**Hour of the Bees**

**Comprehension, Inference, and Connecting Questions**

**Chapters 1 to 5**

1. Grandpa Serge’s sheep ranch is describes as “forgotten by civilization.” (page 3) Do you agree with this assessment? Give 3 – 5 examples of how the ranch was forgotten.
2. Grandpa Serge suffers from dementia. What is dementia? What are its symptoms, causes, and treatments? Do some research into this condition and share your findings.
3. On page 7, the narrator states that father has **“…been gone for twelve years – there is everything to say.”** What is meant by the end of this quote?
4. Do you think that Carol is “**spitting on her roots**” because she goes by Carol, instead of Carolina?
5. Why do you think that the author used this simile to describe Grandpa Serge’s speech pattern: “**This chant drips out of his mouth like water from a leaky faucet**”?
6. Carol’s family was Mexican American, but “**we never act like the Mexican part,”** she said (page 37). Why do you think that Carol’s family doesn’t embrace their heritage?
7. Consider your culture. What aspects of your heritage do you welcome and incorporate into your life? Are there any parts of your culture that you don’t embrace?
8. Why do you think that Grandpa Serge won’t sleep in his bedroom?
9. Carol was born on the same day that her grandmother died. Why do you think that the author included this? Might this foreshadow something yet to come?
10. “**Death lurks around every corner of this ranch.”** (page 77) Pick an example and explain how your example supports this quote.

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**Chapters 6 to 10**

1. Serge thought the village was perfect and needed no more than what the tree, the lake, and the bees had to offer. Rosa thought the village was boring and wanted to see the world beyond the village. Who would you side with if you had to take a side? Explain why.
2. What did Grandpa Serge mean when he said, “I’m as old as time itself”? (page 106)
3. Grandpa Serge said that he measured the passage of time by counting his sheep. What might he meant by this?
4. The author used the metaphor of a light switch to describe Grandpa Serge’s brain (page 115). Is that an effective metaphor? Explain.
5. Grandpa Serge described several ways that nature tells time. Detail one of his examples or provide one of your own.
6. Grandpa Serge said, **“Stories don’t end. They just turn into new beginnings**.” (page 123) What did he mean? Do you agree?
7. Why does the author compare Grandpa Serge’s rhythm to “**the ancient heartbeat of the ranch**?” (page 133)
8. Why do you think that the village chopped down the tree?

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**Chapter 11 to 15**

1. Why were the villagers eager to set off on their own adventures, while Sergio was not?
2. During her time on the ranch, Carol learns something new about each of her family members. Pick one and detail what Carol learned about that individual. How did that information impact Carol’s relationship with that person?
3. How did the items in the closet confirm Grandpa Serge’s stories?
4. When Carol found the bracelet, she thought, “**The bracelet isn’t anything like who I am; it’s a bracelet for who I want to be.”** What does she mean by that?
5. “**He carved the wood as penance.”** (page 199) What does this mean? Why did Sergio need to repent?
6. “**Mom, Alta, and I beeline it to the porch.”** (page 209) What does “beeline” mean? Do you think that the author used this word purposefully? Why?
7. Sergio was sad that his child would only know the tree as lumber. In what way or ways did Sergio know the tree?
8. Grandpa Serge said, “**You put my things in boxes. You’re going to put me in a box.”** (page 212) Was he accurate?
9. Was Ines’ death on their last night at the ranch a coincidence or was there another force at play?
10. Rosa felt that change was always good. Do you agree or disagree? Support your opinion.

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**Chapters 16 to 20**

1. Grandpa Serge felt, “**It’s like she never traveled at all. Like she never lived at all.”** (page 247) Given that his memories of Rosa were so strong, why do you think he felt this way?
2. Do you believe that **“Things are only impossible if you stop to think about them”**? Explain.
3. How was Carol wrong about the ranch?
4. **“Pain is how you know that you are alive.”** (page 260) What did Rosa mean when she said this?
5. Is Rosa right when she said, “**But at least we will have lived”?** (page 260)
6. Why does Carol compare her group of friends (including her) to sheep? Is her comparison fair? Is it accurate?
7. Carol is surprised that her father knew Grandpa Serge’s stories. Why is it so hard for Carol to imagine that her father had a relationship with his father?
8. Raul said, **“You can’t even keep Mama here for a full week. She’s too desperate to get away from here. To get away from you!” (page 285)** Was that an accurate statement?
9. Raul felt that Grandpa Serge made up the stories. “…**A made-up story about a world that never existed, a past that never happened.”** (page 289) Do you agree? Did all of this happen or was it made up?
10. Why was it so important to Carol that Grandpa Serge know it was raining at the ranch?

**Hour of the Bees**

**Comprehension, Inference, and Connecting Questions**

**Chapters 21 -25**

1. What do you think Carol would say if Mr. Adair called on her a day later? What name would she use? What would she say that her grandfather taught her? What else might she say?
2. Carol thought about her grandfather’s saying, **“Things are only impossible if you stop to think about them.”** What are the advantages of believing this? What are the risks?
3. As Grandpa Serge “escapes” from Seville, does he seem as though he is suffering from dementia or does he seem “with it?”
4. Why did Grandpa Serge **“… feel like I’ve been dying for a thousand years”? (page 315)**
5. What elements of Grandpa Serge’s stories are emerging? Do they help prove that his stories were true? Are they coincidences? Are they part of a dream?
6. How was Grandpa Serge’s final story different from Raul’s? How did this truth shatter Raul’s reality?
7. Why did Carol switch to using Carolina as her name?
8. “**She didn’t think: she accepted.”** Explain the meaning of this quote. (page 357)
9. **The tree had strong roots.”** (page 354) What are the many meanings of this statement?
10. **There is no ending because stories never end. They just turn into new beginnings.”** (page 359) How does this story prove that point?
11. Early on, Carol felt that the word “grandpa” didn’t fit because Grandpa Serge didn’t fit her expectations of a traditional grandfather. How did her feelings change over the course of the book? Did he ever become a traditional grandfather as she described on page 10?