



# ANDY ANDREWS

## THE LOST CHOICE

A LEGEND OF PERSONAL DISCOVERY



### Reader's Guide

Andy Andrews, author of the New York Times best seller *The Traveler's Gift*, has crafted a gripping quest to uncover mankind's destiny. Elegantly blending riveting fiction, extensive research, and a powerful message of hope, *The Lost Choice* illuminates timeless principles for transforming the world.

The following questions are designed to trigger new thoughts and ideas relating to the life-changing messages in *The Lost Choice*. You may answer these questions on your own or with a group. Most of these questions are subjective, so please don't feel as though you need to unlock the "right" answer.

Your Actions Will  
Change the  
World . . . The  
question is HOW?

— Andy Andrews,  
*The Lost Choice*

#### ? General Questions

1. In the Prologue, Alem prophesies: "There will come a time when the possession will be revealed to all. On that day, everything will change. Kingdoms will rise and fall . . . in a day!" How is this fore-telling revealed, at least in part, throughout the book?
2. Do the relics, in fact, hold some mystical power? Or, rather, do they simply instill in their owners a sense of power because of their celebrated histories?
3. Why do you think the author chose to use distinct time periods to tell the histories of each relic at specified times in the book?
4. Which of the relics—and the messages behind them—do you consider the most significant? Why?

#### \* Personal Growth

1. What major life choices have you made over the last few years? What choices have you not made that could be considered "lost" choices? How have these choices—both those you made and those you lost—affected the course of your life? How have those choices affected the lives of others?
2. In the Prologue, the author calls Alem "an oracle of truth" because of his ability to speak directly but with compassion. Do you know someone like this? Have you allowed this person to influence how you think? How have his or her words changed you?
3. Consider the relationship between Kasi and Alem. In some ways, it is akin to that of a mentor and protégé. Is there someone in your life who fills the role of Alem? Is there a Kasi in your life? How are you working toward being both to someone else?
4. Is there an object or heirloom from your own family that you cherish? How has its history, and the stories of those who have possessed it, instilled in you a sense of purpose? What emotions does the heirloom evoke?

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(cont'd)

- If you were permitted a private audience with any character from the book, who would it be? Why? How do you believe this meeting would change your life?
- Chapter 9 discusses the Butterfly Effect. Think of your own sphere of influence. How might this effect be at work in your life? Is your impact primarily positive? How can you enhance it?
- In the final chapter, Alfred Vanderbilt writes to his children that the message of his relic is “the most valuable legacy with which one could ever be provided”—unusual words for children who will inherit his fortune. What do you consider the most valuable legacy from your parents? Why? How are you ensuring a valuable legacy for your own children?

*Avoiding action is  
also an action, and  
its consequences  
are every bit as  
significant as acting  
with purpose.*

— Andy Andrews,  
*The Lost Choice*

### Prologue

- How does the Prologue set the stage for the remainder of the book? What important introductions—both to characters and objects—are made? What themes are introduced?
- When the possession is threatened, Alem splits it into four parts, giving one to Kasi. Why do you think he did that? Why not give Alem the entire possession? Or, why not keep it in his own care?

### Chapter 1

- Dorry, a journalist, and Mark, a police detective, are naturally inquisitive people. If these characters had other professions—say, a florist and a salesman—would their story be as credible? What specific details does the author provide that add to the believability?

### Chapter 2

- Oskar Schindler was a man of contradiction—a fierce womanizer and gambler who risked his own life to defy and deceive the Nazi regime. What might have motivated his actions? Do you believe Schindler was a good man? Why or why not?
- Schindler is determined to retrieve the metal paperweight before his departure from Plaszow, though he doesn't understand why. Did he believe the object held some sort of power? What value does Schindler ascribe to the object?

### Chapter 3

- Dorry seeks out Dylan's expertise about the object because he “works in a museum.” Why is this point both humorous and insightful about human behavior? Do your own friends and acquaintances ask you questions based on or related to your profession?
- The translation of the inscription on the object is a mystery to Dorry, Mark, and Dylan: By your hand, the people shall live. Setting aside what you already know about the object, explore other possible interpretations. Consider how the object could have been linked to the owner's profession or station in life.

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### Chapters 4 & 5

1. Dorry is a qualified, experienced interviewer. Why, then, is she nervous about meeting Mae Mae Bounds? What might her expectations be?
2. Mae Mae calls her own relic a “food stone” and relays its history as such. Do you interpret this to mean that the stone itself has the power to produce a bountiful harvest, or rather, its legend had the power to inspire people to work harder for the success of the plantation? What do you think each character believes at this point in the book?

### Chapter 6

1. Consider the relationship between Carver and young Henry Wallace. At that time in history, was it acceptable for a Caucasian boy to have an African-American tutor? Could the two be considered “friends”? Which of the two do you believe garnered the most from this relationship?

### Chapter 7

1. In this chapter, the regional economy is dependent on Carver's ability to develop uses for the peanut, and yet we see no signs of panic or anxiety in Carver. Why? How might you develop the ability to produce great results during times of tremendous stress?
2. Carver quotes from Booker T. Washington's autobiography: “I have learned that success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles he has overcome while choosing to succeed.” What obstacles did each of these men overcome? What did they accomplish?
3. The list of products developed by Carver is seemingly endless. How would our lives be different without his scientific contributions? What product of Carver's is most important in your own life? Which is most significant for society as a whole?

### Chapter 8

1. Through Mae Mae, the author explains the title of the book: “Most folks don't see how important they are . . . how much they matter to all of us. So they never choose to do somethin' special with their lives. And not makin' a choice? That is a choice . . . a lost one.” In a sense, could this be considered the climax of the book? Why or why not?

### Chapters 9 & 10

1. Dorry uses the Internet to uncover facts about Dr. Frederick Patterson and Henry Wallace. If this book had been written twenty years earlier, how might this element be different? How would the overall pace of the book be affected?
2. Each of the four main characters contributes to the investigation of the relics—for example, Dorry, the AP and UPI; Mark, the data banks of the FBI; and Dylan and Abby, the computer at the museum. What does each of their roles signify in the story? How does their collaboration underscore the themes of this book, such as teamwork?

*Everybody—every single  
body—makes a difference!  
But there is a choice that  
determines what kind  
of difference you will  
make. Most folks don't  
see how important  
they are . . . how much  
they matter to all of us.  
So they never choose  
to do somethin' special  
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## Reader's Guide

### Chapter 11

1. How is it possible that two men so vastly different in every way as Adams and Jefferson were able to work together—combining strengths, ignoring weaknesses—in order to lead a nation through its difficult birth? Is there someone with whom you are working who might be the Jefferson to your Adams? What might you learn from the example of this historic pair?
2. Why is it noteworthy that the relic held by Adams was the same held by Joan of Arc? What were their common goals?
3. Adams is quite adamant that the significance of the inscription lies in the “By your hand” portion. Why do you think he believed this so fiercely?

### Chapter 12

1. Through the liberated slave Cinque, the author is able to connect the “free” relic with Africa. George Washington Carver’s “food stone” also has a connection with Africa. Is the author offering us an early clue for how the objects may be related?
2. Dorry notes that of the first seven presidents, John Adams was the only one to have a male heir, but she dismisses this as merely interesting. Given the recurring theme of each of the relics as being passed down from father to son, is this purely coincidental? In what other ways does this theme present itself?

### Chapter 13

1. The relic belonging to a Roman emperor, Constantine XI, falls first into the hands of Nigel, a grave robber, before it is passed to Alfred Vanderbilt. Consider the irony that this seemingly worthless object—something that initially whets the appetite for treasure—became more valuable to Vanderbilt than royal jewels. What does this say about the relic’s value and the ability of the holder to recognize it? Is there a certain amount of character required?

### Chapters 14 & 15

1. Why did so many passengers ignore warnings that the *Lusitania* could be in danger and still take the fateful voyage? How might the warnings have been different today, in an age of media saturation? Do you believe more people would have heeded?
2. Both Vanderbilt and Ronald felt that the inscription of this relic, “By your hand, the people shall be saved,” was somehow meant for them. How does this later prove true? What other characters in this story felt a connection with this inscription?
3. Why do you think some people demonstrate honor and courage in the face of disaster—like Vanderbilt and Ronald—while others retreat in fear and cowardice?

*We are all connected  
to every other person  
on Earth. The actions  
we take today, right  
now, change the  
course of others' lives  
and the world for  
all time.*

— Andy Andrews,  
*The Lost Choice*



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 Chapter 16

1. Mark feels a personal satisfaction when his search for two lost children ends with their safe return. How might this be linked to his contact with the relics? Has he indeed done something meaningful with his life, as Mae Mae made him promise?
2. What, if any, meaning do you ascribe to the fact that the relics, in their primary form, were a cup?

 Chapter 17 & Epilogue

1. Why do you believe the author chose to reveal the inscription on the last object to the reader and not to the four central characters in the book?
2. In Vanderbilt's letter to his children, we finally see the culmination of all the inscriptions, as well as the title of the book. What message do you take away from it? Who do you believe the final inscription is ultimately meant for? Why?
3. Has *The Lost Choice* changed the way you see yourself? How will you use the book and its message to enhance the lives of others?

 Exercise: The Butterfly Effect

*Become a detective like Mark, Dorry, Abby, and Dylan. This exercise can be conducted alone or with a group. It'll be helpful to have a large writing surface like a dry-erase board or postersized paper available. (Or you may prefer to use a software program like Microsoft PowerPoint.) You may also wish to use different colored markers.*

1. List all the historical characters mentioned in *The Lost Choice* in chronological order.
2. Separate them into four groups based on which piece of the relic they possessed.
3. Using what you learn in *The Lost Choice*, record information about each character (and/or brainstorm and research on the Internet or in the library) to determine how each person's decisions and actions influenced the character's immediate history. Draw lines to indicate any connections between historical figures.
4. Next, think about how that immediate impact changed that culture—what other potential effects occurred in the later future? Did it impact the world? Record any of your observations, drawing lines between your results and the appropriate historical figure.
5. See if you can find any additional parallels behind different possessors of the relic. Draw lines connecting each.

In completing this exercise, you may arrive at a bone-chilling realization: everything is truly connected to everything else. Everything matters. You matter! The choices and resulting actions you make today affect your destiny and the direction of humanity. Once again, you matter!

After reading *The Lost Choice* and its Initiative at the end of the book, what life decisions are you contemplating?

Log on to [TheLostChoice.com](http://TheLostChoice.com)  
and share your decisions with the world.

*Every action, no matter  
how seemingly  
inconsequential, has  
a profound impact on  
the lives of others.*

— Andy Andrews,  
*The Lost Choice*

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