

*Across the Winding River*

- 1) What was your first impression of each of the three narrators? What were their goals? Quirks? Interesting qualities.
- 2) Why do you think Johanna chose to work for the *Luftwaffe*? What are her motivations to continue her work?
- 3) Describe Max's relationship with his parents. Why were they at odds? Discuss why their goals are so strongly opposed.
- 4) Beth had a complicated relationship with her mother and a messy divorce. How do these two elements of her life influence Beth's relationship with Max at the end of his life?
- 5) In Beth's place, what do you think your reaction would be to discovering the photo in Max's memory box? And in Max's?
- 6) Max lives through the Battle of Hurtgen Forest, one that was both costly and without a decisive victory for the allies. Why do you think the author chose to highlight this lesser-known and gruesome battle instead of one more celebrated? (i.e. the storming of Normandy.)
- 7) What do you think about the scene between Beth and Greg at the hospital? Do you think her reaction to Greg's behavior is justified? What are some elements of their relationship we see come to light in this scene?
- 8) Harald struggles with his forced involvement in the Nazi party. Do you think he was wise to play along with his brother-in-law's plans for a time? Do you think his ultimate decisions were selfish, foolish, or heroic?
- 9) What do you think is the final catalyst in Max's decision to move on from his search for Metta?
- 10) Why do you think Beth decides to stick to the periphery when her half-brother finally comes to make a visit to their father?
- 11) A good portion of the book centers around Metta, who is largely absent from the page. Why do you think the author chose to keep such an important figure "offscreen" for large swaths of the book?
- 12) What do you think is the significance of the title?