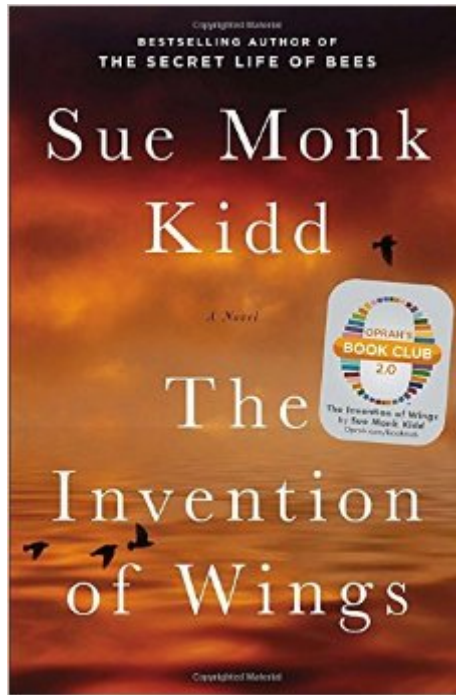


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The Invention Of Wings



Synopsis

From the celebrated author of *The Secret Life of Bees*, a magnificent novel about two unforgettable American women. Writing at the height of her narrative and imaginative gifts, Sue Monk Kidd presents a masterpiece of hope, daring, the quest for freedom, and the desire to have a voice in the world—and it is now the newest Oprah's Book Club 2.0 selection. Hetty "Handful" Grimke, an urban slave in early nineteenth century Charleston, yearns for life beyond the suffocating walls that enclose her within the wealthy Grimke household. The Grimke's daughter, Sarah, has known from an early age she is meant to do something large in the world, but she is hemmed in by the limits imposed on women. Kidd's sweeping novel is set in motion on Sarah's eleventh birthday, when she is given ownership of ten year old Handful, who is to be her handmaid. We follow their remarkable journeys over the next thirty five years, as both strive for a life of their own, dramatically shaping each other's destinies and forming a complex relationship marked by guilt, defiance, estrangement and the uneasy ways of love. As the stories build to a riveting climax, Handful will endure loss and sorrow, finding courage and a sense of self in the process. Sarah will experience crushed hopes, betrayal, unrequited love, and ostracism before leaving Charleston to find her place alongside her fearless younger sister, Angelina, as one of the early pioneers in the abolition and women's rights movements. Inspired by the historical figure of Sarah Grimke, Kidd goes beyond the record to flesh out the rich interior lives of all of her characters, both real and invented, including Handful's cunning mother, Charlotte, who courts danger in her search for something better. This exquisitely written novel is a triumph of storytelling that looks with unswerving eyes at a devastating wound in American history, through women whose struggles for liberation, empowerment, and expression will leave no reader unmoved.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Amazing in every way, Sue Monk Kidd manages to excel in storytelling, character, and an inspiring if sorrowful message in her latest, "The Invention of Wings". Wings is based loosely on the real-life story of Sarah Grimke, a Southern aristocrat whose father is a bigshot judge on South Carolina's Supreme Court, where Sarah wants to be eventually. She is given a slave (Handful) for her 11th birthday, which strikes the little firebrand as something ridiculous. How can someone OWN another person? She doesn't want the "gift" but she's forced to accept. From there, the story is set in motion and follows the two women as they struggle for a common goal: freedom. Handful, naturally, struggles for her freedom from bondage, and Sarah for her freedom from the misogynist oppression of pre-suffrage era sexism. She's taught how to needlepoint and play piano, but she escapes her constrained existence by getting into her father's forbidden library and dreaming of great things like abolition work. Kidd does a wonderful job portraying the barbarism of that time in American history and especially the horrid mistreatment of the slaves, graphically detailing whippings and other abuses. She also intertwines the characters beautifully in almost a female version of Huckleberry Finn. I hadn't read Kidd's first book, but I will go back and read that based on my experience with Wings. I love books that explore deeper ideas than just entertaining plot. Wings explores ideas of freedom, gender roles, race relations, the law, and belief. The only other place I've seen this balance of emotion and ideas is in

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