**BELOVED**

**Brief Plot Synopsis:**

Published in 1987, Toni Morrison’s Beloved is one of the finest slave narratives written by a Black woman, where the main character is also a Black woman, a mother named Sethe. The book won the Pulitzer Prize in 1988 and remains a brilliant tale where the gruesome and inhumane reality of slavery in America is represented, primarily through the life of Sethe. The novel is divided into three parts, each beginning with a description of situation in the house, 124.

The story begins with an introduction to 124, stating how it is “haunted”. It is the house in Ohio that is haunted by the spirit of a baby. Sethe and her daughter, Denver, are the only ones staying in that house since Baby Suggs, Sethe's mother-inlaw who is dead, and Howard and Buglar - Sethe's two sons - ran away. Sethe sleeps with the gravedigger in return for engravings on the headstone for her baby. When she returns home, she finds Paul D, an old friend from Sweet Home, at her porch. In Sweet Home, there was Paul D, Paul F, Paul A, Halle, Sixo, and Sethe, the only girl. Baby Suggs worked at Sweet Home as well, but Halle, her son and Sethe's husband, bought her freedom. Sethe tells Paul D the schoolteacher's nephews stole her milk and how the schoolteacher whipped her back, creating a chokecherry tree. Paul D scares the spirit out of 124. Paul D brings them to the carnival and while returning, Sethe observes their shadows and has hopes for a family with Paul D. however, when they return, they find a young woman sleeping on a stump in front of 124. Her name is Beloved, but she is too tired to answer any of the other questions. Beloved recovers and spends all the time in the house watching Sethe, never taking her eyes off her. Denver predicts that Beloved is her sister, the dead baby whose spirit haunts the house. Baby Suggs used act as the preacher of the community in Ohio, creating a cathartic environment for the ex-slaves. Sethe takes Denver and Beloved to the Clearing, where Baby Suggs gave her sermons. She has a flashback to when she Stamp Paid ferried her across the river and her arrival at 124. Paul D falls prey to Beloved’s seduction, but later, he asks Sethe to have a baby with him, strengthening their relationship. Unfortunately, Stamp Paid finds the newspaper article about Seine's crime and shows it to Paul D. Even after Sethe’s explanation, he leaves Sethe and 124.

Part two of Beloved states how 124 is “loud”. Stamp Paid feels he has driven Paul D away from 124 and feels bad that he ruined a chance at happiness for Sethe. He tries to go to 124 to apologize but he cannot get himself to knock on the door. Peeking through the window, he sees Beloved and wonders who she is. Sethe decides to let go of the past and have some fun by going ice skating with Denver and Beloved. After she hears Beloved hum a song she only sang to her children, Sethe realizes Beloved is her daughter. Stamp Paid finds out Paul D is staying in a cellar of a church and is mad at the community for not offering him a place to stay. Sethe talks to Beloved in her mind, telling her about life in Sweet Home and their plan for escape. In one memory, Sethe overhears the schoolteacher tell his pupils to list her animal and human characteristics. Paul D remembers the plan between the slaves at Sweet Home to escape. He regrets waiting to ponder on the decision to escape or not. When the time comes to leave, Paul A goes missing and Paul D and Sixo get caught by white men. Sixo goes insane and leaps at the armed white man, who refuses to waste a slave by killing him. The schoolteacher burns Sixo to death. Stamp Paid finds Paul D and the church to apologize for the things he told him about Sethe. He tells the story of his wife, Vashti, who slept with their owner and why he changed his name from "Joshua" to "Stamp Paid." He also asks Paul D about Beloved, which makes him realize that he should return to Sethe.

Part three of Beloved states how the house, 124, was “quiet”. Beloved and Sethe develop a very close relationship that excludes Denver. Their relationship was healthy and playful at first, but turns sour when Beloved becomes defiant. Beloved is angry at Sethe for leaving her, refusing to accept any excuse from her. Sometimes Sethe tries to assert herself, but Beloved's temper grows even worse. Nobody could discipline her, so they just relented to her. The inhabitants of 124, except for Beloved, who grows bigger, begin to starve because Sethe loses her job at the restaurant. Denver goes to Lady Jones to ask for a job because she needed to take care of her mother. Lady Jones, as well as other women in the community, drops off food at 124. Not wanting to rely on other's kindness, Denver goes to the Bodwins to ask for a job. She tells Janey, the housekeeper at the Bodwins, about Beloved and what she is doing to her mother. The word gets out in the community that the spirit of murdered baby has come to 124 to get revenge on Sethe. All the women come together to drive the spirit out of 124. When they arrive, the women's singing reminds Sethe of the community she experienced when she first arrived in Ohio. Mr. Bodwin arrives at 124 to pick up Denver for her job. Sethe mistakes him for the schoolteacher and tries to kill him. All the women try to stop her. After the commotion dies down, they find that Beloved has disappeared. Paul D goes to 124 to tell Sethe that he is coming back for good. Before long, the community forgets about Beloved like she is a bad dream. Those who knew her well, such as Sethe, Denver, and Paul D, stop thinking about her, but do not forget her.