

Olentangy Local School District Literature Selection Review

Teacher: Christa Overbeck & Sarah McCarty

School: Liberty High School

Book Title: *Kindred*

Genre: Fiction

Author: Octavia Butler

Pages: 264

Publisher: Beacon Press

Copyright: 1979

In a brief rationale, please provide the following information relative to the book you would like added to the school's book collection for classroom use. You may attach additional pages as needed.

Book Summary and Summary Citation: (suggested resources include book flap summaries, review summaries from publisher, book vendors, etc.)

The visionary author's masterpiece pulls us—along with her Black female hero—through time to face the horrors of slavery and explore the impacts of racism, sexism, and white supremacy then and now.

Dana, a modern black woman, is celebrating her twenty-sixth birthday with her new husband when she is snatched abruptly from her home in California and transported to the antebellum South. Rufus, the white son of a plantation owner, is drowning, and Dana has been summoned to save him. Dana is drawn back repeatedly through time to the slave quarters, and each time the stay grows longer, more arduous, and more dangerous until it is uncertain whether or not Dana's life will end, long before it has a chance to begin. (Amazon)

Provide an instructional rationale for the use of this title, including specific reference to the OLSD curriculum blueprints and/or State standards.

Kindred will serve as a gateway for instruction and assessment pertaining to Reading Literature and Writing (specifically, narrative writing). Priority standards for this unit are listed below.

Priority Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.7

Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text. (Include at least one play by Shakespeare and one play by an American dramatist.)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.2

Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.5

Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of

where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.4

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)

Include two professional reviews of this title: (a suggested list of resources for identifying professional reviews is shown below. Reviews may be “cut and pasted” (with citation) into the form or printed reviews may be attached to the form). Reviews should suggest an appropriate grade-level or grade-band.

Review #1

Kirkus:

“Butler is one of those accomplished science-fiction writers (*Mind of My Mind*, 1977; *Survivor*, 1978) who tap out their tales so fast and fine and clear that it's impossible to stop reading at any point. And this time the appeal should reach far beyond a sci-fi audience—because the alien planet here is the antebellum South, as seen through the horrified eyes of Dana, a 20th-century black woman who time-travels in expeditious Butler fashion: “The house, the books, everything vanished. Suddenly I was outdoors on the ground beneath trees” . . . in 1819 Maryland. Dana has been “called” by her white ancestor, Rufus—on her first visit, Rufus is a small child, son of a sour slaveowner—and she'll be transported back to Maryland (twice with her white husband Kevin) to rescue Rufus from death again and again. As Rufus ages (the Maryland years amount to hours and days in 1976 time), the relationship between him and Dana takes on some terrifying dimensions: Rufus simply cannot show the humanity Dana tries to call forth; Dana, drawn into the life of slaves with its humiliation and atrocities, treads carefully, trying to effect some changes, but too often she returns beaten and maimed to her own century. And most frightening is the thought that, in the “stronger, sharper realities” of Rufus' time, Dana is “losing my place here in my own time.” At one point Kevin and Dana lose one another (Kevin returns haggard, after five years working to help escaped slaves), but finally Dana, fighting off complete possession by Rufus, kills him and that past forever—but not the memories. There is tremendous ironic power in Butler's vision of the old South in science-fiction terms—capriciously dangerous aliens, oppressed races, and a supra-fevered reality; and that irony opens the much-lamented nightmare of slavery to a fresh, vivid attack—in this searing, caustic examination of bizarre and alien practices on the third planet from the sun.”

Review #2

Good Reads:

“The first science fiction written by a black woman, *Kindred* has become a cornerstone of black American literature. This combination of slave memoir, fantasy, and historical fiction is a novel of rich literary complexity. Having just celebrated her 26th birthday in 1976 California, Dana, an African-American woman, is suddenly and inexplicably wrenched through time into antebellum Maryland. After saving a drowning white boy there, she finds herself staring into the barrel of a shotgun and is transported back to the present just in time to save her life. During numerous such time-defying episodes with the same young man, she realizes the challenge she's been given...”

What alternate text(s) could also fulfill the instructional requirements?

Title: *Beloved*

Author: Toni Morrison

Document any potentially controversial content:

The book contains (but explains) racial epithets and depictions of violence particularly against enslaved African people and also includes broad references to sexual assault..

Keeping in mind the age, academic level, and maturity of the intended reader, what is the suggested classroom use: (check all that apply)

Gifted/Accelerated

Regular

At Risk

GRADE LEVEL(S): 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Reading Level of this Title (if applicable):

Suggested Professional Literacy Review Sources:

School Library Journal

Horn Book

Bulletin of the Center for Children’s Books

VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates)

Library Journal

Book Links

Publisher’s Weekly

Booklist

Kirkus Review

Wilson Library Catalog

English Journal (and other resources of the National Council of Teachers of English)

The Reading Teacher (International Reading Association)

Literature for Today’s Young Adults

Signatures:

Teacher: _____

Date: _____

Department Head: _____

Date: _____

Building Administrator: _____

Date: _____

Curriculum Supervisor: _____

Date: _____