

Dec. 13, 1996

Dear Ivan Doig,

We had a great time on Wednesday evening talking about Rascal Fair. The newspaper and magazine articles you sent me in October were a big help in preparing the discussion questions.

One matter we never made any headway with was why, if you had already decided to do a trilogy, you wrote English Creek before Rascal Fair.

Cordially,  
Dick Weyte

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TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION: Ivan Doig's DANCING AT THE RASCAL FAIR  
Seattle Public Library/West Seattle Branch...December 11, 1996  
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1} What adjectives would you use to describe:

|                   |                           |
|-------------------|---------------------------|
| Lucas McCaskill   | Stanley Meisel            |
| Ninian Duff       | Percy                     |
| Anna Ramsay Reese | Nancy Buffalo Calf Speaks |
| Isaac Reese       | Varick McCaskill          |

- 2} Is there anything about this book that seems to fit in with the fact that the author has a Ph.D. in history?
- 3} In an interview, Ivan Doig stated that, "...often people who don't have much else in life are rich in language." How might this be applied to *Rascal Fair*?
- 4} Do the book's characters seem too eloquent and witty to be credible to you?
- 5} The author seems to have made up his mind that, in his book, no people are to be shot, and that he will not dwell on cattle ranching. Why might this be so?
- 6} The hardship of Montana life is perhaps best shown in what character?
- 7} In spite of all their hardships and setbacks, Angus or Rob never talk about going back to Scotland. Why not?
- 8} Why do you think Doig had Anna marry Isaac Reese rather than Angus? Why do you think he later had Anna die?
- 9} As you read deeper into the book, did you start having premonitions about what lay ahead? (Anna dying, Varick marrying Beth, Rob's oversize shoes in Scorpion's stirrups)
- 10} When do you think the personality of Rob began to change, and what changed it?
- 11} Of all the characters here, for whom does the author show absolutely no empathy, and why?
- 12} Are there any events here that clearly show that the era of this story is passing?
- 13} Doig: "I'm trying to deal in fiction with the issue of history dropping in on us." How does he go about this?
- 14} Would this book make a good movie? Why might the author not want to sell the movie rights?