

After these baby  
suggs and sethe  
decided



After the abolishment of slavery, the black community became the core of African American culture and life. This was due in part by segregation and other socioeconomic factors, but also to the spiritual and social unity of each black member.

The black community played a major role in *Beloved*, especially with their interactions with Sethe. After Sethe's escape from slavery, she traveled to Cincinnati to reunite with her children and mother-in-law, Baby Suggs. She arrived at 124, a house constantly filled with people and happiness. "Where not one but two pots simmered on the stove; where the lamp burned all night long. Strangers rested while their children tried on their shoes. Messages were left there, for whoever needed them was sure to stop in one day soon.

" (Morrison, 87) Sethe was enveloped with love and security, while Baby Suggs, the local spiritual leader, became the driving force in the community, gathering the people together to preach self love and respect. " When warm weather came, Baby Suggs, holy, followed by every black man, woman and child who could make it through, took her great heart to the Clearing..."

(Morrison, 87) Twenty days after Sethe's arrival, Stamp Paid brought them two huge buckets of delicious blackberries. With these Baby Suggs and Sethe decided to share the pies they would make from the berries with Ella and her husband John, and from this their generosity escalated into a full-fledged feast for all the colored people in the area. The area folks accepted the generosity, but resented the bounty of Baby Suggs and her kin.

They disapproved of the uncalled-for pride displayed at 124, and were offended by Baby Suggs's excess. Because of this they failed to warn Baby Suggs and Sethe that four white men on horses who were approaching. Sethe, with the help of Baby Suggs and the community, began to build a life for herself and children, but her dreams were soon shattered when the Schoolteacher came into her yard. Because of her fear of returning to slavery and her sense of hopelessness, Sethe resorted to animal brutality, ending her daughter's life so as not to endure one of degradation and abuse. She acted on instinct, never thinking of the consequences and never asking for forgiveness or help.

After that nothing was ever the same. " 124 shut down and put up with the venom of its ghost. No more lamp all night long, or neighbors dropping by. No low conversations after supper.

No watched barefoot children playing in the shoes of strangers. Baby Suggs, holy, believed she had lied." (Morrison, 89) People stayed away from 124, fearing the bad spirit and aura emanating from and inhabiting it.

Everything that Baby Suggs had preached, believed, and lived had been thrown in her face and decimated, thus causing her to lose the spirit and will to live. With the death and burial of Baby Suggs came the final insult to the community." The setting-up was held in the yard because nobody besides himself would enter 124-an injury Sethe answered with another by refusing to attend the service Reverend Pike presided over. She went instead to the gravesite, whose silence she competed with as she stood there not joining in the hymns the others sang with all their hearts. The insult spawned another

by the mourners; back in the yard of 124, they ate the food they brought and did not touch Sethe's, who did not touch theirs and forbade Denver to. So Baby Suggs , holy, was buried amid a regular dance of pride, fear, condemnation and spite.

.. Her outrageous claims, her self-sufficiency seemed to demand it, and Stamp Paid...wondered if some of the “ pride goeth before a fall” expectations..

. had rubbed off on him...” (Morrison, 171)Sethe, after being released from jail, never looked to the community for help or sympathy, but walked arrogantly with her head held high, and in the eyes of the community, what was empathy and compassion soon turned into condemnation and disdain. The community, though not agreeing with what Sethe did, nevertheless understood her actions and reasons for them, for each and every one of them had been scarred mentally, physically, and spiritually by slavery.

Each had their own