

Discussion Questions for *Citadel of God*

1. What was the political situation in Rome when Benedictus appears in the story? What is Benedictus like as a young man?
2. Describe the characters of Boethius, Rusticiana, and Peter.
3. Who are King Theodoric and Princess Amalaswintha? Why are the Romans upset about the Gothic rule? What is their rule like?
4. Describe Benedictus' encounter with the Lady Lelia. Why do you think the author included this story?
5. Why did Benedictus leave Rome? What was life like in Enfide?
6. Why do you think Benedictus left Enfide after the miracle with the bolter? How does he become a hermit, and then a monk?
7. Why was Boethius executed? Have you ever read the famous book he wrote while in prison, *The Consolation of Philosophy*? ([Available in an Ignatius Critical Edition.](#))
8. What are some of the spiritual gifts of Benedictus that are described in the novel? Do you have any favorite stories the author tells about him?
9. What is the character of the priest Florentius? Why does he hate Benedictus and what does he try to do to him? What happens?
10. What happens when Benedictus builds the "Citadel of God" at Casinum? How does it serve as a model of monastic life throughout history?
11. What happens to Princess Amalaswintha? Why do you think her story was included in this novel?
12. What are the foundations of the Benedictine rule? What is the role of prayer? How does the rule give dignity to manual labor?
13. What do we learn about Benedictus' sister, Scholastica, in this novel?
14. What is Peter of Solanica's role in the story? How does his character evolve throughout the novel? Why do you think Peter's fictional character was included?
15. What happens to Rome? What do Peter and Rusticiana realize about vengeance? How did their worldview contrast with that of Benedictus?
16. This is a historical novel—did you do any research to see how much of the story was factual versus how much was artistic license by the author?

