

From *Beloved* by Toni Morrison

Denver stood on the bottom step and was suddenly hot and shy. It had been a long time since anybody (good-willed white woman, preacher, speaker or newspaperman) sat at their table, their sympathetic voices called liar by the revulsion in their eyes. For twelve years, long before Grandma Baby died, there had been no visitors of any sort and certainly no friends. No colored people. Certainly no hazelnut man with too long hair and no notebook, no charcoal, no oranges, no questions. Someone her mother wanted to talk to and would even consider talking to while barefoot. Looking, in fact acting, like a girl instead of the quiet, queenly woman Denver had known all her life. The one who never looked away, who when a man got stomped to death by a mare right in front of Sawyer's restaurant did not look away; and when a sow began eating her own litter did not look away then either. And when the baby's spirit picked up Here Boy and slammed him into the wall hard enough to break two of his legs and dislocate his eye, so hard he went into convulsions and chewed up his tongue, still her mother had not looked away. She had taken a hammer, knocked the dog unconscious, wiped away the blood and saliva, pushed his eye back in his head and set his leg bones. He recovered, mute and off-balance, more because of his untrustworthy eye than his bent legs, and winter, summer, drizzle or dry, nothing could persuade him to enter the house again. (Morrison, 1998, 12)

Morrison, T. (1998) *Beloved*. Penguin Putnam Inc., 375 Hudson Street, New York, New York 10014, U.S.A.

1. Why does Denver feel hot and shy on the bottom step?

- a) It is a sunny day and she is feeling warm.
- b) She is embarrassed by the presence of visitors.
- c) She is physically overheating.
- d) She is anxious about her mother's behavior.

2. How long has it been since anyone sat at their table or visited their home?

- a) Twelve years
- b) Since Grandma Baby died
- c) A few months
- d) Denver does not specify

3. Who is the "hazelnut man" mentioned in the text?

- a) A preacher
- b) A journalist
- c) A white woman

d) A friend of Denver's mother

4. How does Denver describe her mother's usual demeanor?

a) Quiet and queenly

b) Talkative and outgoing

c) Shy and reserved

d) Impulsive and unpredictable

5. What did Denver's mother do when the baby's spirit attacked the dog?

a) Looked away and ignored the situation

b) Called for help from a neighbor

c) Immediately sought medical assistance

d) Took action to help and heal the injured dog

Answers:

1. She is embarrassed by the presence of visitors.

2. Twelve years

3. A journalist

4. Quiet and queenly

5. Took action to help and heal the injured dog