

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How would you describe Audrey and Caroline's friendship when the two young women set off for Minnesota? Do you feel more drawn to one of the girls, and if so, why? By the time they are plunging toward the Black Root River, has their relationship changed? Have your feelings about them changed?
2. After a tense opening chapter set in the present, the novel transitions to explore the past, dealing with the murder of Holly Burke in the same Black Root River, and with her relationship at the time with Danny Young. Other than the involvement of Audrey's father, the ex-sheriff, what connections did you make between the two crimes? Why did what happened to Audrey and Caroline have such an impact on the Burke and Young families? From the outset, did you suspect any characters of having been involved somehow in both crimes, and if so, why?
3. What compels Tom Sutter, who as a sheriff always operated strictly "by the book," to go to Iowa to look for the men who assaulted his daughter? Doesn't he realize that his actions might compromise the case? Why does he shoot Radner in the hand? Do you feel his actions were justified?
4. Throughout the book, Audrey seems to experience the sense of encountering Caroline and other girls in the river under the water; at one point she even seems to speak with Caroline under the ice. What do you feel these visions mean to Audrey? What do they mean to you, and to your reading of this novel?

5. In what ways does the title of this novel connect to the story, beyond the current of the river?

6. Why do you think Audrey seeks out Gordon Burke that day in the woods outside his house? Why does Gordon Burke—no friend of Audrey's father—bring her firewood? By the end of the novel, what have Audrey and Gordon come to mean to each other?

7. Both Danny Young and his ex-girlfriend, Katie Goss, have been keeping individual secrets for ten years. Why do you think Katie didn't report what happened to her all those years ago? What has changed to cause her to consider coming forward now? And why do you think Danny hid the piece of fabric for ten years? Why is he bringing it out now? What has changed for him?

8. For a book with so many crimes, there seems to be little absolute certainty as to guilt. In the absence of definitive proof, how is guilt communicated to the reader? At the same time, how are doubts raised about that guilt? By the end of the novel, do you believe Radner was one of the boys who assaulted Audrey and Caroline? How sure are you that Ed Moran killed Holly Burke and then tried to frame Danny Young for the murder? If you were on the jury that heard these cases, and you had no more evidence than what the author provides with which to convict, how would you decide?

9. Another ambiguous moment in the novel comes when Moran goes out on the ice after Audrey falls into the river. Do you think he intends to make sure she dies, or is he trying to help her—and how did you come to this conclusion? What is the effect on the reader of not having absolute certainty as to guilt?

10. Though completed more than a year before the rise of #MeToo, many of the themes in the novel speak to the causes behind that movement. What actions and events in *The Current* speak most clearly to the discussion begun by #MeToo? Do you feel the novel contains an accurate representation of the attitudes that

brought about the changes so evident in how we discuss male/female relationships today, and in how we view the integrity of law enforcement?

11. Why do you think the author chose to leave Danny's fate unresolved? What do you think happened to Danny, and why do you think so?

12. If you were to encounter any of these characters in another ten years, do you think you would find them greatly changed, or would they still be held in the grip of their pasts? If you think they would have changed, why and in what ways? If you don't think they would have changed, how did you reach that conclusion?