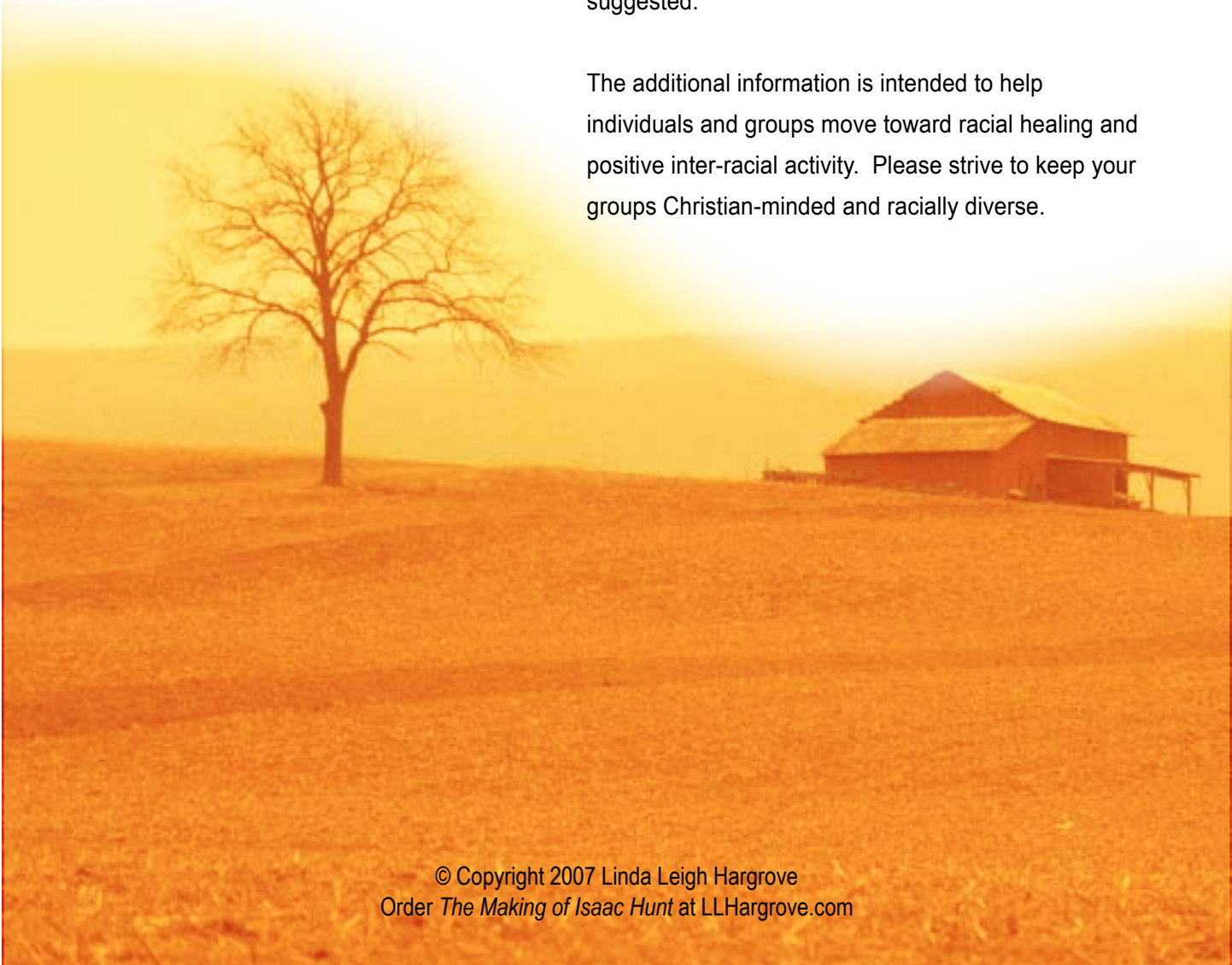


*The Making of Isaac Hunt*

# DISCUSSION guide

This discussion guide is comprised of chapter-by-chapter questions, activities, and prayer points. In some cases, additional reading resources are suggested.

The additional information is intended to help individuals and groups move toward racial healing and positive inter-racial activity. Please strive to keep your groups Christian-minded and racially diverse.



## PROLOGUE

Many families have secrets like the Hunts. Take a moment now to write down one of your family's hurtful secrets (sign them only if you want). Have a group member keep them in a sealed envelope for future use. Then have each member briefly share something about their family such as where they grew up or favorite family tradition.

## CHAPTER 1

Isaac chose to sell an expensive ring his adoptive parents gave him; in exchange he gains something he values. His behavior would have shocked his parents. Sometimes our choices only make sense to us. Have you ever made such a choice? Share one with the group.

## CHAPTER 2

Passing is a term typically used to describe people that pass themselves off for white even though they have black ancestry. Turning the expression on its head, Tate accuses Isaac of 'passing for black' because of Isaac's lack of so-called black behavior. Have you ever been accused of acting white? Or acting black? Share these experiences with the group. Have you ever accused someone of acting white? Why?

## CHAPTER 3

Abraham didn't care about the race of his child's babysitter. Given the opportunity to choose between two well-trained experienced babysitters of different races would you choose one that looked like you? Why? Why not?

## CHAPTER 4

We all have prejudices. Simply put, a prejudice is a pre-thought or pre-judgment of someone or something based on first impressions or limited information. From Isaac's reactions to the backwoods town of Pettigrew, what do you think his prejudices are? Consider what yours are about the people in this group.

## CHAPTER 5

Many folks would call Jack Kepler a racist, among other things. What do you think racism is? Have someone look it up on the Internet. Have someone look it up in a dictionary. Refer to books like *And Don't Call Me a Racist!* (arranged by E. Mazel, published by Argonaut Press, 1998). Compare and discuss your results.

## CHAPTER 6

Catty is a pretty dark-skinned woman. She has skin the color of coffee grounds, in Isaac's words. How are very dark-skinned people treated in America? Why? Does it surprise you when a dark-skinned person does something positive or intelligent. Why or why not? Spend a little time today exploring your own skin tone prejudices.

## CHAPTER 7

Patrick was trying his best to be helpful. And indeed he did lead Isaac to the truth but to an outsider he may look clueless or ignorant. As a white person, have you ever been accused by a person of color of being clueless or ignorant? How did that make you feel?

## CHAPTER 8

What do you think would compel someone like Jack to torment a stranger?

## CHAPTER 9

Abraham Benson has had to make some hard choices in his life. Some of those choices have changed lives forever; some have ended lives. Very few of those choices have been in favor of people of color. Now, after the death of his wife and decline of the family empire, he wants to repair some of the damage he's caused. Do you think his acting out of guilt or repentance? Are reparations of this type necessary in America today?

## CHAPTER 10

What are your thoughts about Catty's take on forgiveness?

## CHAPTER 11

The ring and the letter were 'discovered' because of Catty's deception. Was that right? Could the truth have been revealed another way?

## CHAPTER 12

Ben Jacob is an active racist. How can men like him be stopped? Will racism always be a part of our lives?

## CHAPTER 13

The neighborhood prayer gathering takes Isaac by surprise. He doesn't know what to make of the strangers and their words. Share your

experiences in cross-racial, cross-denominational worship services or prayer meetings.

## CHAPTER 14

Abraham finds it hard to talk about the unforgivable things he's done in the past. Isaac finds it hard to face his adoptive parents with a forgiving heart. Is Catty meddling or could her efforts help both men? Have you had to figure out how to let go of bitterness? If so, share this with the group? If not, discuss ways it can be done. Refer to the reading listing at the end of this discussion guide.

## CHAPTER 15

We all have memories — some good, some bad, and some ugly. Take a few moments and have each group member share a good, bad, and ugly memory from his or her childhood.

## CHAPTER 16

If time and schedules allow, take a trip to the poorer part of your town. Take note of sights, sounds, and smells. What feelings did you have during the visit? Discuss them with the group. Commit to pray for the neighborhood.

## CHAPTER 17

Trip admits to wanting everything Isaac has. Have you ever wanted to be of another race? Discuss this with the group.

## CHAPTER 18

Isaac is shocked to discover that

Jack had followed him to Raleigh. He wastes no time putting distance between them. Identify racial attitudes and prejudices you can put more effort into abandoning? Pray for God's guidance.

## CHAPTER 19

Do you think violence is ever a way to address someone who has offended you? When? How? Is it biblical? Back it up with scripture.

## CHAPTER 20

Isaac thinks he's hearing the voice of God. Is he crazy? Or does God really talk to people? Have you ever heard His voice? Do you think people that claim to have heard His voice to be spiritual or too emotional?

## CHAPTER 21

Isaac is at a major crossroad, which leads to a major moment with God. Share a 'major moment' in your life.

## CHAPTER 22

Isaac has moved past his prejudices concerning Catty. Catty has moved past her fears. Prayerfully consider how you might move past prejudices and fears to include a Christian of another race into your world. Could you visit their church? Have them over for dinner in your home? Let God lead.

## CHAPTER 23

Despite his fair skin, Isaac has a deep-seated hatred and distrust of white people. Why do you think this

is? As a person of color, do you hate or distrust whites? Why? Should whites be blamed for all racial problems in America? If not, how far should they go in righting racial wrongs? How far should people of color go? Is it that simple?

## CHAPTER 24

Once again Isaac is confronted with his white hate. Coupled with his ambivalence over his birthparents, one of which is white, his feelings have evolved into self-hate. He responds by continuing to lash out. In what ways do Christians knowingly 'lash out' racially. Examine your church, home, and work life. How can we correct these behaviors or situations?

## CHAPTER 25

Sweet Miss Lucretia has made her peace with the world and now she is dead. Similarly, you may have attitudes that you need to alter or allow to die away in order to be more racially sensitive. Commit to pray. Commit to action. Embrace change.

## CHAPTER 26

When Isaac first sees the two battered men hanging naked from the tree, he's moved to compassion. His sympathy quickly sours when he discovers that the one that's still alive is Jack Kepler. Should Jack be made to suffer more, or has he suffered enough?

**NOTE:** Retrieve your envelope of secrets (compiled during the first meeting) for the next chapter discussion.

## CHAPTER 27

By staying Isaac's hand, Trip spares Jack's life. He uses the situation to teach a lesson in forgiveness. Unseal the envelope of secrets (compiled during the first meeting). Have one person read them out loud. Is forgiveness possible in every one of those situations? How? Why not?

## CHAPTER 28

Isaac's new faith is tested when he thinks that Jack is responsible for Miss Lucretia's death. As people of faith are we required to always forgive? What about the consequences of the offense (jail time, monetary reparations); how do they factor in?

## CHAPTER 29

Everything has come full circle for Isaac. The truth he's pursued all this time is stranger than he imagined. He's uncomfortable with that but realizes that he must ultimately be a part of the solution. How can you move out of your comfort zone to increase your racial sensitivity and interdependence?

## CHAPTER 30

Isaac sacrificed his safety and willingly became part of the plan to catch Mitchell Highsmith. He was motivated by his desire to see a greater good realized for others. In what ways can Christians realize the greater good for people different from us? What are the benefits of this kind of action?

## EPILOGUE

Isaac Hunt has pursued the truth and been made over by Truth Himself. He's discovered forgiveness, his key to freedom. He's realized his need for others, and for the first time in his life, his eyes have been opened to the needs of those around him. Share ways that forgiveness has freed you. How could you be more sensitive to Christians of another race? How can you be more racially intentional and interdependent in your church, home, or work life? Commit to pray. Commit to action. Embrace change.

# NONFICTION

Breaking Down Walls: A Model for Reconciliation in an Age of Racial Strife  
by Raleigh Washington and Glen Kehrein

More Than Equals: Racial Healing for the Sake of the Gospel  
by Spencer Perkins & Chris Rice

The Coming Race Wars?: A Cry for Reconciliation  
by William Pannell

White to White on Black/White  
by Toni E. Weaver, Ph.D.

How Black is the Gospel?  
by Tom Skinner

He's My Brother  
by John Perkins & Thomas A. Tarrants, III

Beyond Charity: The Call to Christian Community Development  
by John M. Perkins

Winning the Race to Unity: Is Racial Reconciliation Really Working  
by Clarence Shuler

Beyond Black and White: Reflections on Racial Reconciliation  
by Dr. George Yancey

Reconciliation: Our Greatest Challenge - Our Only Hope  
by Curtiss Paul DeYoung

Beyond Rhetoric: Reconciliation As a Way of Life  
by Samuel George Hines, Curtiss Paul DeYoung

Letters Across the Divide: Two Friends Explore Racism, Friendship, and Faith  
by David Anderson and Brent Zuercher

Fulfilling the Dream: Confronting the Challenge of Racism  
by Ronice Branding

Healing Americas Wounds: Discovering Our Destiny  
by John Dawson

Enter the River: Healing Steps from White Privilege toward Racial Reconciliation  
by Jody Miller Shearer, foreword by Michael Banks

Ending Racism in the Church  
edited by Susan E. Davies and Sister Paul Teresa Hennessee

*This list is just a starting point. There are so many other fiction resources.*

# NOTES:



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