

HEART OF FIRE

A Novel of the Ancient Olympics

Book Club Discussion Guide



Here is a list of questions related to *Heart of Fire – A Novel of the Ancient Olympics*. To guide your book club discussion of the novel, select which questions you would like to cover at your gathering.

- 1.) What are some of the most striking differences between ancient Greece and the modern world? What are the similarities?
- 2.) Religion and belief systems were quite different in ancient Greece compared to today. How do you think beliefs made life then different from today? To your modern mind, would you say life was better or worse for those beliefs? How so?
- 3.) What is your perception of the Greek world after the Peloponnesian War? How important were the Olympic Games at a time like that?

- 4.) How did the ancient Olympics differ from the modern games?
- 5.) Were the ancient Olympic Games more infused with what we think of as the 'Olympic spirit' than the modern games? Was 'Olympic Spirit' different to how we perceive it today?
- 6.) How important do you believe religion was to competitors in the ancient games?
- 7.) The theme of this novel is 'There can be no victory without sacrifice.' How do the ancient ideals of *ponos*, and *eris agathos* tie in with the theme? Which characters personify these ideals, and which lack them?
- 8.) How does life for women in ancient Greece differ from today?
- 9.) In ancient Greece, how did Spartan women differ from others in Hellenic societies?
- 10.) What sets Kyniska apart from other women? Do you think her exceptional, even for a Spartan?
- 11.) How is Kyniska's Olympic victory revolutionary, even though she did not drive the chariot herself at the Olympiad?
- 12.) To what extent do you think Kyniska of Sparta was/is a symbol of a strong, independent woman? Does she remind you of someone in particular today?
- 13.) How would you describe Stefanos and Kyniska's characters at the beginning of the story? Did they change after meeting each other? If so, how?
- 14.) Do you think that concepts of Love, now and in ancient Greece, are similar or contrary? How would you describe the love between Kyniska and Stefanos?
- 15.) During the Peloponnesian War, Argos and Sparta were often at war. What would you do if you were in the same situation as Stefanos and Kyniska?

16.) If this book were to be made into a movie, who would you cast for the main characters?

To learn more about the world of *Heart of Fire*, ancient Olympia, and the ancient Olympic Games, be sure to check out the special blog series on our website at:

<http://eaglesanddragonspublishing.com/the-world-of-heart-of-fire/>

You can also go on a short video tour of the archaeological site of ancient Olympia with author Adam Alexander Haviaras here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=04yXwDvrJhw>