Chapters 19–21

Vocabulary:
From the choices on the right, circle the word or phrase that best defines the vocabulary word. Use a dictionary to check yourself and to learn the correct pronunciation of each word.

1. garrulous
   exaggerated  talkative  gory
2. debased
   degraded  deceitful  dismal
3. punctilious
   consecrated  contemptible  conscientious
4. ascendancy
   dominance  affluence  respectability
5. deferential
   composed  devious  respectful
6. equanimity
   guilelessness  composure  gratitude
7. cavil
   scoff  object  glower
8. volition
   enjoyment  freedom  choice
9. despot
   ruler  fanatic  sentimentalist
10. refractory
    resentful  unmanageable  elusive
11. palpable
   immeasurable regrettable obvious

12. sanctimonious
   mocking madness pretending piety extremely ill

13. quixotism
   unreachable ideal obvious understatement gross exaggeration

14. ineffaceable
   not wishing to be disturbed not able to be erased not attractive

15. appropriating
   choosing to ignore taking possession of cruelly chastising

**Questions:**

1. As St. Clare explains to Ophelia, what should prevent someone from treating their slaves as Prue was treated, and what prevents people from intervening in a situation such as Prue’s death?

2. St. Clare’s father defended his overseer’s use of cruelty toward his slaves by insisting that all government requires some harshness and that “general rules will bear hard on particular cases.” Explain in your own words what this phrase means.

3. Ultimately, where does St. Clare lay the responsibility for the existence of slavery?

4. Who seems to have been the strongest influence in the shaping of St. Clare’s character?

5. On what grounds does St. Clare’s brother, Alfred, defend slavery?
6. St. Clare relates an incident in which he was able to break a rebellious slave. How did he accomplish it? Why do you think St. Clare’s method worked?

7. What argument does St. Clare advance when Ophelia refuses to accept responsibility for Topsy?

8. How is Topsy received by the other slaves?

9. How is Topsy received by Eva?

10. How does Topsy get the upper household servants to leave her alone?

11. What is Aunt Chloe’s proposal to Mrs. Shelby in Chapter 21? How does Mrs. Shelby respond?

Analysis:

12. Chapter 19 is almost entirely dialogue between St. Clare and Ophelia and does not advance the plot in any way. What purposes does the author accomplish by means of the sharp, but not unfriendly, exchange between these two characters?

13. St. Clare’s defense of his position as a slaveholder is stated in this dialogue with Ophelia. It is probable that Stowe uses St. Clare to represent thoughtful, “moral” slave owners of her time. Briefly explain St. Clare’s line of reasoning.
14. To rationalize is to cause something to seem reasonable or to create a self-satisfying explanation for something. Do you think St. Clare is rationalizing his actions? How would you respond to his justification for owning slaves?

15. A parody is an imitation of a work of literature, art, music, or other cultural expression for the sake of amusement. Parodies often use exaggeration or inappropriate subject matter to make something serious seem ridiculous.

When Ophelia presses St. Clare from a personal defense to a broader discussion about slavery, St. Clare begins his answer, “When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for a fellow to hold two or three of his fellow-worms in captivity, a decent regard to the opinions of society requires—”. His words are a parody of what important document? (If the text is completely unfamiliar to you, you can type the first 10 words into your online search engine to help you identify the document.) Look up the document itself, and read further. What effect does Stowe achieve by having St. Clare voice these words?

16. Stowe describes Mrs. Shelby as having “a force of character every way superior to that of her husband.” List several examples that demonstrate this.

Dig Deeper:

17. In Chapter 19, St. Clare says he sometimes thinks that the abuses of the lower classes all over the world may foretell the Second Coming of Christ, and he asks, “But who may abide the day of His appearing?” His question is an allusion to Malachi 3:2. Read the entire verse in your Bible. (You may wish to look in a Bible dictionary or other resource to find out the purposes of a refiner’s fire and a fuller’s soap.) Why do you think St. Clare makes this allusion?
18. St. Clare also states,

“What poor, mean trash this whole business of human virtue is! A mere matter, for the most part, of latitude and longitude, and geographical position, acting with natural temperament. The greater part is nothing but an accident!”

Do you agree that most of what we call “virtue” is based on where we live, our culture, and what kind of temperament we are born with?

19. Look up the phrases “social Darwinism” and “noblesse oblige.” According to St. Clare’s narration in Chapter 19, which phrase describes his brother Alfred? Which best describes Augustine? Do you think he lives up to the true intent of the phrase?


21. One of the reasons St. Clare gives for buying Topsy was that he was “tired of hearing her screaming, and them beating and swearing at her.” The other was to give her to Ophelia to educate. What more subtle reason did St. Clare have for giving Topsy to Ophelia to instruct, and how does it illustrate the saying, “Don’t judge a man until you have walked a mile in his boots”? 
Vocabulary:
In the blank to the right of each definition below, fill in the correct word from the Word List.

Word List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>fervent</th>
<th>imperiously</th>
<th>inexorable</th>
<th>superincumbent</th>
<th>artifice</th>
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<tr>
<td>petulance</td>
<td>tempest</td>
<td>relinquished</td>
<td>intimations</td>
<td>eldritch</td>
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<td>assiduously</td>
<td>canaille</td>
<td>unaffected</td>
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<td>demurely</td>
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1. lying or resting on or above something else ________________________________
2. genuine, sincere _________________________________________________________
3. strange or unearthly, weird ______________________________________________
4. marked by great emotion, impassioned ______________________________________
5. unyielding ______________________________________________________________
6. released, let go __________________________________________________________
7. hints, indirect communications __________________________________________
8. unreasonable irritability, peevishness ______________________________________
9. subtle deception, trickery ______________________________________________
10. a violent windstorm; a furious agitation _________________________________
11. masses; riff raff _________________________________________________________
12. with feigned modesty or shyness __________________________________________
13. diligently devotedly ____________________________________________________
14. in a domineering or overbearing manner _________________________________
Questions:
1. When Eva reads the Bible to Tom, what parts do they both love best? Why?

2. Describe Alfred and Augustine St. Clare. In what ways are they alike?

3. What kindness does each of the cousins, Henrique and Eva, bestow upon Dodo? Which one is more meaningful to Dodo?

4. Why did Henrique buy Dodo? What does this say about the way Henrique views Dodo?

5. What does Alfred St. Clare think of the opening lines of the Declaration of Independence?

6. Augustine St. Clare says that the lower class will be educated one way or another. How does he say the current system educates them?

7. What does Alfred believe is the shortcoming of the current system in raising southern white children? What action is Alfred considering to compensate for this failure of the system?

8. How does Henrique respond to Eva's suggestion that Dodo needs someone to love him, and that the Bible says we are to love everyone?

9. What are the two great desires that Eva has for the people around her as she prepares for death?
10. Ophelia and St. Clare are hidden witnesses to a conversation between Eva and Topsy in Chapter 26. What in the discussion between the two girls brings shame to Ophelia?

11. Why does Eva ask Ophelia to cut her hair?

12. In Chapter 26, what does Tom do outside Eva’s room? Why does he do this?

Analysis:

13. *Foreshadowing* is an author’s use of hints and clues to suggest what is going to happen later in the plot. Locate and list several instances of foreshadowing in Chapter 22. What does this foreshadowing lead you to expect?

14. To *transpose* things means to cause them to change places with each other. Compare the roles and statements of St. Clare and Eva in these chapters. How are their positions of father and daughter, parent and child, transposed?

15. *Juxtaposition* is the placing of two ideas or images side by side so that their closeness suggests a new meaning or reveals something new, usually through contrast. What does Stowe emphasize by juxtaposing the peaceful Eva with her agitated father?
16. At the end of Chapter 22, Eva tries to discuss with Marie her feelings about treatment of slaves in general and their slaves in particular. How does her mother respond? What does she do to distract Eva?

Again in Chapter 26, when Topsy brings flowers to Eva, Eva tries to discuss the condition of the slaves with her mother. What does her mother do in this instance?

**Dig Deeper:**

17. In Chapter 25, Topsy cuts up some of Ophelia’s cloth to make doll jackets. Ophelia declares this to be the last straw and tells St. Clare that something must be done with Topsy because she cannot control the girl. St. Clare asks Ophelia,

> “Why, if your Gospel is not strong enough to save one heathen child, that you can have at home here, all to yourself, what’s the use of sending one or two poor missionaries off with it among thousands just such?”

Do you think St. Clare’s question is a fair one? Why? What does seem to reach Topsy?

18. At the end of Eva’s and Marie’s discussion in Chapter 26, Marie tells Eva she should be thankful for the advantages she has, and when Eva says she cannot when she thinks of the slaves’ condition, Marie says, “That’s odd enough . . . I’m sure my religion makes me thankful for my advantages.” Read Luke 18:9–14. In what ways is this passage parallel to Eva’s and Marie’s exchange? How can it be wrong to be thankful as Marie and the Pharisee are?
19. At one point in Chapter 24, when Eva tells her father that she will die soon, St. Clare tells her she has only gotten herself nervous and gloomy. Eva responds:

“I am not nervous,—I am not low-spirited. If it were not for you, papa, and my friends, I should be perfectly happy. I want to go,—I long to go! . . . I had rather be in heaven; though, only for my friends’ sake, I would be willing to live.”

Paraphrase what Eva is telling her father. (Optional: See if you can discover in what verse in the New Testament the apostle Paul says something very similar.)

In Chapter 25, after Eva disperses the lockets of her hair, she tells her father why she is not afraid to die. What is it that gives her joy and peace?

Optional Activities:

1. Draw, paint, or color a picture of or write a short poem about the sunset on Lake Pontchartrain in Chapter 22.

2. Eva and Tom got great pleasure and comfort singing old hymns. What are your favorite hymns? If you are not familiar with the older music, ask a parent or grandparent what their favorite hymns are. If you have an old hymn book or sheet music, sing some of the songs. If you do not have the printed music, see if you can find recordings of some old hymns and after listening for awhile, sing along with one or two. Discuss why these songs bring comfort to people, and discuss what songs bring comfort to you.