

# **Pimp: The Story of My Life Study Guide**

## **Pimp: The Story of My Life by Iceberg Slim**

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# Plot Summary

In his book *Pimp: The Story of My Life*, Iceberg Slim recounts his personal autobiography as a intellectually-gifted teenager growing up in the world before desegregation. Through various events in his life, he ultimately becomes a pimp in between jail stints.

Ultimately, Slim's novel is a book about the choices a black man has in the world before desegregation. He recounts his childhood and the choices he made that led him to become a pimp at the age of nineteen, after a stint in jail. Originally, Slim is little more than a con man in the streets, but after learning and listening from the other men in the jail who used to be pimps, he is enticed and decides to take on that lifestyle for his own.

As soon as Slim is born, he has problems. As an infant, his father becomes enraged and slams his body against a wall, walking out on the family. From then on, his mother tries to raise him on her own, but since there is only one parent and she is responsible for supporting them both, Slim is often left alone as a child. He is left alone with a babysitter named Maude who sexually abuses him when he is only 3 years old.

Slim and his mother move to Indianapolis afterwards and a man visiting his relatives, Henry Upshaw, immediately falls in love with Slim's mother. Henry is the only father figure Iceberg has in his lifetime and is the best person in his life. Henry reciprocates the affection and loves Iceberg and his mother immensely. Slim's mother, however, falls in love with a scoundrel named Steve. Giving Henry a weak excuse that they will return again soon, Slim's mother packs up Iceberg and meets up with Steve. Iceberg is destroyed by leaving Henry and cries as hard as he can. He misses Henry for the rest of his life. Henry dies a year after Slim and his mother leave him.

Steve and Slim's mother plot to take revenge on Slim's father. Telling his father Steve is a cousin, they literally rob Slim's father of everything he owns in order to pay him back for leaving her all those years ago. Living with Steve is a nightmare for Iceberg. At one point, Steve even smashes Slim's kitten against a wall for defecating on the floor. Slim's mother leaves Steve and they go to live in a hotel. Slim's mother misses Steve although they have separated until Steve sees her and assaults her physically. Slim waits for Steve by his apartment with an ice pick to kill him, but he never reappears. Years later, Iceberg spots an older Steve working as a garbage man and run to the street with his gun in his hand to kill him, but not even noticing Slim, Steve moves out of range as he is doing his job of collecting the garbage cans.

Slim meets a hustler named Party Time. Together, Party Time and Slim work a small-time con with Slim dressing up as a woman and pretending to be a black hooker to entice white men to meet "her" down an alley. They pay Party Time to meet the mysterious hooker, but by the time they walk down the alley, Slim takes off through the alleyways. Eventually, Party Time is busted and goes to jail for a year, though he never reveals Slim's name to the police.



By this time, Slim is 15 years old and graduates high school with a near-perfect 98.1 grade point average. He is recruited to go to Tuskegee University, but drops out after getting into a scandal with the local college girls. He has a relationship with a girl and asks her to turn a trick for him. They are eventually busted and this setup sends Slim to jail for the first time at age 17. He is released and meets a woman at his mother's beauty salon named Pepper. Pepper teaches Slim many of his "freaky" sexual tricks he will use on women in future years. Through a con of her own, Pepper sends Slim to jail for the second time.

Slim is released from his second stint in jail just months from his twentieth birthday. He listens and learns from former pimps in jail and wants to start pimping on his own. He scores his first hooker Runt shortly after leaving jail. Runt eventually sends him to another stint in jail through a betrayal of her own.

Slim grows in popularity and has a growing number of hookers working for him over the years. After Runt and Ophelia send Slim to jail, he is reduced to nothing and has to again start from scratch. He tries to regain his glory, but is quickly sent to jail again, shortly after his release, for robbing a drug dealer. He escapes from jail while serving this sentence.

Slim goes to his aunt's home, finds another hooker and starts trying to pimp again. He gains a number of whores, including Rachel who will work with him for 13 years.

Slim gets busted for being in a hotel room with an unmarried woman in Montana and they discover the escape charge on him. They send him back to prison. There, he finally decides to give up pimping and drugs for good. He studies the law and gets an early release. He hurries back to see Mama who lives only 6 more months before dying.

The novel ends and the Epilog(sic) tells us Slim is now a happily married man with two children. He works as a salesman and lives an average, normal life.



# Chapter 1: Torn from the Nest

## Chapter 1: Torn from the Nest Summary and Analysis

The young Robert Beck (who will eventually be known as Iceberg Slim) is three years old and is sexually abused by his babysitter named Maude while his mother works in a hand laundry to support them. He and his mother are living in Indianapolis at the time, having just moved from Chicago.

They move from Chicago because his mother found his father cheating on her with a waitress in the storage room of the hotel they both worked at. After Beck is born, his father suggests the baby be put on the steps of a Catholic church since they cannot afford him. When his mother refuses, he takes the baby Beck and throws him against the wall.

When the baby survives the violence, his father leaves them, forcing his mother to go door to door, offering to do women's hair to earn money. Mama and the baby Beck are nearly penniless when Mama meets Henry Upshaw, who is visiting relatives in Indianapolis and he immediately falls in love. Mama will marry him for money, but not for love. Henry treats Mama like a princess, but she falls in love with a scoundrel named Steve and leaves him. Henry dies of a broken heart a year later. With Steve, they move to Chicago and con his biological father out of literally every single item he owns. Steve eventually physically abuses Mama and although Beck waits by his apartment to kill him, Steve never reappears. Years later, he sees an old Steve working as a garbage man and races out to kill him with his gun, but Steve moves out of range unknowingly.

The impact of Beck's early years follow him for the rest of his life. Later, psychiatrists in jail tell Beck the reason he chose to be a pimp despite all of his gifts is a subconscious hatred of his mother and her decisions in his early years. A level of disrespect of women is necessary in order for a pimp to be successful and that quality most likely stems from Beck's violence-filled early youth.



## Chapter 2: First Steps into the Jungle

### Chapter 2: First Steps into the Jungle Summary and Analysis

Beck is fourteen when he first meets Party Time. Party Time is a street hustler who introduces Beck to a number of cons they can play on white men looking to score with a black hooker. Beck dresses up as a black hooker in a dress and stands down a dark alley while Party Time entices men to pay him to be with the mysterious hooker. After the man pays and is walking towards Beck, both Party Time and Beck take off running, meeting up again in a pre-arranged location blocks away. This scam works well until Party Time is busted by the cops and goes to jail. However, Party Time never gives Beck's name, so Beck stays out of jail on this occasion.

Beck is fifteen and graduates high school with a 98.1% average. The alumni at Tuskegee University convince him to enroll in their college with high hopes for him. He is eventually kicked out, however, after he is already on probation due to his relationship with a female colleague. He runs a bootlegging scheme and this is the final straw for the college. He comes home and his mother is working at the home of an old, white recluse and is rarely home, a fact Beck takes advantage of by hanging out with an ex-pimp named Diamond Tooth Jimmy. Using one of his girlfriends as a test, he tries to get the girl to turn a trick for him. This is his very first pimp act. They are caught, however, and Beck is sent to the State Reformatory for 18 months. While in Reformatory, he befriends a man named Oscar who ends up in the mental institution after too much time in solitary confinement.

The incident with Oscar will come into play again later when Beck is sent to solitary himself during a different jail sentence. The warden wants to know how Beck escapes jail and the worry of becoming like Oscar plays a role in why Beck eventually cracks and asks to speak to the warden. In addition, this is the only time in Beck's life he will be given the opportunity to be a positive contributor to society. The idea that a number of alumni have gotten together to pay for his trip to college speaks volumes about Beck's intellectual possibilities, but unfortunately, he is not raised to place a high importance on education. Perhaps Beck already feels at this age that even with a top education, there are few places a black man can work within society and so he actively pursues the less moral path like the cons he learns on the streets. His environment is a greater influence on him than the possibility of a great education for free.



## Chapter 3: Salty Trip with Pepper

### Chapter 3: Salty Trip with Pepper Summary and Analysis

After leaving the State Reformatory school, he reports to his parole officer who gives him an I.Q. test. Beck receives a score of 175. Now eighteen, he meets a 25-year-old ex-whore named Pepper in Mama's beauty shop in Minneapolis. She teaches him a number of sexual tricks he will use later in life. He is now called Macking Youngblood by a man named Weeping Shorty. Weeping teaches him about pimping on the street, but also lets him know he is not the only person having a relationship with Pepper. Weeping also sets "Blood" up with a potential con against Pepper, who is married to a rich man. The next time she calls, he is to go over and meet her, knowing they will be videotaped the whole time. The videotape will later be used as bribery. Instead, a number of things are stolen from Pepper's house and she denies seeing Blood at her house at all, instead accusing him of stealing her key after making a delivery to their house earlier in the week. Blood goes to jail (not the State Reformatory) for 2 years. After this first incident with Pepper, his general aversion to women extends beyond his mother.

Here again, Blood reinforces his extreme dislike of women. They are filled with trickery and deception, using men and setting them up. Also, Blood's perception of the justice system reinforces his belief that if you have money, you have the power to change things in your favor even when you are not in the right. Blood has to pay for the court fees and he says he sees Justice has her eyes blindfolded to hide the dollar bill signs that are there in the place of eyeballs.





## Chapter 4: A Degree in Pimping

### Chapter 4: A Degree in Pimping Summary and Analysis

In jail, Blood listens to the other inmates and is eager to learn more about the pimping game. He enters the 711 Club and sees a "runty" whore that has recently moved into town from Saint Louis. After talking with her for a little while, she agrees to be his whore. He is still very new at being a pimp and constantly reminds himself what the other ex-pimps said about pimping while in jail. After establishing he is her pimp, he stops by Mama's house to tell her he is leaving Milwaukee and going to the City.

In the end, Blood gets a free education of his own—a career in pimping. Rather than going to the university and graduating with prestige, Blood enrolls in a pimping class of sorts in jail. Here, he learns the tricks of the trade and becomes enticed by its promise of power and easy money. Essentially, the pimp does not do any physical labor, but instead gains his wages through the physical and psychological manipulation of women and other pimps. Blood certainly has the I.Q. and brain for this game and career, but there is an interesting parallel between the choices he could have made in Tuskegee University and the career choice he selects on the street as a pimp instead.



# Chapter 5: The Jungle Fauna

## Chapter 5: The Jungle Fauna Summary and Analysis

Driving Runt's yellow Ford, they pull into Chicago and immediately start scanning the streets for a good place for her to work. He drops her off on a street and within the next few hours, has his wallet stolen and all of Runt's jewelry stolen out of the car. Blood runs into Pretty Preston, whose shoes he used to shine when he worked with Henry, and he tells him about the local areas. While getting Preston some alcohol as payment for information, Blood sees a man beating a whore for getting drunk with a trick. The pimp's name is Poison. He is the second biggest pimp in Chicago. Preston tells Blood about both Poison and Sweet Jones, the most successful pimp in the area. Sweet Jones will become the ultimate goal for Blood—he will see Sweet as having achieved the highest level of success in his career.

Preston tells Blood the story of how Sweet Jones double-crossed him and left him without a whore to make money with. He advises Blood to get out of the big city and head West for a calmer pimping game. Preston is forced to go back to his job of recruiting new poker players into a bar, leaving Blood to check out a new bar called the Roost. The Roost is a popular spot for hustlers and pimps as well. He finds a hotel right down the street from the Roost to stay with Runt and, after physically abusing her, they settle in for the night. As he abuses Runt, he has memories of Mama and other childhood flashbacks.

With these flashbacks, the tie between his pimping career and his mother's choices when he was a child become clear. In a way, Blood is abusing the women (specifically Runt in this instance) to get back at the injustices his mother inflicted upon him when he was a child. He beats Runt violently to show who is in charge, but immediately sees his mother when he does so. Blood will start to have nightmares about his relationship with Mama as well, further developing the idea that his pimping career and his childhood occurrences are explicitly linked.

## Chapter 6: Drilling for Oil

### Chapter 6: Drilling for Oil Summary and Analysis

Runt and Blood wake up and Blood immediately tells her about his rules for whoring in the neighborhood while simultaneously motivating her to work. That evening, he parks in front of the Roost and feels confident he has a whore working for him. He mentions for the first time that he can become successful in a white man's world so long as he has the money to get there. He walks into the Roost and sees Sweet Jones. Sweet calls him over, intimidating Blood who "dusts off" his 175 I.Q. before walking over. After terrifying Blood, Sweet dismisses him and Blood goes back to his car to regroup and catch his breath. While in the car, Preston jumps in, telling Blood he is going to shoot Sweet in the head right now for revenge. For a second, it looks like Preston will be successful, but instead, Preston chickens out and shows his true colors.

Blood is anxious for a way to get to meet Sweet in a good way, in order to pick his brain about how to be a successful pimp. Preston cannot help him, but he sees a man talking to Sweet as if they are good friends. This man is Glass Top, who provides drugs to Sweet and other pimps in the area. Glass Top takes to Blood and they go back to his apartment to get high. Glass Top gives Blood all of the information on Sweet Jones, describing what type of person he is and what to be wary of. After hours of getting high together, Blood returns home to Runt and her meager earnings. He beats her for not working hard enough that night.



# Chapter 7: Melody Off Key

## Chapter 7: Melody Off Key Summary and Analysis

Runt gets a phone call and goes out working. Blood gets up and gets high, going to the "Fun House" bar. He leaves the bar after a few minutes and runs into Melody whose car has broken down just outside the bar. He fixes Melody's car and they drive out to Melody's all-white neighborhood for the evening. When things get serious, however, Blood notices Melody is not the she has been portraying and he escapes the house, leaving Melody tied to the bedposts. When he finally returns home, Runt has worked well that evening and made them plenty of money.

It is ironic Blood gets conned in this way considering his first con as a 14-year-old. The reverse has happened to him now as he is conned and enticed by the beauty of a white woman. The delight of being in white society quickly turns to fear after Blood runs away. He realizes there is a very real possibility Melody could accuse him of being a thief and her word would be stronger than Blood's. This meeting could also symbolize the idea that although white society and all of its attractions tantalize Blood, it is not necessarily all it seems and not all he would want for it to be, no matter how hard he works or how much money he has.



# Chapter 8: Grinning Slim

## Chapter 8: Grinning Slim Summary and Analysis

Runt and Blood wake up and she runs to get them breakfast from the Haven. Glass Top calls and tells Blood to be ready right away since he is going to Sweet Jones' penthouse and will introduce Sweet to Blood properly. Glass Top introduces Blood as his nephew. Sweet agrees to teach Blood some things, but he hates Blood's constant grinning. When a whore named Red Cora almost gets the best of Blood, Sweet Jones saves him, but physically abuses him in the bathroom. With Glass Top's help, he gets up and agrees to meet Glass Top down by the car. While sitting in the car, waiting for Glass Top, police officers start harrassing him, nearly arresting him when Glass Top shows up at the last moment and gets them out of trouble by mentioning Sweet Jones' name.

Glass Top later reveals Sweet Jones pays off all of the policemen, dropping Blood back off at his hotel. He gives Blood his phone number. Exhausted, Blood immediately takes a shower and falls asleep without even checking the money Runt made that evening.

This is Blood's first real entry in the lifestyle and violence associated with being a pimp. Blood is not naive, weak or innocent, yet this first introduction literally floors him. In a way, however, this meeting gives Blood something to aspire to. He wants the power, riches and control Sweet Jones exhibits and will work hard to get these things. Although he never gains the same level of notoriety as Sweet, he will see Sweet as the father figure and professional example of what he wants to achieve through pimping.

# Chapter 9: The Butterfly

## Chapter 9: The Butterfly Summary and Analysis

Blood wakes up and asks Runt about her work last night. She tells him about 2 white police officers that roughed her up, making her too scared to walk the streets (thus not earning much money.) He shows no sympathy for her problems and sends her out to work again. As soon as she leaves, he calls Chris, the former hooker he saw walking down the hall with her husband Leroy. He is very jealous and she is reluctant to go visit Blood across the hall while Leroy is away. She agrees when Blood asks the front desk person Silas to warn them when Leroy is on his way up. While in Blood's apartment, Chris tries cocaine for the first time and they talk. Chris tells Blood her entire life story. Leroy discovers their rendezvous and immediately moves her to another city to be away from Blood.

Chris will later play an important role in Blood's life as she will be the only whore that does not betray Blood. She will eventually leave him to marry and have a child with her new husband while Blood is in jail, but when Blood is being sought by the F.B.I., Chris is the only person who Blood can trust. In this way, she becomes his family for a small period of time. Consequently, when he loses her while he is in jail, he remarks that he is all alone when he gets out of jail. The chapter title of "Butterfly" could easily denote Chris's freedom from an abusive marriage with Leroy into the "freedom" and independence of becoming a whore with Blood. At least as a whore, Chris is able to be on her own. Her limited choices underscore how difficult life is for a black woman with no financial means, skills or talents during this time period.



# Chapter 10: The Unwritten Book

## Chapter 10: The Unwritten Book Summary and Analysis

Chris leaves and Blood immediately regrets her disappearance. He calls Glass Top for more drugs, but one of his whores says he is out of town. He asks if she has Sweet Jones' phone number, which she gives him only after calling Sweet first to ask his permission. He goes over to Sweet's penthouse to get more advice on how to run a successful pimping game. Sweet is very educated in the pimping game, including relaying the history and origins of pimping to Blood. By the end, Sweet is telling him he loves him and to stop grinning all the time. He tells him how to get Runt to work better and how to get a stronger group of girls under him. Sweet tells him about the Cop and Blow scheme, which is when a pimp gets a whore to work as much as possible and as hard as possible and when needed, immediately replaces her. He promises him a whore if it works out, but he never follows through with this promise because Blood uses the advice wisely.

Blood's I.Q. and superior intelligence come in handy as he handles his whores. He is not as cold-blooded or psychotic as Sweet Jones, but through his own gift of intelligence, Blood becomes a successful pimp. Sweet Jones is motivated by pure hatred for white society and all it has done—and is doing—to the black people. Blood, on the other hand, wants to be accepted by white society. This concept is an essential difference between the two, although they will never talk about it since Sweet does not know Blood knows his history. Glass Top explains the history to Blood but only with the implicit promise that he will always keep it to himself.



# Chapter 11: To Lose a Whore

## Chapter 11: To Lose a Whore Summary and Analysis

Inspired by his talk with Sweet Jones, Blood walks into the bedroom and sees Runt smoking marijuana. When she complains about being sick and unable to work, Blood beats her with a wire that leaves scars across her back. When he is finished, he is crying and takes care of her, putting her in the tub and soothing her slashes. She gets up afterwards, getting dressed. When she does not return by 7am the next morning, Blood is sure he has chased her off for good and gets depressed. In a weak moment, he tells himself he will call Mama to tell her he is fine.

When the possibility of losing Runt becomes imminent, Blood realizes he might have lost someone and realizes he actually cares for her. This quality is not a beneficial trait in the world of pimping. However, this emotional response to beating Runt and possibly losing her forever shows a more sensitive side to Blood rarely seen throughout the novel. Typically, he portrays himself as cold and ruthless, unemotional and unattached.





## Chapter 12: To Gain a Stable

### Chapter 12: To Gain a Stable Summary and Analysis

Blood orders breakfast from Haven and when he answers the door for the food, Runt is standing there. Blood is thrilled, but does not let her know it. She has made plenty of money and in addition, has found his second whore. Blood tells her later he has found another whore to work for them and sends himself money from another town, saying the money is from a whore named Chris. This motivates Runt and she brings in at least \$100 each night. Shortly after, Runt brings Ophelia to work with them. Blood runs across Chris in the street. She has returned with her husband Leroy for a gig at a local club in the city. Leroy gets into a fight with the owner because he thinks the owner is hitting on Chris and beats him senseless. Leroy goes to jail and Chris agrees to become Blood's third whore.



# Chapter 13: The Iceberg

## Chapter 13: The Iceberg Summary and Analysis

Chris gets dressed in some clothes Blood has bought for Runt and Ophelia (unbeknownst to them) and he gives her some pills. He introduces her to Runt and Ophelia on the street and they all work for the night. Blood is very proud of himself, finally feeling like a real pimp. He visits Sweet Jones who advises him about having a pretty whore and how it can disrupt the other girls and their comraderie. The next night, Chris finds Leroy and tells him about her decision to be with Blood and become a whore. His response depresses Chris, so they spend the night partying. The next evening, Blood gets his fourth whore since he believes having an uneven number of whores is unlucky. While loaded up on drugs, Blood goes to the Roost bar. A gunshot goes off and nearly shoots Blood in the head, but he does not flinch because he is too out of it. His reaction impresses Glass Top so much he renames Blood "Iceberg Slim" from that point on.

Iceberg Slim's new name will catch on quickly, but there are only a handful of people who know the real reason behind Slim's stunted reaction. Pimps are supposed to always be on the top of their game, intellectually and physically. To be addicted to a serious drug like cocaine would undermine his authority and power. For that reason, many people do not know he does cocaine with the exception of Chris (with whom it is a bonding ritual of sorts), Glass Top and other dealers. The majority of people believe Slim is just that calm and cool, when in reality, he was too coked up to recognize the danger and realize the shot had nearly killed him. In this way, Iceberg Slim's very moniker is based on a lie and deception, a fitting reality.



# Chapter 14: The Mistake

## Chapter 14: The Mistake Summary and Analysis

Slim buys a new 1939 "Hog" car and gets rid of his fourth whore after only 3 months because she is too possessive. He quickly convinces another whore to join his ranks. Glass Top gets busted selling narcotics and gets sentenced to jail. For the next three years, Slim works hard and never has less than 5 whores in his group, getting a new car every year. He is at Sweet's house when he sees Pearl Harbot getting bombed. Sweet predicts the war will change prostitution because it will provide more opportunity for women to earn money in ways besides prostitution. In December, 1944, Slim is doing well, professionally. In 6 years, he goes through roughly 60 different whores working for him. He spends Christmas with his mother that year. Runt is getting older and thereby getting cranky, while Chris is showing herself to be a very strong and dependable asset to Slim.

When Slim hires Carmen, who looks similar to Runt, Runt gets very upset that she is being replaced. Slim reacts badly and abuses Runt physically. Chris and Ophelia save her, but she takes off with Ophelia once her jaw is wired shut again. Six months later, Sweet calls to warn Slim the F.B.I. are looking at him, and are building a case against him. For this reason, Slim has to move out of his apartment that evening and only trusts Chris with the information of where he is going.

After he moves in, he runs into his father. He promptly tells his father exactly what he does for a living and ends the conversation with him, saying "I've come a long way since you bounced my skull off that wall." His father sits down on the steps on the street and bursts into tears. Slim does a lot of cocaine and then calls Sweet.

Slim does not want to think about his parents after his confrontation with his father, but in a way, Slim's entire career and life choices come head to head when he meets his father. By his father's reaction when he hears and sees what his son has become, it is clear he is ashamed of his actions. He feels very guilty for putting Slim in a bad situation and pushing him towards the choices he has made. Slim's relationship with his mother is complicated, but his father clearly left them destitute. In this way, Slim confronts his feelings about his father's past actions and his own childhood head on.

# Chapter 15: In a Sewer

## Chapter 15: In a Sewer Summary and Analysis

Slim calls Sweet, but his paranoia gets the best of him and he starts to wonder if Sweet is conning him like he once did Preston. He decides Sweet is trustworthy, but he is still stuck in a small, one-bedroom apartment, hiding from the F.B.I. Chris knows where he lives, but it is important for Slim to keep up the pretenses of being a pimp with everything under control and so he never tells her how worried he is. To keep the other whores from worrying, he and Chris pretend to call from New York with Chris acting as the phone operator.

Slim's paranoia intensifies and he stops doing cocaine because it makes him more jittery. He contemplates doing heroin as a way to calm down. Slim gets very lonely and cold. Chris visits him on Christmas morning and Sweet visits a few days after New Year's to raise his spirits. He is honest with Slim and tells him other pimps are trying to steal his whores. He also tells him Preston died from frostbite after losing his job and being homeless.

Sweet calls a few days later to tell him a competitor pimp, Poison, has stolen one of his whores named Fay. Poison tells Fay the real story about where Slim is and Fay tells the other whores, who pack up their things, crying and upset. Slim only has Chris as a whore now. Slim tells Chris not to worry, he will figure things out. Instead, he goes out to buy drugs and gets busted by the police. He offers to pay off the policemen, but they refuse and book him at the station instead.

Finally, Slim's betrayal and lies catches up to him. Ironically, it is his whores that leave him first. He gets paranoid Sweet will betray him as well and even has a momentarily lapse of hatred against Chris, convinced she has betrayed him as well. This paranoia and fear underlines the fact Slim cannot trust anyone in his world and his entire environment is built upon lies and betrayals.



# Chapter 16: Away from the Track

## Chapter 16: Away from the Track Summary and Analysis

They lock Slim up at a local jail. Chris goes to visit him and asks him where all of his things have gone. Initially, he thinks Sweet or Poison have burglarized his home, but then he remembers he saw a person from his apartment complex getting booked by the policemen. He knows that man has stolen all of his things.

Slim posts his bond of \$40,000 and then hires the state's best attorney. He gets out on bail for four months, during which time he works as hard as he can to make money, but few whores want to be associated with him since they know he will be leaving for jail soon. He does not talk to Sweet very much since Poison is now the biggest pimp in the area.

When Slim finally goes to trial, Runt and Ophelia testify against him and he gets 18 months in jail. He gets sent to Leavenworth prison. He is nearly killed in prison, but he finally gets out for good behavior in 1947. When he gets out, he has nothing and has to rent a room by the week. He has a difficult time getting a whore because Chris has since left him to marry a man and have a child. He now has no one in the world except for Mama.



# Chapter 17: Trying a New Game

## Chapter 17: Trying a New Game Summary and Analysis

Slim gets out of jail and has no money, so he tries to rob someone quickly to get some fast cash. He meets up with a man named Red Eye and they plan to rob a drug dealer named Mavis. Their scheme is to attack her when she leaves the club and is on the way to her car. They know she will carry a large amount of money and will help Slim re-establish himself in the neighborhood. He does not care about the drug dealer, but instead needs the cash in order to buy clothes and other material possessions to give the impression he is a successful pimp again. He feels he cannot be a good pimp without more money.

They pretend to be cops and the deal is going fine until they pass some policemen in a car. Mavis finally realizes Slim and Red Eye are not the policemen they say they are, and screams help to the real policemen. The cops pull Slim and Red Eye over with the money and drugs that are on Mavis and book them for armed robbery.



# Chapter 18: Jailbreak

## Chapter 18: Jailbreak Summary and Analysis

Slim and Red Eye admit to the crime and get sent to the State workforce (instead of jail) for one year. After being in a week, Slim realizes he cannot do another stint in jail so soon after his last one. He has a young cellmate and one night, after mistakenly sleeping through roll call, Slim is inspired to break from the workforce jail. At first wary, the young cellmate reluctantly agrees to help him by putting a dummy in his bed one night during roll call. Earlier in the day, Slim hides in a supply closet until that evening. When the bell sounds that all is safe, he escapes, jumping from building to building and heads to Indiana.

Slim is particularly pleased with the idea he has duped the white guards. He is delighted they will be scratching their heads, wondering where he went long after he has escaped. Again, his intelligence has worked in Slim's favor, but once again, he has used it for mischievous means. The escape will play a big role in Slim's life later when he is yet again arrested in Montana.



# Chapter 19: The Ice Pick

## Chapter 19: The Ice Pick Summary and Analysis

Slim hitches a ride to his aunt's house who helps him in and takes care of him. He finds and steals a whore named "No Thumbs Helen" who robs men of their money from their wallets in addition to prostitution. They go to Minneapolis and Slim takes on another young whore. Helen gets upset and tries to stab him with a knife, but he takes a golf club and knocks her out instead. He loses Helen to an associate that used to know his mother and goes to Detroit with literally no money and no whores. As soon as he gets off the bus, he sees a girl that looks very similar to Pepper. Her name is Rachel and she will work with Slim for 13 years. After Rachel, he quickly gets 3 more whores. His luck is good, but he wants to move all the girls to Ohio since they are all local girls and can more easily slip away. In addition, Rachel's parents are looking for both of them. Slim is now 30 years old. Serena, one of his whores, goes crazy, however, and nearly kills him, so he takes the girls out of town and drives straight to Mama's house.

Slim is back on top, but his pimping career is an increasingly negative experience. He is having to move from city to city and is already wary his girls will leave him. He shoots Serena in self-defense, but this is yet another indication the pimping game has taken a darker turn than before Slim first went to jail. Serena will not prosecute Slim, but the incident scares him enough that a strong, tough and cold pimp will run straight to his mother's house out of shock and fear. Slim is not really living up to his moniker here and he will pay the price for it.





## Chapter 20: Stable Moves

### Chapter 20: Stable Moves Summary and Analysis

Slim considers it a weak move to go to Mama's house when he gets there. He has plenty of cash, but the girls are not working and everybody in town knows him, so Slim is running out of money quickly. Slim slips out of town and goes into the city to see Sweet. Sweet has recently killed a man, but neatly avoids a jail sentence. Sweet solves Slim's problem by advising him to go back to town since Serena never pressed charges after the near-death experience.

Slim agrees and goes back to town. Stopping by the hotel where the girls are, Slim spots Steve out a window and rushes down to shoot him with his gun. Steve moves out of range too quickly by mindlessly picking up more garbage cans, never seeing Slim.

Slim moves the girls to Cleveland and Toledo. He is ready to get back in the pimping game. Within four months, he has three girls in Toledo and another five in Cleveland. Slim is back on top with one small problem. All of the other pimps want Rachel. One morning, he unexpectedly finds Rachel in bed with a con hustler and realizes he is in trouble. He might lose his best girl in a bad way, which would telegraph to all the other competitor pimps that he is weak. To cement her loyalty, he sets up a scheme where she accidentally kills someone. In reality, the person is just fine, but Slim agrees to back Rachel and keep her safe. She is more loyal than ever afterwards.

Unfortunately, Cleveland is filled with cops as well as whores and a lot of the girls end up in jail for short stints for illegal prostitution. By now, it is 1953. Slim gets a letter from Mama, telling him she has remarried and wants him to visit her in California.

While shopping for new suits from a dealer, he sees a naked girl passed out on the bed. The dealer has to go across the street to get the suits and Slim walks over to the girl. He immediately recognizes it is Runt. He leans down to shoot her with drugs, making her overdose, but runs out of time as the dealer returns.

Slim moves some of his girls to Seattle, while keeping others working in Cleveland. He runs into Glass Top out in Seattle; Glass Top is now a drunk and dies within days of seeing Slim. Slim runs into a doctor who aborted the baby of his former whore "No Thumbs Helen" and agrees to go to detox to get rid of all the drugs in his system. He only tells Rachel and it takes two weeks, but he comes out sober.

Slim is moving his girls all around, which is unsettling and indicates he is just doing this more for the money than any prestige. After all, how can you gain prestige in a town when you are frequently moving? In addition, the police are targeting whores and becoming more strict about their presence, which translates into bad business for Slim. It is interesting that all of his old compatriots are back in other nearby towns. In a way, Slim and his associates are all a little clique that travels to avoid the police, as if their

world is very small and they are sure to see one another again and again. Despite their transient lifestyles, they each run into each other in town after town as word passes that some towns are better than others.

# Chapter 21: The Steel Casket

## Chapter 21: The Steel Casket Summary and Analysis

In 1958, Seattle is boring Slim. His new stepfather dies, leaving Mama alone again. Slim is almost 40 and has gained almost 50 pounds since quitting drugs. He is slowing down, spending more time reading in bed than pimping. To satisfy his new lazy lifestyle, he has his girls work in a house. He only gets 50%, but the money comes in a check in the mail every Monday. While visiting one of his whores at a house in Montana, two policemen visit his hotel room. They book him for having a girl in his room he is not married to.

They get out within 2 hours, but Slim is still wanted for his escape from the workforce jail. He runs to Pennsylvania, but the police find him and prosecute him for the escape charge. He lies and says a guard let him out. It is just enough to stall the charge and put him back in jail again. Mama visits him here and she is sick and dying.

Slim gets convicted of escaping and given another 11 months in jail. While in jail, Mama becomes sicker. Slim sees Leroy in jail. He had been arrested more than 100 times for public drunkenness and had been in a mental institution twice. Leroy petitions a number of men to "crap-bomb" Slim's jail cell to pay him back for what he did with Chris.

A few days later, a fellow inmate tells him of Party Time's demise and Slim decides to give up drugs and pimping forever. He questions all of the decisions he made in his life and says Mama's condition and his conscience make him quit his pimping career. Slim dedicates himself to the law books and comes up with a sound reason to be released early. He memorizes his speech and requests an interview. He is granted an early release. Finally, Slim is putting his intelligence to good use. He is using his brain for something other than deception and betrayal. Obviously, an individual can be successful with tricks if they are intelligent, but when Slim finally uses his intelligence for a good cause, he is also immediately rewarded, which is a good step and good sign he will continue in this path for the remainder of his life.

# Chapter 22: Dawn

## Chapter 22: Dawn Summary and Analysis

Slim is almost 43 years old and is released from jail. He questions whether he will ever be comfortable in his own black skin upon his release. He has no one in the world except for his Mama. He goes to visit her immediately and she lives another six months, during which time Slim never leaves her side. On her deathbed, she asks for Slim's forgiveness.

The complicated relationship between Slim and Mama comes to a close with her death. Fortunately, he is granted early release from prison due to studying the legal books and he is given this extra time to spend with Mama. He will stop pimping after this and give up drugs. He will start a new life with a new attitude and try to make a positive contribution. Without this event and his commitment to a change in his lifestyle, Slim would probably die on the street through any number of possible instances. He titles this chapter "Dawn," despite his mother's death, because he has decided on a new way of living. He forgives his mother and with that forgiveness, quells the drive and animosity towards women essential in the life of a successful pimp.



# Epilogue

## Epilogue Summary and Analysis

It is now the present-day and Slim is reflecting on how a person like himself ever got sober and clean and is now living a legal life. He thinks the answer lies in his beautiful wife Catherine and their two children, a boy and a girl. He is a great salesman, but is still influenced by being a black man in a white society. All in all, though, Slim admits he has come a long way since his pimping days.

Slim's story is ultimately one of redemption and renewal. He has a rough childhood and grows up in a bad environment. Slim makes all of the wrong decisions growing up and becomes an immoral pimp, but in the end, he forgives his mother and finds a wife and has two children with her. In the end, Slim becomes a "square" or a person who is a positive contributor to society and not running from policemen. He obeys the laws and is finally given the life he strived for before Mama left Henry. He has a family, stability and the ability to make a good living by using his intelligence and gifts in a positive, productive manner.



# Characters

## Iceberg Slim (aka Robert Beck, aka Macking Youngblood)

The main character of the book, Slim recounts his full autobiography. He is a child growing up in the 1920's and 30's as a Black man in a segregated society. Although blessed with the I.Q. of a genius, Slim ends up living as a pimp and going in and out of jail throughout his life. Since this is a time before desegregation, there are few choices for black men in general and even fewer choices for poor black men. Slim has an opportunity to take advantage of his genius when he is sent to Tuskegee University, but he is kicked out due to bad behavior.

Slim starts out on the street, doing small-time hustles with an associate named Party Time. After doing time in jail, Slim re-enters society determined to become a successful pimp. Desire to live like other successful pimps, such as Sweet Jones, motivates him. Through drive and psychological schemes, he achieves his goal with all of its highs and lows. After being betrayed by some of his whores and ending up in jail yet again, he finally comes back to society close to the age of 40 and decides to stop being a pimp because he feels he is too old. In the final chapter, he alludes to a wife and 2 children, finally making a positive contribution with his life.

Throughout his time as a pimp, Slim gains power, money and above all, recognition in the street. He is a force to be reckoned with, which is exactly what he strives for. He will eventually give up pimping and its lifestyle, but only because he feels he is too old for the lifestyle, not because of any moral conviction.

Slim is a product of drive, determination and intelligence in the black ghetto. With his choices limited in a segregated society, he takes the options he is presented with and works to be at the top of his profession, even if it is an illegal and sketchy career.

## Mama

Mama is Slim's mother. Mama tries to do her best with Slim, but considering the circumstances she is put in after his birth and her own background as an uneducated black woman from Alabama, her best proves not good enough. She makes a number of choices in Slim's early life that influence the way he treats women and his future career. She works as a single black woman, raising Slim in the few hours she is home, but when she leaves Henry Upshaw, a break occurs in Mama and Slim's relationship. Upshaw is the only male figure that has provided encouragement and stability to young Slim's life, making him the happiest he will ever be. When Mama leaves Upshaw for the scoundrel Steve, Slim's life takes a turn for the worse and never really improves.



Later, when Slim is repeatedly in jail and she learns he is a pimp, she will urge him to become religious and accept Jesus, but by then, it is too little, too late for Slim. His anger at women in general stems most likely from a subconscious hatred of his mother, as a jail psychiatrist tells him. He loves and cares for his mother throughout his life, but he never really forgives her for treating Henry Upshaw and his biological father so poorly and letting a man like Steve abuse her.

## Sweet Jones

Another strong male influence in Slim's life, Sweet Jones is the biggest pimp in Chicago. The first time Slim meets Sweet, he is terrified of him, but wants to meet and befriend him so he can become a successful pimp as well. He gets his wish by establishing a relationship with Glass Top, who supplies drugs to Sweet. Glass Top tells Sweet Slim is his cousin. Sweet will eventually take Slim under his wing and tell people Slim is his son. Throughout his career as a pimp, when Slim has a question or problematic situation, he goes to Sweet for advice.

Although Sweet is ruthless and cold, his advice is relevant and helpful in the pimping world. Sweet will eventually kill himself by shooting himself in the temple when he gets older, leaving the note "Good-bye square! Kiss my pimping ass!"

## Henry Upshaw

The first and only really stable and positive father figure in Slim's life, Upshaw is the owner of the only cleaning and pressing store in Rockford, Illinois. He provides both Slim and his mother with all of the money and luxuries they could want. Slim will also work with his stepfather in the store shining shoes. Slim remembers his last happy day in life for another thirty-five years as being a day when he worked with his stepfather and got a dime tip for shining a banker's shoes. Shortly after this, Mama leaves Henry Upshaw to run away with Steve, depriving Slim of the best influence in his life. Henry is also crushed by the separation and dies a year later.

## Steve

An immoral individual whom Slim calls a "pin-striped snake," Steve comes into their lives and ruins it during the 3.5 years he and Mama are together. Through her association with Steve, Mama leaves the good husband and father-figure of Henry Upshaw and cons Slim's biological father. Steve eventually sends Mama to the hospital by physically abusing her.



## Party Time

Slim meets Party Time on the streets when he is fourteen and Party Time is twenty-two. Party Time eventually goes to jail for a con he and Slim do when Slim is fifteen, introducing Slim to the life on the street and jail.

## Glass Top

Slim's connection to Sweet Jones, Glass Top is another street associate of Slim's. He provides Slim with drugs and lives a lush lifestyle off the money he makes dealing drugs. He helps Slim become addicted to both cocaine and heroin.

## Runt

Otherwise known as Phyllis, Runt is Slim's first whore. He physically and psychologically abuses her, but she will eventually turn on him later in life and send him to jail by testifying against him in court.

## Chris

Slim meets Chris when he sees her in the hotel suite he lives in with Runt. She is married to a man named Leroy and used to be a former prostitute. Slim talks her into meeting him in his room. Leroy is a very jealous man and discovers her dalliance, becoming enraged. He moves her to another city with his band to get her away from Slim. Slim finds her again when he comes across Leroy shooting an old white man who owns the club he is playing in. Leroy will go to jail and Chris agrees to become Slim's whore again. She eventually becomes his most trustworthy confidant and protects him when he is on the run from the F.B.I. When Slim goes to jail, she finds a husband and has a child.

## Pepper

The first woman who controls Slim sexually, he learns tricks with Pepper he uses in the future with other whores and women. Eventually, Pepper is the impetus behind a con that sends Slim to jail.





## Objects/Places

### 711 Club

A small-time underground bar in Milwaukee, Slim meets Runt in the 711 Club and immediately moves with her to Chicago to make more money.

### Roost

Chicago's version of the 711 Club, Slim encounters Sweet Jones for the first time here. It is a central spot for all hustlers, pimps and con men in the city

### Haven

The breakfast diner across the street from the hotel Runt and Slim stay at. They frequently order breakfast from here and Runt likes to take breaks here, and this is also the place she eventually meets Ophelia, who will become Slim's second whore.

### Entasis

The euphemism Melody uses for his penis. Slim will use this euphemism later for other hidden, mysterious things he is not confident about.

### Mood Indigo

The music Runt frequently listens to by Billie Holiday. She sings along with Lady Day, who laments having a bad man she is in love with. This music sets the tone for the relationship between Slim and Runt

### Terre Haute

In an effort to motivate Runt, Slim frequently goes to Terre Haute to send himself money in the name of an imagined whore named Chris. This ploy not only makes Runt work harder, it is a premonition that is fulfilled for Slim when Chris becomes his third whore, validating his lie to the other whores.

### Henry Upshaw's Cleaning & Pressing Shop

Here, Slim feels the only positive fatherly love and encouragement for doing legitimate labor throughout his life. He feels real happiness working with his stepfather and



experiences his last moment of happiness shining a banker's shoes before he is moved away from Henry by his Mama.

## **Chicago**

The big city where Slim finally initiates his successful pimping career. The majority of his career and associates are here, including Chris, Runt, Sweet Jones and Glass Top.

## **Jail**

In jail, Slim learns the inside story on pimping and how to successfully start and maintain a career. In jail, he realizes the importance of psychological manipulation in order to keep whores working for a pimp.

## **The Penthouse of Sweet Jones**

As soon as he enters the home of Sweet Jones, Slim has something to strive towards. He lives in a building owned by a white owner and this symbolizes the height of Sweet's power and influence on Slim. Sweet owns the finest things, becoming the physical embodiment of everything Slim wants to be.



# Themes

## Segregation

Segregation is an important concept to Slim. Throughout the book, he mentions the divide between blacks and whites in society. Slim has high aspirations to be powerful, no matter what. He has all of the best characteristics for achieving something great, including a genius I.Q., good looks and an incredible drive and determination to succeed.

Rather than channel these qualities into a lifestyle that benefits society and stays within legal restraints, Slim chooses to actively pursue a life of pimping and is frequently in and out of jail throughout his life. One reason you could say he chooses this lifestyle is the fact there are few professions for black men to earn a lot of money in the 1920's and 30's. At one point, Slim remarks he does not want to be a porter, working for white men. He enjoys buying a new car every year and being dressed in the finest suits and clothes a man can own. He enjoys the high life and having a lot of money in his pocket. In this way, he can sidestep the positions white society has allowed the black man and make his own living, enjoying power via his own rules.

When Slim escapes from jail, he is elated he has tricked the white guards and laughs at the idea they will forever wonder how a black man escaped them. Slim's rebellious nature is a reaction against his limited prescribed role in society in combination with the way he was raised in the streets. Through money, Slim feels he can overcome the lower stature he is given as a black man and rise to have enough power to be acknowledged by white society.

## Violence

Violence plays an important role throughout the life of Iceberg Slim. As a child, Slim's father throws him against a wall when his mother decides to keep him instead of leaving him at the local Catholic Church. From this point on, Slim uses violence as a means of power and manipulation to get what he wants from people. The lifestyle he leads encourages violence and other associates of his also turn to violence for control and power.

Slim uses violence and psychological manipulation in an effort to keep his whores with him and respecting him. In particular, he beats Runt frequently and harshly in an effort to make her respect him and stay with him. In a way, Slim believes the whores will stay in line if Slim is violent because if a pimp is violent with his whore, he will not hesitate to protect the girl herself later. Through physical and psychological abuse, he makes the girls stay with him and provides them with everything they own.

Poison's physical demonstration of physically abusing his whore for getting drunk with a trick is a public display of power. Through his violent actions, he shows the entire



neighborhood how powerful he is and makes a statement to all the other whores and pimps that are his competition.

Sweet Jones also uses force and physical abuse when establishing himself with Slim. When Slim cannot handle himself around a whore named Red Cora, Sweet shows who is in charge and his disappointment with Slim by physically abusing him. In this way, Sweet declares he is a person to be feared and admired in his circle.

Even the women in Slim's life try to use violence as a way to gain some control of their lives. Serena tries to kill Slim, but he shoots her in the chest instead. Regardless, Serena's reaction to violence is her attempt to gain some control and power in her life and situation as a whore.

## Deceit

Deceit is a common theme in Slim's life. Growing up, Mama uses deceit to betray both Henry Upshaw and Slim's biological father for revenge. Perhaps this early demonstration of betrayal influences Slim to deceive and trick people in his own life. Certainly, his family's choices have a strong influence on the life Slim leads and the deceit his mother shows Henry Upshaw early on could set the stage for the own betrayals Slim engages in.

Slim leads a life of immorality and crime. He does not shy away from hustling or prostitution in any way. When he is only 14, he is involved in his first hustle with Party Time, earning money by tricking white men into thinking he is a black hooker. From there, Slim chooses to go deeper and deeper into a life of crime and illegal activities, despite his jail time.

Later, when Slim is running from the F.B.I., he cannot tell his whores the truth or he risks losing them. Since the girls do not want to work for a man about to go to jail, he cannot trust anyone. He has to lie and tell them he is in New York. During this time, Slim experiences the true loneliness of a pimp who cannot trust anyone and who operates only through lies and deceit. Despite these feelings, he will immediately hustle and rob someone after being released from jail since deceit and betrayal are the only ways he knows to live and gain power.



# Style

## Perspective

The entire book is told from the perspective of Iceberg Slim. From childhood to his retirement, Slim narrates the entire book. The other perspectives of the characters in the novel are not considered. The only time the reader learns their thoughts or feelings about a situation is through the dialogue they have with Slim.

Slim gives plenty of details about the situation, people and places he encounters. Through his descriptions, we learn what he is drawn to and what is important to him. When he first sees Sweet Jones, for example, his complete description of his car, his women and eventually his penthouse will convey that these material objects are what Slim respects about Sweet.

## Tone

The style of the entire novel is the straightforward and simplistic style of an autobiography. The tone is unapologetic and fairly unemotional. In fact, after he beats Runt with a wire, he blithely wonders if he is in love with her or has grown attached to her because he is showing an emotion after abusing her.

Slim's tone conveys the sense to the reader he is above reproach and does not care for almost anyone in his life. He will occasionally lament his mother getting older or long for Chris to return, but these emotions do not influence his daily activities. Just like his fellow associates in the street, Slim is detached and cold to the reader and the retelling of events. In this way, Iceberg embodies his moniker of being as cold as ice.

## Structure

Through Slim's description of events, the story unfolds. Slim starts at the beginning and methodically walks the reader through all the events leading up to his eventual retirement. He does not foreshadow any future events, which gives the reader a higher sense of the unexpected. Slim does not engage in any flashbacks to fill the reader in on more details. Instead, he will consistently tell the story and each event as it occurs, giving the reader the feeling they are experiencing the event at the same time. The reader knows exactly the same amount of information Slim knows at the time the events transpire.

Slim mentions flashbacks in his novel, but they are only flashbacks to events the reader is already fully aware of. In this sense, the flashbacks do not provide more information to the story, but instead giving the reader the understanding that an event in Slim's past could be the cause of his current action in the book.



## Quotes

"He was the only father I had ever really known." Chapter 1, p. 23.

"I don't know, maybe that prison head-shrinker was right when he told me I had become a pimp because of my unconscious hatred for my mother." Chapter 1, p. 29.

"Steve had stalked her and attacked her with his fists and feet and then escaped through the grimy catacombs of the Ghetto." Chapter 1, p. 29.

"'Party' went through his life strugglin to make a watch while wearing boxing gloves." Chapter 2, p. 41.

"My turn came to go in. I got up from the log bench in the hall outside his office and walked in. My knees were having a boxing match as I stood before him." Chapter 2, p. 52.

"Well kiss my dead mammy's ass, if it ain't 'Macking Youngblood.' The whore's pet and the pimp's fret." Chapter 3, p. 63.

"That bitch ain't nothing but a young skunk from Saint Louis. She ain't nothing but a jazzy 'jive whore.' I'm more whore than she is." Chapter 4, p. 79.

"My black whore was a cinch to get piles of white scratch from that forbidden white world." Chapter 4, p. 87.

"Don't drink, smoke gangster, or use anything while you're working. Your skull has got to be sharp and clear out there. Otherwise, you could lose your life, and almost as bad, my scratch." Chapter 6, p. 115.

"For this maniac you gotta be just like a Mississippi Nigger." Chapter 6, p. 121.

:"But he sure hates white folks. ... He says he's paying 'em back for what they done and are doing to black people. His brain is rotted from hate." Chapter 6, p. 135.

"It knocks me out that here I am, a black Nigger bitch, taking their scratch." Chapter 9, p. 176.

"No con misses his freedom more than a pimp. His senses are addicted to the silky living." Chapter 18, p. 260.

"I hung there like a bat. I held my breath. He passed beneath me. ... It seemed forever to my agonized aching arms and legs." Chapter 18, p. 261.



## Topics for Discussion

Iceberg Slim was an influential person to a number of cultural figures in our society. Research and name some people who were influenced by his lifestyle and decisions.

Explain Iceberg's feelings about the segregation between blacks and whites and how these feelings influence his career choices.

Iceberg was born with a high I.Q. level and good looks. Why do you think he chose the illegal profession of being a pimp and what influences and experiences in his life affected that decision?

Name the father figures in Iceberg Slim's life and how each figure contributes to his development.

Explain the relationship between the pimp and whore. In particular, explain the sexism inherent in the professions. Also, how did the War help women at the time redefine their roles as a woman in society?

Many times, Slim has a connection with someone in the new town he moves into and this connection becomes a strong advantage for him. Explain the importance of connections and knowing someone in the neighborhood to advancing professionally as a pimp.

How does violence play a role in the life of a pimp? How is it used by Slim and others?

Why do you think Iceberg Slim chose to write a story about his life? What were his motivations and goals, do you think?