

Discussion Guide for

THE NIGHT TOURIST

PRE-READING

1. Examine the front cover. From the title, **THE NIGHT TOURIST**, what do you think the book will be about? Look at the picture, what images do you see?

What do you think is happening in the cover illustration? Can you predict some events that will take place?

2. Read the front cover flap introduction and the back cover. What have you learned about the story already? What genre do you think this book will be?

What predictions and questions do you have prior to starting the book? On the back cover, what are some things you notice about the two figures below the text?

3. Look at the end pages both at the front and the back of the book.

Describe what you see here. What can you predict about the setting and the time frame of **THE NIGHT TOURIST** from these end pages?

4. Read the author information on the back flap. What is unique and interesting about this author?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AS YOU READ CHAPTERS I-VII

1. In Chapter I, the author provides a few clues that Jack might not be particularly happy. Try to find these clues. As you read further in the book, do other clues appear?

2. On page 6 Marsh says "Occidit" could mean that the snake 'Killed her (Eurydice)' or 'cut her down' but it could also mean she 'perished'. Some people might not think there's much difference between these possibilities, but Jack did." Throughout the novel, Jack ponders the definition of "occidit" meaning to be killed or to perish in an accident. In your opinion, what is the difference between being killed and perishing?

3. On page 9 it says: "And Jack never mentioned her (his mother), even though he had hundreds of questions." Why do you suppose Jack cannot ask his father about his mother?

4. Both Chapter I and Chapter II end with events that foreshadow events to come. What is the meaning of foreshadowing, and how is it important to be aware of and watch for these hints and think about what they mean? What events does the author foreshadow in these two chapters?

5. The visit to Dr. Lyons, Dr. Lyons himself, and his examination of Jack were all very unusual. What do you think is going on or will happen?

6. On pages 28 and 29 there is a poem by John Donne. What do you think it means? When you finish reading the book, reread the poem. What does it mean now? How does this poem relate to the book THE NIGHT TOURIST?

7. Do you think FDR's secret door is historically accurate? How could you verify this?

8. When Jack decided to go with Euri to be "an urban explorer", do you think he is being wise or foolish?

9. On pages 35 and 36 what words, phrases, and events does the author use to evoke fear? On page 38 Euri asks Jack, "What scares you,....?"

Draft a 5 minute quick write describing what scares you and why.

10. On page 40 Jack notes " There's something strange about you (Euri)...." What strange things have you noticed about Euri?

11. Jack crosses over the canal by giving the Old Beggar Dr. Lyons's token. On page 42 the third paragraph is particularly descriptive. Can you visualize this room? Draw a quick sketch of it. As you read the rest of the book, use sticky notes (post-its) to mark other particularly descriptive scenes that you can picture in your mind's eye. Be prepared to share your notes.

AS YOU READ CHAPTERS VIII - XXI

1. Chapter VIII is a turning point in the story. It is here that Jack learns that Euri is dead and is a ghost. Euri explains why she did not tell Jack initially. On pages 47 and 48 she says, "Hi, I'm dead. Want to hang out?' I thought we'd get to know each other first. Ease into it." Is this plausible? If you were Euri, would you have done the same or would you have done something different?

2. How is Marsh's New York underworld a metaphor for Ovid's Greek underworld? What parallel people, ideas, and events does Marsh use from the Greek underworld in her New York underworld?

3. On page 51 Jack learns that the ghosts in the New York underworld are the people who died in New York. From this point on, Jack is on a quest. What is a quest and what is Jack's quest? Sometimes, quests change as events unfold. Pay attention to such events.

4. On page 51 Jack begins to think and wonder whether meeting Euri was meant to happen, so he could find his mother. This is indicative of fate. Look up the definition and definitions of fate in a dictionary and share them.

What are the various meanings of fate and what are your opinions and thoughts about fate? Do you believe fate really exists? How does fate relate to Euri and Jack?

5. Research Central Park. Are the fountains real, how many are there, name some of them? Make a detailed drawing of one of them.

6. Why do you suppose the author has her characters return to the city by means of the fountains?

7. Euri seems to have secrets or issues since she keeps avoiding Jack's questions and comments, such as on page 60 when Jack says "That must be hard on your parents, '...your being dead.'" Why do you think Euri avoids talking about how she died or about her parents?

8. This story, in addition to being fantasy, is also a mystery. What are the elements of a mystery? What specific examples in

THE NIGHT TOURIST, thus far, qualify this book as a mystery?
Keep track of the clues to Jack's quest with post-its or in a notebook.

9. When Euri haunts the family in the penthouse, Jack asks her if she knows those people and Euri says she doesn't. Jack did not believe her. Why not? Do you, as a reader, believe her? Why or why not?

10. On page 80 it says, "Jack glared at her. 'You knew about the guards and the dog, what they would do to me. You knew, and you still had me come.'

Euri looked hurt, 'I've given you an opportunity. You said you wanted to find your mother. There's still a good chance you can...'"

Is that the real reason Euri brought Jack to the underworld? Could there be other possibilities? Should Euri have brought Jack into the New York City underworld?

11. Why is it fitting that Fiorello LaGuardia is the ghost who runs the 'Now That You're Dead' Seminar?

12. LaGuardia explains to the new ghosts that they will have the power of flying and will be invisible but they cannot fly over water. What is the significance of this, why do you think they are not able to fly over water?

13. What is regulation 41.5a and how is it significant?

14. Do you think that Professor Schmitt knows that Jack is alive? Why or why not?

15. When the reader meets Professor Schmitt, he explains what the Viele map was really meant to be used for. What do people use it for today?

16. At the top of page 92, Euri is speaking to Jack. "Euri nodded. 'I guess you're destined to be here, then' 'Destined to help my mom. Keep reading.'"

Do you believe in destiny? Do you think Jack or Euri believe in destiny?

17. Jack found his mother's name in Edna Gammon's Record Book. However, in the column entitled "Favorite Haunts", the only mark was an asterisk.

Both Edna and Euri seem freaked out by the asterisk. What do you think the asterisk means?

18. The photo Dr. Lyons took of Jack shows "His hair was white, his body translucent-" Everything in the background looks normal. Jack wonders, "Are you sure I'm not dead?" Do you think he is dead? Why or why not?

19. When Euri tells Jack her secret about her death, it makes him realize that he has become a changed person. On page 90 he described himself as the boy with "no friends at school and his mother being dead." How has Jack changed and what events or people helped him change?

20. On page 127 Clubber Williams is called "the most corrupt cop in the city's history" Is this true? Was Clubber Williams a real New York city policeman? How could you find out?

21. On page 138 it says, "They're just children", Jack remarked after they left. 'It doesn't seem fair. Why don't they move on?'

'Because children have problems too,' said Euri, 'and sometimes the younger they are, the bigger they feel.'

What kinds of problems might trouble young children? How do you think young children best cope with these problems?

22. On page 138 Jack also says, "How could I have been destined to come here and not find my mom?'

For a moment Euri was silent. 'Maybe that's not who you were destined to find.'" What do you think Euri means by this?

23. Who do you think the family is that Jack and Euri revisited on his third night in the city and why did Euri take him back there?

24. Reread the last paragraph on page 142. What events up to this point led to Jack "wishing he could protect her (Euri) from ever feeling unhappy or alone?"

25. What is the significance of the ornament that Jack noticed with the name Deirdre on it?

AS YOU READ CHAPTERS XXII - XXXIII

1. Reread the poem on page 150. What parallels can you draw between this poem and THE NIGHT TOURIST'S story thus far?
2. Jack begins to realize what he is destined to do. From page 158, "He had become Orpheus, and he needed to bring Euri back to the living world with him." Why?
3. During the story Jack and Euri have become good friends. Jack daydreams about bringing Euri back and even adopting her. Is it possible for a girl and a boy to be good friends? Do you have a good friend who is of the opposite gender? Discuss him or her.
4. In the last line of Chapter XXIV it says, "If his mother had figured out how to escape death, why had she returned to the underworld instead of staying with him?" Discuss and think about this question. Do you think Jack's mother wants to be found? If he finds her, what will he say to her?
5. At the end of Chapter XXVI Jack decides it is more important for him to look for Euri, to find out where the guards took her, than it is to find his mother. In fact, he feels it is urgent. Why did he do this? Do you agree or disagree with his decision? Why? What would you do?
6. During the session with Dr. Brill, Euri reveals her real name, Deirdre.
Can you remember back in the story when the name Deirdre was mentioned?
(page 143) Who do you think Euri/Deirdre is?
7. Is Jack alive or dead? What clues can you find that support either or both possibilities?
8. Euri is profoundly sad when she thinks Jack is dead. Why is she sad?
9. In Chapter XXIX Jack finds his mother, discovers the mystery of her death, and realizes the reasons for his father's silence. Does Jack accept his mother's explanation? How would you feel if you were Jack?
How does Jack enable his mother to move on?

10. Jack wonders, "But was Euri really responsible for making a choice whose consequences she hadn't fully understood? Was his mother?" What do you think about these questions?

11. How do you think Jack's father felt when Anastasia returned to the underworld and did not come back to him? How might this affect a person's life?

12. On page 206 it says, "'Deirdre is dead,' she interrupted. 'Deirdre wanted to die. I'm Euri now, and I want to live.'" Jack thinks to himself, 'She deserved a second chance at life.'" Do you agree or disagree?

13. Euri seems to be filled with regret. What does regret mean? Why is she regretful? What regrets might Jack have?

14. On page 211 Jack tells Euri, "Just so you know, your parents miss you." Why is the simple act of placing an ornament on a Christmas tree that Euri/Deirdre made in the first grade so significant? What little things do parents do that reflect love for their child?

15. At the end of Chapter XXXI it says "For a split second their eyes met." This one small moment has a huge impact. How do you think Jack feels? How would you feel?

16. What does the author do throughout Chapter XXXI, "Voyage of the Cumba Dinghy", to create suspense?

17. Jack tells his father about Euri. "But I failed her, Dad. I looked back."

His father shook his head. "You didn't fail her. You would have failed her if you took her out like I did. Look at your mother. She was never really happy here." Do you agree or disagree that Jack failed Euri? Why? Jack continued, "But Euri's different,".... and Jack's father said, "Loving someone makes them seem different."

Do you agree or disagree? Why?

18. The mystery of how Jack has special powers is resolved at the end of the book. Is this resolution credible?

19. When Cora invited Jack to join a Latin Club, he accepted. On page 232 it says, "The important thing was that he had looked back when Cora had called him, and he had been invited in." Why is this important? What does it tell about Jack, and how he has changed? What brought about these changes?

20. Do you think Jack will ever make it back to Euri and the underworld?

21. What do you think about the ending of THE NIGHT TOURIST?

AFTER THE STORY ENDS

1. Throughout THE NIGHT TOURIST there are different versions of the Orpheus myth. Write your own version.

2. If you could give THE NIGHT TOURIST a new title, what would it be?

Either write 5 new titles or one new title with strong evidence for your choice.

3. After reading THE NIGHT TOURIST, what unanswered questions do you still have that you would like to ask Katherine Marsh?

4. THE NIGHT TOURIST is many different genres: a mystery, a fantasy, a modern-day myth, and a comedy. Which genre do you think it primarily is and why?

5. If there was going to be a sequel to this story, what do you think the story line would be?

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