

Song of Solomon Group Work #4 - Chapter 9

1. What word does Corinthians use to describe her job? Why? Besides this euphemism – what else does she do (be specific with at least two examples) to shield her family (and perhaps herself) from the nature of her true job?
2. Why this job? What happened to her while growing up that made her “unsuited” for anything else – be specific. Now go forward to the end of the chapter – what is in Magdalene’s speech that talks about the same kind of “unsuited” upbringing that the girls have been given?
3. Why does Mrs. Graham hire her (she almost doesn’t)? How is her attitude towards Corrie reflected in specific actions that she takes towards her maid?
4. What is covering the walls of Porter’s apartment? Ahhhhh – do you get it? Explain. How is Porter going against the directives of the Seven Days?



5. Why exactly does Corinthians jump on Porter’s car? What does this have to do with the sound of the “clicking door” from the last chapter – with the landlocked nature of Midwesterners – with the red velvet petals? Use your group to look through this (and other) chapter(s) and come up with 5 specific examples that address her desperation?

5b. What do Corinthians’ actions (both the job and car jumping) have to do with Railroad Tommy’s speech to Milkman and Guitar (pgs 59-60)? How does Porter’s speech on 200 (on what he is giving her) fit in with Tommy’s earlier speech? How does Corinthians jumping on the car relate to Elaine Robinson’s last words to her mother? (hint: it’s at the church). With peacocks? (maybe not limited to male birds after all – think about her reluctance to take Porter’s card to begin with) - and the type of kiss that she plants on his throat.



6. What do Pilate’s actions in the police station tell us about her *character* (both her fictional character and her personal makeup, personality). Is she a **sell-out**? What do her roots, east & west feet, and geography book have to do with your answer (hopefully something?) BE SPECIFIC. ALSO – remember what she said about a brother is a brother if you treat them like one – does that mean you are NOT a sell-out if it is only your appearance and not your actions that are “selling out”?

6b. What so angers Guitar about her actions? Is he justified? What have we seen in Guitar’s character (and feelings to women) that may have foretold his reaction – be specific (there are two very good examples you should quote)? Look at page 210 – What does Milkman realize about Guitar regarding the 7 Days and his (Guitar’s) hatred of Pilate?

6c. On that same page, what does Milkman think of how she acted (you will find one earlier when Corrie returns - be specific)? Does Milkman’s view of her (Pilate’s) actions change? How have our views changed? Macon once called her a

snake – specifically, based on Chapter 9 – how is that true (think of changing skins) and is that necessarily a bad thing? Explain.

7. Is Lena correct when she accuses Milkman of disrespecting (I know those aren't her words, but...) his family? What is the connection with the dying tree, his action when he was a boy that ruined his sister's dress. Did he tell his father about his sister and Porter out of concern? How does what she says explain his earlier hitting of his father? Explain. If Milkman believes that freedom lies in getting away from his past and his family (see chapter 8) then what impact do Lena's words have on that argument? Be very specific and use at least two quotes in answering this question.

7b. How does what Lena tell Milkman fit in with what Guitar has been saying to him for much of the book? Is it possible for Guitar to be right about this even if he has no moral standing to be giving such advice to Milkman – explain.

7c. Notice the shutting of the door at the very end of this chapter – right before Part II. Connect and comment.