

Invisible man by ralph ellison

[Literature](#), [Novel](#)



Invisible Man by Ralph Ellison Chapter 5 Study Guide Plot Summary: The narrator goes to chapel where all of the students are supposed to go and where Dr. Bledsoe is at. Dr. Bledsoe along with only one other man is the only black people standing in front of the congregation. The narrator takes notice that Dr. Bledsoe has no trouble touching a white man and he remembers how difficult it was for him to lay his hands on Mr. Norton. The other black man is Reverend Homer A. Barbee and he gives a sermon about the biography of the school's founder. The school's founder died, but Barbee assures them that his presence is in the school. The narrator starts becoming even more depressed about possibly being expelled from school because he thinks he can see Barbee's vision for the school. The narrator hears a song that reminds him of his parents called " Swing Low Sweet Chariot" The narrator leaves chapel before it is over. The narrator goes to the administration building to have his meeting with Dr. Bledsoe. The narrator is worried that Barbee's may have influenced Dr. Bledsoe to be tougher on him. Reference Points: " And I remember the chapel with its sweeping eaves, long and low as though risen bloody from the earth like the rising moon; vine-covered and earth-colored as though more earth-sprung than man-sprung. " Page 110 The way the Invisible Man describes the chapel's eaves is like a highly intelligent and curious person. A curious person because, obviously, the Invisible Man reflects upon various everyday things and looks at them from a new perspective. An intelligent person because the things he compares the " sweeping eaves" to is not something most people think of on a daily basis. In this quote, the Invisible Man also tells us that he sees a difference between nature and man. " And there on the platform I too had

stridden and debated, a student leader directing my voice, at the highest beams and farthest rafters, ringing them, the accents staccato upon the ridgepole and echoing back with a tinkling, like words hurled to the trees of a wilderness, or into a well of slate-gray water; more sound than sense, a play upon the resonances of buildings, an assault upon the temples of the ear... "

Page 113 The Invisible Man spares no insult to this boy who is about to take the stage and give a speech. According to the Invisible Man the words of the boy are " an assault upon the temples of the ear". It appears that the Invisible Man thinks very highly of himself. This quote is proof that life's positive and negative aspects are not what gave the Invisible Man a prideful persona, but he has always been like this. " Aspire, each of you, to someday follow in his footsteps. Great deeds are yet to be performed. For we are young, though a fast-rising, people. Legends are still to be created. Be not afraid to undertake the burdens of your leader, and the the work of the founder will be one of ever unfolding glory, the history of the race a saga of mounting triumphs. " This quote is an accurate depiction of the mindset of the invisible man at this point in the story. He still has high hopes and wants to make something of himself. He wants to be part of the progression of black people as a race. This is why the invisible man is afraid of being kicked out of school. There is still so much to do on his part and he needs this school in order to accomplish them.

Settings and Characters The school campus is a recurring setting in the novel thus far Dr. Bledsoe- The president of the college. Advocates hard work and commitment. Rev. Barbee- Reverend from Chicago who tells a passionate speech about the founder of the college and is blind.

Symbols, Analogy, and Allusion The symbol in this

chapter are the sweeping eaves. The Invisible Man does not know which way his life is about to go. He does not know whether Dr. Bledsoe will suspend him from the university or make him stay. The sweeping eaves resemble this inner conflict as there are two ways to look at the sweeping eaves. One way is that they always go downhill, but another way is that it is a difficult climb, but once one attains his goal, the easy part comes next. Theme Searching for identity Throughout the chapel, the narrator listens to the story of the founder and as he hears the founder's accomplishment, he begins to worry himself by wondering what his impact will be and when he will leave an imprint on the advancement of black people. Questions What signal tells the narrator that it is time to go to the chapel and why is this signal used? Why does the narrator describe the blind speaker in the way that he does? Does he ever compare the man to Dr. Bledsoe? Is it strange that the narrator does not notice the blind speaker?