

About the Author

SUE MONK KIDD

A native of Sylvester, Georgia, Sue Monk Kidd initially pursued a career in nursing before she began to study writing in her 30s. By her mid-40s, Kidd's fictional short stories were being published in literary journals, with her work garnering critical acclaim and various awards.

Her first novel, *The Secret Life of Bees*, was released in 2002. It remained on the *New York Times* bestseller list for more than two years and was later adapted into a movie.

The Mermaid Chair, her sophomore work, also became a bestseller when it was published in 2005.

Her most recent novel, *The Invention of Wings*, has been another bestselling work with more than one million copies sold. It has been translated into two dozen languages.

Sue and her husband live in southwest Florida. They have two adult children.



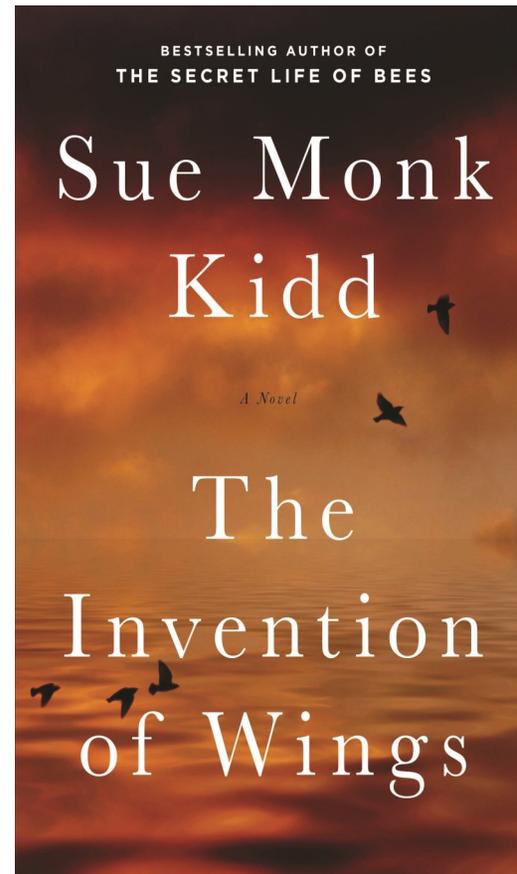
ROSENBERG LIBRARY
MUSEUM BOOK CLUB

PROGRAM AGENDA

Fall 2017

Presented by Rosenberg Library

12:00 noon	Welcome & Introductions
12:00-12:15	Historical Presentation
12:15-1:00	Book Discussion



Rosenberg Library's Museum Book Club provides a forum for discovery and discussion, linking literary selections with artworks and historical objects from the permanent collection.

1. What were the qualities in Handful you most admired? As you read the novel, could you imagine yourself in her situation? How did Handful continue her relentless pursuit of and freedom in the face of such a brutal system?
2. In what ways does Sarah struggle against the dictates of her family, society, and religion? Can you relate to her need to break away from the life she had in order to create a new and unknown life? What sort of risk and courage does this call for?
3. Were you aware of the role that Sarah and Angelina Grimke played in abolition and women's rights? Have women's achievements in history been lost or overlooked?
4. Some of the staunchest enemies of slavery believed the time had not yet come for women's rights and pressured Sarah and Angelina to desist from the cause, fearing it would split the cause of abolition. How do you think the sisters should have responded to their demand? At the end of the novel, Sarah asks, "Was it ever right to sacrifice one's truth for expedience?"
5. Contrast Handful's relationship with her mother with the relationship between Sarah and Mrs. Grimke. How are the two younger women formed—and malformed—by their mothers?
6. Kidd portrays an array of male characters in the novel: Sarah's father; Sarah's brother, Thomas; Theodore Weld; Denmark Vesey; Goodis Grimke; Israel Morris; Burke Williams. Some of them are men of their time while some are ahead of their time. Which of these male characters do you find most compelling? What positive and negative roles did they play in Sarah and Handful's evolvment?
7. Sarah believed she could not have both a vocation and marriage. Do you think she made the right decision in turning down Israel's proposal? How does her situation compare with Angelina's marriage to Theodore? In what ways are women today still asking the question of whether they can have it all?
8. How has your understanding of slavery been changed by reading *The Invention of Wings*? What did you learn about it that you didn't know before?