



## REVOLVER by Marcus Sedgwick

1. When the story begins, Sig Andersson is sitting with the corpse of his father in the table in front of him in a small cabin.

Why is this a good starting point for the story? Is Sig alone or does he have any one else with him? How would you feel if you were in Sig's shoes?

2. The story begins in Giron, 68 latitude north, but we also have flashbacks to Nome, 11 years earlier. Why does the author tell the story this way around? What does he achieve by weaving his story back and forth? As a reader, what is your reaction to this device?

3. The over-riding impression that the book makes is of the icy cold weather. How does the author convey that strong sense of cold throughout the tale?

In what way is the weather a vital part of the story? What kind of language does he use? How successful is he at conjuring up a sense of freezing cold, temperatures so low they can kill somebody in a short space of time? At the end of the novel, the author tells us that he travelled to Northern Sweden where he *'got a sense of the cold, and the landscape, and walked on frozen lakes.'*

Do you think he could have written this story as well if he hadn't been to the Arctic Circle?

4. What does Maria mean by the phrase 'Let's not speak of the snow that fell last year'? It's a phrase she uses in Swedish, but how does it translate? Why is it particularly relevant to this story? What kind of image does it conjure in your own mind?

5. The dominant image in the book is the revolver that Einar buys when times are tough. Why does he keep a gun, and under what circumstances how does he acquire it? Was it a folly to buy it, or a wise precaution? How does his sick wife react to the acquisition of the Colt?

6. The story begins with the illustration of a section of a revolver, and as the story builds, so the gun is added to until it is finally complete. Why has these illustrative devices been used? What does it tell you about the story? The model of the Colt Single Action gun is called 'The Peacemaker'. Is this a suitable name for a gun, or is it ironic to call guns peacekeepers?

7. Einar describes the gun as beautiful and says *'Things are not only beautiful from the way they look on the outside...things can also be beautiful from the inside, because of what they do.'*

Does this make guns beautiful? How is it that the gun saves Sig's life, even though he never actually uses it?

8. At the end of the novel, Marcus Sedgwick reveals that as part of his research for this novel, he himself had fired a revolver, *"If I had expected firing a gun to be frightening or difficult, I was wrong. The only scary thing about firing a gun is just how easy it is."*

What does he mean by that statement? In what way does that echo the sentiments of one of the other characters in the book? Which character is it? Do you think it would be easy to fire a gun? Is that a problem in itself?

9. What kind of story is Revolver? Is it a thriller, a detective story, a drama?

At the end of the story, we discover that Einar had been stealing gold over a long period of time. Does he pay the price for his deception? How does Sig finally work out what has happened to his father? Would you have been able to unravel the mystery of the matches and the clues he was trying to leave his family?

10. What is the significance of the very first sentence *'Even the dead tell stories.'*

To what extent is Revolver a dead man's story? And how is it a story of survival? At the end of the book, there is a postscript from 1967 that puts the tale into another context altogether. How do you feel about that ending? What does it tell you about Sig and his sister Anna? Is it a fitting conclusion to Revolver?

