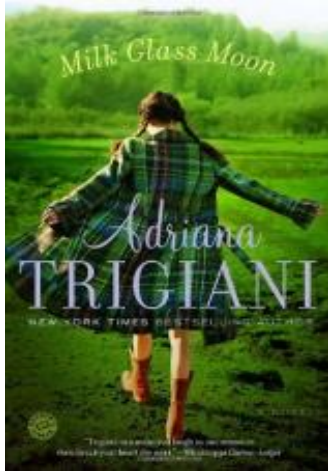


Milk Glass Moon

by Adriana Trigiani



About the Book

Milk Glass Moon, the third book in Adriana Trigiani's bestselling **Big Stone Gap** series, continues the life story of Ave Maria Mulligan MacChesney as she faces the challenges and changes of motherhood with her trademark humor and honesty. With twists as plentiful as those found on the holler roads of southwest Virginia, this story takes turns that will surprise and enthrall the reader.

Transporting us from Ave Maria's home in the Blue Ridge Mountains to the Italian Alps, from New York City to the Tuscan countryside, **Milk Glass Moon** is the story of a shifting mother-daughter relationship, of a daughter's first love and a mother's heartbreak, of an enduring marriage that contains its own ongoing challenges, and of a community faced with seismic change.

All of Trigiani's beloved characters are back: Jack Mac, Ave Maria's true love, who is willing to gamble security for the unknown; her best friend and confidant, bandleader Theodore Tip-ton, who begins a new life in New York City; librarian and sexpert Iva Lou Wade Makin, who faces a life-or-death crisis. Meanwhile, surprises emerge in the blossoming of crusty cashier Fleeta Mullins, the maturing of mountain girl turned savvy businesswoman Pearl Grimes, and the return of Pete Rutledge, the handsome stranger who turned Ave Maria's world upside down in **Big Cherry Holler**.

In this rollicking hayride of upheaval and change, Ave Maria is led to places she never dreamed she would go, and to people who enter her life and rock its foundation. As Ave Maria reaches into the past to find answers to the present, readers will stay with her every step of the way, rooting for the onetime town spinster who embraced love and made a family. **Milk Glass Moon** is about the power of love and its abiding truth, and captures Trigiani at her most lyrical and heartfelt.

Discussion Guide

1. **Milk Glass Moon** is the final book in the **Big Stone Gap** trilogy. Does it stand on its own as an individual novel? Which themes from **Big Stone Gap** and **Big Cherry Holler** carry over into **Milk Glass Moon**?
2. What does the symbol of the milk glass moon signify? Also, through Etta's interest in astrology, Trigiani presents stars as prominent reoccurring images. What significance do the stars have in the novel?
3. Why does Ave Maria experiences so much friction with Etta, when they have had such a good relationship in the past? Do you think their problems arise from normal adolescence angst, or do they stem from deeper issues? How do you think Ave Maria and Etta's relationship would be if Ave Maria's own mother were still alive?
4. Is Ave Maria too hard on Etta for her mistakes, in particular the coal and drinking incidents? Do you think she overreacts, given the fact that she had very different perceptions from the other characters, or is she justified in her decisions? How do you think Ave Maria's actions would appear to the reader if she were portrayed in third person, without the inner dialogue we are privy to?
5. Ave Maria and Jack's display apparent differences in their reactions and outlooks throughout **Milk Glass Moon**, especially in the area of parenting. How do you think they have sustained their marriage? What sacrifices have they made for each other? Why does their marriage work?
6. When Ave Maria sees Pete in New York City, old feelings stir within her. Why does Trigiani bring Pete back into the picture? What do you think would have happened if Ave Maria had chosen Pete over Jack? How would their marriage be different? Do you think Ave Maria's physical reactions to Pete are problematic?
7. Ave Maria describes Pete as being the only person who can see the girl in her. What does she mean? Which qualities in particular does Pete pull out of her? Would you pick comfort over excitement, like Ave Maria ultimately does, or vice-versa?
8. Ave Maria believes that it's easier for women to have close relationships and intimate friendships than men. Do you agree with her? Given the history between Ave Maria and Pete, what do you think about Pete and Jack's friendship?
9. Ave Maria is presented with choices throughout the course of **Milk Glass Moon**; she is tugged between locations, men, and time frames. How do you think she goes about making decisions? If you were her, would you have made the same choices?
10. Ave Maria sometimes seems to be torn between her desire to live in a small town and her wish to explore the allure and excitement of places like New York City and Italy. Throughout the novel, Ave Maria explores the downsides as well as the upsides of living in a small town, and in certain moments, it appears that Ave Maria hasn't quite gotten over the difficulties she long ago experienced in her transition to a small town. Where do you think she ultimately belongs and feels most comfortable? Do you think she and Jack would be happy living in Italy, as their plan at the end of the novel suggests? What kind of environment are you most comfortable in, and why?
11. Does Ave Maria's personality change when she's in a location other than Big Stone Gap? Which hidden qualities

we don't usually see in her persona emerge?

12. Etta tells her mother that she knew she was meant to marry Stefano when she was eight years old. How do issues of fate and destiny play out in **Milk Glass Moon**? In general, do you think every event has a reason for happening?

13. According to Etta, Ave has trouble getting attached to people. Do you think her statement is true? What are some examples that either support or disagree with it?

14. Three different kinds of marriages are explored throughout the novel ? those of Ave Maria and Jack, Iva Lou and Louis, and Etta and Stefano. How do they compare?

15. Throughout the course of three books, Ave clearly progresses through various encounters she never planned on facing. How do you think she has changed from the beginning of the trilogy? Which kind of strengths has she gained? Which personality traits has she held onto?

16. Does Trigiani wrap up everything neatly, or does she leave room for any future developments in Big Stone Gap world? Is there anything from these characters that you would like to see more of? Do the themes and characters? situations in **Milk Glass Moon** come full circle or is anything left unresolved?

Author Bio

Adriana Trigiani is the *New York Times* bestselling author of 21 books of fiction and nonfiction published in 38 languages. In 2023, President Sergio Mattarella of Italy named her Cavaliere dell'Ordine della Stella d'Italia. She is an award-winning playwright, television writer/producer and filmmaker. Among her screen credits, Trigiani wrote and directed the major motion picture adaptation of her debut novel, **BIG STONE GAP**. Adriana grew up in Appalachia, in the mountains of southwest Virginia, where she cofounded the Origin Project, an in-school writing program. Trigiani is honored to serve on the New York State Council on the Arts. She lives in Greenwich Village with her family.

Critical Praise

--- *The Clarion-Ledger* (Jackson, Mississippi)"Trigiani pulls it off, creating a riveting story [and] a believable protagonist... Trigiani can spin a good tale that could happen anywhere."--- *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*"Highly diverting... The literary joy here lies in the details... The Greenwich Village of half a century ago is effectively brought to life... Delightful."--- *Fort Worth Morning Star*"[A] heartfelt depiction of homespun characters whose emotions are always very close to the surface... Trigiani offers an inviting picture of Italian family life as well as a finely detailed appreciation of Old World craftsmanship, whether it be clothing or cooking."--- *Booklist*"Trigiani's writing is as dazzling as Lucia's dresses."--- *USA Today*"Interesting and fun reading... the pace is quick... A mighty good story."--- *Roanoke Times*"Trigiani has a knack for draping gossamer."--- *Boston Globe*"This is escapism on a grand and graceful scale... You'll find yourself lost in an Audrey Hepburn movie that was never made."--- *CNN Money*"[Trigiani] has created an easy-flowing... novel."--- *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*

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