
Religion In The Secret Life Of Bees

Religion- The belief in and worship of a superhuman controlling power, especially a personal God or gods. Lily is a teenage girl whose mother died when she was young and uses religious symbols to find connect with her mother. She grows up with her unloving father. Lily is closer with Rosaleen her nanny who is African American. Sue Monk Kidd asserts that religious symbols show importance within the novel helping not only Lily but other members of the boatwright house.

In The Secret Life of Bees Sue Monk Kidd shows the importance of religion and how religion shows symbolism within the novel. Lily is introduced to Black Virgin Mary or "Our Lady of Chains" she feels a connection with it and is overwhelmed with emotions.

The Lips on the statue had a beautiful, bossy half smile, the sight of which caused me to move both my hands up to my throat. Everything about that smile said, Lily Owens, I know you down to the core. (Kidd, 71)

Throughout Lily's journey she has been seeking answers about her mother's death but deep down is also searching for a motherly figure. Lily is introduced to Black Mary and puts her hand on her heart she feels a connection to her mother. She becomes overwhelmed and faints.

In The Secret Life of Bees Lily and T.ray have no connection and he is often abusive towards his daughter. She would look to god and pray.

I had asked God repeatedly to do something about T. Ray. He'd gone to church for forty years and was only getting worse. (Kidd, 3).

Early on in the story Lily shows how T.ray has been religious for a while but it never changed him. Lily would pray to god to do something about him and even after he attended church he was still aggressive and neglectful. Lily looks to God for help cope with T.ray and her mother's death. These religious figures help Lily cope throughout the story.

Kidd asserts that Lily needed to seek answers from God and to look for religious symbols. After Lily's mother passed away, she had never had a true religious moment or experience but had always hoped for one. She finally realized she needed to make changes after having an experience.

You could say I'd never had a true religious moment, the kind where you know yourself spoken to by a voice that seems other than yourself, spoken to so genuinely you see the words shining on trees and clouds. But I had such a moment right then, standing in my own ordinary room. I heard a voice say, Lily Melisa Owens, your jar is open. (Kidd, 41)

Something inside of Lily is opening up and telling her that it is okay to leave now. This experience opened her mind up to focus more on religion. The wailing wall was used to honor deceased family members and each person would write a note to them. Lily wants to talk to her mother one last time and say she is sorry.

I walked the length of the fence, and it was the same all the way, hundreds of these bits of paper. I pulled one out and opened it, but the writing was too blurred from rain to make out. I dug another one. Birmingham, Sept 15, four little angels dead. (Kidd, 8)

The wailing wall symbolizes mourning and death. Lily uses this to help her cope with her deceased mother. This helps her release some of the pain.

Kidd asserts that religious figures show importance and how each character values these religious symbols differently. Religious figures show up in many novels and within our culture today. Each person today has different religions and different views of religion. Kidd shows how religion and religious symbols connect to each individual character differently.