

THE FIDDLER'S GUN

DISCUSSION GUIDE



Thank you for reading *THE FIDDLER'S GUN*. I hope you enjoyed it or, at the very least, I hope you resisted the urge to hurl it against the wall. Your wall thanks you as well. It told me to tell you that.

The following guide is designed to incite discussion. One of the most wonderful things about creating art is that there will be as many interpretations of the creation as there are people who view it. The work changes with each individual perspective and I've been surprised at how often people have discovered things in the text that I didn't consciously write—and yes, that includes typos.

Each of you—each of us—will see in Fin's story something unique. You may see a simple adventure, you may see the misguided writings of a perpetually lonely daydreamer, you may see something of yourself, or of your childhood, or of the nature of willful children. But the challenge I propose is not merely to express what you've drawn from the novel yourself, but to step to the side, to see it from another angle, to learn what others have seen as well.

I hope that through the process of discussion, each person engaged will perhaps find in themselves a bit of adventure. For what is adventure if not discovery of the unknown—even when the unknown is the mind of your fellow reader or the freshly read book on the table before you.

Accept my humble thanks for reading. Enjoy the conversation.

—A. S. Peterson

I. CHARACTER

1. What characters did you most like?

2. What characters did you most dislike?

3. What makes a character memorable? Is it what they look like? Is it how they talk? Is it, perhaps, how different they are from ourselves or people we know? Or how similar?

4. Which characters were forgettable? Why?

5. Which character would you like to know more about?

6. What personal issues does Fin struggle with? Are they legitimate?

7. How do you think she can best resolve those issues and live a well-adjusted life?

8. Is it realistic to think that her life will resolve in a way that she is happy with?

9. Had Fin and Peter been married as planned, do you think Fin would have been happy?

10. Is her situation in life her fault or is she at the mercy of circumstance?

11. Are Fin's actions heroic? Are they criminal? Or both?

POINTS OF INTEREST:

Part of Fin's story was based on the folkloric character of Nancy Hart, the actual Georgia War Woman.

George Whitefield really did help found the orphanage. He donated the bell for the church and visited often, as did John Wesley.

The characters of Bartimaeus and Hilde are partially inspired by portraits of actual Salzburger Germans on display at the museum in Ebenezer, Georgia.

II. SETTING

1. How important is the setting to Fin's story?
2. Could the same story have been told in a different setting? A different time period?
3. What do you think were the author's reasons for choosing to place the story in this specific time period and location?
4. How is the character of the setting similar to Fin's personal character?

POINTS OF INTEREST:

The Ebenezer Orphanage is a historical place. It was the first orphanage in the American colonies. A replica of the orphan house stands on the site and is now a museum of the Georgia Salzburger Society.

The New Jerusalem Lutheran Church is also a historical building. It stands across the yard from the rebuilt orphan house and is the sole surviving original structure of Ebenezer, Georgia. Its congregation has met continuously for over two hundred years and fingerprints of its builders can still be seen in its earthen bricks.

The RATTLESNAKE was an authentic privateer of the Revolutionary War era.

III. PLOT

1. Why does the story begin with the announcement of the new chapel and the appointment of a helper for Bartimaeus?

2. Could the novel have started at a later point in Fin's life? Would it have been as effective?

3. Near the end of Part I, a major character dies. Why did this need to happen in the narrative? Was it necessary?

4. Are there plot threads that you didn't find satisfying? What would have brought them to a better resolution?

5. At the end of the book, two major characters die. Was this necessary? Why?

6. Why do you think the author chose to end the book at this point in the story? Did it leave you 'hanging' or did it leave you emotionally satisfied and ready for the next book?

POINTS OF INTEREST:

As Fin departs Savannah on the RATTLESNAKE, she witnesses a small naval battle between the Royal Navy and colonials. This is a reference to the historic Battle of the Rice Boats.

Mary Read and Anne Bonny were two famous female pirates that went disguised as men and fooled their shipmates for much of their careers.

The U.S. Marine Corps was established in TUN TAVERN, Philadelphia on November 10, 1775 by Captain Robert Mullen as depicted in the novel. Although the ensuing bar fight is pure speculation, a healthy knowledge of the habits of marines and sailors indicates its distinct possibility

IV. THEME

1. What are the themes of *THE FIDDLER'S GUN*?
2. What do the *FIDDLE* and the *GUN* symbolize?
3. Do you think the sea itself is symbolic of anything?
4. Why do you suspect the book was titled *THE FIDDLER'S GUN*?
5. The concluding book in the *FIN'S REVOLUTION* story is titled *FIDDLER'S GREEN*. What, if anything, do you think that portends?

