

Suggested Seminar Discussion Questions

"Guests in the Promised Land" by Kristin Hunter

1. How does Robert feel about charity? (Ask students after opening two paragraphs are read aloud.)
2. How do the boys feel about charity, based on their conversation on the back of the bus en route to Cedarbrook?
3. Why do you think the story is called "Guests in the Promised Land"?
4. Why did the narrator convince Robert to enter the room?
5. The story states:

"The men at the bar, who had been so quiet, suddenly came to life. 'Give the kid a hand!' one cried. They all applauded and shouted things like 'Bravo!' and 'Wonderful!' as Robert got up from the piano.

"Robert just stood there, his eyes darting around suspiciously. It doesn't pay to give him compliments, even if you mean it, because he doesn't believe you. But even I had a suspicion these cats weren't sincere.

"There was a click, and a blade appeared in Robert's hand. Everyone gasped."

In your opinion, to what is Robert reacting? How might his feelings and actions affect the way the story ends?
6. Why does Robert look happy at the end of the story?
7. What do you think the author would like her readers to take away from the story?
8. How do you feel about Robert's actions and choices? What would you have done in his situation?