

strove to drag me to a stick that was lying just out of the stable door. He meant to knock me down. But just as he was leaning over to get the stick, I seized him with both hands by his collar, and brought him by a sudden snatch to the ground. By this time, Bill came. Covey called upon him for assistance. Bill wanted to know what he could do. Covey said, "Take hold of him, take hold of him!" Bill said his master hired him out to work, and not to help to whip me; so he left Covey and myself to fight our own battle out. We were at it for nearly two hours. Covey at length let me go, puffing and blowing at a great rate, saying that if I had not resisted, he would not have whipped me half so much. The truth was, that he had not whipped me at all. I considered him as getting entirely the worst end of the bargain; for he had drawn no blood from me, but I had from him. The whole six months afterward, that I spent with Mr. Covey, he never laid the weight of his finger upon me in anger. He would occasionally say, he didn't want to get hold of me again. "No," thought I, "you need not; for you will come off worse than you did before."

This battle with Mr. Covey was the turning point in my career as a slave. It rekindled the few expiring embers of freedom, and revived within me a sense of my own manhood. It recalled the departed self-confidence, and inspired me again with a determination to be free. The gratification afforded by the triumph was a full compensation for whatever else might follow, even death itself. He only can understand the deep satisfaction which I experienced, who has himself repelled by force the bloody arm of slavery. I felt as I never felt before. It was a glorious resurrection, from the tomb of slavery, to the heaven of freedom. My long-crushed spirit rose, cowardice departed, bold defiance took its place; and I now resolved that, however long I might remain a slave in form, the day had passed forever when I could be a slave in fact.


### WORDS TO OWN

**expiring** (ek·spīr'in) v. used as *adj.*: dying.

**afforded** (ə·fôrd'əd) v. used as *adj.*: given; provided.

## MAKING MEANINGS

### First Thoughts

1. Review  the event-prediction-outcome chart you made as you read. Which details, events, or aspects of Douglass's account surprised you?

### Shaping Interpretations

2. The root Sandy Jenkins gives to Douglass is a *talisman*,

### Reading Check

- a. What action does Douglass take after Covey strikes him? What does Thomas order Douglass to do?
- b. What is Covey's reaction when Douglass returns from his visit to Thomas?
- c. Explain how Sandy Jenkins helps Douglass.
- d. Describe what Douglass calls the turning point in his life as a slave.

an object believed to possess supernatural powers. What does Douglass discover is even more powerful than the root?

3. What elements of humor do you find in the part of the story involving Sandy Jenkins? Explain.
4. Based on this account, how would you **characterize** the young Frederick Douglass?
5. What does the entire incident reveal about Covey's **character**?
6. At the end of the selection, Douglass distinguishes between being "a slave in form" and "a slave in fact." Explain the meaning of this distinction.

### Extending the Text

7. "He only can understand the deep satisfaction which I experienced, who has himself repelled by force the bloody arm of slavery" (page 430). In what ways is Douglass's statement true? In what ways might it not be true? Discuss how Douglass's feelings might apply to the problems of racism today.