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CHAPTER-5

DESIREE'S BABY

GET GOING

A-1-

Madame Valmonde vividly remembered the day when she first saw Desinee as a baby. In her mind, Desinee would always be her little girl. So, it was amusing for her to think that Desinee was all grown up and ~~and~~ had become a mother herself.

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L'abri was the name of the villa where Armand and Desinee lived after getting married. As we know from the story, L'abri was a sad looking place. The house looked gloomy and was shadowed by oak trees. The slaves of the house looked mindless under the strict rule of Armand. However, it was a lively place under Armand's father as he was an easy-going and indulgent master.

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3. Madame Volmonde was startled to see the baby because she instantly recognized the difference in the colour of its skin. She knew that the baby was black. Desinee, however, was unmindful of this fact. She loved the baby dearly and was overjoyed that it was healthy and was growing fast.
4. Desinee was certain that Armand was happy about the baby because she knew that he wanted a boy. Moreover, she had observed a great change in his behaviour towards the slaves even since the time the baby was born. He has stopped punishing them and was lenient even to the ones who made up excuses to skip work.
5. Certain incidents made Desinee realise that things were changing. There was a mysterious change among the slaves. Distant neighbours started paying visits to the house for no reason. However, Armand's behaviour worried Desinee the most. He spoke to her with averted eyes and there was no love in his eyes. He would avoid Desinee and her baby, and would often stay away from home. Moreover he became harsh towards the slaves.

B-1. This line tells us that the Aubignys were very impulsive and passionate in nature. At the end of the story, we find out that Armand's father had also fallen in love with a black woman and married her. He went to the extent of never letting his wife meet her own son to avoid social stigma, but that did not stop him from being with his beloved. Similarly, in the

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- beginning, Armand had also not cared about Desinee's ~~ob~~ ~~obscure~~ origin and married her.
2. Monsieur Volmonde loved Desinee and wanted the best for her. Due to Desinee's obscure origin, he had to ensure that Armand would take care of his daughter and respect her just the same. As a father, he didn't want her obscure past affect her marriage with Armand wanted to ensure that allowing Armand to marry her was the right thing to do.
 3. Armand's father was a more indulgent and kind master as compared to Armand. Under him, L'abri was a happy place. In contrast, under Armand, the slaves hardly smiled and L'abri turned into a gloomy and sad looking place.
 4. Looking at the boy, the similarity between him and the baby suddenly became apparent to Desinee. Before that moment, her love for the baby had blinded her to the discrepancies that everyone else had noticed. For the first time, Desinee saw the baby in a different light and was well shocked at the realization.
 5. The story does not mention whether Desinee was aware of her origin or not. However, in her letter to Volmonde, she asked her to tell Armand that she was indeed white. This probably indicated that even though she knew that the Volmondes were not her real parents, she was not aware of her uncertain origin. In that case, Desinee's protest was understandably innocent and sincere. On the other hand, if we assume that Desinee knew about the uncertainty regarding her birth, her protest was still most heartfelt. It was

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more out of her indignation at being questioned than out of uncertainty about the colour of her skin. She couldn't believe that Armand would doubt her honesty and desperately wanted him to believe her. Madam Volmonde, on the other hand, was more practical and knew that she couldn't truly vouch for her daughter's skin colour. However, that didn't change her love for Desinee and the baby, and she welcomed them with open arms.

6. During the time the story is set in, white people considered the black people inferior to them and enslaved them. We know that Armand, unlike his father, thought that blacks were beneath him and treated them harshly. Thus, he thought that it was unfair that his own wife and child turned out to be black.
7. Armand's mother never left her own country because she didn't want anyone, especially her own son to know that she was black. She knew that if the secret were to come out, her son would be a subject of ridicule in the society and would not be able to lead a normal life.
8. Yes, Armand wanted Desinee to leave him and go. There are many lines in the story that support this. Firstly when Desinee asked him, he clearly said that he wanted her to leave. It is also mentioned that he didn't love her anymore. A close reading of the story reveals that Armand was aware of the pain he was causing her but he still didn't change his decision.