



# Reading Group Guide for *THE LONG MARCH HOME* by Marcus Brotherton and Tosca Lee

(Spoiler alert—these questions assume you've already read the book)

1. Before reading this book, how much did you know about the Pacific theater of World War II, and specifically the battles in the Philippines and for Bataan?
2. The story centers around four best friends: Jimmy, Claire, Billy, and Hank. How would you describe the personality of each character? Who do you identify with most?
3. How does Jimmy, Claire, Billy, and Hank's friendship as children differ from their friendship as young adults? Do their adventures remind you of any favorite times with friends during your childhood?
4. Discuss the intricate relationship between Jimmy and Claire. As boyfriend and girlfriend, what works between them? What doesn't?
5. Describe Jimmy's relationship with his mother and father. How does Jimmy's father embody—or not—the values he teaches in his role as pastor?
6. Do you think Claire is justified in breaking up with Jimmy? Discuss her choice to let him go—and Jimmy's efforts to win her back.
7. What surprised you most about war in the Philippines and the battle for Bataan—or about the Allied surrender of 1942?
8. At the start of their incarceration at Camp O'Donnell, Jimmy is put on the grisly work detail of burying dead bodies. He is saved by the gift of soap and fresh water from his friends. What do you believe to be the symbolism in this scene?

9. Hank and Jimmy are sent on a mission by the Crate during which time Jimmy, who prides himself on always doing what's right, is faced with a decision in which right and wrong aren't easily discernible. Would you take an innocent life to save a friend? When was the last time you faced a "gray" decision—and what did you do?
10. Female guerilla commander Felipa Culala existed in real life. What did you admire—or not—about her, and what would you be curious to learn more about as it relates to her life?
11. Before the mayor's time is up, he asks to see a priest so he can confess. The priest offers to hear Jimmy's confession, but Jimmy refuses. Why might someone like Jimmy, with his faith so affected by his father's religion, refuse the concept of grace?
12. While the boys endure the hell of Bataan, Claire goes through her own difficult time at home. What might it have been like in that era to be unwed and pregnant?
13. Chapter 41 is one of the most unique in the book in that it contains only one sentence. What does this chapter mean to the story overall, and what was your reaction when you read it?
14. The identity of the one-armed, broom-sweeping medic is revealed late in the book. How is this version of Hank different from the one you described in questions 2 and 3?
15. Discuss the changes in Jimmy, his mother, and his father after Jimmy returns from war. How does Jimmy eventually find grace/redemption—or does he? In what ways has he changed the most?
16. How does the friendship of these four friends come full circle by the book's end?