The Secret Life of Bees

**Section #1: For each quotation below, think about what the character is feeling. Write a short response, comparing this feeling to your own life. Then go back and choose one of the quotations, plus one of your own. For these two, please write a one-paragraph response, using the PEAR method.**

1. “People who think dying is the worst thing don’t know a thing about life.” (2)

2. “I worried so much about how I looked and whether I was doing things right, I felt half the time I was impersonating a girl instead of really being one.” (9)

3. “Nothing seemed quite real.” (36)

4. “In the space of a few hours I’d become forty years old.” (43)

5. “That was the absolute way of things. Loss takes up inside of everything sooner or later and eats right through it.” (55)

6. “Day one of my new life, I said to myself. That’s what this is.” (57)

7. “I realized it for the first time in my life: there is nothing but mystery in the world….” (63)

8. “The body knows things a long time before the mind catches up to them.” (69)

9. “Standing there, I loved myself and I hated myself.” (71)

10. “Takes out the bad stuff, leaves in the good. I’ve always thought how nice it would be to have spinners like this for human beings.” (77)

Here are some sample PEAR paragraphs. Let’s analyze them together.

Quotation: “I heard a voice say, *Lily Melissa Owens, your jar is open*.” (41)

Response #1:

This happens when the main character thinks that God is talking to her. God is telling her to run away. He says the jar thing because of what happened with the bees. She listens to him and she runs away, taking Rosaleen with her.

Response #2:

The narrator, Lily, is saying this line. This line is important because she is unhappy and wants to do something about it. It is like God is giving her permission to run away. The bees she caught earlier in the story left when the jar was opened, and now it is her turn to leave. The bees never come back to the jar, and Lily doesn’t ever want to come back either. I think this is going to be important later in the story. I think this because running away is such a drastic thing to do, and once you do you can’t take it back. Your life is changed forever. I know if I ran away from home I would meet people and see and do things I would never do if I stayed put. That’s why it is important.

Response #3

This quotation is a critical point in the story, both for the main character, Lily, and for the reader. Lily needs to decide if she is going to wait for her father to come back and punish her, or if she is going to take control of her own destiny by leaving before her father returns. The voice she hears could be God, her own conscience, her future self – Lily isn’t sure. Lily decides to listen to the voice and run away. Most readers can relate to this, because everyone has heard that voice from time to time and, like Lily, has had to decide whether or not to listen.