

Reader's Group Guide



James Michael Pratt

In this final World War Two love story, Pratt creates a set of identical twins inspired by a true story of two brothers who served in the same unit in Pacific Theater combat. He uses the names of two beloved uncles, Lucian and Norman, to honor them, though not twins themselves both served during WW II. Identical twins seem special. In what ways? The only novel to not have a parallel love story, this one does include two men with the same feelings for one girl. Why would both loving the same girl present a special challenge?

1. At the beginning of the story we see an aged man. He has a dilemma and wish to do something important before he dies. Who is he, what is his internal struggle, and what is his wish?
2. Mary Jane is the love of Lucian's life. Where do they first meet and how?
3. What basic character differences do you see between Lucian and Norman Parker?
4. What was the Great Depression of the 1930's and how did it affect people? Old Man Harrison?
5. What is a shortline railroad? (The Original pre-published title of *Ticket Home* was "The Shortline.")
6. What can the reader learn from the love of Lucian and Norman's parents? Did it affect them?
7. Did Mary Jane care for both brothers? Can a woman love more than one man yet differently?
8. Why was the ring with the initial KTF so important to the brothers and what did the acronym KTF mean?
9. Why did Norman and Lucian join the National Guard in New Mexico? (FYI: This unit of the National Guard was the highest decorated unit of World War Two. See "Author's Afterword" and discuss.)

10. When did Norman and Lucian leave the United States with their National Guard unit for the Philippines and why?
11. How long after they left from the US did the Japanese attack? (What date did Japan attack Pearl Harbor, Hawaii and then Manila, Philippines on the major island of Luzon?)
12. Who was General MacArthur? What was the real man like?
13. What happened to the allied forces on Bataan and the subsequent march?
14. How were the American and Filipino prisoners treated?
15. What was Mary Jane going through back home? Who died while Norman and Lucian were away?
16. If the war started in December 1941, when did the Americans return to the Philippines to rescue the people and the brothers Lucian and Norman and the other prisoners.
17. The prison at Cabanatuan had held up to 10,000 prisoners. Now there were 600 some when the rescuers came for them. This was the largest rescue of American POWs (still is in American history.) Who rescued them and what did the rescuers hope to accomplish?
18. Norman finally rescues Lucian. What does Lucian say about the ring? What does he want to make sure Norman knows?
19. How does the outcome of Lucian Parker's visit to the American Military Cemetery in Manila affect him and Mary Jane? What truth comes out?
20. At home in the train station of Redemption, aged Norman is happier than he has ever been. What is he feeling?
21. When the train station manager Steve approaches him with a letter, what is included and how do you think it made its way back after 60 years to Norman?
22. Feelings on the conclusion? Can people communicate with those unseen?