Milkman Dead’s Character In The Novel Song Of Solomon

Toni Morrison showed a journey in Milkman Dead’s character in her novel: Song of Solomon. The narrator writes in the third person but concentrates at times on what individual characters are thinking, feeling, seeing, and hearing. Because the narrator switches focus from character to character, we know more about the events in the novel than any of the individual characters. While the narrator interprets and comments on the characters’ feelings and actions, we do not know whether the narrator’s observations are accurate or complete. However, we can see that Morrison focuses more on Milkman throughout the novel, starting from his childhood.

Milkman Dead tries to leave the confines of his parent's home as he feels overwhelmed and becomes an independent man - this is the first step of his journey. He is held back by restrictions of wealth and class, and the ignorance of his own family history has a great influence. Suffocated by the oppressive conditions of the household, which belonged to Macon Jr., Milkman gets involved in a plan to gain his financial independence by stealing gold from Pilate. His journey continues when he travels from Michigan to Pennsylvania, and finds a cave in which there is supposed to be a hidden treasure. After examining the cave, Milkman could not find any treasure and discovers that there has never been. After his failure in finding gold in the cave, Milkman gets involved in a journey of personal self-discovery. Milkman travels to Shalimar, Virginia, where he finds out about his forgotten family history.

Later in the novel, we notice that: Milkman’s eventual flight off Solomon’s Leap is foreshadowed in the first chapter when we are told that he is born in Mercy Hospital the day after Robert Smith’s flight. Later we get to know that the song Pilate sings in the first chapter, about Sugarman’s flight home, foreshadows the eventual discovery of Solomon’s Song in Shalimar. Also, Guitar’s involvement with the Seven Days is foreshadowed during his heated participation in the discussions about racism at Tommy’s Barbershop. First Corinthians’s love affair with Porter, a member of the Seven Days, is foreshadowed when Freddie tells Milkman that Guitar might be involved in covering up a murder of a white boy. Finally, in his statements to Pilate, the ghost of Macon Dead reveals both his wife’s name, Sing, and also the fact that his bones are tied up.

All these contributed to Milkman’s journey of self-discovery.