

Discussion Questions

for

The Siege: Tales From a Revolution – Virginia

Chapters 1-5

- In the confusion of battle, how can surrender be reliably communicated?
- What do we observe of Revolutionary-era trauma medicine, and how does it compare to modern treatment?
- What does parole for a captured soldier mean in this era?
- How is the division between the sides seen in Nathaniel's travels?
- What do we learn about the French & Indian War and Washington's role in it?

Chapters 6-10

- How do Nathaniel's difficulties with currency reflect the unity—or lack thereof—between the states?
- What do we see of the indirect changes wrought by the war in Nathaniel's trip through Williamsburg?
- What does Nathaniel's interaction with Anna tell us about how maimed soldiers were seen by their peers?

Chapters 11-15

- How do the accounts of Waxhaws that Nathaniel must repeatedly correct illustrate the power of propaganda and word-of-mouth?
- Does the story of the dying British soldier humanize the enemy, or illuminate the differences between the sides?
- How did the options people in unhappy marriages like Nathaniel's parents had during the Revolution differ from today's culture?
- How do the intrusions of martial matters affect Nathaniel's mental state?

Chapters 16-20

- How does news of Benedict Arnold's actions affect the townspeople at York-Town?
- What sense do we get of General Lafayette from the brief interaction Nathaniel witnesses with him?
- How does with widow James' reaction to the arrival of the British illustrate the difficulties of evacuation?

Chapters 21-25

- In what way can Nathaniel's accident during the evacuation be seen as fortuitous?
- What does Anna's revelation show us about the distance between Nathaniel's self-image and others' perceptions of him?
- What does the conversion of the town around them into a military stronghold let Nathaniel and the two women witness?

Chapters 26-32

- How does Nathaniel's reaction to the sound of gunfire fit into our modern understandings of responses to traumatic events?
- What action best illustrates the desperation of the besieged British forces?
- How does the image of the two armies staring across the battlements at each other at the end of the siege let us see the larger picture of the two sides' regard for one another?
- Does the personal reconciliation at the end of the story foreshadow the historical reconciliation to come between the warring sides?