

Discussion Questions
Along a Storied Trail
by Ann H. Gabhart

During the Great Depression, many were in desperate situations with the bank failures, no jobs to be found and no way to provide for their families. Do you think the work projects that President Roosevelt established were the best way to help people in need? Why or why not?

After the first Eastern Kentucky county took advantage of the Packhorse Librarian project, nearly all of the other Eastern Kentucky counties wanted a similar library in their areas. Why do you think the project was so popular in Eastern Kentucky?

Many in the Eastern Kentucky Appalachian communities had never had access to libraries and most had no books in their homes other than their Bibles. Can you imagine not having access to a library or to books of any kind? How has being a library patron made your life better?

Did you have a favorite character in the story? If so, who and why?

Perdita Sweet had a tendency toward contrariness. Did you like her in spite of that or perhaps because of that? Have you known people like her who simply can't seem to find a way to be happy no matter their situations? Or perhaps on the other side of the coin, people who do find a way to be cheerful in spite of those less than ideal situations?

In recent years here in Kentucky, the ash borer has killed most of our ash trees. It's been sad seeing the many dead trees in our woods. Why do you think the loss of the American chestnut trees was an even harder blow to the mountain communities all through the Appalachian Mountains? Do you think foresters who are trying to find ways to bring back the American chestnut trees will ever be successful?

Tansy loved her job as a packhorse librarian. Why do think that was true? What was it that made her so happy to be riding the rough trails to take books to her mountain neighbors?

Why do you think Perdita was so ready to take Coralee under her wings?

The Lord seemed ready to answer Perdita's prayer for family before she even uttered it. Do you think the Lord knows the desires of our hearts or our prayers even before we recognize what we need ourselves? Have you ever had answers to those kinds of prayers?

Tansy was very impressed with the writer, Damien. On the other hand, she felt comfortable with Caleb. Do you think the fact that she'd known Caleb forever make it more difficult for her to notice him in a romantic way and as more than an old friend? Do you think we do sometimes run after the new and different instead of appreciating the old and familiar?

Last question just for fun. Did you enjoy the Jack story Aunt Perdie told?