



The Secret Life of Bees

By Sue Monk Kidd

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The multi-million bestselling novel about a young girl's journey towards healing and the transforming power of love, from the award-winning author of *The Invention of Wings*

Set in South Carolina in 1964, *The Secret Life of Bees* tells the story of Lily Owens, whose life has been shaped around the blurred memory of the afternoon her mother was killed. When Lily's fierce-hearted black "stand-in mother," Rosaleen, insults three of the deepest racists in town, Lily decides to spring them both free. They escape to Tiburon, South Carolina--a town that holds the secret to her mother's past. Taken in by an eccentric trio of black beekeeping sister, Lily is introduced to their mesmerizing world of bees and honey, and the Black Madonna. This is a remarkable novel about divine female power, a story that women will share and pass on to their daughters for years to come.

From the Trade Paperback edition.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

In Sue Monk Kidd's *The Secret Life of Bees*, 14-year-old Lily Owen, neglected by her father and isolated on their South Carolina peach farm, spends hours imagining a blissful infancy when she was loved and nurtured by her mother, Deborah, whom she barely remembers. These consoling fantasies are her heart's answer to the family story that as a child, in unclear circumstances, Lily accidentally shot and killed her mother. All Lily has left of Deborah is a strange image of a Black Madonna, with the words "Tiburon, South Carolina" scrawled on the back. The search for a mother, and the need to mother oneself, are crucial elements in this well-written coming-of-age story set in the early 1960s against a background of racial violence and unrest. When Lily's beloved nanny, Rosaleen, manages to insult a group of angry white men on her way to register to vote and has to skip town, Lily takes the opportunity to go with her, fleeing to the only place she can think of--Tiburon, South Carolina--determined to find out more about her dead mother. Although the plot threads are too neatly trimmed, *The Secret Life of Bees* is a carefully crafted novel with an inspired depiction of character. The legend of the Black Madonna and the brave, kind, peculiar women who perpetuate Lily's story dominate the second half of the book, placing Kidd's debut novel squarely in the honored tradition of the Southern Gothic. --Regina Marler

From Publishers Weekly

Honey-sweet but never cloying, this debut by nonfiction author Kidd (*The Dance of the Dissident Daughter*) features a hive's worth of appealing female characters, an offbeat plot and a lovely style. It's 1964, the year of the Civil Rights Act, in Sylvan, S.C. Fourteen-year-old Lily is on the lam with motherly servant Rosaleen, fleeing both Lily's abusive father T. Ray and the police who battered Rosaleen for defending her new right to vote. Lily is also fleeing memories, particularly her jumbled recollection of how, as a frightened four-year-old, she accidentally shot and killed her mother during a fight with T. Ray. Among her mother's possessions, Lily finds a picture of a black Virgin Mary with "Tiburon, S.C." on the back so, blindly, she and Rosaleen head there. It turns out that the town is headquarters of Black Madonna Honey, produced by three middle-aged black sisters, August, June and May Boatwright. The "Calendar sisters" take in the fugitives, putting Lily to work in the honey house, where for the first time in years she's happy. But August, clearly the queen bee of the Boatwrights, keeps asking Lily searching questions. Faced with so ideally maternal a figure as August, most girls would babble uncontrollably. But Lily is a budding writer, desperate to connect yet fiercely protective of her secret interior life. Kidd's success at capturing the moody adolescent girl's voice makes her ambivalence comprehensible and charming. And it's deeply satisfying when August teaches Lily to "find the mother in (herself)" a soothing lesson that should charm female readers of all ages. (Jan. 28)Forecast: Blurbs from an impressive lineup of women writers Anita Shreve, Susan Isaacs, Ursula Hegi pitch this book straight at its intended readership. It's hard to say whether confusion with the similarly titled *Bee Season* will hurt or help sales, but a 10-city author tour should help distinguish Kidd. Film rights have been optioned and foreign rights sold in England and France.

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From School Library Journal

Adult/High School-Lily Owens, 14, is an emotionally abused white girl living with her cold, uncaring father on a peach farm in rural South Carolina. The memory of her mother, who was accidentally killed in Lily's presence when she was four, haunts her constantly. She has one of her mother's few possessions, a picture of a black Madonna with the words, Tiburon, South Carolina, written on the back. Lily's companion during her

sad childhood has been Rosaleen, the black woman hired to care for her. Rosaleen, in a euphoric mood after the passing of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, goes to town to register to vote and insults one of the town's most racist residents. After she is beaten up and hospitalized, Lily decides to rescue her and they go to Tiburon to search for memories of her mother. There they are taken in by three black sisters who are beekeepers producing a line of honey with the Black Madonna label. While racial tensions simmer around them, the women help Lily accept her loss and learn the power of forgiveness. There is a wonderful sense of the strength of female friendship and love throughout the story.

Penny Stevens, Andover College, Portland, ME

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Mary Moore:

What do you consider book? It is just for students since they are still students or the item for all people in the world, the actual best subject for that? Simply you can be answered for that problem above. Every person has different personality and hobby for every single other. Don't to be pushed someone or something that they don't would like do that. You must know how great and also important the book *The Secret Life of Bees*. All type of book is it possible to see on many resources. You can look for the internet solutions or other social media.

Jerry Petrus:

Exactly why? Because this *The Secret Life of Bees* is an unordinary book that the inside of the reserve waiting for you to snap the item but latter it will surprise you with the secret that inside. Reading this book next to it was fantastic author who have write the book in such remarkable way makes the content inside of easier to understand, entertaining way but still convey the meaning totally. So , it is good for you for not hesitating having this ever again or you going to regret it. This phenomenal book will give you a lot of positive aspects than the other book include such as help improving your proficiency and your critical thinking method. So , still want to hold off having that book? If I have been you I will go to the publication store hurriedly.

Ollie Johnson:

In this age globalization it is important to someone to get information. The information will make anyone to understand the condition of the world. The fitness of the world makes the information better to share. You can find a lot of references to get information example: internet, newspaper, book, and soon. You can see that now, a lot of publisher that will print many kinds of book. Often the book that recommended to your account is *The Secret Life of Bees* this e-book consist a lot of the information of the condition of this world now. That book was represented how do the world has grown up. The vocabulary styles that writer make usage of to explain it is easy to understand. The actual writer made some study when he makes this book. Honestly, that is why this book acceptable all of you.

Norma Brier:

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