

KINDRED

LIVING  
LITERATURE  
SERIES

OCTAVIA BUTLER

A PERMA-BOUND PRODUCTION

TEACHER'S GUIDE

GUIDE WRITTEN BY MARY ELLEN SNODGRASS

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**SYNOPSIS**

**Prologue:** Returning from time travel, Dana regrets losing an arm and a year of her life as well as the comfort and security of her new home. Kevin, her husband, arrives at her hospital room after police release him from questioning about her injuries. He admits to telling the police that he discovered her struggling to pull her arm from a hole in the wall.

**The River:** On her 26th birthday, Dana and Kevin move from an apartment in Los Angeles to a house in Altadena. After experiencing dizziness, she finds herself saving a small red-haired boy aged four or five from drowning in a river. She revives him with artificial respiration. The frantic mother beats Dana. A man points a rifle at her at the same times that she quits, dematerializes, and returns home. Dana and Kevin discuss the strange experience.

**The Fire, Part 1:** That same afternoon, Dana is shelving books when a second dizzy spell claims her.

**Part 2:** She returns to the small boy, who is setting fire to draperies. She tosses them out the window. He introduces himself as Rufus and recalls that she saved him from drowning. She realizes that her time travel hinges on the boy's needs. Rufus admits burning the stable because his father, Tom Weylin, refused to give him a horse named Nero. The boy bears fresh welts on his scarred back for stealing a dollar from his father's desk.

Rufus tells Dana that the year is 1815 and the location is the Weylin plantation across the bay from Baltimore near Easton. She learns that Rufus has a free-born black friend named Alice Greenwood. Dana recognizes a connection with her grandmother Hagar, daughter of Alice Greenwood and Rufus Weylin. Dana concludes that she returns to the slave era to insure her family's survival.

**Part 3:** Dana searches for Alice's mother, who lives in the woods. She encounters four white night riders who enter a log cabin and apprehend a man and woman in full view of their young daughter. They beat the man for having no pass.

**Part 4:** Dana comforts young Alice and gives water to the mother. The mother admits that Tom Weylin persecutes her husband because her children are free-born, thus adding nothing to the plantation. Dana makes up a story about being kidnapped from New York.

When Dana goes outside to retrieve a blanket, in a case of mistaken identity, one of the white patrollers grabs and slaps her. He believes she could be the woman's twin and attempts to rape her. She strikes him with a tree limb and immediately returns to her own time without learning whether he survived.

**Part 5:** Kevin finds Dana suffering from the tussle after being gone only two or three minutes. She refuses medical treatment and goes to sleep.

**Part 6:** Before dawn the next day, Dana awakens and

packs a canvas bag with a switchblade knife, clothing, and shoes. She keeps the pack tied to her waist. Kevin gathers books on black history to learn about writing passes for free blacks. Dana tears a map of Maryland from a book. Kevin believes that terror triggers Dana's returns from the past. Dana realizes that Rufus's fear of death causes the departures to the past.

**The Fall, Part 1:** Dana, age 22, meets 34-year-old Kevin Franklin while working as a temporary employee of an auto-parts warehouse, writing a novel, and publishing short stories in little magazines. A full-time employee and writer, he plans to quit on Friday because he sold a book. She tells him about living with an aunt and uncle while taking extension courses at UCLA. She worked in the publicity office of an aerospace company before being laid off. Kevin begins their romantic relationship with tickets to a play.

**Part 2:** Because of the unexpected time travel, Dana fears riding in a car. As a third dizzy spell hits, Kevin holds onto her and the canvas bag. They arrive in the past just as Rufus falls from a tree and breaks a leg. Nigel, his black companion, attends him. Dana explains to Rufus her knowledge of James Monroe's term of office and the Missouri Compromise of 1820. As another proof of their knowledge of the future, Kevin hands Rufus a bicentennial quarter.

**Part 3:** Nigel leads Tom from the plantation by wagon to fetch Rufus. The boy pleads for an invitation for Kevin and Dana. Tom asks them to dinner. Margaret, Rufus's mother, recognizes Dana from the incident at the river.

Carrie, a mute slave around 14 or 15 years old, shows Dana to the cookhouse, where Sarah, the supervisor, serves bowls of corn meal mush to Nigel and his father Luke. She is suspicious of Dana's clothes and speech, which sounds like whites. Dana claims that she speaks properly because her mother taught school. Nigel warns that Tom doesn't want blacks who speak better than him or who encourage slaves to seek freedom.

**Part 4:** In place of the bowl of mush, Carrie slips Dana bread and ham. In the distance Rufus screams as the doctor sets his broken leg. Sarah explains that Carrie, her fourth child, is all that is left of her children after Tom sold the others.

Kevin and Dana withdraw to talk. She fears he will remain stranded in the past. Because Tom offered him a job, Kevin will tutor Rufus, who is a poor student. Dana will remain and make friends while playing the part of Kevin's slave and learning from Sarah how to cook. Dana intends to keep Rufus from growing up into a brutal adult like Tom.

**Part 5:** Dana avoids Margaret's volatile temper while she tends Kevin's room and sleeps in the attic. Kevin urges Dana to leave with him, but she must stay to watch over Rufus for the six-week healing period. Kevin believes she is gambling against history. He confides that Margaret has attempted to seduce him and intends to work his way to Baltimore. Dana

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prefers Philadelphia, which is in a free state.

Dana begins reading *Robinson Crusoe* to Rufus. He explains that Hannah, Tom's first wife, established the family library. Dana urges Rufus to improve his reading and writing. He informs her that Tom sold Alice's father. Tom, who eavesdrops on the conversation, offers to buy Dana. When she refuses, he warns that she will regret her choice to stay with Kevin.

**Part 6:** After observing a beating, Dana grows more wary. Margaret slaps her for committing a sin by sleeping with Kevin. At the cookhouse, Sarah explains that she hates Margaret for demanding the sale of her children so Tom could buy her furniture and china.

**Part 7:** As Dana acclimates to slavery, Kevin grows bored and ponders going west. Tom orders her out of the library. She begins teaching Nigel to read. She realizes that her perception of slavery differs from that of Kevin, who observes from the white perspective. It troubles her that black people manage to acclimate to slavery.

**Part 8:** Tom grows angry that Nigel and Rufus read better than he. Margaret envies Dana's ability to entertain Rufus with reading. Carrie wants to learn to read. Tom walks into the cookhouse and accuses Dana of stealing books and reading against orders. He beats her until she passes out.

**The Fight, Part 1:** Four months after Kevin meets Dana at the auto-parts warehouse where they work, he proposes marriage. His sister Carol disapproves. Dana's aunt approves because Kevin would father light-skinned children. The couple marry in Las Vegas.

**Part 2:** At home once more, Dana soaks her bloodied back in the tub. She packs a denim bag with more essentials, including aspirin and a history of American slavery, which contains a map of Maryland. When her cousin visits from Pasadena to help her buy groceries, she believes that Kevin beat Dana. Readings about slavery and World War II concentration camps cause her to put sleeping pills into her bag.

**Part 3:** Dana finds Rufus losing a fistfight to Isaac Jackson, a black man. She warns him that killing Rufus will bring retribution against Alice, his wife. Isaac halts the fight. Alice informs Dana that Kevin left for the North long ago.

**Part 4:** Dana tells Rufus that the white men he drank with tried to rob him. When Rufus rebels against the lie, she accuses him of raping Isaac's wife. Rufus rationalizes that he would make a better husband than a field hand and predicts that Isaac and Alice will suffer for attacking a white man. Rufus threatens to withhold information about Kevin's whereabouts. As Dana sets out to get help for Rufus, he tells her that his father fears her and will listen to her.

**Part 5:** When Dana returns to the plantation, she discovers that Carrie is pregnant and Nigel is the baby's father. Dana informs Tom that Rufus may have broken ribs. Tom remarks that Rufus has letters from Kevin.

**Part 6:** Dana learns that Margaret lives in Baltimore and concludes that Tom behaves like a monster toward blacks because such deeds between master and slave are legal and proper in his time. Letters from Kevin carry his Philadelphia address and his plans for migrating to Maine. Sarah explains that the births and deaths of twins caused Margaret to move to her sister May's house. She adds that the overseer, Jake Edwards, is Margaret's cousin. Sarah also confides that Tom sold Luke and whipped Nigel for running away. After Nigel married Carrie, he stopped thinking up ways to escape.

Rufus is appalled to read anti-slavery Southern history in Dana's book and forces her to burn both the book and the map of Maryland in his fireplace. In exchange for her compliance, he agrees to mail her letter to Kevin. He claims that he helped Kevin return to the plantation over Tom's objections.

**Part 7:** Rufus buys Alice for twice her worth and returns her to the plantation, where Dana treats her dog bites with saltwater to prevent infection.

**Part 8:** Rufus sleeps next to Alice in his own bed. Sarah disapproves of the arrangement and implies that Rufus didn't mail Dana's letter. Sarah tells how her first mate, Hannah's father, promised to free Sarah, but didn't.

**Part 9:** Rufus becomes more domineering by ordering Dana to tend to Alice, who is reduced to childlike behavior and incontinence.

**Part 10:** Three weeks later, Carrie gives birth to Jude. Alice is curious about slave life without realizing that she now belongs to Rufus. At her urging, Dana tells her about the dogs and the beating. Alice suddenly remembers that captors cut off Isaac's ears and sold him to Mississippi.

Dana helps Tess with the wash out of pity for her injury when Tom began bedding her. Alice blames Dana for not telling her all the details of the capture and torture. When Dana intervenes on Rufus's behalf, Alice scorns her.

**Part 11:** Tom rewards Nigel for the birth of Jude. A month after writing Kevin, Dana writes a second letter. Tom scolds Rufus for sending letters. Dana realizes that Tom might enslave or sell her. She tries to talk Rufus out of taking Alice as a concubine. He retorts that Tom wants him to send Alice to the fields and to bed Dana instead.

Alice becomes emotionally unstable. Dana tells her she can comply with Rufus's orders, be whipped and raped, or run away. Alice foresees that Dana will become a plantation mammy. With no viable choice, Alice gives in to Rufus.

**Part 12:** A month later, Alice passes Dana's original letters to her after stealing them from Rufus's bed chest. That night, Dana sets out toward Delaware. Tom and Rufus capture her. Tom kicks her into unconsciousness.

**Part 13:** On return to the plantation, Rufus orders her to take a whipping from Jake Edwards. Alice tends Dana's injuries. Dana fears that she may give in to suicide.

**Part 14:** Alice confides that the slaves retaliated against Liza, the jealous slave who informed Tom of Dana's escape.

**Part 15:** A letter arrives from Kevin saying he is on the way to get Dana. She learns that Tom wrote Kevin after discovering that Rufus lied about mailing her letters.

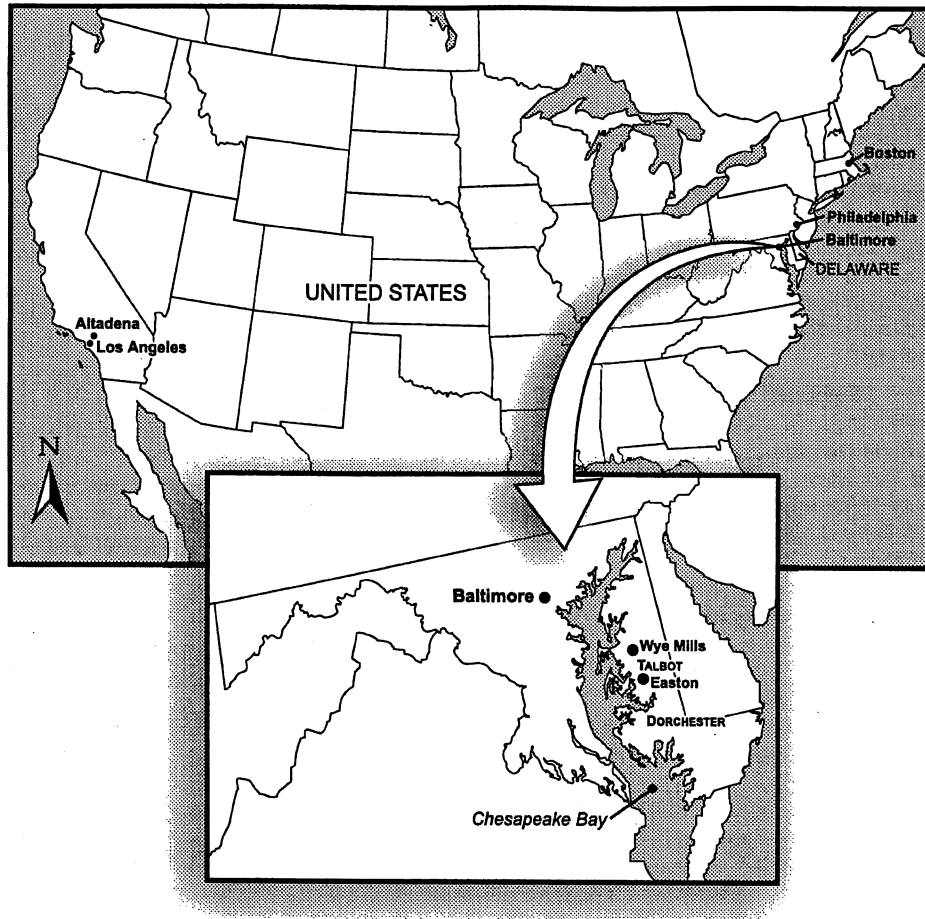
**Part 16:** Jake Edwards forces Dana to do the washing while Tess goes to the field. After five years' absence, Kevin arrives. Rufus holds them at rifle point. Something lands on Dana's back, sending her and Kevin back to their own time.

**The Storm, Part 1:** Kevin time-travels with Dana to the future because he fell on her back before she departed. He relates that he almost bought a farm in Maine. She packs antiseptic, Excedrin, and a knife. Before she can prepare for another episode, Dana once more travels to the past.

**Part 2:** Six years after Dana's departure, Rufus lies in a puddle. Nigel picks him up and returns him to Tom. Dana agrees to stay and tend Rufus if Tom behaves humanely. He threatens to kill her if Rufus dies.

**Part 3:** Nigel thinks Rufus is suffering from ague; Dana believes the disease is malaria. Tom threatens her with a terrible death.

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**Part 4:** Alice has grown bitter from losing two babies. Her youngest, Joe, is sickly. Dana is unable to resuscitate Tom from a heart attack. Rufus rages and blames Dana.

**Part 5:** After the funeral, overseer Evan Fowler takes Dana to cut corn stalks in the field, follows her every move, and beats her unconscious.

**Part 6:** Rufus demands medication and admits that he sent her to the field because he wanted retribution for Tom's death. Rufus places Dana in charge of Margaret, whom Dana doses with laudanum.

**Part 7:** During the time that Dana reads to Margaret, washes her laundry, and cleans the sickroom, Dana sleeps on the floor. Margaret teaches her to sew. When Rufus sells Tess to a slave trader, he explains to Dana that Tom arranged the sale. She asks if Rufus will sell her too.

**Part 8:** In the privacy of her cabin, Carrie pantomimes a prediction that Margaret will sell the property and all the slaves if Rufus dies.

**Part 9:** Four days later, Rufus declares that the doctor diagnosed his ailment as dengue fever. He orders Dana to write the plantation's business correspondence asking creditors for patience.

**Part 10:** Rufus considers Alice and Dana two halves of the same woman. Alice informs her that, so long as she is near, Rufus hits Alice less often.

**Part 11:** While awaiting Hagar's birth, Dana keeps a journal. Because Dana enjoys corn shucking and the Christmas Party, Rufus threatens to sell anyone who might desire her. Dana teaches Joe to read; Rufus takes an interest in the boy.

Alice urges Rufus to free Joe and seal the bargain in writing. Alice intends to run as soon as she gives birth to her fourth child. She requests a bottle of Margaret's laudanum to quiet the child during the escape.

**Part 12:** When Alice gives birth to Hagar in February 1831, Dana assumes that the danger to her family has passed. Rufus considers educating Joe in the North.

**Part 13:** While awaiting a time to run in early summer, Dana teaches Nigel's sons. Neighbors protest that education spoils slaves and makes them disobedient. Sam James, who had admired Dana at Christmas, asks her to teach his brother and sister. Three days later, Rufus sells Sam. Sally, Sam's sister, blames Dana and calls her a whore. After Rufus strikes Dana, she goes to the attic and cuts her wrists.

**The Rope, Part 1:** Lying at home, Dana awakens to Kevin, who had Dr. Louis George treat her wrists. She explains the danger of all the slaves' being sold and declares that time travel has become real.

**Part 2:** Kevin realizes Dana's commitment to helping Rufus's slaves. She fears that, by murdering Rufus, she will never be able to return home.

**Part 3:** On July 4, 1836, Dana returns to Rufus on the day that Alice hangs herself in the barn. Sarah says Rufus sold Alice's children because she ran away. Rufus admits that the sale was a ruse and that the children are safe in Baltimore with May. Dana insists that he atone by manumitting them and raising them as free children.

**Part 4:** The next day, Rufus goes to the courthouse to arrange for his children's freedom. He and Dana squabble.

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She urges him to give up thoughts of suicide and to be a father to the motherless children. When he implies that he will take Dana as Alice's substitute, she hurries to the attic to retrieve her knife. When Rufus follows, she kills him with stabs to his side and back. On her way back to her own time, she loses her left arm in her living room wall.

**Epilogue:** Kevin and Dana travel Maryland in search of the plantation and information on the Weylins and their slaves. Dana concludes that Nigel set fire to the attic to conceal the murder and carried Margaret to safety. There are no sale papers for Nigel, Carrie, Joe, and Hagar. Dana explains to Kevin that Rufus feared writing a will because he believed that she would murder him.

### TIME LINE

- ca. 1804** Rufus is born.  
**ca. 1805** Carrie and Nigel are born.  
**ca. 1809** Dana saves Rufus from drowning.  
**1815** Dana rescues Rufus from a fire he set.  
**1819** Dana nurses Rufus after he breaks his leg.  
**ca. 1821** Alice's mother dies.  
Kevin returns from Maine to the plantation in search of Dana. Tom sells Luke to a New Orleans trader.  
**ca. 1824** Isaac fights Rufus.  
**next day** The doctor treats Rufus.  
**four days later** Captors cut off Isaac's ears and let dogs maul Alice. Rufus pays Judge Holman twice Alice's worth.  
**three weeks later** Carrie gives birth to Jude.  
**a week later** Dana writes a second letter to Kevin.  
**a month later** Alice locates the unmailed letters, which explain why there is no reply from Kevin.  
**at midnight** Dana escapes; Tom and Rufus recapture her.  
**1830** **ca. July** Dana saves Rufus from drowning in a puddle.  
**six days later** Tom dies from heart attack. Rufus sends Dana to the field.  
**Christmas** Rufus threatens to sell any slave who might desire Dana.  
**1831** **February** Alice gives birth to Hagar.  
**before early summer** Rufus sells Sam James and strikes Dana. Dana cuts her wrists with shallow slashes.  
**July** Rufus pretends to sell Alice's children. Shortly after Alice hangs herself, Dana returns to the past.  
**next day** On Dana's insistence, Rufus agrees to retrieve the children from Baltimore and free them.  
**a few days later** Joe returns with "Daddy."  
**1861** The Civil War begins.  
**1868** The Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution grants citizenship to blacks.  
**1950** **July 28** Dana is born.  
**1972** Kevin and Dana marry.  
**1976** **June 6** Dana travels into the past and saves Rufus's life.  
**later in the day** She makes a second trip.  
**June 7** Dana packs a bag and ties it to her waist.  
**June 9** Dana makes the third trip with Kevin. She returns the same day without him and treats lash marks on her back.  
**June 10** Dana reads up on slavery.

**June 17** The fourth trip returns her to the plantation long after Kevin departs for the North.

**hours later** On return to her own time, Dana tries to help Kevin acclimate to their sufferings.

**June 19** Dana returns to Rufus.

**three hours later** She regains her own time after eight months on the plantation.

**July 4** Dana makes the last trip to the plantation. On return, she loses her left arm on re-entry through the living room wall.

**later** Dana and Kevin research the history of the Weylin plantation and the fate of the slaves.

### AUTHOR SKETCH

Octavia Estelle Butler is the rare popular sci-fi author who blends speculative fiction with social issues and racial history. Born in Pasadena, California, on June 22, 1947, the only child of Octavia Margaret Guy and shoe-shiner Laurice Butler, she lived with her mother and grandmother after her father's death. A shy child growing up in a racially diverse neighborhood, she realized her mother's struggle against poverty. Octavia loved storytime and began reading at an early age and writing at age ten. Two years later, she composed her first science fiction story as an improvement over a mediocre plot from television.

Because of dyslexia, Butler avoided classroom presentations in school and gravitated toward teachers who appreciated her sensitivity and gift for stories. She earned an associate degree at Pasadena City College. While working odd jobs, she continued her education in creative writing at California State University and with evening classes at UCLA. At age 23, she began a successful career in freelance writing after positive experiences at workshops held by Screen Writers Guild of America and Clarion Science Fiction Writers. In addition to stand-alone novels and a three-book science fiction trilogy, she has contributed short fiction to *Clarion*, *Chrysalis 4*, *Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*, *Future Life*, and *Transmission*.

### CRITIC'S CORNER

Butler's *Kindred* surprised her publisher, who was uncertain of the market for black feminist science fiction. The successful novel blends two distinct literary traditions—the fantasy and sci-fi motif of time travel and slave narrative—with themes of gender and genealogical probing. Her mastery of power motifs undergirds an examination of equality and character-building, both central issues in the story.

Without openly embracing feminism, Butler typically features strong, purposeful female protagonists like Dana, whose emergence as heroine derives from actions rather than sexual allure. She credits people-watching and eavesdropping for teaching her verisimilitude. Butler has won two Hugo Awards for short fiction from the World Science Fiction Convention, two Nebula Awards, a Nebula nomination, and a Locus Award. In 1995, she received a MacArthur Fellows genius grant.

### OTHER WORKS BY THE AUTHOR

*Patternmaster* (1976)

*Survivor* (1978)

*Wild Seed* (1980)

*Clay's Ark* (1984)

*Dawn: Xenogenesis* (1987)

*Adulthood Rites* (1988)

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*Imago* (1989)  
*Mind of My Mind* (1994)  
*Bloodchild and Other Stories* (1995)  
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### LITERARY TERMS AND APPLICATIONS

For a better understanding of Octavia Butler's fiction, present the following terms and applications:

**episode** a coherent event, digression, or incident in a narrative or serial that stands out on its own merit, such as Dana's enjoyment of the Christmas party, her first experience peeling potatoes with Sarah, and her explanation to Joe why Alice has gone away. These events offer additional proof of Dana's humanity and ingenuity and her commitment to the Weylins' slaves, who influenced her own family tree.

**round character** a realistic being who possesses a complex or multifaceted array of traits. From boyhood until his death from two stab wounds, Rufus is a charming, but difficult personality to grasp. Vulnerable and brutalized by a heavy-handed father, he depends on his mother for love and nurturance, yet has no respect for her softness and hysterics. As he grows into his teens, he begins to display the inhumanity and insensitivity that engulfs plantation life. Although Dana encourages him to study more and to obey the human impulses of his character, dominance and lust for Alice bring out the worst in Rufus. He dies just as he predicts, lonely and terrified without Dana to comfort him.

**symbol** a concrete object that stands for a complex or abstract idea or relationship and implies more than the literal meaning of the word or words, such as Dana's missing arm. Committed to a relationship with slaves who lived 140 years earlier, Dana grows more entangled with plantation lives and fates with each visit. On her final return to the contemporary world, she leaves behind an arm that she fails to pull through the living room wall. Just as Butler depicts Dana as a mirror image of Alice, she requires a personal loss from Dana to represent the part of her emotions that remains forever invested in the hapless victims of the antebellum South.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF SETTING

The milieu of Octavia Butler's *Kindred* contrasts the freedom of the twentieth century with the misery of the American South before the Civil War. Dana, a freelance writer who lives in Los Angeles and works part-time for a blue-collar agency, meets her future husband at an auto-parts factory. The setting glimpses the egalitarian world of the 1970s, when men and women of both races work at minimum wage jobs. The union of Dana and Kevin as man and wife and the move to a new house in Altadena, California, equalizes them as workers, citizens, mates, and writers. Essential to their residence are the myriad books they combine into one library.

During episodes of time travel, Butler stresses Dana's approach-avoidance relationship with the Weylin plantation near Easton, Maryland. At first, it is the loathsome historical evidence of agrarian enslavement and slave breeding for the sake of profit. Dana observes Sarah's work in the cookhouse and other slaves' obedience to overseers Evan Fowler and Jake Edwards, Tom Weylin, his wife Margaret, and son Rufus as proof that black people had no choice in their fates. Even the log cabin at the far edge of Weylin's property offers no protection to Alice's mother, a freewoman who suffers a night-time raid by four patrollers to punish her enslaved husband for refusing to marry a slave wife and father slave chil-

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dren for Tom Weylin's personal enrichment.

After identifying Alice Greenwood as a link to a family tree that Alice's daughter Hagar inscribed in a family bible, Dana begins to make friends among the slaves to collect information. She must peruse the main residence, barn, slave quarters, corn field, cookhouse, wash shed, and other outbuildings to learn the nature of their toils. She also attends a corn shucking, birthing, and Christmas party to witness their joys and amusements. By helping Tess with the laundry, tutoring Nigel and Joe, learning to sew and cook, and befriending Carrie, Dana comes to think of the slaves as real historical figures in her family's past who survived a hostile environment. During her time travels, Kevin is amazed at the change in his wife, who commits herself to aiding people against an insidious economic system that evaluates them like farm animals and breeding stock, even though some of the mixed-blood offspring, including Joe and Carrie, are the children of their white owners.

On an increasingly dangerous series of returns to the Weylin plantation, Dana is surprised that she comes to think of it as home. Tess observes how quickly Dana fits into the household routine and makes up for the time periods she has missed. While cooking in Sarah's place at the cookhouse and helping Margaret overcome poor health, Dana becomes a citizen of the antebellum South and limits her personal freedom by following the protocols of subservience to white people and silent acquiescence to unfairness and brutality. The mounting understanding of the slave mentality shocks her, but enables her to empathize with the victims.

At the novel's end, Dana and Kevin, returned to their own time, are more interested in the history of Maryland than in their new home in Altadena. By searching the Historical Society, newspaper clippings, and courthouse records and reconstructing bits of data on land and slave sales, they fill in the major events that affected Dana's ancestors. By knowing the attitudes and behaviors of Nigel and Margaret, Dana concludes that he witnessed the stabbing of Rufus, set fire to the Georgian Colonial residence, and pulled the mistress to safety to conceal Dana's crime.

### CROSS-CURRICULAR SOURCES

#### Novels

Isaac Asimov, *Assignment in Eternity*  
Gregory Benford, *Timescape*  
Michael Crichton, *Timeline*  
L. Sprague De Camp, *Lest Darkness Fall*  
Robert Heinlein, *The Door Into Summer* and *Farnham's Freehold*  
Madeleine L'Engle, *An Acceptable Time and Many Waters*  
Ward Moore, *Bring the Jubilee*  
Mark Twain, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* and *Pudd'nhead Wilson*  
H.G. Wells, *The Time Machine*  
Arvella Whitmore, *Trapped Between the Lash and the Gun: A Boy's Journey*  
Jane Yolen, *The Devil's Arithmetic*

#### Short Stories

Ray Bradbury, "The Other Shoe"  
Robert Heinlein, "By His Bootstraps" and "Hey All You Zombies"

#### Nonfiction

Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*

Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*  
Mason Lowance, ed., *Against Slavery: An Abolitionist Reader*  
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#### Videos/DVDs

*The Truth About Slavery in History* (TMW Media Group, 1998)

### THEMES AND MOTIFS

A study of the central issues and situations in *Kindred* should include these aspects:

#### Themes

- slavery
- genealogy
- time travel
- survival
- rescue
- manipulation
- victimization
- self-esteem
- escapism
- loss

#### Motifs

- coping with inexplicable travel back in time
- seeking a refuge
- making friends with ancestors
- comprehending the decline of a family
- explaining to police an unlikely injury during time travel

### MEANING STUDY

Below are significant words, phrases, or sentences from the novel. Explain each in context. Chapter, part, and page numbers pinpoint each entry so that you can re-read the passage in which it appears.

1. Or like a . . . a dream.  
I looked down at him. "You mean a hallucination." ("The River," p. 17)  
(In explaining her first encounter with time travel, Dana challenges Kevin, who implies that she suffers a delusion or mental disorder out of keeping with reality.)
2. "The what?"  
"Where Elisha breathed into the dead boy's mouth, and the boy came back to life." ("The Fire," Part 2, p. 24)  
(Rufus interprets cardiopulmonary resuscitation in biblical terms. He compares Dana's life-saving method to that of Elisha, the Old Testament prophet who succeeded Elijah as moral counselor to Israel.)
3. I didn't dare test the paradox. ("The Fire," Part 2, p. 29)  
(In realizing her importance to Rufus's survival, Dana accepts the unlikely truth that if he dies, she and her whole family will be obliterated from history.)

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4. Patrols. Forerunners of the Ku Klux Klan. ("The Fire," Part 2, p. 37)  
*(Dana refers to white supremacist vigilantes who terrorized blacks by harassment, terrorism, emasculation, rape, arson, and murder. Formed in Pulaski, Tennessee, in 1866, a year after Robert E. Lee surrendered to Ulysses S. Grant to end the Civil War, the Klan took shape from the outrage of many whites at the emancipation of black slaves.)*
5. I was working out of a casual labor agency—we regulars called it a slave market. ("The Fall," Part 1, p. 52)  
*(Dana ironically identifies her work as a blue-collar temporary laborer as a form of enslavement. After her first-hand encounter with servitude in the antebellum South, she has reason to take the term "slave market" more seriously.)*
6. He picked out a bicentennial quarter and handed it to Rufus. ("The Fall," Part 2, p. 64)  
*(Butler sets the novel shortly before the celebration of the 200th anniversary of the founding of the United States. Kevin offers a commemorative quarter as proof to Rufus that Kevin and Dana come from the distant future.)*
7. Rufus's father arrived on a flat-bed wagon, carrying his familiar long rifle—an old muzzleloader. ("The Fall," Part 3, p. 65)  
*(Before the invention of the repeater rifle, Tom arms himself with a Kentucky rifle, a one-shot weapon requiring laborious priming with wadding and powder through the barrel with a metal rod.)*
8. It was a red-brick Georgian Colonial, boxy but handsome in a quiet kind of way, two and a half stories high with dormered windows and a chimney on each end. ("The Fall," Part 3, p. 67)  
*(Dana characterizes a popular style of antebellum Southern architecture reflecting the building methods and style of English houses during the reigns of George I, II, and III. An imposing design stressing regularity and balance, it includes convex windows and complementary chimneys enclosing each end.)*
9. "West," I said bitterly. "That's where they're doing it to the Indians instead of the blacks!" ("The Fall," Part 7, p. 97)  
*(Persecution and displacement of native tribes had already begun in 1818, when Catholic priests forced natives to be baptized and labor like slaves for the California Indian Mission System. That same year the Delaware ceded their land to settlers and moved west of the Mississippi. The Miami and Chippewa also agreed to abandon their lands in exchange for an annuity and supplies. In the Mackenzie River Valley, European diseases, game depletion, and land grabs forced the Ojibway to abandon ancestral lands. President James Monroe appointed Jedidiah Morse to report on Indian removal. With the treaty at Doak's Stand, the U. S. government introduced an anti-Indian movement disguised as civilizing the aborigines and perpetuated a system of displacement, confiscation, and resettlement of natives in Indian Territory (the future state of Oklahoma.)*
10. If I had to go, I knew how to follow the North Star at night. ("The Fight," part 6, p. 143)  
*(Dana follows the lead of the pole star, the point in the*

*night sky that aligns with the earth's axis. Her method parallels that of slaves escaping via the Underground Railroad.)*

### COMPREHENSION STUDY

Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important and you should be ready to defend your answers with quotations from the novel.

#### Motivation

1. What causes Rufus to hate his father?

*(In childhood, Rufus fears his father's quick temper and ruthlessness, which often results in painful punishments. After Dana rescues the boy from drowning in the river, Tom holds her at gunpoint as she dematerializes and returns to California. On her next return to the past, she finds Rufus angry at his father and taking out his spite by setting fire to his bedroom drapes. She questions him gently about his summons to her. He replies that he feared that the house would burn and he would die in the fire.*

*Dana points out that Rufus would probably have escaped the fire, but that his parents would have died before they could wake up and flee to safety. Without prompting, Rufus admits, "I burned the stable once. . . . I wanted Daddy to give me Nero—a horse I liked. But he sold him to Reverend Wyndham." At the time, Tom's anger was so out of control that he threatened Rufus's life until Margaret intervened.*

*Rufus candidly admits that he set the drapery fire to get even for Tom's hitting him after Rufus stole a dollar from his desk. He lifts his shirt to reveal long red welts crisscrossing his back over older scars from earlier beatings. He confesses to Dana, "I was afraid this time he would kill me." Dana predicts that Rufus will end up in prison.)*

#### Setting

2. Describe the Weylin plantation.

*(Across the bay from Baltimore near Easton, Maryland, Tom Weylin's plantation residence is a substantial, but not overly impressive brick Georgian Colonial. From Dana's nighttime walk toward Alice's home, she observes grassy land and fields of some indeterminate crop grown waist high. Among scattered trees are shadowy farm buildings and a row of slave cabins out of sight of the main residence.*

*On the journey that carries both Kevin and Dana to the spot where Rufus suffers a broken leg, the couple pass through golden wheat along the road, where mostly male slaves swing scythes at the grain. Near the river, the family residence has no columns or porch, but is "handsome in a quiet kind of way, two and a half stories high with dormered windows and a chimney on each end." A hall runs the length of the downstairs to a front door lighted above and along each side with windows.*

*Out the back door, Dana follows Carrie to the cookhouse, a separate white frame cottage that is the most welcoming area Dana has seen. Sarah, the domestic mistress and adviser to the slaves, cooks at an open brick fireplace that fills a whole wall. Utensils unknown by name to Dana hang from a long board and from hooks on the wall. Beyond lie the barn, where Alice later hangs herself, and the next plantation, which belongs to*

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Judge Holman.)

### Character Development

3. How does Dana realize her connection to the Weylin plantation?

*(After rescuing Rufus from the drapery fire, Dana questions him about the family name, the plantation's Maryland location, and a local slave girl named Alice. His reply about the free-born girl whom he befriends proves to Dana that she is time-traveling back to her ancestors. Of Rufus she notes, "Maybe he was my several times great grandfather, but still vaguely alive in the memory of my family because his daughter had bought a large Bible in an ornately carved, wooden chest and had begun keeping family records in it.")*

Putting together bits of information, Dana begins reconstructing the 1830 birth of her grandmother, Hagar, the child of Rufus and Alice. Dana's interest in family prompts her concern for Rufus's heinous relationship with Alice and the torture and sale of her husband, Isaac Jackson. She also wonders why no correspondent indicated that Hagar's father was white. The anticipation of the birth of Hagar, the recordkeeper who had written detailed family history in careful script, rivets Dana's attention on the conditions of slavery and creates a bond to the Weylin family that threatens her life, health, and sanity.)

### Historical Milieu

4. How does Butler set the story in an historical era?

*(It is important to Dana to understand the economic, political, and medical status of the Weylin plantation in the decades preceding the Civil War. Butler depicts Kevin's assistance in looking up and discussing such details as the building of the Pennsylvania Railroad, along which Dana wants to travel to free states in the North. Butler also depicts Dana's gradual perception of why slaves become docile workers, why women like Sarah hold life-long grudges against masters who sell their children for profit or spite, and why Rufus must continue the practice of selling his blacks to pay Tom's debts.)*

Crucial to Dana's protection of Rufus is her knowledge of anatomy, disease, and medical treatment. From experience in the twentieth century, she practices cardiopulmonary resuscitation on the boy to save him from drowning and nurses him back to health with aspirin after the local doctor sets the boy's broken leg. More challenging is the unidentified ague that depletes his energy and spikes his fever. Dana knows enough about early nineteenth-century bleeding and purging to ward off the doctor's life-threatening treatment until Rufus can recover. When he leaves Alice in Dana's care, she has aspirin, Excedrin, and sleeping pills in her bag, but must use salt to stop the spread of infection from dog bite.

To Rufus's questions about Dana's time, she fibs that she came from New York. The lie covers the difficulties of explaining how California progressed from Spanish territory to statehood. She salts in details about the administrations of James Monroe and John Quincy Adams. When Rufus reaches manhood, he examines the history book that Dana brings in her bag and refutes what he considers destructive abolitionist propaganda. She prepares him for pre-Civil War days by explaining how slaves once fled north to free states and how some

gained an education to rid themselves of the degradation of slavery.)

### Theme

5. What does the author reveal about sexual slavery?

*(Much of the story derives from Rufus's friendship with Alice, a free-born black girl living in her mother's log cabin in woods near the Weylin plantation. After the boy grows into a man and falls in love with Alice, he forces her family to flee. Upon their recapture, he goes to sadistic extremes to rid her of a black husband, Isaac Jackson, whom captors torment by cutting off his ears. While a trader carries him southwest for sale in Mississippi, Alice, "more dead than alive," struggles to recover. Rufus tenderly welcomes her to his bed, avoids harming her, and encourages Dana's nursing to restore Alice to sanity and health. Much later, he admits, "I would have her. And, by God, I had to have her.")*

As Alice's memory of her former life returns, she recoils from Rufus and his bizarre courtship. Without realizing that she, too, is enslaved, Alice contemplates Rufus's attempt to turn her into a willing mistress. Frantic and grieving for Isaac, she discusses with Dana her options, which are limited. She can comply with Rufus's intent, she can reject him and suffer whipping and rape, or she can flee once more with her children. In misery, she concludes, "I'm going to him. . . He knew I would sooner or later. But he don't know how I wish I had the nerve to just kill him!"

### Interpretation

6. How does Butler express Rufus's twisted thinking?

*(The complexity of Rufus's character lies in his narcissism. Persistent in seeking what he wants, he first charms, then manipulates Dana, the rescuer whom he can summon when he is in danger. After he beds Alice, Dana realizes that his evil temper and hard drinking threaten Alice's well being. When Alice appears one morning with a swollen, bruised face, Dana deduces, "He had already found the way to control me—by threatening others. That was safer than threatening me directly, and it worked." The method also worked against Sarah, whom Tom cowed by selling three of her four children and leaving unsaid a threat to trade Carrie if Sarah displeased him.)*

The final scene between Dana and Rufus occurs after Alice's suicide and funeral. On return from Baltimore to arrange emancipation for Alice's children, Rufus speaks intimately of nightmares about Dana leaving him "in trouble, hurting, maybe dying." He reveals that he sells Sam James for wanting Dana and wishes that he had shot Kevin to keep Dana on the plantation. Mulling over the resemblance between Alice and Dana, he declares, "You were one woman . . . You and her. One woman. Two halves of a whole." Rufus wonders how long it will take Dana to stop hating him.)

### Conflict

7. Why does Rufus contemplate suicide?

*(The ambivalence in Rufus grows seriously out of hand after Alice hangs herself in the barn. Dana returns to his aid and finds him haggard, weary, red-eyed, and sleepless. After learning his evil deception of pretending to sell Alice's children, Dana confronts him in the library,*



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where he fondles a gun. She realizes that "this was where he had been heading when he called me." In anger at his callousness, she charges, "You killed her. Just as though you had put that gun to her head and fired."

After agreeing to free Alice's children to stave off Dana's anger, Rufus renegotiates his relationship with her. He appears to comply with her wishes while continuing to play mind games to subdue her into a willing mistress. Dependent on her good will, he grows despondent and admits, "I've never felt so lonesome in my life." She realizes that he is fearful and hopeless and that he fingered his gun as a possible escape from an unhappy life. His only outlet is through a sexual relationship with Dana, whom he transforms into a double of his beloved Alice.)

### Atmosphere

8. How does Butler depict work under an overseer?

(For much of the novel, Dana lives a less stressful and onerous life than the average kitchen worker, housemaid, cook, laundress, or field hand. Because Rufus depends on her for medical knowledge, he rages at her failure to revive Tom from a heart attack. Upon assignment to the fields under the whip of Evan Fowler, she observes firsthand the terror of labor that threatens her strength and recovery from an earlier whipping. Equipped with a sicklelike corn knife, she stumbles over the long distance to the cornfield.

The job of chopping, gathering the cut stalks, and collecting them into bunches seems simple enough, but Dana "suspected that a day of it could be backbreaking." Fowler's shove and blunt order sets her to work emulating the others, who are quick and strong. After the first chop, Dana suffers Fowler's unexpected lash across the back followed by a blow to her breasts. She considers killing him, but fears that, if she fails, he will kill her.

From a fellow field hand, Dana learns the best way to balance work to save her strength. "Slow down! Take a lick or two if you have to. You kill yourself today, he'll push you to kill yourself every day." As Dana's shoulders begin to ache, Fowler berates her for working too slowly. All day, he shouts, curses, and threatens her. She remains "on edge because I never knew when a blow would fall." She becomes jumpy and cringes at the sound of his voice. Sweaty and blistered with welts on her back, she stumbles and falls before sinking into unconsciousness.)

### Author Purpose

9. Why does Butler blend time travel with slave narrative?

(Butler uses the science fiction-fantasy device of time travel as a means of confronting the slave-holding mentality with twentieth-century egalitarianism. By having her black character marry a white man, Butler sets up the contrast between Kevin, who deplors slavery, and Dana, who knows more intimately the soul-killing plight of people who must please unfeeling masters. The manipulation of time journeys allows Butler to depict the gradual decline of Rufus's character. In showing Dana how the boy grows up to fear and loathe his father, then takes his place as tyrannic owner and master, the author proves an important point about slave ownership—that Rufus declines in spirit and self-control alongside slaves

who suffer and die from servitude.

Desperation marks the end of Butler's major characters. Isaac and Alice flee the plantation in spite of the danger of sadistic patrollers with their guns, ropes, whips, and dogs. Returned to captivity, Alice gives up her dream of escape by hanging herself, leaving her children to Carrie's mothering. Still bent on possessing Alice, Rufus contemplates a way to coerce Dana, Alice's double, into bed without making her hate him. Her task complete with the birth of Hagar, her grandmother, and the murder of Rufus, Dana returns to Kevin in her own historic period. Butler dramatizes the human cost by depriving Dana of her left arm, a symbol of the part of herself that she leaves behind in Maryland.)

### Structure

10. What does the epilogue add to the novel?

(Escape from enslavement to Rufus does not end Dana's curiosity about her family tree. As soon as her injury heals, she and Kevin return to Baltimore and Easton to scout out the result of Rufus's murder and the fire. They learn that the authorities blamed his death on the fire and that Nigel, Carrie, Joe, and Hagar were not among the slaves sold from the estate. To locate Hagar at May's residence in Baltimore, Kevin and Dana explore newspapers and legal records as well as data from the Historical Society.

Because the search is only partially successful, Butler returns to Dana's immersion in the Weylin slaves and speaks through Kevin a reminder that "there's nothing you can do to change any of it now." He sympathizes with her search for understanding and for solid evidence that the slaves of Weylin plantation existed and produced a matriarch of her family tree. Another reason for the search, he adds, is "to reassure yourself that you're sane.")

### HOW LANGUAGE WORKS

Butler creates idiosyncrasies in character language to flesh out implications about motivation and behavior.

1. In the Prologue, Kevin reassures Dana at the hospital with a balanced logic that makes him valuable to her emotional time travel. He explains how he described exactly how Dana's arm was crushed in the wall. Straightforward in his narrative, he explains, "They wanted me to tell them how such a thing could happen. I said I didn't know . . . kept telling them I didn't know. And heaven help me, Dana, I don't know."
2. In the first episode of time travel, Dana encounters Margaret, an over-protective mother who strikes out and screams distractedly about the rescue of Rufus from the river, "You killed my baby! . . . You killed him!"
3. After Rufus's fall, Tom, the man of few words, calms Margaret's wailings with simple fact: "The boy has a broken leg, that's all. There's nothing you can do for a broken leg. I've already sent for the doctor."
4. Sarah, the plantation mammy, is strong enough in purpose and importance to speak directly to Tom about Dana's work: "I told him you wan't lazy. Told him you didn't know how to do some things—and, girl, you come here not knowing how to do nothing, but I didn't tell him that. I said if you don't know how to do something, you find out."

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5. In a description of his wedding to Carrie, Nigel speaks the typical Southern slave patois, the result of ignorance and limited exposure to good examples: "Marse Rufe paid a free preacher from town to come and say the same words they say for white folks and free niggers. Didn't have to jump no broomstick."
6. The emotional extremes of Rufus's behavior color his comments. Of the purchase of Alice, he explains, "I had to pay near twice what she's worth to get her. That's all the money I had, and Daddy won't pay for a doctor to fix niggers. Doc knows that."
7. Alice, who must recover her wits as her body heals from dog bites, summarizes in whispers, "They beat me . . . I remember. The dogs, the rope . . . They tied me behind a horse and I had to run, but I couldn't . . . They beat me . . . But . . . But . . ."
8. Restored to her true self, Alice charges Dana, "Do your job! Go tell him! That's what you for—to help white folks keep niggers down. That's why he sent you to me. They be calling you mammy in a few years."

### ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

#### **Business and Economics**

1. Describe the types of work that black women perform on the plantation. Explain why some would envy Sarah her control of the cookhouse, how Dana learns to sew, why Tess needs help with the laundry, how Evan Fowler discourages laziness, and why Liza informs on Dana, who appears to enjoy the master's favor.
2. Contrast in dollars and cents the value of a field hand, house worker, black overseer, cook, seamstress, midwife, driver, and fertile breeders like Carrie, Sarah, and Alice.
3. Explain in a brief paragraph why field hands sold to rice plantations in Mississippi are likely to die younger than those on the Weylin plantation. Summarize the value of the rice crop to Southern economic history.
4. Make a shopping list of portable items you would take with you for time travel to the antebellum South. Consider the possibility of feeding and fending for yourself, treating wounds and sickness, dressing for all types of weather, and fleeing slave masters.

#### **Cinema**

1. Propose a film biography of Alice. Working from a family tree that leads from Alice's mother to Dana, outline episodes of Alice's life leading up to her flight, recapture, and suicide.
2. View films dealing with racism and slavery, such as *Roots*, *Beloved*, *The King and I*, *Jefferson in Paris*, *Gone with the Wind*, or *Queen*. Compare the movies' settings, themes, and dialogue to those of *Kindred*.

#### **Drama**

1. Create a storyboard account of Alice's flight from the Weylin plantation with her infant Hagar and a bottle of laudanum to keep the child from crying. Accent the social isolation of Alice, her seducer Rufus, her mute friend Carrie, and Dana, her double.
2. Draw stage settings for a dramatization of pulling Rufus from the river, attending a Christmas party and group wedding, learning to cook under Sarah's instruction, shackling Sam James in a coffin of slaves, interrogating

Kevin at the police station, working in the cornfield, and teaching Joe and Nigel to read and write. Supply sketches of costumes and props.

3. Act out Ray Bradbury's short story "The Other Foot." Emphasize the hopes of black earthlings that they can flee racism on Earth and establish a stable home in outer space.
4. Read aloud Karl Shapiro's "The Leg." Outline the stages of emotional turmoil that engulf a recent amputee.

#### **Geography**

1. Use topographical maps to describe the land that Dana must traverse to reach Kevin in the north. Include Easton, the bay, Baltimore, Talbot and Dorchester counties, Wye Mills, Miles River, and Delaware.
2. Shade a United States map to show the political situation before and after the Missouri Compromise of 1820. Explain to a small group the need for such compromises as the United States grew beyond the original thirteen colonies.

#### **History and Social Studies**

1. Compose an extended definition of social isolation. Explain why the term describes Rufus, Margaret, Dana, Kevin, Tom, Jake Edwards, Evan Fowler, Luke, Carrie, and Alice. How does the management of slaves dehumanize corrupt masters like Rufus, Judge Holman, and Tom?
2. Summarize the splintered history of Dana's family and those of Rufus and Nigel. Explain why researchers study courthouse records, wills, bills of sale, historical society archives, newspaper clippings, and family bibles for information concerning people living in the antebellum South. Suggest more recent sources of genealogy, including the archives maintained in Salt Lake City, Utah, and genealogical web sites.
3. Post a mural or web site expressing the importance of these terms to Southern slavery: manumission, breeding stock, coffee, overseer, Emancipation Proclamation, patrollers, passes, Denmark Vesey, Nat Turner, Harriet Tubman, Fredrick Douglass, abolitionism, and the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution.
4. Compile a timeline of dates and heroes in slave history.
5. Based on your understanding of the novel, lead a panel discussion of the effects of abuse, threats, hunger, adultery, seduction, sale of children or parents, overwork, and violence on plantation life. Support your opinions with facts from census reports, sociological surveys, and statistics obtained from almanacs and economic and health surveys of the antebellum South.

#### **Language Arts**

1. List and define literary terms that characterize the novel, especially epilogue, prologue, journal, Job and Ecclesiastes, dialogue, abstract concepts, paradox, flashback, episode, and doppelganger motif.
2. Compose an extended definition of stilted language. Explain briefly why Dana must read examples of letters from the antebellum South before writing plantation correspondence for Rufus.
3. Record aloud descriptive passages from *Kindred*. Consider Margaret's return from Baltimore, Rufus's unidentified illness, setting the leg, the patrollers' attack on

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Alice's cabin, reading *Robinson Crusoe* aloud to Rufus, packing for another time journey to the Weylin plantation, studying Sarah's cooking methods, learning to pace the job of cutting corn stalks, and Dana's first meeting with Kevin.

4. Pantomime relationships within the plantation hierarchy. Include these pairs: Dana/Jake Edwards, Margaret/Rufus, Tom/Tess, Carrie/Nigel, Liza/Alice, neighbors/Joe, patrollers/Isaac, Luke/slaves, night riders/Alice's husband, and traders/Sam James.
5. Brainstorm sound-alikes for proper names in the novel. Focus on Weylin/wailing and the title, kindred/kin dread.
6. Read aloud from nonfiction, novels, plays, speeches, and stories that describe racism, abuse, and dominance.
7. Record a dramatic reading of Richard Wright's "Between the World and Me." Contrast his personalization of the unnamed lynching victim with Octavia Butler's images of Alice's sufferings.
8. Summarize from scriptural commentaries how the plight of American slaves mirrors that of the biblical Job.
9. Draw contrasting posters of plantation ritual, in particular jumping the broom at Christmas/public whipping of a pregnant slave, corn shucking/corn harvesting, life in the quarters/patrollers, eating corn meal mush from wood bowls/burying Alice, and welcoming newborn children/slave coffles.
10. Make a chart of advice to Sarah concerning how to avoid the loss of Carrie, her only unsold child.
11. Make a web site or bulletin board that identifies these terms: limbo, Elisha, Second Book of Kings, antebellum South, suppress, refuge, contrite, zombie, minimum wage, candor, UCLA, James Monroe, John Quincy Adams, bicentennial quarter, commemorate, muzzle-loader, dormered, Georgian Colonial, opium, Potiphar's wife, traction, proportionately, sadistic, repelled, acclimatize, Rose Bowl, blue-collar agency, Nazi, clichéd bigotry, incongruously, sealing wax, repressive societies, North Star, keloids, erratic, onerous, contraalto, composure, beneficently, submissive, Windsor chair, Job, and Fourteenth Amendment.

### Law

1. Read aloud summaries of legal cases that impacted the institution of slavery, especially those involving John Brown, Nat Turner, Denmark Vesey, Dred Scott, and the crew of the Amistad.
2. Suggest other legal sources Kevin and Dana might research to locate information about the Weylins and their slaves, such as deeds of trust, marriage and birth certificates, bank foreclosures, registration and voting records, and harbor manifests from slave ships.

### Psychology and Health

1. Explain with a character web the pressures that impinge on Rufus's choices, particularly debts incurred by his father. Include his relationships with Alice, Nigel, Margaret, Tom, Jake Edwards, Evan Fowler, Luke, Sam James, Alice's older children, Joe, neighbors, and Dana.
2. Lead a debate concerning the harm that Rufus suffers from growing up under the hand of a tyrannic father. Explain his belief that his father is not likeable, but is a thrift-conscious plantation owner and a fair man who

keeps his word, even to blacks.

3. Compose a lecture on emotional trauma. List causes, symptoms, and treatment for people like Alice who must overcome a near-death experience, accept enslavement, the mutilation of her husband Isaac, mauling by dogs, endangerment of her children, and threats of rape from Rufus.

### Science

1. Explain with posters the effects on the body of laudanum, setting a bone, traction, aspirin, bleeding, whipping, mutilation, dog bites, dragging, keloid scars, CPR, telekinesis, external heart massage, ague, blistering, tetanus, rabies, sleeping pills, Excedrin, stabbing, hysteria, drowning, hallucination, hanging, and purging.
2. Contrast the symptoms of malaria and dengue fever. Account for the term "miasma" as a synonym for "malaria."
3. Interpret the lyrics to "Follow the Drinking Gourd," a coded slave message concerning the way to freedom north of the slave states.
4. Explain with diagrams the importance of crop rotation to the success of Southern plantations.

### Speech

1. Organize a discussion of blackmail. Explain the powers that Dana and Rufus have over each other, especially possession of the letters, slaves, freedom papers for Alice's children, medicines and antiseptics, knowledge of cardiopulmonary resuscitation, patrollers, the Kentucky rifle, map of Maryland, and a switchblade.
2. Compose a presentation on trust. Explain the parallel relationships of Dana with Kevin and with Rufus. Summarize what Kevin learns about his wife's courage and commitment by observing her concern for Alice and the other Weylin slaves threatened by Rufus's greed, lust, and pride.
3. Deliver a brief chalk talk on the importance of the American bicentennial. Explain why Butler uses a bicentennial quarter as an historical detail and why she concludes her novel on July 4, 1976.

### ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT

1. List examples of emotion in major characters, for example, Kevin's devotion to his wife.
2. Compile a list of actions that demonstrate divided families, such as Sarah's loss of children sold to slave dealers.
3. Compose a scene in which Dana and Kevin locate an archeological dig at the Weylin plantation and identify personal belongings of the family.
4. Make a character list and explain the character flaws of each.
5. Account for the recurrence of the motif of displacement among people who come and go from the Weylin plantation.

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### VOCABULARY TEST

Underline synonyms in the lines that follow the words in boldface below:

1. **limbo**: thoroughfare, crossroads, nether world, beginning, loss, underworld, purgatory, plantation, unrestraint, infernal region, confinement, arrival, destination
2. **suppress**: extricate, disengage, emancipate, retain, unleash, unpinion, deliver, manumit, disinvolve, ransom, unshackle, redeem, inhibit, unfetter, liberate
3. **refuge**: haven, imperilment, sanctuary, menace, harbor, asylum, threat, crisis, shelter, retreat, sanctum, plight, exposure, susceptibility, pitfall, anchorage, maelstrom
4. **contrite**: penitent, brazen, repentant, abject, sorrowless, humble, apologetic, regretful, remorseful, rueful, shameless, hardened, callous, obdurate, self-reproaching
5. **candor**: evasion, unreserve, frankness, furtiveness, plainness, confidentiality, disclosure, repression, concealment, discretion, sequestration, stealth, deception
6. **commemorate**: celebrate, dismiss, malign, suppress, memorialize, solemnize, hallow, efface, drop, salute, ignore, disparage, minimize, honor, decry, discredit, discount
7. **proportionately**: equally, disparately, variously, correspondingly, alike, equivalently, nonuniformly, irregularly, sporadically, unsystematically, evenly, identically, prejudicially
8. **sadistic**: cruel, brutal, ruthless, coldhearted, unmerciful, insensitive, malicious, spiteful, harmful, malevolent, barbarous, uncivilized, ferocious, vicious, devilish, fell
9. **repelled**: disgusted, delighted, nauseated, charmed, allured, offended, enchanted, attracted, sickened, appalled, fascinated, captivated, gratified, elated, displeased, rapt
10. **acclimatize**: alarm, disjoint, sever, accustom, habituate, condition, season, dismay, familiarize, naturalize, inure, repel, uproot, unsettle, harden, displace, unseat
11. **clichéd**: novel, trite, dull, insipid, banal, unique, firsthand, repetitious, bromidic, imaginative, authentic, uncreative, wearying, unprecedented, inventive, tedious, realistic
12. **bigotry**: narrow-mindedness, fanaticism, abhorrence, aversion, repugnance, odium, abomination, malevolence, malice, enmity, animosity, detestation, antipathy
13. **incongruously**: inconsistently, illogically, incoherently, paradoxically, congenially, disproportionately, concordantly, inappropriately, ill-suitedly, unanimously, fittingly
14. **erratic**: stable, imperturbable, irregular, inconstant, undeviating, unpredictable, unordered, eccentric, abnormal, immutable, persistent, static, enduring, stolid, true
15. **onerous**: laborious, facile, uncomplicated, arduous, strenuous, manageable, practicable, troublesome, oppressive, convenient, maneuverable, unburdensome

## KINDRED

### COMPREHENSION TEST A

#### Part I: Character Identification (30 points)

Match each of the following descriptions from the novel with a character name. Place the letter of your response in the blank provided at left.

- |   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| _____ 1. manages the house and spreads the work fairly                                      | A. Sam James    |
| _____ 2. dresses in blouse and pants and desert boots                                       | B. Jake Edwards |
| _____ 3. becomes an anchor and tie to the real world  | C. Carrie       |
| _____ 4. is prematurely gray, a regular employee at an auto-parts warehouse                 | D. Kevin        |
| _____ 5. curls into a small knot, clutching one leg, with face streaked with tears and dirt | E. Luke         |
| _____ 6. becomes dizzy and nauseated while witnessing the room recede into a dark blur      | F. Sarah        |
| _____ 7. loses her beauty to a fragile gauntness  | G. Dana         |
| _____ 8. is a white man, gray-bearded, dusty, with a jagged scar on his forehead            | H. Tom          |
| _____ 9. is a man with huge muscles who watches slaves dancing to banjo music               | I. Carol        |
| _____ 10. is the daughter of Rufus Weylin and Alice   | J. Hannah       |
| _____ 11. drives and oversees black laborers  | K. Liza         |
| _____ 12. carries information straight to Mister Tom about Dana's whereabouts               | L. Rufus        |
| _____ 13. signals "white" by rubbing at her skin  | M. Hagar        |
| _____ 14. marries a Nazi dentist  | N. Alice        |
| _____ 15. establishes the Weylin library  | O. Margaret     |

#### Part II: True/False (20 points)

Mark the following statements either **T** for true or **F** if any part is false.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. After she recovers from dog bites, Alice grows erratic in her moods and surly retorts to Dana.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Kevin is bored by the Weylins' pretentious house guests.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. A field hand warns Dana to work as fast as possible to spare herself a whipping.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. After saving Rufus from drowning, Dana finds a rifle pointed at her.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. On July 4, 1976, Kevin goes to the celebration at the Rose Bowl, leaving Dana to pack.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Nigel apparently sets fire to the residence and rescues Margaret.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Rufus realizes the difference between the medicines in Dana's bag and demands sleeping pills rather than aspirin.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Margaret's bout of dengue fever requires constant purging and bleeding.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Rufus believes that Dana will kill him if he makes out a will.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. After three visits, Dana feels no fondness for the Weylin plantation.

## KINDRED

### Part III: Completion (20 points)

Fill in the blanks below with a word or phrase which completes the sentence. Place your answer in the space provided.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ arrives at the hospital room after \_\_\_\_\_ end their questioning about Dana's injuries.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ admits stealing a \_\_\_\_\_ and setting fire to the stable out of anger at Tom.
3. The Weylin plantation lies across the \_\_\_\_\_ from Baltimore near the town of \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The mother admits that Tom Weylin persecutes her \_\_\_\_\_ because her children are \_\_\_\_\_, thus adding nothing to the plantation.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ confides to Dana that \_\_\_\_\_ has attempted to seduce him.

### Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Describe how Kevin acquires a wife and house.
2. Explain why Tom intervenes in the matter of the hidden letters.
3. Discuss the slave reaction to lessons in reading and writing.
4. Account for Dana's numerous injuries.
5. Summarize events that precede Rufus's murder.

KINDRED

COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Multiple Choice (20 points)

Select the phrase that completes each of the following sentences. Place the letter of your response in the blank provided at left.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The man at the Christmas party
  - A. plays the banjo.
  - B. is sorry that Dana is married.
  - C. makes Rufus angry enough to sell him to Judge Holman.
  - D. recites Bible verses about slaves submitting to their masters.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. In the attic, Dana finds
  - A. a child trying to open a pill bottle.
  - B. Nigel standing over Rufus's bloody corpse.
  - C. evidence that Liza informed on her.
  - D. corn shuck mattresses for all the others, but none for her.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. When Dana learns the whereabouts of the children,
  - A. she searches gravesites for Rufus's burial place.
  - B. Sam feels free to ask her to teach his brother and sister.
  - C. Margaret calls her a whore.
  - D. she accuses Rufus of killing Alice.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Dana must make herself
  - A. help Sarah beat the laundry.
  - B. lift the tree limb and murder the patroller.
  - C. call Rufus "master."
  - D. cut the rope and lower Alice's body to the cookhouse floor.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Sarah warns Dana
  - A. of eavesdroppers.
  - B. to reduce Margaret's doses of laudanum.
  - C. to travel at night and follow the North Star.
  - D. about wearing men's clothes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Records fail to reveal
  - A. that anyone died in the fire.
  - B. whether Margaret claimed her grandchildren.
  - C. the location of Rufus's will.
  - D. how many of Weylin's slaves lived until passage of the Fourteenth Amendment.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Tom Weylin
  - A. sells Luke for allowing slaves to marry.
  - B. leads the patrollers to Alice's cabin.
  - C. knows who took Liza's place as seamstress.
  - D. hurts Tess after he takes her as a concubine.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Dana is surprised
  - A. that Rufus recovers from near-drowning and dengue fever.
  - B. when Sam James asks to marry her.
  - C. to hear Joe call Rufus "Daddy."
  - D. that Jake, Rufus, and Tom recapture her so quickly.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Sarah is injured when
  - A. a kettle falls on her foot.
  - B. she goes to the fields to chop corn stalks.
  - C. Nigel sets fire to the attic.
  - D. patrollers lash her to the ground.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Kevin is slow to
  - A. comprehend the danger his wife faces from Evan Fowler's whip.
  - B. give up his land in Maine and return to Maryland for his wife.
  - C. begin driving again.
  - D. accept Tom's invitation to tutor Rufus.

## KINDRED

### Part II: Matching (30 points)

Match the following actions with places from the list below. Place the letter of your response in the blank provided at left.

- |  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| _____ 1. Kevin almost buys a farm.                                       | A. Baltimore             |
| _____ 2. Evan Fowler strikes a clumsy laborer.                           | B. Easton                |
| _____ 3. Kevin buys lunch for a temporary worker.                        | C. Alice's home          |
| _____ 4. Alice's children reside with May.                               | D. Margaret's room       |
| _____ 5. Isaac goes to a new master.                                     | E. Mississippi           |
| _____ 6. Alice hangs herself.  | F. auto-part warehouse   |
| _____ 7. Dana places books on her shelf.                                 | G. cookhouse             |
| _____ 8. Dana dispenses laudanum.  | H. New York              |
| _____ 9. Rufus insists that Dana burn the map.                           | I. library               |
| _____ 10. Dana runs into a patroller as she retrieves a blanket.         | J. Maine                 |
| _____ 11. Kevin and Dana locate the courthouse.                          | K. Altadena              |
| _____ 12. Dana observes the torment of a man under the patrollers' whip. | L. field                 |
| _____ 13. Alice lies feverish and incontinent.                           | M. Rufus's room          |
| _____ 14. Sarah offers Dana corn meal mush.                              | N. barn                  |
| _____ 15. Tom finds Dana with a book as she teaches slave children.      | O. Pennsylvania Railroad |

### Part III: Short Answer (20 points)

Supply a word or phrase in answer to the following questions. Place your response in the blank provided.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. What does Dana tie to her waist?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Who rebukes Dana for leaving the attic to sleep with Kevin?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Whom does Kevin consider retarded?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. How does Dana seal her letters?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Who is injured giving birth to twins?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. What causes Rufus to lapse into unconsciousness?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. What does Rufus pour into his chamber pot?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Whom does Rufus sell to settle Tom's debts?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. What leaves jagged wounds on Alice's leg?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. What state was Spanish in 1819?

### Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Explain how and why Dana time-travels to Maryland.
2. Contrast Sarah, Tess, Dana, and Alice as slaves.
3. Account for Tom and Margaret's hatred of Dana.
4. Summarize the events of Alice and Isaac's escape.
5. Describe Dana's duties at the Weylin plantation.



## KINDRED

### ANSWER KEY

#### VOCABULARY TEST

1. nether world, underworld, purgatory, infernal region, confinement
2. retain, inhibit
3. haven, sanctuary, harbor, asylum, shelter, retreat, sanctum, anchorage
4. penitent, repentant, abject, humble, apologetic, regretful, remorseful, rueful, self-reproaching
5. unreserve, frankness, plainness, disclosure
6. celebrate, memorialize, solemnize, hallow, salute, honor
7. equally, correspondingly, equivalently, evenly, identically, alike
8. cruel, brutal, ruthless, coldhearted, unmerciful, insensitive, malicious, spiteful, harmful, malevolent, barbarous, uncivilized, ferocious, vicious, devilish, fell
9. disgusted, nauseated, offended, sickened, appalled, displeased
10. accustom, habituate, condition, season, familiarize, naturalize, inure, harden
11. trite, dull, insipid, banal, repetitious, bromidic, uncreative, wearying, tedious
12. narrow-mindedness, fanaticism, abhorrence, aversion, repugnance, odium, abomination, malevolence, malice, enmity, animosity, detestation, antipathy
13. inconsistently, illogically, incoherently, paradoxically, disproportionately, inappropriately, ill-suitedly
14. irregular, inconstant, unordered, eccentric, abnormal, unpredictable
15. laborious, arduous, strenuous, troublesome, oppressive

#### COMPREHENSION TEST A

##### Part I: Character Identification (30 points)

- |      |      |      |       |       |
|------|------|------|-------|-------|
| 1. F | 4. D | 7. O | 10. M | 13. C |
| 2. G | 5. L | 8. D | 11. E | 14. I |
| 3. D | 6. G | 9. A | 12. K | 15. J |

##### Part II: True/False (20 points)

- |      |      |      |       |
|------|------|------|-------|
| 1. T | 4. T | 7. F | 10. F |
| 2. T | 5. F | 8. F |       |
| 3. F | 6. T | 9. T |       |

##### Part III: Completion (20 points)

- |                  |                       |
|------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Kevin, police | 4. husband, free-born |
| 2. Rufus, dollar | 5. Kevin, Margaret    |
| 3. bay, Easton   |                       |

##### Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.

#### COMPREHENSION TEST B

##### Part I: Multiple Choice (20 points)

- |      |      |      |       |
|------|------|------|-------|
| 1. B | 4. C | 7. D | 10. C |
| 2. A | 5. A | 8. C |       |
| 3. D | 6. B | 9. A |       |

##### Part II: Matching (30 points)

- |      |      |      |       |       |
|------|------|------|-------|-------|
| 1. J | 4. A | 7. K | 10. C | 13. M |
| 2. L | 5. E | 8. D | 11. B | 14. G |
| 3. F | 6. N | 9. M | 12. C | 15. G |

##### Part III: Short Answer (20 points)

- |                   |                    |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1. her canvas bag | 6. setting his leg |
| 2. Margaret       | 7. purgative       |
| 3. Carrie         | 8. Tess            |
| 4. with wax       | 9. dog bites       |
| 5. Margaret       | 10. California     |

##### Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.

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**TEACHER'S NOTES**

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