

The Secret Lives of Bees



Director Gina Prince-Bythewood
Principal Cast: Queen Latifah, Dakota Fanning, Jennifer Hudson, Alicia Keys, Sophie Okonedo, Nate Parker, Tristan Wilds, Hilarie Burton, Paul Bettany

Country: USA
Year: 2008
Language: English
Runtime: 110 minutes
Format: Colour/35mm
Rating: PG

Dakota Fanning (*I Am Sam*, *Charlotte's Web*) fronts a stellar ensemble cast in this adaptation of the novel by Monk Kidd's bestselling novel that chronicles a young girl's powerful healing journey during a defining moment in American history.

Set in South Carolina in 1964, when the American civil rights movement was finding its strongest voice, *The Secret Life of Bees* stars the luminous Fanning as Lily Owens, a fragile adolescent who has never recovered from her mother's violent death. She lives a lonely life on a peach farm with her volatile father (Paul Bettany, *A Beautiful Mind*, *The Da Vinci Code*), where her only companion is her caregiver Rosaleen (Jennifer Hudson, *Dreamgirls*, *Sex and the City*). She and Rosaleen decide to flee the farm and embark on a journey to a nearby town, where Lily hopes to unearth the secrets of her past and recover some memory of her mother's life.

The two friends are taken in by the remarkable Boatwright sisters, played by Queen Latifah, Alicia Keys and Sophie Okonedo. While under their protective care, Lily and Rosaleen are made privy to their secret world of beekeeping – and discover the realm of kindness and redemption that has eluded them.

Gina Prince-Bythewood directs *The Secret Life of Bees* with a sensitivity to the complex racial currents at play, but she devotes even greater care to shading the relationships that form among the makeshift family living in the Boatwright house – a sanctuary from the harsh world that surrounds them. Fanning is especially remarkable here, making that rare transition from popular child star to confident, maturing actor. Less a fairy tale than a story of adventure and self-discovery, *The Secret Life of Bees* reveals how friendship, love and generosity can heal even the deepest of wounds.

Gina Prince-Bythewood graduated in film from the University of California, Los Angeles. She has worked as a writer and director on numerous television series, and directed the short films *Stitches* (91), *Damn Whitey* (97), *Bowl of Pork* (97) and *Progress* (97). Her feature films are *Love & Basketball* (00) and *The Secret Life of Bees* (08).