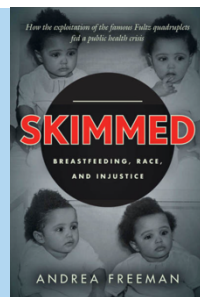


## Discussion Guide



*Skimmed, Breastfeeding, Race, and Injustice*  
Andrea Freeman

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2019  
304 pages  
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Infant Feeding

### Summary

*Skimmed* tells the story of The Famous Fultz Quadruplets. Born in North Carolina in 1946 to Black and Cherokee Annie Mae Fultz, who lost the ability to hear and speak in childhood, these adorable sisters were the world's first recorded Black quadruplets. Their white doctor, Fred Klenner, named the girls after his family members, experimented on them with vitamin C, and sold the rights to use them in formula advertisements to the highest corporate bidder, St. Louis' Pet Milk company. When the girls started school, Dr. Klenner convinced a judge to take them away from their parents and seven siblings to live with the nurse that he picked out for them, Alma Saylor. Pet Milk got rich while the famous sisters lived in poverty all their lives and were all diagnosed with breast cancer by age 45.

Pet Milk's campaign opened the formula market to Black families and contributed to Black women having the lowest rates of breastfeeding and highest rates of formula-related illnesses and deaths. *Skimmed* shows how many other factors, including enslavement, racial stereotypes, welfare policy, employment laws, and unequal distribution of resources contribute to low breastfeeding rates in the Black community that lead to 'first food' oppression.

### Questions

1. Why does Dr. Klenner think that he will get away with exercising so much power over the Fultz family's lives? Why does he get away with it?
2. *Skimmed* also tells the story of the Tigner Quads, born a few months after the Fultz sisters, also targeted by the formula companies. Although Carnation won the rights to use their images in formula ads, they only ever ran one ad featuring the Tigner quads. Why do you think the stories of the Fultz and the Tigner quadruplets are so different?
3. Tabitha Walrond was a young Black woman whose son died when the medical system failed her on many levels. Instead of providing her with support and sympathy, the justice system turned on her. How do Tabitha's and the Fultz sisters' stories relate to each other?
4. Who is to blame for what happened to the Fultz family? Dr. Klenner? Pet Milk? Society?

5. If Pet Milk shares responsibility for their tragic story, how should the company compensate for its part in it? How could it be made to do so? How should Pet Milk compensate for the harm that the Fultz campaign did to Black families?
6. What about the role that government policies and law have played in low breastfeeding rates in Black families? Should there be reparations and what form should they take? Who should receive them?
7. In the prologue, the author shares the story of the difficult birth of her twins. Do you have any stories to share about births in your family?
8. *Skimmed* focuses on formula and breastfeeding in the Black community. How do you think the issues in the book might (or might not) affect other communities? How might they affect trans men's decisions about feeding their infants?
9. *Skimmed* shares that most health organizations recommend breastfeeding for infants' health. Is it wrong to encourage breastfeeding when many parents cannot or choose not to do it?
10. Why do you think the Fultz sisters' story was not more well-known before now?