

## Study Guide



**I**n the fog of a dark and scary night, Libby wakes to the ship's bell. First she finds Annika. Then she finds danger. An impatient captain runs his steamboat even in the thickest fog. But out of the near-diaster comes the sound of music. A fiddler on the main deck with a light, wuick touch that sets toes tapping and hearts free.

*Why is this gifted man who is also a concert violinist wearing ragged clothes? Why does he answer to his first name, but not his second?*

**Hi Friends**—What *is* the fiddler's secret? Where is Jordan's biggest enemy? And when the *Christina* family leaves St. Paul, will they ever find Annika again?

### Let's Talk About . . . Words you might need

Find a dictionary and fill in the definitions:

guard (as in steamboat)

*gut* (German)

*nein* (German)

speculators

treaties

oxcarts

trunk

pawnshop

pawnbroker

bog (as in a geographic area)

gristmill

pan ice

buckets (as for a paddle wheeler)

suffrage

### **Let's Talk About . . . The story**

Use the blank space between questions to write your answers or create sections in your loose-leaf notebook when you want to write more. To find something in the story, check the number (ch. 1) at the end of the first question. That means chapter 1. Look there until you see another note (ch. 2, or 3, or 4) directing you to a different chapter.

- How did Libby's quick thinking become a matter of life-or-death? (ch. 1)
- Why is Libby still trying to be a matchmaker?
- In what way did the fiddler's face seem to hold a secret? (ch. 2)
- As older boys, what did Caleb and Jordan do to help Peter with the bullies? (ch. 3)
- Why could Peter and Jordan understand how a mistreated orphan dog might feel?
- What did Libby's mother understand about a captain's duty if there was ever a disaster on the *Christina*? (ch. 5)
- What choice did Libby's mother make?
- How did Peter help the *Christina* family talk to him? How did they help Peter know what they were saying?

**Let's Talk About . . . What's important to us**

- In school Pa asked, "What is most important to you? What do you want?" (ch. 5) Let's do his lesson: Think first about the speculators, the immigrants, and the people who want to build a new state. What do each of these groups want? Give just a few words for each group.

- What do Pa's students want?

**Peter:**

**Jordan:**

**Libby (ch. 6):**

**Caleb:**

- What is most important to *you*? Make a list, then summarize your thoughts in one sentence. Date your answer and put it in a safe place so you can check back and decide how you're doing.
- When Captain Norstad says it's important that we know what we want in life—what we believe in—he asks if we're tested about what we want, are we going to stick to what we believe? Yes or no? What would you say?
- Captain Norstad gives a clue: If that time of testing comes, what should we do?

**Let's Talk About . . . Freedom . . . What is it?**

- James Thompson is an historic character who lived in St. Paul during this time. (ch. 8) Mr. Thompson told Jordan that living in Minnesota Territory was like living anywhere. "If you let yourself be free, you will be." Was Mr. Thompson saying that Jordan could do anything he wanted, whether it was right or wrong? Why or why not?
- What does it mean to Jordan to be free to live, to earn his own way, to learn to read and write?
- In 1857 a handshake was a man's pledge of honor. Business agreements were made and kept by the pledge of that handshake. In some places a handshake is still a way to say, "I give you my word. You can trust me." When Jordan finds it hard to believe that he will ever vote, why does Mr. Thompson offer another handshake?
- What does Jordan decide about what Mr. Thompson said? What does Jordan say about his taste of freedom?
- How did the thought of being truly free give Jordan even more reason for wanting to do his best?
- What does Jordan plan to tell his parents when he gets to Galena? (ch. 13)
- What did Jordan do when the bully threatened him?

- What kind of person do you believe Jordan will be in his new life of freedom?

### **Let's Talk About . . . Discoveries**

- In the Bible there are heroes of the faith who made the right choices. Who are some of those heroes? Why?
- In Chapter 6 Peter talked about a secret sign that could help them know that one of them had been somewhere. Long ago, another group of people used this sign. Who were they? What did that sign mean to them and what does it still mean to us?
- In St. Paul an artist asked Libby and Caleb if they'd like to be part of his painting of the *Christina*. (ch. 12) Years later in *Disaster at Windy Hill*, some Northwoods characters saw that painting at Nevers Dam. Who were those characters and why were they curious about Libby and Caleb?
- In what way did the artist catch the best view of Caleb? What look did Caleb have?
- When the artist painted Libby, what did she see about herself? Have you seen that change in Libby also?

### **Let's Talk About . . . A never-give-up family**

- Why did Annika feel certain that God wanted her to stay in St. Paul that winter?

- When Pa had to start downriver, Annika and Libby had to say goodbye. What comfort does Annika offer Libby?
- What does a never-give-up family mean to Pa? If he adopts Peter will he love Libby just as much? If Pa marries Annika what will happen to his love for Libby? What does Pa tell Libby? (ch. 13) What is Libby's answer to Pa?
- How did Pa tell Peter that he and Libby want to adopt him? (ch. 15)
- Because Aunt Vi told Annika that she would always be second best, what did Pa plan to tell Annika? (ch. 14)
- How do you think Peter felt when he asked Pa, "I'm really your boy?" When he told Libby, "You're really my sister!" (ch. 17)
- When Caleb talks with Libby about how she listened in to Pa and Annika, what honesty does Caleb offer Libby? What comfort?
- How can that same comfort help each of us when we're facing something difficult?
- Is it the good times or the hard times that make us a family? Give reasons for your answer.

- How have the people on the *Christina* become a never-give-up family?
- As you read about Pa and Libby, Caleb, Jordan, and Peter, what does being in a never-give-up family mean to you?

### **Let's Talk About . . . Belonging**

- If you're with a group of kids and they leave you out of something, is it always bad? Why or why not?
- If you see a shy person who needs to be part of a good group what can you do about it?
- Why is it important for friends to talk about things that are important to them?
- How is being part of a never-give-up family like belonging to God?

### **Let's Talk About . . . Hearing God**

- As Libby watched to see when it would be safe for Jordan to leave the *Christina*, a man on the boiler deck spoke to her. (ch. 14) How did he describe himself? What did he regret about his life?
- What did he say he should have done? What did he tell Libby about Jordan?

- When Libby wondered if she could trust the man with Jordan's life, she asked the Lord to give the man a good plan. What happened?

### **Let's Talk About . . . Knowing God**

- What special gift did Pa give to Libby? (ch. 15) Why was it so meaningful to her?
- When Libby reads her mother's Bible she discovers that Romans 8:28 was not only important to Pa, but also to her mother. What special prayer had Libby's mother written in the margin of her Bible?
- When Libby admits that she's not very strong, what does Caleb tell her?
- Before Pa left St. Paul, Annika told him she would know if something happened to him. But now Pa senses that something is wrong with Annika. (ch. 15) How did God help Captain Norstad know that he needed to pray for her?
- The Bible tells us about the greatest Freedom Seeker of all time. Though Jesus never sinned, He loved us so much that He came to earth to die on the cross for each one of us. Because of His life, death, and resurrection, we can ask Him to forgive our sin and to be our Savior and Lord. That's His promise of John 3:16.

- What did Peter believe would happen to him if he died? (ch. 16)
- Libby asked God to help her give Peter hope: “In that still small voice that Libby was learning to recognize, she heard the answer: *Get Wellington.*” How would you describe a still, small voice?
- On Thanksgiving Day, what was Caleb most thankful for?

### Let's Talk About . . . Digging deeper

The Minnesota History Center in St. Paul offers a wealth of information and photos. Go to [www.minnesotahistorycenter.org](http://www.minnesotahistorycenter.org). In the search button enter *oxcarts*, *red river trails*, or other topics that interest you. See also [www.mnhs.org](http://www.mnhs.org) for a timeline of Minnesota history and additional topics such as the teacher *Harriet Bishop*, *Joe Rolette*, and *Minnesota Territory*.

- In an encyclopedia look up the **Emancipation Proclamation** issued by President Abraham Lincoln on January 1, 1863. What effect did this proclamation have on the rights of slaves and the outcome of the Civil War?
- Look up the **Constitution of the United States**, Amendment 13. What rights does this amendment give?
- See also Amendment 15. What does the word *suffrage* mean? How did this amendment change the right to vote?

**Let's Talk About . . . Being a Freedom Seeker**

- How have these four characters changed during the series? What were they like when you first met them? What are they like now?

Libby

Caleb

Jordan

Peter

- If you could be a character in this series, which one would you want to be? Why?
- As you think about the Freedom Seekers and what they did in this series, what meant the most to you?
- Find a part of the series that you especially like. Copy your favorite paragraph here.