

BEFORE YOUR DISCUSSION

- Email an invitation to your book group members
- The following bookstores are offering 10% off the purchase of this book:
 - *King's English Bookshop in Salt Lake City*
- **Martha Hughes Cannon** is available to stream at pbsutah.org/martha
- Join the Facebook Group "Book Club in a Box Discussion Group" to find ideas, helpful links, etc.
- During your discussion:
 - Make PBS Utah materials in the box available to the group
 - Show clips from the film
 - Take photos to share with PBS Utah and Facebook group

AFTER YOUR DISCUSSION

- Please have members fill out feedback forms and mail back to PBS Utah
- Share your photos and ideas with others on the Facebook Group
- Invite your book club members to join the Facebook Group via email
- Complete host survey
(Link will be emailed to you after your discussion)

GET INVOLVED

You chose this box because you are interested in these stories and issues. Learn more by visiting these organizations:

- **Better Days 2020**
betterdays2020.com
- **Martha Hughes Cannon Statue Committee**
sendmartha.com
- **Utah League of Women Voters**
lwwutah.org
- **Real Women Run**
realwomenrundotorg.wordpress.com
- **Utah Women and Leadership Project**
uvu.edu/uwlp
- **Women's Leadership Institute**
wliut.com
- **YWCA**
ywcautah.org
- **Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Upsilon Beta Omega**
akautahubo.org

MARTHA HUGHES CANNON

When political cartoons mocked polygamist women in the late 1800s, women in Utah enjoyed the right to divorce their husbands, own property, and vote. Brigham Young (leader of the LDS Church) encouraged women to study and work. Martha Hughes Cannon was 21 years old when Church leadership called her to go to medical school. After graduating, Mattie returned to Salt Lake and became a resident physician, where she met her husband Angus M. Cannon, 23 years her senior with three wives.

Mattie claimed, “A plural wife is not half as much a slave as a single wife... A plural wife has more time to herself and more independence in every way, than a single one.” However, the decision to marry Angus had its consequences. The marriage took place during the height of the crackdown on polygamy, and while pregnant, Mattie had to go underground for two years. When she returned, she began her work for women’s suffrage and ran for senate against her husband. The Salt Lake Herald wrote: “Send Mrs. Cannon to the state senate as a Democrat and let Mr. Cannon as a Republican remain at home to manage home industry.” Mattie defeated Angus, becoming the first female state senator. For Martha Hughes Cannon, the clash between romance and faith, between ambition and tradition, would test her throughout her life, propelling her to great heights, breaking barriers both visible and invisible. At other times, her activism came with a cost.

FILMMAKER

PBS Utah producer, Nancy Green, specializes in the production of documentaries for local, regional, and national PBS broadcast. Her work at PBS Utah spans more than 25 years, focusing on diverse topics including healthcare, the arts, history, and the outdoors. Recent films include **Battle Over Bears Ears**, **Homeless at the End**, **Search & Rescue**, and **The Utah Bucket List**. Green has won numerous awards during the course of her career, including awards from the Rocky Mountain Emmys, Utah Society of Professional Journalists, Houston WorldFest, National CINE Golden Eagle, New York Film Festivals, and Women in Television & Film.

Before joining PBS Utah, Green served as Associate Producer for the national KUTV “Baby Your Baby” Series. She studied Neuropsychology at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst prior to receiving her M.F.A. in Film and Media Arts from the University of Utah, where she currently teaches documentary studies and heads the Documentary Studies Minor. Originally a native of New Jersey, Green was lured to Utah by the fresh powder. She lives in Salt Lake City with her musician/composer husband, Frank, and her not so musical cats, Tink and Cal.

THE INVENTION OF WINGS

Sue Monk Kidd's novel begins with Sarah's eleventh birthday when she is given ownership of 10-year-old Hetty "Handful" as her handmaid. This sets in motion a complicated relationship that Kidd covers for the next 35 years through altering narratives. Both Sarah and Handful seek liberation, empowerment, and self-expression as they yearn for lives beyond the limits of society's conventions and rules. Handful will endure loss and sorrow, finding courage and a sense of self in the process. Sarah will experience crushed hopes, betrayal, unrequited love, and ostracism before leaving Charleston to find her place alongside her fearless younger sister, Angelina, as one of the early pioneers in the abolition and women's rights movements.

Inspired by the historical figure of Sarah Grimké, Kidd goes beyond the record to flesh out the rich interior lives of her characters, both real and invented, including Handful's cunning mother, Charlotte, who courts danger in her search for something better. This exquisitely written novel is a triumph of storytelling that looks with unswerving eyes at a devastating wound in American history, through women whose struggles for liberation, empowerment, and expression will leave no reader unmoved.

AUTHOR

Sue Monk Kidd was raised in the small town of Sylvester, Georgia, a place that deeply influenced the writing of her first novel, *The Secret Life of Bees*, which spent more than 2 years on the New York Times bestseller list. She graduated from Texas Christian University (TCU) in 1970 and later took creative writing courses at Emory University and Anderson College, as well as studying at Sewanee, Bread Loaf, and other writers' conferences. In 2016, TCU conferred on her an honorary doctor of letters degree.

The Invention of Wings, Kidd's third novel, was published in 2014 to wide critical acclaim. It debuted at #1 on the New York Times bestseller list where it spent a total of 9 months. It sold over a million copies and been translated into over 20+ languages thus far. The novel has won several literary awards, including the Florida Book of Year Award and the SIBA Book Award. It was also nominated for the International Dublin Literary Award and was chosen for Oprah's Book Club 2.0. Kidd serves on the Writers Council for Poets & Writers, Inc. and lives in North Carolina with her husband, Sandy, and dog, Barney.

1. How do Sarah and Martha go against — and conform to — the women's spheres dictated by their families, societies, and religions? Have you ever had to break away from what was "expected" or "conventional" in order to do what you wanted or felt that you needed to do? What sort of risk and courage does this call for? How did you maintain your personal integrity throughout this process?
2. What drove Sarah, Martha, Handful, and others in the novel to push boundaries and seek opportunities to get involved? How did the community (or individuals) support them in pursuing their ambitions? How did the community (or individuals) constrain them?
3. After Sarah lays aside her aspirations to become a lawyer, she describes the Graveyard of Failed Hopes as "an all-female establishment." Yet, two generations later, Martha becomes one of the very first women to graduate from medical school, and later, is elected as the first female state senator in the United States. Do you think Sarah's comment still applies to Martha's life? How does it apply to the stories of the other female characters in the novel (i.e. Handful, Charlotte)? How are contemporary women's opportunities and spheres both the same and different than from a generation or two before? How do you foresee them changing a generation or two from now? How did securing voting rights for women act as a catalyst for these changes?
4. Martha's life is one of seeming contrasts: a polygamist wife and physician, a Mormon woman and a politician. What contrasts do you see in the lives of the Grimbé women? What contrasts do you see within yourself? How do they and you navigate these seeming contrasts? How do they exercise autonomy — even in small ways?
5. Sarah believed she could not have both a career and marriage. Martha saw polygamy to have both. Do you think Sarah was right to have turned down Israel's proposal? Do you think Martha really had both? What costs and gains came from their respective decisions? In what ways are women today still navigating the question of whether they can have both family and career?
6. Some abolitionists believed the time had not yet come for women's rights and pressured Sarah and Angelina to abandon the cause, fearing their participation would split the movement (it eventually did). Decades later, in 1895, many feared that including women's suffrage in the Utah state constitution would interfere with the territory's application for statehood (it did not). How might fear play into people's opposition to expanding rights for marginalized groups? How might these fears be overcome or assuaged? Are these fears ever justified? How do Sarah, Handful, Martha, Angelina, and other characters work with their fears? How do you?
7. Handful says to Sarah, "My body might be a slave, but not my mind. For you, it is the other way round" (pg. 200). Who do you think was the "freest"? How does the novel's title, *Invention of Wings*, apply to the book's characters as well as to Martha?
8. The novel includes several physical objects that hold special significance for the characters: Sarah's button, Charlotte's story quilt, Handful's rabbit-head cane, and the spirit tree. What significance do these objects play in the novel? What object would you select to symbolize Martha? Why?
9. These women evoked change in small and large ways despite disappointment, loss, betrayal, and ostracism. How do their stories influence your desire and ability to advocate for others and for yourself? In what ways might you effect change within your spheres of influence? How do you see these women's lives as models for handling loss, ostracism, betrayal, and/or disappointment?

10. We often laud people in the past who pushed against social, political, or religious customs. Yet the Grimké sisters and Martha were sometimes vilified during their lives for pushing boundaries. How do you see this pattern of villain to hero play out with those who push against custom today?
11. A statue of Martha is headed to National Statuary Hall in Washington, D.C. as one of two statues representing the state of Utah. Brigham Young and Philo T. Farnsworth are Utah's current statues, and Martha will be replacing Farnsworth. Out of 100 statues in the Hall (each state has two statues), only nine are of women, and several other states are also in the process of replacing their statues of men with statues of women. What do you think of Utah's choice of Martha for this honor?
12. These women were all advocates of various causes: abolition, women's suffrage, equal pay, child welfare, public health. What causes are important to you? How do you hope to make an impact?

**DR. NAOMI WATKINS**

Naomi Watkins is an educational leader and the co-host of “This Is Her Place,” a podcast that tells the stories of Utah women past and present. She authored *Champions of Change: 25 Women Who Made History*, a book written with Katherine Kitterman and illustrated by Brooke Smart as part of her work for Better Days, a non-profit dedicated to popularizing Utah women's history through art, education, and legislation. An expert in teacher education and literacy pedagogy, Naomi earned her Ph.D. from the University of Utah and resides and hikes in the mountains of Salt Lake City.



Bake this sweet bread and honor women's suffrage by showing off the colors of the movement: purple and gold. If you like, drizzle with an icing and decorate with candied lemon rind.

INGREDIENTS

2 cups all-purpose flour
1 1/2 tsp baking powder
1/2 tsp salt
1 stick unsalted butter, room temperature
1 cup sugar
2 eggs
2 cups blueberries (12 oz.)
2 tsp lemon zest
1/2 cup plain yogurt, regular or low-fat

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat your oven to 350 degrees. Spray a loaf pan with nonstick cooking spray and set aside.
2. In a medium sized bowl, whisk together your flour, baking powder, and salt. Add the blueberries and lemon zest and toss to combine.
3. Cream together the butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add the eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Add the yogurt then the dry ingredients, mixing only until incorporated and being careful not to crush the blueberries.
4. Scoop batter into your prepared loaf pan and bake for 1 hour 10 minutes, until golden brown. Let cool in the pan for 10 minutes before inverting gently onto a plate.