

Beholding Bee

By Kimberly Newton Fusco

Discussion Prompts

1. Beholding Bee is essentially a book about courage and learning to believe in yourself. How does Bee become self-reliant and resilient?
2. Why does Bee spend so much time hiding behind her hair?
3. Why does Pauline think it will be impossible to leave the carnival and find a new home? Why does Bee think it can be done? Why is a home so important to Bee?
4. Why can't Pauline look past the pig smell and see inside to Bobby's heart? Why is this easy for Bee?
5. Why is Bobby so important to the book?
6. Pauline says everyone has troubles, so Bee is not alone. "Some folks have troubles on the outside for everyone to see, and some have troubles on the inside where they hide and fester. "But everyone has something, Bee. So you are not alone." But Bee responds, "I think it must be way easier to have troubles on the inside where no one can see." What does Bee mean by this? Is she correct?
7. Why is resilience such an important theme in the book?
8. Why is Bee the only person who can see Mrs. Swift and Mrs. Potter? Do you believe they are really present, or are they figments of Bee's imagination? Is there any evidence that they may, in fact, be living in the house with Bee?
9. Are Mrs. Potter and Mrs. Swift ghosts, angels or something else?
10. During the 1940s, "freak shows" were common on the carnival circuit. Bee's birthmark isolates her in many ways from regular society. What are some examples of other characters in the book who face isolation/discrimination?
11. Did Mrs. Swift and Mrs. Potter face discrimination in their times? What do they try and teach Bee about being strong?
12. Is there something of a fairy tale in Beholding Bee? How?
13. Mrs. Swift's background as a suffragette gives her special knowledge of the things Bee needs in her life if she is to stand on her own two feet. Explain.
14. Special education classes have changed since the 1940s. Are children "set aside" today? Why did school officials in Bee's time think that it was important for children with special needs to be separate?