

Freewrite on this topic for 5-10 minutes:

Think about the way we divide humans into different races. How many are there? What are the main characteristics that allow us to divide ourselves? How can you *know* to what race someone belongs, particularly if their ancestry is mixed?

Answer these questions when you finish reading “Desiree’s Baby”:

1. What was unusual about Desiree’s origins?
What assumptions might a reader make based on these origins?
2. Where did Armand grow up?
3. What is Madame Valmonde’s reaction to the child?
4. What is revealed about Armand’s background at the end of the story?
5. Find two places where the answer to number 4 is hinted at in the story.
6. Longer, more thoughtful question: we’ve been talking a lot about metanarratives, the systems of thought that help explain life. Race is another example of a metanarrative, one that has had a powerful impact in this country. What is Kate Chopin saying about how we understand race? Do you agree with her?