



thisweek

Readings & signings on LI

Today

Sag Harbor resident

Mac Griswold reads from her book, "The Manor: Three Centuries at a

Slave Plantation on Long Island" (FSG). At 2 p.m., Quogue Library, 90 Quogue St.; 631-653-4224, quoguelibrary.org



Tuesday

East Meadow resident

Matt Blackstone discusses "Sorry You're Lost" (FSG), his novel for young readers.

At 7 p.m., Barnes & Noble, 91 Old Country Rd., Carle Place; 516-741-9850, barnesandnoble.com



Thursday

Scott Barry Kaufman

discusses his book "Ungifted: Intelligence Redefined" (Basic Books), followed by refreshments.

At 7:30 p.m. Temple Sinai of Roslyn, 425 Roslyn Rd., Roslyn Heights; 516-621-6800, mysinai.org



Friday

Long Island resident

James Perez signs copies of his self-published middle-grade novel, "Maia and Icarus." At 7 p.m., Book Revue, 313 New York Ave., Huntington; 631-271-1442, bookrevue.com

Saturday

Ransom Riggs

reads from "Hollow City: The Second Novel of Miss Peregrine's Peculiar Children" (Quirk Books). At

2 p.m., Barnes & Noble, 91 Old Country Rd., Carle Place; 516-741-9850



reviews

The sisters and the slave

THE INVENTION OF WINGS, by Sue Monk Kidd. Viking, 373 pp., \$27.95.

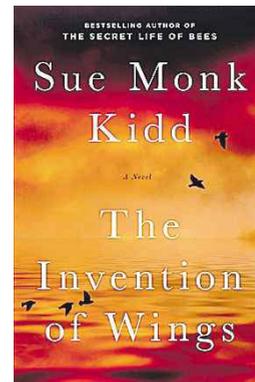
BY MARION WINIK
Special to Newsday

Oprah hasn't had much time for reading lately, it seems; it's been a year since her last Book Club pick, "The Twelve Tribes of Hattie." Now Sue Monk Kidd ("The Secret Life of Bees," "The Mermaid's Chair") has reignited Oprah's love for the written word with a new historical novel. Like the film "12 Years a Slave," "The Invention of Wings" turns an unflinching eye on the horrors of the antebellum South, adding an Oprahvian focus on sisterhood, mother-daughter relations and female friendship.

Set in the early 19th century, "The Invention of Wings" is inspired by the true story of abolitionists and feminists Sarah and Angelina Grimké, sisters from Charleston, S.C. It's a tribute to Kidd's imaginative powers that I didn't



PHOTO BY ROLAND SCARPA



Sue Monk Kidd

even realize I was reading a fact-based story until the appearance of Lucretia Mott, John Greenleaf Whittier and William Garrison in the second half of the narrative.

The book is told in alternating chapters, half in the voice of Hetty, nicknamed Handful by her "mauma," a brilliant seamstress named Charlotte. Handful is a slave of 10 when the book begins. The other narrator is Sarah, one of the dozen Grimké children. Handful is presented as a gift to

Sarah on her 11th birthday, and so their intertwined, often brutal, adventures begin.

Sarah Grimké is a little spitfire of a redhead. She reads voraciously and plans to be a lawyer like her Daddy, unaware of how impossible this is. Though she cannot refuse the repugnant gift of another human being, Sarah teaches Handful to read. Both are punished for this; the description of various terrible slave punishments is a major feature of this book. Sarah's penance is

a spiritual one — her father's library is closed to her for good.

Born 12 years after Sarah is the youngest Grimké sibling, Angelina. Disappointed, restricted, her dreams of achievement dashed, Sarah demands to be the baby's godmother. The education Sarah gives her charge has very little to do with Jesus, though.

The girls' story eventually takes them away from Charleston, up to Quaker Philadelphia, and into the real world of the famous names of the early 1800s. Whether Sarah will ever be able to make good on the promise of freedom she made in her youth to Hetty's "mauma" is in question right until the end.

In the Author's Note, Kidd explains that though she lives in Charleston, she knew nothing of the Grimké sisters until she visited Judy Chicago's art installation "The Dinner Party" at the Brooklyn Museum. Now she joins Chicago in opening our eyes to forgotten heroines with a well-made and entertaining work of art.

Connected across the water

THE SEA & CIVILIZATION: A Maritime History of the World, by Lincoln Paine. Alfred A. Knopf, 784 p., \$45.

BY JIM LANDERS
The Dallas Morning News

Heft this history of the seas off the bookshelf (or out of the Internet basket) and enjoy.

Here is a story told with assurance and a refreshing perspective: "I want to change the way you see the world," Lincoln Paine begins, "by focusing your attention on the blues that shade 70 percent of the image before you, and letting the earth tones fade."

The Mediterranean becomes the setting for war and empire over four millennia. Athens destroys the Persian fleet at Salamis. Julius Caesar is captured by pirates. Rome relies on merchant ships

loaded with Egyptian grain.

The Red Sea leads traders to exotics like myrrh and pepper. As nutmeg, clove and mace reach civilizations of the East and West, the Spice Islands of Indonesia make the Indian Ocean the Silk Road of the Seas.

Saltwater voyages offer pathways to riches and glory, but bring back terror as well. Vikings sack ancient London. Genoese sailors return from China with Black Death. Christopher Columbus discovers the riches of a new hemisphere's lands for Spain, but brings devastating diseases to the New World.

Religions traveled the waves as well, as persecuted minorities sought freedom and evangelists sought converts. Buddhism and Islam met in Southeast Asia. Protestants of many churches met in America.

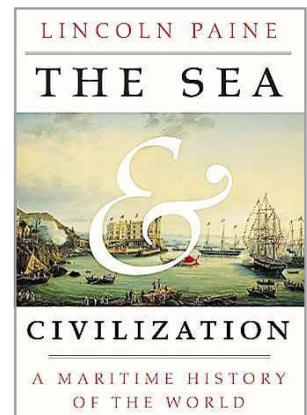
It's a bracing journey. But I wish Paine had set sail with

less of the ancient blueprint and more of the modern action. He is 56 pages in before sailors shift from rivers to seas, and his retelling of the naval battles of World War II takes a mere 10 pages.

What goes before is certainly important in understanding why, for example, Japan became ambitious for a Pacific empire. Korea dealt Japan two decisive defeats in 1592 and 1598, and the Japanese withdrew from marine ambitions for 250 years.

Once the U.S. Navy had pried open the doors, however, Japan went back to sea with a vengeance. Japan became one of the world's premier shipbuilders by the late 19th century; its navy seized Taiwan and Korea and key ports in northeastern China.

Japan next dealt Russia two devastating naval defeats in 1904 and 1905. Theodore Roosevelt, who negotiated a



peace between the two powers, was keen to take the measure of the Japanese as rivals in the Pacific. Paine suggests the Spanish-American War was waged in part to establish a firmer American Pacific presence.

By the time the two powers go to war, however, Paine seems more intent on finishing his book than dwelling on an epochal struggle for the Pacific.