Chapter 7: Close Reading of Myrtle Wilson’s Death

**Directions:** Watch the video (<http://www.showme.com/sh/?h=4LxrRWi>) and then answer the questions below.

A moment later she rushed out into the dusk, waving her hands and shouting — before he could move from his door the business was over.

The “death car,” as the newspapers called it, didn’t stop; it came out of the gathering darkness, wavered tragically for a moment, and then disappeared around the next bend. Michaelis wasn’t even sure of its color — he told the first policeman that it was light green. The other car, the one going toward New York, came to rest a hundred yards beyond, and its driver hurried back to where Myrtle Wilson, her life violently extinguished, knelt in the road and mingled her thick dark blood with the dust.

Michaelis and this man reached her first, but when they had torn open her shirtwaist, still damp with perspiration, they saw that her left breast was swinging loose like a flap, and there was no need to listen for the heart beneath. The mouth was wide open and ripped at the corners, as though she had choked a little in giving up the tremendous vitality she had stored so long.

We saw the three or four automobiles and the crowd when we were still some distance away.

Use your annotations of the passage above to answer the question below in complete sentences.

* What is implied by “the business was over,” both literally and figuratively?
* What is implied by the use of the word “knelt”? How is this symbolic?

* What is being conveyed by the observation that Myrtle’s “thick, dark blood mingled with the dust”? *Think about where she lives and her social status. What could this suggest*?
* “There was no need to listen for the heart beneath. The mouth…..” Why not use *her* heart and *her* mouth?
* Why do you think Myrtle’s death is described so violently? What could Fitzgerald be suggesting through this description?