Chapters 37–41

Vocabulary:
Look up and define the following words. Then use each word in a sentence that demonstrates your understanding of its usage.

1. tractable: definition: __________________________________________________________
   Your sentence:

2. exuberant: definition: ______________________________________________________
   Your sentence:

3. obsequiously: definition: ______________________________________________________
   Your sentence:

4. belabored: definition: ______________________________________________________
   Your sentence:

5. thrall: definition: __________________________________________________________
   Your sentence:

6. execration: definition: ______________________________________________________
   Your sentence:

7. wonted: definition: __________________________________________________________
   Your sentence:

8. ostentation: definition: ______________________________________________________
   Your sentence:
9. appurtenances:  *definition:* ________________________________
   *Your sentence:*

10. lugubrious:  *definition:* ________________________________
    *Your sentence:*

11. preternatural:  *definition:* ________________________________
    *Your sentence:*

12. perdition:  *definition:* ________________________________
    *Your sentence:*

13. unobtrusive:  *definition:* ________________________________
    *Your sentence:*

**Questions:**

1. Why does Loker give Aunt Dorcas information that might help George and Eliza escape?

2. Who does George see questioning the clerk of the boat?

3. Where does the family go upon arriving in Canada?

4. Why does Tom sink into despair and bitterness when he is back in the fields?

5. How does Legree once again inadvertently push Tom to the point that his spirit is strengthened?
6. What effect does the change in Tom have on Simon Legree and on the other slaves?

7. How does Cassy arouse Legree’s fears about the garret?

8. How does Legree vent his rage when Cassy and Emmeline are not found?

9. Tom’s response to Legree’s threats is one of the most pivotal speeches in the novel. What is the gist of it? What is its importance for Stowe’s purposes?

10. After brutalizing Tom throughout the night, Legree leaves the shed thinking Tom is “done for.” The first fruits of Tom’s sacrifice are then brought to light. What are they? As Tom lies for two days dying, who else from the plantation comes to see him, and with what result?

11. What is Tom’s last great joy before he dies?

12. What is George’s oath upon Tom’s grave?

Analysis:

13. What simile does Stowe use to describe Tom Loker in the second paragraph of Chapter 37? What does this tell the reader about him?
14. A few paragraphs later she describes him with another simile. What is the simile and what symbolic significance might it carry?

15. What character at the beginning of Chapter 37 might be considered comic relief? How does the entire chapter provide comic relief from the chapters before and after?

16. Paradox is a statement that seems to contradict itself, yet is true. For example: in 2 Corinthians, Paul says, “For when I am weak, then I am strong.” Read Matthew 16:24–26. What is the paradox in this passage?

In Chapter 38, Stowe says of Tom, after his vision of Christ:

. . . in the joy that filled him, he no longer felt hunger, cold, degradation, disappointment, wretchedness. From his deepest soul, he that hour loosed and parted from every hope in the life that now is, and offered his own will an unquestioning sacrifice to the Infinite.

How does this illustrate the paradoxical statement in Matthew?

17. Near the end of Chapter 38, Cassy comes to Tom in the night and asks him if he would like his liberty. Reread that passage, then read 1 Samuel 24:1–7 and 26:6–12. List three or four ways in which these passages are parallel.
18. Why do you think Stowe titled Chapter 38 “The Victory”? To what victory do you think she is referring? Support your answer with evidence from the book.

19. Stowe could have had Tom die alone in a dirty shed on Legree’s plantation, but she did not. Why do you think Stowe wrote Tom’s death the way she did? What do you think will be the result?

Dig Deeper:

20. In Chapter 38, at Tom’s lowest moment, Legree taunts him, “‘You see the Lord an’t going to help you; if he had been, he wouldn’t have le me get you! This yer religion is all a mess of lying trumpery Tom.’” What does Tom reply?

Read Daniel 3:13–18, then review the context of the quotation in Chapter 38. How is Tom’s situation parallel to the situation in Daniel? To whom is Tom similar in Daniel?

21. Review Tom’s answer to Legree and Shadrach’s, Meshach’s, and Abednego’s answer to Nebuchadnezzar in the passages referenced in the previous question. What is particularly striking about their answers? What does it demonstrate about their faith in and relationship with God?
22. Read again 1 Samuel 26:6–12. What is Abishai’s reaction to David’s opportunity in the camp? Does David see it the same way as Abishai? How do their reactions compare to Tom’s and Cassy’s?

23. Do you agree with Tom’s position and statements to Cassy in Chapter 38? What are the ultimate results, in Chapter 41, of his decision?
Chapters 42–44

Vocabulary:
The following underlined words are shown in the context of the sentences in which they appear in the book. Read the sentences and try to define the underlined words from context. Then look up the dictionary definition and compare.

1. “For some remarkable reason, ghostly legends were uncommonly rife, about this time, among the servants on Legree’s place.”
   Your definition:

   Dictionary definition:

2. “He no longer drank cautiously, prudently, but imprudently and recklessly.”
   Your definition:

   Dictionary definition:

3. “Cassy kept her room and bed, on pretext of illness, during the whole time they were on Red River. . . .”
   Your definition:

   Dictionary definition:

4. “. . . she was seconded by the graces of her little girl, who was bout as pretty a plaything as ever diverted the weariness of a fortnight’s trip on a steamboat.”
   Your definition:

   Dictionary definition:
5. “Though neither of them could **conjecture** what was the cause of Cassy's fainting, still they made all the **tumult** which is proper in such cases; . . .”

**Conjecture:**
*Your definition:*

**Dictionary definition:**

**Tumult:**
*Your definition:*

**Dictionary definition:**

6. “Little Harry—a fine bright boy—had been put to a good school, and was making rapid **proficiency** in knowledge.”

*Your definition:*

**Dictionary definition:**

7. “The despairing, **haggard** expression of her face had given way to one of gentle trust.”

*Your definition:*

**Dictionary definition:**

8. “I want a people that shall have a **tangible**, separate existence of its own; and where am I to look for it?”

*Your definition:*

**Dictionary definition:**
9. “A nation has a right to argue, 

remonstrate, implore, and present the cause of its race,—which

an individual has not.”

Your definition:

Dictionary definition:

10. “On its borders I trust we stand; and the throes that now convulse the nations are, to my hope,

but the birth-pangs of an hour of universal peace and brotherhood.”

Your definition:

Dictionary definition:

11. “At last, George, sitting down beside the mourner, took her hand, and, with simple pathos,

repeated the triumphant scene of her husband’s death, and his last messages of love.”

Your definition:

Dictionary definition:

Questions:
1. What happens to Simon Legree after Tom dies?

2. How do Cassy and Emmeline avoid recognition until they are well away from danger?

3. Who is traveling on the same boats as Cassy and Emmeline?

4. What surprising acquaintance does George Shelby make on the voyage up the Mississippi River?
5. In the course of George Shelby’s giving Madame de Thoux all the information he knows about her brother, what other startling discovery comes to light?

6. In a sentence or two, summarize why George Harris wants to go Africa.

7. Where did Topsy go first, and where did she eventually end up?

8. What did George Shelby do shortly after he returned home?

Analysis:

9. After the dark ending of Chapter 41, why do you think Stowe opens Chapter 42 the way she does? What literary term that we have previously discussed describes the first sentence of Chapter 42?

10. Samuel Taylor Coleridge wrote in his *Biographia Literaria* (1817) that good writing should produce “a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith.” In other words, the telling of a story should contain sufficient truth that the reader is willing to ignore portions that may be impractical or impossible. The term willing suspension of disbelief has come to be a literary term meaning that something generally impossible or implausible is made to seem plausible by the author’s skill at telling the story. In a fairy tale, we are willing to believe that a prince will search the entire kingdom for a girl who fits a slipper, and it only fits one person. In Narnia we are willing to believe in speaking animals and passages into other worlds.

   In Chapter 42, a lot of loose ends are tied up in the secondary plots of the story as George Shelby rides the boats home. For you, did Stowe achieve willing suspension of disbelief in the tying together of loose threads and the confluence of characters on the boats?
Dig Deeper:

11. Read Romans 8:28. How do these last chapters illustrate this verse? Based on this verse and what you see in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, are all things good?

12. In Chapter 43, George Harris is writing to a friend about his reasons for wishing to go to Liberia, and he says of the people of Haiti, “The race that formed the character of the Haytiens was a worn-out, effeminate one; and, of course, the subject race will be centuries in rising to anything.” Look up *racism* in a good dictionary. According to the definition, is George a racist? How does one avoid being a racist? Can you think of any scriptures already mentioned in this study that would apply?
Across
4. from New England; comes to New Orleans to help keep her cousin’s household
7. evil man; fist as hard as iron
8. little girl, angelic; known for her love for everyone; almost drowns in fall from riverboat
9. good-hearted but lazy, kind; stabbed to death; first name
11. thief, incorrigible; believes beating the only way to help her; eventually reforms and moves to New England
12. excellent cook; works at a “perfectioner” to get her husband back
14. very intelligent, hard-working man; branded on his hand; moves to Canada, then Liberia
16. smothered one of her babies; lived with Simon Legree; finds her daughter in Canada
17. people who help Eliza and George escape to Canada; also nurse Tom Loker back to health

Down
1. self-centered, hypochondriac; believes all slaves lazy and selfish; sells slaves after her husband dies
2. treats her slaves as family; taught them as Christians; lives in Kentucky
3. young boy, sold to pay off debts; mother escapes with him to Ohio
5. Christian man; stands for his beliefs even if he has to die for them
6. gives Uncle Tom a dollar to remember him by; tries to buy back Uncle Tom
10. woman who drowns herself after her baby is sold away from her
13. excellent cook; totally disorganized; refuses to change anything in the kitchen
15. slave trader; believes in doing the “humane thing”
Overview

1. Dramatic structure refers to the parts into which the plot of a story or novel can be divided. A German novelist and dramatist named Gustav Freytag (1816–1895) developed a diagram that is widely used today, to analyze dramatic structure.

Freytag’s Pyramid, shown here, typically divides the plot into specific parts, as follows:

- **Exposition**—The writer introduces the characters and setting, providing the background information needed to understand the story.
- **Inciting incident**—A single incident in the story’s action without which there would be no story. This is sometimes called “the complication.”
- **Rising action**—The story builds and secondary conflicts are introduced. Various obstacles come into play that keep the protagonist from reaching his or her goal.
- **Climax**—The moment of greatest tension in the story, as well as the turning point in the action.
- **Falling action**—Events take place as a result of the climax, and the story begins to be resolved.
- **Dénouement**—(day noo MAH) A French term, literally meaning “unraveling” or “unknot,” this is the resolution of the story. Any remaining questions are answered and the final outcome of the conflict is revealed.

Next to each of the headings for dramatic structure below, fill in specific events from *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* that occur in this stage. Do not try to list every event that takes place in the novel, but include those that specifically propel the plot forward.
Uncle Tom’s Cabin Study Guide

Exposition:

Inciting incident:

Rising action:

Climax:

Falling action:

Dénouement:
2. Both in the novel and in reality at the time, many people in favor of slavery claimed the Bible supported slavery in the United States. Read Matthew 22:36–40. Based on these verses, should any slavery exist? Explain your answer.

3. From what you have observed in the story, why do you think slaves were treated as they were at this time in America, but were not treated as instructed in these scriptures, discussed earlier in this study guide: Genesis 15:1–3; Genesis 17:10–13; Exodus 20:10; Exodus 21:2–11; Exodus 21:26–27; Deuteronomy 15:12–18; Deuteronomy 23:15–16.

4. In Chapter 20, St. Clare gives Miss Ophelia a young slave named Topsy. How do the other slaves in the household react to Topsy? What do their statements about her reveal about the way they view themselves and other slaves?

5. Describe the way in which Eva approaches her death. Is she afraid, peaceful, childish, mature? Why does she act the way she does?

6. In Chapter 28, what does St. Clare say has created more skepticism in him toward Christianity than anything else? What else does he say keeps him from believing?
7. A Christ-figure, in literary studies, refers to an object, person, or figure with qualities generally reminiscent of Christ. Other terms used are christological or a messianic figure. The Christ-figure is not intended to influence our understanding of Christ, but rather uses our understanding of Christ to give deeper meaning to the character or story. In what ways is Uncle Tom a Christ-figure, both in the beginning of the book and the end?

8. Though Uncle Tom clearly is the main character of the story, there are many important characters and many of these are women. Discuss the strong role of women in Uncle Tom’s Cabin and what Stowe may be saying through her female characters. Another option is to examine one female character more closely and explain what Stowe is saying with that character.

9. The theme of a novel is the main idea the author hopes to communicate to her readers through the story, though often more than one theme may be found in a work of literature. Select one of the following themes and explain how this theme is presented in the novel. What does the author seem to be saying about this subject? Explain your answer with examples from the novel.

   - social responsibility
   - slavery
   - racism
   - apathy
   - religion
   - Christianity
   - education
   - self-sacrifice

10. In Chapter 41, what do the two slaves who help bury Uncle Tom ask of George? Why do you think he does not fulfill their request, especially considering his actions when he returns home? Do you think he should have granted their request?