

Educator Discussion Guide

RIDERS

By Veronica Rossi

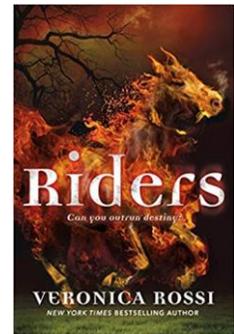
Louisiana Teen Readers' Choice Award Nominee 2018-2019
Grade 9-12

Submitted by Kayla Caffarel

School of Library and Information Science, LSU, Baton Rouge

ABOUT THE BOOK

After an accident, Gideon is suddenly reincarnated as War- a horseman of the apocalypse. As War, he finds himself gifted with superpowers and the burden to save humanity. He soon meets Daryn, a seeker on a quest to find the remaining three horsemen and bring them together. During their search for Famine (Bas/Sebastian), Death (Marcus), and Conquest (Jode), they encounter demons and fallen angels that wish to leave Satan's rule. Together, Daryn and the Four Horsemen must save the world.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Veronica Rossi was born on June 16th, 1972 in Rio de Janeiro, and has lived in several places throughout her life. She studied at the California College of the Arts in the San Francisco. Currently she does not have any award-winning books, however, her trilogy *Under the Never Sky* was a New York Times Best-selling book. Rossi now lives in California with her husband and her two sons.

Biographical information taken from the author's website at

<http://veronicarossi.com/>

Accessed 7 October 2017.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Canadian born Hugh Syme is best known for covert art for rock and metal bands. Notably, he has created all of Rush's cover art since *Caress of Steel* in 1975. He does a lot work with major record companies like Sony Music, and is also a musician himself. He has three daughters, all of whom live in Indiana.

Biographical information taken from Wikipedia

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hugh_Syme

Accessed 17 November 2017

Illustrator's website, <http://www.hughsyme.com/>

OTHER TITLES IN SERIES

Seeker (2017)

PREREADING ACTIVITIES

Good vs Evil

Ask your students to think about the various good vs evil movies and books that they have seen or read. Ask them for examples of how the conflicts began (why evil decided to be evil and why good decided to fight evil). Have students try to get in the mindset of their favorite characters to understand why they fight for good or evil. Discuss the usage of color when defining good and evil (black and white, light colors vs darker colors) etc., and ask for examples from films or TV shows they may have seen.

Mythology

Ask your students if they enjoy mythology. Do they have a favorite myth or legend that they prefer over others, and why is this myth their favorite? Ask if they know or recall anything about the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. If so, do they have a favorite myth about them? Ask students to get into groups of 3 or 4 and do some simple research on the Four Horsemen. Once groups have information, ask them to share what they have found.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Gideon's coping method for most of his feelings is to run away from others and be alone in his emotions. Discuss examples of how his coping method has impacted his sisters' life.
2. Gideon's experience in the military often comes in handy whenever trouble finds the group. Discuss the implication of this with the class; should he be the leader of the ragtag group and rely on his teammates for their input? Or is it right to put Daryn in charge because she receives the information?
3. On page 88, Gideon explains his reasoning for joining the army, however in chapter 24, we find out his father's history with the army. Between the two reasons, do you think his father's history with the army influenced his reason, or did he truly just want to protect innocent people? Do you think his father's death also had any influence on his joining the army?
4. Rossi begins this book after much has already happened. Gideon and the group have already been through a great deal of trauma and trouble. Why do you think Rossi chose to start the story this way, essentially as a large flashback? What impact did this have on the story?
5. Death is a primary theme in this story, from the horsemen dying to them experiencing the death of loved ones. Do you think that in this story, death was their destiny?
6. Gideon clearly has an anger problem, as demonstrated in the book, he has a short temper, even nearly beats someone to death at one point. However, after receiving his powers, he learns to control his rage. Do you think in a way, becoming war helped him understand how his rage can affect others? Have your emotions ever played off someone else's emotions?
7. Trust is another major issue throughout the story. Gideon doesn't trust any of the horsemen, though he does trust Daryn after some time. Please discuss some of the events

that caused their trust in each other to grow. Also, please speculate and discuss Gideon's outright distrust of his groupmates.

8. Gideon is a very prideful character. Discuss pride, not only read in this book, but in other stories as well. How can pride cause problems between a team and how does his pride impact his interactions with the other Horsemen?
9. This story revolves around the concept of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. However, this story flips the traditional tale on its head. Take other popular villains in entertainment and discuss how making them "good guys" might change the entire story or universe the character lives in.
10. At the end of the story, Gideon is still learning how to do things with one hand. He can joke about it, although his mother is not happy when he does. Please list some other examples of disabled/disability representation in movies, TV, and books and discuss the importance of this representation.
11. During this story, we learn that the Horsemen are a diverse cast of characters. This representation is slowly increasing in the entertainment industry. Amidst the call for more diverse media, what film would you like to see be more diverse? Are you able to see yourself in these characters already or would you change them, so you could see yourself?
12. Gideon's military training plays a big part in his thought process and action process throughout the story. Try to imagine you are in Gideon's shoes. Do you have any experience that you think would help you in a survival situation? How did you get this experience?
13. Throughout the novel, Gideon overcomes numerous obstacles; many of which have been hindering him since his father passed away. After meeting the other horsemen and Daryn however, he overcomes these obstacles, moves past his guilt and anger. Has there ever been a time when your friends and family have helped you overcome great obstacles in your life?
14. Gideon and Marcus are immediately at odds with each other. Gideon sees Marcus as a threat to his relationship with Daryn, and as a threat to his "alpha male" position in the horsemen group. After learning how Marcus died, their respect for each other blossoms. Discuss with the class why you think they begin to get along after this.
15. Destiny is one of the major themes in this book. Do you think that a person can choose or change their destiny? Or do you believe that destiny is concrete?

CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

Health and Physical Education:

Have students research the weapons mentioned in the book and create a short PowerPoint presentation on the fighting styles of these weapons and where they originated from.

Art:

Have students create a visualization of the four horses. It can be abstract art, a collage, scrapbook style, etc., but it must be created by the students, using their own imagination to visualize the horses.

Social Studies:

Have students research different locations mentioned in the book. Then have them group together (3-4 students each) and create a short report on their locations. Have them create a short PowerPoint to present the report with pictures from these locations.

History:

Have students create the front page of a newspaper in a location that was mentioned in the book. Students should use descriptions from the book, and include “Horsemen sightings” that may have taken place in those locations (particularly in towns that suffered major destruction).

Religion:

Have students research The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse from all manner of mythology. Then have students research the Four Horsemen from the Bible. Compare and contrast these descriptions with the descriptions from the book.

Vocabulary:

Jotunheim	Rapture	Fjord
Jumpmaster	Hyperconscious	Lithe
Musk	Battalion	
Belligerent	Psychiatrist	
Hypodermic	Contingency	

RELATED WEBSITES

New World Encyclopedia

http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Four_Horsemen_of_the_Apocalypse

This site gives a detailed description of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, as well as artwork that represents them.

Wilderness Survival

<http://www.wilderness-survival.net/>

This website is a neat, free to use, website that provides survival tips that Gideon would have learned or become familiar with during his time in RASP.

Go Army

<https://www.goarmy.com/>

This website is the United States Army websites. It provides information about how to join different branches of the army, as well as giving some information on ranks and the lifestyle of military service men and women.