

***Song of Solomon* – Partner or Solo Work (each person writes – you don’t have to agree, but you may want to throw ideas off of someone, or you can work solo) Chapter 2 –Many of the answers can be very short (just make them specific).**

1. Explain or describe any connection you see from the following quotes. Be specific and have complete answers. Why is Milkman so happy at Pilate's? Is there a connection? Does past or future have anything to do with the reason Macon doesn't want Milkman there?

QUOTE 1 But riding backward made him uneasy. It was like flying blind, and not knowing where he was going- just where he had been-troubled him. He did not want to see trees that he had passed, or houses and children slipping into the space the automobile had left behind. It was becoming a habit--this concentration on things behind him. Almost as though there were no future to be had.

QUOTE 2 As a result, for all the years he knew her, her stomach was as smooth and sturdy as her back, at no place interrupted by a navel. (Chapter 1)

QUOTE 3 She was all angles, he remembered later, knees, mostly, and elbows. One foot pointed east and one pointed west.

QUOTE 4 ...but it was the first time in his life that he remembered being completely happy. He was with his friend...he was surrounded by women who seemed to enjoy him and who laughed out loud. And he was in love. No wonder his father was afraid of them.

2. Look at page 29 – as Macon is walking down the street and encounters Pilate’s house. What is Pilate’s aspect: “he could not see her because her back was to the window”? Now look at the second and third quote in the box above – can you make a connection between the “he could not see her...” quote and these two quotes (keep in mind what you wrote for question 1)?



3. What common event in their lives connects Pilate with Macon in Chapter 2? What event or object do they both remember (important – don’t move on till you get this – quietly check with someone else in the room)? Is there any **significant** difference in their memories of this very specific event or object? Explain with quotes.



4a. Turn to page 41 in your books – where Pilate describes that man she tried to save who thought he was falling. Later, she tells Reba that Hagar should call Milkman brother – because if you treat someone like a brother, than he is one. Is Pilate right? Is there ANY difference between brother and cousin or between a real cliff and the imaginary one the man stood on the edge of? If there is a difference what is it? If there TRULY isn't, what is the significance when considering Mr. Smith's jump? Think “Night Face Up”.

4b. During one of the movies we watched – I said that these “brother is as brother does” ideas would come up in March or April – well, here we are – what movie was it (again, check with someone if you are stuck)? What did it have to do with the idea of identity and someone truly being what they are, if they act as though they are. Explain with specifics. Also what does this have to do with Pilate’s lack of a navel or believing Mr. Smith really intended to fly?

5. Is there a connection between Milkman’s “backwardness” (looking back) and his “not flying?” What? Be specific, and find at least one quote. What is – literally – different about Pilate’s front and back? What then is the flying implication (pretty cool, eh?)



6. It seems like Milkman, we (the readers) are flying backwards – going to earlier parts of the chapter – after getting to its later parts. What is so special about the car – why has it earned the disdain of the neighborhood? What does Macon “use” it as?

7. How is Ruth treated during the car ride? Be specific. When Milkman asks to go the bathroom – why is Macon so angrily insistent that she not take him? What does this have to do with the “dead man’s fingers” we talked about in Chapter 1? What does it have to do with Macon’s “mind sharpened by hatred” (Chapter 1)?

8. What is Milkman’s reaction to Pilate when he first meets her? How and why is he surprised? Is the reader surprised as well? What do we (he) expect? How does the “specific” nature of Pilate belie (look it up) what Milkman expects of her character – of what Macon has said about her?). Find Macon’s description of her up to this point, how is she different – how is she like the girl that baked him that cherry pie (be specific)?



9. Find where there is the brief account of how Guitar got his name. What is the difference between being named after something you do or something that you want to do? What does Guitar then, have in common with Milkman (think about what Milkman learned at the age of 4)? What is the effect of a life of frustration (it’s a general question so you can have a general answer). Have any of you read “A Raisin in the Sun”? By the way, have we met Guitar before (twice in Chapter 1)? How did the context of those incidents prepare us for that frustration?

10. On the bottom of page 38 – Milkman is suddenly very possessive about his name – why? What is being said/done that makes him feel so? How does this (specifically of course) fit in with his father’s view of names, with Pilates taking her name (written during her mother’s death) and putting in an earring? Use what you’ve written earlier to support your answer.

11. Continuing our discussion of Pilate’s sense of specificity: Go to page 41 – find where Pilate describes the color green – first of all – why “green”? Next, go to the bottom of 42 – what color was her mother’s ribbons? Where have we seen this before? (be specific). Once again this brings us to a wonderful connection between which two characters?

12. There are two times Milkman has been happy and one of them is that first time at Pilate’s. How does his father react to his (Milkman’s) having been there. OK here is the tough one: Remember this quote: “Without these keys he would have floated away” – What is it that you think Milkman appreciates about his aunt, especially when contrasted with his father.

