

## **Day 5**

### **Section 5: The End of His Slavery**

Chapters 19-22, with the addition of “After Freedom: What Happened?”

### **Vocabulary and Terms:**

Peregrination - *a wandering about from place to place*

Prudent - *wise*

Incredulity - *disbelief, skepticism*

Affidavit - *a written and sworn legal declaration of alleged facts*

Boniface - *the keeper of an inn*

Abolitionist - *a person favoring the extinction of slavery, particularly regarding slaves of African descent*

Replevin - *the recovery of one's property held by another*

## **Detail Questions:**

### **Chapter 19**

- 1. What was the name of the man in whom Solomon placed so much trust, the man who wrote the letter that ultimately led to Solomon's recovering his freedom? Describe this man. Where was he from? What were his views of the institution of slavery, and were these views common for the place and time? What became of him after Solomon's rescue?**
- 2. Epps' views regarding slavery and Bass's views regarding the same were in stark contrast to each other. What did each believe regarding the institution of slavery and slaves?**
- 3. Recall that Solomon mentioned multiple Canadian locations with which Bass was also familiar. Bass knew then that Solomon was telling the truth, that he had in fact been to those places. What was Bass's question to Solomon at this point, and what was Solomon's reply? Did Solomon trust Bass right away with the entirety of his history?**
- 4. Solomon felt he could lay his complete trust in Bass. What did Solomon ask Bass to do to aid him? What was Bass's response?**
- 5. In private conversation, Solomon spoke freely with Bass regarding his history, his family, and his experiences in bondage. In the company of others, how did the two men regard each other?**
- 6. Only at this point, many years into his captivity, has Solomon entrusted anyone with his true identity. Why has he not told anyone before? What danger would there have been telling a fellow slave about his truth?**
- 7. Bass wrote the letters as he promised, stating they were from Solomon Northup but that Solomon was not the writer. He kept his own identity anonymous, knowing the danger he was undertaking. To whom was the letter written that ultimately led to Solomon's rescue?  
When were these letters written; what month and year? From which town post office were they mailed?  
His initial kidnapping was briefly described in these letters. What request did Solomon have in these letters?**
- 8. Bass and Solomon calculated the weeks it would likely take for the letters to reach their intended destinations, and for possible replies to return. Did any replies of any kind arrive within this time frame?  
What was Solomon's reaction, and Bass's response?**

## **Chapter 20**

- 9. As he had promised, Bass returned the day before Christmas. What news did he bring Solomon?  
What was Solomon's response?  
Was Bass in favor of this idea? Why or why not? What did he suggest?  
Why was Bass willing to undertake a task like this?**
- 10. On Christmas Day, Bass and Epps are speaking about where the slaves celebrate Christmas. As Epps explains that Platt (Solomon) is in great demand in the area for his fiddle playing, and expounds on Solomon's other good points, what is Bass's reaction?**

## **Chapter 21**

- 11. Describe the journey of the letter Bass wrote on Solomon's behalf and directed to Parker and Perry in Saratoga. Bass wrote the letter and mailed it from the Marksville post office. Who was the next recipient?  
What additional information did the Governor require? How were these proven?  
What was the Governor's response?**
- 12. Where did Henry B. Northup's journey take him? Did his journey follow the route he initially intended?  
Why did he change his destination?**
- 13. Who did Henry B. Northup seek out upon arriving in Marksville? What came of this meeting?**
- 14. During a conversation between Waddill and Henry B. Northup regarding New York politics, a political view much more common in the North than in the South is described. What is this view, and what is its significance in aiding Solomon's rescue?**
- 15. What information leads Waddill and Henry B. Northup to realize that Bass is the man who can tell them about Solomon Northup?**
- 16. Upon finding Bass, and without introduction, Henry B. Northup asks him directly if he wrote a letter for a black man to be sent to Saratoga. What is Bass's reply?**
- 17. What complication arose, expediting the need for the judge's signature as soon as possible instead of waiting until morning?  
Was this effort to rush proven worthwhile? When?**

18. Just after midnight, the necessary signatures were acquired and the sheriff and Henry B. Northup were driven in a carriage to Epps' plantation on Bayou Boeuf. Why was a particular sequence of questions to ask Solomon (Platt) decided upon?
19. Solomon and the other slaves are working in the cotton field very early in the morning when the two men approach, looking for "Platt". The sheriff, wholly unknown to Solomon, asks him if he recognizes the other man with him. What is Solomon's response?
20. What is the reaction of the other slaves as they witness this scene?
21. As Solomon walked with the sheriff and Henry B. Northup towards the house to meet with Epps, what did Solomon ask? What was he told?
22. The carriage driver did not divulge the nature of his errand to Epps; therefore, Epps was very cordial upon meeting the sheriff and being introduced to Henry B. Northup. While inviting the gentlemen into the house, Epps told Solomon (Platt) to chop wood and bring it in. Was Solomon able to do these tasks efficiently? Why or why not?  
What did Epps ask Solomon as he was leaving the room? What was Solomon's answer?
23. When Epps realizes that Solomon had been a kidnapped free man when he was purchased by Epps, what was Epps' reaction; what did he say? What was Solomon's reply?
24. Did Epps ever find out who wrote the letter on Solomon's behalf?
25. What was the reaction of the slaves to Solomon leaving? The reaction of Mistress Epps? Master Epps? Patsey?
26. In the courts in Marksville, who convened to discuss Solomon's situation? ---  
Upon the presentation of the documents, the letters, the affidavits, and many questions directed at Solomon, what was the advice Epps' counsel gave his client? What did Epps do?

## Chapter 22

27. While in New Orleans, what locations did Solomon point out to Henry B. Northup, and who did they see while there? Did Solomon speak to this person?
28. What document did they receive while in New Orleans; what did it state? Who gave them this document?

- 29. Upon arriving in Washington, who did Solomon and Henry B. Northup determine were still in the area? What action did they take with this information?**
- 30. Burch called a former business associate of his, a slave trader named Shekels, to appear and testify on his behalf. What did Shekels testify in court? Did he have personal knowledge of the information to which he testified? Was Shekels the only person to give false testimony?**
- 31. What document could have proven Shekels' and Thorn's testimony? Who was called on to provide this document, and was it provided? Why or why not? What further action was taken in an effort to find the record of the bill of sale?**
- 32. What decision did the court reach regarding Burch?**
- 33. What did Burch and his associates attempt next in the court? Was it successful?**
- 34. What are some of the reasons Solomon sees the false testimony in court and the idea of him conspiring to be kidnapped and sold into slavery absurd?**
- 35. What are Solomon's feelings regarding the outcome of the court?**
- 36. When is Solomon reunited with his family? How has his presence been felt during his absence?**
- 37. At the end of the narrative, does Solomon seem to feel that he is the only one who has had this terribly unfortunate and unfair experience of being kidnapped and sold into slavery? What are his plans for his life now?**

**After Freedom: What Happened?**

- 38. After Solomon Northup's rescue and return home, what became of Burch? What became of Brown and Hamilton? What were some indications brought up in court that these two men might not have been trustworthy, and what was Solomon's response to these warnings?**
- 39. What happened to Solomon after he was rescued? Did he live out the quiet life he had envisioned for himself upon his release from captivity? Why or why not?**

### **Discussion Question:**

- 1. Consider the general feeling regarding the system of slavery in the time and place of Solomon Northup's experiences. The slavery system was accepted and/or participated in by nearly everyone, and the laws for the time supported it as well. Now consider Bass's opinion of slavery. He felt very strongly that there was no justice in the slavery system, that no man had any right to "own" any other man, and he was known in the area for his views as they were very rare for that time period in Louisiana. Bass knew voicing such opinions might put him in danger, yet he never shied away from discussions regarding slavery. His manner in such discussions did not anger his opponent, instead almost bringing amusement. Knowing the danger that his efforts would likely bring, why did Bass go to such lengths to aid Solomon's rescue, in your opinion?**

### **Discussion Question Covering Entire Narrative:**

**Consider that Twelve Years a Slave was written (ghost-written) by a man who had been born free and lived free, then was kidnapped into slavery where he remained for twelve years before he was rescued. The narrative was truly written from the perspective of an outsider having to live as an insider for sheer survival. In your opinion, how might this narrative have been different if it had been written by someone who had been born a slave, and the life of a slave is all he or she ever knew? Regarding common occurrences surrounding slavery, such as whippings, what might the different perspectives be?**

Research Project:

**Solomon's story is unfortunately not the last of enforced slavery. In 2014, there are millions of people who are victims of human trafficking and slavery all over the world. Men, women, and children are being forced to endure horrific realities of starvation, forced hard labor, physical abuse, sexual abuse, and many other forms of persecution. Choose two examples of human trafficking and forced slavery, one in the United States and one international. Write, using your teacher's guidelines, a description of the kind of slavery you have identified for each example, and include the answers to as many of the following questions as possible while providing additional details.**

Where is the location?

What is most recent number of slaves/enforced laborers?

What is the age range of the slaves/enforced laborers? Are there any children?

What are the circumstances in which they must live?

What are they forced to do? Is it forced labor, sexual slavery, another variety?

Have there been any successful rescues or escapes? What happens to someone if he/she tries to escape (or arrange a rescue) and the attempt is thwarted?

Be sure to clear your sources with your teacher. Wikipedia is not acceptable.

[Twelveyearsaslave.org](http://Twelveyearsaslave.org) is an excellent site to begin your search, and additional links are provided there.

## **Detail Questions: Key**

### **Chapter 19**

- 1. What was the name of the man in whom Solomon placed so much trust, the man who wrote the letter that ultimately led to Solomon's recovering his freedom? Describe this man. Where was he from? What were his views of the institution of slavery, and were these views common for the place and time?**

*The man's name was Bass. Solomon refers to him as his "deliverer, "knowing that if not for Bass he would likely still be enslaved. Bass was originally from Canada, a fact which helped him know Solomon was telling the truth when he (Solomon) mentioned specific Canadian cities they had both visited. He had no permanent home, going where he could find work as a carpenter. He was very liberally minded, very kind, and was known for having a good heart. For his views, his carpentry skills, and his kindness, Bass was well known in the area. (p158-159)*

**What became of him after Solomon's rescue?**

*Solomon regretfully states he does not know. He only knows that Bass left the area the day before he did, as Bass knew that he himself could be in extreme danger if anyone knew his part in aiding Solomon. (p159)*

- 2. Epps' views regarding slavery and Bass's views regarding the same were in stark contrast to each other. What did each believe regarding the institution of slavery and slaves?**

*Epps believed that his slaves were his property, that he had a right to hold them as such because he bought and paid for them. He laughs at Bass's question of the difference between a white man and a black man, stating that the two have as much in common as a white man and a baboon. With this remark he is clearly comparing black men to animals, not humans. One very clear indication of Bass's opinion lies in his remark, "I know some white men that uses arguments that no sensible monkey would." (p160) Bass, by tremendous contrast to Epps, disagreed with the system of slavery at its core. Even though slavery is the law at this place and time, Bass says that the law lies, that there is no justice in slavery. He does not believe a man has a right to hold another man as property at all. Bass knows that there are good men and bad men, smart and less so, and that being black or white does not define these characteristics. As Epps refers to black men as property, Bass refers to them as human beings. Bass further states that slaves know very little because they are not allowed to know a lot, or to have freedom to go where they wish. Education of any sort is a privilege that black people are denied. Bass refers to the Declaration of Independence statement of all men being created equal. To this, of course, Epps laughs and says, "Yes, except [black men]." (p160) To Epps, Bass is a man who likes to argue just to hear himself talk, who would take the view of the opposition for his own fun. To Bass, on the other hand, he tells Epps that a day of reckoning is coming for the slaveowner. (p161)*



**3. Recall that Solomon mentioned multiple Canadian locations with which Bass was also familiar. Bass knew then that Solomon was telling the truth, that he had in fact been to those places. What was Bass's question to Solomon at this point, and what was Solomon's reply? Did Solomon trust Bass right away with the entirety of his history? Bass asked Solomon why he was there as a slave, and Solomon responds that justice was not done, otherwise he would not be there. He wanted to tell Bass everything, and trusted that he could, but also knew it was not a safe time and place to do so. Bass clearly was very interested in the circumstances that brought Solomon there, and promised not to tell anyone at all. The two arranged to meet much later that night to ensure their conversation would be private. (p162)**

**4. Solomon felt he could lay his complete trust in Bass. What did Solomon ask Bass to do to aid him? What was Bass's response?**

*Solomon asked Bass to write letters to acquaintances of his (Solomon's) in the north, giving details of his circumstances and location as well as requesting free papers. Bass agreed, and both men knew of the danger of revealing these secrets to anyone. Bass also remarked that it had been so many years that Solomon's acquaintances might not live there anymore or might have died. Because of this, he decided to also write the house at which Solomon had originally obtained free papers before his captivity, as there should be a record kept there of such. Bass reassured Solomon that his secrets would be safe, and that he was now completely devoted to helping Solomon regain his freedom. (p163-164)*

**5. In private conversation, Solomon spoke freely with Bass regarding his history, his family, and his experiences in bondage. In the company of others, how did the two men regard each other?**

*They hardly spoke or even acknowledged each other, lest this might arouse suspicion. (p 164, p. 166)*

**6. Only at this point, many years into his captivity, has Solomon entrusted anyone with his true identity. Why has he not told anyone before? What danger would there have been telling a fellow slave about his truth?**

*Solomon recalled the vicious beating that Burch had given him when he was first captured and stated correctly he was a free man. He knew he must always be aware and incredibly careful to hide this fact from anyone, as he would face perhaps even more severe beatings or worse. Solomon knew that it was imperative to keep his secret hidden from fellow slaves, for there was nothing any slave could do that would aid him in securing freedom. Fellow slaves could, however, do many things to expose Solomon, and therefore put him in great danger. (p165)*

- 7. Bass wrote the letters as he promised, stating they were from Solomon Northup but that Solomon was not the writer. He kept his own identity anonymous, knowing the danger he was undertaking. To whom was the letter written that ultimately led to Solomon's rescue?**

*This letter went to Cephas Parker and William Perry, store owners Solomon knew from his home. (p.6, p 165)*

**When were these letters written; what month and year? From which town post office were they mailed?**

*They were written in August, 1852, and they were mailed from Marksville. (p165)*

**His initial kidnapping was briefly described in these letters. What request did Solomon have in these letters?**

*He requested the securing of free papers, and he details in the letters that he was robbed of his upon being kidnapped. (p. 165- 166)*

- 8. Bass and Solomon calculated the weeks it would likely take for the letters to reach their intended destinations, and for possible replies to return. Did any replies of any kind arrive within this time frame?**

*None came, even after weeks longer than anticipated. (p167)*

**What was Solomon's reaction, and Bass's response?**

*Solomon's hope in the letters was fading, but his faith in Bass's help was very strong.*

*When Bass's work at Epps' plantation was complete, he prepared to leave. He knew Solomon was in despair, and promised to return to Epps' plantation the day before Christmas, hopefully with an update and reply from the letters written, and if not a reply, then a new course of action. Solomon's fellow slaves even asked him (Solomon) if he were sick, and wondered what he could be pondering constantly and deeply. He never divulged any piece of information to any of them. (p167)*

## **Chapter 20**

- 9. As he had promised, Bass returned the day before Christmas. What news did he bring Solomon?**

*There had been no replies received from the letters that had been written to Solomon's acquaintances in the north. (p. 169)*

**What was Solomon's response?**

*He was extremely disappointed, begging Bass in desperation to write more. (p168)*

**Was Bass in favor of this idea? Why or why not? What did he suggest?**

*Bass stated he had asked about incoming letters often at the Marksville post office, and asking more would be suspicious and dangerous. He instead told Solomon that upon completing work he had coming up, he would have enough money to go to Saratoga himself, which he earnestly promised he would do. He asks Solomon to think of as many men in Saratoga as he can recall, and he (Bass) would call on them in person. (p169)*

**Why was Bass willing to undertake a task like this?**

*Bass was as appalled by slavery as Solomon was, and he promised himself -and Solomon - that he would succeed in securing liberty for Solomon. He states that success in helping Solomon regain freedom is a good deed he will always remember. (p169)*

**10. On Christmas Day, Bass and Epps are speaking about where the slaves celebrate Christmas. As Epps explains that Platt (Solomon) is in great demand in the area for his fiddle playing, and expounds on Solomon's other good points, what is Bass's reaction?**

*He acts as though he has never really taken any particular notice of Platt (Solomon) before, and looks him over as a slaveowner might examine a potential purchase. Before leaving, however, he gives Solomon a look acknowledging their understanding of each other. (p171)*

**Chapter 21**

**11. Describe the journey of the letter Bass wrote on Solomon's behalf and directed to Parker and Perry in Saratoga. Bass wrote the letter and mailed it from the Marksville post office. Who was the next recipient?**

*Upon receiving the letter, Parker and Perry immediately forwarded it to Anne, Solomon's wife, who had moved to a different county during Solomon's captivity. Anne and their children then took the letter to Sandy Hill, to enlist the aid of Henry B. Northup, a lawyer and a relative of the owners of Solomon's late father. Henry B. Northup knew and remembered Solomon. Henry B. Northup found the legal basis for protection of free citizens from being kidnapped into slavery, and set about to procure the additional information needed before consulting the Governor. (p175)*

**What additional information did the Governor require? How were these proven?**

*Sufficient proof of two things were necessary: proof of Solomon's citizenship of New York, and proof that he was wrongfully enslaved. Proof of Solomon's citizenship was easily obtained, as many acquaintances still lived in the area and would testify to his citizenship. Satisfactory documents were compiled, detailing Solomon's marriage to Anne, his fateful trip to Washington, the fact that he was indeed a free citizen, and affidavits corroborating the enclosed information. Circumstances of Solomon's kidnapping and enslavement were proven only by the letter written on Solomon's behalf in Bass's hand. It was also requested by several gentlemen known to the Governor that Henry B. Northup be appointed counsel. (p176)*

**What was the Governor's response?**

*Governor Hunt agreed, and immediately assigned Henry B. Northup as counsel, sending him to Louisiana by way of Washington. (p176)*

**12. Where did Henry B. Northup's journey take him? Did his journey follow the route he initially intended?**

*In Washington, Henry B. Northup shared the facts and documents with a Supreme Court judge, the Secretary of War, and a senator from Louisiana, who took particular interest. These gentlemen supplied Henry B. Northup with open letters to gentlemen in Louisiana urgently asking them to aid Henry B. Northup. He then went to Pittsburgh, intending to go directly to New Orleans. However, he changed his mind on the way, heading to Marksville instead. (p177)*

**Why did he change his destination?**

*He went to Marksville because the letter on Solomon's behalf was postmarked from the Marksville post office. Therefore, he thought Solomon Northup was likely in the vicinity somewhere. (p177)*

**13. Who did Henry B. Northup seek out upon arriving in Marksville? What came of this meeting?**

*He met with the Honorable John Waddill, a lawyer himself. Waddill immediately offered his assistance, and with great urgency. He, like Bass and Henry B. Northup, had an honorable heart and did not tolerate injustice. The name "Solomon Northup" was unfamiliar to Waddill, but he knew that if a man by that name was in the area, his own slave Tom would know him. Tom had never heard the name, either. The letter was postmarked at Marksville, but was dated at Bayou Boeuf, leading to the assumption Solomon Northup was near this bayou. However, there were thousands of slaves in the area, rendering it impossible to examine each one in the search for one individual. Waddill and Henry B. Northup did not know Solomon was only known as "Platt." Solomon observes that had these men asked Epps about Solomon Northup, Epps would honestly say he knew nothing of such a name. (p179)*

**14. During a conversation between Waddill and Henry B. Northup regarding New York politics, a political view much more common in the North than in the South is described. What is this view, and what is its significance in aiding Solomon's rescue?**

*The view described is that of an abolitionist, wanting slavery to cease. Since this view is very uncommon in the South during this time, anyone who believes this stands out a great deal. Henry B. Northup says that Waddill probably does not see any such people in the South, and Waddill responds that there is just one, who is as against slavery as anyone from the North. This man's name, he says, is Bass. (Recall that Bass is indeed from the North; he is from Canada. Hence, his views are consistent with the area from which he comes.) (p179)*

**15. What information leads Waddill and Henry B. Northup to realize that Bass is the man who can tell them about Solomon Northup?**

*Waddill has the postmark date of the letter researched, and discovers that Bass was working in the area at that time. Knowing Bass' views on slavery, Waddill knows he is the man who wrote the letter on behalf of Solomon Northup. (p179)*

**16. Upon finding Bass, and without introduction, Henry B. Northup asks him directly if he wrote a letter for a black man to be sent to Saratoga. What is Bass's reply?**

*Bass initially says that it is none of his business. Henry B. Northup then apologizes for asking without telling him who he is, where he is from, or the nature of his business. Upon learning these details, Bass says that he is indeed the man who wrote the letter, and is happy to see them come rescue Solomon Northup. He tells Henry B. Northup when he last saw Solomon, and that he is only known as Platt. Bass shares some of Solomon's details and history with Henry B. Northup and draws a map of the bayou, leading Henry B. Northup directly to the Epps plantation where he will find Solomon Northup. (p180)*

**17. What complication arose, expediting the need for the judge's signature as soon as possible instead of waiting until morning?**

*Bass told someone at the landing that he was going to leave the state, becoming keenly aware of the danger. This knowledge was passed along, as well as a rumor that a stranger in town (Henry B. Northup) who knew the lawyer Waddill was trying to get to one of Epps' slaves. Epps was well-known in the area, and there was sufficient fear that he would be told in time to hide "Platt". (p181)*

**Was this effort to rush proven worthwhile? When?**

*Yes, it was, when the entirety of the situation is told to Epps, he informs Henry B. Northup that if there had been any notice of his arrival, Platt would have been hidden away where he never would have been found. (p185)*

**18. Just after midnight, the necessary signatures were acquired and the sheriff and Henry B. Northup were driven in a carriage to Epps' plantation on Bayou Boeuf. Why was a particular sequence of questions to ask Solomon (Platt) decided upon?**

*It was decided that prior to speaking to Henry B. Northup, Solomon would be asked questions regarding his life there. These questions would include specifics concerning his marriage, his wife, and his children. (p182)*

**19. Solomon and the other slaves are working in the cotton field very early in the morning when the two men approach, looking for "Platt." The sheriff, wholly unknown to Solomon, asks him if he recognizes the other man with him. What is Solomon's response?**

*At long last, Solomon recognizes the man as Henry B. Northup, and knows immediately why he is there. Solomon correctly answers each of the questions asked by the sheriff, regarding his family and where Henry B. Northup lives. Overcome with gratitude and emotion, Solomon runs to Henry B. Northup, with tears falling. (p183)*

**20. What is the reaction of the other slaves as they witness this scene?**

*They are all astonished and bewildered. Solomon, known here only as Platt, has been side by side with them for over ten years, experiencing the same struggles, beatings, and very rare joys as they, yet they had no inkling of who he truly was. (p184)*

**21. As Solomon walked with the sheriff and Henry B. Northup towards the house to meet with Epps, what did Solomon ask? What was he told?**

*He asked if his family were living, and was told that his wife and children were, but that his mother was not. (p184)*

**22. The carriage driver did not divulge the nature of his errand to Epps; therefore, Epps was very cordial upon meeting the sheriff and being introduced to Henry B. Northup. While inviting the gentlemen into the house, Epps told Solomon (Platt) to chop wood and bring it in. Was Solomon able to do these tasks efficiently? Why or why not?**

*Solomon was overwhelmed with the day's events and this made precision work, such as cutting wood, difficult. When he brought the wood into the room, he deliberately took a great deal of time setting each piece of wood just so in an effort to listen to what was being said. (p184)*

**What did Epps ask Solomon as he was leaving the room? What was Solomon's answer?**

*Epps asked Solomon if he knew the gentleman (Henry B. Northup) there, and Solomon answered yes, he had known him as far as his memory allowed. Answering Epps' questions, Solomon replied that the gentleman was from New York, and that he himself had been born and lived there as well. (p185)*

**23. When Epps realizes that Solomon had been a kidnapped free man when he was purchased by Epps, what was Epps' reaction; what did he say? What was Solomon's reply?**

*He asked Solomon why he did not tell him he was free. The reply from Solomon reminded Epps that he never asked, and that the one owner he did tell -Burch, the one who kidnapped him - beat him unmercifully for it. (p185)*

**24. Did Epps ever find out who wrote the letter on Solomon's behalf?**

*No, he did not. Even with repeated questions and threats Solomon never told Epps who wrote it, and Bass had left the area the previous night. (p185)*

**25. What was the reaction of the slaves to Solomon leaving? The reaction of Mistress Epps? Master Epps? Patsey?**

*The slaves as a group were asking many questions, showing a great deal of curiosity and excitement for him. Mistress Epps showed regret that she had not known who he truly was, and told him how valuable he was to her. Solomon saw both sides to this compliment, knowing that now there was no one who could mend furniture or play the violin for her. Mistress Epps was very kind telling him goodbye, while Master Epps said that he wasn't gone yet, that he'd be taking care of things in Marksville himself. Patsey was excited for Solomon, knowing he was free, but distraught for herself, remembering how much suffering at Epps' hands Solomon had spared her. (p186- 187)*

**26. In the courts in Marksville, who convened to discuss Solomon's situation?**

*Epps, his counsel Mr. Taylor, Henry B. Northup, Waddill, the Judge, the sheriff of Avoyelles Parish, and Solomon Northup.*

**Upon the presentation of the documents, the letters, the affidavits, and many questions directed at Solomon, what was the advice Epps' counsel gave his client? What did Epps do?**

*He told Epps that he was satisfied, that litigation would be expensive and pointless. Epps signed the proper papers acknowledging Solomon's freedom. All of this was entered into record in Avoyelles. (p 187)*

**Chapter 22**

**27. While in New Orleans, what locations did Solomon point out to Henry B. Northup, and who did they see while there? Did Solomon speak to this person?**

*Solomon showed Henry B. Northup the room where William Ford had purchased him, and Theophilus Freeman's Slave Pen. They saw Freeman on the street, but Solomon did not speak to him. Solomon and Henry B. Northup learned from others in the area that Freeman's reputation had fallen to that of a wretched, dishonest man. (p189)*

**28. What document did they receive while in New Orleans; what did it state? Who gave them this document?**

*The man who received the letter from the Louisiana senator, Mr. Genois, gave Solomon and Henry B. Northup a legal pass to keep with them on their journey north. This pass contained a description of Solomon, stating he was a free man, and requesting that he be allowed to continue his journey north without incident. (p189-190)*

**29. Upon arriving in Washington, who did Solomon and Henry B. Northup determine were still in the area? What action did they take with this information?**

*After determining that Burch and Radburn were still in the city, Henry B. Northup and Solomon filed a complaint and brought the two men into court. (p190)*

**30. Burch called a former business associate of his, a slave trader named Shekels, to appear and testify on his behalf. What did Shekels testify in court? Did he have personal knowledge of the information to which he testified?**

*Shekels fabricated his testimony based on conversations he had overheard, to which a court objection was raised. His testimony was kept, even so. (Recall Solomon was kidnapped in 1841.) He falsely testified that two men came to his hotel in 1841 and said they had a colored man for sale who could play the violin, was from Georgia, and proceeded to give the colored man's history as given by these two men. He identified Solomon as the colored man the two men were selling, and claims knowledge of the sale price Burch paid. (p 191) (Recall Solomon has been renamed Platt by Burch.)*

**Was Shekels the only person to give false testimony?**

*No, a man named Thorn echoed much of what Shekels had said, conceding that he could not be entirely certain that Solomon was the same colored man as had been referred to by Shekels. (p192)*

**31. What document could have proven Shekels' and Thorn's testimony? Who was called on to provide this document, and was it provided? Why or why not?**

*A bill of sale detailing Burch's purchase of Solomon would have proven the testimony correct. However, when Burch was asked to provide such a document, he testified that one had been properly drawn up and signed but had gotten misplaced. (p193)*

**What further action was taken in an effort to find the record of the bill of sale?**

*A police officer was sent to search Burch's records for that year, but no such record of a purchase of Solomon (by either the name Solomon Northup or the name Platt) was found. (p193)*

**32. What decision did the court reach regarding Burch?**

*The court found that Burch had innocently purchased Solomon, and was discharged. (p193)*

**(Recall that Burch aided in Solomon's kidnapping, and knew he was in danger if anyone ever found out he had sold a free man into slavery.)**

**33. What did Burch and his associates attempt next in the court? Was it successful?**

*Burch and his associates filed a complaint that Solomon had planned the kidnapping with the two white men in an effort to cheat Burch out of money. This effort was not successful, as Burch himself withdrew the complaint. (p193)*

**34. What are some of the reasons Solomon sees the false testimony in court and the idea of his conspiring to be kidnapped and sold into slavery absurd?**

*Being a party to such a conspiracy would mean being away from his family for an indefinite period of time, which Solomon clearly would not have done willingly. If he had been a party to the kidnapping at all, he would not have sought Burch out to bring him to court. Indeed, Solomon would have taken great pains to avoid Burch at all costs. (p194)*

**35. What are Solomon's feelings regarding the outcome of the court?**

*Upon Burch's acquittal, Solomon states that there is a much higher court in which false testimony will not conquer truth. (p194-195)*



**36. When is Solomon reunited with his family? How has his presence been felt during his absence?**

*Solomon sees his family in January, 1853, after being kidnapped in 1841. His son had been saving money to buy his father's freedom. They knew he had been in bondage, as they had received the letter that Solomon had written on the brig Orleans and Clem Ray, a slave from Williams' Slave Pen, had visited them. His specific location, however, was unknown until the letter from Bass arrived. His daughters had seen pictures of slaves in cotton fields, and had become upset at the thought of their father possibly being in such a place, not knowing that he actually was experiencing and enduring just that. One of his daughters named her son after him. (p195)*

**37. At the end of the narrative, does Solomon seem to feel that he is the only one who has had this terribly unfortunate and unfair experience of being kidnapped and sold into slavery? What are his plans for his life now?**

*Solomon knows there are hundreds in very similar situations, still suffering the life of a slave that he was able to leave. He is incredibly grateful that he has his freedom back, but his spirit has been dampened by what he was forced to endure in captivity. He intends to lead a quiet life from then on. (p196)*

**After Freedom: What Happened?**

**38. After Solomon Northup's rescue and return home, what became of Burch? What became of Brown and Hamilton? What were some indications brought up in court that these two men might not have been trustworthy, and what was Solomon's response to these warnings?**

*Burch was arrested following the complaint filed by Henry B. Northup and Solomon. This complaint detailed the kidnapping and selling Solomon of into slavery. Burch was never tried, however. He was discharged by the court because Solomon could not testify at all in Washington because he was black, and Burch was not identified by anyone else as one of the slave purchasers. (p203) Brown and Hamilton, whose real names were Merrill and Russell, were also arrested in conjunction with the kidnapping of Solomon. An acquaintance of Solomon's named Prindle identified Merrill and recalled his warning to Solomon not to go south with the two men. He also stated he was not the only person to give Solomon such advice. Solomon responded that he would take the risk involved of possibly being sold. Merrill and Russell were never taken to trial, however, because Solomon had disappeared. (p202-203, p206, p208, p210)*

**39. What happened to Solomon after he was rescued? Did he live out the quiet life he had envisioned for himself upon his release from captivity? Why or why not?**

*Solomon had speaking engagements at rallies in support of abolition, and sometimes received donations for such. Records indicate his multiple and ongoing financial problems upon his return. David Wilson, a writer living near Henry B. Northup, gathered a great deal of information from both Solomon and Henry B. Northup, and proceeded to ghost-write the book of Solomon's ordeal. The publication of the book was widely reported in newspapers, generating a great deal of interest, and aiding in the search for the men responsible for kidnapping Solomon. The trial against Merrill and Russell was set to begin in 1956, but never went to court because Solomon Northup had disappeared. Records of Solomon making speeches after the case was cancelled exist, so at that time he was still living. There are several theories regarding his disappearance. He might have been kidnapped again, killed, or perhaps he was truly a party to the kidnappers with intent to share the money earned from the sale. No evidence has ever been found to support this last theory, however. Solomon Northup's grave has never been located.*  
(p203-p 205, p214-216)

**Discussion Question: Key**

Correct answers include the following, and additional correct answers are possible.

- 1. Consider the general feeling regarding the system of slavery in the time and place of Solomon Northup's experiences. The slavery system was accepted and/or participated in by nearly everyone, and the laws for the time supported it as well. Now consider Bass's opinion of slavery. He felt very strongly that there was no justice in the slavery system, that no man had any right to "own" any other man, and he was known in the area for his views as they were very rare for that time period in Louisiana. Bass knew voicing such opinions might put him in danger, yet he never shied away from discussions regarding slavery. His manner in such discussions did not anger his opponent, instead almost bringing amusement. Knowing the danger that his efforts would likely bring, why did Bass go to such lengths to aid Solomon's rescue, in your opinion?**

*Bass seemed to believe that any risk to himself if his actions to aid Solomon were discovered would pale in comparison to the benefits Solomon's rescue would bring if the rescue was successful. Bass clearly believed very strongly that the system of slavery was wrong and unjust, and helping the release of even one slave was worth the risks involved.*

## Discussion Question Covering Entire Narrative: Key

1. Consider that Twelve Years a Slave was written (ghost-written) by a man who had been born free and lived free, then was kidnapped into slavery where he remained for twelve years before he was rescued. The narrative was truly written from the perspective of an outsider having to live as an insider for sheer survival. In your opinion, how might this narrative have been different if it had been written by someone who had been born a slave, and the life of a slave is all he or she ever knew? Regarding common occurrences surrounding slavery, such as whippings, what might the different perspectives be?

*The perspective of one born a slave and one living a life of freedom then being sold in slavery would bring great differences to the narrative. The situations observed might be the same, such as the chores assigned to the slaves, the living quarters, the facts of the abuse, and the Christmas celebrations. However, from someone born a slave, the descriptions of such things might be descriptions only, with very little emotion tied to them. The facts might be the only thing presented, no more and no less. Someone born into slavery would not see the beatings, the poor food, the disregard of a person as a person, as unusual, since these would be common parts of that individual's life. Written from Solomon's perspective, the reader gains much insight into the injustice of the system, the feelings of the slaves themselves, and the hope he carried the entire time that he would someday return home to his family. One clear difference is that Solomon had hope that his slavery would end at some point, and that he would regain his freedom. Slaves who had been born into the system of slavery had no hope that freedom would ever be a reality for them. In his life before he was kidnapped, Solomon never experienced the situations that were very common in areas of slavery. It was perfectly acceptable for him to look people in the eye as he spoke to them, to go where he wished when he wished, and own his house and property. All of a sudden he was in a place where he had to look down to address white people, could not travel without express permission, had no bed (recall he slept on a board for many years), and he and his fellow slaves could be whipped at the whim of the master. It was a culture shock for him, but this is all his fellow slaves had ever known, this was their normal. From conversations with the other slaves, Solomon knew they did not like it and longed to escape, but that attempting to escape would put them at such great risk it was preferable to stay and endure the system.*

### **Closing Question Following Section 5 Lesson**

What is your overall impression of the narrative?

Has your overall opinion of slavery changed upon reading this narrative? If so, how? Provide examples from the book.

Has your overall opinion of slave owners changed upon reading this narrative? If so, how?

### **Closure of Unit:**

Did students...exhibit understanding of terms and vocabulary?

...follow instructions for the selected projects?

...actively participate in oral discussions?