1. “’ I’ve wanted to….see how your people live. You know what I mean? I’ve been to England, France, Mexico, but I don’t know how people live ten blocks from me. We know so little about each other. I just want to see. I want to know these people. ‘” Can you relate to this sentiment? Explain.

2. In what ways do Jan and Mary make Bigger uncomfortable? Be specific. What are their intentions? Are they trying to make him uncomfortable? Why are they behaving in this way?

3. Who is Bessie?

4. What happened to Bigger’s father?

5. How does Mary come across in the car after dinner? Be specific. Discuss your perception alongside her intention.

6. Reread bottom (84) – what occurs between Bigger and Mary?

7. Reread 85-end. Describe Mary’s death. To what degree is Bigger culpable? Why?

8. Why doesn’t Bigger explain what happened? Why doesn’t Bigger say something to Mrs. Dalton?

9. Why does Wright include the decapitation of Mary by Bigger? This is fiction – he could have easily allowed Mary’s entire body to fit in the furnace. Why the decapitation?

10. What is Bigger’s story that he’s sticking with?