

Winter of the Metal People

The untold story of America's first Indian War

— *A Book Club Guide* —

1. What are the different values at stake in the novel? Discuss the way in which the values clash with one another.

2. Discuss the character of Poquis. What kind of man is he? Like the Oglala Lakota warrior Crazy Horse, Poquis was considered rebellious by the standards of his people. How did that help make him a leader?

3. There are four principal women depicted in the novel: **the matriarch**, who leads and advises the Tiwa women; **Panpahlu**, the mate of Poquis; **Francisca de Hozes**, a Spanish woman of whom we are given glimpses; and **Luisa**, the Mexican Indian woman who accompanied the expedition as an interpreter. Discuss the importance of each.

4. The myth of Coronado is that his expedition was a benign exploration of Pueblo country. Discuss why this myth, so at odds with the reality, still largely endures after nearly 500 years.

5. The cover's art, by the Kewa Pueblo artist Persingula Tafoya, portrays Poquis as a buffalo dancer from an early scene in the book. Although bison are usually identified with the Plains Indians, discuss their importance to the Puebloans.

7. Against the Zunis, Coronado took an active role in personally leading the assault on a pueblo. Why do you think he never did that during the battles of the Tiguex War that followed? Discuss the frustrations he faced because of the Puebloans' resistance and lack of European-valued riches.

8. What can a well-researched historical novel accomplish compared with an academic recitation of only known and provable facts? What are the values of each?

9. If you read the online historical notes linked to at <http://dennisherrick.com/downloads/history.pdf>, were they helpful in better understanding the novel? Did they enhance the novel's credibility?

10. Discuss the characters of Alonso Álvarez and Pedro de Castañeda. Like all the Spaniards in the novel, they are drawn from historical accounts. How are they similar?

11. Which character did you most identify with? Least identify with? Why?

