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### DISCUSSION GUIDE

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## ABOUT THE BOOK

After traveling to New York City's ghostly underworld, Jack Perdu has made it back aboveground to join the living. But if he's alive, why is he still seeing ghosts?

Jack tries hard to fit in at his new school—and tries even harder to win the affections of his Latin classmate and friend, Cora. In an effort to impress her, Jack leads Cora to the entrance of the underworld and makes a terrible mistake. Soon they have crossed the threshold—and this time, there may be no getting back.

Similar to *The Night Tourist*, this exciting sequel blends together the modern-day world and mythology—this time brilliantly weaving in the myth of Persephone and Eros.



## DISCUSSION GUIDE

- 1 Why doesn't Jack share the truth with Cora, the girl he likes? Would you? How would you cope with seeing ghosts everywhere?
- 2 What does Jack do to prepare for his date with Cora? From the outset how are things not as he hoped? How does he try to impress Cora and Austin?
- 3 Describe what happens at Columbia. What happens to Austin? Why does Cora's home life complicate the adventure for her?
- 4 Where does Jack find Euri? Describe the therapy session led by "Shorty" Snowden. What kinds of teachers and skills would you pursue in the afterlife?
- 5 How would you feel if you were Cora? Do you think Jack should have kept the truth from her for so long? Why is time such an enemy for the pair? Would you be willing to risk your life to have this adventure or not?
- 6 Why does Euri haunt the young musician? Why is she so angry with him and how does she show her displeasure? In this story, why do ghosts haunt people?
- 7 The group runs into the poet W.H. Auden in the library. What is he doing there? Do you agree that changing one word can alter the entire meaning of a poem? Who would you most like to meet in the afterlife?
- 8 What obstacles does the trio run into while trying to find their escape? Which chapter did you find the most exciting? How do authors build excitement and keep a reader turning pages?
- 9 Despite constantly avoiding Cerberus, the trio does manage to have some fun in the city too. Describe their adventures. What would you do in the city if you could fly anywhere and get in without admission?



- 10 How does the history of the construction of New York City provide the key to Jack and Cora's escape? Who reveals this? Why is the park a place of regret and pain for Viele? What does he reveal for their escape plan?
- 11 How does the line from the Auden poem, "If equal affection cannot be/  
Let the more loving one be me" have significance for Jack's life? Why is his relationship with Cora complicated?
- 12 In the end, what happens to all three explorers? What future does Euri face? Do you think Jack and she will have a future connection?



## PROJECTS

### Reading

Good readers stay tuned in as they read by making predictions based on what they know about the characters and their motives and the elements of storytelling. As you read *The Twilight Prisoner*, make a prediction at the end of each chapter in the form of a question.

### Writing

Katherine Marsh writes with great sensory detail. This description from chapter 3 is a great example:

"The doughy scent of H&H bagels; the refrigerated vegetable odor of an air-conditioned grocery store; the fume of hot brake pads drifting up from the subway grate; the sweaty earthy pungent smell of ..." (p. 27)

Write a description of your own town, city, or rural location, and be sure not to ignore the sense of smell, which is very powerful!

### History

Research the history of New York City, in particular the displacement of Native Americans and immigrants in its development and expansion. Or research the history of your own city or town and see if you can discover the displacement of other groups in the name of progress.

### Art

Draw, paint, or digitally create a scene set in the underworld described by Katherine Marsh.

### Science

Study the importance of water as a resource for cities across the United States. How could water be a resource in the next century?

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Patrick Andrade

**KATHERINE MARSH** is the Edgar–Award winning author of *The Night Tourist*. She is currently the story editor of *The New Republic* magazine, where she edits articles on politics and culture. A native of the Empire State and a Yale graduate, she lives in Washington, D.C., with her husband, son, and two cats.

## AUTHOR QUESTIONS

- 1 Which of the Greek myths is your personal favorite? Why do you think we continue to turn to these stories for inspiration?

Obviously the Orpheus and Persephone myths are two favorites. And I'll reveal a third favorite in my next book. I think we turn to these myths because thousands of years later we're still living them. We're all everyday heroes facing love, loss, change, and longing.

- 2 Are you a figure-out-the-plot-first kind of writer or a fly-by-the-seat-of-her-pants kind of writer? Why?

With *The Night Tourist*, I was more of a seat-of-my-pants writer. With *The Twilight Prisoner*, I started with an outline of the plot. Which book do you think is better?

It's worth pointing out, however, that in both cases, I did a little of both. I tried to outline *The Night Tourist* as I wrote, and allowed my outline for *The Twilight Prisoner* to change as characters and events evolved. Maybe that's a good philosophy for life as well as writing: have a plan but don't be afraid to change it.

- 3 What's the best piece of writing advice you ever got?

When I was sixteen I sent a story I'd written to the great American playwright Edward Albee. Albee sent me a postcard with a photo of a hippo back. On it he had written: "Adjectives and adverbs can be your friends but don't overuse them. Take all of them out of your story and sprinkle a few back in." To this day, it's advice I try to follow.

Want to know more secrets about *The Night Tourist*?

Visit <http://www.katherinemarsh.com/SecretsofTheNightTourist.htm> for mysterious and fascinating information about New York City.

