The Poisonwood Bible

Book Five—Exodus

Due: January 12, 2017

Orleanna

1. To what does the title of this book allude? What does it foreshadow?

2. How does Ruth May’s death suddenly and irrevocably change Orleanna’s character and actions?

3. To whom is Orleanna speaking in this chapter? What theme does this emphasize?

4. Discuss the power that Orleanna finds in motion in this chapter. What theme or themes does it develop?

What We Carried Out

Leah Price (1961)

5. Why does Nathan not accompany his family out of Kilanga?

6. Discuss the significance of Leah’s statement: “Anatole banished the honey-colored ache of malaria and guilt from my blood.”
7. Discuss Leah’s decision not to return to America. What does this reveal about her character?

Rachel Price Axelroot (1962)

8. Discuss the significance of Rachel’s assertion that she was baptized by mud.

9. What does Rachel’s status as Eeben Axelroot’s de facto wife suggest about her character and her allegiance in the Congo’s struggle for independence?

Adah Price (1962)

10. What substantial change in her character does Adah reveal at the beginning of the chapter?

11. How is Orleanna’s newfound talent for gardening significant?

12. What is Adah’s “religion that serves?” What does this indicate about her character?

13. What is Adah’s debt that she cannot repay?

14. Explain Adah’s statement that her family has produced a scientist, penitent, politician, and a ghost.
Leah Price (1964)

15. How many years have passed since the Price women left Kilanga? What do you think this sudden change in the pace of the narrative indicates?

16. What is Leah’s tone throughout this chapter? What theme does this pervasive tone emphasize?

17. Explain the significance of God’s resemblance to Nathan.

Rachel Axelroot (1964)

18. Why does Rachel consider herself an adaptable kind of person? Is she really?

19. What does Rachel’s intention to marry the First Attaché to the French Ambassador suggest about her character?

Leah Price Ngemba (1965)

20. What does Leah mean when she calls Anatole “my first prayer to Creation answered?” What does this foreshadow?

21. Discuss the contrast between Nathan and other missionaries Leah knows.

22. What is Leah’s attitude toward Rachel? Why?

23. How does Leah deal with her guilt in this chapter?
Adah Price (1968)

24. How is the style of Adah’s narration changed now that she has lost her “slant?” What does this suggest about her character?

25. When Adah can think of “no honorable answer” to Pascal’s question, what theme is emphasized?

26. Discuss the religions of the Price women and their significance.

27. Explain the significance of Adah’s statement: “In spite of myself I have loved the world a little, and may lose it.” What does this say about her character?

Leah Price Ngemba (1974)

28. Where is the irony in renaming the Congo and its cities?

29. How does Leah see Nathan and Orleanna’s marriage as similar to the Congo?

30. What does Leah mean when she says, “My pagan mother alone among us understood redemption?”
31. Why does Leah discuss Mobutu’s homes and emphasize the project to build the Inga-Shaba power line?

Rachel Axelroot DuPrée Fairley (1978)

32. Why does Rachel think her family has never visited her, and what does that say about her character?

33. How does Rachel absolve herself of the guilt that the rest of her family feels?

Leah Price Ngemba (1981)

34. Leah realizes that she cannot return to America for good. Why? What theme does this emphasize?

35. Explain Leah’s statement “We are all co-conspirators here. I mean, all of us, not just my family.”

Rachel Price (1984)

36. What is significant about Rachel’s choice of last name in this chapter?

37. How does the news of Nathan’s death affect the sisters? How does each sister’s response reflect her character?
Adah Price (1985)

38. To what does the poem that begins the chapter allude? What is its significance as it relates to Nathan’s lasting impact?

39. Discuss how Adah equates lameness with dark skin. What theme does this emphasize?

40. How does Adah emphasize the theme of the power and beauty of language in this chapter?

41. Why does Adah insist on talking about Nathan?

Leah Price Ngemba (1986)

42. How does Leah continue to respond to unfairness and injustice?

43. How is the theme of the power of language developed in this chapter?

Book 6—Song of the Three Children

44. Explain the allusion to the apocryphal “Song of the Three Children” that opens this Book. What might this allusion foreshadow about what will happen in this Book?
Rachel Price

45. This is the first book so far to open without a section narrated by Orleanna. Explain the significance of this change.

46. How has Rachel ultimately dealt with her family’s tragedies and guilt?

47. Where is the irony in Rachel deciding to never move back to America?

Leah Price

48. What conclusion does Leah finally come to regarding her search for justice?

49. Explain the significance of Leah describing herself as an un-missionary. What theme does this emphasize?

50. Describe Leah’s new religion.

Adah Price

51. Describe Adah’s new religion.

52. What conclusions does Adah come to regarding her burden of guilt?
53. Who is the narrator of this chapter? How is her viewpoint significant?

54. How does the title of this book relate to Ruth May?

55. Explain the significance of the novel’s closing line.