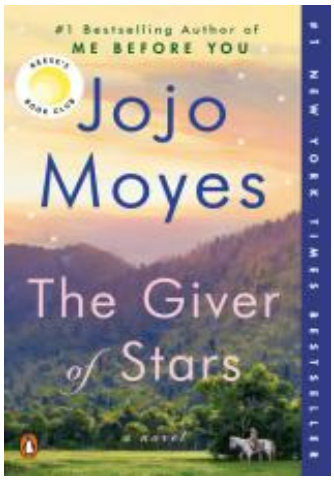
The Giver of Stars

by Jojo Moyes



About the Book

Set in Depression-era America, THE GIVER OF STARS is a breathtaking story of five extraordinary women and their remarkable journey through the mountains of Kentucky and beyond, from the author of ME BEFORE YOU and THE PEACOCK EMPORIUM.

Alice Wright marries handsome American Bennett Van Cleve hoping to escape her stifling life in England. But small-town Kentucky quickly proves equally claustrophobic, especially living alongside her overbearing father-in-law. So when a call goes out for a team of women to deliver books as part of Eleanor Roosevelt?s new traveling library, Alice signs on enthusiastically.

The leader, and soon Alice's greatest ally, is Margery, a smart-talking, self-sufficient woman who's never asked a man's permission for anything. They will be joined by three other singular women who become known as the Horseback Librarians of Kentucky.

What happens to them --- and to the men they love --- becomes a classic drama of loyalty, justice, humanity and passion. Though they face all kinds of dangers, they?re committed to their job --- bringing books to people who have never had any, sharing the gift of learning that will change their lives.

Based on a true story rooted in America?s past, THE GIVER OF STARS is unparalleled in its scope. At times funny, at others heartbreaking, this is a richly rewarding novel of women?s friendship, of true love, and of what happens when we reach beyond our grasp for the great beyond.

Discussion Guide

1. While writing and researching THE GIVER OF STARS, author Jojo Moyes visited Kentucky several times, stayed in

a tiny cabin on the side of a mountain, rode horses along the trails, and met the people of Kentucky. Did the characters and sense of place feel authentic to you?

2. Alice, a Brit, is an outsider, but eventually acclimates to her new home in Appalachia, and even falls in love with her new home. She grew up in a rarefied world in England, so the change to ?unremarkable? Baileyville proved quite the shock to her system. Have you ever moved to a distinctly different location? What was that transition like? How did you adapt?

3. Literacy and censorship are significant issues in THE GIVER OF STARS, issues that affect the women of the novel very differently from the men. Why do you think Moyes chose to focus on these topics?

4. Moyes has said she wanted to write a book about women who had agency and who actually did something worthwhile, rather than simply existing in a romantic or domestic plotline. Margery is the unofficial leader of the librarians and Alice eventually inherits that role when Margery is jailed. Yet throughout the book, most of the women do have their moments of agency. Which of these moments struck you most intensely? Did you ever wish a character had taken action when she hadn?t? If so, when, and what could she have done different?

5. The novel features families from vastly different backgrounds, and one of the central issues in the book is that of class inequality. In which scenarios did you see these dynamics play out, and between which characters?

6. There are numerous ways in the book in which the acquisition of knowledge changes characters? lives: protecting their homes, educating their families, liberating themselves from marriages. Have you ever experienced such a shift --- after gaining new knowledge --- in your own life? How did it happen? If not, what held you back from making a change?

7. The relationships between men and women in this book vary greatly --- from Margery and Sven?s loving, mutual respect and passion, to Bennett and Alice?s bewildered lack of understanding to the true love affair that blossoms between Alice and Fred. How did you come to understand the differences among these relationships? Did you relate to any of them in particular or to any of the problems these women faced in their romantic relationships?

Author Bio

Jojo Moyes is the #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of WE ALL LIVE HERE, SOMEONE ELSE'S SHOES, THE GIVER OF STARS, STILL ME, PARIS FOR ONE AND OTHER STORIES, AFTER YOU, ONE PLUS ONE, THE GIRL YOU LEFT BEHIND, ME BEFORE YOU, THE LAST LETTER FROM YOUR LOVER, THE HORSE DANCER, NIGHT MUSIC, SILVER BAY, THE SHIP OF BRIDES and THE PEACOCK EMPORIUM. Also a screenwriter, Jojo lives in London, England.

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