



Discussion Questions

1. The Kentucky Pack Horse program was implemented in 1935 by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) to create women's work programs and to assist economic recovery and build literacy. Looking at the novel, how did the program affect the people in this remote area? Do you think library programs are still a vital part of our society today?
2. How has a librarian or booklover impacted your life? Have you ever connected with a book or author in a meaningful way? Explain.
3. Missionaries, government, social workers and various religious groups have always visited eastern Kentucky to reform, modernize and mold hillfolk to their acceptable standards. Do you think Cussy faced this kind of prejudice from the outside world? Is there any prejudice or stigma associated with the people of Appalachia today?
4. How do you think Cussy's father feels after he marries her off to an abusive man? Why do you think he agrees to Charlie Frazier's proposal in the first place? What do you imagine life was like for an unwed woman that time?
5. Imagine you are making a community scrapbook like the ones Cussy distributes to the people of Troublesome. What would you include? Do you think these materials were helpful to Cussy's library patrons?
6. When Cussy receives the cure for her blueness from Doc, she realizes there's a price to pay for her white skin, and the side effects soon become too much to handle. If you were in Cussy's shoes, would you sacrifice your health for a chance at "normalcy"? If there weren't any side effects, do you think Cussy would have continued to take the medication? Would you?
7. How do you think Cussy feels when she is ostracized at the Independence Day celebration, despite her change of skin color? Can you relate to her feelings of isolation? Do you think these kinds of racial prejudices are still prevalent today?
8. Cussy has to deal with the loss of many loved ones in a very short amount of time. How do you think she handles her grief? Which loss was the most difficult for you to read?
9. What do you think life was like for the people of Troublesome? What are some of the highlights of living in such a remote place? What are some of the challenges the people on Cussy's library route face?
10. Back then, entering into a prohibited or interracial marriage in Kentucky was a misdemeanor that could result in incarceration, and we see these racial tensions attempt to sever Cussy and Jackson's relationship. Discuss antimiscegenation laws and marriage laws. Do you think this kind of prejudice still exists toward interracial couples?
11. What do you think happens to Cussy, Jackson, Honey and the other inhabitants of Troublesome after the story ends? Imagine you were Cussy. How would you feel leaving Troublesome for good?

New and Upcoming Book Club in a Bag Titles

Demon Copperhead	by Barbara Kingsolver
The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek	by Kim Michele Richardson
Finding the Mother Tree	by S. Simard
Ace of Spades	by Faridah Àbíké-Íyímídé
How to Have Difficult Conversations about Race	by Kwame Christian
Someone Else's Shoes	by Jojo Moyes
The Ways We Hide	by Kristina McMorris
The Rose Code	by Kate Quinn
Spare	by Prince Harry
West With Giraffes	by Lynda Rutledge
Shout	by Laurie Halse Anderson
Speak (Novel Edition)	by Laurie Halse Anderson
Hester	by Laurie Lico Albanese
Hang the Moon	by Jeannette Walls
Homestead	by Melinda Moustakis
Dear Edward	by Ann Napolitano
The Last Days of Summer	by Steve Kluger
Maame	by Jessica George
Under the Magnolias	by T. I. Lowe

