

Song of Solomon – Group Work #3 – Chapters 4 & 5 – Milkman & Guitar

If you did not read – get out of your group and read now – take this home and turn it in tomorrow – remember chapter 6 is due tomorrow. **Make sure you have a time keeper and note the questions that you need to move more quickly through.**

1. **Quickly answer:** What does Guitar think about the homes in Honoré? Why? What does he say he'd like to do about them? How does this support or contradict Guitar's views in general about "his people"? Be specific and use two quotes in answering this question. How does this fit in with Guitar's story of the doe and his off-the-cuff comment about Ruth "deserving it [being hit]"?
2. Is Guitar right; *is* Milkman not a serious person? Begin by looking at pages 104-105 (and earlier if you can find it), then look at their conversation as Guitar makes tea. What evidence, besides what Guitar specifically mentions could your group make in supporting that assertion (that he is not serious). Find at least 5 pieces of evidence from anywhere prior to chapter 6. (This would be a good time to divide your group up – each person taking a chapter).
3. **Quickly answer:** Now, that you've answered that one – is Milkman aware of his "problem"? On page 106 he says that he knows where he's going – does the **narrator** (Morrison), not Milkman (see question 4 below) ever show otherwise – see if your group can find a specific quote (there are at least 2 that I know of) that shows the delusional aspect of Milkman's "self-awareness"? Think direction.
4. **Quickly answer:** On page 107 he also seems to take the other side – that perhaps his "life was pointless." Does your group see any other evidence of this? Find and cite one other quote.



5. **Quickly answer:** How does Guitar and Milkman's discussion of tea serve as a metaphor for their beliefs – be specific and use at least 2 quotes (showing each side of the metaphor) in answering your question. If you can, tie this answer in to something that you've written earlier here.
6. What do we find out at the Fairfield cemetery? What do we find out about why Ruth was in bed with her dead father? Remember the references that Toni Morrison makes to Ruth being out all night. Ready, ok here comes the big question of the day: How is this discovery like the watermark and the Waterford Crystal Bowl and the seaweed diorama and the truth we discover about *that* landmark (by the way, can Macon's reason for hating Ruth all these years be considered a landmark)? This is a big question (and subtle) make sure you understand before you answer it. Use at least 2 quotes in your answer.
7. Is what Milkman does and says on page 130 (where she comes into the room) to Hagar, and his decision to wait for her a sign that he has **given up** "running away" (as in his answer about buying a plane ticket (when Guitar asked him what he would do if where they lived **was** Alabama) and seeming to walk away from every confrontation in his life) OR is it, much more subtly just another example of "running away."? Be very specific here.
8. Make a specific connection between Ruth's trips to the cemetery and Hagar's pursuit of Milkman – how are they driven by the same thing? Can you specifically connect them to the desire of a 4 year boy looking out his window – who has discovered he can't do the thing that Mr. Smith discovered four years earlier?