

# BOOKNOTES

TEACHERS GUIDE

## thematic connections

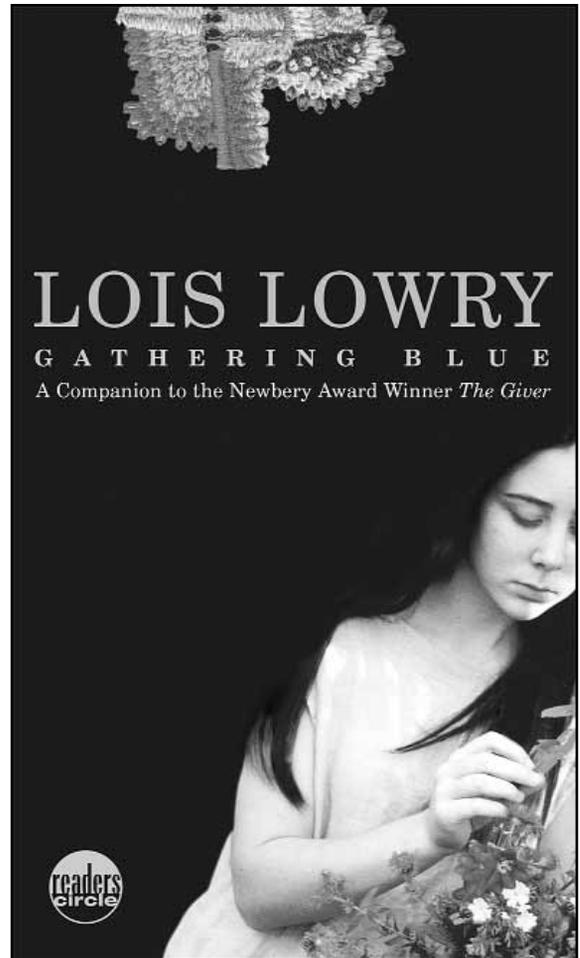
Fear • Courage • Friendship  
Truth • Freedom

Grades 7 up

## about the book

In this companion to *The Giver*, the Newbery Medal-winning favorite among educators, Lois Lowry takes young readers to another futuristic society. Orphaned and physically handicapped, Kira is unsure of her future until she is named weaver of the singer's robe and becomes a ward of the Council of Guardians.

Kira, born with a deformed leg, is frightened and uncertain of her future when her mother dies and the neighbors burn her cot and treat her with great hostility. Her father had long ago succumbed to the beasts, and now Kira is alone except for Matt, a boy from the Fen, who becomes her friend. It is the ways of her community to shun and discard the weak, but Kira's fate appears hopeful when she is called before the Council of Guardians and given the task of repairing the singer's robe, a robe that represents the entire history of Kira's community. Kira goes to live at the Council Edifice and soon meets Thomas, the carver, and little Jo, the future singer. While life appears good for the three-orphaned artists, there is a feeling of menace in the air, and it falls upon Matt to help Kira find the courage to seek the truth.



Dell Laurel-Leaf Readers Circle paperback • 0-440-22949-9

## awards & reviews

*A School Library Journal*  
Best Book of the Year

"Lois Lowry, the consummate yarn-spinner, has deftly woven this cautionary tale so reminiscent of her Newbery tour-de-force, *The Giver*."

—*School Library Journal*

## pre-reading activity

Engage the class in a discussion about the meaning of art and how it is a means of self expression. Divide the class into small groups, and ask each group to list the many different forms of art—for example, painting, embroidery, drawing, sculpture, carving, etc. Students may wish to find pictures to illustrate the various art forms.



# thematic connections

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

**Fear**—Engage the class in a discussion about how Kira deals with her fears. How do her fears change throughout the novel? Discuss how Kira changes from a fearful young girl to a self-assured young woman. Ask the class to discuss how Kira and Thomas help Jo deal with her fears. Discuss why the women of the village are fearful of Vandara. How does Vandara display the qualities of a bully? Talk about the best way to deal with bullies.

**Courage**—Discuss how Katrina shows courage when she stands up to the people of the community and demands that her handicapped daughter's life be spared. Katrina told Kira, "Take pride in your pain. . . . You are stronger than those who have none." (pp. 22–23) How is strength related to courage? Discuss how physical pain contributes to Kira's courage. Matt suffers from a different type of pain. Describe his life in the Fen. Discuss the many different ways he shows courage.

**Friendship**—Matt is a devoted friend to Kira though they lead very different lives. Why do you think Matt befriends Kira? Kira admires Matt's curiosity, and she thinks he is kindhearted. Discuss how kindness is an important element in friendship. Ask the class to trace Matt's devotion to Kira from the beginning of the novel to the end. Discuss the relationship that develops between Kira and Thomas. How is their friendship the key to their survival?

**Truth**—Ask the class to explain the truth that Kira discovers. Debate whether Matt knew these truths before Kira was taken to the Council Edifice. Discuss whether Annabella realized her fate. How does art reveal truth? How does Kira's art lead her to the truth? Why does the Council of Guardians conceal the truth?

**Freedom**—Discuss how the people of the village are slaves to the Council of Guardians. At what point does Kira realize that she isn't really free, even though she lives in an unlocked room? Ask the class to discuss how "true art" requires freedom of expression. Discuss how Kira, Thomas, and Jo lose the freedom to express themselves in their art form.

# connecting to the curriculum

**Language Arts**—*Gathering Blue* is a companion novel to *The Giver*. Discuss the difference between a companion novel and a sequel. Talk about the similarities and differences in the two novels. Ask students to write a letter that Kira might write to Jonas, the main character in *The Giver*, where she tells him the frightening truths that she discovers about her community. Share the letters in class, and discuss what Jonas might write back to her.

Kira has always yearned to read, but in her society women aren't allowed. Send students to the library to select a book that Kira might enjoy reading if she was given the right. Instruct each student to write a one-page paper explaining his or her book selection.

**Social Studies**—Death rituals and customs vary throughout the world. In Kira's world, people are taken to the Field of Leaving, and their loved ones sit there until the spirit has left the deceased. Discuss the different rituals practiced in your students' own cultures or religions. Send students to the library to find out death rituals from different cultures. They may wish to focus on the cultures they have studied in social studies. Engage the class in a discussion about the results of their research.

**Science**—Kira is sent to Annabella to learn about the various plants used for dyeing threads. Have students list the plants that Kira studies. Then refer them to [www.gallica.co.uk/celts/dyes.htm](http://www.gallica.co.uk/celts/dyes.htm) and ask them to create an illustrated booklet called "Plants and Their Colors." Instruct students to describe each plant, tell where it grows, note the color each plant creates, and discuss the process for extracting the color from the plants. Encourage students to use books in the library or information from the Internet to find out other plants that are used to make dyes.

**Music**—Jo is the future singer for the annual Ruin Song Gathering. Ask students to use information learned in the book about the society ruled by the Council of Guardians and write words for "The Ruin Song." They may wish to select appropriate music for their lyrics.

**Art**—Explain to students that tapestries and needlework samplers have been used throughout history to tell stories—to preserve history. Ask students to create a small sampler that details one special memory from their family.

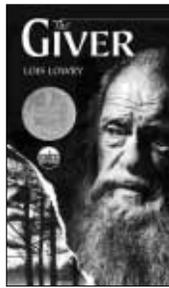
Students may enjoy trying their hand at dyeing threads. Provide the class with common items used for dyeing such as beets, spinach leaves, red cabbage, tea, etc. Give each student strands of white wool yarn to dye. Allow students to share their yarns in class. How many different colors are made? How many different hues?

## vocabulary/ use of language

This novel is an opportunity for students to expand their vocabulary. Ask students to jot down unfamiliar words and try to define them using clues from the context of the story. Such words may include: *forage* (p. 11), *malevolence* (p. 15), *elite* (p. 31), *sinewy* (p. 32), *contemptuous* (p. 37), *vindictive* (p. 38), *pulsated* (p. 45), *iridescent* (p. 56), *impetuous* (p. 63), *inert* (p. 65), *infinitesimal* (p. 95), *volition* (p. 96), *oppressive* (p. 109), *bravado* (p. 110), *stiletto* (p. 132), *incessant* (p. 159), *chortle* (p. 166), *subtlety* (p. 180), and *renegade* (p. 215).

## related titles

by theme



### The Giver

Lois Lowry

Courage • Fear • Freedom • Friendship

Grades 5 up / 0-440-23768-8

Dell Laurel-Leaf Readers Circle

### A Single Shard

Linda Sue Park

Courage • Friendship

Grades 4–7 / 0-440-41851-8 / Dell Yearling

Available March 2003

### Forgotten Fire

Adam Bagdasarian

Courage • Fear

Grades 9 up / 0-440-22917-0

Dell Laurel-Leaf Readers Circle

## internet resources

### Dyes

[www.gallica.co.uk/celts/dyes.htm](http://www.gallica.co.uk/celts/dyes.htm)

This site provides information about plants used for dyes.

### Ethnobotanical Leaflets

[www.siu.edu/~ebl/leaflets/dyes.htm](http://www.siu.edu/~ebl/leaflets/dyes.htm)

This site provides information about native dye plants of the United States.

### Whiteworks: The Embroidery Pages

[www.white-works.com/EmbroideryIndex.htm](http://www.white-works.com/EmbroideryIndex.htm)

This site gives information about the different types of embroidery.



Photo credit: Bachrach

## about the author

**Lois Lowry** first captivated young readers in 1977 with her award-winning first novel *A Summer to Die*. From there she went on to create the popular Anastasia Krupnik series. She was the recipient of the Newbery Medal in 1990 for *Number the Stars* and again in 1994 for *The Giver*. Other honors that she has received are the *Boston Globe-Horn Book Award*, the Dorothy Canfield Fisher Award, the California Young Reader's Medal, and the Mark Twain Award.

## on the web

For bios, teachers guides, and more . . .

Visit our FREE online site  
Teachers @ Random

[www.randomhouse.com/teachers](http://www.randomhouse.com/teachers)