

FUMC ESL 11-1-2021 High Intermediate and Advanced Lesson

Introduce yourself. Tell where you are from and where you live now.

The Secret Life of Bees, part 7

After my morning of capturing bees, I spent the afternoon in the peach stand out on the highway, selling T. Ray's peaches. It was the loneliest summer job a girl could have, stuck in a roadside hut with three walls and a flat tin roof. T. Ray refused to let me bring books out here and read. Once I smuggled out a book of Shakespeare's plays. Unlike my classmates, I loved reading Shakespeare. Anyway, Mrs. Watson from the next farm saw me reading. The next day in church, she said to T. Ray, "I saw your girl in the peach stand reading a big thick book. You must be proud." T. Ray was so mad, he half killed me. I was astonished. What kind of person could be against reading? T. Ray thought reading might lead to wanting to go to college, which was a total waste for a girl, as far as T. Ray was concerned.

Does Lily like working in the peach stand?

Why can't Lily take books to the peach stand any more?

How did T. Ray feel about girls going to college?

Mrs. Henry, my teacher, introduced me to good literature, and I loved reading. I always thought the best I could hope for was to attend beauty college. But Mrs. Henry said that would be insulting my intelligence. She told me I might get a scholarship to college and she lent me books from her own library to read during the summer. Without books in the peach stand, time passed so slowly. I just sat out there and thought about how much I hated the peach stand.

What did Lily think she would end up doing after graduation from high school?

What hopes did Mrs. Henry give Lily?

I remembered the day years ago when I was just about to start school for the first time. I had just turned 6. T. Ray had found me in the peach stand sticking a nail into one of his peaches. He walked over to me with his eyes squinted half shut. I thought he was about to kill me for stabbing that peach. I didn't even know why I was doing it. Instead, he said, "Lily, you're starting school tomorrow, so there are things you need to know. About your mother."

For a moment everything got still and quiet. The wind died down and the birds stopped flying. He squatted down in front of me. I wanted to get away from him, but I couldn't move. "It's time you knew what happened to her, and I want you to hear it from me. Not from these gossipy town people."

The memory of the day my mother died would come back to me at odd moments. The stuck window. The smell of her. The clink of hangers. The suitcase. The way they'd fought and shouted. Most of all, the gun on the floor. The heaviness when I'd lifted it.

I knew that the explosion I'd heard that day had killed her. The sound still sneaked into my head once in a while and surprised me. Sometimes it seemed that when I'd held the gun there hadn't been any noise at all, that it had come later, but other times, sitting alone on the back steps, bored and wishing for something to do, I felt I had caused it, that when I lifted the gun, the sound had torn through the room and gouged our hearts.

Does Lily know for sure who shot her mother?

T. Ray said, "The day she died, she was cleaning out the closet." I had never thought about what she was doing, but I was pretty sure she wasn't cleaning out the closet. I remembered the open suitcase that she was dropping clothes into. It looked to me like my mother was going on a trip. "I remember," I said. T. Ray's eyebrows lifted. "You what?" His voice got louder. "I remember you were yelling at each other," I said. T. Ray's lips started to turn white. That was the sign I always watched for. White lips meant T. Ray was getting mad and might explode. I wanted to say, "You know what, I don't remember." T. Ray cursed a bit and said, "Lily, you were four years old. There is no way you could remember anything about that day." I looked down at my shoes. "I remember the gun," I said. T. Ray stood up and walked to the back of the stand. He stood there a minute with his hands balled into fists before he turned around and came back.

"What else?" he said. "You tell me right now what you know!"

"The gun was on the floor," I said

"And you picked it up. I guess you remember that." said T. Ray.

I wanted to break and run. "I remember picking it up," I said. "But that's all."

He reached down and held me by the shoulders and shook me. "You don't remember anything else? You're sure?" I paused so long he cocked his head, looking at me, suspicious. "No sir. That's all," I said.

"Listen to me," he said, his fingers squeezing my arms. "We were arguing, like you said. We didn't see you there at first. Then we turned around and you were standing there holding the gun. Then it just went off. You didn't mean to do it. It was an accident. Now you know what happened." T. Ray let go of me. He stared out into space a minute as if he was remembering. Then he said, "The police asked lots of questions. They acted like they didn't believe me. But that's what happened. And if anybody says something different, you tell them they're wrong. You hear?"

Then he started walking back to the house. He stopped for a minute and I thought, maybe he'll come back here and pick me up and hug me and tell me everything is alright. But he didn't. He just pointed at me and said, "And don't you ever stick nails into one of my peaches again."

Are their differences between the story T. Ray tells and Lily's memories?

Do you think Lily shot her mother?

More "Mind" Idioms

Ginger: My daughter is really on my mind these days. She got Covid and I worry she will have to go to the hospital.

Helen: I will keep her in mind when I am offering prayers.

1. Why is Ginger's daughter on her mind?
2. What does Helen mean, "when I am offering prayers."

Margaret: Ella is running for mayor of our little town. She made her first speech yesterday. She was so nervous she just started saying whatever came to mind. It didn't make any sense. It was so embarrassing.

Nell: She's not good at thinking on her feet.

Margaret: No one in their right mind would vote for her. There is no doubt in mind she will lose the election.

Nell: I try to keep an open mind. I don't know if the other candidate is any better.

1. Who is running for mayor?
2. What did Ella do that was embarrassing?
3. Are you good at "thinking on your feet"?
4. Does Margaret think Ella will win the election?
5. Does Nell plan to vote for Ella?

Oscar: Are you going to the party? Do you mind if I ride with you? I don't want to take my car in case I decide to drink.

Pete: I'm not sure whether I will go or not. I'm not a big party-goer. I have to be in the right frame of mind to enjoy partying.

1. What does Oscar ask Pete?
2. Does Pete love parties?

Roland: That lecture was so dull. I couldn't keep my mind on what the professor was saying. I don't know how I'll pass this class if all the lectures are that boring.

Sandy: I'm sure if you put your mind to it, you can pass the class.

1. Why does Roland think he might not pass the class?
2. Do you believe you can do most things if you just "put your mind to it"? Did your parents ever tell you this?

Mother: I don't think you should go out to dinner with your boss. He's married.

Daughter: Mind your own business!

Mother: Mind your manners! I'm just trying to give you a little advice. You should be mindful of what people in the office might think of you. They might assume you're going out with the boss in order to get a promotion.

1. Should Mother mind her own business or is she right to warn her daughter?
2. Did your Mother ever give you advice that you didn't want to hear?

Tara: I really loved that book. It captures the mindset of a teenage girl.

Wendy: I read that book several weeks ago and I'm afraid I don't remember much of it. I must be losing my mind because I can't remember books that I've just finished reading.

Husband: How about going out for sushi tonight?

Wife: You read my mind. I was just thinking about eating out.

1. Can your spouse "read your mind"?

Aretha: I want to give that woman a piece of my mind. She pulled in front of me, then slowed down. I had to hit the brakes hard to avoid hitting her. At least I had the presence of mind to memorize her license number. I will report her to the police.

Barb: You sound really angry about it.

Aretha: Oh, don't mind me. I just like to rant about bad drivers.

1. Why is Aretha mad?
2. What did she have the presence of mind to do?
3. What does "rant" mean?

Cindy: Knowing you will be my daughter's roommate, really takes a load off my mind. I know you'll help keep her mind on her schoolwork.

Deb: Keep in mind that Tara has a mind of her own. I may not be able to influence her.

1. Is Cindy happy Deb will be her daughter's roommate? Why or why not?
2. Is Deb confident she can influence Cindy's daughter?
3. Do your children have minds of their own?