

Uncle Tom's Cabin (1852)

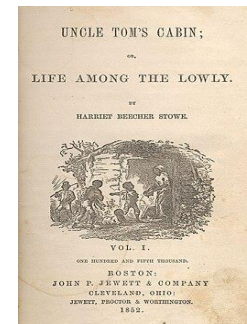
Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-1896)

OVERVIEW

Writer Born in Litchfield, Connecticut, to a famous Calvinist preacher and abolitionist, Lyman Beecher, Harriet Beecher was the sixth of eleven children. Her mother would die only five years later, leaving the young girl to be raised by her father's second wife. She received an education at the Hartford Female Seminary (which was, at the time, run by her older sister, Catharine), where she focused on the classics, mathematics, and languages. At the age of 21, she fell headfirst into writing clubs and abolition organizing. From 1832 until she married in 1836, Harriet Beecher Stowe ran the abolitionist circuit meeting freedmen and free Black northerners, writing for debates, and attending meetings of various writing clubs. When Congress passed the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, Beecher Stowe felt she had to act. Inspired by a religious vision, she began to compose *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which would first release in a serialized format in 1851. This novel pushed her into the international spotlight as sales across the Northern US and Britain took off. She would spend most of the rest of her professional life helping to found and edit long-running magazines such as *The Atlantic Monthly* (still in publication to this day as *The Atlantic*) and *Hearth and Home* magazine. She began to experience mental degradation in her final years, likely suffering from some form of dementia. Mark Twain was her neighbor in her later years, and he wrote about her and her dementia in his autobiography, calling her friendly and playful if somewhat strange. Harriet Beecher Stowe died only seventeen days after her eighty-fifth birthday and rests alongside her husband and son in the cemetery at Philips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts.



Background A best-selling novel upon its compilation, *Uncle Tom's Cabin; or, Life Among the Lowly*, is an anti-slavery novel. It was first published as a forty-week serial in *The National Era* in the summer of 1851 before it was compiled in two volumes in 1852. The first running of the novel could barely keep up with demand, but that demand fell off by the middle of 1853. In 1901, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was translated into Chinese by Lin Shu, making it the first American novel translated into Chinese. The novel would have an immediate impact on novel writing for the next few decades in spite of many critics' dismissals of sentimental novels as the product of "women's sloppy emotions." *Uncle Tom's Cabin* spurred the creation of a number of new sentimental novels like Maria Cummins' *The Lamplighter* and acted as a landmark publication for protest literature, inspiring works like Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was the most influential novel of the mid-1800s, with many (both supportive and critical) saying Beecher Stowe's writing helped to start the Civil War. Many abolitionists—including the likes of Frederick Douglass—pushed the novel for its anti-slavery message, but many Black abolitionists, such as Martin Delany, pointed out that Beecher Stowe "borrowing (and thus profiting) from the work of Black writers to compose her novel" was a show of "apparent support of black colonization to Africa." Modern critics tend to echo these points of view, as Beecher Stowe had never left the Northeast US and would frequently mischaracterize the realities of the system of chattel slavery common in the South for a more dramatic portrayal. Proud southerners and supporters of slavery reacted with outcry and the creation of a subgenre of pastoral novels known as "Anti-Tom literature." These stories focused on propagandizing the gentleness of plantation life and the necessity for the continuation and spread of slavery. While the book's importance as a vital anti-slavery tool before the Civil War is well known and understood, modern critics hold mostly negative views of the novel. In 1945, James Baldwin criticized *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in his essay "Everybody's Protest Novel," where he pointed out the



dehumanization and racial stereotypes Beecher Stowe relied upon to tell a story that was overflowing with “self-righteousness” and “virtuous sentimentality.” In more recent years, critics have turned to examining the historical significance of the novel in an attempt to resurrect the book as a critical document in US race relations. However, the creation and popularization of a number of harmful racial stereotypes can be directly tied to *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* and the book’s international fame. The character of Sam gave us the “happy ducky,” Topsy proliferated the “pickaninny” stereotype, Eliza, Cassy, and Emmeline give us some of the earliest examples of the “tragic mulatto,” and the titular Uncle Tom expressed an innate desire to please and protect white people, which has been adopted in Black communities as a slang word meaning “race traitor.” The novel was turned into a play, and it’s still possible to see productions on tour today. The first film based on *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* was shot in 1910, and most of the handful of other films based on the novel would come out in the silent era. *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* remains a controversial and historically important book even today.

MAIN CHARACTERS

Uncle Tom – A long-suffering slave who belongs to Mr. Shelby

Eliza Harris – The personal slave of Mrs. Shelby

George Harris – Eliza’s husband

Harry Harris – George and Eliza’s son

Aunt Chloe – Tom’s wife, the Shelby’s enslaved cook

Arthur Shelby – A Kentucky farmer who owns Tom and Eliza

Emily Shelby – Arthur’s wife

George Shelby – Arthur and Emily’s son

Augustine St. Clare – A wealthy New Orleans man who purchases Tom

Marie St. Clare – Augustine’s wife

Eva St. Clare – Marie and Augustine’s daughter

Topsy – An enslaved girl purchased by St. Clare as a gift to his cousin

Simon Legree – A plantation owner who purchases Tom

Dan Haley – A slave trader

Tom Loker – A slave catcher

Marks – A slave catcher

The Birds – An abolitionist couple who aid Eliza

The Hallidays – A Quaker couple who aid Eliza

Sambo & Quimbo – Legree’s Black overseers

Cassy – Legree’s enslaved mistress, Eliza’s mother

Emmeline – a young biracial girl purchased by Legree at the same auction as Tom

SYNOPSIS

In the hills of Kentucky, the Shelby family makes a living on their slave-holding farm. The patriarch, Arthur, is forced to sell two of his slaves to settle a debt, causing the mother of the younger slave to take him and attempt to escape. Eliza and her son, Harry, cross the Ohio River with the aid of several sympathetic people, but the slave trader Dan Haley is hot on her heels. Back at the Shelby farm, Tom is sold to Haley and transported with a number of other enslaved people to New Orleans for auction. Eventually, George Harris, Eliza’s husband, learns of her escape with their son and rushes to join them as they head for Canada and freedom. Eliza and Harry, meanwhile, settle in with a kindly abolitionist Quaker family who shelter them as they prepare for the next leg of the escape.

While in transit to New Orleans on a Mississippi riverboat, Uncle Tom meets a little white girl named Eva St. Clare, who he rescues from drowning. In a macabre sort of repayment, Eva’s father, Augustine, purchases Tom, and he accompanies them home to New Orleans. There, Tom meets Eva’s mother, Marie, who is bigoted and spoiled. Tom begins to bond Eva by reading the Bible with her, teaching her to love the Christian faith. Up north, George meets with the rest of his family, but they’re overtaken by slave catchers. George is forced to shoot one, injuring him, and Eliza convinces the rest of the escaping slaves to take him with them to get him medical assistance.

In New Orleans, Tom becomes an integral piece of the St. Clare household while still keeping ties with his wife, Chloe, in Kentucky. Around this time, the St. Clares purchase an enslaved girl for their cousin as a sort of surrogate child. In Kentucky, Chloe convinces Mrs. Shelby to rent her out as labor for a local baker in order to raise funds to buy Tom's freedom.

Years pass, and it becomes clear that Eva St. Claire has a wasting disease that will kill her. As the young girl dies, all in the household are touched by her Christian acceptance. Augustine St. Claire promises to free Tom after his tender words stoke Christian faith in him. He is killed before he can go through with his plans to free Tom and the other enslaved people in the household, leaving Marie to sell them to the auctioneer. In this way Tom finds himself owned by plantation owner Simon Legree. He experiences the brutality of the cotton fields and meets Cassy, Legree's enslaved concubine, who helps him when he is cruelly punished for his attempts to help other slaves.

Back up North, the Harris family is able to escape to Canada with the help of some abolitionists. Tom, however, is at the lowest point of his life, and he begins to lose his faith. A spiritual change comes over him, however, and he is able to endure Legree's torture. This inspires the other slaves, some of whom (including Cassy) plan to escape. When this plan is enacted, Legree and his overseers bind and whip Tom until he is near death, but Tom refuses to say a word about the escaping slaves' plans. Legree gives up, and Tom forgives him and the two overseers. George Shelby arrives to purchase Tom's freedom, but he's too late. He's just in time, however, to aid Cassy and Emmeline in their escape. During their time on a riverboat, Cassy learns that George knows her daughter, Eliza, and he aids her in reaching Eliza's family in Canada. Afterward, George returns home to find his father dead. He delivers the bad news about Tom to Chloe before freeing all of his slaves in the memory of Uncle Tom.

PLOT

Volume I

I

Shelby's farm – Two white men meet in the well-furnished dining room of a farmhouse. The farm's owner, Mr. Shelby, discusses the sale of one of his slaves, Tom. In between racist quips, Dan Haley, a slave trader, mentions he'd be interested if Mr. Shelby could sweeten the deal and sell him a young slave as well. Mr. Shelby hems and haws for a moment before a young boy he owns enters the room, and Mr. Shelby coaxes him into entertaining Haley. The boy's mother, Eliza, emerges from the kitchen to check on her son, overhearing the discussion about selling him. Haley swears up and down that he is incredibly humane in his treatment of his "product" before talking about how people from Kentucky spoil their slaves. Mr. Shelby says he'll think the matter over and give the slave trader a response that evening. Eliza, having listened in, rushes to Mr. Shelby's wife, Emily. She begs Mrs. Shelby to stop the trade of her child. Mrs. Shelby assures Eliza the boy won't be sold, and Eliza tends to her mistress' chamber pot.

II

The Mother – This chapter serves as a description of Eliza and an introduction to her family. Beecher Stowe describes the "peculiar air of refinement" that is granted to "quadroon and mulatto women," saying that Eliza is an archetype of this stereotype. She was married to George Harris, a biracial slave from a neighboring estate who was known for his sharp wit and mechanical ingenuity. This ability led him to create a machine for processing hemp, which his master praised, and allowed him to find additional employment in a nearby factory. George was happy with this work and the better treatment it brought and was devastated when his owner decided to put him back to work in the fields. It's only through superhuman self-control that George maintains his composure after being told about this decision. Beecher Stowe interjects a thought here: "A very humane jurist once said, 'The worst you can put a man to is to ham him.' No; there is another use that man can be put to that is WORSE!"

III

Plans to run away – Later that afternoon, Eliza and her son watch Mrs. Shelby leave for the afternoon. George joins them on the veranda, and the family has a tender moment together. George begins complaining about his owner returning him to work in the fields, saying he wishes he were dead. Eliza tries to comfort him, but she can do little to help. George expounds on the growing cruelty of his master, from over-whipping the horses to demanding friendly dogs be drowned, and he concludes he must run away. He says he'll make his way to Canada and earn enough to buy Eliza and their son's freedom. Eliza frets for him before giving a tearful goodbye.

IV

Uncle Tom's cabin – The narrative is once again interrupted to introduce us to the titular Uncle Tom and his wife, Aunt Chloe. Beecher Stowe first describes Uncle Tom's cabin and the carefully tended garden outside. Aunt Chloe is described as a woman with a green thumb, a kind heart, and unmatched skill in the kitchen who loves playing hostess. Sitting in the modest dining room with Tom and Chloe is the young master George, who instructs Tom in a writing lesson. Chloe feeds them pancakes and sausage and sits back to appreciate young George's praise of her cooking. After dinner, Tom and Chloe welcome some of the other slaves into their cabin to have a short praise meeting. Tom leads with a very brief sermon, and then they all sing together. Afterward, George praises Tom's priestly skills. Meanwhile in the big house, Mr. Shelby sells Eliza's son, Harry, and Tom to Mr. Haley to resolve his debts.

V

News of the sale – As they prepare for bed, Mr. and Mrs. Shelby have a conversation about the "low-bred fellow" who Mr. Shelby was talking to at the dinner table that evening. Mr. Shelby says he was a slave trader and that he had sold Tom and Harry. Mrs. Shelby reacts with anger and sorrow to losing two she considers part of the family. "Why, wife," says Mr. Shelby, "you are getting to be an abolitionist, quite." Mrs. Shelby admits that she finds the whole system ghastly, and her husband mocks her for differing from "many wise and pious men." Mrs. Shelby laments having to tell Eliza the news about Harry. Little does she know that Eliza is listening through the door. Eliza then collects Harry and rushes to tell Tom and Chloe about the sale. Tom and Chloe resign to the fate, but Eliza says she's taking her child and running to join George in Canada. Chloe asks if Tom will join them. He says he won't, but he wishes Eliza well. After Eliza leaves, Tom sits down and weeps.

VI

Eliza and Harry missing – The next morning, Mr. and Mrs. Shelby rise after sleeping in. When Mrs. Shelby can't rouse Eliza by pulling the bell in her bedchamber, she calls for another slave to check on her, and he finds Eliza missing. At around that time, Mr. Haley comes knocking to purchase Tom and Harry, and he's very angry to learn Harry is missing. Mr. Shelby swears he had no part in the escape and pledges his assistance to hunt down Eliza and her son. He equips two of his slaves with gear and horses. One of the slaves does his best to waste time and infuriate Mr. Haley before they leave to look for Eliza around noon. With sentimental language, Beecher Stowe takes a moment to recount exactly what kind of situation Eliza finds herself in. We then enter the narrative again as Harry begins to nod off in his mother's arms. He wants to sleep, but he's afraid the slave catchers will get them before he wakes again. Eliza doesn't know exactly where to go, but she decides to go to a village on the Ohio River she's visited with Mrs. Shelby before. Walking until noon, when Eliza stops to rest at a farm where she chats with a woman. This woman informs Eliza that all traffic across the river has stopped due to ice. Harry begins to cry, and the woman invites them in so he can have a nap.

VII

Haley's search – Still preparing for the journey to hunt down Harry and his mother, Mr. Haley is growing even more impatient and insulting his guests. Chloe is happy to have some more time with Tom before he is taken from her, and they have a tender conversation in the kitchen of the big house. The time comes for Tom to leave with Mr. Haley, and the slave trader is frustrated again by the tenderness of the family toward their slaves. He wastes no time after they hit the road, following a little-used dirt track that likely

looked promising to an escaping slave. Mr. Haley speaks rudely to the slaves about their lack of smarts and ability, all while relying on them to do the majority of the tracking. It's not long after Eliza has reached the small town and laid Harry down for another nap that the slave-catching posse rides into the town. She's warned by a loud cry from a slave Mr. Shelby sent with Mr. Haley to find her, allowing her to sneak out a back door with Harry while a train rushing down the nearby track covers her movements. She finds a ferryman at the riverbank, but he refuses to take her across the river with the ice the way it is. He does give her a tip where she might be able to cross safely on foot, and she thanks him, heading that way.

VIII

The slave catchers and news of the escape – We learn that Eliza has crossed the river. Mr. Haley sits frustrated in the parlor of a rented house. Passing outside, he sees a man he knows, Tom Loker, a slave catcher. Loker is accompanied by a man named Marks, and the three agree to work together to catch Eliza and her son after hearing his story and commiserating. They drink while they talk, Haley in particular getting plastered. After they finish bickering about shares and methods, they make their way down to the riverbank, where they find someone who tells them Eliza and her son crossed the river with the help of a man. The two slaves Mr. Shelby sent to help Mr. Haley in the search for Eliza return home and tell the gathered slaves and Mrs. Shelby about Eliza's escape. Piously, they believe that God will protect her and Harry as they make their way to Canada. Both Mr. and Mrs. Shelby express relief that Eliza and her son have made good on their escape. One of the returning slaves attempts to give a sort of sermon about the events and the way slaves should behave, irking Aunt Chloe, who rebuffs him and assures he ends the speech embarrassed.

IX

The Birds – A senator, Mr. Bird, and his wife settle in for a cold night, talking about the sad state of politics in the state. Mrs. Bird calls a new law making it a crime to harbor any escaping slaves from Kentucky “unchristian,” and Mr. Bird tells her he voted for such a law. She vows to break it at the first opportunity, and her husband tells her she's letting her sentimentality cloud her better judgment. They're interrupted by a servant who asks Mrs. Bird to accompany him to the kitchen. After a moment, Mrs. Bird calls for the senator, and he enters to find Eliza and Harry recovering from the cold in their kitchen. Before anything else can be said, Mrs. Bird swears that they shall be protected in her home. Mr. Bird begins to interrogate Eliza to find out “who and what she is.” Eliza tells him he came from Kentucky and crossed the ice on the Ohio River to everyone's amazement. She then admits to Mr. Bird that she was a slave. In private, Mr. Bird says Eliza will have to leave, as her being discovered here would destroy him politically. He suggests a nearby house off the beaten path. Mrs. Bird collects some things—including some of her dead child's clothes for Harry—and prepares a carriage. Mr. Bird accompanies her to make introductions and arrangements. Van Tromp, the homeowner, had once been a Kentucky slaver but had freed his slaves and moved after realizing the cruelty of the system. He swears to keep Eliza safe and takes her and Harry into her home.

X

Uncle Tom's last meal – Back in Kentucky the next morning, Aunt Chloe tearfully irons and hangs some shirts as Uncle Tom sits nearby, reading his Bible. After a time, he stands to watch his children sleeping in their bed. Chloe mourns her inevitable loss, wishing the Bible gave her the same comfort it gave Tom. He starts to argue with her about faith and miracles, but she stops him, saying they should focus on having one last happy meal together. After Chloe finishes the preparations, Tom rouses the children. They're cheerful at first, as if on Christmas morning, but after a tearful visit from Mrs. Shelby, they come to realize the seriousness of the situation. Mr. Haley enters the cabin soon after Mrs. Shelby. The family and other onlookers openly weep as Tom is shackled and taken away. Mr. Haley stops in a nearby town to pick up a larger pair of handcuffs for Tom, having found the ones he carried to be too small. The blacksmith is well-acquainted with Tom and surprised to see Shelby selling him. Mr. Haley comments that “good creatures” like Tom often get ideas into their heads about running off and are better off sold to do harsher labor down south. George Shelby sees what's going on, and he rushes up to say farewell to Tom, promising to find a way to free him.

XI

Wanted poster – The story leaves Uncle Tom for now, jumping to a town and describing a frontier hotel where trappers, travelers, and thrill seekers intermingle. Here, Beecher Stow stops to make some comments on the dress and behavior of white men and their slaves in the area, describing them as casual—sloppy even—and hickish. An old man tries to strike up a conversation with a nearby man by offering him some chewing tobacco. Around that time, someone comes in with a wanted poster for a runaway slave: George Harris. The white men gathered there are shocked when an old veteran walks up and spits his tobacco juice on the wanted paper, saying such mistreatment is an insult to all of Kentucky. Many speak up to agree with him when into the hotel walks a tall, brown-skinned man who stands out because of his neatness of dress and manner. A dark-skinned slave follows him and listens to his commands. While the white men are distracted talking politics and slave-catching, he rents a room and orders the slaves around. In the room, the man is surprised to see a man who recognizes him, calling him George: It's George Harris, and the man is the factory owner whom he worked for. The factory owner tells him that he's taking some great risks, but George says his freedom and the freedom of his family are worth anything.

George's story – The factory owner asks if his treatment was really so bad, and George begins to tell the man his life story. His mother was sold and taken away from her seven children when he was a boy, and his father, a white man, abandoned him to a life akin to that of livestock. Afterward, he was separated from his siblings one by one as they too were sold away. It was his love for Eliza that saved his sanity and gave him hope. As they can't be treated like humans in American society, George must find a way to bring them to Canada so they can live as a family. The factory owner is astonished by the story of George's poor treatment and offers to help pay for his family's freedom, and George takes it on the condition that he'll repay the debt someday. The factory owner gives him the money and complements George's boldness and passion, taking a gift for Eliza before they part.

XII

Estate sale and riverboat – The chapter begins with a quotation from the book of Jeremiah: "In Ramah there was a voice heard,—weeping, and lamentation, and great mourning; Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted." Tom and Mr. Haley are headed south. On the way, Mr. Haley stops to bid on some slaves for sale. Some drama breaks out as Haley separates yet another family, buying a husband but refusing to purchase his wife. Haley seems to enjoy separating the couple. A few days after the auction, Haley has "his possessions" (the slaves) transferred to a riverboat. Haley tries to cheer up Tom and the others, telling them, "do well by me, and I'll do well by you." On the upper deck, some white children point out the presence of the slaves in the lower deck, eliciting some outcry from some of the women who think the practice is "a shame to our country." An argument breaks out about racial supremacy and the right to hold slaves when Haley comes up from the lower decks. After things calm down, Haley remarks that the slave trade is getting "too dangerous" and plans to quit after a few more runs. The journey to Louisville is long, and on the way, Haley sells the baby of one of the slaves he brought aboard. Tom tries to console the woman, but to no avail. She manages to get away and throw herself into the river in despair, drowning.

XIII

Help from Quaker abolitionists – We are introduced to a Quaker homestead in Indiana. Here, Eliza sits and chats with the woman of the house, Rachel Halliday. Mrs. Halliday speaks in an old-timey dialect, using outdated phrasings like 'thee' and 'thou,' while commiserating with Eliza's struggle and giving the young woman advice on how to continue toward Canada. Several other Quakers enter during their conversation, treating Eliza as a guest rather than a fugitive. Eventually, a boy acting as a messenger enters to inform Eliza that her husband, George, is in town and she'll see them tonight. She falls unconscious from fatigue and excitement and finds herself and Harry in a small bed being tended to by the Quakers sometime later. She falls back asleep, feeling truly safe and secure for the first time in her life. She's awoken by George's tears of joy falling against her cheek. The next morning, the Harris family

has a nice breakfast with the Quaker family, the messenger boy warning them of a pursuing slave-catcher.

XIV

Uncle Tom's Bible – Aboard another paddleboat making its way down the Mississippi, we find Tom loosed from his bindings sitting on a bale of cotton, reading from his Bible. Missing home, the familiar pages and marks left by loved ones give him comfort. He sees slaves working in cotton fields near the river. In them, Tom sees flashes of his own life, thinking about how the same sad stories repeat over and over again in this cruel system. It's during this leg of the journey that Tom makes the acquaintance of the St. Clare family. In particular, he begins to bond with the family's young daughter, Eva, who asks her father to buy him. One day, Eva and her father stand by the railings, watching the river. Turbulence in the raging waters rocks the steamer and sends the girl tumbling into the drink. Mr. St. Clare dives in after his daughter, but he's not a strong swimmer. Tom, however, is, and he manages to save Eva from drowning. The next day, Mr. St. Clare approaches Mr. Haley about purchasing Tom. St. Clare endures the jabs and taunts from Mr. Haley, who thinks him insane for trying to make Tom happy. It doesn't matter why St. Clare wants a slave in Mr. Haley's mind, though, so long as he gets paid. The slave trader joyously makes out the official bill of sale. Tom begins to cry when Eva and her father break the news, promising him the position of coachman. "And you shall have good times," Eva promises.

XV

The St. Clare estate – Beecher Stowe interrupts the narrative to explain the history of the St. Clares, Augustine and Ophelia, noting that Mr. St. Clare is almost 'womanly' in his sensitivity while Ophelia—his cousin from up North—is vain and "shiftless." Marie St. Clare meets her husband and daughter when they return, and she's overjoyed to see her daughter. After the greetings and luggage have been dealt with, Eva asks after Tom, who is being given a quick tour of the property. The family joins him, and they comment on his awe-stricken expression. Soon, the St. Clares go about introducing the rest of the house slaves to Tom. Eva greets the various slaves happily, hugging and kissing while Ophelia looks on with disgust. Some days later, Marie sits at the breakfast table, complaining about the slaves, calling them "the plague of my life." Her family informs her of how much the slaves do for her, but Marie insists the slaves are all "selfish." Privately, Ophelia speaks with Marie about the girl, saying, "She seems to be a good child..." Marie says her daughter has the flaw of putting "herself on an equality with every creature that comes near her." She then spirals into another self-serving gripe where she says her husband "indulges" the slaves instead of making them "know their place." Ophelia has shown some open racism already, but even she thinks Marie's preferred treatment of the slaves is cruel and inhumane.

XVI

Ophelia's hypocrisy – We enter another aside where Beecher Stowe describes Tom and Eva's relationship: he's attached to the girl for her kindness and how she allowed him to avoid the cruelty of the slave auctions by asking her father to buy him. Tom has nearly become the girl's personal escort on top of his carriage and stable duties. He reports to Marie one morning that Eva is visiting with her maid, and the girl returns without a piece of jewelry, telling her mother she gave it to her maid as a gift. Marie scolds her and demands the return of the necklace. After church, the women return—as Mr. St. Clare doesn't attend service—and join him at the dinner table, where the topic of biblical defenses of slavery comes up. St. Clare says he doesn't believe in such things and cares little for such arguments, creating an argument with Pious Ophelia, who believes the Bible to be sacred, even if it supports slavery. They argue back and forth about religion for a while before Eva enters, talking about Tom's hymns and helping him to read the Bible. As they prepare to move to the parlor, Mr. St. Clare laughs at the fact that Tom prayed for his conversion, but Ophelia asks him to take the prayer to heart.

XVII

Sunday dinner – Still sheltering at the Halliday home, George and Eliza talk about their future in Canada. He swears to act as a good father to Harry and find work as soon as he can. Eliza says she'll help him by

taking a job as a dressmaker or a washerwoman. They fret for a moment that there will be many dangers between them and freedom, but George speaks hopefully, saying, "It seems as if I smelt the free air, and it makes me strong." As if siding with Eliza, a Quaker enters and warns George and Eliza that the slave-catchers tracking them have rented a room at the local tavern. George decides to arm himself with a pistol. In spite of their desire to flee, the Quakers ask them to wait for nightfall and to eat before they leave, so George and Eliza sit down with everyone for supper. The Quakers help the Harris family prepare to leave when warning comes that the slave-catchers are making their way toward the homestead. George and his family board a carriage and bolt down the frozen road. A galloping rider soon catches up to them, and to their surprise, it's one of the Quakers, trying to give them warning that the slave-catchers are right behind them, as many as ten. He takes the wagon from them, hoping to throw the pursuers off their trail as they run cross-country. Joined by a Quaker and another two escaping slaves, the Harris family barricades themselves behind a rocky outcropping.

Making good on a threat – Tom Loker and Marks lead the posse of slave-catchers. They bicker and complain about the cold weather before discussing how to approach and catch the escaping slaves unharmed. Marks fears a firefight, but Tom calls him a coward before walking forward and addressing the people crouching behind the rocks. George identifies himself, shouting that they're armed and will defend themselves. A slave-catcher steps forward, chastising George for threatening violence, saying the law's punishment will be harsher for it. George declares, "I know very well that you've got the law on your side, and the power. You mean to take my wife... put my boy like a calf in a trader's pen... to send Jim and me back to be whipped and tortured... We'll fight for our liberty till we die." Loker remains undeterred and approaches, pistol in hand, and opens fire. George, with the help of the Quaker with them, manages to shoot three of the slave-catchers, including both Loker and Marks. The old woman escaping with them cradles Loker and soothes him as he dies, taking pity on him. After a while, he passes out, and the Quaker says he'll likely live, as it's just a deep flesh wound. The party continues on toward Canada after leaving the old woman with another abolitionist family.

XVIII

St. Clare's soul and Ophelia keeping house– The plot moves back to Tom in Louisiana, where he's become an integral part of the St. Clare household. He worries about Mr. St. Clare's soul as someone who won't convert, especially as the man goes through bouts of binge drinking. Tom and another slave manhandle their master into bed one night, and Tom can't stand it anymore. He throws himself to his knees and begs him to change his ways. Mr. St. Clare is touched by Tom's plea and promises to never touch liquor again. We learn that Ophelia has turned her hand to learning the housekeeper's trade, specifically because Marie St. Clare is "indolent and childish, unsystematic and improvident." She makes her way through the house, cleaning and reorganizing, causing a stir among the house slaves. One, the head cook named Dinah, feels like Ophelia is intruding. Ophelia picks apart the kitchen, finding it disorganized, unkempt, and even unhygienic. Dinah does her best to defend her actions, but Ophelia won't hear it. We learn that in only a few days, Ophelia has the household running like clockwork. Instead of being thankful, Mr. St. Clare mocks his cousin's "extravagant value on time." Their argument turns into one about slavery. St. Clare posits that the "lesser" races exist to serve the "higher" races. Ophelia finds this runs counter to her religious beliefs, but St. Clare refuses to argue any further, inviting his cousin to dinner.

Volume II

XIX

Prue's story – Around that time, the tall, lanky woman who delivers bread to the kitchen enters through the rear door. Her name is Prue. Dinah greets her heartily, but Prue is distraught. While the white folks argue about who is going to pay for the bread delivery, the slaves gather in the kitchen to gossip. Tom offers to show Prue out. While politely carrying her basket for her, Tom listens to Prue's story, comforting her when she reveals she's been forced to abandon her child to death. The baby was born with a disability, likely because of her drinking, and she blames herself for the child's death. Tom prays for her and hopes that she'll be open to Jesus' love, bidding her farewell as she continues her delivery route.

Back in the big house, Tom runs into Eva, who asks why he looks so glum. He tells her the story, and she reacts with grace beyond her years.

St. Clare's hypocrisy – A few days later, the St. Clare house slaves gossip. They all talk about Prue's sudden death. The person punishing her for drinking went too far. The white folks overhear the news; Ophelia reacts the most angrily, while St. Clare is indifferent. "It thought it would come to that, some time," he says, reading his paper. Ophelia rages on, but St. Clare simply responds, "If people choose to ruin their own possessions, I don't know what's to be done." "It's perfectly abominable for you to defend such a system!" shouts Ophelia. St. Clare argues that he doesn't defend it; he simply lives with it. In a very long and serious conversation about slavery, and St. Clare's opinion becomes clear: this is the system the people in power desire, and there's nothing he can do to change it. Might makes right, and the best he can do is treat his own slaves well despite everything. Eva interrupts them, asking questions about Prue's death before breaking down in tears at her father's indifferent replies. Later that night, Tom asks St. Clare and Eva for help writing and sending a letter to his wife in Kentucky.

XX

Topsy – One morning, Mr. St. Clare calls Ophelia downstairs, saying he has a surprise for her. The surprise is a young slave girl, one Beecher Stowe describes as "goblin-like." Ophelia asks, "What in the world have you brought that thing here for?" St. Clare says he "thought she was rather a funny specimen," after explaining she's for Ophelia to educate. He asks the girl, Topsy, to dance, and she does so with gusto, making strange noises as she does so. While frustrated with the situation, Ophelia goes about cleaning the girl up, shocked and disgusted to find one so young with scars and calluses from beatings. Topsy has no family, having been raised by a "speculator" for the market from infancy. She doesn't even know her age or birth month. After dressing the girl and asking some more questions, Ophelia begins instructing Topsy on proper housekeeping. Ophelia is pleased with the girl's skill but frustrated when she is shown to be stealing; a silk ribbon hangs from her sleeve. Afterward, Eva meets Topsy, and the two become fast playmates. Ophelia says she'd never let her children play with Topsy, but St. Clare thinks it will do his daughter good, pointing out Ophelia's hypocrisy: even as a slave owner, he has more respect for his slave's humanity than his northern, abolition-sympathizing cousin.

XXI

A letter from Tom – The narrative returns to the Shelby farm in Kentucky, where Chloe receives a letter from Tom. The Shelbys talk about how this has made her very happy. Mrs. Shelby asks when they'll be able to buy Tom back. Mr. Shelby doesn't think it possible. Mrs. Shelby is distraught, feeling as if she's betrayed a dear friend. Entering the big house, Chloe overhears and makes a proposition: she knows of a confectioner looking for help. If Mr. Shelby would rent her out to the bakery, her earnings could be saved up to purchase Tom back or even his freedom. It will take four or five years, but Mr. Shelby agrees. Excitedly, Chloe goes to George Shelby and asks him to help write her reply to Tom.

XXII

Two years later – Two years have passed by the time we rejoin Tom in Louisiana. In Kentucky, things go to play with Chloe working for the baker. George Shelby laments that Uncle Tom's cabin has been boarded up to keep pests out. Tom, however, has been happy caring for the horses and accompanying Eva. Eva, in turn, has become an avid reader of the Bible in helping Tom to learn to read more proficiently. The St. Clare family has left St. Louis, hoping the clear air around Lake Pontchartrain will help Eva's undisclosed illness. By the lakeside, Tom and Eva sit and read from the Bible, Tom occasionally interjecting with hymns. After a while, Eva stops Tom and tells him, "I'm going there... To the spirits bright, Tom; *I'm going, before long.*" Later, while talking with her mother, Eva says she wishes she could buy a house in the free states where she could send all the house slaves to have them educated and freed. Mrs. St. Clare wonders why she would want to educate slaves. "But they ought to read the Bible, Mamma, to learn God's will," says Eva. The chapter ends telling us that Eva began giving her personal maid reading lessons after that conversation.

XXIII & XXIV

St. Clare's brother and Eva's illness – Mr. St. Clare's brother comes to visit, bringing his twelve-year-old son, Henrique, with him. While on a horse ride with Eva, Henrique begins to beat his groom, a young enslaved boy named Dodo. "How could you be so cruel and wicked to poor Dodo?" Eva asks. Henrique says Dodo is a liar and deceiver. Eva stops her horse and dismounts to tend to Dodo, saying that even slaves deserve love as do all God's creatures, and this compassion seems to touch Henrique. He gives Dodo a coin and tells him to buy himself some candy with it. At the summer home, St. Clare and his brother discuss the French Revolution before settling in for a game of backgammon. Two days later, Eva's health begins to fail. Her mother doesn't seem to notice or care, but Ophelia is distraught and demands they call a doctor. It's only when Eva becomes bedbound that the doctor is called and Marie reacts. One day, Eva tells Tom she can understand why Jesus wanted to die for their sins: "Because I've felt so, too." The family and many of the slaves gather around Eva's deathbed. Here, she makes a request of her father she's wanted to make for a long time: "I feel sad for our poor people; they love me dearly, and they are all good and kind to me. I wish, Papa, they were all *free*." St. Clare begs for her to stay with him, and he'll do whatever she wants. Eva's voice falters, and she tells her father, "You will come after me." St. Clare holds his dying daughter and sings to her as she sleeps.

XXV

Doll clothes – The next Sunday, St. Clare lounges on the veranda with a cigar as Marie reclines on a couch, reading her prayer book. Ophelia is away, having found a Methodist service to attend. They both bicker, deeply distressed by Eva's condition and their inability to do anything to help. Ophelia returns boisterously, dragging Topsy into the parlor and demanding the girl explain her actions. Topsy remains quiet, and Ophelia reports that the girl was cutting doll clothes out of Eva's clothes. When confronted, Topsy repeats things she's heard about slaves, that he has a wicked heart and a poor mind. She is resigned to a whipping. Marie says this is what should be done, but Ophelia refuses. Ophelia admits to not wanting to touch Topsy, and the girl wanders off. The adults hear Eva speaking from the next room, and she tells Topsy she is loved by herself and Jesus. Hearing this, Ophelia wishes she were as Christ-like as Eva.

XXVI

Eva's last words – An undetermined time later, the entire house gathers in Eva's bedroom. She seemed to be recovering for a while, but she's clearly dying now. Topsy, trying to make the dying girl feel better, brings a bouquet of flowers, but Marie tries to stop her. Eva calls from her bed that she wants to see Topsy, and she takes the bouquet, complimenting Topsy's flower arranging skills and wishing she could have her arrange flowers for her every day. Eva strikes up a conversation with her mother, trying to get Marie to see the humanity of their slaves, but Marie doesn't care. Then Eva asks Ophelia to cut some locks of her hair and distribute them to the slaves and tell them she'll meet them all in heaven. Feeling the end coming, Eva asks her father to gather the house slaves so she can make sure this happens. Tom is particularly touched by this gesture. As her strength fades further, she asks her father to convert. Finally, she spasms and begins to pass away. Mr. St. Clare sobs openly as he holds his child's body. He relays her final words: "O! Love,—joy,—peace!"

XXVII

The mourning – Beecher Stowe begins the next chapter with John Quincy Adams' last words: "This is the last of Earth! I am content." Eva's room has been transformed into an impromptu tomb, her statuettes and pictures shrouded in white cloth as her body lies in her deathbed. This event seems to have broken St. Clare, as she shows uncharacteristic impatience when asked questions about the funeral arrangements. His brother and one of the head slaves try to keep the others out, especially Topsy, but the girl is allowed entry by St. Clare, who stamps his foot when ordering her to be let through. Topsy throws herself on the floor beside Eva's bed and wails, "I wish I's dead, too,—I do!" Ophelia tries to comfort Topsy by saying Eva is in heaven and promises to try and love her as Eva did. Seeing how his daughter affected those around her in her short life, St. Clare feels the hollowness of his own life. Marie,

however, is beside herself with grief, sobbing and moaning partly because St. Clare isn't mourning as she is. Back in New Orleans, Tom stands with St. Clare, urging him to accept Christ's love, but St. Clare ignores him, frequenting restaurants and bars to drink instead.

Eva's Bible – Life goes back to normal in the St. Clare mansion, but it takes on a hollow, mechanical nature. Both parents dearly miss their child and struggle with grief. Trying to reconnect with his daughter, St. Clare begins to read from her bible. Remembering his promise to Eva and having his faith stoked by reading the Bible, St. Clare makes plans to free his slaves. He tells Tom, "I'm going to make a free man of you;—so have your trunk packed, and get ready to set out for Kentuck." Tom reacts joyously, shocked that he could actually be gaining his freedom. While Marie continues to be demanding and cruel to her slaves in spite of her husband's change of heart, we see Ophelia being kind and tender with Topsy and the others. St. Clare promises to sign over Topsy's papers to Ophelia so she may do as she wishes with the girl. Ophelia plans to take Topsy up North and free her where she'll be at less threat from slave-catchers and the like. Ophelia and Marie ask him to make arrangements for the slaves if he happens to die, and he says he'll get around to it some time, going back to his carefree ways again.

XXVIII

Tom talks of faith and freedom – One day, struck by a passage in the Bible, St. Clare sits down with Tom to help him read from his own bible. He's struck by another passage, reading it twice to Tom: "Then shall he say unto them, 'Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it not to me.'" A bit later that day, St. Clare opens an old music book and plays a Latin song praising Jesus on the piano. Tom, listening on the Veranda, is touched. Ophelia overhears too, and they rejoice, telling him he's beginning to come into his faith. St. Clare argues against this for a moment, but he admits he has changed, so much so he promises to "save my country from the disgrace from that false position in which she now stands before all civilized nations." He now believes that the whole United States should come together to free, educate, and integrate the slaves into society. After a bit more discussion, he decides to clear his head and go on a walk. A while later, several men drag a body in, and everyone gathers in the parlor. Tom is shocked to see Mr. St. Clare bleeding on the couch. At a cafe where St. Clare was reading the paper, a fight broke out, and he was stabbed. It takes a while for the doctor to come, and he makes his examination, but he doesn't do more than apply a dressing as a type of theater. As he dies, St. Clare begs Tom to pray for him.

XXIX

Marie in charge – Beecher Stowe begins by discussing the common fears of the slave, hinting at the terror of the slaves in the St. Clare household with the passing of Eva and Mr. St. Clare. Marie's treatment of them has never been kind, and now she's grieving and acting out on top of everything. After the funerals, Ophelia begins thinking of returning home, and the house slaves see in her their last remaining "indulgence." This is confirmed when one of them is ordered to go to the whipping house for punishment. She goes to Ophelia, who is outraged, and confronts Marie. Marie, however, finds Ophelia's outbursts comic: Marie is going to control her household through fear. She soon changes her mind, but not in the way Ophelia may hope. Marie sells the house, the furniture, and all of the slaves. Tom begs with Ophelia to help them, as Mr. St. Clare promised to free them before he died, but Marie is more interested in the wealth these people represent than honoring her late husband's wishes. Marie's final lines are an emotional outburst about the world being against her, responding to Ophelia reminding her of Eva and St. Clare's wishes. Ophelia packs her things and leaves, unable to help any further. The slaves are taken to a great "warehouse" to await auction.

XXX

The slave warehouse – Tom and the other slaves from the St. Clare household are segregated by gender and taken to separate holding pens. The slave keeper Mr. Skeggs treats the whole affair with a surreal joviality Tom can't comprehend. One of his customers, a Black overseer named Sambo, approaches and sizes up Tom. Skeggs says he'll be put to auction tomorrow, and Sambo pokes fun at them for their position as house slaves, and he starts a fight with one of them. Beecher Stowe describes

the situation in the women's pens as much more calm and somber. Two of their number are mother and daughter, Susan and Emmeline, mixed-race women who were taught to read and write and fear being put to harsh labor. To comfort her daughter, Susan leads them in a hymn, *O, where is weeping Mary?*.

The auction begins – The next morning, Mr. Skeggs enters the pens with a cigar clamped in his teeth, taking a moment to harass Susan and Emmeline about having pulled her hair straight before making his way out to the saleyard. Several buyers make the rounds, looking over the occupants of the pens. One recognizes Tom and some of the others, saying he'd never buy any of St. Clare's slaves, saying, "Spolit niggers, everyone." A rough-dressed and intimidating man eventually approaches Tom and asks about him and his history, spitting tobacco in disbelief. It's this man who buys Tom and Emmeline at the auction. They're readied for transport to his cotton plantation.

XXXI

Legree's cruelty – Tom quickly realizes how serious his situation is as he sits in stowage on a riverboat with irons clasped around his arms and legs: never has he had such a cruel master. Mr. Legree comes down and roughly unbinds Tom before taking his clothes and replacing them with rough but sturdy field-working clothes. Seeing a hymnal among Tom's possessions, Legree mocks his faith and vows to break him of it. "I'm your church now!" Legree says, stamping his foot. After taking his things and throwing them in the river, Legree gloats that Tom should take good care of his clothes, as "one suit has to do for one year, on my place." Legree then turns his torments toward Emmeline, demanding she smile and manhandling her face into the grimace he wants to see. After scaring her sufficient, he begins to brag and gloat to the other white men aboard about how his treatment gets the most out of his slaves. One man asks how long they last under such treatment, and Legree says it doesn't matter, saying, "I just put 'em straight through, sick or well. When one nigger's dead, I buy another; and I find it comes cheaper and easier, every way." Many of the white men aboard complain about Legree's philosophy and say it does not define them. Emmeline and another enslaved woman in stowage manage to share a heartfelt conversation about friends and family before the boat docks and they disembark.

XXXII

A long wagon ride to Legree's plantation – We see Tom and the others chained to a wagon; they jog behind as Legree transports them to his plantation. Legree, seated on the wagon, begins to demand the slaves sing to rouse his spirits. Tom starts to sing *Jerusalem, my happy home*, and Legree screams at him. Another slave begins singing a song and making up new verses based on a simple rhyme, and this seems to please Legree. He turns his attention to Emmeline, who trembles at his touch and questions: Legree plans to use her as a concubine. The wagon and trailing slaves reach the plantation grounds. It was once a beautiful, well-kept place, but Legree's cruelty and frugality have assured it has fallen into disrepair. The slaves are introduced to Legree's brutal overseers, a pair of loyal slaves named Sambo and Quimbo. Legree then threatens to feed the new slaves to the dogs if they misbehave. He retreats to the house after promising Emmeline to Sambo as a "reward" for his loyal service. She's taken to the house to be "prepared." Later that evening, the slaves who were working the field return to their lodging to make dinner, and they're introduced to Tom and the others but pay them little mind. They're so broken by Legree's treatment that they abuse each other to eek out enough to survive. Tom feels his faith is being tested. When he goes to sleep that night, he dreams of Eva reading to him from the Bible.

XXXIII

Tom's endurance – As cruel and physically punishing as it is, Tom quickly adapts to plantation life. He endures this test of his faith, his body, and his humanity with quiet humility, and Legree notices. To anyone, he would call Tom a "first class hand," yet he held a secret hatred of him for his spiritual resilience. Tom meets a new slave in the field one day, a woman named Lucy, and—noticing that she is ill—he starts to help her by putting his own cotton in her sack. Sambo sees this, kicking and whipping Lucy as punishment. She warns Tom that he'll lose his kindness before the month is out. At the weighing, Legree is the one taking stock. He hears Sambo's report about Tom and Lucy, and Legree orders Tom to be the one to flog her. After stowing the cotton harvest, Tom begs Legree not to make him beat Lucy.

Legree hits Tom across the face with a rawhide switch. Even after this abuse, Tom refuses to strike a fellow slave. Legree reacts with childish indignation before handing Tom over to Quimbo and Sambo for “breaking.”

XXXIV

Breaking Tom – Late that night, Tom lies groaning in the old distillery Legree uses to “discipline” his slaves. A mixed-race woman from the house named Cassy brings him a bottle of clean water. Tom thanks her, calling her “missis,” but she corrects him: she’s a slave too, just of a different type. She does her best to make him comfortable and is dumbfounded when Tom begins praying for Sambo and Quimbo. Having lost everything else, Tom refuses to lose his faith. He sees them as poor creatures trapped in this cruel system, even as they take joy in the suffering of other slaves. In a long chunk of exposition, Cassy describes her life to Tom. She was bought by a white man who she loved, but he refused to free and marry her. Shortly after this, he died of yellow fever. She had two children with the man, both of whom were separated from her in the slave markets. Tom cries out in pain, and Cassy comforts him, helping him to get to sleep.

XXXV

Legree’s broken mind – Legree sits in his house, the once opulent rooms in total disarray. He drinks a stoutly spiked punch and complains about “letting” Sambo “convince” him to punish Tom. Cassy enters, Beecher Stowe telling us she has a sexual hold over Legree, but he fears her, as his superstitious mind makes him think she is some sort of witch. Cassy has worked a day in the fields to prove she is not afraid of whatever punishments Legree might have in store for her when she tells him he’s doing everything wrong, siding with Emmeline that this cruelty toward Tom serves no purpose. Sambo enters with a charm he found on Tom, a silver dollar given to him by George Shelby and the lock of Eva’s hair tied to it, claiming it makes Tom impervious to harm. Legree throws it into the fire, thinking it some sort of magic, while Cassy sneaks out again to tend to Tom. We also learn of Legree’s forsaken Christian upbringing and his belief that his mother’s spirit haunts him for his cruelty.

XXXVI

Plan to escape – Later that night, Emmeline sits sleeplessly in her bed, listening to the drunken goings on on the lower floors. She’s startled by Cassy’s entrance. The older woman has a plan to escape. Emmeline is scared and fears being caught, but Cassy is able to convince her the plan will work: if they can survive in the swamps around the plantation, not even the dogs could find them. It’s revealed that Emmeline has not yet slept with Legree, though that is why he bought her. Cassy says she should drink heavily so that the process is easier and she won’t remember it well. The next morning, Cassy advises Legree to be gentler on his property, reminding him that he spent \$1,200 on Tom alone. Legree seems to agree. In spite of this, Legree goes out to the old distillery and kicks Tom, who lies unmoving on the floor, badly beaten. He brandishes a whip and demands Tom beg for his forgiveness. Tom says he only did what he thought was right. He says he’ll do whatever work Legree commands, but he will never beat another slave. Legree flies into a rage and savagely beats Tom. Cassy warns Tom that he’s earned Legree’s ill will and that he should bend if he has any hope of surviving. Tom compares himself to Daniel in the lion’s den.

XXXVII

A Quaker farm – We return to the Quaker farmhouse up North, but this time we see Tom Loker, the slave-catcher, in the care of the Quaker family. It’s from the old woman living there that Loker learns the same escaped slaves he was trying to catch are the ones responsible for his recovery. George and Eliza backtracked to the house, carrying Tom with them, and assured him he was cared for before making good on their escape. Touched by this gesture, Tom tells the old woman to get word to the Harris family: they must change their appearance if they’re to escape. The fugitive slave Jim and his mother rush to rejoin the Harris family with this information.

Escape to Canada – After getting this advice, George and Eliza rent a room. They joke and laugh as Eliza changes her appearance and dresses like a man: “Ain’t I a pretty young fellow?” After a short aside to express a mix of joy and distress for having made it so far and being so close to freedom, little Harry is given a similar treatment, his hair put in bows and dressed in girls’ clothes. “We’ll call him Harriet,” says Eliza. The boy is a bit perturbed by the situation, a bit disturbed to see his mother altered so. George helps his wife put the finishing touches on her man costume, saying they should split up and take separate boats to avoid being recognized by the slave catchers. Boarding separate steamers, the Harris family crosses Lake Erie, reaching Canada and freedom. On the shore, the family kneels down and gives thanks to God. A missionary discovers them there and takes them in.

XXXVIII

Wounded work and a plot to kill Legree – Tom’s work at Legree’s plantation has only grown more difficult since we last saw him. Enduring frequent whippings and torture, Tom is put back to work in the fields even before his wounds have a chance to close. Day after grueling day passes, and Tom’s faith falters further. He seeks solace in prayer and the Bible, but he feels forsaken and no longer able to find joy in the passages that once made his soul sing. Legree taunts him for still trying, reminding him that religion won’t save him. The abuse continues, and prayer does less and less for Tom. At his lowest, Tom has a vision of Christ. This renews his faith in spite of everything. One night, Cassy comes to Tom and tells him she’s drugged Legree’s brandy. She asks him for help in murdering Legree so they all may be free. Just as when Legree commanded him to whip the sick slave woman, Tom responds that he could never do such a thing. “Then I shall do it,” says Cassy. Tom stops her, holding her hands and reminding her God says to love your enemies. As she writes against him, Tom prays for her to free her from the “evil spirits” that follow her and frighten Legree so. This pseudo-exorcism seems to work, and Cassy swears to not enact her plan.

XXXIX

The Stratagem – Later, we see Cassy teasing Legree’s superstitious nature, causing him so much stress that he strikes at her with his whip. She retreats and places a bottle in the knothole of a nearby tree, so when the wind blows, it makes a gentle, moaning whistle like a ghost. After a few nights of this, Legree’s mental health declines even further. He’s jumpy and paranoid. Cassy does more to stoke this fear in him before making good on the escape she planned with Emmeline. As she leaves the mansion, Cassy opens several hidden stashes of supplies and money before stealing a horse and galloping out into the swamps. Legree calls for his overseers, instructing them to begin a hunt for the fugitive slaves.

XL

Torturing Tom – The next evening, Cassy and Emmeline still haven’t been found. Legree decides to take his rage out on Tom, believing he knows all the details of the women’s escape. We learn that Emmeline and Cassy have been hiding in swamps nearby, living on hidden caches Cassy has prepared, waiting for the searchers to move further afield. One day, after no success in finding the escaped women, Legree takes Tom back to the distillery, telling him, “Do you know I’ve made up my mind to KILL YOU?” Tom calmly responds that he figured as much. The only way to be spared this fate, says Legree, is for Tom to tell him where the women are. Tom doesn’t know and can’t tell him, simply telling Legree to hurry up and kill him if that’s his intent. The most vicious torture Tom has faced yet awaits him that night. The next morning, the overseers look over Tom’s broken and bleeding body. He barely clings to life. “I forgive ye, with all my heart!” Tom says weakly. The two men break down in tears and ask Tom to tell them of Jesus. In a short sermon, Tom converts Sambo and Quimbo.

XLI

Too little, too late – That same morning, a familiar face enters the Legree property: it’s George Shelby. The narrator informs us his father has died, and he and his mother made it their life’s work to track down and free Tom so he could be reunited with his family in Kentucky. When George asks Legree if he can see Tom, Legree says Tom is dying. George stoops to Tom’s side in the old distillery, begging him not to

die. “*Heaven has come!*” Tom cries out. “I’ve got the victory!—The Lord Jesus has given it to me! Glory be to His name!” Before he passes, he makes George promise not to tell Chloe the details of his death, and the young man agrees. George assures Tom has a good, Christian burial before he leaves. Several slaves clamor after George, begging him to buy them, but he lacks the money.

XLII

Ghosts – The night after Tom’s burial, Legree gets particularly drunk in town. When he returns, he’s frightened to find a ghost in his bedchamber. She beacons to him to join her, and he faints out of fear. Shortly after this, two ghostly figures dart down the road toward the town: it’s Cassy and Emmeline making good on their escape. Cassy dresses as a Spanish Creole woman, and Emmeline as her servant. In the town, Cassy purchases a trunk to help disguise their escape and waits for the riverboat. Also waiting is George Shelby. There’s something familiar about Cassy’s face and expressions, and he strikes up a conversation with her, becoming better acquainted. As they board the boat, Cassy tells George the truth, and he promises to help the women make their way up North.

Revelations – A bit later on the riverboat ride, George is conversing with a French woman and her daughter about his home. She is interested in learning more about George Harris. George Shelby tells her about the Harris family and their escape to Canada. The French woman reveals herself to be George Harris’ sister. She was sold when she was young and ended up falling in love with a man who freed her, married her, and took her to the West Indies. She has returned to the United States as a widow, intending to free her brother with her husband’s wealth. Listening to George describe Eliza, Cassy has the revelation that Eliza is her long-lost daughter taken from her near her birth. We see them reunite with the Harris family in Montreal. Using his sister’s inheritance, the Harris family moves to France, where George attends college. They return to the US several years later, however, due to political upheaval in France.

XLIII

Letter to a friend – In a long letter to a friend, George Harris complains about being mixed race, saying he wishes he were darker for the sake of African solidarity. He also tells this unnamed friend about his family’s life. He says he wishes to visit Liberia, saying it has a hopeful political future. The narrator tells us that George and his family move there. We also learn that Topsy has grown up with Ophelia and has become a Christian missionary in Africa.

XLIV

George Shelby returns home – Mrs. Shelby learns of her son’s return from a letter containing a single line. She and Chloe fret over their appearances, hoping to please George and Tom upon their arrival. George doesn’t have Tom with him, however, nor does he have good news. Just as he promised, he doesn’t tell Chloe the details of Tom’s death. They hold a dinner in Tom’s honor. Afterward, George, now the man of the house, frees all his slaves, inviting them to live on the farm as workers instead of slaves. They all come together to sing a hymn in thanks. Uncle Tom’s cabin is enshrined on the property as a Christian symbol.

XLV

A final call to action – The final chapter takes leave of the narrative in order to analyze the abolitionist themes and politics that guided the creation of the novel. Beecher Stowe addresses the reader as herself, explaining that she drew inspiration from a great number of slave stories to pen her novel, having been spurred to action by the passing of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. She also admits to dramatic embellishment in order to gain attention for this important issue. She calls for all Americans and Christians to act and pray. She implies that Christ will return upon the turn of the century (1900), and they will suffer God’s wrath if they do not end slavery.

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Uncle Tom

Tom is one of Mr. Shelby's most helpful and long-serving slaves. He is shocked to be sold in order to help Mr. Shelby clear a debt. Tom's trip down South begins fairly positively when he is bought by the eccentric Mr. St. Clare as a sort of repayment for saving his daughter, but he reaches the lowest point of his life when he is sold again to Mr. Legree.

Loyal Tom is loyal to a fault. He swears loyalty to whoever may be his master in a frankly unrealistic way, but Beecher Stowe is attempting to portray him as a man of strong moral beliefs in doing this. When other slaves suggest violent or illegal activities, Tom argues against them, warning them of the consequences they may face in the afterlife. This too is an act of loyalty warped by his spiritual beliefs. Tom believes worldly suffering is impermanent but spiritual suffering is eternal. He suggests to other slaves that they should focus on finding joy in God's word instead of using violence and crime to attain earthly freedom. While he would very much like to be free, he relies on others to free him instead of taking his fate into his own hands. Tom's loyalty and his faith are deeply intertwined.

Faithful Even more than his loyalty, Tom is endlessly faithful in God. He believes that if he will be freed, it will be through God's will. While Beecher Stowe didn't mean to portray it in this way, we see Tom's strict interpretation of scripture and hymns hobble him from achieving escape and freedom. While it's understandable that one may not want to murder someone to stop suffering, Tom's faith forces him to refute Cassy when she asks for his help in killing Legree, though such an act would save hundreds of slaves from the cruelest of master and keep Legree from putting anyone else through the same suffering. Many biblical figures did just that to save far fewer people: even in the Bible, murder is sometimes seen as a necessity, especially in the name of God or the defense of his people. Tom, however, focuses on Jesus' teachings, taking the idea of turning the other cheek to such an extreme that it results in his death. However, his display of faith, forgiving the men who beat him to death, sways two souls, allowing him to convert them in his final moments. This faith reads differently based upon your personal spiritual beliefs: those with deep Christian faith often find beauty in Tom's death, while people without such belief frequently find it senseless and hollow.

Eliza

Eliza is one of Mr. Shelby's slaves. She is especially close with his wife. Because of the escape of her husband, George, and the desire to see her son, Harry, freed, she too flees the Shelby farm for Canada.

Determined Eliza is a very determined woman. While she often has to rely on the kindness of others, she often makes her own outcome in some way. She shows this at first by even being able to muster up the will to escape: many slaves throughout the narrative wish for freedom but are held back from chasing it by some fear or belief. She risks frostbite and other such conditions in order to escape, traipsing across frozen fields and getting across the frozen ice on the Ohio River. Pursuing men with guns doesn't give her much pause. She also isn't afraid to pose as a man or dress Harry as a girl to get across the lake to Canada undetected. Because of Eliza's determination to keep her family whole, she and her family get the only happy ending in the novel.

Loving Eliza loves her family more than anything. Even though George and Harry are the main focus of her love, we also see her acting in loving ways with the Shelby family in spite of her position as their slave. She's happy to take care of their son and socializes with them as one might a family member. Her love is so great that she even risks her family's freedom to help take the wounded slave-catcher Tom Loker back to the Quaker farmhouse so he might recover from his gunshot wound. These are short snippets from the story, but each has a massive impact in building up this character trait in Eliza.

George Harris

A mixed-race slave living near the Shelby's farm, he recently married Eliza. He is a frequent visitor to the farm and very fond of his young son. When his jealous owner revokes his ability to work at a nearby factory, he swears to do everything in his power to free himself and his family.

Intelligent We're told of George's intelligence, though Beecher Stowe gives him little chance to show us this trait. He is so smart that he invents the equivalent of the cotton gin for flax. Because his prideful owner wants to show off his intelligent slave, he allows George to work at a factory to help install the machine. George loves working at the factory so much, and the factory appreciates his help and smarts for engineering, frequently relying on him to help make improvements and praising him for it. George's local fame and recognition make his owner jealous, causing him to end the contract and putting him to work in the fields. Hurt and frustrated by this, George pledges to escape and earn enough money in Canada to buy his family's freedom.

Determined Just like his wife, George is determined to reach Canada and freedom. This is for the sake of his family. He wants to live a life of his choosing instead of being lost to the whims of cruel and petty men. His determination to reach freedom and protect his family is so strong, he kills at least two men during his escape. George is also determined to not be like the slave-catchers, risking his life and freedom to deliver Tom Loker to the Quakers so he might recover from his gunshot wound. George's determination pays off, as he and his family reach Montreal, where they build a new life together.

Simon Legree

Legree is a Louisiana plantation owner noted for his frequent purchase of "replacement" slaves. He is incredibly cruel, providing next to nothing to assure his slaves survive. His superstitious attitudes and his alcoholism allow cunning slaves like Cassy to take advantage of him.

Cruel Legree is nothing if not cruel. He gives his slaves barely enough to get by, so little they steal from each other to survive. Legree also seems to take sick pleasure in beating his slaves or having them tortured by his overseers. Often, these slaves will go back into the fields without their wounds having a chance to stitch. Even when given good advice about ending these behaviors, Legree continues to torture Tom to death for no reason, killing him before George Shelby tracks him down to free him.

Foolish While described as "superstitious," Legree's beliefs are simply foolish. He lacks any and all curiosity about what could be or what should be. It's only what's right in front of him and what pleases him now that drives him. This is tied to some childhood trauma that made him believe his mother's spirit haunts him. To escape his fear and paranoia, he drinks, tortures his slaves, and sleeps with his concubines, using the pleasures of the flesh to make up for his lacking spirit. Cassy even warns him of the economic foolishness of beating a \$1,200 slave to death simply because he is a devout Christian. Because of his foolish beliefs, Cassy is able to trick Legree into believing he is being haunted and make good on her escape without being followed.

Eva St. Clare

Daughter of Augustine and Marie, Eva is a bright spot in many of the lives she touches. Her naïve friendliness gives her a special bond with many of her father's slaves. On her deathbed, she begs for her father to free his slaves, such is her love for them.

Selfless Eva is shown to be selfless in some very childish but touching ways throughout the story. She gives her jewels to her maid as a gift, earning her mother's anger. Similarly, Eva wishes she could give all the slaves her family owns their freedom because she loves them so. Her Christian love for these slaves touches them deeply, and none cry quite as much as them when she dies. Her final wish is never granted, however, because of her father's carelessness and drinking. Her death and desires are portrayed as Christ-like in their impact, seen as dying for the sins of another.

Augustine St. Clare

A wealthy man from New Orleans, St. Clare is known for his indifferent and lazy attitude. His slaves take advantage of this, often stealing or neglecting their duties because St. Clare just doesn't care. After his daughter dies, he is killed in a disagreement at a cafe.

Lazy St. Clare is incredibly lazy. He's never on time, nor does he care if he is. He would rather lay in bed all day than get up and do something. We never see St. Clare do anything resembling labor or work. In fact, most of what he does is lie around the house chatting or go out for drinks. His wealth gives him the ability to live like this, and, mirroring Legree somewhat, he does nothing to make a positive change in his or anyone else's lives, seeking earthly pleasure instead.

Careless This ties into Augustine's lazy attitude. St. Clare thinks that everything will just work itself out and his input and action are unnecessary. He uses this idea as a defense of his owning slaves to Ophelia. Because of his desire not to act, he often puts off important things. This includes getting medical treatment for his daughter and freeing his slaves. St. Clare's inaction at these key moments results in tragedy.

Marie St. Clare

Marie is the wife of Augustine St. Clare. She is his opposite in many ways, most notably in her desire to put the slaves 'in their place.' She often acts without thinking, leaning on emotions and tragedy as an excuse for her actions.

Uncaring Marie simply doesn't care for anyone but herself. When Eva begins having health trouble, Ophelia notices, and while he waves it off as commonplace childhood illness, St. Clare at least recognizes it. Marie denies that her daughter has an illness and blames others when Eva's sickness advances rapidly, saying that "someone" should have called the doctor sooner. Other characters are all touched and swayed by the actions and desires of others, but Marie acts as if these same things are annoyances and manipulations, shown most obviously when she refuses to grant both Eva and her husband's dying wishes by selling their slaves so she can live on the proceeds elsewhere.

Selfish Marie is incredibly selfish. She shows this occasionally during her first introduction, but it becomes most clear after Eva and her husband die. Instead of mourning in her room or seeking out the comfort of family, Marie lashes out at her staff, becoming impossibly demanding. She even turns her selfish behavior on Ophelia, who directly shares her grief as St. Clare's cousin. When anyone tells Marie that she is acting cruelly, she begins to weep and say "the world is against me."

George Shelby – Son of a Kentucky farmer, George makes his distaste for slavery known early on. He sees the enslaved people on his father's farm more as family than anything else. It's George who pushes hardest and does the most to try and buy back and free Tom after his father sells him at the beginning of the novel.

Kind George has a kind streak in him. While he only has small parts in the story, they all revolve around the way he treats the slaves around him as his peers. He loves Uncle Tom and Aunt Chloe as if they were his flesh and blood, and he can often be found in their cabin visiting. George never has a harsh word for anyone, even when he's upset. He travels all the way to Louisiana to give Tom his freedom, though he is too late to save his friend. On his way back home, George befriends two fleeing slaves, telling Cassy and Emmeline that he will do whatever he can to protect them and assure they reach the North. He also immediately frees his slaves when his father's inheritance passes to him.

THEMES

Society

Class We see several levels of America's economic classes throughout the story. The Shelby family is somewhere in what we would consider upper-middle class today, owning a farm with many slaves and only having some minor debt. The St. Clares, however, are clearly upper class, owning a mansion and several properties besides while never doing anything that resembles work or labor. Legree shows us how familial wealth can be squandered, as he is rich enough to treat slaves in a way that results in their deaths and replace them constantly. Even Cassy, one of his slaves, tells him he's wasting away his wealth with such cruelty. Even the slaves we see have a pseudo-economic hierarchy that becomes clear the second time we see Tom sold. Those who have "lenient" jobs in rich households are mocked by other slaves and slave traders. Those working the fields, bought as concubines, or sold to particularly cruel masters make up the bottom rung. Where the story often touches on issues of class, Beecher Stowe places less emphasis on material wealth and more upon spiritual strength and morals.

Gender We see a sentimental portrayal of gender in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Many of the actions and feelings of the characters have been blown out of proportion for dramatic effect. While there is a bit of over-dramatic extreme emotion, we see a surprisingly even mixture of cruelty, kindness, and indifference between male and female characters. Gender norms are enforced by the characters, but in a passive way. We're shown the lack of gender norms in many aspects of slave life. While house slaves show a clear dichotomy between men and women, those working the fields have no such luxury. Besides their manner of dress, there's little difference between men and women in the fields as they toil to raise and pick cotton. Neither is there much difference in the punishment of slaves based on gender. Beecher Stowe sees this as especially cruel.

Leisure This theme comes into focus when we first see the St. Claire household. Mr. St. Clare is incredibly lazy in many ways and is rarely seen doing business. He loves to rise late and spend the day reading, playing music, drinking, and chatting. While she wishes for more structure in her household, Mrs. St. Claire is very similar in the way she values her free time. Beecher Stowe tries to get across that the only reason they can enjoy their leisure the way they do is thanks to the efforts of their slaves, though she stumbles in the delivery at times, especially when she describes the St. Clare's slaves as listless and incompetent.

Race Race is a central theme of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Harriet Beecher Stowe was attempting to sway a middle- and upper-class audience in their view of the necessity of slavery. One of the ways she does this is making some of the slaves more heroic or worthy of sympathy in the eyes of this audience, giving us many light-skinned slaves like George, Eliza, and Cassy, who because of their mixed race received some additional sympathy from white readers. To improve the view of dark-skinned slaves like Tom, Beecher Stowe attempts to show them as loyal to a fault or incredibly faithful in God, Tom having both of these traits. While she does occasionally reveal her own deep-seated belief that white people are inherently superior to Black people, Beecher Stowe wants to portray her protagonists as noble in some way to change the perception of those who are on the fence about slaves and Black people's humanity at the time the book was published. Many people tolerated slavery because of widespread racial stereotypes, and *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was an attempt to rewrite some of those stereotypes. In some ways, Beecher Stowe succeeded, but in others, there have been long-lasting unforeseen consequences, as the popularity of this novel and so-called Anti-Tom novels set the stage for minstrelsy and the creation of new racist stereotypes based on the likes of Topsy.

Religion Beecher Stowe makes her religious intent clear throughout the novel with the inclusion of hymns and scripture. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is a Christian moral tale attempting to sway middle and upper-class Christians to connect the teachings of their religion to their politics when it came to America's system of chattel slavery. The most important and moral characters have strong faith in God, none more so than Uncle Tom, who endures trials not unlike the biblical Job. He is first and foremost a Christian, and this guides his words and acts. Tom inspires several people, including Eva and her father, to pick up the

Bible and accept God's word. We also see the inverse, that is people who act joyously godless. Legree is the clearest example of this, though Mr. Haley also falls into this category. They take some joy or at least are happy to profit from the suffering of enslaved Black people and often shun any religious or moral argument against their trade. Through these characters and this story, we're given an incredibly in-depth look at the religious and moral beliefs of Northeastern abolitionists in the mid-1800s.

Work Work is in constant focus, as this is the story of slaves. We see enslaved people working at nearly every type of job, from farming to horsemanship to hauling and general labor to domestic services of all types and even working as overseers. While some of the work we see done and slave-owners' expectations around it may be incongruent with reality because of Beecher Stowe's lack of experience and research (such as Sambo and Quimbo being allowed to work as slave overseers), much of the culture around slaves and work we see is fairly accurate when it comes to the structure of society: the white man does little while Black men and women take up all the slack. The system exists to serve white leisure through Black labor. Even those who do not own slaves and even outspoken abolitionists, such as cousin Ophelia, are incapable of treating Black people as anything other than servants or animals—as seen in her initial treatment of Topsy. We also see gendered divisions of labor, though in some moments these divisions are blurred. Even in Legree's slave camps, the women do the washing, the cooking, and the cleaning on top of field work. Modern critics and analysts are quick to nitpick the lack of feminist analysis in these moments, but it's important to remember that this novel was written nearly a half century before the first-wave feminists even deigned to ask for the vote.

Justice

Crime/Legality This is a surprisingly complex theme throughout the novel. We're shown many moments of outright criminality, often from the slaves, but Beecher Stowe wants us to sympathize, even at the most brutal of moments, such as when George Harris shoots the slave-catchers. He is committing the crime of murder against lawful officers seeking to enforce US law, but he does so for the sake of his family and their freedom, making his criminality just. Similarly, Cassy must steal from Legree to create caches of supplies for herself and Emmeline to use in their escape, making their crimes just. While completely legal under US law, the system of slavery is portrayed as one gigantic crime. It is, in essence, legalized brutality and inhumanity in Beecher Stowe's eyes. Because of her views, she posits US law as standing against God's law as portrayed in the Bible.

Injustice The idea of injustice drives most of the drama of the story. We see the first injustice when Mr. Shelby decides to sell Tom and Harry to pay off a debt. Tom's and the others' treatment on the riverboat is an obvious injustice. The fact that George Harris is torn away from a job he loves and excels at because of the jealousy of his owner is another obvious injustice, creating a large amount of drama when George convinces his wife, Eliza, of the necessity of running away to Canada. The entire point of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is to portray the system of chattel slavery in the US as a massive spiritual injustice enforced by law (given the context of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850). Beecher Stow wants the reader to become so incensed that they at the very least speak up about the injustice of being forced to cooperate with a system they want abolished or at the very least do not want to participate in.

Revenge The idea of revenge is floated a few times by the slaves. We see it mostly in Cassy, who explicitly wants to murder Legree for his cruelty. Through Tom, Beecher Stowe portrays this as an unthinkable act, though in the minds of many enslaved people and their supporters (such as the radical abolitionist John Brown), it is a noble goal to end human suffering. In this moment and Tom's complete rejection of the idea, we see how Christian moralism fails to actually end the suffering of humans in a material sense, focused more on their spiritual suffering in hell should they commit a grievous sin such as murder.

Violence Beecher Stowe spares us most moments of outright violence. The first time we see actual physical violence in the story is when George Harris is shot at by the slave catchers. He returns fire, killing two and wounding their leader, causing the rest to scatter out of fear. Tom first encounters outright physical violence under Legree, and it escalates. We see more outright violence during this section of the book than any other, even though Beecher Stowe does tiptoe around it for the sake of the

more squeamish reader. She also attempts to get across the idea that slavery is in and of itself violence. We're shown the many scars on even children like Topsy from whippings used as punishment for even the most mild misdeeds. While she tries not to dwell on it, Beecher Stowe can't escape the violence of the system of slavery, and it exists as a sort of background radiation throughout the entire novel.

Relationship

Family One of the most important themes in the novel is that of family. Uncle Tom is torn from his family, but he does so stoically with a tearful goodbye. When Eliza learns that her son has been sold, she has no choice but to follow her husband to Canada instead of waiting for him to buy their freedom there. The St. Clares watch their family disappear bit by bit, first when Eva dies of a wasting disease, again when Augustine is stabbed in a fight at a cafe. Without her family's support, Marie loses it and goes against both her daughter's and her husband's dying wishes that their slaves be freed. The story ends with Cassy and the Harris family reuniting, bringing three generations of a broken family back together with the addition of George's sister, who brings with her a great inheritance.

Friendship We see some conflicting ideas about friendship in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Mr. Shelby describes Uncle Tom as a good friend, even allowing the man to build his home up against his own and dining with the slave, but Tom is still his slave, his property. It barely takes Mr. Shelby a few hours to decide to sell his so-called friend to pay off a debt. Tom becomes fast friends with Eva, who truly sees him and the other slaves as full and equal humans. When she dies, Tom and her father become fast friends, but even with their friendship, St. Clare doesn't free him, allowing Marie to sell all the household slaves when she moves to forget what has happened to her family. The idea of friendship is complicated further by the Christian ideal of friendship, which has more to do with spirituality than material action or the treatment of others.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* gives us an interesting glimpse into the social lives of slave owners and their slaves. In your opinion, does Beecher Stowe effectively show the nuance of a person literally owning someone they consider a friend and vice versa? Explain.
2. In what ways does Beecher Stowe's use of Christian moralism impact the anti-slavery argument and the storytelling?
3. What kind of anti-Black stereotypes did Beecher Stowe lean into? Did you notice any similarities between some of the Black characters and minstrel shows or vaudeville acts?
4. In what ways is Beecher Stowe's argument effective? In which ways is it ineffective? List at least two examples of each with short explanations.