Uncle Tom's Cabin

INTRODUCTION

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF HARRIET BEECHER STOWE

Harriet Beecher, the daughter and sister of Christian ministers, was born in Connecticut in 1811 and educated at Hartford Female Seminary. She eventually became a teacher in Hartford. She moved to Cincinnati, Ohio, with her family at the age of 21, and married Calvin Stowe, a professor of theology, at the age of 25, raising with him a family of seven children. Beecher Stowe moved with her husband to Maine in the early 1850s (he had taken a teaching position at Bowdoin College), and there, sparked by the controversial passage of the Fugitive Slave Act, she drafted *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and had it published serially, initially in the paper *The National Era*.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The lofty language of the Declaration of Independence, which promised "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" to all Americans, fell far short of reality in the first century of the United States' history. Women and black slaves were essentially excluded from this promise. The Southern economy depended upon cotton, and slave labor was the cheapest way to prepare cotton for sale. The North's banking and manufacturing sectors also depended on cheap Southern cotton. Thus both North and South, for over a hundred years, maintained a system of Southern slavery involving millions of African Americans. By the first few decades of the 1800s, however, various congressional compromises could not settle the issue of the expansion of slavery into Western territories, which many Northerners opposed, fearing that slave interests would come to dominate American politics.

RELATED LITERARY WORKS

Uncle Tom's Cabin was written for a specific purpose: to demonstrate the "living dramatic reality" of slavery, as Beecher Stowe put it. Many people, especially those in the North, did not know the day-to-day hardships of African Americans living in bondage, and literary works could provide these details in the form of exciting, dramatized stories. *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, a work of non-fiction, had similar ambitions and was also very popular among those wishing to learn more about slavery—and to find ways to eliminate the institution and liberate slaves in the South.

KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** *Uncle Tom's Cabin, or, Life Among the Lowly*
- **When Written:** 1851-1852
- **Where Written:** Maine
- **When Published:** Serially, between June 5, 1851, and April 1, 1852. As a book on March 20, 1852.
- **Literary Period:** Civil War-era American literature
- **Genre:** Social novel / protest novel
- **Setting:** Kentucky, Louisiana, Ohio in the 1840s
- **Climax:** Tom is beaten by Simon Legree yet refuses to abandon his faith
- **Antagonist:** Simon Legree
- **Point of View:** Third-person omniscient

EXTRA CREDIT

"Tom Shows." *Uncle Tom's Cabin* achieved additional fame in an adaptation of the novel for the stage. Many companies toured throughout the Civil War and Reconstruction periods with a version of the "Uncle Tom" story, although racial caricatures and the conventions of comic theatre often mangled the Christian message of the novel and accentuated the racial biases Beecher Stowe had attempted to dismiss.

Race and the novel in contemporary culture. In contemporary times, the term "Uncle Tom" has acquired a derogatory meaning: a black person who is all too willing to serve, without fail, a white superior. Beecher Stowe's personal view of black people—namely, that they possess qualities making them biologically and culturally distinct from white people—draws particular criticism in today's society, and with good reason. It is important, then, to read *Uncle Tom's Cabin* as a document grappling with issues of race and slavery in their cultural moment, rather than as a perfect and perfectly-argued treatise exposing all forms of discrimination.

PLOT SUMMARY

On his Kentucky plantation in the 1840s, Mr. Shelby, a gentleman and farmer, discusses a debt he owes to Haley, a slave-trader. Haley presses Shelby to sell Uncle Tom, Shelby's most trustworthy slave, and Harry, the fair-skinned child of Eliza, maid to Mrs. Shelby. Eliza is married to George Harris of another plantation, a fair-skinned slave who once worked in a factory where he showed great ingenuity. George has decided to escape, rather than waste his life laboring in the fields for his jealous master who removed him from the factory. Sometime after George has already left, Eliza overhears the Shelbys discussing Tom and Harry's sale, and she and Harry flee toward Ohio, with the idea of reaching Canada.

Haley is furious at Eliza's escape and attempts to track her, traveling with Sam, a cunning slave of Shelby's. Sam manages to delay Haley. At the Ohio River, in the middle of winter, Eliza jumps with Harry from ice floe to floe and lands in Ohio. They are taken in by a Quaker family and reunited with George Harris, who has been traveling in the guise of a Spanish gentleman.

Uncle Tom decides not to try to escape; he sees it as his duty to be sold as his master intended. George Shelby, Jr., who loves Tom, sees him before the sale and promises to bring him back to Kentucky. Haley takes Tom on a steamboat down the Mississippi where they meet Augustine St. Clare, a wealthy man living in New Orleans with his daughter Evangeline, wife Marie, and a large group of slaves. Augustine has been in the North to fetch his cousin, Miss Ophelia, a stern, religious woman who is to help raise Eva, a religious and kind-hearted girl. Eva and Tom become friends, and Tom saves Eva when she falls overboard. St. Clare buys Tom.

George, Eliza, Harry, and others are shepherded by kind Quakers, including Phineas Fletcher, toward Sandusky, Ohio, on the lake bordering Canada. En route, two slave-catchers, Tom Loker and Marks, who are working for Haley, nearly corner the escaping party, but George returns a gunshot fired by Marks and hits Loker, who is pushed over a chasm by Fletcher and wounded. The slave-catchers flee, and George and his party carry Loker to recuperate in another Quaker home.

Uncle Tom is treated well at the St. Clare estate. He and Eva read the **Bible** to one another. Miss Ophelia takes a young slave girl, Topsy, under her care, but Topsy continues to misbehave. Eva's health declines, though, and she announces she will soon return to her Father in heaven. Eva promises to love Topsy and asks St. Clare to promise that, after her death, he will become a practicing Christian and free his slaves. Eva dies, and St. Clare begins to carry out her wishes but, before he can, he is killed accidentally in a cafe fight. Marie does not honor her husband's desire to free Tom, instead selling Tom to the cruel plantation owner Simon Legree.

Legree has also purchased Emmeline, a teenage slave girl, and on the Legree plantation near the Red River Uncle Tom meets Cassy, a once-beautiful slave. Legree puts Tom to work in the fields and asks him to whip a fellow slave in order to "harden" Tom. Tom says he will do anything his master says except hurt another human being. Legree and his overseers Sambo and Quimbo beat Tom mercilessly, hoping to crush his religious spirit. Inspired by Tom, Cassy and Emmeline plan to escape by storing materials in the attic, which they convince Legree is haunted, and hiding there after creating the appearance of escape through a swamp. They depart in earnest some days later. Legree takes his anger out on Tom, mortally wounding him.

Back in Ohio, Loker discovers he is being cared for by Quakers, despite his attempts to catch George and Eliza. He recognizes his past wickedness and repents. Meanwhile, the Harris family crosses to Canada by boat.

George Shelby, Jr. arrives at the Legree plantation and sees Tom before his death. Tom asks George to be a good Christian, and George swears he will never own slaves and will work to free them. On a boat back to Kentucky, George runs into Cassy and Emmeline. They meet Madame de Thoux, a wealthy woman revealed to be George Harris' long-lost sister. This party, minus George, travels to Montreal, where the Harrises live. De Thoux is reunited with her brother, and Cassy is revealed to be Eliza's mother.

George returns to the Shelby estate, frees his slaves, and declares that **Uncle Tom's cabin** will always be a symbol of goodness and faith. Beecher Stowe closes the novel by swearing that its characters are based in reality, and that slavery is an un-Christian institution that must be eliminated.

CHARACTERS

MAJOR CHARACTERS

Uncle Tom – The book's title character, hero, and moral center, Uncle Tom is the head slave of the Shelby estate, sold to pay off Mr. Shelby's debt. Uncle Tom's new master, St. Clare, is a benevolent one, and Tom befriends St. Clare's daughter, Eva. After St. Clare dies, Tom's religious spirit is tested at the hands of Simon Legree, his final master, and Tom's willingness to die for his Christian beliefs makes him a martyr and Christ figure.

Eliza Harris – Maid to Mrs. Shelby, Eliza learns that her son Harry is to be sold along with Tom and escapes in the night with her son. Her husband, George, has also recently escaped his cruel master—the three reunite in Ohio en route to Canada, which they eventually reach in disguise. They start a new life in Montreal and move from there to Africa.

George Harris - An intelligent man, slave to a cruel master, George escapes in the guise of a Spanish gentleman and later reunites with Eliza and defends his freedom against Tom Loker and Marks, who have been dispatched to capture them. George and his family make their way to Canada and finally to Africa, where he works for the cause of a free African republic.

George Shelby, Sr. – The head of the Shelby family, Mr. Shelby must sell Tom and Harry to pay off a debt he owes to Haley, the slave-trader. Mr. Shelby treats his slaves well but he considers them essentially different from white people—he allows them to form marriage-like relationship and takes pride in the continuity among slaves on his estate, but he is willing to alter Tom's life in order to maintain the Shelby family's financial security. On his death, his estate passes to his son, George, Jr.

Mrs. Shelby – Mr. Shelby's wife, Mrs. Shelby is extremely kind to her slaves, and she comes to believe that slavery is a grave sin after she learns that Tom and Harry are to be sold. She had

earlier said, to Eliza, that it would be inconceivable for Mr. Shelby to sell Uncle Tom, Eliza, or any of the other slaves on the estate. Mrs. Shelby helps Eliza escape to freedom by hinting that Sam should delay Haley as he begins his search.

George Shelby, Jr. – Son of Mr. Shelby and Mrs. Shelby and devoted friend to Tom and the other slaves, George Shelby promises to bring Tom back to the Kentucky estate and writes to Tom in his absence. When George learns that Tom lives on Legree's plantation, he goes there to visit, only to find that Tom is on the verge of death. At Tom's deathbed he promises to work tirelessly to free those slaves his family owns. At the end of the novel he dedicates **Uncle Tom's cabin** to the memory of his beloved friend.

Simon Legree – A cruel master, hateful of religion, superstitious, and determined to "break" Tom, Simon Legree is the novel's antagonist. His plantation near the Red River is characterized by its state of physical and moral disrepair. Legree encourages his slaves and overseers, Sambo and Quimbo, to be cruel to one another in order to maintain total control over the lives of those on his estate. Legree beats Tom to death and cannot be tried for his crime, because there were no white witnesses to the act, and, according to law, he has only destroyed his property. Nevertheless George Shelby, Jr., curses Legree.

Cassy – A fair-skinned black woman, Cassy has lived a life of misfortune, moving from one man to another but managing to learn to read and write, to speak French, and to gain knowledge of the Christian faith. She is sold to Simon Legree and exercises a great deal of control over his estate. She comes to care for Tom, who inspires her, by his spiritual strength, to attempt an escape with Emmeline.

Emmeline – Sold to the Legree estate at the same time as Tom, Emmeline is an attractive teenager "kept" by Legree in his own home for his personal amusement. This position is similar to the one Cassy used to occupy on the Legree plantation. Emmeline and Cassy eventually trick Legree into believing they have escaped. They then hide in the attic, where he is afraid to search, and leave the plantation some time later.

Haley – A slave-trader, Haley is owed a debt by Mr. Shelby and is given, as payment, Uncle Tom and Harry. Harry and Eliza escape, thus angering Haley, and he dispatches Tom Loker and Marks to find the two runaway slaves. He is able to sell Uncle Tom to Augustine St. Clare. Haley professes that slavery, for him, is "just business," and although he is not nearly so cruel as other masters in the novel, he believes that slaves should only be treated humanely enough to keep their prices high.

Aunt Chloe – Uncle Tom's wife, Aunt Chloe is an important member of the Shelby estate. She is terribly upset when Tom is sold and finds work as a baker in Louisville, with her wages going to help buy back Tom. At the end of the novel she has earned enough money to buy Tom's freedom, only to learn that Tom has died on the Legree estate.

Augustine St. Clare – A slave-owner in New Orleans, St. Clare is Tom's second owner. He is a character of complex morality: he does not condone slavery and believes God will strike back against this injustice, but until Eva's death and Tom's intervention, he does not know what he can do to help the plight of Southern slaves. After he resolves to free Tom and live a more Christian life, he is killed accidentally in a fight at a café.

Eva St. Clare – St. Clare's lovely and deeply religious daughter, Eva becomes close friends with after Tom rescues her from drowning. Eva and Tom study the **Bible** together and pray, and Eva serves as an inspiration to her father, Uncle Tom, Miss Ophelia, and other slaves in the St. Clare household. She falls ill and dies, saying that she is going to a "better place" to be home with her heavenly Father. She wishes that she might die for the sake of those she loves.

Miss Ophelia – A stern and religious woman from Vermont, Miss Ophelia is St. Clare's cousin. She moves to New Orleans to live in the St. Clare household and look after Eva, because Marie is often sick. Miss Ophelia believes that slavery is wrong but initially has trouble interacting with, or even touching, black people. She learns through Eva to become a better, more loving mentor to Topsy.

Topsy – A young slave child from abusive circumstances, Topsy is purchased by St. Clare and given to Ophelia in order that she might raise her and teach her Christian values. Initially Topsy misbehaves, but after befriending Eva and learning to love her, and to be loved, Topsy accepts Christian teachings and moves north with Miss Ophelia, who purchases Topsy and frees her, treating her as a daughter.

Tom Loker – A cruel slave-catcher, Tom Loker, along with Marks, promises Haley that he will find Eliza and Harry and return the latter to Haley and selling the former into prostitution. Loker is shot by George Harris and nursed back to health by Quakers and the escapees he was sent to capture. He then experiences a change of heart and repents of his previous wickedness.

Senator and Mrs. Bird – An Ohio Senator and his wife. Senator Bird has recently argued for the passage of a bill making it a crime to aid escaping slaves. Mrs. Bird believes this bill is immoral, and is cheered to discover her husband is more than willing to help Eliza and Harry as they pass through Ohio en route to Canada.

Mr. Wilson – Manager of the factory where George Harris used to work, Mr. Wilson spots Harris in disguise and warns him that, by fleeing, Harris is breaking the law and Christian teaching. Harris manages to convince Wilson that slavery itself is wrong, and that George must break these laws in order to protect his family and win his liberty.

Mr. Symmes – A neighbor of the Shelbys, Mr. Symmes helps Eliza and Harry to escape by not providing information of their

whereabouts to their former master. He claims that, although Mr. Shelby might be angry, he feels he has no obligation to turn over slaves who desire their freedom so ardently, and work so hard to get it.

Lucy, or "Luce" – A very old and feeble slave woman, Lucy is helped by Uncle Tom on Legree's plantation—he puts additional cotton in her bag, so that she "makes weight" and is not beaten. When Legree demands that she be beaten anyway, Tom refuses, saying he cannot hurt a fellow human being. Lucy also happens, coincidentally, to be the name of the slave woman on La Belle Riviere, whose child is purchased by Legree. This Lucy later kills herself out of despair by throwing herself overboard.

MINOR CHARACTERS

Harry Harris – A remarkably beautiful child and the only surviving son of Eliza and George, Harry escapes with Eliza through Ohio and is later raised in Canada as a free child.

Marie St. Clare – St. Clare's ill-tempered and hypochondriacal wife, Marie St. Clare is a distant, unfeeling mother, yet she argues that no one in the family understands her needs. Marie believes that slaves are a "degraded race" and that they should be treated firmly and without fellow-feeling.

Mammy – An older slave in the St. Clare household, Mammy takes care of Eva, particularly before the arrival of Miss Ophelia. Marie believes, hypocritically, that Mammy complains far too often of her poor health.

Madame de Thoux – A wealthy, well-dressed woman who has inherited money from a husband in the West Indies, Madame de Thoux, of mixed race, is revealed to be the long-lost sister of George Harris, sold when Harris was very young. De Thoux rejoins the Harrises in Canada.

Adolph – A funny and theatrical slave in the St. Clare household, Adolph steals his master's clothes and manages the house's finances poorly. St. Clare is nevertheless kind to Adolph, as he is to all his slaves.

Sam – A cunning slave on the Shelby estate, Sam pretends to help Haley find Eliza and Harry, instead making sure their trip takes far longer than expected. This enables Eliza and Harry to escape.

Marks – A slave-catcher with Tom Loker, Marks, a small man, is revealed to be a coward, as he runs away after Tom Loker is shot. Marks later misses George, Eliza, and Harry as they cross over to Canada in disguise.

Phineas Fletcher – A recent convert to Quakerism, Phineas Fletcher helps George, Eliza, and Harry to escape and pushes Tom Loker into a ravine, wounding him. Fletcher practices the Quaker faith but retains a righteously violent streak not entirely in keeping with his new faith.

The Hallidays, the Stedmans, and Michael – Quakers who assist Eliza, George, and Harry in their escape to Canada.

John Van Trompe – A large man, once owner of many slaves in Kentucky, who takes in Eliza and Harry. Van Trompe will only join a church that explicitly identifies slavery as a human evil.

Andy – A slave on the Shelby estate who, along with Sam, distracts Haley in his search for Eliza and Harry.

Cudjoe and Dinah - Servants to Senator and Mrs. Bird, they tend to Eliza and Harry.

Prue – An old slave woman who lives on an estate near the St. Clares'home, Prue drinks heavily out of despair over the cruelties she has endured. Prue is whipped by her master for stealing money to buy alcohol. She is then left in the basement and dies there.

THEMES

In LitCharts literature guides, each theme gets its own color-coded icon. These icons make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. If you don't have a color printer, you can still use the icons to track themes in black and white.

SLAVERY AND RACE

Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in order to demonstrate the "living dramatic reality" of slavery. The novel protests the horrors of this institution: the way it degrades black men and women and gives absolute power to slaveowners and thereby corrupts them. The novel portrays and explores various "kinds" of slavery. The Shelbys treat Uncle Tom and other slaves as part of a separate, "childlike" addition to the family. Augustine St. Clare allows his slaves the run of the household, understands the evil of the institution, but feels he cannot stop it—until it's too late. Simon Legree, the cruelest of all of the slave masters depicted, works his slaves as hard as possible, dominating them so fully that he often kills them. Miss Ophelia, who does not own slaves and represents Northern anti-slavery abolitionist views, has trouble even touching the black girl Topsy, whom she tutors. Through these various depictions, Beecher Stowe argues that *all* forms of slavery, "benevolent" or not, lead to immorality among blacks and whites, and an unchristian life, and further points out that slavery is a complex system, involving Northern business interests as well as Southern ownership.

At the same time, Stowe's conception of race can feel out of sync with contemporary values, and, at its worst, racist itself. In particular, Uncle Tom's love of his masters has been interpreted, by some, as a misplaced loyalty to a dominant white culture. An understanding of slavery in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* requires at least some separation of the author's anti-slavery message from the attitudes and language of her time and place. But it is certainly not incorrect to argue that while Beecher Stowe was strongly anti-slavery she did not in fact believe that

the races were created equal.

CHRISTIANITY AND CHRISTIAN CHARITY

Uncle Tom's Cabin repeatedly references the Bible, especially the New Testament. The dominant morality of the United States is, according to Beecher Stowe, a Christian one, and slavery is utterly incompatible with it. Uncle Tom owns only one book—the Bible—and is often found reading it, slowly and with great religious feeling. He quotes the Bible to educate Eva, Cassy, and others, and to find the strength to survive his own trials. The Quakers who help George, Eliza, and Harry escape—and who take in Tom Loker despite his aggression toward them—justify their actions not as generosity to black people but as a duty to God and man, demanded of them by the Bible. Miss Ophelia embodies a colder, more distant "Northern" Christianity, which values the lives of slaves but is unwilling to help them personally. But as the novel continues, it becomes clear that the Golden Rule is the paramount Christian law: humans ought to treat one another as they themselves wish to be treated.

Uncle Tom serves as a Christ-figure or martyr in the novel. Tom dies protecting Cassy and Emmeline and will not whip his fellow slaves; he suffers so that others might live. Eva demonstrates a kind of saintliness: she behaves in strict accordance with Jesus' teachings, and her death is an example to her father, causing him to regain his faith (however briefly before he is killed). Ultimately, Beecher Stowe argues through the novel that a more truly Christian system of values in the United States would eradicate slavery altogether and render Uncle Tom's and Eva's sacrifices unnecessary.

WOMEN

Uncle Tom's Cabin contains numerous strong female characters. The social role and importance of women, both white and black, is emphasized throughout the novel, and female characters are often linked by interaction and influence. Eva is fair-skinned and beautiful, generous, deeply religious, and always kind; she becomes an example to the uneducated, "heathenish" Topsy. After Eva's death, Topsy grows (with Miss Ophelia's help) into a Christian woman. Miss Ophelia herself believes in duty as a manifestation of love and Christian charity; she finds slavery repugnant but must learn, through Topsy, to actually interact with blacks. Marie St. Clare, on the other hand, is indulgent, lazy, quick to blame others, and her Christianity is merely performance.

Mammy, Eva's favorite servant, serves as a counterpoint to both—she is boisterous and committed to helping the St. Clare family. Back in Kentucky, Eliza and Mrs. Shelby are paired: both are caring mothers, and when Eliza flees to protect her child, Mrs. Shelby distracts those pursuing her. Cassy and Emmeline also form a kind of mother-daughter relationship as they escape to Canada together, and are eventually reunited with their blood relatives.

Beecher Stowe strongly implies that women are more affected by the horrors of slavery than are men. Black women see their children taken away and can themselves be sold into sexual bondage. White women understand these problems because they have children of their own. Indeed, it is difficult to read the inspiring language of equality and freedom in the novel without applying it to the rights of *all* women in society, black and white. Many of Stowe's arguments—about equality before God, the necessities of nonviolence and Christian love—might be extended to a discussion of the place of women in America, where white women also did not at the time have the right to vote.

HOME

Uncle Tom's cabin, described early in the novel, represents the warmth and love of family life. It is a place Tom hearkens back to over the course of his trials. George Shelby wishes to bring Tom home, and at the close of the book, he points to Tom's cabin as a symbol of honest work and Christian faith. Other homes are juxtaposed with the cabin. The Shelby estate is genteel and placid, though disrupted upon the sale of Tom and Harry.

The St. Clare mansion is filled with color, wonderfully decorated, an island of comfort surrounded by the horrors of Louisiana plantation country. The Legree estate is dilapidated and used only to make money—eventually it is "haunted" by ghosts. Legree loves no one, and his destroyed home makes evident this lack of love. George, Eliza, and Harry's new home is, ironically, a place where they might live out the American ideals of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," but it is located in Montreal.

Home also takes on another dimension in the novel: that of a heavenly home after death, in God's abode. Eva claims she is going "home" when she is dying, and slaves who feel they have no home on earth may take comfort in the next life. In heaven the human family is reunited; even though black and white people may not live together in harmony on earth, a Christian belief in the afterlife will guarantee equality and peace.

FREEDOM

Freedom is a central and complex concept in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Slaves wish to be free, and abolitionists in the novel wish also to free the slaves. But, as St. Clare points out, what is to be done *after* the abolition of slavery? Is it enough simply to release the slaves, to let them do as they wish?

George Harris argues for the colonization of Liberia by freed

slaves. Many thought this a viable option before and after the Civil War. George Shelby eventually frees his father's slaves but allows them to live and work on the family estate for a wage, with the ability to choose to leave. This is an improvement over slavery, but it looks quite a bit like slavery or serfdom, as was the case with sharecropping in the South after the Civil War. Beecher Stowe also asks whether freedom might be possible while still under the yoke of slavery.

Some despairing slaves, like Cassy, believe at first that slavery has taken their souls, their humanity. But Uncle Tom declares that his soul will always remain free, that Legree can do nothing to destroy it. In this sense, Tom remains the master of himself. Conversely, the author implies that slavery can make slaves of its masters. St. Clare believes slavery degrades everyone though he is mostly powerless to stop it; his wife claims her slaves are a plague, even as she thinks she cannot live without them.

To Beecher Stowe, freedom is a spectrum, not an on-off switch between Free and Enslaved. The goal of society is human betterment—the creation of a more Christian country—and in achieving such a country, Beecher Stowe believes, more people will gain the ability to direct their own lives, to live with charity and goodness, to work according to their inclination, and to raise their own families. This deepens freedom for all. But these improvements are possible only in a country itself freed from the scourge of slavery.

SYMBOLS

Symbols appear in **teal text** throughout the Summary and Analysis sections of this LitChart.

THE BIBLE

The Bible is both a practical item in the novel—it is the only book Uncle Tom owns—and a symbol for the endurance of his, and other's, Christian faith. Tom manages to keep his Bible from the hands of Simon Legree, and throughout his trials, as he moves from the Shelby estate to St. Clare's home to the Legree plantation, the Bible is a source of comfort and strength. Tom forms bonds with Eva, Cassy, George Shelby, St. Clare, and other characters when they read the Bible together. And, of course, the Bible provides the religious wisdom enabling Tom to withstand his brutal treatment at the hands of Legree. Tom's ability to read the Bible despite his circumstances gives hope to those who struggle with their faith, including St. Clare and Cassy.

UNCLE TOM'S CABIN

George Shelby specifically identifies Uncle Tom's cabin as a symbol at the end of the novel. The cabin is a home to Uncle Tom's family and a place of love and support. Aunt Chloe works there—and, later, as a baker in Louisville—in order to bring Tom back. The cabin is the center of slave life on the Shelby plantation, and though it is not featured in many chapters, it remains an imagined place of rest, comfort, and family. In this sense Uncle Tom's cabin is analogous to the spiritual rest all humans might find in heaven, if they live according to Christian principles.

QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the Bantam Books edition of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* published in 1981.

Chapter 1 Quotes

"Lor bless ye, yes! These critters an't like white folks, you know; they gets over things, only manage right.

Related Characters: Haley (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 6

Explanation and Analysis

Shelby owes Haley money, and Shelby, considering himself a gentleman, feels he must repay that debt. Shelby does not wish to give up Uncle Tom and Eliza, whom he considers to be his best slaves. But neither Shelby nor Haley considers that Tom and Eliza themselves might not want to leave the Shelby plantation in Kentucky - that, for them, that place is home, and they, like anyone else, would be reluctant to leave their families behind.

Thus Haley argues, for his part, that no African American is capable of this kind of human feeling. Shelby's attitudes are more moderate than Haley's, but Shelby nonetheless feels that, in a slave system as practiced in the South, there is nothing inherently wrong with owning slaves and putting them to work, so long as the master is somewhat kind to them, and treats them nicely (if paternalistically). Shelby is an example in the novel of the "good" slave-owner who, all the same, participates in an unjust system of human ownership.

Chapter 2 Quotes

"O yes!—a machine for saving work, is it? He'd invent that, I'll be bound; let a nigger alone for that, any time.

Related Characters: George Harris

Related Themes:

Page Number: 14

Explanation and Analysis

George's master will use any excuse possible to find a way to denigrate George and limit his freedom. George is a gifted engineer and inventor, and his machine really does save people time - enormous amounts of time. But George's owner (who is clearly jealous of his slave's intelligence) makes it seem that this invention is only created so that George can be "lazier." Of course, this discounts the ingenuity and work that goes into making machines like this. Here, the narrator makes clear that slave ownership is often predicated on a total lack of logic - on a system that supports itself by asserting that African Americans are inherently less valuable, intelligent, and even human than white Americans, even though there is no evidence to support this contention at all.

Slavery is therefore a system that sustains itself and perpetuates itself according to a code followed by white slave-owners, even by the "kind" ones. This system does not allow African Americans to express human emotions or aspirations, and denies that these emotions or aspirations are possible for them - even when African American characters clearly demonstrate a full range of human experience and creativity.

Chapter 3 Quotes

❝ I an't a Christian like you, Eliza; my heart's full of bitterness; I can't trust in God. Why does he let things be so?

Related Characters: George Harris (speaker), Eliza Harris

Related Themes:

Page Number: 19

Explanation and Analysis

Christian faith will be a key element in the novel, one that is returned to again and again by different characters and in different contexts. Here, George wonders aloud how a Christian God could allow the kind of injustice he observes in a slave system - how this might be possible if God is indeed on earth to protect all his children. Eliza, for her part, has an easier, though not entirely easy, job believing in God - her faith and position are more secure than George's, and she believes that, eventually, God will provide a way forward for them, for a life beyond slavery.

George and Eliza's romance is one of the central narrative axes of the novel. It is a love that is separated, again, by something so cruel and impersonal as a debt between two white men. And although Shelby is somewhat hurt by the idea of losing Uncle Tom and Eliza - because he does have a fondness for them - he believes that it is more important to protect "his honor" with Haley than it is to maintain Eliza and George's marriage on his farm.

Chapter 4 Quotes

❝ How easy white folks al'us does things!

Related Characters: Aunt Chloe (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 24

Explanation and Analysis

Aunt Chloe, who is married to Uncle Tom, marvels as young George Shelby, the son of the owner of the farm, tutors some of their children. Chloe is remarking here that certain things, especially reading and writing and mathematics, seem to come easier to white students than to black ones. It is this logic - which would seem to play into the idea that whites are intellectually superior to African Americans, and which is of course not the case at all - that many now find offensive in the novel. This logic, though well intended, can be seen as "paternalistic" on the part of the author - as part of a system that believes slavery is wrong because African Americans ought to be supported by society, rather than recognized fully as equals of all other persons.

Although Beecher Stowe by no means intended to be racist, and indeed believed her novel to be an important forum for social change in the United States, these components of the novel nowadays read as, at best, dated, and, at worst, as indicators of the blinkered nature of even the best intentions of many white abolitionists.

❝ Uncle Tom was a sort of patriarch in religious matters . . . . Having, naturally, an organization in which the *morale* was strongly predominant, together with a greater breadth and cultivation of mind than obtained among his companions . . . .

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 33

Explanation and Analysis

In this scene of the novel, Uncle Tom is shown to be not only the center of authority in his family (a very kind-hearted authority indeed), but also a source for religious teaching and wisdom. Uncle Tom, as the narrator states, has read a great deal of the Bible, and has committed much of it to memory. Further, he abides by these teachings - he does not merely espouse them but works, day in and day out, to live by them to put them into practice.

This will become important later in the novel, when Tom has his faith tested by many people and in many ways. Some, like Legree, will even try to make Tom abandon his faith - they will tempt him, they will beat him, and wonder whether his Christian God can save him. Even in these moments, however, Tom's faith, as evident in this passage, remains strong and unbroken.

Chapter 5 Quotes

❝ This is God's curse on slavery!—a bitter, bitter, most accursed thing!—a curse to the master and a curse to the slave! I was a fool to think I could make anything good out of such a deadly evil.

Related Characters: Mrs. Shelby (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 38

Explanation and Analysis

An important scene in the novel. Mrs. Shelby did not, until this point, know that Eliza and Tom were to be sold - and, indeed, when Shelby later admits to the size of his debt, Mrs. Shelby realizes that the farm itself was in jeopardy, and that Shelby has done what he had to do, although it is a bitter thing. Mrs. Shelby has a more emotional and honest response to the loss of Eliza and Tom - a humane response, one that Shelby might also feel, deep down, but one that he is not willing to share.

Mrs. Shelby is indeed the first person in the novel to mention the idea that slavery itself is an "evil," rather than simply a "custom" or a way of life in that part of the country. Mr. Shelby, though he doesn't articulate it explicitly, seems to think the latter to be the case - that slavery is simply a component of the Southern way of life, as it has been for many, many decades.

Chapter 7 Quotes

❝ Besides, I don't see no kind of 'casion for me to be hunter and catcher for other folks, neither.

Related Characters: Mr. Symmes (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 69

Explanation and Analysis

Mr. Symmes is a neighbor of the Shelby family. He lives close to the Ohio River, and is on the Ohio side, the "free" side, as Ohio does not participate in the slave economy. Symmes behaves here in a manner that, importantly, is in violation of one of the primary laws of the time - the Fugitive Slave Act, which forced any person to return an escaped slave to the South, if confronted with that escapee (since slaves were, in the eyes of the courts at that time, "property"). Thus, by this brutal and inhumane logic, any person helping an escaped slave was helping in the "theft of property."

Symmes, of course, does not ascribe to this logic. He feels that Eliza wishes to be free, along with her child - and he is not going to return them to a man, Haley, whom he knows to be a brutal and overbearing master. Thus Symmes' act is one of heroism, and a notable one in the novel.

Chapter 8 Quotes

❝ Run up a bill with the devil all your life, and then sneak out when pay time comes! Boh!

Related Characters: Tom Loker (speaker)

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 75

Explanation and Analysis

Loker, speaking to his friend Marks, who also looks for escaped slaves (like Loker does), argues an interesting and perhaps nonsensical view of human morality here. Loker believes that slavery is, of itself, not a moral thing. It is a system, instead, that relies on human cruelty and violence. It is one where humans own and exploit other human beings. Thus, catching escaped slaves is another brutal part of a brutal business. If Loker doesn't believe that his job is just or right, he also doesn't believe that it's any worse than any other aspect of the slave trade. It is simply one more

component in a world that is far from any Christian ideal.

Although Loker's arguments are brutal, there is a simplicity and a clarity to them also. He does not make any claims for the moral high ground, as some defenders of slavery in the South did at the time. For this, in a very small way, Loker's views are at least comprehensible, even if they are also certainly reprehensible.

Chapter 9 Quotes

❝ You ought to be ashamed, John! Poor, homeless, houseless creatures! It's a shameful, wicked, abominable law, and I'll break it, for one, the first time I get a chance . . . .

Related Characters: Senator and Mrs. Bird (speaker)

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 90

Explanation and Analysis

This is another instance of well-intentioned and impassioned argument by white Americans, wondering what is ethical and right in the face of human bondage occurring in the South. Mrs. Bird, whose husband is a Senator, believes that any law preventing people from helping fugitive slaves, in a free state like Ohio or in any state, is deeply immoral. But the Senator argues, for his part, that though he also feels this way, he has other obligations as a Senator. One of them is to preserve the balance of power between states in the United States - it is, in short, to avoid war.

Of course, the reader today understands that war could not be avoided, and that Senator Bird's theory, in this case, proved incorrect. For there was no amount of moderation that could prevent the conflict between free and slave states from spilling over. There could be no ultimate compromise on the issue of human freedom and inequality. And this latter position seems to align more closely with Mrs. Bird's -- another example of a woman taking a more sympathetic view on slavery than the novel's men.

Chapter 12 Quotes

❝ I know this yer comes kinder hard, at first, Lucy . . . but such a smart, sensible gal as you are, won't give way to it. You see it's *necessary*, and can't be helped!

Related Characters: Haley (speaker), Lucy, or "Luce"

Related Themes:

Page Number: 147

Explanation and Analysis

Haley has bought Lucy's child but not Lucy - thus, he has separated mother from child. This kind of separation is a central part of the novel, and is portrayed by the author as one of the essential cruelties of slavery - that African American families can be broken apart simply by the will of white men and owners, who seem not even to believe that African Americans can have any kind of family feeling at all.

Haley attempts to "reason" with Lucy, telling her that nothing else could be done, that he is a businessman and businessmen must profit by things. If this profit comes at the expense of her own happiness, or of the prospect of her life with her child, then that's an unfortunate thing, but it's simply the way the system is designed to work. The author here shows that the logic even of "benevolent" slavery is a terrible and brutal logic, producing only suffering and dehumanization for African Americans.

Chapter 14 Quotes

❝ And you shall have good times . . . . Papa is very good to everybody, only he always will laugh at them.

Related Characters: Eva St. Clare (speaker), Augustine St. Clare, Uncle Tom

Related Themes:

Page Number: 172

Explanation and Analysis

Evangeline (Eva) and Augustine are two of the more interesting characters in the novel. Augustine has married a woman who does not love him, and who is cruel and harsh to their slaves. Eva is the apple of Augustine's eye - he will do anything to please her, and she is an extremely well-behaved and kind child. She is, in this sense, her father's daughter, and not her mother's.

Eva notes to Tom that Augustine is a man who wishes to treat his slaves well, who believes that they are his equals, but who also believes in social conventions to the extent that he will not free his slaves right away. Indeed, Augustine's moral evolution over the course of the middle of the novel is one of the book's most important dramatic arcs. For, though in the beginning he maintains his position

in the slave system, by the end of the book he no longer believes this to be the ethical or Christian thing to do.

Chapter 15 Quotes

❝ Of course, in a novel, people's hearts break, and they die, and that is the end of it . . . . But in real life we do not die when all that makes life bright dies to us.

Related Themes:

Page Number: 175

Explanation and Analysis

This is an instance of "meta-narrative," for the author of this novel mentions other novels in which heroes or heroines undergo misfortunes and then perish. This reference to novels within the novel is designed to increase the "realism" of the scene, to make it such that the reader believes characters like Augustine really do exist in "life."

Augustine fell in love with a "northern woman" who broke his heart, and then "settled" for Marie, his current wife. Marie was very beautiful but also unloving, both toward Augustine and toward their daughter. Marie, further, was and is immensely cruel to the slaves the family owns - she does not believe that they are people, nor that they are worthy of any kind of respect.

Thus Augustine's choice to marry Marie is a fateful one, for it seals for him a great many years of unhappiness, and, perhaps more importantly for the narrative, it makes it impossible for Augustine to free his slaves so long as Marie has a say in the matter.

Chapter 16 Quotes

❝ It's we mistresses that are the slaves, down here.

Related Characters: Marie St. Clare (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 191

Explanation and Analysis

This quote is an indication of just how out-of-touch Marie St. Claire is - how little she recognizes the plight of the slaves her family owns. Marie genuinely believes that her own physical ailments (whose exact nature is never described; they might very well be imaginary) to be far more difficult to manage than any problem encountered by Mammy or the other slaves in the house. Marie must know that there is a difference between being a free person and being enslaved - thus, it might be inferred, and is later demonstrated in this chapter, that Marie simply believes white people to be morally and intellectually superior to black people.

As with Loker in the previous chapters, Marie seems all too ready to embrace the underlying cruelty of a slave system. The system is hard to defend if one resorts to moral arguments about "protecting" slaves. But if, like Marie, one believes slaves to be naturally inferior to whites, then this cruel and inhumane standpoint at least makes the idea of slavery a workable one.

Chapter 17 Quotes

❝ But you haven't got us. We don't own your laws; we don't own your country; we stand here as free, under God's sky, as you are; and, by the great God that made us, we'll fight for our liberty till we die.

Related Characters: George Harris (speaker), Tom Loker, Marks

Related Themes:

Page Number: 224

Explanation and Analysis

George delivers this speech from a mountain-top to Loker, Marks, and the very idea of a "slave-catcher" attempting to hunt down and return a human being. George has learned a great deal from the Quakers, and he has also seen awakened within him his natural inclinations and passions - George knew all along that he was more than the equal of those around him, and his engineering skill and efforts around the farm demonstrated to him that he could do, think, and say whatever he pleased.

Thus George fights back against the notion that African Americans are in any way inferior to white Americans. This chapter, coming as it does on the heels of Marie's description of African American inferiority, serves as an important juxtaposition - a reminder of the slaves and former slaves who find occupations in the North and in Canada, and who move beyond the yoke of slavery into more fulfilling lives.

Chapter 19 Quotes

On this abstract question of slavery there can, as I think, be but one opinion. Planters, who have money to make by it—clergymen, who have planters to please—politicians, who want to rule by it—may warp and bend language . . . they can press nature and the Bible . . . into their service; but, after all, neither they nor the world believe in it one particle the more.

Related Characters: Augustine St. Clare (speaker)

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 252

Explanation and Analysis

Augustine makes plain exactly the intellectual system that allows people in the South to defend the practice of slavery. For Augustine, the system is not a "natural" one, and it does not derive from any inferiority of African Americans to white Americans. Instead, slavery is a business system, an interaction of those who own land and capital (the plantation owners) and those who would, under different circumstances, sell their labor to the farms (the slaves). Under the system, as Augustine notes, owners have taken away the workers ability to work where they please - they have established instead a system of rules that prevent the recognition even of the humanity of the workers. This has not been done in accordance with any universal principle, and it is by no means the only way for the world to work. It is, instead, the way the South works at this moment - and all the moral or religious arguments defending slavery come *after* this economic reality, not before. Though Augustine sees the truth of his society, he despairs at the thought of the Southern system changing any time soon.

But, of course, I didn't want you to confess things you didn't do . . . that's telling a lie, just as much as the other.

Related Characters: Miss Ophelia (speaker), Topsy

Related Themes:

Page Number: 279

Explanation and Analysis

A complicated section in the novel. Miss Ophelia says that she will go about "civilizing" Topsy, attempting to make her less of a "heathen" and more of a "good Christian girl." This teaching, of course, requires a great many assumptions on Miss Ophelia's part. She believes that Topsy is naturally inclined to evil or wickedness, just as Eva is naturally inclined to goodness. And it is hard to read those "natural" inclinations as anything other than outgrowths, for Miss Ophelia, of the skin color of those two girls. Thus, although Miss Ophelia seems genuinely to want to help Topsy, her teaching is also inflected with the idea that white Americans are superior to African Americans, and that it is the duty of white Americans to "help" slaves whenever they can.

This notion of beneficent teaching, as above, is an aspect of the novel that has not aged well over the years - that is now seen as a paternalistic or condescending view of the relationship between black and white Americans.

Laws, now, is it?

Related Characters: Topsy (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 279

Explanation and Analysis

The story is here told from Topsy's perspective. In the narrative Topsy appears to have a more fluid relationship to the truth, but there is a reason for this - as Topsy argues, she merely wants to say or do the thing that will make Miss Ophelia happy, because, at root, Topsy really does want Miss Ophelia to like her. What is exasperating to her teacher, of course, is Topsy's willingness to bend the truth in order to say the thing that Miss Ophelia might want to hear. Topsy's response in this section, then - "Laws, now, is it?" - is a coy one, indicating that Topsy has known all along she hasn't been truthful - but that being truthful, for Topsy, is not the most important thing.

Again, this section seems to validate a preconception about African Americans, common even to abolitionists of the time - that black people were more inclined to bend the truth to appease people in power. This, of course, is not true - and even if in particular instances that might occur, it is, as in Topsy's case, an indicator of wanting to please a person in a position of authority, as opposed to any inherent "wickedness."

Chapter 24 Quotes

It's jest no use tryin' to keep Miss Eva here . . . She's got the Lord's mark in her forehead.

Related Characters: Uncle Tom (speaker), Eva St. Clare

Related Themes:

Page Number: 313

Explanation and Analysis

Tom and Eva grow very close as Tom continues to live in the St. Claire house. Indeed, Tom and Eva are linked as sacrificial, Christ-like figures in the narrative. Each seems almost "too good for this earth" - each is an embodiment of Christian ideals of selflessness and love of one's fellow person greater than one's self-love. Thus the reader tends to believe Tom when he recognizes in Eva this form of saintliness.

Of course, Eva's goodness, along with Tom's, really is "too good" to be true - there perhaps never has been a person as selfless as Tom or Eva. They are not meant to be characters in the novel so much as walking, breathing symbols, embodiments of Jesus's teachings. Against their example, the immoral schemings of slave-holders might better stand out. This, then, is Beecher Stowe's logic in presenting these characters are morally perfect - they underscore just how imperfect and vile the slave system in America is.

Chapter 29 Quotes

❝ Now, I'm principled against emancipating, in any case. Keep a Negro under the care of a master, and he does well enough . . . but set them free, and they get lazy, and won't work, and take to drinking . . . .

Related Characters: Marie St. Clare (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 369

Explanation and Analysis

This scene is part of one of the great tragedies of the novel. St. Claire had vowed, at his saintly daughter's urging, to release those slaves of his he had owned. In other words, before his own untimely death he had committed to becoming a better person, and to doing right to those who lived under his roof. But Marie has made no such conversion. And because after Augustine's death Marie now controls the house, she sees to it that no slave will ever be released from there.

What is most upsetting about this resolve is the explanation Marie provides. She says that she does not wish to harm any of the African Americans under her "care," and she wants them to work rather than to "be lazy," which she believes is the natural state of any black person who is not living within a slave system. The blatant cruelty and falsity of these statements does nothing to keep Marie from wielding absolute power, unfortunately, and so her slaves realize they will not be freed after all.

Chapter 33 Quotes

❝ Mas'r, if you mean to kill me, kill me; but, as to my raising my hand agin any one here, I never shall,—I'll die first!"

Related Characters: Uncle Tom (speaker), Simon Legree

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 406

Explanation and Analysis

One of the most important scenes in the novel. This is a moment in which Tom most fully demonstrates his commitment to Christian teachings. It is also the moment when he is most Christ-like - refusing to protect himself in order to protect another person. Tom does not have a violent bone in his body, and it is inconceivable for him to harm another person in order to save his own skin. He cannot do it.

This moment is so affecting because here Tom's commitment to the health and wellbeing of another person is believable - it is an enormous moral burden for him to bear, but it does seem at least plausible that someone in his situation might respond in this way. One need not be a saint to do this - one need only be a committed, emotionally strong, and generous human being. Thus Tom (and Stowe) achieves maximum pathos, or fellow-feeling, in this section.

Chapter 38 Quotes

❝ Utmost agony, woe, degradation, want, and loss of all things, shall only hasten on the process by which he [the slave] shall be made a king and a priest unto God!

Related Themes:

Page Number: 446

Explanation and Analysis

This is an instance in which Beecher Stowe, as the narrator, inserts herself into the telling of the novel. Here, she argues that it would have been much easier for Tom simply to die, rather than to continue to live and to suffer. Beecher Stowe argues, moreover, that the suffering Tom undergoes will not necessarily make him stronger in this life, but will contribute to his heavenly reward - that these are the things that will make him, after death, into a saint.

Thus the Christian allegory in the novel becomes most pronounced in these chapters. Beecher Stowe makes no bones about presenting Tom as a figure of Christ-like power, and his ability to bear the burden of suffering for others, even unto death, is one the narrator finds deeply moving and appealing. Further, Beecher Stowe does not argue that everyone has to be like Tom in all senses - but she does state that everyone can learn from the selflessness of Tom's example.

Chapter 40 Quotes

❝ O, Mas'r! don't bring this great sin on your soul. It will hurt you more than 'twill me! Do the worst you can, my troubles'll be over soon; but, if ye don't repent, yours won't *never* end!

Related Characters: Uncle Tom (speaker), Simon Legree

Related Themes:

Page Number: 469

Explanation and Analysis

This scene further demonstrates Tom's goodness. Even as he is being beaten to death for refusing to tell anything about Emmeline and Cassy, Tom refuses to consider his own plight. Instead, he argues that Legree's beating of Tom will only result in further damnation for Legree. If Legree wishes to protect himself in the afterlife, he will stop what he's doing and repent - even if Tom dies.

That Tom might find any satisfaction at all in the idea that Legree's eternal soul is protected might be hard to believe, especially after the cruelty that Legree has visited upon Tom. But this belief in fellow-feeling even for those who have wronged us is central to Tom's identity. It is the thing that sets him apart from other slaves, and indeed from all the other characters in the novel, with the exception of Eva. It is the thing that makes Tom an example (if an unrealistic one) for all people to follow.

Chapter 43 Quotes

❝ I trust that the development of Africa is to be essentially a Christian one. If not a dominant and commanding race, they are, at least, an affectionate, magnanimous, and forgiving one.

Related Characters: George Harris (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 494

Explanation and Analysis

George believes that the best way for his family to grow and prosper is for that family to "give back" to African communities in Africa - to argue for a "Christian" project that helps those living in Africa to live good lives. On the one hand, George believes he is continuing on the mission that helped to save his life - he is following in the footsteps of the Quakers who helped him.

But, again, viewed according to contemporary ideas, this section is at best problematic, because it shows that, even after escaping slavery, George is more interested in applying Western (and white) thought-systems to black experience in Africa. This does not mean that George willingly goes to Africa to "colonize" it, or to harm anyone - indeed, he only wishes to help. But the nature of his good works, which might have seemed straightforward in Beecher Stowe's time, might today be viewed with suspicion, as though George were going to Africa merely to spread Christian doctrine to a group of people who, largely, did not ask to receive this doctrine or invasive cultural influence.

Chapter Quotes

❝ A day of grace is yet held out to us. Both North and South have been guilty before God; and the Christian church has a heavy account to answer . . . .For, not surer is the eternal law by which the millstone sinks in the ocean, than that stronger law, by which injustice and cruelty shall bring on nations the wrath of Almighty God!

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 511

Explanation and Analysis

In this section Beecher Stowe speaks in her own voice, and

prophetically, as one who has created in the novel a parable of good and evil in America in the middle of the nineteenth century. Beecher Stowe has attempted to create both a "realistic" and an allegorical work - one that reflects society as it was at the time, and shows the battles of good and evil that existed in that society in symbolic terms.

Beecher Stowe believes that this conflict of slavery vs. freedom can only end in some form of cataclysm. There were increasingly in the 1840s and 1850s those who thought the same way, and were willing, in the North, to take a harder line against slavery in the South. Although there were a great many factors leading to the Civil War (nearly all of which did revolve in one way or another around the issue of enslavement of African Americans), Beecher Stowe's novel, problematic though it might be, is now seen as a spark that presented the issues of slavery to a wide reading public - and helped pave the way for the long struggle of equal rights for all Americans.

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

The color-coded icons under each analysis entry make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. Each icon corresponds to one of the themes explained in the Themes section of this LitChart.

CHAPTER 1: A MAN OF HUMANITY

At his estate in Kentucky, Mr. Shelby, a gentleman and farmer, discusses repayment of a debt he owes to Haley, a rough and coarse slave-trader. Shelby offers to sell his most reliable slave, called Uncle Tom, whom he describes as uncommonly religious, honest, and dependable. Haley voices his belief that slaves can have such traits, but that even so he argues that another slave, in addition to Tom, is required to repay the debt in full.

Shelby is a gentleman while Haley is rough and coarse. And Shelby's moral sense about slaves is more "refined" than Haley's: To Shelby, slaves may be sold only in response to dire financial circumstances. To Haley, slave trading is just business, with no moral component. Yet despite Shelby's "refinement" he's still talking about selling human beings.

When an attractive young four or five year old slave, Harry, enters the room, Shelby has the boy perform for his and Haley's amusement. The boy's mother Eliza, a beautiful mixed-race slave, soon comes to retrieve Harry. After the boy and mother have left, Haley asks Shelby to consider selling Eliza as well. But Shelby states that his wife is too fond of her, and when Haley suggests Harry might serve as payment, Shelby again protests, saying he would not want to separate mother and son.

Shelby recognizes the strong bond between Eliza and her son, even as he decides to break up Eliza's family. This is a sign of Shelby's attitude toward his slaves: he feels for them but does not acknowledge their full humanity. His biggest concern is not even the slaves; it's not upsetting his wife. Also note how he treats Harry like a toy or pet; he sees Harry as being not quite human.

Haley replies by arguing that black people don't feel for their children as white people do, although, he continues, it makes sense to treat slaves somewhat respectfully, since they fetch a higher price when they're content. Others, such as his friend Tom Loker, are crueler to slaves, and their business suffers. Haley nevertheless insists he might buy Harry without upsetting Eliza too much, if she is kept away from the scene of separation. Shelby asks for time to think over the deal and privately curses Haley's business advantage, which will drive him to part with Tom and Harry.

Haley introduces the topic of perceived inherent inequalities between whites and blacks, which are used by some slave-owners to justify slavery. Shelby's position falls somewhere between Haley's and his wife's: slaves are not "just business," and their families are a part of white estates, but the interests of white owners are more important than those of black families.

The narrator breaks in and describes Kentucky's milder form of slavery but insists any form of human ownership results in cruelty.

This is the first of Beecher Stowe's direct addresses to her readership, explaining the evils of slavery that have just been dramatized.

Eliza is standing near the door and overhears that Haley wishes to buy someone on the estate, but she hears Mrs. Shelby calling and must leave before she finds out whom. Later, when Mrs. Shelby wonders why she's so distracted, Eliza confides her worries that Harry might be sold. Mrs. Shelby laughingly replies that her husband would never sell any of his slaves as long as they behave, and certainly not Harry. Shelby meanwhile dreads breaking to his wife the hard news of the impending trade.

Mrs. Shelby respects Eliza as a mother and as a woman, and wishes to protect her, but she is naïve in thinking nothing could cause the Shelbys to part with Harry. Although Mrs. Shelby is one of the novel's most benevolent slave-masters, her gentle laughter at Eliza shows how she still treats blacks as largely inferior and believes they require the guidance of whites.

CHAPTER 2: THE MOTHER

Eliza, Mrs. Shelby's maidservant, is a fair-skinned mixed-race slave, married to another mixed-race slave named George Harris. George had been "leased" by his master to a bagging factory, and while there George invented a machine to speed the cleaning of hemp. The factory owner was delighted at the invention, but George's master was made uncomfortable by his slave's intelligence and accomplishments, and he brings George back to work on his farm.

An illustration of the impossible difficulties of the slave's position. George is permitted to work at a trade for no pay (his wages are paid to his master), and in doing this job effectively he ends up angering (and perhaps scaring) his jealous master who then forces George back into menial labor in order to keep George down.

George and Eliza got married while George was still at the factory in a formal ceremony on Shelby's estate, and the couple later watched two children die in infancy. As a result, Eliza is particularly attached to Harry, her only surviving child, and she settles into domestic life, which is pleasant, in relative terms, for a slave.

Slaves were permitted to form marriage-like relationships, but these existed at the whim of the slaves' masters and could be broken up when one or another slave was sold.

A week or two after George's master removes him from the factory, the factory owner asks George's master whether he might return to the factory again. The master says no, that he'll use George on his farm however he wishes. Beecher Stowe argues this is a fate worse than death.

George's master's stubbornness foreshadows other instances of hateful slave-owners, who seem to enjoy tormenting their slaves as much as they require slaves to work and generate income on the plantations.

CHAPTER 3: THE HUSBAND AND FATHER

Soon after Haley's visit to Shelby, George visits Eliza at the Shelby estate. He bitterly complains of having to return to his master's farm and wishes that he and Harry had never been born, and that he had never met Eliza. She counsels him to be patient. George answers that he has always been patient, and that his patience can guarantee only more drudgery.

For George, different forms of freedom exist. At the factory, though he was still a slave, he was able to apply his skills and intelligence—he was free to use his mind. Back on the farm, he is treated far less humanely.

Eliza states that she has obeyed her master and mistress because it is Christian to do so. George agrees that she has been treated well but responds that he, however, has been treated with no respect, and has been worked hard throughout his life. He relates the story of his dog Carlos, given to him by Eliza, who was drowned by George's master because slaves' dogs are a nuisance.

Eliza preaches to George a Christian tolerance derived from the teachings of Jesus: when an enemy wrongs you, turn the other cheek. George argues that Eliza can afford to think this way only because she has been raised by more generous and benevolent masters.

George says his circumstances must change; they make it difficult for him behave as a Christian and believe in God, and are trying to force him to marry a woman on his master's farm despite his marriage to Eliza. George reminds her that they may be sold separately, or Harry may be sold, and even if the Shelbys are against it now, they might die and cause their slaves to be scattered. Eliza thinks anxiously of Harry but does not tell George of her fear that Harry might be sold.

George wishes to act as a Christian but has more difficulty than Eliza in understanding the intentions of a God who permits slavery, which makes a mockery of the Christian idea of marriage and allows loving families to be broken up. George's struggle with Christian teachings and his own freedom continues throughout the book.

George announces he has decided to flee to Canada or die in the process. Eliza begs him to behave honorably, without harming himself or others, and he departs after a painful goodbye.

George feels that he cannot exist as a slave, and is willing to do anything to escape. Eliza reminds him to act honorably, to act as a Christian, even in his escape attempt. Note how the slaves seem more attuned to acting according to true Christian ideals, even in the most difficult circumstances, than the white characters do

CHAPTER 4: AN EVENING IN UNCLE TOM'S CABIN

Uncle Tom's **cabin** is simple, its front covered in beautiful flowers, with an interior organized around a hearth. Aunt Chloe, Uncle Tom's devoted wife, prepares a meal for the family. She is known to be the most naturally gifted cook in the county.

For Aunt Chloe, cooking is a way of demonstrating one's love and devotion. The cabin is a physical embodiment of Uncle Tom's family and, more generally, of the families slaves establish on white estates, and even of the human connections that can be forged between slaves and kind masters.

Two of Uncle Tom's and Aunt Chole's children play happily with a third, who is learning to walk. Near them, seated, is Uncle Tom, described as a strong middle-aged slave with a noble air. He practices his writing diligently and is tutored by "Mas'r George," the thirteen-year-old son of George Shelby. As Tom perseveres at his lessons, Aunt Chloe remarks that reading and writing, and other activities like it, come more easily to whites than to blacks.

Chloe's remark is a notable example of the "internalized racism" present in some parts of the book—these are often sticking points in contemporary analysis of race in the novel. Tom's lack of education is a product of his bondage, not of his natural abilities. George Harris' eventual education, at the end of the book, is an obvious contrast to Tom's difficulties with reading.

George expresses his love of Aunt Chloe's cooking as she serves him griddle cakes. George mentions that Tom Lincon, a friend, has declared his slave Jinny to be a better cook than Chloe, and Chloe replies that Jinny's cooking is serviceable but plain—the Lincons, she continues, don't have the Shelby's manners and good breeding. When George admits to having bragged about the quality of Chloe's cooking, Chloe gently reproaches him, saying he ought not to boast of his good fortune.

Young George is very much loved by Uncle Tom and Aunt Chloe, and he considers them a part of his family, even if his treatment of them includes the intimation that they are his inferiors. Chloe's desire to keep Master George humble stems from a Christian notion of service—George ought to use his gifts to help others.

After George has eaten his fill, Aunt Chloe and the children eat. The children run around, roughhousing, and Chloe scolds them for being rude while George is present. The children are instructed to behave, and the family prepares for the prayer meeting to be held that night in the **cabin**. The family recounts the previous week's boisterous meeting, in which Uncle Peter, another slave, sang so heartily he fell out of his chair.

The novel shows numerous instances of religious worship. This is the first such instance involving slaves, and the meeting, referred to later as a "Methodist" celebration, involves out-spoken, song-filled praise of God and his power. It shows the deep Christianity among the slaves, implicitly raising the question: how can Christians enslave other Christians?

George agrees to read a **Bible** passage for the meeting, and soon a large group of slaves from the plantation have assembled to pray and sing together. They sing especially of the glory of the judgment day and of Jerusalem, which Beecher Stowe attributes to the vivid imaginations of black people. George reads from the Book of Revelation, and Uncle Tom leads the group in a closing prayer.

Stories of the Judgment Day have particular importance in the novel, as Beecher Stowe felt that a "reckoning" was going to soon come regarding slavery, and the apocalypse of Revelations is a fitting allegory for this kind of major upheaval. (And a reckoning did come: the Civil War.)

Meanwhile, in the main house, Mr. Shelby and Haley the trader are finalizing the sale of Uncle Tom and Harry. Shelby appears displeased after signing them over, and asks Haley to keep his word and sell Tom only to a benevolent owner. Haley promises as much, though Shelby takes little comfort in his promise, and sits alone, smoking.

Here the impossible mixture of "benevolence" and "business" in slave-trading becomes clear. Slavery is a cruel system that some defend because they feel they can make conditions livable for slaves. Shelby wishes that Tom not be mistreated, yet at the same time he insists on selling Tom to another man. The novel argues that any system in which men are traded and sold will necessarily result in cruelty, no matter the "good intentions" of some of the masters.

CHAPTER 5: SHOWING THE FEELINGS OF LIVING PROPERTY ON CHANGING OWNERS

That evening, Mrs. Shelby asks who visited Mr. Shelby earlier, and Mr. Shelby admits it was a slave-trader. Mrs. Shelby reports her conversation with Eliza, and that she had told Eliza that Shelby would not sell any slaves. Realizing he can no longer hide the truth, Shelby reveals that business conditions have forced him to sell Tom and Harry to Haley.

A rift between Mr. and Mrs. Shelby's understanding of slave-ownership becomes apparent. Mrs. Shelby genuinely believes that her husband would not sell Tom because he is part of the family. But for Shelby, the "family" can consist only of blood relations among white people.

Shelby insists that he did not want to sell anyone, and that he did not offer Eliza even though Haley wished dearly to purchase her. Mrs. Shelby, at first upset and surprised, apologizes to her husband for her small outburst and wonders aloud whether the estate couldn't get buy with a "pecuniary sacrifice" and keep the two slaves. Shelby informs his wife that, had he not sold them, he would have been forced to part with the entire estate—the debt is more severe than Mrs. Shelby has imagined.

Selby feels it would be "unbecoming" for Mrs. Shelby to work, since a southern estate should be able to function with only income from the male and leader of the household (although it is never clear what exactly Mr. Shelby's line of work is). He sees it as better to sell Tom than to have Mrs. Shelby earning even a small amount of money, part-time.

Mrs. Shelby grows even more upset, arguing that slavery is a curse, something she has never agreed with, even though she tried to make conditions for her slaves as comfortable as possible. Mr. Shelby points out a recent sermon justifying slavery, which Mrs. Shelby responds was just a defense of evil. Mr. Shelby asks that his wife help in the sale by distracting Eliza when Harry is taken, but Mrs. Shelby says she will not, and that instead she will visit Tom before he leaves.

Christian defenses of slavery will be mounted by characters throughout the novel. Although sections of the Bible, especially in the Old Testament, make reference to slavery and bondage, the institution of southern cruelty is quite a bit different from ancient slave customs, and other portions of the Bible, especially the New Testament, seem obviously to champion a love for all humankind that is clearly not compatible with slavery.

Eliza overhears this conversation from an adjoining room and resolves to escape with Harry immediately. That night, Eliza takes Harry in her arms, quiets the old dog Bruno, and slips into the cold winter darkness. Aunt Chloe sees Eliza as she leaves, and Eliza reports the news of the impending sale, saying that neither Shelby wishes it to be done. Eliza says it is wicked to leave, but she must to protect her son.

The first of the novel's escapes. Even as she has heard that Mr. Shelby wishes to sell her son, Eliza believes that the Shelbys have been good masters and have treated their slaves with kindness. However, caring for her son is more important than remaining on the estate to carry out her "duty."

Uncle Tom, on hearing the news, understands that Eliza must flee, but he says he must stay, since fleeing would mean breaking his word and bond with his master. Uncle Tom goes inside and cries—Beecher Stowe argues that he cries the tears any human being might on being confronted with such horrible circumstances. Eliza asks Chloe to tell George that she loves him, that she and Harry are escaping to Canada, and that they hope to reunite with him there or, failing that, in heaven.

For Tom, the equation is reversed. There is nothing more important than his obligation to his superiors, including Mr. Shelby (and, later, to the Lord). The notion of reunion in heaven is also introduced in this passage—one that will recur throughout the text.

CHAPTER 6: DISCOVERY

After Eliza doesn't respond to the Shelby's bell the following morning, they see her empty room and realize she and Harry have run off. Although Mrs. Shelby is relieved, Mr. Shelby fears Haley might think he has arranged for Eliza's flight; he claims that this "touches [his] honor." The slaves talk excitedly about the pair's escape.

Another instance of Mr. Shelby's fear about his "honor." More important, to him, than the bond between mother and son is the business arrangement he has made with Haley. To appear to go back on that arrangement would be "ungentlemanly."

Haley arrives to pick up the slaves and is greatly angered at the news of their flight. He speaks brusquely of this to Mr. Shelby, who asks him to maintain gentlemanly "decorum," makes clear that he had nothing to do with Eliza's escape, and promises to use all resources available to recover the two.

Nevertheless there are layers of "gentlemanliness." Shelby wishes that Haley watch his tongue in front of his wife. Ironically, of course, the slaves have overhead Shelby himself discussing the sale of individual people, and the notion that white life is more inherently valuable than black life. This racist language is not, however, considered "ungentlemanly."

An older slave named Black Sam remarks on Tom's fate with resignation and disappointment, and is then asked by the slave Andy to call for horses to aid in the search for Eliza and Harry. Andy also informs Sam that Mrs. Shelby doesn't actually want them captured. Sam understands this subterfuge and slips a nut under Haley's saddle, to aggravate the horse and disrupt the chase. Mrs. Shelby, emerging on the balcony, hints that the search party should move slowly.

A comic episode. "Black Sam" is an interesting foil to Uncle Tom—a character who in some ways is similar to Tom (his age, his loyalty to Mrs. Shelby) but, in many ways, represents traits entirely opposed to Tom's. It is Sam's duty to disregard Shelby's orders and follow Mrs. Shelby's hints. His trickery—a trickery Tom would never employ—enables Eliza to escape to freedom.

When Haley attempts to mount his horse, the hidden nut causes it to buck and run away; the slaves chase the horse around the property and take until lunchtime to catch it. Sam claims they'll need to wait till after a meal to let the horses rest. Mrs. Shelby laughs at the morning's chaos, Haley is furious, and Sam reports to Andy that his faculty of "bobservation," or his ability to read Mrs. Shelby's hints, has satisfied his mistress and given Eliza and Harry a few hours' head start.

It is, interestingly, the power of "bobservation" that Uncle Tom might also be said to possess, although he does not use it to his advantage. Tom understands Mr. Shelby's debt, Haley's disregard for slaves' lives, and Mrs. Shelby's sympathy, but he wishes only to please Mr. Shelby, and to be sold without fuss.

CHAPTER 7: THE MOTHER'S STRUGGLE

Eliza carries Harry through the ice and snow, though he is old enough to walk. Beecher Stowe asks female readers whether they would be as strong as Eliza, as willing to endure hardship. Eliza reassures Harry that she won't let any harm come to him as he sleeps in her arms.

Another direct address to the reader, and an appeal to a universal form of motherhood. Eliza might be said to do what any mother would at least attempt; but Beecher Stowe wishes to underscore just how incredible Eliza's efforts are.

They head toward the village of T-----, near the Ohio River. Along the highway they walk normally, with Harry eating apples and cakes from Eliza's bag, in order not to arouse suspicion. Eliza claims she cannot eat until they have reached safety. Both Eliza and Harry are light-skinned enough to pass as white, enabling them to buy food in the open and speak briefly with locals.

A note on "whiteness"—both George and Eliza have fair enough skin to pass as "foreign" or even white, highlighting the arbitrary nature of slavery: if a black woman might very easily carry herself as a white woman, then slavery cannot be a "natural" or "biological" system.

At T-----, Eliza is informed that the ferries have stopped running across the river to Ohio. Eliza explains to a woman she meets that Harry is ill—thus she has been hurrying to the ferry—and the woman offers to take them both in for the night.

This woman's kindness is repeated by others throughout Eliza's journey north, and seems an indicator of the "universal motherhood" Beecher Stowe invokes.

Back at the Shelby estate, Aunt Chloe prepares a meal for Haley and others with great care, following Mrs. Shelby's implied desire to slow down the search party. When Aunt Chloe and her children speak ill of Haley and other slave-traders, arguing that they participate in an evil enterprise, Uncle Tom enters and quotes the New Testament: "Pray for them that spitefully use you." He instructs his family not to curse Haley but to trust instead the Lord's grace. Uncle Tom worries that the estate won't be able to manage without him.

The line quoted by Uncle Tom is another version of the famous line of Jesus, telling his followers that, if they are struck, they ought to "turn the other cheek" and allow themselves to be struck again. This form of radical passivity in the face of violence is embodied by Tom later in the book, on Legree's plantation.

Tom reports to the parlor and tells Shelby and Haley he will report to be sold on the appointed day, with no "trickery." Mrs. Shelby promises Tom they will buy him back when they have the means. Haley readies once more to track Eliza and Harry, and Sam and Andy go with him. Sam uses his wiles to throw Haley off the trail and convinces him to take an old, seldom-used road to the Ohio River. They reach T----- about 45 minutes after Eliza has laid Harry to sleep at the woman's house.

Mrs. Shelby's promise to Tom is undercut by Mr. Shelby, who later will not allow Mrs. Shelby to work for her own income in order to buy back Tom. Instead, Aunt Chloe must do this work. Again, Sam's trickery enables Eliza to elude capture.

Sam sees Eliza through the window, fakes that his hat is blown off, and calls out, thus alerting Eliza to their presence. Haley sees her as she flees from the house with Harry. At the river, extremely cold and choked with floes of ice, Eliza carries Harry and jumps from floe to floe in a manner that seems miraculous. She reaches Mr. Symmes, an acquaintance of the Shelby's, on the Ohio side. He is impressed by her courage and directs her to a safe haven, though he knows Mr. Shelby wouldn't be pleased. Haley is furious, and Sam and Andy celebrate Eliza's bravery before returning to the estate.

Eliza's efforts here are seen as "superhuman" and made possible by the grace and intervention of God. Mr. Symmes acts in contravention of the Fugitive Slave Act, a Federal law which required northerners to return slaves to their southern owners—his actions would be considered "theft," or the "aiding and abetting" of a crime across state lines. It was Beecher Stowe's outrage at this law that prompted her to write the novel.

CHAPTER 8: ELIZA'S ESCAPE

As Eliza flees, Haley finds a tavern and mulls his fate. He runs into his acquaintance Tom Loker, a massive and violent-looking man, and his small, mouse-like companion, Marks. Over drinks, Haley explains the day's events, and Marks, Haley, and Loker discuss the "strange" responses of female slaves to the sale of their children. Haley once bought a woman who drowned herself and her child to avoid being sold separately, and Loker explains how he threatens women to keep them from doing the same.

Haley is surprised by the woman's response—that she would be willing to kill herself and her child rather than expose herself to the horrors of slavery. This notion of self-murder and child-murder is repeated, later, on the riverboat and in Cassy's backstory. It also shows how Haley, who sees slavery as "just business," can't comprehend the horrors of actually being a slave.

Haley repeats to Loker his theory of slave-trading: always keep profits in mind, and only be as cruel as necessary, for economic gain. Loker, on the other hand, argues that slave-trading his inherently evil and violent—to him, paradoxically, it is right to acknowledge its evil and embrace it. Marks steers the subject back to Eliza and Harry.

Two theories of slave-trading: Haley, as before, wishes only to turn a profit; for Loker, on the other hand, slavery's evil enables evils of his own. Loker does not worry so much about profit, and instead delights in the cruelty slavery lets him inflict on slaves.

Marks proposes that he and Loker will catch the two, return Harry to Haley, and sell Eliza into enslaved prostitution in New Orleans, since she is fair-skinned and attractive. Haley agrees in principle but asks for ten percent of Eliza's sale price; Loker threatens Haley, however, and Haley relents, accepting the return of Harry as payment enough. Marks and Loker resolve to cross the river that night on a hired boat, and Beecher Stowe addresses the reader, saying that slave-catching is a shocking though lawful business, and if the west is opened to slavery, it will become more common.

The mention of selling Eliza into prostitution is a reference to a common practice. Beecher Stowe must acknowledge the sexual slave trade in New Orleans using "polite" language. Nevertheless, such sexual slavery this is a significant part of the slave-trading economy. Beecher Stowe's address to the reader similarly underscores that, despite the horrors these two men describe, what they do is legal—the "property" they catch can have no legal rights.

Sam and Andy return to the estate and inform the Shelbys of Eliza's escape. Sam argues that the Lord helped Eliza cross the ice floe, and Mr. Shelby chastises Sam for his delaying tactics that morning, since he feels they are sly and ungentlemanly. Sam heads to Uncle Tom's **cabin** and tells Aunt Chloe and the slaves assembled of Eliza's crossing; he gives a grand and comic speech to all, and argues that persistence (displayed in his aid to Eliza) is a fine principle to live by.

Sam is, in many ways, a comic character—he is a foil to Uncle Tom's seriousness. Sam also feels that a divine hand helped Eliza in her escape. His speech before his fellow slaves both memorializes his importance and accomplishments and points to the ability of slaves to organize and maintain their culture while on the estate.

CHAPTER 9: IN WHICH IT APPEARS THAT A SENATOR IS BUT A MAN

An Ohio state Senator named Bird is at home with his wife and children; he has recently been away at the capital in Columbus. Mrs. Bird asks her husband about a recent bill, just passed, banning the provision of food and drink to escaped slaves. Mrs. Bird finds the law un-Christian, but the Senator defends it, and his vote for it, by arguing the law would quell the public outcry erupting between slave and free states. Senator Bird says that his private feelings, which are not dissimilar to his wife's, must remain separate from his public duty to maintaining peace and order.

The bill signed by Senator Bird mirrors, on the state level, the Fugitive Slave Act. Bird's vote and argument are similar to those many northerners made on passage of that national bill. This argument underlines a fear in the north of chaos and the dissolution of the Union. Only when it became clear that slavery itself would dissolve the Union did opinion in the north turn against the institution of slavery. Before that, the north was willing to tolerate slavery in the South (and to profit from it without actually owning any slaves).

Mrs. Bird asks her husband what he would do if an escaped slave came to their home, and the Senator responds that it would be a "painful," but necessary, duty to turn her away. Sure enough, just then, Cudjoe, a black servant, informs Mrs. Bird that the two runaways, Eliza and Harry, have arrived. Mrs. Bird promises them shelter and food, and the Senator, despite his previous statements, warms to their case and tells his wife to make the runaways comfortable.

The timing here is quite fast and the coincidence enormous, but it seems more important to Beecher Stowe that Bird's "conversion" from pragmatic politician to man of feeling be shown. His care for the escapees is a male form of the family concern Eliza and other women have shown toward their children.

Eliza begins telling her story. The Birds reveal that they have recently lost a child, and Mrs. Bird, the children, and a female slave, Dinah, weep as they hear of Eliza's heart-wrenching decision to risk her life for Harry, and of George's cruel master. The Senator resolves to drive Harry and Eliza that night to a friend's house seven miles away, over a bumpy and little-used back road. Mrs. Bird rejoices privately in her husband's change of heart. The Senator also tells his wife to offer Harry their dead child Henry's clothes.

This coincidence further draws a parallel between blacks and whites—both wish to protect and love their children. The fact that both children are named "Henry" is perhaps an overwhelming coincidence, but the point is made that a parent's love for his or her child transcends race and social status.

Beecher Stowe claims that the Senator only knew fugitive slaves in the abstract, thus allowing him to argue for the passage of the state's strict no-aid law. Bird and Cudjoe drive Eliza and Harry slowly over the slushy road, often stopping to remove the carriage from a rut or put it on rails over the mud.

An important distinction in the novel. Beecher Stowe tells her story as a novel, *rather than as a political tract, because the specific example of Tom's and other's lives might be more persuasive than an abstract argument.*

After a long night's ride, they meet John Van Trompe at his house. Van Trompe, a burly, bearded Kentuckian, has recently freed his slaves after believing privately for some time that the institution is immoral. Now living in the free state of Ohio, he agrees to shelter Eliza and Harry, and says his equally burly sons will protect them. Van Trompe claims, after hearing Eliza's story, that he never joined a church till he found one that understood slavery as explicitly immoral. The Senator places Eliza and Harry in Van Trompe's care, then leaves for Columbus in order to avoid suspicion of his night's journey.

Van Trompe represents a kind of person (St. Clare and George Shelby are others) who comes to realize, eventually, that slavery is too great an evil to be allowed to continue. Van Trompe even goes so far as to move from Kentucky to a "free" state where slavery is illegal. Furthermore, he only attends a Christian church that refuses to make excuses for slavery, but instead uses the Bible to prove it's evil.

CHAPTER 10: THE PROPERTY IS CARRIED OFF

Tom is to be handed off. His wife acknowledges that, as a Christian, she should put her faith in God's hands, but she finds the task difficult. Tom replies that he knows he will find comfort in the Lord, and the Lord will protect him. Tom won't allow Chloe to speak ill of Mr. Shelby. Tom argues, that Shelby is only doing what he must, that Shelby can't be expected to care deeply about all his slaves, and that they have been treated well on the Shelby estate.

Again Tom defends his master, claiming that it is right for Mr. Shelby to values his own life and family above the lives of his slaves. Tom's Christian love is evident here, even in the face of terrible tragedy and loss. Aunt Chloe, also a Christian woman, has an understandably more difficult time with Tom's leaving.

Beecher Stowe states that black people are not inclined to travel and adventure but rather are home-bodies, more inclined to what is known that to what is unknown. Many escaped slaves in Canada, she reports, left their relatively kind masters because they feared being sold south to greater horrors.

This instance of Beecher Stowe's direct address is particularly jarring to the contemporary reader, exhibiting a prejudice against black people that is obviously discredited today.

As Uncle Tom and Aunt Chloe eat breakfast together, Aunt Chloe can't contain her weeping. Uncle Tom is quiet, sadly resigned to his fate. Mrs. Shelby arrives, claims she can offer no gift of use to Tom now, and promises again to buy back Tom once the Shelbys have the funds. Haley arrives and Aunt Chloe vows not to cry in front of so cruel and unfeeling a man.

Mrs. Shelby renews her promise to buy Tom back and shows her guilt. Mrs. Shelby and St. Clare are perhaps the most sympathetic slave-owners in the novel, although Mrs. Shelby does not desire to free all her slaves, as St. Clare finally resolves to do.

Haley shackles Tom, arguing that he has already lost 500 dollars at the Shelby estate. Tom gives his love to Master George, who is away at a friend's and who has yet to learn of Tom's sale. Mr. Shelby is out on business, hoping that Tom's transfer will be finished out of his sight.

Mr. Shelby's guilt mirrors and opposes his wife's—rather than see the slaves before Tom is sold, Mr. Shelby shields himself by leaving the estate. He is a moral coward. George Jr.'s trip is an instance of bad luck, as is his arrival at Legree's later in the novel, just after Tom has been mortally wounded.

Haley stops with Tom at a blacksmith's shop to tighten his shackles. The smith claims that Tom is faithful and need not be bound. Haley replies that supposedly "faithful" slaves are exactly the ones to watch out for. When the smith speaks of the terrible conditions on many southern plantations, Haley replies that he will try to get Tom a household position. Meanwhile, outside, Master George arrives and offers Tom a dollar, which Tom denies graciously, saying it is of no use to him. Tom tells George to be good, to work hard, and to behave as a Christian young man.

An example of the nonsense and misleading arguments slave-owners make to justify their actions. Why would a loyal slave be more likely to run away than a disloyal slave? In fact Haley trusts no slaves, which is why he thinks Tom must be shackled. Tom's relationship with George mimics in many ways a father-son relationship—indeed, this relationship is more pronounced than George's interactions with his own father.

George promises Tom he will be good and bring Tom back. When Haley returns outside to the carriage, George argues with him, saying it is evil to trade in slaves. Haley answers, once again, that he is only making a living, and George swears never to buy or sell slaves when he is older. George leaves, and Haley tells Tom to behave—if he is "fair," then Haley will treat him "fair." Tom assents though he remains shackled as they begin their journey south.

George renews his mother's promise and makes good on it at the end of the novel, only a few days too late. His promise never to buy slaves becomes a willingness to free slaves, once he has taken over his father's estate. Again, Haley's fairness is one that champions business and profit over the rights of human beings.

CHAPTER 11: IN WHICH PROPERTY GETS INTO AN IMPROPER STATE OF MIND

At a hotel in N-----, a village in Kentucky, a short, older traveller named Mr. Wilson enters. He speaks to the owner about the town's news and is shown a poster advertising a $400 reward, dead or alive, for the return of an intelligent, light-skinned fugitive slave with an H branded on his hand, known to the reader as George Harris. An army veteran comes and spits tobacco juice on the poster, claiming that an owner who doesn't know how to treat so distinguished a slave ought to lose that slave. The veteran, who works as a drover, sends his slaves to other cities and trusts them with money, with the idea that good treatment encourages good service.

Another example of "benevolent" slave-ownership. The drover cannot be considered a cruel man, since he is kind to his slaves and he trusts them, but of course he continues to own slaves in the first place. Beecher Stowe takes great pains throughout the novel both to highlight these instances of kindness and argue that, good though they are, they allow a bad system to continue.

Another man walks into the hotel as the drover is conversing with a "coarse man" who defends rough treatment of slaves. The newcomer has light skin, fine clothes, and carries himself like a foreigner, perhaps a Spaniard. His valet is a slave named Jim and he gives his name as Henry Butler. When shown the poster of the escaped slave, he says he might have seen someone like him earlier, but he can't be sure. He requests a room at the hotel and management quickly arranges his for his luggage.

The first instance of a slave passing as a "distinguished foreigner." This tactic will be used again by George and Eliza as they pass from Ohio to Canada. As with Eliza pretending to be white, earlier, George has only to act the part of a Spaniard—thus he is "performing" his race, meaning that his supposed racial inferiority is not biological, but instead a result of social forces.

Mr. Wilson believes he recognizes the newcomer. Following him to his suite, he calls to him as George, his former employee at the factory. George responds that it is he, and that he is traveling to freedom under the assumed identity of a foreign gentleman. Mr. Wilson warns George that the venture is risky, unlawful, and against the word of the **Bible**. He quotes the example of Hagar returning to her mistress. George replies that he is willing to take up with God later the legality and morality of his quest for freedom.

An example of the misplaced "duties" and "loyalties" of law-abiding white people. Mr. Wilson is a good man and has treated George with a great deal of respect. But he respects also the system that enables George's bondage, because he respects the laws of the United States. George, in essence, supports a view of "civil disobedience" not unlike Henry David Thoreau's: he believes he must break a law he feels to be immoral.

Mr. Wilson and George argue further over the morality of George's mission. George shows two pistols and a knife to Wilson, saying he will do what is necessary to protect himself. Wilson states that George is breaking the laws of his country. George replies that Wilson has a country, but he, George, does not.

This is an important point. George makes clear the hypocrisy that black people, who are not considered fully human in American law, must nevertheless abide by the laws that white men create. He argues instead that he can't be a part of a country that makes it legal to enslave him.

George tells Wilson of his life. His father was a white Kentucky slaveholder who had children by one of his slaves, with George the youngest. On his death, his wife and the children were sold separately. His mother convinces her new master to trade in order that George might remain with one older sister, who is then beaten and sold into prostitution in New Orleans. George says that the only happiness he knew came for his work at Wilson's factory, and with the love of Eliza and Harry. At the end of this speech, he says he fights desperately for the cause of his and his family's liberty, and Wilson changes his mind, assenting to the rightness of George's mission.

George's plight is all-too-common—indeed, Haley wished initially to sell Eliza into this form of slave-prostitution, and Loker and Marks, if they catch her, want to do the same. George desires only the opportunity to work—he does not want anything from the government or from white people other than the chance to show that he is equal. At this, Mr. Wilson is convinced by George's arguments.

George tells Wilson that his wife and child have escaped. Wilson gives George money, which George accepts as a loan with a promise to repay. Wilson states that George looks like a freeman, and George answers that he is free, moving about as he wishes—a new and exhilarating feeling. He asks Wilson to give Eliza a pin, a gift from Eliza to him one Christmas, and to tell Eliza that she must go to Canada at all costs. Wilson tells George to trust in God, and though George questions whether this is possible, Wilson replies that circumstances will improve either in Canada or in heaven.

George continues to have trouble placing his faith in God. He is more comfortable taking "fate" into his own hands. Just as George is capable of posing as a Spaniard, his experience of freedom can be learned as well. He is free so long as society treats him as free—it has nothing to do with the color of his skin.

CHAPTER 12: SELECT INCIDENT OF LAWFUL TRADE

Tom and Haley ride to the riverboat. Haley thinks of how he might market Tom on the trading block, and how good he has been to Tom—loosening his manacles—despite being tricked by slaves before. Tom, meanwhile, remembers a **Bible** verse in which God "hath prepared for us a city" (heaven). Haley spots a newspaper ad for a slave sale in Washington, Kentucky, books a room for himself, and accommodates Tom in jail overnight. The next morning they head to the sale.

Slave auctions are, according to Beecher Stowe, the primary means for separating families. They are a source of great cruelty and injustice in an already terribly cruel system. Tom's Bible verse echoes the idea that, though matters may look incredibly dire, there is a place of freedom and rest prepared in heaven for all humanity.

At the sale, a woman named Aunt Hagar worries that her fourteen-year-old son, Albert, will be sold without her. Haley offers to buy Albert for plantation work but not Hagar, since she is too old and worn for hard labor. Haley successfully bids for Albert at the auction and Hagar is sold for a pittance to another man.

The novel contains many instances of doubling or foiling—creating characters who mirror other characters in order to create a resonance or contrast. Here Aunt Hagar and Albert represent a "what-if" scenario: had Eliza and Harry both been sold, their parting would have resembled Hagar and Albert's.

On La Belle Riviere, a riverboat, Haley tells the assembled slaves, including Tom, to behave on the journey south. Above-deck, white families discuss the institution of slavery, with one woman arguing it is tolerable because conditions for blacks are better in servitude than they would be if all were made free. Another claims that the separation of slave families is the real cruelty. A clergyman enters the discussion and says that God intends to keep blacks in a state inferior to whites—the "Curse of Canaan." The drover from the Kentucky hotel, also on the vessel, subtly critiques this absolute view of black inferiority to Haley, who protests he does not read much and can't weigh in on the moral question. Another young man, also a clergyman, counters the statement of the first, saying that God commands us to treat others as we would want to be treated. The younger clergyman goes on to ask Haley how he can trade so cruelly in slaves.

The first woman's argument is common: slaves are better off as slaves than they would be free. The first clergyman's argument, sadly, is also common. Many believed that black people were Biblically cursed, and that their black skin was a mark indicating that they were fit only for servitude. Haley, as usual, doesn't go in for abstract reckoning—slaves continue to be just a business matter for him. But the presence of the other clergyman, arguing for the primacy of the Golden Rule, shows that Christian precepts may be used both to justify and reject slavery.

A slave woman, Lucy, who had been told by her master that she and her daughter would be sent to Louisville to work with her husband, is informed that they have instead been tricked by their master and sold to Haley. Haley meets a man who offers to buy the child for 45 dollars; Haley agrees, takes the child from the woman as she sleeps. When Lucy wakes, Haley tells her what he has done and she takes the news silently and wishes to be alone.

Another example of "doubling." It is not hard to imagine Eliza and Harry in Lucy's position. The total despair Lucy quietly bears will be echoed, later, by Cassy's response to her traumas.

Tom offers comfort to Lucy but she shrugs it off, moans to herself. That night, she falls overboard and drowns. The trader questions Tom, who acknowledges he only felt Lucy brush by and heard her fall overboard. Others on the boat remark on Haley's cruelty, and Beecher Stowe argues that they, and anyone, who even allows the institution of slavery to exist aids and abets this cruelty. Although many discuss the horrors of the foreign slave-trade, she continues, tragedies like those on La Belle Riviere are overlooked by many American whites.

A story like this had been mentioned by the slave-owners earlier in the book. It is hard for some white people to understand that black mothers care for their children just as much as white mothers do. Beecher Stowe includes this awful example to demonstrate the universality of motherly love, and to show to the white mothers reading her novel just how horrible slavery could be.

CHAPTER 13: THE QUAKER SETTLEMENT

Eliza and Harry are safely hidden in the home of Simeon and Rachel Halliday, Quakers who help runaway slaves along the route to Canada. Rachel asks about Eliza's plans in her new country—she will have to work—and tells Eliza not to fear her present circumstances, because no slave has ever been recaptured on the Quaker settlement. Ruth Stedman, a neighbor, arrives with a cake for Harry and greets Eliza warmly.

The Quakers believe in radical non-violence and the equality of all people before God. Beecher Stowe finds their faith and, more importantly, their willingness to defend their faith with non-violent action to be appealing, courageous, and deeply Christian.

Simeon enters, announcing to his wife and friends they will leave tonight with Eliza and Harry. He also reports that an escaped slave named Harris—George—has entered the settlement, and Ruth convinces him to tell Eliza the news immediately. Rachel does so, and Eliza faints with joy. She awakes later with Harry and her husband by her side.

This coincidence, like the arrival of Eliza and Harry at the Kentucky senator's home, might be seen as "unnatural" to some. But it is necessary for the furtherance of the plot and of Beecher Stowe's argument in the text.

The Quakers and the Harrises eat together the next morning. It is the first time George has eaten as a free man, at a table with whites. Simeon's son asks what his father would do if caught again—it is implied he has been caught before—harboring slaves. Simeon answers that he will take his punishment. When his son curses slavery and slave-owners, Simeon replies that he would help an owner in peril just as he helps escaped slaves. George tells Simeon he does not wish to cause difficulty in the family, but Simeon claims to help not for George's sake, but for "God and man" generally.

A new instance of "home." George Harris believes that, to have a home, a man must be free, able to dine and converse with others as an equal. The Quakers demonstrate here, too, their willingness to help all mankind, even sinners like slave-owners. This sentiment is echoed by Tom later in the book, when George Shelby curses Simon Legree's cruelty.

CHAPTER 14: EVANGELINE

La Belle Riviere continues down the Mississippi. Tom's conduct has convinced Haley he is trustworthy; Tom is therefore allowed to sleep without fetters and to walk as he pleases around the ship. Atop cotton-bales on the ship's deck he looks out on the plantations they pass, slaves at hard labor in the fields, and thinks back on his time in Kentucky. Beecher Stowe states that an educated person would be able to write to his family, but Tom can write only poorly and so cannot communicate with Chloe and others at home.

Tom's difficulties reading and writing are symbolic of a greater inequality—that of opportunity between whites and blacks. Only through immense hard word is Tom able actually to read the Bible and participate fully in his Christian faith. If Tom were a free man, he could be an educated man, and his ability to read the Bible would likewise increase.

Tom takes out his **Bible** and reads, haltingly, "In my Father's house there are many mansions . . . ." Although there are no notes in the margins of the **Bible**, Tom has marked up favorite sections from hearing George read to him.

This line, taken from the Biblical book of Matthew, has been understood many ways. One is simple: that God's divine home will make room for all those who believe in him.

On the boat are a New Orleans gentleman named St. Clare and his five-or-six-year-old daughter, a beautiful, fair-haired, blue-eyed child, dressed always in white, whom the narrator likens to an angel. Evangeline, as she is known, walks all over the vessel and smiles at the slaves, the "firemen" who shovel coal, and others. She meets Uncle Tom, takes an immediate liking to him, and offers that her father might buy him. At a boat-landing Eva accidentally falls in the water, and Tom dives in after her, saving her with little trouble.

St. Clare is introduced, as is his daughter Eva. Eva's relationship with Tom will become an important one in the book, as both are characters of great religious feeling, and both are willing to die for the betterment and protection of others.

The next day, St. Clare does in fact offer to buy Tom from Haley. Haley sets the price at $1300. St. Clare jokes that Tom's Christianity, intelligence, and trustworthiness might cause trouble and should result in a lower price. In truth, however, St. Clare recognizes Tom's kindness and Eva's apparent love for him. St. Clare introduces himself to Tom and promises to make him coachman at his New Orleans estate. Eva tells Tom that her father is a benevolent slave-owner, and that his teaching hides a real concern for his slaves.

Tom's purchase by St. Clare seems an example of good luck. St. Clare, though a bit haughty and given to joking, is a classically "benevolent" master, as will become evident in later chapters. Tom is as devoted to St. Clare as he was to George Shelby, Sr.

CHAPTER 15: OF TOM'S NEW MASTER, AND VARIOUS OTHER MATTERS

St. Clare's family history is told. He, Augustine, comes from a rich Louisiana family. His mother was a French Protestant, and his uncle a farmer in Vermont, where Augustine often spent summers. He is a dreamer and something of a free spirit, with a joking, teasing intellect. At one point in his youth he fell in love with a northern woman who then apparently broke off their engagement—it turned out, later, that in fact she had never received his letters to her. Thinking himself spurned, St. Clare married his current wife, Marie St. Clare, a moody, beautiful southerner, only to learn of his ill luck with his first love during his honeymoon. This experience ended "the whole romance and ideal of life" for St. Clare, but he goes on living, resignedly, with his wife, who is demanding and indulged.

St. Clare, on the other hand, has lived a life of "bad luck." His relations with women appear to be cursed, as his current wife is an unpleasant woman, always complaining and never doing anything to change the world around her. Although St. Clare's romantic disappointment crushes him, he is nevertheless able to carry on in his business and social affairs.

The birth of Eva, however, seemed to cheer St. Clare; he gave her his mother's name. Marie St. Clare begins to complain of "sick-headaches" and other illnesses. Thus St. Clare travels north with Eva to meet with Miss Ophelia, a relative on his uncle's side, in the hopes of asking her to come south to nanny Eva. This explains St. Clare's presence on La Belle Riviere.

Marie St. Clare has a hard time understanding Eva, and from an early age she in some sense competes with Eva for St. Clare's affections. Her period of "sickness" begins in earnest with Eva's birth, thus requiring that Miss Ophelia join the family.

Miss Ophelia is a severe northern woman, deeply religious and organized, and convinced that a strong work ethic and sense of duty are essential to living a Christian life. Though she is nervous about moving to the south, she does so because she feels she must help her cousin St. Clare. Despite their differing temperaments, St. Clare and Miss Ophelia get along quite well.

Miss Ophelia is a representative of "the North" in the text. Her hypocrisies concerning slavery, described more fully later in the novel, are the North's hypocrisies, and her sense of duty and hard-work are also considered Northern qualities.

The boat stops in New Orleans, and the three enter St. Clare's large, opulent estate, which Miss Ophelia finds impressive but "heathenish." St. Clare's domestic slaves are introduced. Mr. Adolph, a boisterous footman, dresses in his master's clothes and pretends to have run of the house. Mammy serves as a cook and aid to Eva—they are very fond of one another.

St. Clare's estate is in disarray, but the slaves appear happy and are not ill-treated. Even the décor, according to Miss Ophelia, smacks to her of an "un-Christian" or uncivilized laziness. Though her comment indicates how Miss Ophelia equates being Christian with being rigorous and upright, but she does not yet understand that it also means being compassionate.

St. Clare tells Marie he has brought her a new coachman, Tom. Marie believes that Tom will drink and shirk his duty like their pervious driver. After St. Clare gives Marie a present from his journey, Marie complains that her husband neglects her, and Miss Ophelia settles into life in the house.

Marie does not even consider Tom, nor does she believe her husband, when he says Tom is a devoted, religious man. To Marie, all slaves are the same: indolent and not to be trusted It is beyond her ability to imagine a slave being capable of religion.

CHAPTER 16: TOM'S MISTRESS AND HER OPINIONS

At breakfast, Marie declares to her husband, Eva, and Miss Ophelia that the slaves are really the masters of their owners, that no one understands her physical maladies, and that slaves like Mammy complain too much and do too little. When St. Clare and Eva leave, Marie says that Eva is strange, always playing with the slaves, which does not teach them their place in the household. St. Clare, she continues, believes slaves should be treated kindly and that any faults in slaves are the responsibility of their masters. Marie asserts to Ophelia that this is nonsense. Slaves, she says, are a "degraded race."

Marie continues in her description of slaves' behavior. Mammy, who essentially takes care of Eva before the arrival of Miss Ophelia, is, in Marie's understanding, a complainer and a hypochondriac (which is, of course, a better description of Marie herself). Although St. Clare takes a more enlightened and challenging view—that slaves' deficiencies might be derived from their servitude—Marie believes slaves are slaves because they are inferior, "degraded" in the eyes of God.

Marie brought Mammy from her father's house but did not bring along Mammy's husband. St. Clare argues this is cruel, but Marie refuses to acknowledge that black marriage resembles the white institution—slaves do not feel as whites do. Marie believes St. Clare should flog his slaves when they misbehave.

Marie similarly does not understand that a marriage between black people might in any way resemble a marriage between whites. Of course, Marie's own marriage isn't characterized by love, as she has poisoned it.

St. Clare tells Ophelia that Adolph, his footman, has been taking too much of his clothing. Ophelia decries the slaves' (and, implicitly, their master's) laziness, and states that St. Clare ought to let his slaves be educated, intellectually and spiritually. St. Clare plays the piano while he considers this opinion, and Marie says educating slaves is worthless. Ophelia also criticizes St. Clare for letting Tom play with Eva; she finds this "dreadful." St. Clare says that the two care for each other and points out Ophelia's hypocrisy.

St. Clare's time at the piano allows him to think over Miss Ophelia's comments, which clearly affect him (as we see later in the novel). But Ophelia has her own prejudices, and although she opposes slavery she finds black people frightful, indeed somewhat repulsive. Ophelia must learn how to interact with black people as equals, how to treat all people with compassion.

The house's opulence is described, and Beecher Stowe argues that black people are inclined to enjoy this kind of majesty. Eva offers Mammy her golden brooch as a present, since Mammy has a headache. Marie says this is a terrible thing to do, though St. Clare defends it. Marie and Eva leave for church, and St. Clare and Ophelia stay behind.

An example of Beecher Stowe's own racial attitudes. One would be hard-pressed to support her opinion that blacks appreciate opulence more than whites. These views, however, were common even among abolitionists like Beecher Stowe.

Marie describes the church sermon over dinner, wherein the pastor explains that "orders and distinctions in society come from God." St. Clare thinks this justification for slavery is immoral. He believes that slavery exists for economic reasons, to spur on the cotton trade, and if this trade ceased to need slavery, no one would have to justify the institution anymore. Eva says she likes slavery because it means her household contains more people for her to love. She tells of her **Bible** studies and singing with Tom, and St. Clare relates that Tom has begun praying for St. Clare's conversion to Christianity.

The pastor's comments are another religious justification for slavery, such as was common in the South. St. Clare takes a more practical tack, arguing that people will justify slavery however they wish, but it is economically necessary and therefore tolerated. Tom's prayers for St. Clare, that he might accept Christianity, will eventually be answered just before St. Clare's untimely death.

CHAPTER 17: THE FREE MAN'S DEFENSE

George and Eliza begin to plan their life in Canada. Eliza can wash clothes and work as a seamstress; George can practice his trade. Simeon Halliday enters with Phineas Fletcher, an athletic and energetic man who has recently converted to Quakerism. Fletcher brings news that Loker, Marks, and their gang are approaching the Quaker settlement. The Quakers plan to get leave quickly with George, Eliza, and harry. George says he wishes to harm no one, but vows that violence might be necessary. Simeon acknowledges George's position but says that, in the Quaker tradition, only non-violence is practiced.

A philosophical split arises between the Quakers, who feel violence is never justified, and George Harris, who is willing to use violence to protect his family. Both sides appear to be given deference by Beecher Stowe, although George later announces that, had he killed Tom Loker, he would not have been able to live with a murder on his conscience.

George tells Eliza he loves her more than ever, but he wonders how God can defend those who pursue them. Simeon reads George a psalm that echoes this doubt but ends with a sworn vow to put faith in God. Beecher Stowe argues that, because Simeon is wiling to espouse these values and help a fleeing slave, at risk to himself and his family, he is doing the work of a true Christian.

Again, Beecher Stowe praises the Quakers for putting their faith into action. This is similar to Beecher Stowe's praise of Tom, who is willing to die for his beliefs, and who uses his faith as an example for others.

Another escaping slave, Jim, and his mother join Eliza, Harry, George, and Phineas on the trip to Canada. As they ride, a scout on horseback named Michael reports that eight to ten of the capturing forces, led by Loker, are close behind. Michael takes the wagon and rides away, as a distraction and to gather more help, and Phineas leads the escapees over a fence, across a gap, and up a rocky embankment.

The most action-packed sequence in the novel. Phineas is a convert to Quakerism, and the others in the community recognize that his desire for thrills and not quite so strong commitment to non-violence might set him apart from other members of the faith. But Phineas is devoted to the cause of helping slaves escape.

Loker, Marks, and the others arrive. Fearing a violent confrontation, George mounts the embankment and delivers a speech on his desire for freedom and willingness to defend his family. Marks fires on George, nearly hitting him, and George fires on Loker, injuring him in his side but not killing him. Loker attempts to reach the party but is pushed into the ravine by Phineas. Marks and the others flee without rescuing Loker. The Quakers and escapees lift up Loker and carry him by horseback to another farmhouse an hour away, where they all rest.

It is important to note that George first articulates his vision for freedom and his desire only to choose a life of liberty with his family; it is Marks who fires the first shot, causing George to retaliate out of self-defense. George keeps his promise to Eliza, using violence only when absolutely necessary.

CHAPTER 18: MISS OPHELIA'S EXPERIENCES AND OPINIONS

Uncle Tom takes over management of the St. Clare household's finances. After St. Clare stays out late one night drinking, Uncle Tom chastises him for treating his body and soul poorly. St. Clare promises not to drink so much again. Miss Ophelia assumes management of the household and reorganizes the storage and arrangement of materials throughout the house, including in the kitchen, much to the annoyance of Old Dinah, the eccentric and disorganized head cook.

St. Clare is devoted to his daughter, but Tom questions his devotion to the health of his soul. Just as Miss Ophelia wishes to put the household's affairs in order, Tom wishes to guide St. Clare in a "cleaning out" of his spiritual life, so that Christian faith might be allowed in.

Miss Ophelia reports to St. Clare on the state of chaos in his home. St. Clare replies that, because he does not wish to discipline his slaves, he must be content to live in a disorganized home. St. Clare appreciates Dinah as a cook, has no desire to see what goes on in the kitchen, and figures that an efficient household system would only give him more time in which to be lazy.

This is an example of St. Clare's "shiftlessness," which is appalling to Miss Ophelia but which also enables the slaves to achieve a kind of "freedom" in the St. Clare household. Though St. Clare still owns them, they are treated with respect.

Ophelia believes that some of the slaves might be tricking St. Clare, stealing from him, or dishonestly reporting their work. St. Clare answers that the "dependent, semi-childish state" of slavery is to blame for this "shiftlessness," and white people, after all, maintain this state.

St. Clare repeats a sentiment from earlier in the novel: that slaves cannot be expected to behave as free men and women, because they are not afforded the education and opportunity for self-fulfillment that free people are.

A drunk slave named Prue, who belongs to another master, enters the St. Clare kitchen sometime later. Prue is a slave who takes money behind her master's back and uses it to buy alcohol, maintaining a state of perpetual drunkenness to hide her sadness. When Prue enters, Tom offers to carry her basket, and Prue tells him her life-story: she gave birth to many children who were sold to other owners, and though she was allowed to keep her last child, she became sick and couldn't nurse her child, who died. Prue says that she has no need for going to heaven, since white people go there. She would rather go to Hell to escape them.

Prue's story foreshadows Cassy's on the Legree plantation. Prue is an example of a women so broken by the cruelties of slavery that she cannot recover. Although Miss Opehlia finds her drunkenness offensive, St. Clare has an easier time understanding her melancholy and total dejection. Prue's desire to go to Hell if it means avoiding white people is another point about the incompatibility of slavery and Christianity.

CHAPTER 19: MISS OPHELIA'S EXPERIENCE AND OPINIONS (CONTINUED)

One day, Dinah notices that Prue has not been around for a while, and another woman reports that Prue was beaten by her owner in a cellar, on account of her drunkenness, and left there to die. Miss Ophelia is outraged to hear this and reports it to St. Clare, who accepts it resignedly and states that such cruelty is a natural consequence of slavery, which places "debased, uneducated" people in the hands of owners who are tempted to exercise their absolute powers.

St. Clare further elaborates his theory that slavery breeds immorality on the part of slaves and owners. He is coming to realize, however slowly, that the system of slavery really is a "disease" that harms both master and slave.

St. Clare begins a long speech describing his relationship to slavery. St. Clare does not defend slavery. He participates in it though he knows it to be morally wrong, a system where the strong maintain an advantage over the weak. He believes that eventually there will be a correction of the system, when whites guilty of protecting the institution will be made to pay penance. Miss Ophelia finds this attitude, by which she is surprised, deeply radical.

St. Clare is perhaps the most morally complex character in the novel (Mrs. Shelby being a close second). He participates in the slave system but attempts to treat his slaves as humanely as possible; he knows that owning humans is wrong, but he feels he cannot change the entire institution or the country's laws.

St. Clare relates to Miss Ophelia the story of his family slave ownership. He and his twin brother, Alfred, grew up on their father and mother's Louisiana plantation. His father was a hard taskmaster, as was his brother; he and his mother felt for the slaves and helped them as best they could. On his parents' death, St. Clare attempted to co-manage the plantation with his brother but could not endure treating slaves so harshly. He took over instead the family banking interests in New Orleans. After telling his story, St. Clare repeats that, once slaves become educated, they will overthrow their masters and cause a "day of reckoning."

Alfred is, in many ways, the opposite of St. Clare. He is a shrewd businessman and a harsh taskmaster. St. Clare, on the other hand, takes after his mother, whose Christian charity he recollects fondly. Eva embodies a good number of the characteristics St. Clare attributes to his deceased mother.

Over dinner, St. Clare tells another story, this time of a slave named Scipio who fought his overseer and escaped the family plantation. St. Clare and others tracked him into the swamps, surrounded him, and shot him, but St. Clare interfered before the man could be killed. Scipio was then faithful to St. Clare for the rest of his life. Later, Eva tries to help Tom write a letter to Aunt Chloe. When the effort proves difficult, St. Clare steps in to help, and mails the letter immediately.

Although it appears that St. Clare "disciplined" his slave, as he tells his story it is revealed that his act of kindness cemented the bond between master and servant. This again shows the complicated morality of St. Clare—he is willing to go on the hunt for the fugitive slave, but once the man is captured, St. Clare wishes to protect him.

CHAPTER 20: TOPSY

St. Clare purchases an eight- or nine-year-old slave with very dark skin named Topsy, so that Miss Ophelia might teach her manners. Miss Ophelia is upset, feeling that there are too many slaves in the house already, and Topsy is dirty and "heathenish," but St. Clare convinces her to take Topsy on as a student.

Topsy serves as a foil to Eva, both in appearance (Topsy is very dark-skinned, and Eva very fair) and in behavior. Topsy embodies a total lack of Christian values, while Eva is so perfect as to seem an angel on earth.

When Miss Ophelia asks Topsy about her family and origins, Topsy replies that she has none; she has no knowledge of her past. Once, while doing chores, Miss Ophelia believes Topsy has stolen a bow belonging to Eva, and after threatening her, convinces Topsy to admit stealing it and other trinkets besides. Miss Ophelia later discovers that Eva never lost her bow, and Topsy admits to making up her confession to please her master. Exasperated, Miss Ophelia says she will have to whip Topsy, and St. Clare insinuates that his cousin is giving up on her ideals too easily.

An example of how slave attitudes and moralities are shaped by the reality of ownership. Topsy wishes only that her mistress does not harm her or yell at her—she will say what needs to be said in order to avoid punishment. Though this seems like lying to Miss Ophelia, it is in fact a natural defense born of years of mistreatment.

Miss Ophelia wonders that St. Clare lets Eva play with Topsy—she thinks it will harm Eva's development, but St. Clare believes Eva is in fact teaching and improving Topsy. When Topsy misbehaves and Miss Ophelia asks why, Topsy answers that she was "born wicked," and smiles.

Again, Miss Ophelia believes that it is not right for Eva to play with slaves—this is an example of northern hypocrisy, decrying slavery but wanting nothing to do with actual black men and women.

Miss Ophelia tries to teach Topsy the **Bible**, but Topsy learns the passages only by rote, and perhaps willfully misunderstands them, in order to anger her master. St. Clare finds Topsy amusing, and delights in Ophelia's difficulties "civilizing" her.

St. Clare's attitudes toward the Bible are, to a degree, reflected by Topsy's impudence. St. Clare delights in the difficulties Topsy presents for Miss Ophelia, and appears to understand that, to care for Topsy, Ophelia must learn to treat black people with compassion.

CHAPTER 21: KENTUCK

Back in Kentucky, on the Shelby plantation, Mrs. Shelby tells her husband that Tom's letter to Aunt Chloe has arrived. Mr. Shelby hints that business affairs have not improved much since Tom's sale but refuses to tell his wife specifics. Mrs. Shelby says she could teach music students to raise extra money, but Mr. Shelby finds this "degrading" and will not allow it.

Once more, Shelby will not allow Mrs. Shelby to work, as that would be degrading and gauche—even though Mrs. Shelby's extra income could speed Tom's return. Shelby puts preserving his "honor" higher than the well-being of a beloved slave.

As she cooks dinner, Chloe offers that she could be "let out" as a cook to another family, and her wages could be used to buy back Tom. Sam has reported to Chloe that a bakery in Louisville wants to hire a cook and would pay four dollars a week, a decent wage. At this rate Uncle Tom could be bought back in "four to five years."

Aunt Chloe is willing to help. The "renting" of slaves for commercial purposes was a common practice in the South. Wages earned by the slaves were entirely the property of the owner. Here, the Shelbys vow to use this money to repurchase Tom.

Mrs. Shelby likes the idea and plans to run it by Mr. Shelby. Young George arrives, pleased to have news from Tom, and eats a final meal with Aunt Chloe before she heads off to Louisville. As they eat, he writes to Tom with the news of the Kentucky estate.

George Shelby again appears in the "home" scene of Uncle Tom's cabin. It is notable that, in the entire book, he is shown eating only in the cabin and never in the Shelby's main house.

CHAPTER 22: "THE GRASS WITHERETH—THE FLOWERS FADETH"

Tom has lived in the St. Clare home for two years, and though he misses Kentucky he finds some comfort in his faith and in the good treatment he receives at the hands of his master. Tom receives George Jr.'s letter and is cheered by its contents. Eva and Tom grow closer, and the two of them take turns reading the **Bible** together, with Eva enjoying "Revelations and the Prophecies the most."

Although the Gospels and teachings of Jesus receive their due in the novel, Beecher Stowe places special emphasis on the book of Revelation, which details the end times when Jesus separates the Saved from the Wicked. This mirrors the kind of "reckoning" some, including St. Clare, believe will occur once slaves mount a revolt against their masters. Beecher Stowe is implying that only those who oppose the wickedness of slavery will be saved.

Reading from the **Bible** at the St. Clare summer home on Lake Ponchartrain, Eva believes she sees the lake as a "sea of glass mingled with fire," words from the Bible, and tells Tom she has seen angels and expects to be in heaven soon. Uncle Tom remembers that Miss Ophelia has spoken more frequently of Eva's cough, seemingly signaling an illness. Beecher Stowe hints that Eva might be too good for this earth.

This is the first mention of Eva's illness. Eva's saintliness, as mentioned by Beecher Stowe, is symbolic of her "being apart" from other children. The earth is fallen and Eva is not—therefore she must rejoin her Father—God—in heaven.

Miss Ophelia confides in St. Clare that she fears Eva is getting sick, and he responds that he's not convinced, but privately he fears that she might die, and recalls the ominous and wisely religious comments Eva has made to him in passing. Eva tells her mother that, since Miss Ophelia has taught Topsy to learn to read, she might teach Mammy. Although Marie thinks this is a distraction from Eva's other education, which involves learning to be a lady, Eva begins teaching Mammy anyway.

St. Clare refuses to believe that something could happen to Eva. Marie continues in her belief that slaves are to be treated firmly and without regard to their humanity—it would be worthless, in Marie's eyes, to teach Mammy to read, since reading will not help Mammy to do her chores and serve the St. Clare family.

CHAPTER 23: HENRIQUE

St. Clare's brother, Alfred, visits the Lake Ponchartrain home with his son Henrique. Henrique is a handsome, difficult, and aristocratic child who is enamored of his cousin Eva. Henrique's slave Dodo brings around the boy's horse, and though Dodo cleaned it earlier, the horse is dusty. Henrique reacts angrily, yells at Dodo, and slaps him in the face. When Tom tries to explain the situation, Henrique tells him to be quiet. Eva asks why Henrique is so cruel, and though Henrique believes slaves ought to be treated this way, he agrees not to injure Dodo again in Eva's sight.

Henrique has clearly inherited his father's manner of dealing with slaves. Eva does not appreciate Henrique's behavior, but he only promises not to be so cruel when Eva is looking—it might be inferred that he will continue in his cruelty when he is alone. Because slaves are not fully human, in Henrique's eyes, there is no reason to treat them fairly.

Alfred and Augustine watch this scene from afar. When Augustine quotes Thomas Jefferson, that "all men are created free and equal," Alfred counters that of course this isn't so, and that slaves must be "kept down." Augustine wonders whether a slave uprising can be "kept down" forever. They speak of the recent Haitian revolution. Alfred claims that Anglo-Saxons are the master race, born to lead, and Augustine replies, using this line of argument, that if whites reproduce with blacks long enough, soon slaves will contain white blood and will perhaps be more suited to rebellion.

The brothers keep up their long-standing discussion of the nature of slavery, and the best method for treating slaves. St. Clare repeats his assertion that, eventually, slaves will not be able to be kept in bondage forever, and their uprising will tear the country apart. Although St. Clare was not correct in predicting a national slave rebellion, the Civil War did in fact nearly destroy the country, and it resulted in the emancipation of all slaves.

Alfred does admit, however, that the slave system encourages young owners like Henrique to mistreat slaves, although he also believes that black slaves set an example of what not to do for their young white masters. Alfred asks Augustine why, considering his opinions, he does not simply free his slaves. Augustine replies that the world is already too prejudiced against blacks to make free life truly equal.

Another echo of the idea that slavery encourages a kind of absolute dictatorship on the part of owners. Such power is particularly troublesome when young people, who have nothing to temper their impulses, are permitted to direct the activities of slaves.

Eva and Henrique return from riding, and Augustine is concerned that his daughter has ridden too much for her health. Eva tells her cousin to love Dodo. Henrique responds that one may "like but not love" one's servants. Eva says that the **Bible** asks people to love all humankind. Henrique promises that he will try to love all, since he loves Eva.

Another intimation that Eva's health is perilous. Henrique again makes a promise to Eva, but this one also seems qualified and self-serving. When Eva speaks of universal love, she embodies the Christian ideal, as taught by Jesus, that man ought to love even the lowliest. Henrique wishes only to court Eva.

CHAPTER 24: FORESHADOWINGS

After their holiday on Lake Ponchartrain, Eva grows sicker. Marie initially does not believe Miss Ophelia's reports that Eva is unwell, thinking that only she, Marie, can be sick in the house. A doctor reports that Eva truly is sick, however, and Marie immediately changes, believing that she knew Eva's illness all along, and that it is part of her curse as a mother. St. Clare tries to find good news, but Marie is convinced that Eva's situation can end only in tragedy—a terrible burden for Marie.

Marie inverts most of Beecher Stowe's notions of universal motherhood—she is, in fact, a profoundly inattentive and unloving mother. Eva's affliction matters to her primarily as an excuse to wallow in her own (perceived) maladies. Yet Marie is not even aware of her self-centeredness, though St. Clare often jokes about it in her presence.

Eva's condition appears to improve for a time, although Miss Ophelia and the doctor do not believe it. Eva finds comfort in the **Bible**, believing she is returning "home" to Jesus, but she acknowledges that she will miss her father and the servants she loves. Eva tells Tom she knows why Jesus wished to sacrifice his life for man's sins. Eva feels she would die for those she loves. Tom believes Eva is meant for heaven.

An explicit link between Eva and Jesus Christ. Eva understands what it means to die for others. She also repeats the notion that, in going up to heaven, she will be returning home. In this way Eva is one of the novel's two Christ-figures, the other being Uncle Tom.

Eva tells this also to her father, who grows very upset. She asks him, too, why the slaves cannot earn their liberty, and Eva asks him to promise that, when she dies, he will free his slaves and work for the general freedom of all black people. St. Clare agrees to do this and fears greatly for Eva's life.

An important promise. It is the possibility of Eva's death that finally sways St. Clare to change his listless, fatalistic attitude toward slavery. From now on, he attempts to be more proactive in righting the wrongs of slavery.

CHAPTER 25: THE LITTLE EVANGELIST

Marie tells St. Clare that she is sick, and she needs a better doctor than the one who cares for Eva to attend to her. Eva, Tom, and Miss Ophelia return from a Methodist prayer service and Ophelia finds that Topsy has destroyed her cloth with a scissors. Ophelia, exasperated, wishes to whip her. St. Clare remarks that women can be quite violent, though Marie agrees with Ophelia. Ophelia wishes to give up the care of Topsy.

An illustration of Marie's childish "mothering." Indeed, it often appears that Eva is the mother and Marie the child. Miss Ophelia's desire to whip Topsy resonates with Marie—Ophelia has fallen into the trap of cruelty that all slave-owners eventually experience.

Eva, however, speaks to Topsy and asks her why she misbehaves. Topsy says no one can love her because she is black; Eva disagrees and says Ophelia will love her if she is good, but Topsy says Ophelia refuses even to touch her. Eva declares she loves Topsy, and Topsy cries, promising to try harder to be good. Ophelia, witnessing this exchange, acknowledges her prejudice against black people to St. Clare and vows to learn loving-kindness from Eva's example.

Only Eva is capable of speaking with Topsy as a person, and it is because Eva chooses to love Topsy unconditionally, in accordance with Christian law. And in doing so, Eva transforms Topsy. By giving unconditional love, Eva inspires others to give the same. This is an example to Miss Ophelia, whose understanding of Christian duty did not previously include the practice of universal Christian love. Thus Eva is Ophelia's teacher and her guide in moving past a rigidly moral Christianity to one based on love.

CHAPTER 26: DEATH

Despite having appeared to improve in recent weeks, Eva enters another downturn. Marie thinks that Topsy has stolen flowers from the house, but really Topsy only wishes to give them Eva to make her feel better. Eva is delighted by the artfully-arranged flowers and asks Topsy to fill a vase for her every day.

An instance of Topsy's change. She now desires to be Christian and to be "good." Despite this, however, many in the household, including Marie, believe that Topsy is still bent on mischief.

Marie tells Eva to wait before believing that Topsy has changed. Eva asks her mother whether she thinks Topsy can be a good Christian; Marie scoffs. Eva wishes to cut her hair off to give it to friends and loved ones after she is gone. She calls the servants and her family into her room, asking them to care for their eternal souls and follow the **Bible's** teachings. The slaves in particular are struck by her speech and sob intensely. Eva distributes locks of her hair.

Eva's lock of hair will factor into the novel later, when it is taken from Uncle Tom at Legree's plantation. It is a physical symbol of her universal love for mankind, and it happens coincidentally to evoke in Legree a memory of his mother, another Christian exemplar (like St. Clare's mother).

After the slaves leave, St. Clare complains that he has been dealt terrible blows in life, with his daughter's coming death being the most severe. Although St. Clare questions how Eva can love Jesus without having proof of his existence, Eva says that she believes in him completely. Tom often carries Eva outside and sings to her.

St. Clare asks the fundamental question of what is known as "theodicy," or the problem of God in the world: how can God exist if there is so much evil on earth? And if God does exist, why does he permit this evil to take place?

Tom and Miss Ophelia sense that Eva will die soon. For her part, Eva seems content. Tom, St. Clare, and the family gather by her bedside at midnight, and as she slips away she remarks that she sees only "love—joy—peace."

Eva's death marks a fundamental change in St. Clare and foreshadows significant changes for the family and for Uncle Tom.

CHAPTER 27: "THIS IS THE LAST OF THE EARTH"

The St. Clare house is in mourning, and Adolph and Rosa have shrouded Eva's room in white, where she lies. Topsy comes to pay her respects, and Miss Ophelia, moved by Topsy's apparent change (inspired by her contact with Eva), promises to love her and to help her become a good Christian. Marie helps with none of the preparations but lies weeping in her bedroom.

White is a color symbolically associated with Eva and evoking her purity. Topsy makes clear her desire to be good and to live according to Eva's example. Marie, however, is unchanged by Eva's death—Eva's Christian message has not touched her.

St. Clare returns to town and to his normal activities, but he has been emotionally devastated by Eva's death. Mammy worries about him. Marie claims he never cared for Eva at all. Tom goes in to St. Clare to tell him that Eva is now in heaven, where she belongs, and St. Clare breaks down, wondering how Tom can maintain his faith in such a trying time. Tom tells him he must simply love Jesus, as Jesus loves all mankind. Tom tells St. Clare to read the eleventh chapter of the book of John, which he does, aloud, and Tom leads St. Clare in prayer, soothing the grieving father somewhat.

St. Clare repeats his desire to believe in God and his trouble understanding how a benevolent God can allow suffering to persist in the world. Uncle Tom shows him how to pray as Jesus showed his disciples in the Sermon on the Mount and elsewhere in the Gospels. This draws another parallel between Tom's behavior and Christ's.

CHAPTER 28: REUNION

St. Clare's personality changes: he begins reading the **Bible** and attempts to increase his oversight of household activities. He promises to set Tom free and is surprised that Tom has no desire to remain in the St. Clare house, even though he is well-treated and surrounded by opulence. Tom states that his freedom is the most important thing a man can receive, and so even being a well-treated slave is not something he would choose for himself. Tom then promises to stay at the house until St. Clare becomes a practicing Christian.

Tom is finally granted the promise of his freedom—though we shall see that this promise is ill-fated and is not ultimately kept. Tom reiterates a version of what George Harris has said to Tom Loker, his wife, Mr. Wilson, and others: that nothing counts in life without freedom. Thus Tom cannot enjoy St. Clare's life of comfort—he must be free instead.

Miss Ophelia is "softened" after Eva's death, and Topsy has taken to reading a collection of **Bible** passages Eva gave her before her death. Miss Ophelia wishes to "purchase" Topsy so that she might free her and raise her as her charge in the north. St. Clare agrees and signs Topsy over to Ophelia. Ophelia asks if he has written into his will something regarding his slaves' freedom, should he die unexpectedly.

Miss Ophelia's foreshadowing of St. Clare's untimely death will unfortunately bear out. Eva's death has taught Miss Ophelia that she, too, must love Topsy, both as a Christian and as a woman in a mothering role.

St. Clare reads Tom a **Bible** passage from Matthew ending, "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it not to me." He is taken by its meaning. He plays a hymn, the *Dies Irae*, on the piano, and resolves to Miss Ophelia that he will proceed more bravely, and more actively, as a Christian in the future, though he worries what effect a general emancipation of slaves might have on the country.

St. Clare is moved by Christ's words. He wishes to make himself an example to others, and he hopes that freeing his slaves might make the world a better place, at least in some small way. Nevertheless he maintains his reservations regarding national emancipation—an issue that would prove intractable during and after the Civil War. And yet, is the difficulty of an issue a reason to perpetuate a clear evil such as slavery?

After making this resolution, St. Clare goes for a walk in the streets. Later that evening a commotion erupts, and it is revealed that St. Clare was stabbed and mortally wounded while trying to break up a fight at a café. St. Clare, dying, asks Tom to pray with him, and he announces that he is going home—his last word is "Mother."

Again the question of coincidence and timing in the novel might be raised—it does seem that St. Clare's death comes quickly after his conversion. But he is dead, Miss Ophelia's fears have come to pass, and it is not clear what will happen to Tom and his fellow slaves.

CHAPTER 29: THE UNPROTECTED

Beecher Stowe begins by saying that slaves whose kind master has died are left "unprotected" by any laws, left to the designs of those who wish to buy them. St. Clare's slaves, upon hearing of his death, are panicked with the exception of Tom, who prepares St. Clare for his funeral and thinks only of his devotion to his master, and of God's love.

Because St. Clare has not drafted a will, his slaves will be sold at auction according to Marie's desires. This is another instance of Tom's (and St. Clare's) poor luck, and another example of the way that slavery puts the slave's at the extreme mercy of others. It does not matter what has been promised to them; under the law, they have no rights.

About two weeks after the funeral, the slave Rosa asks Miss Ophelia to speak on her behalf, since Marie found Rosa trying on one of her dresses and has commanded she be thrashed. Miss Ophelia asks Marie to think of Rosa's "delicacy" and "good looks," but Marie is hard-hearted and will not budge, and Rosa is beaten.

If possible, Marie has somehow gotten crueler in the aftermath of her husband's and Eva's deaths. She thinks only of beating and berating her slaves—she will do nothing to help them.

Tom relates to Miss Ophelia the promise St. Clare made him, to grant him freedom on his death. Miss Ophelia again promises to speak to Marie, who, lazing in her room, says that Tom is too necessary a servant and will not be given his liberty. Despite Ophelia's efforts, declaring that this was St. Clare's desire, Marie refuses to give him freedom, and is unmoved by the idea that, when Tom is sold, he might end up with a bad owner. Marie complains that no one in the house ever takes her side or understands her view of the slaves.

Marie does not believe that such a thing as a "bad owner" can exist, despite all evidence to the contrary (and she herself, of course, is a terrible and unfeeling mistress). Tom is sold here not to pay off a family debt, as in the Shelbys' case, but simply owing to the whim of his mistress, who knows she can fetch a great deal for so steadfast and honest a worker as Tom.

CHAPTER 30: THE SLAVE WAREHOUSE

Beecher Stowe describes how slave warehouses in New Orleans appear clean from the outside, but inside are jammed tight with slaves waiting to be sold. Tom, Adolph, and others are kept there, and on the women's side we are introduced to Susan, a "respectably-dressed mulatto woman," and her daughter Emmeline, a pretty, fair-skinned slave of fifteen. Both have been taught to read and have been trained in religion. Beecher Stowe traces the financial transactions that will cause a New York firm of non-slave-owners to benefit from the sale of Susan and Emmeline.

Another scene of separation is about to take place between Susan, the mother, and her daughter Emmeline, who ends up as Simon Legree's "kept woman" on the plantation. The slave warehouse is an even crueler and more inhuman version of the slave auctions depicted earlier in the text, and Beecher Stowe takes pains to show that the North is embroiled in this cruelty because of its financial dealings with the South.

Susan and Emmeline hope to be sold together. Susan advices Emmeline to look "plain" so that families will buy her for housework. To fend off their sorrow the two of them sing a "funeral hymn" about arrival in heaven, the "goodly land." The next morning Mr. Skeggs, the manager of the warehouse, tells Emmeline to curl her hair, thus increasing her sale price.

Again it is hinted that a slave woman, this time Emmeline, is to look pretty so that she might be sold into prostitution. This is of course a horrifying prospect for Emmeline and her mother; thus Susan wishes that Emmeline appear homelier than usual, so that she might be employed in a house.

Tom is put up to auction and is sold to Simon Legree, a cruel plantation owner living by the Red River who does not believe that Tom managed the Shelby's farm in Kentucky. Emmeline is also sold to Legree. Susan, her mother, is sold to another, more refined gentleman. Beecher Stowe remarks that the New York firm profiting from the sale of Susan and Emmeline ought to be reminded of what they have done.

Legree is introduced. He is Tom's final owner, the cruelest owner in the novel, and its true villain. He does not wish to own slaves so much as to destroy them, and in Tom he meets his match—a slave devoted only to goodness, who cannot be corrupted by the presence of evil. Their showdown forms the core of the remainder of the novel.

CHAPTER 31: THE MIDDLE PASSAGE

Tom is shackled hand and foot on a boat running down the Red River. Beecher Stowe remarks that slaves educated and brought up in better circumstances, like Tom, can easily be thrown into terrible ones. On the ship are others of Legree's new slave purchases. Legree forces Tom to change into shabby clothes. Tom hides his Bible so it can't be thrown away. Legree tells Tom that he will take the place of Tom's religion. Legree says he will rule Tom completely, but Tom resists, quietly.

Tom knows that all he has now, in the hands of Simon Legree, is his faith in God. Indeed this faith becomes even more important during his trials on the Red River plantation. It seems that, as much as Legree beats and injures him, his faith can only grow stronger.

Legree sizes up Emmeline, whom he finds attractive and warns to look happy, so that he will continue enjoying her company. Legree comments aloud that his hands have become strong and hard from beating up on his slaves. Legree describes his method of tough punishment to a white stranger, who claims Legree has also become hard-hearted.

Even fellow whites, some of whom are supportive of slavery, find Legree's tactics excessive—these tactics tend to destroy his slaves, thus "using up" his property and leaving their owner at an economic disadvantage. Thus Legree's motivations cannot just be profits; they derive from a deeper immorality and desire to exercise power over other human beings.

The stranger argues to another gentleman that, if all slave-owners were as vile as Legree, the system would collapse under its own cruelty. Benevolent slave-owners are the ones who perpetuate the system under a veneer of civility, he continues. Emmeline hears the sad story of another slave who has been separated from her husband, and Beecher Stowe wonders whether Emmeline, and other slaves educated like her, and taught to believe in God, could manage to remain human under the strain of so much brutality.

This has been expressed before in the novel, but no place more forcefully than here. Slavery is a system of inherent inequality that has been given a decent enough reputation through the benevolence of certain masters. But the "peculiar institution"—as slavery was sometimes called—will be revealed for its true horrors, Beecher Stowe believes, if its cruelties are exhibited.

CHAPTER 32: DARK PLACES

Tom marches behind Legree's wagon with the other recently-purchased slaves. When Legree demands they sing a song, the slaves try a Methodist hymn, which Legree loathes. He tells them to change to something else, and they begin a nonsense tune. Legree, who has been drinking, notices that Emmeline, seated beside him in the wagon, doesn't wear earrings, and he promises to get her some back at the plantation.

This is an example of Legree's desire to strip religion away from his slaves, as he is afraid of it and its power to encourage slave resistance. Even a hymn is too much for Legree to bear, as he understands that many Christian hymns promise liberty in heaven. He doesn't want his slaves to think or hope, just to do what he tells them to do. So he has them sing nonsense.

Legree's plantation is in disrepair, with a ragged lawn and a dilapidated interior and exterior. He spends only enough money on it to keep it from falling apart, and uses it to turn a profit only. Legree checks in with Sambo and Quimbo, two of the "first mates" on the plantation, brutal slaves who enforce their master's wishes and punish fellow-slaves for their "laziness." Legree encourages the two to spy on and compete with one another. Tom is led to the slave quarters, and Emmeline is asked to stay in the plantation house with Legree.

Legree's plantation is a physical symbol of his moral decay. His "associates" Sambo and Quimbo, black slave overseers, are nearly as wicked as he is, and have been trained to injure their fellow slaves rather than help them. This is perhaps the most tragic example of slavery: that its cruelty might be taught to other black people, who for a little power or better treatment in turn perpetuate the system.

Beecher Stowe relates the picking of cotton to a slow form of torture. Tom watches as the slaves come in, broken and exhausted, from the fields. He is given his ration of corn meal for the week, and despite his tiredness he tries to spread the word of God among the slaves, who are mostly too feeble to believe that the Lord could abide with them there. Tom has a pleasant dream of Eva reading the **Bible** near Lake Ponchartrain and wonders if she has visited him in his sleep.

Eva is now a vision of religious salvation for Tom, and a symbol of earthly goodness toward which he might strive. Beecher Stowe takes pains to discuss the physical drudgery of picking cotton, as some have argued that the work really isn't so difficult. In fact it is back-breaking, and Legree demands more of his slaves than is possible to complete in a day.

CHAPTER 33: CASSY

Though Tom is tired and uncomfortable, he quickly adapts to his work on the plantation. Legree notices Tom's abilities and resolves to "harden" him to make him suitable for overseeing other slaves. Tom notices a new women, beautiful and with fine features, walking outside; she is jeered at by some of the slaves. She works quickly in the fields and appears not to belong in them. Tom helps another old woman, Luce, by placing some of his cotton into her bag to make sure she ends up with enough to meet her daily quota and avoid punishment, but Sambo notices her slowness and stabs her with a pin. Tom continues putting cotton in her bag.

Just like Shelby and St. Clare, Legree recognizes Tom's intelligence and inner strength. Unlike the first two owners, however, he wishes only to use Tom's abilities to help discipline the other slaves. Tom's martyrdom is foreshadowed here, as he helps a tired, enfeebled slave by putting picked cotton in her bag so she won't get punished for failing to meet her quota, risking his own wellbeing in the process.

The fine-featured woman tells Tom he must be new to the plantation, otherwise he wouldn't help his fellow slave. Sambo seeks to whip her but, realizing that it is Cassy, he goes away sheepishly. Sambo has seen Tom aiding Luce, and Legree resolves that the way he will "harden" Tom is by forcing him to whip her.

This is the first test for Tom on the Legree plantation. If he is willing to whip a fellow slave, perhaps he can be trained as an overseer and made to manage the plantation like Sambo and Quimbo.

Tom refuses the command to whip Luce, saying he will do any work himself but will not hurt another. In response, Legree beats and kicks him mercilessly, and announces that Tom's soul belongs to him. At this Tom cries that his soul will always remain his, no matter what they do to his body. He is beaten further and dragged back to his quarters.

A turning point in the novel. Tom will not abandon his faith, even in the face of terrible physical harm. He says that his soul will always remain his. This Christian teaching provides him the strength he needs to stand up to Legree and his associates, and it allows him to assert a degree of freedom even within his slavery. His body may not be his, but his soul is.

CHAPTER 34: THE QUADROON'S STORY

Tom lies back in his quarters, bloodied and in pain. Cassy arrives with water and tends to Tom, moving him onto cool, wet sheets. Cassy tells Tom to stop resisting Legree, as it will only end in Tom's destruction. He responds that he must try, otherwise they all will become inhuman and cruel to their fellow slaves, like Sambo and Quimbo.

Cassy has been "broken" by Legree; she no longer hopes for freedom, nor is she able to believe in God. Tom, however, argues that to abandon his faith would be to abandon everything. His faith not only keeps him alive—it keeps alive the hope that there is something beyond the slaves' present suffering.

Cassy reads to Tom the scene of Jesus' crucifixion. Tom says that the Lord challenges us with suffering but still loves us, despite all. Cassy tells her life story, beginning with her youth. She was born on a luxurious estate to a free white man and a slave woman and was educated well, yet when the white owner died Cassy was listed as property and bought by a young man.

An obvious parallel between the trials (or "passion") of Jesus Christ and Tom's trials at the Legree plantation. It is interesting to note that Legree's temptations of Tom—his desire to offer Tom power over his fellow slaves—mirrors the temptations the devil presented to Jesus in the wilderness.

Her owner took her as a lover and said that marriage between them was legally impossible, but that they could live as though married. Cassy believed him and they had two children, Henry and Elise. But her lover met a white woman, fell for and married her, and sold Cassy and their two children. The man who bought her again took her as a lover, and claimed that he had tricked the previous lover into falling in love with the white woman so as to abandon Cassy.

Cassy's story is all-too-common. Though her marriage to a white man resembled *typical white marriage in all ways, she had no actual legal rights and her husband was eventually convinced that his life would be easier if he married a white woman. Cassy's children are torn from her, initiating her withdrawal from life.*

After witnessing her new owner treating Henry harshly, Cassy "snaps" and falls into a swoon. When she awakes she finds she has been sold to a brothel. There she meets a man, Stuart, who buys her, but Henry cannot be found and Elise is owned by someone who does not wish to sell for a reasonable price. She has a child with Stuart but, despairing of her situation, kills it with laudanum, because she does not wish to bring it into a life of bondage. Cassy says that, for this reason, she can no longer believe in God's charity, but Tom asks her to try to do so, and Cassy leaves for the evening.

Cassy's crime, the murder of her child, is of course a violation of God's law and of the universal motherhood the novel has established. But it is not so unthinkable considering Cassy's circumstances, and Tom is convinced that Cassy can be saved—that she can be returned to Christian belief, if she only chooses to value her life and work for her freedom.

CHAPTER 35: THE TOKENS

The chapter begins in Legree's sitting room, where he is complaining of the complications introduced by Uncle Tom's refusal to cooperate with his demands. Cassy comes into the room and Legree believes she has returned to live with him, but she replies that she would rather live in filth, and that she "has the devil" in her. Legree, who is superstitious, agrees that she is a woman possessed. He notes that Cassy has become more "irritable," even a bit crazed, during her time at the Legree plantation.

Interestingly, although Legree is in many ways identified with the devil, Cassy is the one who claims to be crazed and possessed. It is revealed that Legree is superstitious; Beecher Stowe links this superstition with his total renunciation of religion. This is another way that Beecher Stowe argues that it is true religious faith that gives a person an unassailable core. Legree lacks such a core, and so is prey to superstitions (and a penchant for cruelty). His superstitions and fears will be of great importance later in the novel.

Cassy reveals that she has come to see Legree to argue with him over Tom's treatment. Legree feels he will eventually "break" Tom, but Cassy says it won't be done—Tom's faith is too strong. Sambo arrives, showing the lock of Eva's hair that Tom has kept, and claiming that it is a form of witchcraft. Fearful, Legree demands it be burned.

Cassy has come to believe that Tom's efforts, though not resulting in his freedom, will preserve his soul. She believes, in other words, that Tom will win out over Legree in the next life. Legree has yet to admit this, though he fears greatly the bit of Eva's hair that is found on Tom's person.

Legree's life story is briefly sketched. His father was a difficult, tyrannical man, and his religious mother attempted to raise him according to Christian teachings, but Legree became a sailor and chose a life of "brutality" and greed. On his mother's death, he received a letter from her containing a lock of her hair, and he has been haunted by her memory ever since.

Eva's lock of hair is compared to another one, Legree's mother's, given to Legree on his return from a sea voyage. Legree's mother, like St. Clare's, is a religious exemplar, but unlike St. Clare Legree does not uphold his mother's Christian teachings. Instead he fears even the idea of her, as if he has a hidden guilt for his behavior.

Legree is shaken by the coincidence of Eva's and his mother's hair-locks, thinking that the hair recovered from Tom might be his mother's hair, "back from the dead." He hears Emmeline singing a hymn in another room and grows scared, asking Sambo and Quimbo to keep him company. Cassy leaves the three of them, carousing together, and heads to Emmeline's room.

Legree's response to fear is "carousing," or drinking. He seeks, essentially, to make himself senseless with alcohol in order to escape his fear. A religious person, instead, might pray and face his or her fears. But Legree can only hide from them in drink.

CHAPTER 36: EMMELINE AND CASSY

Cassy enters to find a scared Emmeline, who thought Cassy might have been Legree. Emmeline asks Cassy if she has ever thought of or tried escape, and Emmeline vows she could make her way through the swamps. Emmeline says she does not wish to drink Legree's brandy, as he would like, and Cassy says she ought to get used to it. Cassy says she herself now "cannot live without it." Emmeline wishes she had never been born, and Cassy says killing oneself in these circumstance is just as cruel as the cruelty foisted upon the slaves by Legree.

This is an honest discussion of suicide among slaves. Although their spirits might be very low, suicide remains a major taboo, and tends to crop up in the novel only among mothers who have lost their children (like Cassy). Emmeline believes that suicide is un-Christian and inhuman.

Legree consumes an impressive amount of alcohol in order to drown his superstitious fears. He has a dream where the locks of hair are following him, "whispering" to him. Cassy appears in the dream, as does an image of his mother removing a veil. The next morning, Cassy recommends that a hung-over Legree not too work Tom so hard, since it would ruin Legree's investment. Cassy repeats that Legree will not be able to break Tom.

Cassy begins the ruse that will result ultimately in her freedom. Legree cannot stand the thought of his mother, and her "appearance" to him is enough to plant a seed of doubt in his mind—a fear that will keep him from heading into the attic.

Legree finds Tom and tells him to "beg pardon" for his impudence the previous day. Tom refuses, since he believes he acted correctly in refusing to whip Lucy. Tom repeats that, although Legree can harm his body, he cannot take Tom's soul. Tom says he will have Jesus' help. Legree strikes Tom but Cassy interferes, saying that beating him would make him useless in the fields. Legree tells Tom to get to work, promising not to forget his recalcitrance. Cassy warns Tom that Legree will follow through on his threats.

Cassy must remind Legree that harming Tom is of no benefit to him. After all, Tom would work in the fields and do as he is told. The only thing he will not do is harm another human being. But this is not enough for Legree—he must remake Tom completely and stamp out his Christian goodness. Such total control is, of course, impossible in Tom's case because his faith puts his soul beyond Legree's reach.

CHAPTER 37: LIBERTY

Tom Loker awakes in a Quaker household under the supervision of Aunt Dorcas, who is tending to his wounds. Loker announces that, if George, Eliza, and Harry are still there, they ought to get across the lake quickly, to safety in Canada. He hopes they do make it safely to Canada, despite his previous convictions. Tom has taken up trapping and otherwise helping in this Quaker settlement after recovering from his fever; he finds the Quakers to be "nice people."

Loker is an example of a "convert," if not to the Quaker faith than to Christian teaching more generally. He recognizes that his cruelties toward George and his party were not met with similar cruelty but rather with kindness. This causes him to attempt to change his ways. Just as Topsy responds to universal love with love, so does Loker.

George, Eliza, and Harry travel to Sandusky, near the lake. Eliza has cut her hair in order to pass undetected. George worries that, because they have come so close to freedom, he will be crushed if they do not make it. Eliza feels that God has intended for them to be free, and George says he too is growing convinced of this.

George and Eliza grow cautiously optimistic that they might in fact reach freedom. George is starting to believe that his liberty is possible, and this enables him to place his faith in a divine power.

They travel in disguise. Mrs. Smyth, a Quaker from Canada, pretends to be Harry's aunt, and Eliza pretends to be a man. Marks is at the lake-docks but does not notice the party. The boat sweeps away and approaches Amhertsberg, Canada. On the Canadian shore they sing a hymn of praise and land at a missionary's home. Though they have no money and no land, Beecher Stowe argues that they have the greatest gift one can receive—their complete freedom to control their lives and keep their family intact.

Beecher Stowe refuses to recognize the argument that slaves, even well-treated slaves, are better off in bondage than free. There can be nothing without freedom—she places this idea in the mind of George Harris and Uncle Tom. Even when they arrive in Canada without a penny, they are "rich" in freedom and able to live life as they choose, as a family.

CHAPTER 38: THE VICTORY

Beecher Stowe argues that it is more difficult, and the sign of a true martyr, to cling tenaciously to life, day after day, than to give over to a glorious death. Tom is put back to work even though he is still gravely injured. Tom finds it increasingly hard to read the **Bible** in his minimal spare time.

Though Tom is willing to work in the fields, despite his injuries, he finds it very difficult not to be able to read at night. The Bible is his lifeline to God's word. It enables him to carry on in the face of immense hardship.

Legree comes to him one night and asks if Tom's religion does him any good now. Tom claims that he will "hold on" to his faith even if no one comes to his aid. Legree's speech, his "atheistic taunts," have wounded but not destroyed his confidence, and he rises later to sing robustly a hymn of praise to God. This buoys his confidence and allows him to bear the horrors of the plantation.

This is perhaps Tom's lowest moment in the novel. But even when he feels he might have been physically defeated by Legree, he does not abandon his faith. The hymn he sings rouses his spirits and enables him to continue at his work.

Legree discusses Tom's more cheerful mood with Sambo, who suggests that Tom might wish to run away. Legree tells him to prepare for such a plan. Legree hears Tom singing a hymn again that night and whips him, but Beecher Stowe says this can only damage "the outer man," and not Tom's soul. Even while being beaten, Tom experiences love for his fellow slaves and thinks of their plight.

An explicit link to Jesus Christ. Tom thinks only of others even as his body is beaten and bloodied. This behavior seems almost impossible to believe—such goodness is seldom seen on earth, which of course makes Tom's sacrifice all the more dear (and all the more Christ-like).

Cassy comes to Tom later and tells him that she has drugged Legree via his brandy—they can murder Legree with an axe and escape to freedom, perhaps even freeing the other slaves. Tom responds that such an act would be evil: he cannot fight wickedness with wickedness. Instead, they must "love their enemies." Tom says that if Emmeline and Cassy can escape without harming Legree, they ought to try, but Tom will not go with them—he is going to "work among the poor souls" of the plantation until he must go to heaven. Cassy, bolstered by her conversation with Tom, decides to try to escape.

Another important turning point in the text. Tom very easily could have killed Legree in his sleep and escaped to Kentucky and saved Legree's slaves from his cruelty. But murder is wrong; it says so in the Bible. Tom will not go against the Bible's teachings, even if they might help to further his position on earth or lessen his suffering or even help others. Tom will not do evil even to stop evil. He is purely good. He will stay on the plantation to serve as a martyr for others.

CHAPTER 39: THE STRATAGEM

Cassy works out an escape plan. Legree's house has a "garret," or attic area, consisting of unused rooms and clutter. Once, Legree imprisoned a slave woman there until she died. Her ghost, some claim, still haunts the space. Cassy's room is under the garret, and she tells Legree that she cannot sleep there anymore because of all the noise coming from the garret late at night. Legree is terrified by this "news."

Cassy's plan is quite brilliant. By establishing the garret as a "no-go zone" within the house, for Legree and his men, she creates a hiding-place that will allow Emmeline and her to eventually slip out undetected.

Beecher Stowe argues that those who do not have faith in God tend to be the most superstitious. Later, after turning over the garret's haunting in his mind, Legree asks Cassy if she believes in spirits, and she answers, cunningly, that "it doesn't matter" what she thinks. Cassy continues hinting that the garret is haunted. Cassy has prepared the garret so that, its windows open, it allows wind in and douses the candle-lights in the house. Legree, terrified, refuses to go into the garret, where Cassy has stored a large portion of her and Emmeline's belongings.

Cassy encourages Legree in his superstitious thinking and directs her cunning toward her escape. Tom has given her a "new lease on life," and has encouraged her to use her talents to find her freedom. It is important to note, too, that this is the second time Tom has welcomed another's escape while refusing to free himself (he said the same to Eliza back in Kentucky).

Cassy takes a trip with Legree to another town near the Red River, memorizing routes she and Emmeline might travel. One night, she and Emmeline make it seem like they have escaped into the swamp. As Legree and his overseers search for them, Cassy teals a roll of Legree's money and she and Emmeline hide in the garret. Cassy knows that Legree will be too frightened to search for them there, and that any noise they make he will attribute to the "ghost."

Cassy's plan is put into action. Because the swamps cannot be traversed, they head into them for a while and then disappear in the garret. Cassy has been able to store provisions there, making eventual escape possible. Money, which is meaningless to slaves, becomes meaningful to the escapees and is therefore symbolic of a transition to free life.

CHAPTER 40: THE MARTYR

Legree is incensed at Emmeline and Cassy's disappearance, and he takes his anger out on Tom, who is overjoyed at the news. Friends of Legree's continue to hunt the swamps for the pair. In the garret, Cassy says she only wishes to escape to freedom because of Emmeline—Cassy herself feels she has nothing to live for. Emmeline replies that she will love Cassy, even if Cassy is not capable of returning this affection. Emmeline tells her to put faith in God.

Emmeline's love for Cassy creates another mother-daughter pairing in the novel. In this case, however, Emmeline is the one to initiate the affection and to convince Cassy that all will be well. In this sense the Eliza-Harry relationship is reversed: it is Emmeline, the daughter, who urges Cassy, the mother, on as they escape.

Legree tells Quimbo to beat Tom until he reveals any knowledge of Emmeline and Cassy's escape. Tom knows where they are hiding but vows silently never to give up their whereabouts. Quimbo grabs Tom, and Legree announces that he has decided to murder him. Tom refuses to speak. Legree vows to "conquer or kill" Tom. Tom says he would give anything to Legree to help save him, and that Legree must not bring sin upon himself. Legree grows even angrier and strikes Tom.

Even when Legree vows to destroy Tom, Tom desires primarily that Legree not sin so that his (Legree's) soul remains pure. This is, once again, a nearly unbelievable instance of godliness. Tom's behavior becomes truly saintly.

Legree encourages Sambo and Quimbo to beat Tom mercilessly. They realize they are doing something "wicked" and hope that this sin will fall upon their master and not them. They tend to Tom's wounds as he prepares to die and ask him about Jesus. Tom tells them they can be saved, and that he would give his own life to "bring them to Christ." Sambo and Quimbo wonder how they have not believed in Jesus' grace before.

Sambo and Quimbo's "conversion" to Christianity mirrors the conversation Jesus has with the robbers while crucified on the cross at Golgotha. The Christ-Tom parallel is thus further clarified in this passage.

CHAPTER 41: THE YOUNG MASTER

George Shelby, Jr., arrives at the Legree plantation. His father has recently passed away, Mrs. Shelby is now manager of the estate, and after hearing only that Tom has been sold at public auction, George headed south to inquire after him. The search took several months. George now asks Legree where Tom can be found. Legree points to the shed, where Tom is dying.

Just as George Shelby, Jr., arrived late when Tom was being sold, and only saw him being carted away, he arrives too late to save Tom from his mortal injuries.

Cassy sneaks out from the garret, briefly, to hear about Tom and breaks down crying—her faith is Jesus is somewhat restored. George meets with Tom, who is greatly pleased that George has remembered him, and George begs that Tom get better. Tom says not to worry—he is going to a finer place. Tom asks George not to mention to Chloe his current condition.

Again, Tom's concerns are only the concerns of others. He is happy that George is healthy and robust, and he does not wish to worry Chloe with news of his terrible demise.

George curses Legree but Tom says he must not do so. Tom passes away, and George, Sambo, and Quimbo prepare to bury him, since Legree says he "does not sell dead slaves." George tells Legree he will take up the matter in the courts. Legree replies that, since there are no white witnesses, the case would not stand up. The three bury Tom on a low hill in an unmarked grave. Sambo and Quimbo ask for George to buy them from Legree, but George says he cannot and promises to do what is in his power, as one man, to help the cause of slaves.

Tom asks that George not condemn the sinner, just as the Quakers promise that they would help a sinner just as soon as they would help an escaping slave. This is Christian love in action. George does what he can to bury Tom, but Tom's true memorial is found back in Kentucky, at the cabin that was the center of life at the Selby plantation.

CHAPTER 42: AN AUTHENTIC GHOST STORY

Legree is driven slowly crazy by the noises from the garret and begins drinking more heavily. Cassy puts on Legree's mother's shroud and visits Legree in the night, scaring him even more. His drinking increases until finally he is on his deathbed. Then Cassy and Emmeline escape, with Cassy pretending to be a Creole woman and Emmeline her servant.

Cassy and Emmeline use Legree's drunkenness—a stand-in for his immoral nature—for cover. Here a parallel might be drawn to George Harris's escape earlier in the text. Cassy is fair-skinned enough to pass as foreign.

Cassy and Emmeline get onto a steamship heading upriver, and while on it run into George Shelby, Jr.. Madame de Thoux, a French lady, and her twelve-year-old daughter also meet Shelby, Jr. on the boat and de Thoux announces, after speaking with Shelby, Jr. about the goings on around his plantation in Kentucky, that she is George Harris' long-lost sister. Shelby, Jr. tells her that George Harris, Eliza, and their son have fled to Canada, and de Thoux rejoices. De Thoux reports that she was purchased, sold to a man in the West Indies, given her freedom, and married to him. Her husband recently died, and now she is looking to find her brother. When Shelby, Jr. tells of how the Shelbys originally purchased Eliza, from a man named Simmons, Cassy swoons, realizing that Eliza is her long-lost daughter.

Another of the novel's rather fortuitous coincidences. De Thoux's story makes clear that she was not sold into prostitution in New Orleans but was instead one of the lucky few to be cared for and, eventually, married. But de Thoux's life thus far has been incomplete, as she has been made to live far from her family. Her reunion with George Harris in the coming chapters allows her to regain the family ties that slavery had forced her to give up for lost.

CHAPTER 43: RESULTS

George Harris, Eliza, and Harry now live, after having been free five years, in a small apartment outside Montreal. One day, a local Amhertsberg pastor arrives with two women, and de Thoux reveals that she is Emily, George's sister. Cassy then reveals she is Eliza's mother. All pray and sob together. Over the next several days Cassy softens considerably, and her faith in life is slowly restored. De Thoux tells George that her husband has left her a fortune, and George asks that he might receive an education. They all move to France along with Emmeline, and George receives a degree from a French university.

It turns out that Eliza is Cassy's daughter—again, the coincidence is perhaps not particularly realistic, but in knitting together these two families, Beecher Stowe underscores the importance of familial love and the notion that, ultimately, this love must triumph over wickedness, at least for a lucky few. If slavery is banished, far more slaves will be reunited, either on earth or in heaven.

After returning to the United States ("political troubles" having started in France), George writes a letter to a friend arguing that he must take the side of black people and champion their freedom. He wishes for an "African nationality" and hopes that a free black republic might be established in Africa. George argues that he cannot help his enslaved comrades in America as of yet, since the institutions are too complex and difficult to detangle, but a free and Christian African nation might allow for the betterment and development of all black persons.

George's letter lays out a plan for the betterment of black people through the creation of a free state in Africa. This state, Liberia, was in fact established by abolitionists. George is less clear on how to deal with the problem of universal emancipation, and indeed this question remain unsolved well into and after the American Civil War, when legal slavery was abolished but Jim Crow laws insured slave-like conditions for many throughout the South.

Miss Ophelia and Topsy move to Vermont, where Topsy becomes a Christian and eventually serves as a missionary in Africa. Madame de Thoux also finds Cassy's long-lost son, years later, who joins Cassy Emmeline, and the Harrises in Africa.

Topsy, too, participates in African liberation and finds that her abilities are well-suited to work overseas.

CHAPTER 44: THE LIBERATOR

Shelby, Jr. returns home. Although Mrs. Shelby fears that something has happened to Tom, Aunt Chloe still plans for his safe return and lays out the money she has earned on the table. Shelby, Jr. enters and tells all that Uncle Tom has died, and Mrs. Shelby and Chloe mourn his passing. Within a month, Shelby, Jr. grants all the slaves on the plantation their freedom, but they claim they wish to remain on the estate and work. Shelby, Jr. announces he will pay them and they will be free to leave as they wish.

George is a "liberator," but his offer to have the slaves remain on the estate—though well-intentioned—smacks of the sharecropping system which will come to define black-white relations in the South for many years after the Civil War. That George allows them freedom of movement means, at least in theory, that all are free.

Shelby, Jr. gives a small speech telling all of them to remember Uncle Tom and to "think of their freedom," and of Uncle Tom's Christian example, when they pass by his **cabin**.

This is the formal establishment of Uncle Tom's cabin as a symbol for Tom's Christian goodness, and for family and home.

CHAPTER 45: CONCLUDING REMARKS

Beecher Stowe acknowledges that, although the story is fiction and a composite of different tales, it is based heavily in fact. Eliza, Uncle Tom, Old Prue, Legree, and others all come from stories Beecher Stowe has heard from others. St. Clare, too, has "parallels" in society, as do the Quakers.

Beecher Stowe makes clear that though her story has been dramatized, the cruelties of slavery have not been exaggerated, and the activities of many in the novel have a basis in real life. She wants her readers at the time to know that the awfulness of slavery that she depicts and makes you feel through the magic of fiction is in fact very real.

Beecher Stowe says she has attempted to present slavery "fairly," showing its "best" and worst aspects, although she fears the worst is impossible to depict. The author directly addresses readers in the North, asking them to consider all that she has written, and to acknowledge that they are economically bound-up in the system of "southern" slaveholding.

In fact, if anything, the novel has not shown the worst examples of just how brutal and horrifying the conditions of slavery can be. Beecher Stowe wishes that all who read the text are "awakened" to the wickedness of the system. She hopes none will be able to make excuses for its existence.

Beecher Stowe says that establishing Liberia is a step forward, but slavery must be ended in the US, and a solution must be drawn up to deal with the education and economic fate of those who are freed. She gives examples of freed men and women who have made lives for themselves after slavery. She announces that a "Christian country" like the US will be called to account for its actions, both in the North and in the South, otherwise the wrath and judgment of God will fall upon the entire nation.

A final appeal to all those who read the novel. Beecher Stowe concludes, simply, that slavery is un-Christian, and the United States was conceived in accordance with Christian Scripture. In order to make the country more Christian, and to avoid the wrath of God, slavery must be abolished.

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