



## Discussion Guide

# The Path to the Sun

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Photo by Tom Kachadurian

## Book an Author Appearance

Kimberli is available to visit your group and discuss the book. Please inquire about her schedule via email at: [KBindschatel.author@gmail.com](mailto:KBindschatel.author@gmail.com). She will visit in person whenever possible, or via videoconference, **FREE of charge**.

## To Order the Book

*The Path to the Sun* is available at Amazon.com and other retailers

Bulk discounts are available by ordering direct from the author.

Author web site: <http://www.thefallenshadowstrilogy.com>

Author email: [KBindschatel.author@gmail.com](mailto:KBindschatel.author@gmail.com)

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Young Adult literature, Ages 14+, Grades 9-12

## Discussion Questions

1. In the first scene, Kiran is tempted to make the “leap of faith,” a literal jump from a blind cliff. How does this set the tone for the rest of the story and the themes running through the text? How does his perspective change, culminating in the actual jump at the end? Would you have jumped?
2. How do the Torans view nature? The encounter on the mountain with the squirrel was a poignant moment for Kiran. Then he has a close encounter with the monkey-man. Compare these two moments. In what other ways does Kiran’s relationship with nature evolve? How do you view nature and is your viewpoint derived from your religious beliefs?
3. The Script of the Legend is a metaphorical story that the Torans translate as a literal guide. How would you interpret it? Who is the wise man? What must one do to hear the Voice of the Father?
4. After Bhau dies and Manu-amatu shows Kiran what really killed him, Kiran has an epiphany. It is a significant turning point for Kiran. Why? Have you had an epiphany in your life?
5. Kiran becomes mesmerized by the idea of traveling to the spirit world by Manu-amatu’s staff. Why does this have such a powerful draw for him?
6. Many of Kiran’s revelations come as he encounters cultural differences. Have you ever felt like an outsider in another country or culture? How did you feel about the differences? Did the experience impact your own beliefs? In what ways?
7. When the group arrives on the island of the Kotari, the Torans are drawn in by The Guardian. He appeals to their individual desires. He has also established the culture of a cult: isolation, rules of silence, constant activity, etc... Why does it take so long for Kiran to break free of his spell? What is the difference between a religion and a cult?

8. Deke's death is a considerable blow to the group. How does it affect Kiran? How is it another turning point for him?
9. How are women portrayed in the book? Discuss the roles of the main female characters: Bria, Kail, the witch, Kalindria, Aurora, and Marion.
10. At the end, Kiran comes full circle, having circumnavigated the world, to end up home, where he started. But it was unintentional; he was still searching. What does this symbolize? Were you expecting it? Why or why not?
11. At the beginning of each book is a quotation. How do the quotations relate to the corresponding section and do they influence your understanding of that section?
12. On his journey, Kiran seems to meet mentors who tell him what he needs to hear just at the right time. Do you think this happens in real life? Have you ever had a mentor appear right at the time you needed him or her?
13. In the city, Marion tells Kiran "...that which you seek can never be found. For the moment it is sought, it ceases to exist." What did she mean?
14. What is the significance of the codex?
15. *The Path to the Sun* is a spiritual journey as well as a physical adventure in our natural world. What does the story say about religion? What about the role of religion in shaping views of our environment? Do you think the message is at odds with organized religion?
16. Kiran struggles with faith. What, in your opinion, is the value of faith? How does Kiran's view of faith differ from Roh's? How are they similar? What is the difference between faith and religion?
17. *The Path to the Sun* is a parable. What is the moral?
18. In the final scene, what does Kiran finally realize? What do you think will be the consequence of his decision?

19. *The Path to the Sun* is about questioning: questioning authority, questioning the status quo, questioning the wisdom of elders. More pointedly, it is about doubt. Is there a place for doubt within religious belief? Is faith the opposite of doubt?
20. Kiran struggles with the fear of banishment. If he shares his doubt, or even suggests he questions The Way, he'll lose what matters most to him—a sense of belonging. Can you think of examples from your own life where you have felt unable to share your true feelings or doubts for fear of rejection?

## Philosophy Discussion

Plato was a philosopher in Classical Greece. A student of Socrates and mentor to Aristotle, Plato helped to lay the foundations of Western philosophy and science. His best-known contribution is a written work, *The Republic*, a lengthy dialogue on the nature of justice, (often regarded as a directive for utopia), particularly his *Allegory of the Cave*, an extended metaphor that examines the way in which we perceive reality.

In his story, Plato presents a cave in which prisoners are chained down and forced to look upon the front wall of the cave. Behind the prisoners, puppeteers use a fire to cast shadows on the wall. The prisoners (unable to turn their heads) know nothing else but the shadows and perceive this as reality. Once a prisoner is released, he is forced to look upon the fire and objects that once dictated his perception of reality, and he thus realizes these new images in front of him are now the true forms of reality. Once the prisoner climbs out of the cave, he begins to see items and people in their own existence, and only then is aware of reality and truth.

Upon returning to the Cave, the prisoner is confronted by the others who cannot understand something they have yet to experience. Plato claims the *philosopher king* has a duty to be their leader and to govern from truth and goodness.

Discuss how *The Path to the Sun* is an interpretation of the *Allegory of the Cave* and Kiran a *philosopher king*.

## *More Resources*

For more information and resources, including a one-hour online video of teens discussing *The Path to the Sun*, go to:  
<http://www.thefallenshadowstrilogy.com/discussion-guide/>