

## The Secret Life of Bees – Study Guide Questions

1. How would you describe Lily's feelings about her mother? Did they change throughout the novel? How did hearing that her mother left her affect her perception of her mother?
2. Do you believe T-Ray's account of what happened when Lily's mother died?
3. Did your opinion of T-Ray change when August told Lily about how much he used to love her mother? Does Deborah's abandonment explain or excuse T-Ray?
4. Do you agree with Lily that people would rather die than forgive? Does she forgive her mother? T-Ray? Herself?
5. What do the bees mean to the story? What is "the secret life of bees?"
6. Do you think race was portrayed realistically in *The Secret Life of Bees*? What do you think Sue Monk Kidd was saying about race in this novel?
7. Why did Rosaleen spit on the men's shoes? What are the ways the characters in the novel confront injustice? How do you think we should deal with injustice? Do these kinds of prejudices still exist today?
8. What was your reaction to Lily's relationship with Zach? What do you think happened to them in the future?
9. Talk about the sisters. Who was your favorite? Do we all need a wailing wall, like May? Why do you think June was cold toward Lily? How would you describe August?
10. What role did the Black Madonna play in their community? What do you think about the legend of the Black Madonna?
11. Rate *The Secret Life of Bees* on a scale of 1 to 5. Justify your ranking.