

THE SECRET LIFE OF BEES

Sue Monk Kidd

- 1. Describe Lily's relationship with her mother, Deborah. What makes their relationship so complicated?*
- 2. What is the significance of the female communities in the novel? How do they help Lily grow up?*
- 3. In what ways does Sue Monk Kidd root The Secret Life of Bees in a specific time and place? How does this tie into Lily's experience of coming-of-age?*
- 4 Compare and contrast the ways in which Lily and Zach are restricted by their ethnicities.*
- 5 In what ways does Lily change throughout the course of the novel? In the end, in what ways has she grown up? In what ways might she still be a child?*
- 6. At the end of the novel, T. Ray decides to let Lily stay in Tiburon. Is this decision in keeping with his character? Why or why not?*
- 7 Discuss the novel's religious symbolism. Is The Secret Life of Bees a religious novel? Why or why not?*
- 8. In what ways does Lily's mother, Deborah, actually serve as Lily's guardian angel? How does Deborah manage to help, teach, and love Lily, even though she died when Lily was small?*
- 9. What is the significance of August's discussion of "motherly love" with Lily? Does August practice what she preaches?*