

Annotations Journal, *The Invention of Wings*, by Sue Monk Kidd

Q2 Credit: DUE by Jan. 5

PART ONE Directions: Choose ONE of the following topics to focus on during your reading of the novel. As you read, make annotations (notes of your analysis, connections, and ideas) focused on the topic you have chosen for your study of the novel. At the end of each part of the novel (there are six parts to the novel), write a "meaty" paragraph discussion of your topic based on your annotations.

TOPICS

- Sarah and Handful battle for different kinds of freedom. Handful remarks to Sarah, “My body might be a slave, but not my mind. For you, it’s the other way around.” How is the issue of freedom developed in these two characters?
- Two of the great movements of the twentieth century—Civil Rights and feminism— were fueled by early 19th century innovations of thought about abolition and women’s rights, two major motifs in the novel. What messages about these movements does the novel convey to readers? How are these ideas connected in the novel?
- The relationships between mothers and daughters and between sisters are explored in the two parallel mother/daughter relationships in the novel. What connections and conclusions can be made about these female relationships?
- Storytelling happens in many ways in the novel. How does Handful’s mother, Charlotte, tell her story? How does that become a symbol throughout the story? What does it mean to Charlotte and to Handful?
- Sarah and Handful’s relationship begins when they are children and continues into adulthood. Kidd stated: "To a large extent, they mold one another’s lives and shape each other’s destinies. There’s an undeniable caring between them, but also the built-in gulf of slavery. Their relationship is disfigured by so many things: guilt, shame, pity, resentment, defiance, estrangement... I tried to create a relationship that allows for all of that, yet also has room for surprise, redemption, and even love." Is their relationship a friendship? What kind of “disfigurement” occurs and why? What kind of “redemption” is achieved and how?
- Kidd said this about her title: "I discovered an American black folktale about people in Africa being able to fly and then losing their wings when captured into slavery, and that notion began to slip into the story in different ways. Sometimes, while writing, I listened to songs the slaves sang: “Now let me fly... now let me fly, now let me fly way up high.” What does the title "The Invention of Wings" symbolize? Trace how are wings used as a central metaphor in the story and what that metaphor means.

IF YOU ARE USING THIS NOVEL FOR YOUR Q3 READING ENHANCEMENT, COMPLETE PART TWO ALSO (and you do not get Q2 credit and Q3 credit with the same book).

Q3 credit: DUE DATE: TUESDAY, FEB. 16 (turn in annotations and post essay on your digital learning portfolio, on your Literature page(s)).

PART TWO Directions: After you finish the novel, choose ONE of the following final reflection topics to discuss in a 1.5-page (minimum) essay:

FINAL REFLECTION—Choose ONE of the following topics:

- How does this relate to other works you have read this year: *The Crucible*? *Caleb's Crossing*? *The Scarlet Letter*? What relationships or connections do you find between these works? What do these connections add to your understanding of *The Invention of Wings* and to your understanding of your own life and times?
- When asked what she wants people to take away from reading *The Invention of Wings*, Kidd said:

I most want the reader to take away a felt experience of the story, of what slavery might have been like for someone or what it was like for a woman before she had any rights. I want the reader to feel as if he or she has participated in the interior lives of the characters and felt something of their yearnings, sufferings, joys, and braveries.

That's a large hope. Empathy—taking another's experience and making it one's own—is one of the most mysterious and noble transactions a human can have. It's the real power of fiction. In the Author's Note at the end of the novel, I quote some words by Professor Julius Lester, words I kept visible on my desk as I wrote: 'History is not just facts and events. History is also a pain in the heart and we repeat history until we are able to make another's pain in the heart our own.'

What does Kidd mean in her statement about history? How successful is the novel in achieving her goal? What does reading this novel bring to your study of U.S. History in that class?