

## Beloved & Characters (Relationships)– Overview

Beloved & Baby Suggs – Although there is barely any interaction between the two, Beloved is the reason why Baby Suggs takes to her bed and “thinks about colors.” After seeing Sethe kill Beloved and prepare to throw Denver against the wall, Baby Suggs feels that “slavery [undid] all her efforts to overcome its evils.” (Liscio 38) Previously, she had been a spiritual leader, one that many of the African Americans looked up to for guidance. To see one of her own blood be killed, she feels as if she had tried for an impossible freedom from slavery.

Beloved & Denver – From the moment when Beloved first appears, Denver feels a certain attachment to her. Denver acts as a motherly-type of figure towards Beloved with a strong desire to protect and care for her. She, who didn't seem like the type to be outspoken, goes against Sethe for the sake of Beloved. However, their relationship is purely one-sided, while Denver has her eyes on Beloved, Beloved is occupied with chasing after Sethe. Denver's addiction to being with Beloved is accredited to how Denver had “swallowed her blood right along with [her] mother's milk.” In her dedication, the power of mother-daughter relationships is expressed, but not fully because this is not truly that type of connection. As time passes, Denver continues to watch Beloved and finally sees just how dedicated she is to Sethe. Instead of feeling hurt, she turns her goals into protecting Beloved and warning her “don't love her too much. Don't.” Not until Denver fully realizes that she is cut out of Sethe and Beloved's intimate relationship does she regain her own logical perspective. Seeing that Beloved is some part evil, taking the life out of Sethe, Denver is indirectly forced to become independent, to be the ‘mother’ of the family. Beloved's effect on Denver causes her to find the courage to leave 124 alone and find anyone that will save her mother from the selfish Beloved. Denver represents the “voices of all blacks who survived,” a contrast to Beloved who represents those who died in slavery. (Liscio 40)

Beloved & Sethe – The central relationship of this novel, Beloved and Sethe's intimate connection reflects the theme of love that runs throughout. They epitomize the specific mother-daughter theme but portrays this relationship with a sense of danger. The love between a mother and a daughter is seen to be the greatest type of love, exceeding even romantic love as Sethe left Halle behind at Sweet Home for her children and as she does not care for Paul D after he leaves 124. However, eighteen years without a mother figure, Beloved tries to take it all at once when she comes back into the physical world. Beloved gets to the point where she is taking away Sethe's vitality and grows fat like a pregnant woman. Yet despite the danger Beloved is putting Sethe in, Beloved is also saving her. Constantly asking questions, she prevents Sethe from “circling the subject” as she often does. Sethe is finally able to tell her story, the one she has avoided and tried to forget for so long. She remembers the “stories that have been ‘disremembered’ so that she may truly let them go and look towards the future. (Liscio 39) An even more complex part of their relationship is how Beloved sees herself as Sethe, the Sethe that also lost her mother to the institution slavery. The pain Beloved holds is the pain of all daughters who have been separated from their mothers because of slavery and the Middle Passage. It is a constant yearning to find “her face.”

Beloved & Paul D – In the beginning, it seems like Paul D is hurting Beloved but in fact it is Beloved who corrupts Paul D in the end. Paul D who had been violated by whitemen in the past is also trying to forget his past but instead simply buries it in his mind. Beloved rapes him and forces him to remember and although it is wrong as she asks him to “touch [her] on the inside

part,” it also saves Paul D. His feeling of worthlessness is confronted and resolved. He could not survive and live fully until he could let go of his traumatizing past.

Beloved & the community – Beloved is brought into the physical world because of “different people’s obsessions,” namely Sethe who cannot let go of the idea that she never told Beloved why she did what she had to. This effort to bring her was involuntary, yet “they must produce a collective effort to send her away; only thus will the wounds she has so unmercifully exposed heal forever.” The community of blacks all come together as one and position themselves in front of 124 to exorcise this ghost. Beloved, who is the representation of slavery, must be sent away so that they all can heal from the effects slavery has had on these former slaves. Thus, she is forgotten “like a bad dream,” the remnants always remain in your mind but nothing more.