



Reading Group Guide

Catching the Wind

by Melanie Dobson

This reading group guide includes a book summary and book club discussion questions for *Catching the Wind*. If you'd like Melanie to speak with your book club, please contact her through her website (melaniedobson.com).

Book Summary

What happened to Brigitte Berthold?

That question has haunted Daniel Knight since he was thirteen, when he and ten-year-old Brigitte escaped the Gestapo agents who arrested both their parents. They survived a harrowing journey from Germany to England, only to be separated upon their arrival. Daniel vowed to find Brigitte after the war, a promise he has fought to fulfill for more than seventy years.

Now a wealthy old man, Daniel's final hope in finding Brigitte rests with Quenby Vaughn, an American journalist working in London. He believes Quenby's tenacity to find missing people and her personal investment in a related WWII espionage story will help her succeed where previous investigators have failed. Though Quenby is wrestling her own demons—and wary at the idea of teaming up with Daniel's lawyer, Lucas Hough—the lure of Brigitte's story is too much to resist. Together, Quenby and Lucas delve deep into the past, following a trail of deception, sacrifice, and healing that could change all of their futures.

Questions for Discussion

- 1) At the beginning of the book, Dietmar's heart is torn. He wants to rescue his parents, but he's not strong enough to overpower the Gestapo. Have you ever been in a situation where you wanted to help but could not? How did you reconcile this?
- 2) As Quenby struggles with insecurity and fear of abandonment, she tries to escape her feelings by immersing herself in someone else's story. What are other ways people escape from either past memories or present conflict? What do you think is the best way to heal from emotional wounds and fear?
- 3) Mr. Knight believes that many people don't understand or honor faithfulness. What does faithfulness mean to you? How are you faithful to the people in your life? How has someone been faithful to you?
- 4) When Dietmar and Brigitte are in the public hall, Dietmar believes he must walk away in order for Brigitte to find a home. Do you think he made the right decision? Was there a time in your life where walking away was the best or only choice?
- 5) Brigitte identifies with fairy-tale characters and stories while she lives with the Terrells. How has a book or movie changed your life? What are some stories that have stayed with you over the years? Why have they stuck with you?

- 6) This novel slips between historical and contemporary stories. How do actions in the past affect the present-day characters? What was a seemingly small decision from your past that had a significant impact on your future?
- 7) Rosalind thinks of herself as wise and perhaps courageous to leave her daughter with Brigitte, in order to protect the child. Do you think she made the right choice? How did her decision change the future for multiple characters in this story?
- 8) The magnolia tree is common in England today but would have been rare during World War II. What does the magnolia represent along Brigitte's journey? If you had Cinderella's wishing tree, what would you wish?
- 9) As they get to know each other, Lucas and Quenby discuss "super powers," including the abilities to forgive and to expunge things from the past. Do you think we can forgive and forget things that have happened in the past? How do you process hurtful things that happened to you as a child or as an adult?
- 10) Quenby believes that the death and forgiveness of Christ have the power to change her life today. Do you believe that God can heal both the past and present through forgiveness? If so, what does this look like in your life?
- 11) Mr. Knight is fascinated by heroic knights from the past, but Lucas thinks Mr. Knight is a modern-day hero. What is your definition of a hero or heroine? Has someone served as a hero or heroine in your life?

- 12) Quenby wrote an article comparing the *Kindertransport* during World War II to the flood of refugees in our world today. How does the portrayal of Brigitte, a young refugee, influence your perspective on the current crisis? How do we balance caring for the needs of refugees while stopping those intent on doing harm?

- 13) What does the wind symbolize throughout this novel? How does it bring the characters back together again?