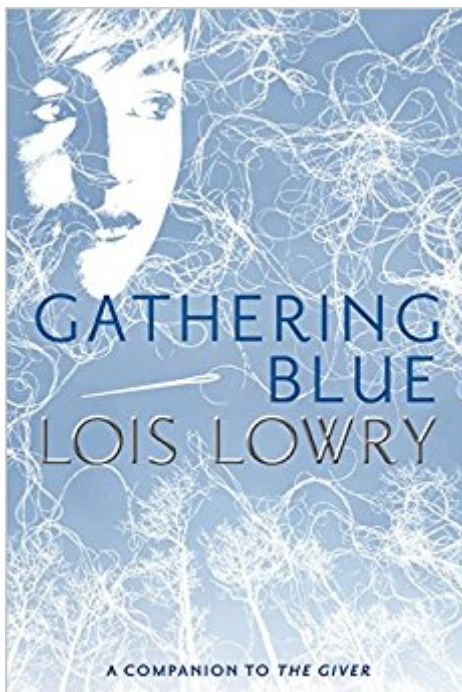


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# Gathering Blue (Giver Quartet)



## Synopsis

Lois Lowry won her first Newbery Medal in 1994 for *The Giver*. Six years later, she ushered readers back into its mysterious but plausible future world in *Gathering Blue* to tell the story of Kira, orphaned, physically flawed, and left with an uncertain future. This second book in the *Giver Quartet* has been stunningly redesigned in paperback. As she did in *The Giver* and later *Messenger*, in *Gathering Blue* Lois Lowry challenges readers to imagine what our world could become, how people could evolve, and what could be considered valuable.

## Book Information

Series: *Giver Quartet* (Book 2)

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

Lois Lowry's magnificent novel of the distant future, *The Giver*, is set in a highly technical and emotionally repressed society. This eagerly awaited companion volume, by contrast, takes place in a village with only the most rudimentary technology, where anger, greed, envy, and casual cruelty make ordinary people's lives short and brutish. This society, like the one portrayed in *The Giver*, is controlled by merciless authorities with their own complex agendas and secrets. And at the center of both stories there is a young person who is given the responsibility of preserving the memory of the culture--and who finds the vision to transform it. Kira, newly orphaned and lame from birth, is taken from the turmoil of the village to live in the grand Council Edifice because of her skill at embroidery.

There she is given the task of restoring the historical pictures sewn on the robe worn at the annual Ruin Song Gathering, a solemn day-long performance of the story of their world's past. Down the hall lives Thomas the Carver, a young boy who works on the intricate symbols carved on the Singer's staff, and a tiny girl who is being trained as the next Singer. Over the three artists hovers the menace of authority, seemingly kind but suffocating to their creativity, and the dark secret at the heart of the Ruin Song. With the help of a cheerful waif called Matt and his little dog, Kira at last finds the way to the plant that will allow her to create the missing color--blue--and, symbolically, to find the courage to shape the future by following her art wherever it may lead. With astonishing originality, Lowry has again created a vivid and unforgettable setting for this thrilling story that raises profound questions about the mystery of art, the importance of memory, and the centrality of love. (Ages 10 and older) --Patty Campbell --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

After conjuring the pitfalls of a technologically advanced society in *The Giver*, Lowry looks toward a different type of future to create this dark, prophetic tale with a strong medieval flavor. Having suffered numerous unnamed disasters (aka, the Ruin), civilization has regressed to a primitive, technology-free state; an opening author's note describes a society in which "disorder, savagery, and self-interest" rule. Kira, a crippled young weaver, has been raised and taught her craft by her mother, after her father was allegedly killed by "beasts." When her mother dies, Kira fears that she will be cast out of the village. Instead, the society's Council of Guardians installs her as caretaker of the Singer's robe, a precious ceremonial garment depicting the history of the world and used at the annual Gathering. She moves to the Council Edifice, a gothic-style structure, one of the few to survive the Ruin. The edifice and other settings, such as the FenAthe village ghettoAand the small plot where Annabella (an elder weaver who mentors Kira after her mother's death) lives are especially well drawn, and the characterizations of Kira and the other artists who cohabit the stone residence are the novel's greatest strength. But the narrative hammers at the theme of the imprisoned artist. And readers may well predict where several important plot threads are headed (e.g., the role of Kira's Guardian, Jamison; her father's disappearance), while larger issues, such as the society's downfall, are left to readers' imaginations. Ages 10-up. (Sept.) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

After being orphaned, Kira is assigned to restore The Singer's robe. She becomes friends with Thomas the Carver and Jo, the future Singer, two other orphans who also must work for

the Council. They live in luxury while the rest of the villagers, including Kira's little friend Matt, eke out a not-so-great existence. As time goes on Kira begins to suspect, and then know, that things aren't quite what they seem. I absolutely could not put *Gathering Blue* down. It totally forced me to stay up way past my bedtime and then even after I was finished reading it, I still couldn't sleep since I kept thinking about what had happened in the book. I was vaguely disturbed, but also excited to see where the next book would go (it took a lot of willpower to not immediately start reading *Messenger!*). It was a little weird to read since it's the second book of the Giver Quartet and Jonas and Gabriel are not in this one. I highly recommend *Gathering Blue*. It is truly excellent.

*Gathering Blue*, the second in the Giver quartet by Lois Lowry, follows the story of Kira, an orphaned girl. In a world where physical differences are shunned and the bearers cast out, Kira finds herself alone and vulnerable when her mother suddenly dies. As her only protector, Kira's mother valiantly fought for the disabled girl's right to exist in such a harsh community. Without her, Kira has become a target of certain villagers looking to claim the land where her home once sat, even if it means expelling her from the community. After being called into a hearing with the Council of Guardians to determine her fate, Kira is pleased to learn that her life will be spared due to her special talent. Under the watchful eyes of the Guardians, Kira undertakes the daunting task set before her by the Elders, and in doing so discovers things about herself and her community that she never would have imagined possible. While this is the second book in the Giver quartet, I find it only fair to note that there aren't any characters from the original novel in this book. Set in the same dystopian future Earth, Kira's village is less advanced and the residents have a much harsher life. Where the Giver had an almost futuristic feel to it, through their advancements and gadgets, *Gathering Blue* has a very medieval feel, where all but the most privileged of residents reside in clay and thatch cottages with little to no food. I ended up reading this as part of a Summer reading challenge with my 10-year-old and I honestly can say that I don't think I ever would have read it otherwise. But now that I have read it, I want to read the remaining two books to see where this all goes. With both *Gathering Blue* and *The Giver*, Lois Lowry has created a fictional dystopia that has a hint of real life and modern prejudices and thoughts woven in. No, modern day America does not cast out the infirm, disabled or elderly; but we do have a way of treating them as less of a person unless they have something that we want or a knowledge that we can use. *Gathering Blue* brings that issue to the forefront in such a way that will cause the reader to

think about Kira's situation and hopefully be kinder to those around them.

Gathering Blue was a sweet and contemporary read; a young reader (middle school for sure) might enjoy this story. The plot was dull however and lacked the suspense that I eagerly look forward to in all my book reading adventures! Also, by the end of the story, I was left with so many unanswered questions. I remember I kept moving along chapter after chapter hoping that at some point, I would get a more in depth back story of Kira, but all I got was the lowdown on weaving, sewing, embroidery, threading, color dyeing and plants. The message was merely relative to perseverance in the midst of opposition. The characters were genuinely engaging and quite comical; though at times, I felt annoyed with Kira's naiveness, but that was just me. The only offense I came across was the way this make believe society targeted and completely disregarded the disabled. It was difficult to read at times and I just wanted to throw that out there. Meh, it was a good read. I liked it but I didn't love it. Don't buy it borrow it!

Many years ago I had the pleasure of reading "The Giver" by Lois Lowery. It was complete unto itself, a fascinating story of a time without technology, an anti-utopian future time. I never forgot the story and was thrilled when the movie came out which reacquainted me with the book. Recently I discovered Lois Lowery had gone on to write 3 more books, calling it a Quartet, not a series. I bought the second book, "Gathering Blue" and quickly became, once again, enthralled by the writing of Lois Lowery. This story takes place in a poor village and is the story of Kira, a young crippled girl with an extraordinary gift for weaving. It is a beautifully written piece. I was totally captivated by all of the characters as well as the clarity of story line, staying true to all the details of a world without technology, how the people thought and lived. The characters are separate from those of "The Giver", but there is still the theme of not everyone being willing to follow the norm, the original thinkers. As with the first book, there are loose threads, there are questions. That is where the reader gets to use his or her imagination to decide what might have happened next or leave the book as it is, a unique glimpse into a possible future time, and be satisfied. I, myself, love the what ifs which will keep me occupied for a long time to come. In the meantime, I downloaded the rest of the quartet. I am in no way hoping to connect the dots to turn these stories into a series. I look forward to more thoroughly enjoyable and thought provoking reading. Thank you Lois Lowery.

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