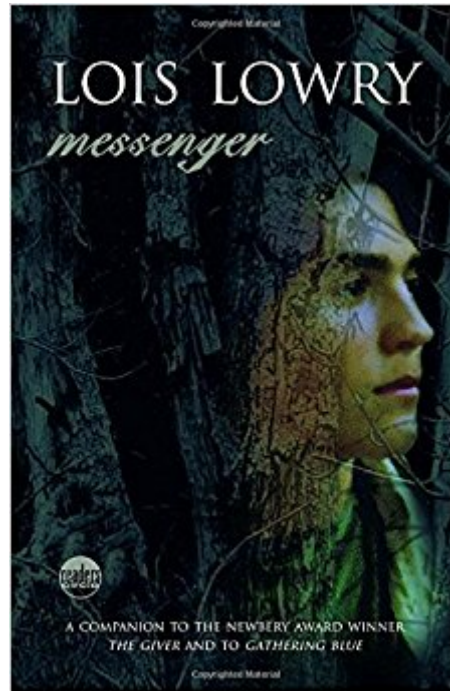




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Messenger (Readers Circle)



Synopsis

Messenger is the masterful third novel in the Giver Quartet, which began with the dystopian bestseller *The Giver*, now a major motion picture. Matty has lived in Village and flourished under the guidance of Seer, a blind man known for his special sight. Village once welcomed newcomers, but something sinister has seeped into Village and the people have voted to close it to outsiders. Matty has been invaluable as a messenger. Now he must risk everything to make one last journey through the treacherous forest with his only weapon, a power he unexpectedly discovers within himself.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 1,159 customer reviews

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Customer Reviews

Grade 6 Up-Matty, who has lived in Village with the blind Seer since running away from an abusive childhood, is looking forward to receiving his true name, which he hopes will be Messenger. But he is deeply unsettled by what is going on. He has discovered his own power to heal others and learned of disturbing changes within his community. Under the gentle guidance of Leader, who arrived in Village on a red sled as a young boy and who has the power of Seeing Beyond, the citizens have always welcomed newcomers, especially those who are disabled. But a sinister force is at work, which has prompted them to close admission to outsiders. Also, it seems that Matty's beloved Mentor has been trading away parts of his inner self in order to become more attractive to Stocktender's widow. When the date for the close of the border is decided, Matty must make one

more trip through the increasingly sinister Forest to bring back Seer's daughter, the gifted weaver Kira. On the return journey, Matty must decide if he should use his healing but self-destructive power to reverse the inexorable decline of Forest, Village, and its people. While readers may be left mystified as to what is behind the dramatic change in Village, Lowry's skillful writing imbues the story with a strong sense of foreboding, and her descriptions of the encroaching Forest are particularly vivid and terrifying. The gifted young people, introduced in *The Giver* (1993) and *Gathering Blue* (2000, both Houghton), are brought together in a gripping final scene, and the shocking conclusion without benefit of denouement is bound to spark much discussion and debate. -Marie Orlando, Suffolk Cooperative Library System, Bellport, NY Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Starred Review Gr. 6-10. Like Lowry's hugely popular Newbery winner, *The Giver* (1993), this story dramatizes ideas of utopia gone wrong and focuses on a young person who must save his world. Teenage Matty lives with his caregiver in the Village, a place of refuge, where those fleeing poverty and persecution are welcomed with kindness and find a home. But the Village people are changing, and many have voted to build a wall to keep the newcomers out. The metaphor of the wall and the rage against immigrants ("They can't even speak right") will certainly reach out to today's news images for many readers. But Lowry moves far beyond message, writing with a beautiful simplicity rooted in political fable, in warm domestic detail, and in a wild natural world, just on the edge of realism. Matty lives with his blind caregiver, Seer. Both of them were driven from home and nearly perished. The drama is in their affection; in the small details of how they cook, care for their puppy, and tease one another. Matty teases Seer about his blindness, even though they both know Seer sees more than most. In contrast is the terror of Matty's secret powers and the perilous journey he must undertake to save the Village. The physical immediacy of his quest through a dark forest turned hostile brings the myth very close and builds suspense to the last heart-wrenching page. Hazel Rochman Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

SPARROW'S THOUGHTS: ANSWERS! Yes, Lois Lowry has finally provided us with answers concerning Jonas and Baby Gabriel after the freakish, yet brilliant ending of *The Giver*. Thus, I will make it known, that *Messenger* has been my favorite read so far in the quartet; although, the page count is pretty ridiculous. I mean, 187 pages? Really? Okay, I'll stop being snarky. ;) While I acknowledge that I gave *Gathering Blue* a pretty low review, I will say this: *The Giver*,

Gathering Blue, and Messenger eventually connect beautifully. So, yes, please read the quartet in that particular order if you wish to experience the fullness of a dystopian relationship between the stories. But what makes Messenger stand out between the other books!? The mere fact, that you are reminded that living amongst a community/family/city/nation is both beautiful and ugly, and how self-love, egotism and especially pride can easily corrupt and poison a society in its entirety. And who doesn't need this friendly reminder? ;) Sadly, history has taught me that when a society is overthrown by pride and corruption, a martyr is the most effective solution. While martyrdom may not always mean a physical death, (though that is the legitimate definition), martyrdom may be displayed by one's self-sacrifice in taking the blame for something they may, or may not have done.

IN A NUTSHELL: The Giver demonstrates what a controlled community looks like when its leaders make every effort to prevent division, controversy, misunderstandings and painful experiences from ever taking place. Gathering Blue illustrates how a society can be gravely affected by its way of reasoning, and how living in such a society, one forgets how to care and appreciate one another. Messenger exposes how a society, whose initial principles were founded on love, friendship, sympathy, compassion, friendliness can easily become corrupted by way of pride, self-love, envy and unforgiveness.

A wonderful thought-provoking message that challenges the reader to live in a selfless way.

The characters were fairly engaging; I liked how the characters from Gathering Blue and The Giver all connected beautifully, and with their own stories too. My favorite character was the Seer; he reminded me of a Gandalf.

I was impressed with the book! It was worth the read :) 3 THINGS I LIKED: + The personal convictions the story delivered; I needed the rude awakening :) + Messenger is full-on fantasy with a pinch of dystopia; not to mention, Lowry's writing is wonderfully descriptive and thought-provoking + I received my answers regarding Jonas and I was quite pleased :) 3 THINGS I DID NOT LIKE: - Though I received a somewhat detailed summary of what took place after Jonas arrived at The Village, I didn't get enough about baby Gabriel; nothing - The whole Trade Mart scene was confusing and flawed; I was left with unanswered questions - The origin stories of both Jonas and Kira lose their sense of realism towards the end of the book; I felt betrayed :(

This third story by Lois Lowry is a study in altruism and what happens then evil creeps in. The first book, "The Giver" took place in a city where there is technology, and people do not know what love, color, family, etc. are all about. Everything is dictated. All are the same, and those that are different are not appreciated and are breaking the Law in some way. Lowry's second book takes place in a

village where infirmity is bad. It is a hard life, but there are families, most poor, and if you are found to have a Gift, you are whisked away to use it for the village. The story revolves around 3 gifts, and in particular, a girl, Kira, who has a twisted leg and is a weaver, and a young boy, Matty, who does not yet know he has a gift. He goes to a special village and brings back the color blue, in the form of a flower not grown in Kira's town and Kira's father. This story does not particularly overlap with the first story other than to show a different village in the same world. That brings us to book 3, "The Messenger". Here we are more thoroughly introduced to the village where Matty had found Kira's father. The village started as a truly altruistic community. Everyone was welcomed. Everyone helped everyone, and people, escaping other villages would find their way there. Here there is Leader, who later we find is Jonas from "The Giver". Matty and Kira's father, often called Seer as he was blind but "saw" so much, are also in this village. This is the story of Matty and the village. The people are changing and not for the good. As the people change, so does the forest going from hospitable and welcoming to actually being able to kill people. The village decides to close the gates to outsiders so Matty needs to go back to Kira's village as it is time for her to come home to her family. The journey is fraught with danger. It is truly a fascinating read. The imagery used to show the results of progressive evil using the people and the forest is amazing. It also begins to tie some of the book themes together. For a young adult, it is a fun read. Lois Lowry does a terrific job of weaving a story, painting a complete picture. For adults it has such depth. This book along with the other 2 gave me much food for thought. I went right on to the fourth story to see how it was wrapped up. Not to give it away, but you will finally get a feel for how the world was through the three settings and the characters. You also get to meet Gabriel's mother and see her journey as well as young Gabe, who is now a young boy. Happy reading!

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