

Song of Solomon - Group Work #2 - Chapter 4



1. Closely examine the following quote. What thoughts or actions here show a connection between Milkman and his father. Of the two that I see, one has to do with Ruth, while the other has to do with something Milkman will do later in this chapter. Briefly name at least two connections (yours or mine).

Once again he did his Christmas shopping in a Rexall drugstore. It was late, the day before Christmas Eve, and he hadn't had the spirit or energy or presence of mind to do it earlier or thoughtfully. Boredom, which had begun as a mild infection, now took him over completely. No activity seemed worth the doing, no conversation worth having. The fluttery preparations at home seemed fake and dingy. His mother was going on as she did every year about the incredible price of trees and butter. As though their tree would be anything other than it had always been: the huge shadowy thing in a corner burdened with decorations she had had since she was a girl. As if her cakes were edible, or her turkey done all the way to the bone. His father gave them all envelopes of varying amounts of money, never thinking that just once they might like something he actually went into a department store and selected.

2. How is Milkman like his father? How is he different? How does he see himself in relation and likeness to his father (hint: look through earlier chapters - there is textual evidence that will help you here).

3. Briefly outline the evolution of Milkman's relationship with Hagar. Why does he begin to reject her? Is it something she or he does? Explain. What is the most offensive aspect or line in his good-bye letter to her? Why does it affect her so? What does the inclusion of that line tell us about Milkman?



4. Through the discussion between Milkman and Guitar that occurs on pgs. 101-106, what do we learn about Milkman's basic and fundamental relationship between himself and the rest of the world? Does he know or care about anyone? Does it make a difference? Does Guitar? How are their views contrasted? Use at least two quotes from the text in supporting your view and explanation.

5. (extra credit) What story does Guitar tell Milkman to help MM understand why he feels bad about hitting his father? Does it help Milkman? Does Milkman see his mother as a doe? Why or Why not?