**Ship Breaker**

**By Paolo Bacigalupi**

**About the Book**

In America's flooded Gulf Coast region, oil is scarce, but loyalty is scarcer. Grounded oil tankers are being broken down for parts by crews of young people. Nailer, a teenage boy, works the light crew, scavenging for copper wiring just to make quota--and hopefully live to see another day. But when, by luck or by chance, he discovers an exquisite clipper ship beached during a recent hurricane, Nailer faces the most important decision of his life: Strip the ship for all it's worth or rescue its lone survivor, a beautiful and wealthy girl who could lead him to a better life....

**About the Author**

Paolo Bacigalupi’s writing has appeared in WIRED Magazine, High Country News, Salon.com, OnEarth Magazine, The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction, and Asimov’s Science Fiction Magazine. His short fiction been anthologized in various “Year’s Best” collections of short science fiction and fantasy, nominated for three Nebula Awards, four Hugo Awards, and won the Theodore Sturgeon Memorial Award for best science fiction short story of the year. His short story collection PUMP SIX AND OTHER STORIES was a 2008 Locus Award winner for Best Collection and also named a Best Book of the Year by Publishers Weekly

His debut young adult novel, SHIP BREAKER, was a Micheal L. Printz Award Winner, and a National Book Award Finalist, and its sequel, THE DROWNED CITIES, was a 2012 Kirkus Reviews Best of YA Book, A 2012 VOYA Perfect Ten Book, and 2012 Los Angeles Times Book Prize Finalist.

**If you enjoyed this book*:***

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* *Revolver* by Marcus Sedgewick
* *Planesrunner* by Ian McDonald
* *The Summer Prince* by Alaya Dawn Johnson
* *Fever Crumb* by Philip Reever

**Discussion Questions**

1. What kind of society developed among the Ship Breakers? Does it make sense? Does any of it strike you as not authentic?
2. **Are the blood ties among families usually strong enough to overcome betrayals? How important is family to Richard Lopez and to Nailer? Other characters? How does Nailer feel when he is compared to his father? How is he the same or different from his father, Richard Lopez?**
3. Loyalty is a virtue this society thinks about on a daily basis. Is it something we consider today? Who are the characters loyal to? Is loyalty the most important part of any relationship? What is loyalty to Tool?
4. **What did you think of the blood oath the crew swore with each other? Are there**

**situations today that could be made better or worse by this act? What do you think of the code of ethics among crew members?**

1. Where do you imagine the location of Bright Sands Beach to be? How important is the setting to this story?
2. **The book names Lucky Strike, Lucky Boy, and Lucky Girl, but who is really lucky? Who is smart? Does success in life have as much to do with luck as with choices or abilities? Which is more important: being lucky or being smart?**
3. Nailer is called upon to make difficult choices on a moment’s notice. Does he always make the right choice? What does he consider in making a choice? How would things change if he made another choice? What do his choices tell us about his character? Given his upbringing on Bright Sands Beach, how did Nailer end up with his value system? Who or what influenced him?
4. **Were you satisfied with the ending of the book? What do you think will happen with Nailer, Nita, Pima, and Sadna after they leave on the clipper? Given that Bacigalupi might write a sequel to Ship Breaker, what will the story be like?**
5. In an interview, Bacigalupi states, “We’re good at solving the short-term problem and

ignoring the long-term consequence.”  Bacigalupi says he may have a dismal view of

humanity, but that doesn’t mean he isn’t a fan of man’s cooler inventions, including

bicycles and computers. “It’s not technology’s fault that it’s devastating. An individual

car is never a problem; it’s when we have 350 million of them.”  How is this statement

reflected in *Ship Breaker*?

1. **Explain some of the things that have happened to the planet in this post-oil world. Does Bacigalupi’s vision of the future make sense? What do you agree/disagree with? What would you change? What would you add to it?**