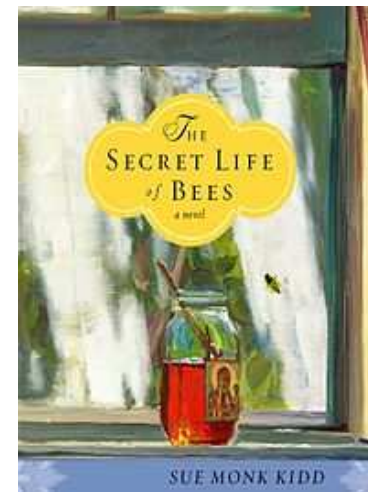


Set in South Carolina 1964, **The Secret Life of Bees** tells the story of 14-year-old white girl, Lily Melissa Owens, whose life has been shaped around the blurred memory of the afternoon her mother was killed. She lives in a house with her abusive father, whom she refers to as T. Ray. They have an African-American maid, Rosaleen, who acts as a surrogate mother for Lily. The book opens with Lily's discovery of bees in her bedroom. Then, after Rosaleen is arrested for pouring her bottle of "snuff juice" on three white men, Lily breaks her out of the hospital and they decide to leave town. They begin hitch-hiking toward Tiburon, SC, a place written on the back of an image of the Virgin Mary as a black woman, which Deborah, her mother, had owned. They spend a night in the woods with little food and little hope before reaching Tiburon. There, they buy lunch at a general store, and Lily recognizes a picture of the same "Black Mary" but on the side of a jar of honey. They receive directions to the origin of that honey, the Boatwright residence. They are introduced to the Boatwright sisters, the makers of the honey: August, May and June, who are all black. Lily makes up a story about being an orphan. Lily and Rosaleen are invited to stay with the sisters.

SUE MONK KIDD was raised in the small town of Sylvester, Georgia. She graduated from Texas Christian University in 1970 and later took creative writing courses at Emory University and Anderson College, as well as studying at Sewanee, Bread Loaf, and other writers' conferences. In her forties, Kidd turned her attention to writing fiction, winning the South Carolina Fellowship in Literature and the 1996 Poets & Writers Exchange Program in Fiction.

When her first novel, *The Secret Life of Bees*, was published by Viking in 2002, it became a genuine literary phenomenon, spending more than 2½ years on the New York Times bestseller list. It has been translated into 36 languages and sold more than 6 million copies in the U.S. and 8 million copies worldwide. *Bees* was named the Book Sense Paperback Book of the Year in 2004, long-listed for the 2002 Orange Prize in England, and won numerous awards.



The Secret life of bees
by *Sue MonkKidd*

February the 11th at 6:30 pm

Hosted by Ruth Cory



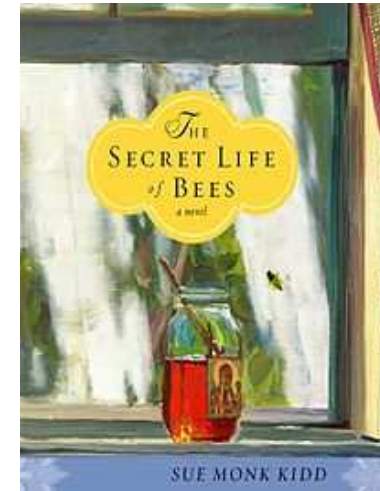
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ENGLISH READING CLUB



The Secret life of bees by Sue Monk Kidd

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