over to meddle a child's face leaning on its mother's shoulder--all the time the three shadows that shot out of their feet to the left held hands. Nobody noticed but Sethe and she stopped looking after she decided that it was a good sign. A life. Could be.*

In the beginning of this passage, the word “crickets” can symbolize good luck, yet they can also be associated with death and resurrection. The fact that crickets are lucky can foreshadow Sethe’s luck of reuniting with a form of her deceased baby, Beloved. The crickets can also represent Beloved,

who died and was resurrected. In the sentence, “The crickets were screaming on Thursday and the sky, stripped of blue, was white hot at eleven in the morning,” Morrison uses cacophonous and biting diction with the words “screaming and “stripped” to convey a harsh tone to show how intense the heat of the day was. In this sentence, the description “blue,” is archetypal for soothing and cooling and is replaced by “white hot,” which is archetypal for pure in which the heat was complete and pure, and this also emphasizes the great heat of that day. When the passage says, “Sethe was badly dressed for the heat, but this being her first social outing in eighteen years, she felt obliged to wear her one good dress, heavy as it was, and a hat. Certainly a hat,” the syntax consists of one long sentence and then a short sentence immediately after. The long sentence can be used to show Sethe’s process on her overthinking of how she will dress herself to be in public for the first time in eighteen years. The short sentence shows the part of her thought process in which she feels that the hat is completely necessary in order to avoid feeling insecure around “Lady Jones or Ella”.

In the quote, “Denver’s bonnet knocked against her shoulder blades; Paul D wore his vest open, no jacket and his shirt sleeves rolled above his elbows,” the syntax consists of two phrases about both Denver and Paul D which are separated by a semicolon in order to contrast the two characters and their personalities. Within this quote, the word “knocked” in Denver’s description gives a sense of hardness supports a tone of rigidity because Denver isn’t willing to be happy or carefree and therefore tenser in her manner. However, Paul D is described as having “no jacket and his shirt sleeves rolled above his elbows” to show his free-spirited personality. Morrison uses the word “rolled” instead of another word like “folded” to describes Paul D’s sleeves to show that he is simply carefree, and that his carefree manner shows through the way he wears his clothes.

In the sentence, “They were not holding hands, but their shadows were,” the word “but” is placed to show a contrast between what is actually happening and what is interpreted by Sethe. The fact that the three characters were not actually holding hands can symbolize their relationship in reality since throughout the book, the three couldn’t truly be a family due to several complications. When the passage says, “Sethe looked to her left...” it introduces Sethe’s point of view of third-person limited. This is so that readers can be exposed to her interpretations of the three shadows holding hands. In the sentences, “Maybe he was right. A life,” the word “maybe” shows a shift within Sethe’s thoughts because she began to realize the optimism that Paul D exerts. The syntax of short sentences is used to emphasize the mere thought of having a more normal and ideal life. When the passage says, “Watching their hand holding shadows, she was embarrassed at being dressed for church...” Sethe is embarrassed because she realizes that she needed not to present herself well in public but instead to focus on having a good time with Paul D and Denver. In the sentence, “The others, ahead and behind them, would think she was putting on airs, letting them know that she was different because she lived in a house with two stories; tougher, because she could do and survive things they believed she should neither do nor survive,” the syntax consisting of two parallel clauses separated by a semicolon is used for listing the multiple things that others think of her. Since this sentence is long and wordy, it shows that people have a lot of negative thoughts about her. The words “airs” and “tougher” contribute to the use of negative diction to emphasize the fact that other view Sethe as arrogant and pompous. When the passage says, “She was glad Denver had resisted her urgings to dress up—rebraid her hair at least,” it shows that Sethe still feels insecure and conscious about how she looks in public since she’s glad that Denver didn’t dress up and therefore makes the group look less snobby as a whole.

In the sentence, “But Denver was not doing anything to make this trip a pleasure,” the word “but” shows a shift to end Sethe’s thoughts about how she thinks she looks in public. When the passage says, “She agreed to go—sullenly—but her attitude was ‘Go ‘head. Try and make me happy.’ The happy one was Paul D,” the fact that the sentence about Denver is longer and more complicated than the short, simply sentence about Paul D can symbolize their own characteristics during this scene. Denver, in the midst of the happiness of a carnival, is only determined to stay unhappy only to show that she’s not content with Paul D’s company and is not willing to succumb to Paul D’s efforts to make her happy. Paul D, however, has a simple outlook in which he stays optimistic and is merely happy to be at the carnival. Also, the word “sullenly” is put between dashes for emphasizes that even though Denver agreed to join Paul D and Sethe at the carnival, she will not do so in a happy manner. When the passage says, “whether Denver wiped perspiration from her forehead or stooped to retie her shoes; whether Paul D kicked a stone or reached over to meddle a child’s face leaning on its mother’s shoulder,” it shows that Denver’s actions are always immediately followed by Paul D’s actions. This is done to show the great contrast between the two characters in which Denver stays bitter and doesn’t choose to have fun while Paul D enjoys his joyous surroundings and interacts with everything around him such as when he spontaneously draws attention to “a child’s face leaning on its mother’s shoulder”. The consecutive phrases always end with Paul D in order to end the mood with a feeling of joyfulness. When the passage says, “Nobody noticed but Sethe and she stopped looking after she decided that it was a good sign. A life. Could be,” it shows that since Sethe was the only one who saw the three shadows holding hands, it was only Sethe’s mind that contained hope for the three characters to pursue a family lifestyle and thus hopefully developing a potentially better life. The words “Could be,” however, shows that this hope is uncertain and only merely possible. The syntax consisting of extremely short sentences at the end can represent Sethe’s thought process in which she didn’t really think of the possibilities of a nicer life thoroughly and instead focuses only on what she hopes for.

## **Chapter 5**

*A FULLY DRESSED woman walked out of the water. She barely gained the dry bank of the stream before she sat down and leaned against a mulberry tree. All day and all night she sat there, her head resting on the trunk in a position abandoned enough to crack the brim in her straw hat. Everything hurt but her lungs most of all. Sopping wet and breathing shallow she spent those hours trying to negotiate the weight of her eyelids. The day breeze blew her dress dry; the night wind wrinkled it. Nobody saw her emerge or came accidentally by. If they had, chances are they would have hesitated before approaching her. Not because she was wet, or dozing or had what sounded like asthma, but because amid all that she was smiling. It took her the whole of the next morning to lift herself from the ground and make her way through the woods past a giant temple of boxwood to the field and then the yard of the slate-gray house. Exhausted again, she sat down on the first handy place--a stump not far from the steps of 124. By then keeping her eyes open was less of an effort. She could manage it for a full two minutes or more. Her neck, its circumference no wider than a parlor-service saucer, kept bending and her chin brushed the bit of lace edging her dress.*

*Women who drink champagne when there is nothing to celebrate can look like that: their straw hats with broken brims are often askew; they nod in public places; their shoes are undone. But their skin is not like that of the woman breathing near the steps of 124. She had new skin, lineless and smooth, including the knuckles of her hands.*

In the first paragraph, we are introduced to Beloved's character. The use of "fully dressed" emphasizes the fact that Beloved seemed very normal and maybe even in better condition than some others. It is important that Beloved comes out "of the water" because water archetypally symbolizes life and rebirth, signifying Beloved's presence as a rebirth of both Sethe's murdered daughter and the concept of slavery. Also the "water" refers to the "waters of history" (Perez) where Beloved represents those affected by slavery or those lost in sea during the Middle Passage. Throughout the book, trees are motifs, symbolizing revival, relief, or refuge (Wyatt) and this can be clearly seen since Beloved comes to a "mulberry tree" because of her physical weakness. The words "all day and all night" help to exaggerate the time that Beloved was at the tree trying to gain her strength. The imagery used to describe Beloved as she "rest[s] on the trunk in a position abandoned enough to crack the brim in her straw hat" helps readers to visualize the length of Beloved's rest. Her position was described as "abandoned enough" which conveys a sense of a long absence. The next sentence, "Everything hurt but her lungs most of all," is strange in syntax. The "but" in the sentence is out of place as Beloved feels everything hurt, especially her lungs. The word "but" usually shows a contrast but in this sentence, the word gives emphasis on how Beloved's lungs hurt the most. It is significant to know that Beloved's lungs are having trouble because Sethe had killed her daughter by slitting her throat, which is how we can identify that the woman coming out of the water is Beloved, Sethe's murdered daughter. The words "sopping" and "shallow" are a clear indication of diction. The word "sopping" denotes that something is soaking wet or dripping with water. The word "shallow" denotes that Beloved took small breaths because of the trouble with her lungs. The "sopping" and "shallow" are put together to connote that Beloved was so heavy with water or rebirth but the cause of her original death had put her in a fight to keep herself together at first. The word "negotiates" also brings out a sense of Beloved's struggle to keep herself together because "negotiates" conveys the feeling of resolving an issue. The sentence about the "day breeze" and "night wind" are composed of two simple sentences connected with a semicolon that emphasizes the long period that Beloved used for rest. Day represents new beginnings while night represents death. The day breeze helped to "bl[ow] her dress dry" that brings in a feeling of something clean and new. The night wind "wrinkled it" which brings in a feeling of old and dirty, referring to death.

In the next sentence, we have a shift from seeing the event with a main focus on Beloved to seeing the event being aware of the outside world as well. The beginning was focused on everything about Beloved, oblivious to the world around. The sentence that begins with "Nobody saw her..." provides a big shift into the outside world, signifying the jump from Beloved's afterlife and into reality. The sentence following about the hesitation of people approaching her is a very long and complex sentence gives reasons for why people would have "hesitated before approaching her," and this brings out a sense of skepticism. The length of the sentence shows how there are so many doubts and uncertainties of Beloved's strange position. The next few sentences are also long in which provides a sense of prolonged actions. As Beloved "makes her way" to "a stump not far from the steps of 124," her actions are drawn out, slow because of her physical weakness. Words like "whole," "exhausted," and "effort" creates a very weary tone to describe Beloved's journey to 124.

The next paragraph compares Beloved to other women. No matter how much women try, they wouldn't have skin like Beloved because Beloved's skin is "lineless and smooth,

### Multiple Choice Quiz: Chapter 2

1. In context, the phrase, “Time never worked the way Sixo thought,” conveys a sense of:
  - a) Raw sarcasm
  - b) Comic relief
  - c) Rebellion against slave society
  - d) Hopelessness**
  - e) Lust
  
2. The author’s observation in the line beginning, “Sprawled near Brother....like a corpse” characterizes Sixo as:
  - a) A lethargic voyager
  - b) A devoted lover**
  - c) A careless brother
  - d) A dependent friend
  - e) A lonely slave
  
3. What does the line, “*And the wrought-iron maze he had explored ...was in fact a revolting clump of scars*” convey in terms of tone?
  - a) Audaciousness
  - b) Pride
  - c) Bitterness**
  - d) Ferocity
  - e) Detachment
  
4. What do the trees in this section symbolize according to the context?
  - a) A family he has never known
  - b) Companionship that he thought he had lost
  - c) A comforting refuge**
  - d) A part of himself that he hasn’t come to terms with
  - e) His past hardships coming back to haunt him
  
5. What does time represent in this passage?
  - a) A confidant
  - b) A lover

- c) A hero
- d) Himself
- e) **An enemy**

6. The capitalization of “Brother” in the passage most likely suggests \_\_\_\_\_

- a) Mother Nature
- b) **the significance of the tree to Paul D**
- c) The brotherhood of Sweet Home
- d) A figment from Paul D’s past
- e) Paul D’s loneliness

7. According to the passage, it can be inferred that the speaker would agree that...

- a) Sethe has lost her beauty in Paul D’s eyes
- b) great pain and desperation should be dismissed at all costs
- c) **the impact of slavery will never be forgotten**
- d) the trees take on the form of a mother when they provide refuge for the slaves
- e) beauty can be seen in all circumstances

8. In line seven, “things” refers to which of the following?

- I. trees
- II. companionship
- III. refuge

- a) I only
- b) II only
- c) **I and III only**
- d) II and III only
- e) I, II, and III

9. The diction in lines three to four, “*he could definitely live without, never mind that downstairs he had held them as though they were the most expensive part of himself*” conveys a feeling of:

- a) **remorse**
- b) bitterness
- c) hatred
- d) hopelessness
- e) longing

10. There is a shift in point of view from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.

- a) free indirect discourse to first person
- b) third person omniscient to third person limited
- c) first person to third person omniscient
- d) third person omniscient to free indirect discourse
- e) **third person limited to third person omniscient**