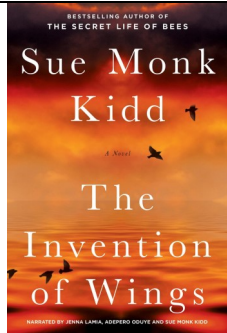




Discussion Guide



About the Book

Book Title: The Invention of Wings
Author: Sue Monk Kidd
Published: Viking, 2014
Author website: suemonkkidd.com/

Questions for Discussion

1. What were your general impressions of this book?
2. Did you learn anything about history in this book? If so, what did you learn?
3. How did the author deal with the theme of freedom? Which of the women do you think experienced freedom the most and why?
4. What African customs did Charlotte teach Handful that helped them deal with their status and look beyond slavery to their humanity?
5. What bravery did you see in this story? What happened as a result of the bravery? Is this common for people who go against the status quo to speak up against injustice?
6. What issues do you think it's important to speak up about today? How are you doing that, and does this book influence you in any way as you speak?
7. Have you read other books by Sue Monk Kidd? If so, how do you think this book compared to other books you've read?
8. Read over the MAMs comments on the book. Which of them do you most agree with and why?
9. In what ways, if any, will this book change your life or perspective?

Videos on her website at: <http://suemonkkidd.com/media-room/media-features/video/> include an interview with Oprah, shorts on characters, writing a slave story,

On YouTube: Florida Book Awards interview Sue Monk Kidd The Invention of Wings



NANCY: Sue Monk Kidd weaves fact and fiction into a creative masterpiece, providing a window into a dark time in our history, as she explores the dynamics of freedom and bondage. Her strong female characters of Handful, Charlotte, Sarah and Nina all struggle with repression and injustice in their own ways. All seem to speak out and do what they can, limited though their options seem to be. I love that she has created these strong prophets, speaking to the people of their day, that continue to speak to us in our day. Although we've come a long way since the days of slavery and women's repression, we still have a long way to go. I love that she's speaking to this day as well.



SALLIE: Yeah, Charlotte. How do you raise a child in the slave environment? Didn't she do a great job, giving Handful wings? Kidd also does a great job looking at Sarah as a young girl being given a slave and trying to protest, even as she has no choice. I loved these children, and their resolve to live beyond the constraints of their life.



ABIGAIL: I was reminded once again of how wrong the Christian church can be. Even the Quakers got it wrong! Suppressing women and making African-americans sit in different pews? Now we look back with clarity and know how wrong they were. But what are Christians confused about to-day? Why are so many churches still segregated?



MOLLY: Mm, mm, mmm. Hard to read. So hard to put myself back in that place of my ancestors and what they suffered at the hands of these plantation owners. And today? We've still got some of this stuff going on 150 years later. Why do we need Black Lives Matter? Because they just still don't for too many white people. This book disturbs me because I just think there are still a lot of problems because of slavery and the way people treat others.



PRISCILLA: Weren't Charlotte and Handful something? I loved the descriptions of the clothes they were making. And that story quilt! They were fabric artists, and they used the quilts to express important things, like the triangles representing the wings. I wish I could see some of their quilts. Our Underground Railroad House has a display about quilts. We should all go visit it sometime. You know they have a Juneteenth celebration coming up in a few weeks. What do you



JANE: Talk about exploitation of the workforce! I know, as a business owner, I always wanted to keep labor costs down, but how do you do that in a way that's good for the workers, too? I've been thinking more about Molly's idea of the Triple Bottom Line business. Weird that slavery would make me start thinking we need to do something different with our businesses.



KATHARINE: I think she did a wonderful job bringing this era alive and I think this would be a great book to have students read while studying early American history. I also think I could use it with my Religion and ethics class. Wonderfully written. I love this book!