



THE BOOK WOMAN OF TROUBLESOME CREEK

by Kim Michele Richardson

BOOK 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 at 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?

Source: <https://www.readinggroupguides.com/reviews/the-book-woman-of-troublesome-creek/guide>





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[ABOUT THE AUTHOR:](#)

Kim Michele Richardson is a bestselling author who lives in Kentucky. She's an advocate for the prevention of child and domestic abuse and the author of the bestselling memoir *The Unbreakable Child*, a book critic for the *New York Journal of Books*, and the founder of *Shy Rabbit*, a writers residency scholarship. Her novels include *Liar's Bench*, *GodPretty in the Tobacco Field* and *The Sisters of Glass Ferry*. Kim Michele's latest novel, *The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek* is inspired by the historical blue people of Kentucky and the fierce and brave Kentucky Packhorse librarians.

About the Writing

I love exploring my birthplace in my writings; the beautiful, brutal and mysterious Kentucky land and its people. I have traveled to mostly every corner and nook of Kentucky and am always searching for another cranny to discover. I impart my novels with my fierce love for the land, showcase its intriguing people, history, and forgotten song of the region, exploring historical social injustices and the unusual and cherished traditions, myths and legends of Kentucky. More than anything, I write human stories set in a unique landscape. Knowing one small piece of this world, the earth, the sky, the plants, the people and the very air of it—helps us understand the sufferings and joys of others —ourselves.

I visited the backwoods and rural areas of Western Kentucky in *Liar's Bench* with a town's bench made from the 100-year-old gallows of a female slave. Then in *GodPretty* I explored Appalachia, its darkly coal rich mountains and the hardscrabble and oppressed women of Eastern Kentucky in this *Coalminer's Daughter* meets *Winter's Bone* tale. Spanning the 30s to present-day, *The Sisters of Glass Ferry*, is a haunting tale of love and loss, redemption and atonement, and the dark secrets surrounding a 1952 prom night when two teens go missing in rural Kentucky.

My latest novel, *The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek*, delves into the Pack Horse Library Project of 1935 and the factual blue people of eastern Kentucky. It's a fascinating story, one I feel privileged to write—a tale of tribute to the fearsome librarians who traveled on horseback and mule to provide books to the poor and isolated communities in Kentucky. In stores, May 7th, 2019.

Source: <https://www.kimmichelerichardson.com/about>

