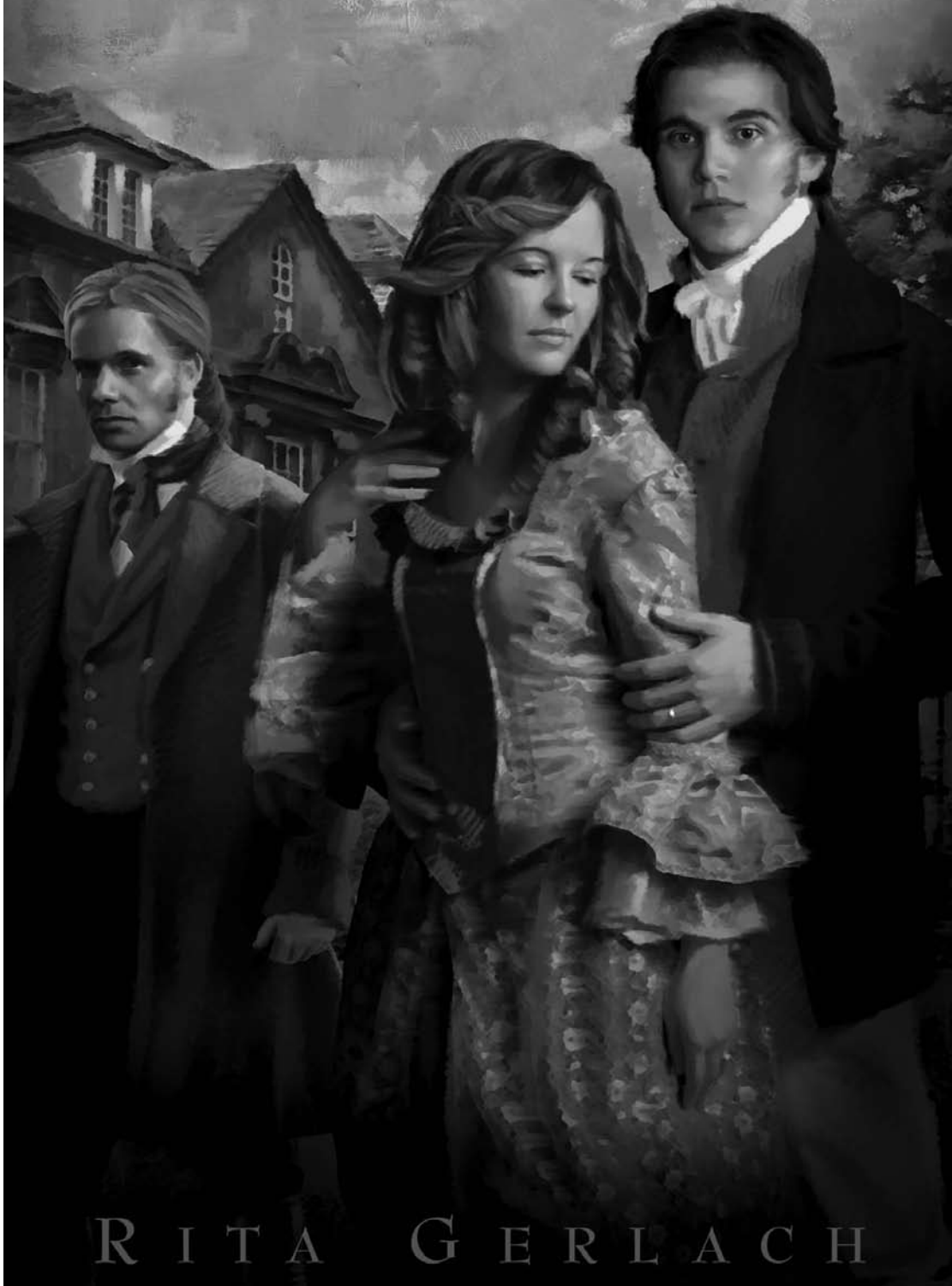


Surrender the Wind



Study and Discussion Guide





Surrender the Wind

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by
Rita Gerlach

COMPANION STUDY GUIDE FOR GROUPS

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Surrender the Wind

Companion Study Guide for Reading Groups

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Surrender the Wind can be used by groups for in-depth study and discussion. This study is intended to help readers and book groups go deeper into spiritual themes and topics present in the narrative. This guide will provide you a starting point for discussion, and give a variety of perspectives from which you might approach *Surrender the Wind*.

Using the book's forty-six chapters plus the epilogue as a resource, the guide provides for each session:

- • Lesson Topic/Theme
- • Related Scriptures
- • Related Devotional
- • Discussions questions related to lesson topic and specific chapters
- • General Discussion Questions
- • Character connections

A Brief Synopsis

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Surrender the Wind is the story of Seth Braxton, a patriot of the American Revolution, who unexpectedly inherits his loyalist grandfather's estate in England. Seth is torn between the land he fought for and the prospect of reuniting with his sister Caroline, who was a motherless child taken to England at the onset of the war.

With no intention of staying permanently, Seth arrives to find his sister grieving over the death of her young son. In the midst of such tragedy, Seth meets Juleah, the daughter of an eccentric landed gentleman. Her independent spirit and gentle soul steal Seth's heart. After a brief courtship, they marry and she takes her place as the lady of Ten Width Manor, enraging the man who once sought her hand and schemed to make Ten Width his own.

From the Virginia wilderness, to the dark halls of an isolated English estate, Seth and his beloved Juleah inherit more than an ancestral home. They uncover a sinister plot that leads to murder, abduction, and betrayal—an ominous threat to their new life and love.

About the Author



Rita Gerlach is the author of *Surrender the Wind*, a novel set in post-Revolutionary War Virginia, Maryland, and England. Rita loves to advocate for writers and is the creator of Stepping Stones Magazine for Writers and Readers, an online website focusing on marketing and the promotion of Christian authors. She writes in her weekly blog, InSpire, about what aspiring writers can expect when submitting, contracting, editing, and promoting a novel.

She lives with her husband and two sons in a historical town in a valley nestled along the Catoctin Mountains, amid Civil War battlefields and Revolutionary War outposts in central Maryland.

Rita Gerlach writes:

“Romantic historical fiction is one way people can escape the cares of life and be transported back to a time of raw courage and ideal love,” she says. “The goal of my writing is to give readers a respite, and inspire them to live fully and gratefully.”

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Suggestions for Group Leaders

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This book and the accompanying study are versatile enough to work with women or mixed groups, high school age through senior adults. Moreover, the lesson is divided into ten reading segments. You may decide on a ten week study or consolidate to a four week study. The lesson topic is biblically based on the human felt need of trusting God through life's difficulties and uncertainties. To get the most out of the discussion, participants should read the assigned reading segments of the book in advance.

Open each session with prayer, asking for God's presence in the discussion. Throughout the session, invite group discussion, but do not try to force anyone to share. As the weeks unfold, you will likely find members more eager to open up. Everyone has faced some difficulties in their life and hopefully have endured. Do allow time for the group members to share their stories of hope, faith, and love.

A Sample Session

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- Open with prayer and chat casually as participants settle in. Ask individuals to share updates from their own lives since the group was last together. Some may want to jump right into questions sparked by their reading, but encourage them to wait. Let this be a comfortable, casual time that flows easily.
- Consider the **Lesson Theme** of the session.
- Ask someone to read aloud the **Scripture references**.
- Present the related **Devotional** included in the lesson plan. If your study will be longer than one week, you may ask for volunteers to provide the devotional for the next session.
- Lead the group to discuss and answer the **Discussion Questions**. They are meant not only to talk about the book but to encourage dialogue on matters of faith and living as a Christian in society.
- The **Character Sketches** gives your group an opportunity to connect with a character in the book and discuss how the character responds to a difficult situation or event.
- **Time to Reflect!** Allow time for the group to reflect on the discussion and to share their thoughts and testimony.
- End the session with prayer requests and a prayer for God's guidance for each person as you seek to know and do the Lord's will.

Reading Group Lesson Plan

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Topic/Theme: God doesn't remove the hard times from the lives of people just because they are Christian disciples, but we are reminded over and over again that God is always with us through the hard times. Through trust in God and help from our Christian community, we can endure.

Related Scriptures:

I hated all the things I had toiled for under the sun, because I must leave them to the one who comes after me. And who knows whether he will be a wise man or a fool? Yet he will have control over all the work into which I have poured my effort and skill under the sun. This too is meaningless.
Ecclesiastes 2:18-19 (NIV)

Casting all your care upon Him, for he careth for you.
I Peter 5:7 (KJV)

Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and He shall sustain thee: He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.
Psalm 55:22 (KJV)

And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.
Mark 4:39 (KJV)

Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.
Matthew 10:31 (KJV)

Related Devotion:

Never would I have believed I would ever see an F-2 tornado in Maryland. Kansas and Nebraska, certainly. But in a county in Maryland made up of hills and valleys, housing developments, and the Catocin Mountains to the west, never.

Hurricane Ivan was the strongest Atlantic hurricane of 2004, and called 'Ivan the Terrible'. On September 16, it skirted up the eastern seaboard and struck Maryland as far inland as the Allegheny Mountains. Around five that afternoon we stood outside and watched dark gray to black clouds rotating and swirling with such great force across the sky that we could see debris in the air.

We went inside to turn on the news. I looked out our upstairs window that faced the farmer's field across the road. Not believing what my eyes were seeing, a black wall cloud deepened, and then three funnel clouds began to descend. I stood stunned as one formed into a sharp point and rapidly touched the ground. It was a mile and a quarter away, but it looked monstrous as it whirled and hissed across the field parallel to our home with winds up to 130 miles an hour. We went into the basement for safety. My heart was pounding as a prayer was uttered on my lips.

The tornado tore up the field and destroyed a barn and ripped the roof off a farmhouse. It lifted and dissipated before reaching a housing development.

We don't expect or welcome trouble. But the rain falls on the just and the unjust. Some people may only experience a shower or two, others thunderstorms and hurricanes. I remember as a child my father lifting me up in his arms during a thunderstorm. I trembled in fear with each crash of thunder and flash of lightening. Yet, as long as Daddy kept me close, I believed I was safe.

What sustains us through the storms of life? How do we react when the storms mount up against us and the winds buffet us? When we surrender the windstorms of life, our cares, our pain, our anxiety and worry, to Him, He will sustain us through the most violent of storms.

..... **Reading Segments**

Prologue: As the book opens, Seth feels an urgency to make it to Yorktown before the battle begins. His anxiety is not based solely on fighting, but rather on finding his father after years of fighting in the Virginia wilderness.

- How does separation from a father in a time of war affected people?
- Where did Seth draw strength from when faced with death?
- How would you describe Seth?

Chapter 1: Juleah witnesses Benjamin's signing of his will and his death. The question of what it all meant, what purpose did gaining wealth play in ones life, crept into reality. To Juleah gaining wealth is meaningless in the grander scheme of things. Her friendship and devotion to Caroline deepens, and she hopes Seth will come.

- If you were to leave an inheritance to a child or grandchild in what ways would you want them to use it for good?
- What if they did not use it in an honorable way? Would you regret giving them an inheritance, or would you be able to let go?
- In what ways could Seth have used his inheritance for good?
- What kinds of things can you leave to your descendants that would have more meaning than money?
- Have you considered writing a journal that expresses your life and faith for future generations of your family?

Chapter 2: Grieving the death of his father, Seth returns to his Virginia fields. When he inherits his grandfather's estate in England, his plan to restore his father's land is unexpectedly interrupted. Seth is reluctant to leave. The one thing that forces him to make a decision is the chance of seeing his sister again.

- During the American Revolution, men were separated from their families. Think back to those days. What hardships would wives and mothers had to endure while their husbands and sons were off fighting?
- Have you had a family member go off to war? If yes, how did this make you feel?
- Do you think Caroline's father did the right thing in allowing Benjamin to take her to England?
- Did you ever experience a moment in your childhood where you were in danger and a family member came to your rescue?

Chapters 3-5: Upon his arrival in Devonshire, Seth finds his sister gravely ill and in the throes of grief after being told her young son has died. In the midst of all the turmoil, he meets Juleah. Even strangers can be drawn together by a mutual tragedy.

- Do you think this incident brought Seth and Juleah together? Why?
- Have you ever met someone new while going through a difficult time and gained a friendship by it?

Chapters 6-18 Seth searches for the truth concerning his nephew when he realizes the pieces to this puzzle are not fitting together. He discovers the boy is alive and in the care of Sir Charles Kenley, Nathaniel's estranged grandfather. Seth uncovers a sinister plot to rid England of Braxton heirs. The ambition and betrayal of others puts his life and that of Juleah's on a dangerous path.

- How do we as Christian overcome the urge to seek revenge?
- Betrayal is a painful and often earth shaking experience. Have you ever been betrayed by someone you trusted? Could you trust that person again?

Chapters 19-30 After a whirlwind courtship, Juleah becomes Seth's wife and lady of the manor. This enrages Edward Darden, a former British officer who had sought to win her hand before the war, who had encountered Seth on the day he was captured. Greed leads to murder and when a fire ravages the old manor, and a body is found, Seth is told Juleah has died in the disaster.

- How did Seth grieve?
- Was it wrong for him to show such strong emotions?
- When he prayed for strength what did God do to help him?
- Talk about your deepest moment of grief and how God helped you through it.
- What can we do to help others through grief?

Chapters 31: Juleah is abducted, drugged, and taken on a harrowing journey across the ocean to the Carolinas. A storm wrecks the ship off the perilous coast, and fishermen slaves rescue Juleah. Alone and afraid in a strange land, she sees first hand the deplorability of slavery and wishes she could help, but cannot.

- What did Juleah learn from Lucy and Juba?
- In what ways did God protect her?
- Have you ever been in a perilous situation where your life was threatened? What did you do?
- How can we learn to trust God in our hour of need?
- What scriptures come to mind?

Chapters 32-43: With the help of a widower plantation owner, Juleah journeys to Annapolis to the home of her uncle, John Stowefield. She desperately needs his help to be reunited with Seth. Seth too has left England having resigned himself to his loss. Hours before Juleah arrives in Annapolis, Seth arrives on Mr. Stowefield doorstep. Stowefield is shocked to see him. Seth tells Stowefield all that has happened, the story of his nephew's kidnapping, the murder of the child's wet nurse, and finally Juleah's tragic death. Stowefield is staggered by the events, and his heart is broken over his niece.

- What caused Seth to surrender to the loss of his wife when at one time he was convinced she was alive?
- By returning to America, was he running away from his pain, or attempting to loose himself in the wilderness?

When Juleah enters Stowefield's house, an emotional meeting takes place. After seeing she is truly alive and well, Stowefield takes Juleah to the inn where Seth is staying. A tender, tearful reunion takes place between them.

- Have you experienced a tearful reunion that only by a miracle could have occurred?
- How was it a testimony to God's grace and mercy?

Chapters 44-46: With her family back in England believing she is buried in the family plot, Juleah and Seth sail back to Devonshire. Hearts are full of joy the day they arrive, but during the night, Juleah is lured away from the house. Panicked, after discovering Juleah is gone, Seth rides to Crown Cove faces Darden. Seth rescues Juleah, and mysteriously Crown Cove is set alight, just as Ten Width Manor had been.

- Did Edward Darden reap what he had sowed?
- When others have hurt you, betrayed you, and hurt those you hold most dear, what must you do in order to overcome it?
- How important is the spiritual support of others when we are struggling to forgive someone that has hurt a family member, a close friend, or us?

Epilogue: Seth takes Juleah and her family back to Virginia to rebuild the estate left to him by his father, and start a new beginning. Sir Henry is not among them, having passed away.

- Have you had a loved one or friend suffer with dementia?
- In what ways can we comfort those suffering with this disease?
- In what ways can a homecoming bring healing to a family?
- In the building of our ‘homes’, and families, what kinds of things should we leave as a legacy?

General Discussion Questions for *Surrender the Wind*

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1. How is the title of this novel symbolic? At what point in the story did the title *Surrender the Wind* have meaning to you? What does it mean to ‘surrender the wind’?
2. Discuss Ecclesiastes 2:18-19 and how this gives a prelude to the story.
3. To what extent does Seth’s upbringing as an American patriot shape his character? What changes take place in Seth from the prologue to the conclusion of the story? What kind of man would you describe him to be? Dutiful? Kind? Heroic?
4. Why did Seth find it difficult to forgive his grandfather? Were his reasons valid? Have you ever been in a similar situation where you found it difficult to forgive someone?
5. What were the reasons Seth hesitated to accept his inheritance? What were the reasons that compelled him to go to England? How did this change his life? What made his inheritance a blessing? What made it a burden? Have you had times in life where you had plans, and then unexpectedly you are faced with a major change? How did you deal with these changes?
6. What expectations did you have for Seth and Juleah when they first meet? Did they fulfill them? What hopes did you have for their future together?
7. Seth was not expecting to fall in love with an Englishwoman. Have you experienced unexpected love?
8. In what way did faith get Seth and Juleah through their trials? How did faith strengthen their relationship?
9. What are Juleah’s strengths? In what scenes did she need Seth the most? Have you ever been in a situation where you realized you could not get through a trial alone and needed the person you loved the most to help you find your way back?
10. In the prologue when you met Edward Darden, what was your first impression of him? What did his character foreshadow? Did he ever gain your sympathy? What forced Juleah to change her mind about him?
11. For what reasons do you think the author left Darden’s mother nameless?
12. Finally, how did you profit from reading *Surrender the Wind*?

CHARACTER SKETCHES

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Give your group an opportunity to connect with a character in the book and discuss how the character responds to a difficult situation or event.

Seth Braxton: (26) American patriot, son of a patriot, and grandson of an English squire. Seth is outwardly stoic, and he is a skeptic when it comes to anything handed to him by his grandfather. The gruesome realities of war have left him reserved. Yet, the Revolution taught him to be a man of faith and duty. His own desires in life take a backseat to the needs of his sister, then later to his wife. Doing his duty is honorable to Seth. Seth is a Christian, as were most men of his day, and wrestles with such things as death, eternal life, and forgiveness. He sees life as a journey toward the Truth. He is also doubtful about true love, if it even exists, and is indifferent to it. Seth keeps his true feelings to himself. He will not reveal too much of his inner man. He prefers to be alone, unencumbered by human conversation. But this changes when he meets Juleah.

Juleah Fallowes: (22) No powder, rouge, or wig, conceal Juleah Fallowes. She finds those habits marks of vanity. Her hair, long and dark, is brown as the color of oak leaves in autumn. Seth likens her eyes to the color of a moonstone. They sparkle full of spirit, clear a color as amber glass struck with noonday sun. She is the precious daughter of an eccentric landed gentleman, who likes to romp barefooted in her father's fields and wade in the pond on moonlit nights. She is a romanticist in many ways, a poetic creature with deep feelings. She is strong-willed, yet disciplined and passionate. She is not afraid to speak her mind, especially to Seth. She feels she must prove herself to him, that she is not the timid English girl that keeps her eyes always down, that only speaks when spoken to, that does not laugh in public or interject her opinion especially on matters of religion and politics. She wants him to see her as educated and a free thinker. Juleah is also loyal, and Caroline Braxton's closest friend.

MINOR CHARACTERS in Order of Appearance

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Edward Darden: Antagonist. British officer who wished to see Seth hung. He is Benjamin Braxton's stepson, and believes he should have been the rightful inheritor of Benjamin's estate. As Juleah's former suitor, he is a jealous man, and becomes obsessed with not only her but also the estate. He has such hatred for Seth that his malice blinds him to any moral code.

Michael Bray: British officer. A good man and true. Michael believes in doing what is right, and abiding by the just rules of conduct in war. When Seth is captured and sentenced to hang, Michael Bray risks his own life to save Seth's after discovering Seth is the brother of Caroline Braxton. Michael Bray loves Caroline, so much so that he ends his declaration of affection when he learns she loves another. He thinks, what better love can he show her than to aid her brother. He helps Seth escape in the night. Later in the story, Bray becomes Caroline's husband, and Seth's best friend. He is very loyal and a man of strong moral character.

Benjamin Braxton: Seth's grandfather. Benjamin is a staunch loyalist to his king, and the squire of Ten Width Manor in Devonshire. Once proud of his son's accomplishments in establishing plantation land in Virginia, differences in political allegiances cause a rift. Later when Benjamin learns that his son perished at Yorktown, his heart aches for months on end. On a cold winter's night in 1783, he awaits death. With so little time left, he sends for his solicitor, and insists important changes must be made to his will. His heart has convicted him, and he bequeaths to his grandson Seth his estate at Ten Width.

Philip Banes: Benjamin's solicitor. Dutiful to Benjamin, he travels in a storm to Ten Width and makes changes to the will. When he meets Seth, he is ambivalent toward him, and offers minimal help - a horse and directions to Ten Width.

John Stowefield: Annapolis lawyer. Juleah's uncle. Stowefield gave his fortune to support The Glorious Cause and practices law in Annapolis. Wise in his elder years, he advises Seth to accept not only his inheritance, but whatever path he has been placed upon.

Partridge: Stowefield's housekeeper. A short, stout woman whose appearance matches her name.

Lady Anna Fallowes: Juleah's mother. Sir Henry's wife and mother of three. Anna is an excitable person, talkative, and opinionated. She gives herself heart and soul to her family, and worries and frets over Juleah getting married.

Thomas Fallowes: Juleah's younger brother. Thomas is energetic and mischievous.

Jane Fallowes: Juleah's sister, a quiet and reserved girl who looks up to her older sister.

Caroline: Seth's sister. Michael Bray's wife, and Nathaniel's mother. As a child, her grandfather, Benjamin, took Caroline back to England. It was mutually agreed upon between father and son, that she not stay in Virginia during wartime. She grows up at Ten Width, regretting the separation from her brother. Yet, she is totally devoted to her grandfather. Caroline is a gentle soul, compassionate. She leans on the men in her life for strength and security. Juleah is her best friend and confidant.

Claire: Caroline's serving girl.

Mave Proctor: The village midwife.

William: Servant at Ten Width, and Claire's beau.

Dr. Yates: Village physician. Yates prefers caring only for the wealthy and titled gentry of the area.

Lol Makepeace: Church gardener/caretaker

Sir Henry Fallowes: Juleah's father. Husband and father of three. Sir Henry is a landed gentleman who loves his land and hounds. He suffers from dementia, and often lapses into episodes where he thinks war has 'reached his doorstep', that 'the King's men are out on the drive'. He is lovable and admired by all that know him.

Hetty Shanks: Wet-nurse. Hetty is bribed by an evildoer to do away with Caroline's son Nathaniel. She takes the money, but her heart so deeply convicts her that she takes him to Sir Charles. Yet, her heart does not convict her deep enough when she tells him that Caroline has passed away from the fever and that it is his duty to care for the boy. Her disloyalty costs her her life, and she is found murdered in the woods near Ten Width.

James Bonnecker: Buccaneer. Bonnecker will do just about anything for a coin in his palm. He delivers messages from shady persons. He spies on people at the tavern. He journeys from ship to ship to keep his existence going. Bound by the pirate code for years, he breaks it when he learns of a young woman's kidnapping. He decides at his age, it is needful to make amends with his Creator before the final ship sales, and goes aboard *The Raven* to keep a watchful eye upon Juleah. He saves her life in a storm at sea.

Sir Charles Kenley: Caroline's former father-in-law. Sir Charles is the quintessential English gentleman. He disapproved of his son, Jeremy's, choice in a wife, and shut him out. He takes his grandson Nathaniel into his home and cherishes him. When he meets Seth, he is taken back that a Yankee has inherited an English estate. When Seth informs him that Caroline is alive, and alerts Sir Charles to the conspiracy at hand, Sir Charles has the willingness to resend his aversion to Caroline. He does all he can to 'bring the scoundrels to justice!'

Nathaniel Kenley: (3) Caroline's son.

Lady Kenley: Wife of Sir Charles.

Latterbuck: Constable of the District. Latterbuck, a gluttonous, incompetent officer of the King's law, would never consider that any murder could be done in his district. He is bent on keeping his reputation as a strict law enforcer in tact, and will go so far as to pronounce a murder as an accident. He does not like foreigners, especially colonists. He ignores Seth's deductions, and then accuses him of conspiracy and for lighting Ten Width afire causing a woman's death.

Pen: Serving girl at the Sea Maiden Tavern.

Judith Dirk: Lady's maid hired by Edward Darden to accompany Juleah on *The Raven*.

Habbinger: Darden's manservant.

Miss Lovelace: Darden's later love interest.

Captain Roche: Captain of The Raven.

Juba: Slave and fisherman. Juba rescues Juleah from the sea after a storm wrecks The Raven. He is Samson-like in stature, willing to protect her.

Lucy: Old slave-woman. Lucy is wise, having suffered greatly in her life. She looks after Juleah when she is brought to the fishermen's' camp along the Caroline coast.

Mr. Martin: Plantation and slave owner. A grieving widower, Martin helps Juleah journey to Annapolis to her Uncle John.

Corben: Plantation overseer.

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See you there!