

Book Club Discussion v2

1. How does NIGHT OF PAN, a story about an ancient time (about 2500 years ago!) relate to us today? And how can words of those in power sway people to do things they may not have dreamed of doing otherwise? (Both for the good and the bad.)
2. What does Thaleia mean when she says to the old priest Diokles and all the men of Delphi, “You can’t kill the song?” What is the song? What is *your* song? Where do you hear it most clearly?
3. What different meanings do you think the saying carved on the Temple of Apollo—*Know Thyself*—has? (Hint: Does it refer only to an individual knowing whether she/he is out-going or shy? Or is there much, much more to it?)
4. Why were both Apollo and Dionysus worshipped at the Temple of Apollo? Were they worshipped at the same time or different times? What is the relationship between the two gods?
5. Why don’t the gods help Thaleia, when she commands them to destroy Brygos and the soldiers up on the mountain? (Hint: What is *hubris*?)
6. Thaleia’s best friend Sophia knows that girls are sacrificed to ensure fertility of the crops—murdered to guarantee the birth of healthy sons and daughters to continue the city-state. Why does she still insist that she wants to participate in the Agrionia Festival even though she knows someone will be killed? Does this have anything to do with why women often stay in abusive relationships?
7. When I wrote the scene about Thaleia’s initiation with Pan in a cave, I thought I made up the cave. About a year later, while doing research, I discovered there actually IS a cave on Mt. Parnassos about seven miles above Delphi. And can you guess the name of the cave? It’s called... even to this day, the Cave of Pan! I couldn’t believe it. Have you ever written something or said something you thought you made up only to find out later that it is real? Why do you think that happens?
8. Why does history depict the Oracle as a drugged teenager manipulated by the priests?
9. Now that you know Thaleia and some history from her era, how does her story relate to your world in the 21st century? Have you read other historical fiction novels about teen heroes, perhaps Joan of Arc, or Elizabeth the Queen of England or others who could see far into the future and took action to preserve an ideal? How does that compare to the characters in Night of Pan, and the history of ancient Greece?
10. Here is a question to think about, something I think about. When the evil priest drowns Thaleia, she is “lost in a sky of sparkling motes, lifting and dancing like thousands of butterflies or minute seeds carried on an invisible wind.” And my question? It’s a big one. It’s a question you can spend your life pondering: What do you think happens when you die?