

Olentangy Local School District Literature Selection Review

Teacher:	John Giusto	School:	OLMS
Book Title:	The Secret Life of Bees	Genre:	Historical Fiction
Author:	Sue Monk Kidd	Pages:	336
Publisher:	Penguin	Copyright:	January 28, 2003

In a brief rationale, please provide the following information relative to the book you would like added to the school's book collection for classroom use. You may attach additional pages as needed.

Book Summary and summary citation: (suggested resources include book flap summaries, review summaries from publisher, book vendors, etc.)

Sue Monk Kidd's ravishing debut novel has stolen the hearts of reviewers and readers alike with its strong, assured voice. Set in South Carolina in 1964, *The Secret Life of Bees* tells the story of Lily Owens, whose life has been shaped around the blurred memory of the afternoon her mother was killed. When Lily's fierce-hearted "stand-in mother," Rosaleen, insults three of the town's fiercest racists, Lily decides they should both escape to Tiburon, South Carolina--a town that holds the secret to her mother's past. There they are taken in by an eccentric trio of black beekeeping sisters who introduce Lily to a mesmerizing world of bees, honey, and the Black Madonna who presides over their household. This is a remarkable story about divine female power and the transforming power of love--a story that women will share and pass on to their daughters for years to come. (From www.amazon.com)

Provide an instructional rationale for the use of this title, including specific reference to the OLSD curriculum map(s): (Curriculum maps may be referenced by grade/course and indicator number or curriculum maps with indicators highlighted may be attached to this form)

Literary Applications Literary

Gain and demonstrate a deeper understanding of human story by reading varieties of genres.

10. Examine author's purpose and style.

10RALG

11. Determine purpose for reading and strategies needed for comprehension.

12. Compare and contrast literary elements in similar literary works.

13. Analyze plot, character, theme, point of view and setting in varied genres. 10RALA,B, 12RALA

Reading Process

Develop and apply strategies to comprehend and interpret text.

5. Read purposefully and automatically, using comprehension and self-monitoring strategies. 10RPA,C

Include two professional reviews of this title: (a suggested list of resources for identifying professional reviews is shown below. Reviews may be “cut and pasted” (with citation) into the form or printed reviews may be attached to the form)

Review #1

Fourteen-year-old Lily and Rosaleen, the black woman who has been Lily's stand-in mother for ten years, take to the road in 1964. Rosaleen is escaping from jail after insulting the town's racists while Lily flees her abusive father and the haunting memory of her mother's violent death. They journey to Tiburon, South Carolina, because Lily found the place name on the back of a black Madonna picture among her late mother's possessions. Lily hopes that she will discover a link to her mother in the small town. There the runaways are sheltered by May, June, and August—black beekeeping sisters who are also keepers of the truth Lily seeks. Lily finds the home she has always missed with the sisters and their eccentric friends. Lily learns more about her mother and herself from living with the sisters. This rich, engaging novel tells of loss and hope. Kidd is especially skilled at giving Lily a real voice. She has believable strengths, weaknesses, and reactions to the world around her. The other characters are wise and understanding mother figures, but Lily captures the reader. This novel also is of place and setting—the oppressive heat, the swarming bees, the countryside smells, and the pervasive racism are experienced through Kidd's words. When Lily, who has always felt unlovable, realizes that she is loved by many and that "there is nothing perfect... there is only life," the novel draws to its expected and hoped-for conclusion. Older teenage girls will enjoy this comforting read about the search to "find the mother inside yourself... the strength and consolation and rescue, and all the other things we need to get through life." VOYA CODES: 5Q 3P S A/YA (Hard to imagine it being any better written; Will appeal with pushing; Senior High, defined as grades 10 to 12; Adult and Young Adult). 2002, Viking, 303 (from: www.barnesandnoble.com)

Review #2

Adult/High School-Lily Owens, 14, is an emotionally abused white girl living with her cold, uncaring father on a peach farm in rural South Carolina. The memory of her mother, who was accidentally killed in Lily's presence when she was four, haunts her constantly. She has one of her mother's few possessions, a picture of a black Madonna with the words, Tiburon, South Carolina, written on the back. Lily's companion during her sad childhood has been Rosaleen, the black woman hired to care for her. Rosaleen, in a euphoric mood after the passing of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, goes to town to register to vote and insults one of the town's most racist residents. After she is beaten up and hospitalized, Lily decides to rescue her and they go to Tiburon to search for memories of her mother. There they are taken in by three black sisters who are beekeepers producing a line of honey with the Black Madonna label. While racial tensions simmer around them, the women help Lily accept her loss and learn the power of forgiveness. There is a wonderful sense of the strength of female friendship and love throughout the story.

Penny Stevens, Andover College, Portland, ME Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. (From www.amazon.com)

What alternate text(s) could also fulfill the instructional requirements?

Title: **The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman** Author: **Gaines**

Title: **Watsons Go To Birmingham 1963** Author: **Curtis**

Title: Author:

Title: Author:

Title: Author:

Title:

Author:

Document any potentially controversial content:

Mild profanity connected to the context of the characters and setting. Mild, racially motivated violence is a center storyline for this book.

Keeping in mind the age, academic level, and maturity of the intended reader, what is the suggested classroom use: (check all that apply)

Gifted/Accelerated Regular At Risk

GRADE LEVEL(S): 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Reading level of this title (if applicable): 7

Date Submitted to Department Chair: May 8, 2007

Suggested Professional Literary Review Sources:

School Library Journal

Horn Book

Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates)

Library Journal

Book Links

Publisher's Weekly

Booklist

Kirkus Review

Wilson Library Catalog

English Journal (and other resources of the National Council of Teachers of English)

The Reading Teacher (International Reading Association)

Literature for Today's Young Adults