

Name _____

Adalyn Harper and the Salty Dungeon

by Sarah Zimeri

Hearing the waves lap against her cell, Adalyn realized agony took many forms. Silent, with gritty hair and skin, yet she was in control, not him. Everyone called him Bull, but his real name was Mason. Almost ducking to enter the door frame with steel shoulders, he acted plenty tough to keep most of the inmates cooperative. But not Adalyn.

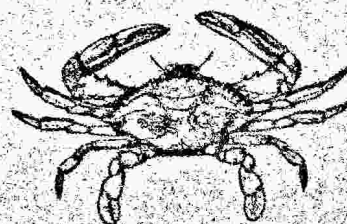


She was born different. From birth her toes and the bottoms of her feet were a brilliant shining blue, webbed and covered in iridescent scales. When her parents left her alone, they would return to find her soaked in salt water, sometimes playing with a sea plant or fish. Maybe they could have learned to love her despite her uniqueness if it ended there. But as soon as she learned to talk she repeated the thoughts and intentions of everyone around her. Even parents have a limit to their love, she realized, and before her third birthday she was abandoned to the Imperial Guard for training. Even though family was allowed to visit twice a week, Adalyn's never came. Now at twelve, wasting away in a dungeon cell, she could hardly remember their faces.

Each time Bull twisted the rusty iron lock, she grinned at his fear. From the first creak, she opened her salty portal and let the waves build. She always made sure he could hear the splashes. He never learned to swim, and the thought of being swept up into an overpowering sea was his greatest fear. She felt his thoughts blur and his panic intensify at the sound. So she laughed boldly and sent a shallow stream of waves his direction.

Adalyn wasn't really mad, especially not at him; she was just proving a point. She had come to the north to band forces, to fight for freedom, and they locked her in a cell. She had sworn her allegiance weeks ago, yet they kept her in this prison. Not that she was trapped, she could escape through her portal anytime she wanted, and she'd done it at least a dozen times already.

She left each time the hunger would set in. Those trips were risky. Bull hated seafood, but his wife and daughter loved Snow Crab. When she was ready to barter, Adalyn would risk a portal to what used to be Alaska in search of crabs. At first she'd come back pinched and bleeding with very little to show for it, but she'd gotten much better in the last week. Today was a special day because she'd managed to capture 5 large snow crabs and had them wrapped in her outer cloak without getting a single injury.



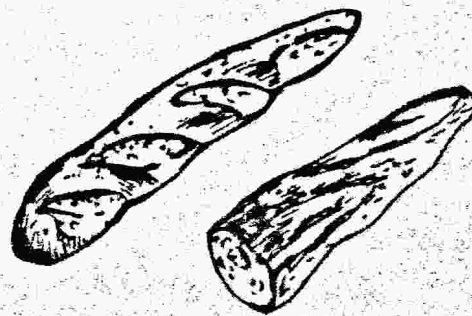
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Hearing Bull almost at the door of her cell, she released constraint and sent scores of waist high waves aimed in his direction. He gasped as the icy, salty water splashed up to his thighs and sent chills through his spine. A small fish wriggled between his fingers making him scream. Adalyn laughed before quickly ushering most the salt water back into the portal, leaving only a salty, muddy sludge beneath her webbed toes.

Before he could scold her, she held out her squirming cloak with a grin. "Hey Mason. Great day for a swim, eh? Okay, fine. I'm a little sorry about the water. But I got 5 crabs today. Just for you. Fresh and still pinching. And look- not even a scratch on me this time! Any chance you could..." Bull turned around and left before she could finish speaking. She feared maybe she really had pushed him too far this time.

While she sat almost feeling regretful, the creak of the iron lock let her know someone was coming again. Once the door opened she could tell it was Bull. He might have left without sharing any thoughts, but he was full of them now. She'd rarely known him to be in a good mood, yet right now it felt like his thoughts were dancing. Every ship in the country was in use for the war effort, and quality food supplies were starting to run thin. Seafood wasn't even a consideration for the past week. There was a spring in his step as he imagined the smiles and hugs he'd get from his family at bringing home the crabs. It must be nice to have a family that loves you Adalyn thought.

He sloshed closer to her in his salty soggy boots and held out a wrapped package. They exchanged goods silently. She waited until she heard him leave before she opened hers to see what he'd brought her today. Meat and juice were always heavily guarded, so she never expected those. But extra breads for the prisoners and pastries for the guards were left unattended in large baskets in the kitchen. Bull brought all her favorites- 2 blueberry bagels, a warm French baguette, and his own chilled lunch portion of pomegranate juice. If she had to be trapped in this dungeon, at least it seemed like she was starting to get along with Bull.



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Analyzing Characters

	Adalyn Harper	Bull
Looks like Describe the appearance of each character.		
Says or Does and Motivation What are some important things that each character says or does? What is the character's motivation for doing this?		
Thinks and Feels Explain some of the thoughts and feelings of each character.		
Positive Traits Analyze each character and choose 2 positive character traits. Use text evidence to explain why you chose each trait.		
Negative Traits Analyze each character and choose 1 negative character trait. Use text evidence to explain why you chose each trait.		

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Character Relationships and Changes

What is the relationship between Adalyn and Bull at the beginning of the story?

How and why does the relationship between Adalyn and Bull change throughout the story?

Purpose and Role of Characters

What is the purpose and role of Adalyn in this story?

What is the purpose and role of Bull in this story?

Personal Reflections

Which character is your favorite and why?

Authors: Toni Morrison

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TOP: Pulitzer Prize-winning author Toni Morrison photographed in New York City in 1979. Getty Images.

Synopsis: Toni Morrison was born on February 18, 1931, in Lorain, Ohio. Her novels are known for their massive, sweeping themes, vivid dialogue and richly detailed African-American characters. Morrison has won nearly every book prize possible.

Background And Education

Born Chloe Anthony Wofford, Toni Morrison was the second oldest of four children. Her father, George Wofford held several jobs at once to support the family. Her mother, Ramah, was a housekeeper. Morrison later credited her parents with instilling in her a love of reading, music and storytelling.

Morrison did not become fully aware of racial tensions until she was in her teens. "When I was in first grade, nobody thought I was inferior. I was the only black in the class and the only child who could read," she later told a reporter from The New York Times. Dedicated to her studies, Morrison took Latin in school and read many great works of European literature, and she graduated from Lorain High School with honors in 1949.

At Howard University, Morrison continued to pursue her interest in literature. After graduating from Howard in 1953, Morrison continued her education at Cornell University. She then moved to the Lone Star State to teach English at Texas Southern University.

Mother And Random House Editor

In 1957, she met Harold Morrison, an architect originally from Jamaica. The couple got married in 1958 and welcomed their first child, Harold, in 1961. After the birth of her son, Morrison began working on her first novel.

In 1963, Morrison's husband decided to move back to Jamaica. At the time, she was expecting the couple's second child. She moved back home to Ohio to live with her family before the birth of her son, Slade, in 1964. The following year, she moved with her sons to Syracuse, New York, where she worked for a textbook publisher.

Literary Star

Morrison's first novel, "The Bluest Eye," was published in 1970. It tells the story of a young African-American girl who believes her incredibly difficult life would be better if only she had blue eyes. The book received warm reviews but didn't sell well. Morrison continued to explore the African-American experience in her work. Her next novel, "Sula" (1973), explores good and evil through the friendship of two women who grew up together. The work was nominated for the American Book Award.

"Song of Solomon" (1977) follows the journey of Milkman Dead, a Midwestern city dweller. He attempts to make sense of his family roots and the sometimes harsh truths of his world.

Pulitzer For "Beloved"

Soon, Morrison was a rising star in the literature world. In 1987, she completed one of her greatest works, "Beloved." Main character Sethe, a former slave, is haunted by her decision to kill her children rather than see them become slaves. Three of her children survived, but her infant daughter died at her hand. Yet Sethe's daughter returns as a living person who becomes a constant presence in her home. For this work, Morrison won several awards, including the famed Pulitzer Prize. Ten years later, in 1998, the book was turned into a movie starring Oprah Winfrey and Danny Glover.

Branching Out

Morrison became a professor at Princeton University in 1989, and continued to produce great works. She received the 1993 Nobel Prize in Literature, making her the first African-American woman to be selected for the award.

Morrison later branched out into children's books, writing four in a joint effort with her son, Slade.

Her next novel, "Love" (2003), divides its story between the past and present. Bill Cosey, a wealthy businessman, is the central figure in the book. A critic for Publisher's Weekly praised the work, saying that "Morrison has crafted a gorgeous novel whose mysteries are gradually unearthed."

Writing For An Opera And Supporting Free Speech

In 2006, the New York Times Book Review named "Beloved" the best novel of the past 25 years. Morrison continued to explore new art forms, writing the libretto, or lyrics, for the opera "Margaret Garner."

Morrison traveled back to the early days of American history for her next novel, "A Mercy." Once again, a woman who is both a slave and a mother must make a terrible choice regarding her child. It won numerous awards and, as a critic from the Washington Post described it, the novel is a mix "of mystery, history and longing."

In October 2009, one of Morrison's books was banned at a Michigan high school. Afterward, she became outspoken about fighting censorship and the importance of free speech. "Unwritten novels, poems whispered or swallowed for fear of being overheard by the wrong people, unstaged plays, canceled films — that thought is a nightmare. As though a whole universe is being described in invisible ink," Morrison said at a conference for free speech.

"Home" And "God Help The Child"

Now in her 80s, Morrison continues to be one of literature's great storytellers. Her novel "Home," published in 2012, follows a man named Frank who fought in the Korean War. He suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder, a condition that hurts his ability to relate to others.

While writing the novel, Morrison experienced a great personal loss. Her son, Slade, an artist, died in December 2010.

In 2012, Morrison also collaborated on a new opera production, inspired by William Shakespeare's "Othello," called "Desdemona." The opera focused on the relationship between Othello's wife Desdemona and her African nurse, Barbary, and it premiered in London in the summer of 2012.

In 2015, Morrison published her next novel, "God Help the Child." The layered story focuses on the experiences of the character Bride — a young, dark-skinned black woman who works in the beauty industry while dealing with the rejections of her past.

Quiz

- 1 Which section of the article BEST explains that Morrison has continued to write about a wide range of topics despite personal struggles?
 - (A) "Mother And Random House Editor"
 - (B) "Literary Star"
 - (C) "Branching Out"
 - (D) "Home And God Help The Child"

- 2 Select the paragraph from the section "Writing For An Opera And Supporting Free Speech" that connects the themes in one of Morrison's new books to her novel "Beloved."

- 3 Read the section "Background And Education." What purpose does it serve in developing the main idea of the article?
 - (A) It suggests that many of the topics in Morrison's works were established in her childhood.
 - (B) It establishes Morrison's early confidence and abilities as a reader and writer.
 - (C) It introduces Morrison's close relationship with her parents.
 - (D) It demonstrates the differences between Morrison's childhood and adulthood.

- 4 Why does the author include the section "Pulitzer For Beloved"?
 - (A) to note the turning point in recognition for Morrison's work
 - (B) to explain what it was about the plot that made it so popular
 - (C) to outline where Morrison found inspiration for her novels
 - (D) to suggest that the novel was more interesting than her other works