

Reading Group Guide

Isobel's Song, Faith & Fiddle Series, Book One by Daryl Lott

About the Novel

Set against the backdrop of the Texas Revolution, *Isobel's Song* follows a young woman whose search for purpose becomes intertwined with some of the most dramatic events in American history. As armies move, lives hang in the balance, and a nation is born. Isobel discovers that the greatest journey is not across the frontier but through the human heart.

Rich in historical detail and grounded in a Christian worldview, *Isobel's Song* explores faith, courage, sacrifice, and the mysterious ways Providence works through ordinary people living in extraordinary times.

The questions below are designed to encourage thoughtful conversation and personal reflection. Not every question must be discussed. Select those that resonate with your group.

Discussion Questions

Story and Character

1. How does Isobel change from the beginning of the novel to the end?

Consider both her outward experiences and her inward spiritual growth. What events shape her most profoundly?

2. Which character besides Isobel made the strongest impression on you, and why?

What qualities made this character memorable? Did your opinion of that person change as the story progressed?

3. What relationship in the novel did you find most meaningful?

How did that relationship contribute to the story's larger themes of faith, sacrifice, loyalty, or courage?

4. Were there moments when you disagreed with Isobel's choices?

If placed in similar circumstances, what might you have done differently?

5. What scene remained with you long after you finished the book?
Why do you think that moment carried such emotional power?

History and Setting

6. What aspect of the journey from Tennessee to Texas surprised you the most?
Did the novel challenge or reinforce your understanding of this period in American history?
7. How did experiencing historic events through the eyes of ordinary people affect your understanding of history?
What perspectives did the novel provide that a textbook might not?
8. Which historical figure felt most real and human to you?
What details or scenes helped bring that person to life?
9. Why do you think historical fiction can sometimes teach lessons that facts and dates alone cannot?
What emotional truths did this story help you understand?

Faith and Providence

10. The idea of Providence appears throughout the novel.
What does Providence mean to you? How does the story illustrate that concept?
11. Where did you see God's hand at work in the lives of the characters?
Were there moments when His guidance seemed obvious? Were there moments when it seemed hidden?
12. Isobel often struggles to understand God's will.
Have you ever experienced a season when the path ahead seemed unclear? How did Isobel's journey speak to that experience?
13. How do prayer, Scripture, and faith influence the decisions made by the characters?

Which examples stood out to you the most?

14. Why do you think God sometimes appears silent during life's greatest trials?

How do the characters respond to uncertainty and suffering?

15. What do you believe Isobel ultimately learns about faith, trust, and obedience?

How has that lesson influenced your own thinking?

The Fiddle and Personal Reflection

16. The fiddle melody appears at key moments throughout the novel.

What do you believe it represents? Guidance? Comfort? God's presence? Something else?

17. Have you ever experienced what felt like a gentle nudge toward a particular path or decision?

How did that experience compare to Isobel's journey?

18. What lesson from the novel do you hope to carry forward into your own life?

How might that lesson affect your future decisions?

19. What do you think this passage from the end of the novel means?

"Can you hum the tune?"

"I can't hum the tune alone. It fades when I try. I can't bring it to life by myself. I can only follow where it leads."

20. After finishing the novel, what does the title *Isobel's Song* mean to you?

How did your understanding of the title change as the story unfolded?

Closing Reflection

The people who lived through the Texas Revolution could not see the end of their story while they were living it. Like all of us, they moved forward one day at a time, making choices with

limited knowledge and uncertain outcomes. Yet history often reveals patterns that were invisible in the moment.

As you reflect on *Isobel's Song*, consider where you have seen courage, faith, sacrifice, and Providence at work in your own life. What part of your story may still be unfolding in ways you cannot yet see?

A Conversation With the Author

What inspired you to write *Isobel's Song*?

I am concerned that important chapters of American and Texas history are increasingly being forgotten, simplified, or intentionally misrepresented. I wanted to tell a story that would bring history to life through the experiences of ordinary people living through exceptional events. Historical fiction has a unique ability to help readers feel history rather than simply learn about it. I wanted the reader to step into Isobel's shoes and leave the 21st Century mindset behind.

At the same time, I wanted to explore questions of faith, purpose, and Providence. Our ancestors' spiritual journeys were not contrived by me for the sake of pleasing a Christian audience. The story's faith angle is authentic. Providence was such an integral part of our nation's founding that it is cited as a primary factor in Jefferson's Declaration of Independence. The result was *Isobel's Song*, a story that combines historical events with a deeply personal spiritual journey

Why did you choose a female protagonist for the story?

The first draft of the novel focused on a male protagonist, Kelvin. As the story developed, however, I realized that the most compelling perspective belonged to Isobel.

My personal genealogical research and academic research I conducted in libraries and museums revealed that the women of the Texas frontier were not constrained by female stereotypes and tropes. Their stories are often overlooked. Through Isobel, I could explore both the historical events and the emotional and spiritual challenges faced by those who lived through them.

The story became stronger once I allowed Isobel to take center stage.

How much of the novel is historically accurate?

“Accurate” may not be the correct word here. I choose to use the term “authentic.” The dates, places, and historical persons are accurate as much as research can provide. I intentionally placed the date and setting location at the head of every chapter so that modern readers have enough information to check out the setting on their own. Sometimes a character’s dialogue seems stilted or formal. This happens when I use the characters’ dialogue verbatim from a primary historical source. The dialogue between Sam Houston and Alexis de Tocqueville on the steamboat comes to mind.

Francis Scott Key, Mr. Stanbery, Washington Irving, Tlahina at Wigwam Neosho, and Mrs. Gordon in Jonesboro are all real people who were in their historically accurate time and place. The Beecher family at the Presbyterian church in Cincinnati are also true to their time and place. Again, I give the reader enough information so that they can explore the issue on their own.

Which historical figure was the most enjoyable to write?

Without question, Sam Houston. The more I studied Houston's life, the more fascinating he became. He was a man of contradictions—soldier, statesman, frontiersman, diplomat, and politician. His personal triumphs and tragedies showed a real man with real problems. The Age of Jackson is personified by Sam Houston.

What does the fiddle melody symbolize?

The fiddle melody can mean different things to different readers, and I encourage readers to draw their own conclusions.

For me, the melody represents those moments when God gently directs our attention toward a particular path. It is not loud. It does not force obedience. It simply invites us to listen.

The melody serves as a reminder that guidance often comes quietly.

What do you hope readers take away from the novel?

I hope readers come away with a deeper appreciation for the people who lived through the Texas Revolution and the sacrifices they made.

More importantly, I hope readers are encouraged by the idea that faith can endure even in times of uncertainty. The characters in the novel do not always understand what God is doing, but they continue moving forward one step at a time.

That is a lesson as relevant today as it was in 1836.

Will readers see Isobel again?

Yes.

Isobel's Song is the first novel in the Faith & Fiddle Series. Future books continue Isobel's journey as she faces new challenges, deeper questions of faith, and some of the most significant events in nineteenth-century American history.

What is the one thing that readers can do to help get the message of the book out?

That's an easy one. Leave an honest review at Amazon or on Audible.

Can I leave an Amazon review if I didn't purchase the book on Amazon?

Yes. If you got it at a library, if a friend loaned it to you, or if you bought it at a book signing, you can still leave a review if you have an Amazon account.

How long does the review have to be?

One sentence. Amazon wants the review system to be honest and helpful to their customers. The Amazon business model rests on this truth. The review needs to be "helpful." Tell one thing you liked about the book that another reader would appreciate as they consider the purchase. The review, even a one-sentence review, needs to reveal that you actually read the book. That's it. Simple, but it is the most valuable tool in the Amazon arsenal and one of the most coveted gifts an author can receive.

Connect with the Author

To learn more about Daryl Lott, upcoming books in the Faith & Fiddle Series, historical articles, speaking events, and additional reader resources, visit:

FaithfulTexasFootprints.com