

Denver's coming of age in toni morrison's beloved essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Denver has to recognize her dependence on others and start to rely on herself so that she can become her own person and reach her full potential. Before *Beloved*, Denver had only left the house a few times and needed someone's help to do something. As *Beloved* and Sethe grow closer, Denver has the chance she needs to realize the dangers of reliance on Sethe and *Beloved*. In order to survive, Denver is forced to fend for herself and become independent for the first time.

Denver's desperation for approval and dependence on others prevents her from being an independent young adult because her focus on approval and others assistance does not allow her to focus on herself. When Paul D first arrives, Denver cries to Sethe, " I can't no more... I can't live here" (17).

Although Denver is crying to her mother that she cannot live in 124 anymore, Sethe refuses to move. After Sethe says that they are not moving, Denver drops the conversation and is forced to stay.

Denver is so reliant on Sethe that she will not leave the house that is ruining her life emotionally, mentally, and socially even though she is old enough to move out. Living in 124 and Denver's need for her mother, prevents her from doing what is the best for her health and does not allow her to give attention to helping herself. Denver is also so focused on her desire for *Beloved*'s attention that she does not care that *Beloved* only pays attention to her when Sethe is not around.

In chapter eight, Denver and *Beloved* are dancing when Denver asks *Beloved* not to tell Sethe that she is Sethe's dead daughter. *Beloved* gets upset at Denver for trying to tell her what to do and doesn't want to continue

dancing. Denver is so content with Beloved's attention that she wants to keep Beloved's secret from Sethe. If Sethe were to discover that Beloved was her daughter, Denver would lose the attention she strives for from both Sethe and Beloved.

Denver's desire Beloved, bring her to lie, keeping her and her mother from the truth, and drives her deeper into a hole and further away from helping herself realize her potential. In order to get Beloved's affection back " she swallowed twice to prepare for the telling, to construct out of the strings had heard all her life a net to hold Beloved" (90). Denver chooses to forget her fight with Beloved because it would put a strain on their relationship. If their relationship was strained, Denver would lose her friend and only form of acceptance and admiration.

Denver's maturity and growth is blocked by her reliance on others for acceptance. Denver's exclusion from Sethe and Beloved helps her realize the negative effects Beloved has on her and Sethe so that she can turn her life around for the better. Beloved's distraction of Sethe brings Denver isolation and hunger. " The thirty-eight dollars of life savings went to feed themselves with fancy food and decorate themselves with ribbons and dress goods" (283). Sethe spends all of her savings, which are meant for an emergency, on Beloved to make up for her murder of Beloved.

After Sethe stops going to work, she put her full focus on Beloved and tries to please her with the most expensive food and goods that she can buy. Sethe's actions allow Denver to realize that Sethe is spending all of her money to please Beloved who is manipulating Sethe. Denver starts to isolate

herself from Beloved because she is seeing the effect on her mother and does not want to be near someone who is going to manipulate her. Denver's removal of herself from Beloved, helps improve her life and brings her closer to being an independent person.

As the food supplies start to run out, Denver is left hungry and alone: "hunger could do that: quiet you down and wear you out. Neither Sethe nor Beloved knew or cared about it" (281). As Sethe stays with Beloved, they all grow hungry but Beloved will not let go of Sethe long enough for her to realize that she isn't eating feeding Denver or herself. Denver's isolation allows her to see that Beloved's distraction of Sethe from everything including food is slowly killing Sethe and herself.

As Beloved slowly starves Denver and Sethe, Denver slowly begins to see Beloved's destruction is their lives and has try to piece their lives back together herself. Beloved and Sethe's companionship allows Denver to recognize the wake of destruction that Beloved leaves behind her. Once Denver leaves the comfort of her home to look for help, she is able to grow and put her life on the track it was meant to be on. Denver's first step to becoming her own person, after her recognition that she needed help, was her venture to Lady Jones' house.

When Denver arrives at Lady Jones', she is hesitant to talk to her but eventually opens up and says, " I want work Miss Lady... I can't do anything, but I would learn it for you if you have a little extra" (292). Denver makes two steps toward growth and independence by talking to Lady Jones. For the first time in a long while, Denver has the courage to speak to someone

without her mother standing by her side. Also, Denver's ability to reach out and ask for help shows that she has gained confidence and her increase in independence has allowed her to ask for a job.

As April continued, Denver began to find parcels of food outside 124 which forced her outside her comfort zone once again: " Denver paid a second visit to the world outside the porch, although all she said when she returned the basket was " Thank you. "" (293). Denver's second travel outside 124 strengthens her independence and throws her deeper into the community. With the community to support her, Denver is able to grow and get the help she needs in order to help herself and become the best person she can be.

Once Beloved is expelled from 124, Denver continues to work in the shirt factory, earning money to put away for her and Sethe. As Denver works, she receives lessons from Miss Bodwin in hopes that she can go to Oberlin College. Even after Beloved is gone and Sethe is alone again, Denver doesn't return to relying on Sethe. Denver shows that she has truly become independent by working towards going to Oberlin and trying to make her own future. After Denver takes those first steps outside of 124 for the first time in years on her own, she begins her new life with the help of her community, Miss Bodwin and Lady Jones.

Any mistake or slight stray from the path of life can be mended and even forgiven by accepting the wrongdoing and doing the best to fix it. The first step to overcoming alcoholism is admitting that you are weak under the power of alcohol and that your life has become uncontrollable. To Denver Sethe and Beloved's attention was a power much like alcohol is to alcoholics.

Denver would never have been able to overcome her “ addiction” if she hadn't realized that she had a problem to begin with. Denver's struggle with the drug of attention and acceptance is a reflection of the average person's mistake and resolution.