

# Beloved: Toni Morrison [B2]

Questo romanzo della Premio Nobel afroamericana è dedicato alla memoria delle oltre 60 milioni di morti a causa della tratta atlantica degli schiavi. Un resoconto dell'eredità della schiavitù nel XIX secolo.



Inspired by a true story, [Beloved](#) is a profound and [disturbing](#) novel set in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1873. Its protagonist is Sethe, a [former](#) slave, a mother and a murderer, who now lives alone with her eighteen-year-old daughter Denver. Sethe's terrible secret is that she deliberately killed her [firstborn](#) while trying to escape from a cruel slave owner.

## INHERITED TRAUMA

Each of [Beloved](#)'s three parts begins with a [quote](#) about Sethe and Denver's home, 124 Bluestone Road, which is [haunted](#) by the malevolent spirit of Sethe's dead daughter. Part one begins with: "124 was [spiteful](#). Full of a baby's [venom](#)". While Sethe is now a free woman, she is imprisoned by her traumatic memories. She [pictures](#) the past as if it were a physical presence. Denver appears to encounter her mother's past too, [even though](#) she did not experience it. "If you go there — you who was never there — if you go there and stand in the place where it was, it will happen again; it will be there, waiting for you [...] Even though it's all over — over and done with — it's going to always be there waiting for you." "– Se lì ci vai tu, tu che non ci sei mai stata – se vai lì e ti trovi nel posto dov'era prima – succederà di nuovo. E' lì per te, che ti aspetta. Perciò, non andarci mai." One day Paul D arrives at their house. He was enslaved in the same place as Sethe and her family. The spirit does not like his presence and makes the house [shake](#). When that does not dissuade him, it physically manifests itself as a young woman called [Beloved](#). This was the word [carved](#) into the [tombstone](#) of Sethe's dead child.

## THE ANGRY DEAD

Part two of the book begins with: "124 was [loud](#)". Paul D has left Sethe's house after discovering Sethe's crime. A local man called [Stamp Paid](#), another [former](#) slave, can hear the supernatural noises around the house very [loudly](#). He considers the ways in which slavery dehumanises everyone who comes into contact with it, including the white slave owners. "White people believed that whatever the manners, under every dark skin was a jungle. Swift unnavigable waters, swinging screaming baboons, sleeping snakes, red gums ready for their sweet white blood. [...] But it wasn't the jungle blacks brought with them to this place. [...] It was the jungle white folks planted in them. And it grew. It spread [...] until it invaded the whites who had made it. [...] The screaming baboon lived under their own white skin; the red gums were their own." "I bianchi credevano che, qualunque fosse la loro educazione, sotto ogni pelle scura si nascondesse una giungla. Acque vorticosi non navigabili, babbuini che si dondolavano gridando, serpenti addormentati, gengive rosse pronte a succhiare il loro sangue dolce di bianchi. [...] Ma non era la giungla che i negri avevano portato con sé in quel posto dall'altro posto (vivibile). Era la giungla che i bianchi avevano piantato loro dentro. E cresceva. E si allargava, [...] fino a coinvolgere i bianchi stessi che

l'avevano creata [...] I babbuini urlanti vivevano sotto la loro pelle bianca, le gengive rosse erano le loro". By this time, [Beloved](#) has become an increasingly powerful force. The spirit is described as being like the collective "black and angry dead".

## COMMUNITY BOND

Part three begins with: "124 was [quiet](#)". Sethe appears to have lost her mind and can only [care for Beloved](#), who is increasingly [demanding](#). Denver looks for help in the Black community around them. They now [sympathise](#) with Sethe as they all share her experiences in some way. "When they caught up with each other, all thirty, and arrived at 124, the first thing they saw was not Denver sitting on the steps, but themselves." "Quando si erano ritrovate insieme, tutte e trenta, ed erano arrivate al 124, la prima cosa che avevano visto non era stata Denver seduta sui gradini, ma se stesse."

## THE EXORCISM

The community [gather](#) for an exorcism. Sethe relives the horror of past events, until [Beloved](#) finally [vanishes](#). Paul D returns. [Stamp Paid](#) has confessed to him that he himself almost killed his own wife out of humiliation after she was repeatedly [raped](#) by their slave owner's son. "I looked at the back of her neck. She had a real small neck. I decided to break it. You know, like a twig — just snap it. I been low but that was as low as I ever got." "L'ho guardata dietro sul collo. Aveva un collo proprio piccolo. Ho deciso di romperglielo. Così, come un fuscello – romperglielo e basta. Ero caduto in basso, ma più in basso di così non ero mai andato." Stamp's confession exposes the brutality and indignity of slavery.

## MOVING ON

In [Beloved](#) there is constant tension between a need to exorcise a painful past and the desire [to move on](#), a tension that remains to this day. The novel [met with](#) immediate acclaim. It won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1988, and in 1993 Morrison received the Nobel Prize in Literature. [Beloved](#) became a film in 1998, directed by Jonathan Demme, with Oprah Winfrey playing Sethe.

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# Glossary

- **quiet** = tranquillo
- **gather** = riunire
- **raped** = violentare
- **spiteful** = maligno
- **tombstone** = lapide
- **shake** = tremare
- **vanishes** = svanire
- **met with** = ricevere
- **Beloved** = amatissima
- **even though** = nonostante
- **quote** = citazione
- **carved** = incidere
- **care for** = preoccuparsi per
- **demanding** = esigente
- **sympathise** = empatizzare
- **to move on** = passare a
- **former** = precedente
- **firstborn** = primogenita
- **venom** = veleno
- **pictures** = immaginare
- **loud** = rumoroso
- **Stamp Paid** = francobollo pagato
- **disturbing** = inquietante
- **haunted** = spettrale