

**Introduce yourself. Tell where you are from and where you live now. What color is the most soothing (calming) to you?**

### **The Secret Life of Bees Part 6**

My mother's name was Deborah. I thought that was the prettiest name I'd ever heard, even though T. Ray refused to speak it. Once when I asked him when her birthday was and what cake icing she preferred, he told me to shut up, and when I asked him a second time, he picked up a jar of blackberry jelly and threw it against the kitchen cabinet. We have blue stains on that cabinet to this day.

1. *What did Lily ask T. Ray that made him so mad?*
2. *What did T. Ray do to show his anger?*

I did manage to get a few scraps of information from him though, such as my mother was buried in Virginia where her people came from. I got worked up at that, thinking I'd found a grandmother or some aunts and uncles. "No," he tells me, my mother was an only child whose mother died ages ago.

*What does Lily mean when she says she, "got worked up" when she heard where her mother was from?*

*Why was the idea of having a grandmother or aunts and uncles so exciting for her?*

The only time T. Ray ever talked about my mother was when he wanted to point out how crazy she was. Once when he stepped on a roach in the kitchen, he told me my mother had spent hours luring roaches out of the house with bits of marshmallow and trails of graham cracker crumbs. T. Ray said my mother was a lunatic when it came to saving bugs.

3. *Luring means persuading or tempting someone to do something by providing a reward. Who did Lily's mom lure out of the house? What does this tell us about Lily's mother?*
4. *What is a lunatic?*

Once I found a paper bag in the attic stapled at the top. Inside it I found traces of my mother. There was a photograph of a woman standing in front of an old car. I laid that photo beside my eighth grade picture and examined every possible similarity. The bag contained a pair of white cotton gloves stained the color of age. When I pulled them out, I thought "Her hands were inside here." I stuffed the gloves with cotton balls and held onto them through the night.

1. *A "trace" of something is something that makes you identify with a person. EX: She could smell traces of her mother's perfume even after she left the room.*
2. *Can you picture Lily sitting in the attic, going through the small sack that contains all she has of her mother? After my dad died, my sons wanted to keep small traces of my dad; his money clip, his gold pen that he always kept in the inside pocket of his suit jacket. They wanted to keep small things that had belonged to him so they could remember him. Have you had experiences like this?*

The biggest mystery inside the bag was a small wooden picture of Mary, the mother of Jesus. I recognized her even though her skin was black. It looked to me like somebody had cut the Black Mary's picture from a book, glued it onto a sanded piece of wood about two inches across, and varnished it. On the back someone had written, "Tiburón, S.C." How strange. Had

my mother been in Tiberon, South Carolina? I got out a map and found Tiberon. It was about 3 hours from where we lived. I decided some day, when I was grown up, I would go to Tiberon, S.C.

*Lily finds a clue that might tell her something about her mother. Describe it.*

I kept my mom's things inside a tin box, buried in the orchard. There was a special place out there in the long tunnel of trees no one knew about, not even Rosaleen. It was a low spot where I could hide from T. Ray and his meanness or from the memory of that afternoon when the gun went off. When I got older, I would slip out there after T. Ray had gone to bed, just to lie under the trees and be peaceful. I was afraid to leave her things in my room. I hated to think what T. Ray might do if he discovered them in one of my drawers.

1. *Why won't Lily keep her mother's things in her room?*
2. *Why does T. Ray not want Lily thinking about her mom?*
3. *Do you have any thoughts or questions about the story so far?*

## **VOCABULARY--BRAIN AND MIND**

The brain is an organ of your body responsible for all your reflexes and thought. Your mind is the understanding that you get from your brain. So we talk about people, "losing their mind" but not about them "losing their brain." My mother has dementia. She can't remember anything. But she still has a brain.

**Read these conversations and explain the underlined "mind" phrase.**

**Salesclerk:** May I help you?

**Customer:** I'm looking for paint for my bedroom.

**Salesclerk:** What color do you have in mind?

**Customer:** In my mind's eye, I imagine something light and soothing. Perhaps a soft, baby blue color. I really like this color. I think I'll buy this.

**Salesclerk:** That was a quick decision. You really know your own mind.

**Customer:** Haha. Not always. My husband complains that it takes forever for me to make up my mind. But this color really calms me. I know it's the one I want.

1. What is the customer looking for?
2. What color does the customer imagine she wants?
3. When the customer says, "in my mind's eye", she is seeing a mental picture of the color of paint she wants. In your mind's eye, what is the color you see in your bedroom? In other words, what do you imagine the perfect color would be?
4. To say you, "know your own mind," is a compliment. It means you have the confidence to believe your ideas are right. Someone who doesn't have confidence in their decisions is "indecisive". It is possible to be indecisive sometimes and know your own mind other times. Can you give an example of when you knew your own mind about something?

**Sara:** You look thoughtful. What's on your mind?

**Marian:** I was just thinking that I should buy a gift for my friend. It's her birthday today.

**Sara:** What kind of gift did you have in mind?

**Marian:** I didn't really have anything in mind. Do you have any suggestions?

1. When you are thoughtful, you are quiet and thinking about something. Something is "on your mind". What is on Marian's mind?
2. Does Marian know what she wants to buy?
3. What is a good birthday gift for a friend?

**Carla:** It never crossed my mind that mother expected me to call every day. She was always so independent before my father died. Now she wants me to check on her all the time.

**Alison:** Bear in mind that she is living alone for the first time. She needs some new interests to take her mind off her loneliness.

1. If something "crosses your mind," you think of it. In this conversation, what never crossed Carla's mind?
2. If you bear something in mind, you keep it in your thoughts. What does Alison want Carla to keep in her thoughts?
3. Carla is surprised that her mother is less independent now. Do you think it is surprising that Carla's mother needs more attention from her daughter now that her husband has died? Do you have similar experiences with your own parents?

**Pronunciation:**

English has many words that end in L or LE. When L or LE are at the end of the word, they are pronounced like UL in bull, not like EL in bell. Say "bull" and "bell". Hear the sound difference? So let's look at the word "table". It is pronounced tay bul. Not tay bell. The same is true of most words ending in L or LE.

**Say these words with the correct sound.**

level, particular, comfortable, sensible, table, label, taller, stable, model, able, syllable