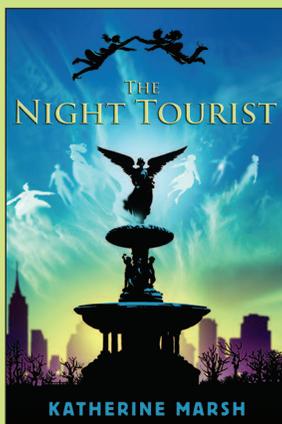


This guide was created by Tracie Vaughn Zimmer, a reading specialist and children's author. Visit her Web site at [www.tracievaughnzimmer.com](http://www.tracievaughnzimmer.com) to find hundreds of other guides to children's and young adult literature.



**The Night Tourist**

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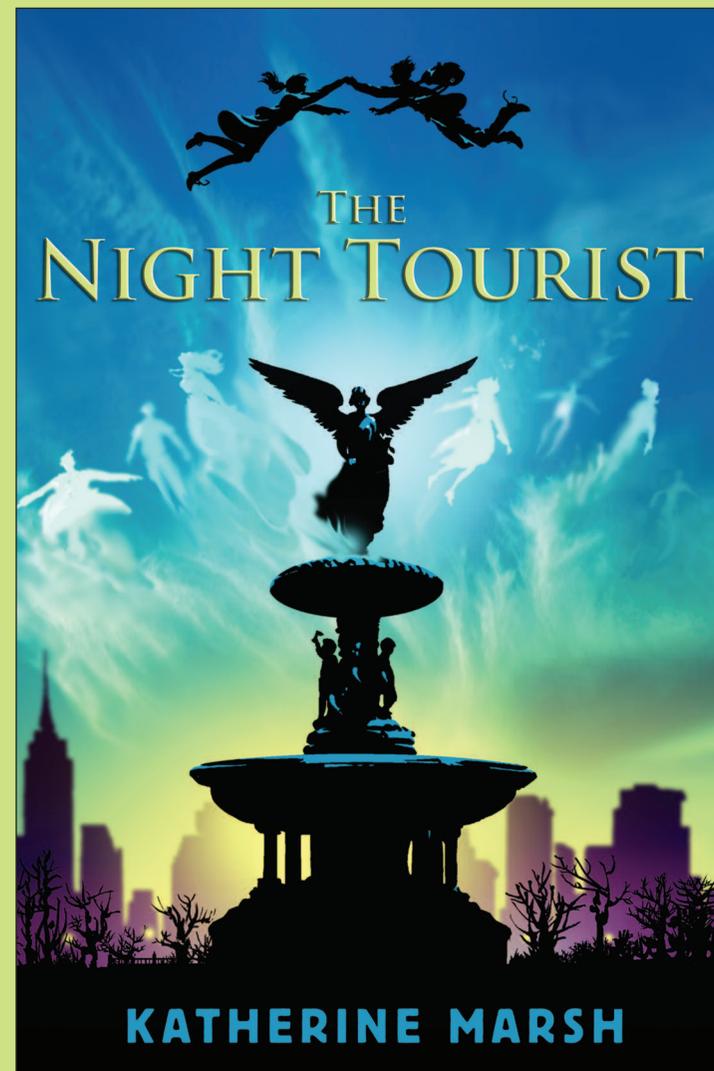
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**DISCUSSION GUIDE**

**Disney • HYPERION BOOKS**

## ABOUT THE BOOK

Jack Perdu, a ninth-grade Classics prodigy, lives with his father on the Yale University campus. Smart and introverted, Jack spends most of his time alone, his nose buried in a book. But one winter evening, a near-fatal accident changes Jack's life forever.

His father sends him to see a mysterious doctor in New York City—where Jack hasn't been since his mother died there eight years ago. In Grand Central Terminal, he meets Euri, a girl who offers to show him the train station's hidden places—the ones only true urban explorers really know about. Eight flights below the station, however, Jack discovers more than just hidden tracks and mysterious staircases. He has stumbled upon New York's ghostly underworld. This, Jack believes, is his chance to see his mother again. But as secrets about Euri's past are revealed, so are the true reasons for Jack's visit to the underworld.

Masterfully told, *The Night Tourist* weaves Classical mythology together with New York's secret history and modern-day landscape to create a magical adventure, full of unexpected twists and page-turning action.

## ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide includes discussion questions intended to provoke thought and insight into the themes of the book, which include friendship, acceptance, myth, grief, despair, risk, forgiveness, and hope.

## PRE-READING

Read a version of the Orpheus myth from Greek mythology before reading the opening chapter of the novel. What do you think is the lesson about life and death that is woven into this story? Does Orpheus learn to appreciate his own life more? Can true love outlast even death?

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- 1 After you read the first chapter, create a news release or front page article explaining the events that occur. Be sure to answer all five of the journalistic questions (what, when, where, why and who) and get quotes from witnesses at the scene.
- 2 Describe the incident in Jack's father's study. What does it reveal about their relationship that he doesn't tell his father about the mysterious man in the office? Would you tell your parents if something similar happened to you? What is Jack afraid of? His father isn't honest with Jack about his real reasons for sending Jack off to New York City. Would you be suspicious if your parents treated you similarly?
- 3 Do you trust Euri as she leads Jack deeper and deeper into her world? Why do you think Jack follows? What does she offer to show him? What could you show a visitor in your own neighborhood or city? At what point, if any, in the story would you have turned back? Why?
- 4 Jack finally realizes that he has entered the underworld of New York City. What are the three major powers and rules that will rule his time there? What will happen if he is discovered? Would you be willing to risk death to explore this world and speak to a lost loved one? Explain your position.

- 5 List the characters that Jack and Euri meet while in the underworld. Compare these characters' human life with their existence in the afterlife. Who do Jack and Euri learn the most from? Why? What famous person would you most like to run into in the afterlife? Why?
- 6 What is the most exciting part of their adventure together? How does their relationship change over the course of the novel? How did you feel about Euri's fate? Is it fair? How does Jack deal with this new loss?
- 7 Jack and Euri try to solve the mystery of what happened to Jack's mother. What does the asterisk mean? Why do the dates initially seem incongruent but eventually make sense? What does Jack learn from his mother?
- 8 Euri explains her death as an "accident." Was it? Does she regret her decision? What does she miss most about life? What do we learn about her life and her family? How does Jack feel about Euri's death? Does he have more empathy for Euri than he has for his mother? Why or why not?
- 9 Who (or what) are the villains in this story? Which one would you be most afraid of? Why?
- 10 Compare this story with the classic Greek myth of Orpheus and Eurydice. How are they similar, how different? Why do you think writers are so influenced by the myths?

## PROJECTS

### Language Arts

Write a scene from the novel that takes place either before the novel opens or after its closing. Try to stay true to the voice of the main characters and make the action believable.

### History

Euri takes Jack on a behind-the-scenes tour of Grand Central Terminal. Conduct a tour of your own, giving the history of a local haunt that only a native would know.

### Art

Create a piece of art inspired by the novel.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**KATHERINE MARSH** taught high school before she moved to New York City and started writing for *Good Housekeeping* and *Rolling Stone*. Her nonfiction stories about the city have appeared in *The New York Times* and other publications. She is currently the managing 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.



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## AUTHOR INTERVIEW

### 1 Have you always been a fan of Greek mythology? Why did you decide to weave mythology into a story about New York City?

In fifth or sixth grade, I began to read Greek mythology in a fantastic book called *D'Aulaires' Book of Greek Myths*. I also liked the pictures, especially one of the night sky on the very last page. Beneath the picture the authors had written that although the Greek gods and goddesses are no longer around, they continue to exist in the sky as constellations. Reading this always made me sad, and so as an adult I decided I wanted to bring their world back to life but relocated into my world, which is New York City. This is why I wove the two together.

### 2 What did you learn about yourself as a writer while you were creating this novel?

There are a lot of things that I'm afraid of—small spaces (I'm claustrophobic), flying, and most of all, losing the people in my life I love most. *The Night Tourist* gave me a chance to face these fears through my hero, Jack. It taught me that writing is a way of doing that. On a more practical level, I also learned that the secret to writing is rewriting, because each draft of the story becomes a little bit better as themes and characters reveal themselves. But you have to be patient.

### 3 What are you working on next?

The sequel to *The Night Tourist*! I'm actually almost finished with it and am excited to continue the story of Jack and Euri and reveal more about their lives (and deaths) to readers. The next book is also set in New York City, but it explores a different myth and also a historical secret about Central Park.

