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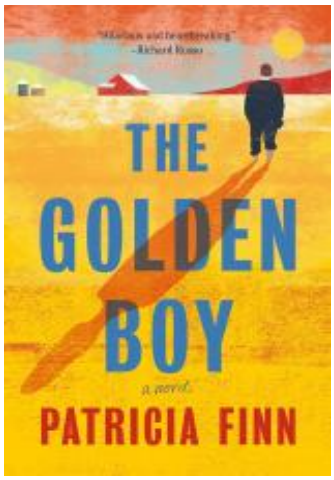
The Golden Boy

by Patricia Finn



About the Book

An unexpected letter sends a man and his wife into their pasts --- and offers them both a shot at redemption.

After an involuntary retirement from his high-flying Hollywood career, Stafford Hopkins has retreated to a luxury estate on Maui, along with his wife Agnes, both grimly resigned to life in a paradise where neither feels fully at home.

Stafford is ready to retreat into himself, too, when a letter arrives with shocking news. He has been named guardian of four children he didn?t know existed: the grandchildren of his late childhood friend, Bobby Shepherd, whose ghost he can no longer ignore.

Returning to both the hardscrabble farming town and the dark secret he?d tried to forget for decades, Stafford is forced to confront his past in order to rebuild his future --- and to redirect the fates of his family and the four young people suddenly in his care.

Slyly funny and deeply moving, THE GOLDEN BOY is a captivating debut about love, mercy and second chances.

Discussion Guide

Please note that the following questions may contain spoilers to the plot. We recommend that you look at these questions only after you?ve finished the book.

1. The chapters of THE GOLDEN BOY open with quotes from Aristotle?s philosophical texts, as well as the Bible. How do these epigraphs set the tone for the chapters, and what effect did they have on you as a reader?

2. What were your first impressions of Stafford and Agnes in Maui? What seems to be the source of their discontent?

3. Stafford and Agnes separately deal with feelings of shame. What do they feel ashamed about, and how do these feelings affect their behavior and outlook?

4. Stafford harbors a complicated relationship with faith. What do you make of Stafford?s definitions of virtue? How would you describe his attachments to Catholicism and philosophy?

5. It?s after Stafford nearly drowns in the ocean that he finds the letter from the Shepherds. When reading the letter, he realizes that ?had it arrived a month, a week, or even a single day earlier, his response would have been so different.? What changed? How do you think Stafford would have responded otherwise?

6. Why do you think Bobby is so shaken by Steven Truscott?s fate?

7. After Stafford finally reveals his secret, telling the church caretaker about Bobby?s death, he reflects that ?the unburdening of his past had not set him free from it.? Do you believe this to be the case?

8. From the Maui ocean to the St. Lawrence River in Canada, what is the significance of water in the story?

9. What were your reactions to the email correspondence between Agnes and her daughter, Callie?

10. What did you think of the ending?

11. Did your view of Stafford and Agnes change over the course of the novel? Were there distinct moments --- whether in flashbacks or the present --- that made you see them in a different light?

12. What did you think of Stafford and Agnes? marriage, and how did the events of the novel reshape their relationship?

Author Bio

Patricia Finn is a writer, ghostwriter, editor and consultant who has worked in various capacities on nonfiction, episodic television and feature films, including adaptions of original material from Alice Munro and Carol Shields, among others. She completed post-graduate work in English and Classics with a focus on Aristotle and Athenian tragedy. She has both Canadian and American roots and now lives in Vancouver.

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