**THE HELP**

BY KATHRYN STOCKETT

REPORT BY JENNA STEVENS

**SUMMARY:** Taking place in Jackson, Mississippi, Aibileen, an African-American faces racial inequality that was prevalent during that period of time. Despite segregation and injustice, white upperclass, Skeeter, interviews three black housekeepers for the town newspaper. Skeeter learns the hardships that are faced in each home everyday and how ignorant the white bosses really are.

**STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES:** This book is one that I never wanted to put down. When I pick it up, I can’t put it down. The language made me feel as if I was in the setting. Certain words would have a southern twang to them. The ending was very subtle. Everything ends well, the way I had hoped.

**MY OPINION:** As I previously mentioned, this book is a page turner. It really digs deep and grasps the conflicts of racism in the deep South. I take special interest for the downtrodden in our society and this book exemplifies this perfectly.

**WHAT TYPE OF READER WOULD ENJOY THIS BOOK:** Anyone who is as passionate about society’s injustices would love this book. The Help and the Color Purple correlate because they both display racial inequality throughout time. I would recommend this book to anyone who wants to be educated about issues that have been faced countless times.

**MY PERSONAL EXPERIENCE:** I relate to Skeeter considering that I am a white female in a still racially unjust nation. Even though there are laws and many people that are against racial inequality, it is still an underlying problem of our social and cultural system. Many Americans have the stereotype stuck in their heads that if someone isn’t white, they are not meant to be successful, that they are a minority. I feel as if racial inequality is something that needs to be recognized and talked about, just as Skeeter does. Problems can’t be ignored, that’s how they don’t get fixed and bubble up and cause even more problems than in the first place. Not only is racial inequality a major issue in today’s society, gender inequality is a huge plague facing our nation. Women getting paid 20% less than men for doing the same jobs, women’s hygiene products costing significantly more than men’s. These misfortunes in society need to be talked about and I am glad that there are more mediums that are displaying the subject matter.

**THE SECRET LIFE OF BEES**

BY SUE MONK KIDD

REPORT BY AMELIA RUREY

**SUMMARY:** Taking place in South Carolina it follows Lily Owens and her life on her father’s peach farm. She receives bitterness and disregard from her father and sets out for her mother’s past. She embarks on an adventure after taking her beloved nanny Rosaleen with her. They find themselves in a small town of Tiburon. Lily discovers the injustice and racism that is directed towards the black race in the U.S. Lily is a good example of trusting her faith and believing for equal rights. She carries a very mature but youthful attitude about her escape of her racist town and father.

**STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES:** One of my all time favorites! I absolutely love how there is always action happening in every scene. You always want to know what is coming up next. There is no cliffhanger but the ending is very uplifting and worth all the anticipation. The vocabulary was not difficult, which made it easier to just be in the setting and relate with the language being used by the characters. There is a southern dialect between the characters, giving it a richness.

**PERSONAL EXPERIENCE:** I could relate with Lily in this book because even though the time period is different there are still many issues that are continuing. Still on the news you hear of police brutality towards African Americans and the law has put the issues under the mat. The Trayvon Martin case was an example of inequality and injustice and this was something that similarly happened in the book. White judges and policemen tend to favor the white race over the other in both time periods. It still makes me furious to hear the racial problems in our country that have not been addressed. One of my favorite picture books as a kid was the Martin Luther King Jr’s: I have a Dream always made me think that racism was a completely solved problem. Now I understand that it will be a continuing problem and that the only way to change it is by putting a stop to the discrimination.

**WHAT TYPE OF READER WOULD ENJOY THIS:** I think anyone would because it is a very touching story that also looks at social problems during the Civil Rights movement. The Help is very similar and is why we combined our book reports together.

**MY OPINION:** The Secret Life of Bees is the pure example of younger generations like Lily Owens recognizing the social flaws in this country. Today many younger generations hold more liberal opinions. Progress has been made in certain venues like women having the right to vote however racial oppression is a plague that is inflicting our entire nation.