

### Discussion Questions

- 1 A long history of rejection causes people to protect themselves in various ways. Compare how Mellie, Tom, Larry, Goosie—and even Kay—protect themselves.
- 2 Our society can be harsh on women who don't meet its standards of attractiveness. How do you see this in Mellie's life? In the world around you? Do you find yourself subconsciously judging others on their looks?
- 3 Tom's story was inspired by a news article about a man facing execution who had a small son. What challenges did Tom face because of his father's notoriety? What challenges do you see in the world for children of infamous—or even famous—people?
- 4 What do you think of how Tom's mother raised him? How would you have handled a similar situation?
- 5 Five hundred women served as flight nurses during World War II, and seventeen were killed in action. Considering the role of women at the time, flight nurses were pioneers in many ways. What ways do you see?
- 6 Sesame plays an important part in Tom's life. How does Sesame help him? How has a pet helped you?
- 7 In the field, Tom and Mellie have to deal with a difficult way of life—mud, bugs, living on the go, and the constant threat of attack. How do the various characters in the story deal with these situations? How would you?
- 8 How were letters vital to Tom and Mellie's individual growth and to their relationship? Have you ever had a close correspondence with a pen pal?
- 9 How does Mellie handle condescension from Captain Maxwell and Sergeant Early? How have things changed since the 1940s?

- 10 Both Tom and Mellie were raised by the opposite-gender parent. What issues does that cause in their lives? What can single parents do to overcome these challenges?
- 11 Mellie comes to friendship late in life. What insights into friendship did you gain from her journey?
- 12 What insights into leadership do you gain from Tom's example and from the examples around him?
- 13 What does Mellie learn about mercy through this story? Is there any way you need to show greater mercy to those around you?
- 14 Tom struggles to bridge his inner self and his outer self. Have you ever lived a less-than-genuine life? How did you find balance? How does it encourage you to know that you're a new creation in Christ?
- 15 The next novel in the series follows Lt. Georgie Taylor and pharmacist Sgt. John "Hutch" Hutchinson, and the third novel follows Lt. Kay Jobson and C-47 pilot Lt. Roger Cooper. From what you've seen of these characters, what might you expect?