

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



**GARY PENLEY**

The idea for *Jubal*, Gary Penley's third effort to sow the seeds of his unique past, sprang from an old family story in which his wife's ancestor had a slave named Dummy who was deaf and mute. In *Jubal*, Penley integrates his disciplined writing style and his extensive travels in the South; the result is a concise yet poignant portrait of one man's struggle within his community and against his greatest fear. Thus, Penley's narrative captures his impression of the South as at once "beautiful, serene, violent, [and] unfathomable." After a twenty-six-year career in geology, Mr. Penley now lives in Divide, Colorado, with his wife, Karen.

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*Also available from Pelican Publishing Co.*

***Della Raye: A Girl Who Grew Up in Hell and Emerged Whole***

**By Gary Penley**

For twenty years, Della Raye lived at the Partlow State Asylum for Mental Deficients in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. Left there by her uncle in 1929 at the age of four, along with her mother, aunt, and brother, she would know her mother only as another threat the attendants of the institution employed against her. She was subjected to beatings, made to work like a slave, and was given little formal education.

Throughout the compelling true story of Della Raye Rogers, her determination, strength, and faith stand as testaments of the enduring resilience of the human spirit against adversity.

**By Gary Penley**

**240 pp. 5½ x 8½ 47 b/w photos**

**ISBN: 1-56554-944-9 \$22.00**

**JUBAL**  
A NOVEL  
By Gary Penley

"Dummy" is big. He is black. He doesn't speak. To everybody in Linville, Mississippi, he's a familiar sight, pulling his wagonload of laundry for his mother. What people remember most about him and his family is the way his father died after being accused of bothering a white woman, and Jubal's own act of violence while working the levee after the flood of 1927.

Crossing racial lines, and against codes of propriety for the well-respected Dunaway family, the children, Sarah and Lucas Dunaway, befriend Jubal Jefferson. When a fire breaks out in their home, Jubal "Dummy" Jefferson saves his friends' lives but is accused of murder, forcing him to face his greatest fear and forcing a town to decide whether justice is blind and whether Jubal is really who they think he is.

Part elegy to small-town childhood, full of suspense, and written with a sensitivity and attention to detail that reveals the complexity of how we see and treat those who are different, this gripping first novel holds echoes of classic works of Southern fiction, such as Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

**JUBAL**

**By Gary Penley**

**272 pp. 5¼ x 7½**

**ISBN: 1-58980-129-6 \$23.00**

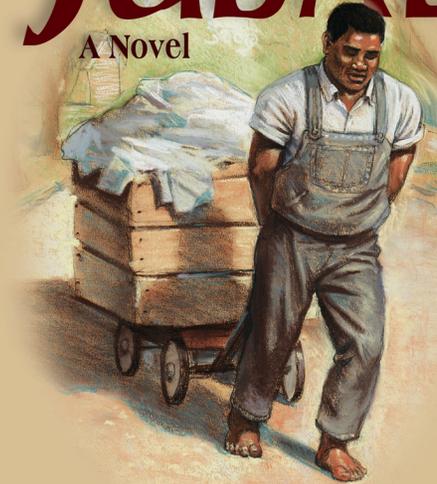
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## Reader's Group Guide

**JUBAL**  
A NOVEL

**JUBAL**  
A Novel



**By Gary Penley**

**WRITTEN BY**  
**GARY PENLEY**

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## Reader's Group Guide to

### *Jubal: A Novel*

Although Sheriff Turnball was dedicated to keeping lynching out of Linville, lynching was an accepted, even encouraged, practice during this time. Three times in history (1922, 1937, and 1940) anti-lynching legislation was defeated in the Senate by heavy Southern opposition. How did lynching practices of the time play a large part in Jubal's development as a person?

- ❖ Jessica Dunaway had extreme hatred for Jubal – do you think this came from her upbringing or was it simply fear? What might she have been afraid of?
- ❖ Sarah rejected the fancy, store-bought dolls that her mother gave her in favor of the simple, hand-made dolls given to her by Emiline. Why do you think she did? Why do you think this infuriated her mother so much?
- ❖ Sarah seemed to use her mother's insistence that she learn to play the piano as a weapon of resistance. Instead of showing her proficiency, she pretended that she couldn't play. Why do you think she was willing to take her punishment for that instead of showing her mother that she could play? Why was her mother so insistent that she learn to play?
- ❖ The author draws distinct race and class lines between the races in this story, but there are distinct class lines within the Dunaway and Tolliver families. What were they?
- ❖ Because of those differences, is it surprising that Jessica married her husband? Why? How might she have changed since marrying her husband?
- ❖ Sarah was abused throughout the story. Why do you think she was such a target of her mother's abuse?

- ❖ Such abuse would never be tolerated today. How and why did the social atmosphere of the time prevent even those closest to the family from doing something about it?
- ❖ Lucas was a hero in many ways. What do you consider to be his most heroic act?
- ❖ Jessica Dunaway was a flawed woman; she was rich in many ways but spoiled and deeply unhappy. How does she contrast with Miss Amanda, Jubal's mother?
- ❖ How were Miss Amanda and Jessica Dunaway different in the ways that they remembered their husbands? How did their remembrances reflect how they lived their lives in general?
- ❖ Why was Pastor Hogan's sermon for Jessica Tolliver's funeral so unusual?
- ❖ Why do you think that Sarah had such a strong affection for Jubal?
- ❖ Jubal did save both Sarah and Lucas from the fire but he was a savior for Sarah her whole life. How? Can you think of a person in your life that has helped you in a similar way?
- ❖ Fear played a large part of the development of many characters in the book. What were some common fears of the characters? What were some unique fears?

- ❖ There were many heroes in this story. Look at the list below and see if you can find examples of how the characters were heroes in their own ways. Can you think of others?  
Jubal  
Sarah  
Lucas  
Reid Dunaway  
Emiline  
Grandma and Grandpa Dunaway  
Sheriff Turnball  
Rufus Jefferson  
Mr. and Mrs. Tolliver
- ❖ How would you describe Jubal to someone who has never read the book?
- ❖ Southern society exhibited many paradoxes during the time the story took place. Can you name some of them?
- ❖ Before you learned about Jubal's ability to read and write, did you ever suspect it? Why or why not?
- ❖ Neither John Dunaway, Reid Dunaway, nor Sheriff Turnball believed in the common racial practices of the day. In their hearts they were men of integrity, yet none of them openly discuss their racial beliefs with others. What caused this reluctance to speak?
- ❖ How did Sheriff Turnball's act of hiding the scrap of red fabric that had torn off of Jessica Dunaway's blouse reflect the social atmosphere of the day? How did this also reflect his character?



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