

Reading Group Gold



- 1) What is the significance in having Solemn's name changed from Solomon, the name she was to receive if she had been born a boy? What does the name she was to receive versus the name she was finally given show about what she has gained with life, and what she lacks? Is there any irony in having her name be Solemn?
- 2) Why are Solemn's words only important when they are spoken internally, to herself? What significance does it have that the most meaningful dialogue in her life starts and ends with her?
- 3) How is Solemn's family different from the other residents of Bledsoe? What effect does this have on how Solemn sees the world?
- 4) What does Desiree being struck by lightning signify?
- 5) Discuss how race comes into play in the novel. How do characters perceive others based on race, and does this perception change when a character reflects on him or herself?
- 6) There comes a point in the novel when multiple characters know that Redvine was somehow involved with Pearletta, but no one does or says anything about it. Why is this? What are these

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characters feel they will lose if they speak, and what do they gain by keeping silent?

- 7) Why do you think out of all the secrets that are in the novel, Solemn and her father actually share more than any other two characters in the novel: Knowing what really happened to the baby, robbing the house together—how do these two end up being coconspirators (sometimes intentionally, sometimes not) despite having such different personalities?
- 8) What is the significance of Majority's name, and what does it say about her overall?
- 9) How are the reactions that the staff and her family have after Solemn learns Pearletta's body has been discovered indicative of how the community as a whole views people who may need help? Is Solemn to blame for being a person with unreliable, unbelievable insights, or is there a larger issue at play behind everything?
- 10) What does the well represent? Does it reflect on any one person, or serve as a microcosm for something larger?
- 11) Discuss the role of Officer Bolden. What about his position, his background, his ethnicity, and his personality make him the one to want to dig deeper into what happened to Pearletta? What is he able to see and understand that others aren't?