

MARATHON – READING GROUP GUIDE



About the Book:

In 490 BC, an Athenian messenger named Eucles ran over 300 miles to turn the tide of battle, and in doing so preserved ancient Greek civilization from subjugation to the Persian Empire. His run set the foundation for today's marathons – and for the Olympic Games.

For Discussion:

Marathon is a graphic novel, a story told in words and pictures. How do you think this story would be told differently if it was a novel, with only words? How would it be different if it was a movie, with just pictures?

Eucles saves his country, but ends up dying in the process. What makes him so passionate about Athens? Do you feel similarly strongly about your country?

The Spartans refuse to come to the aid of the Athenians because of a religious festival. Think about what you know about the Greek gods. How might missing a religious festival have different results – or be thought about differently – in their society than it would in yours today?

Eucles and Antigonos start out the book with an antagonistic relationship, but come to respect teach other at the end. After Antigonos' final sacrifice, what do you think about Eucles' treatment of him throughout the book?

There are three different military powers in *Marathon*: Athens, Sparta, and the Persian Empire. Think about their similarities and differences. How would things change in ancient Greece if one of them conquered the others?

Eucles was formerly a slave. How does this affect the way he sees his world? Was slavery in ancient Greece different from slavery in the United States? Does this affect your concept of Eucles' life?

What do you think about Datis' actions throughout the book? The attack on Athens is clearly very personal for him; do you think that influences his judgment and his military strategy?

Eucles is given an almost impossible task in running from Athens to Sparta to Marathon and back to Athens. How does his strategy for dealing with this great challenge match up with your own methods for facing difficult things?

Basically every single person in Athens musters up to fight the Persians, whether in Marathon or when the Persians come to Athens. How would war today be different if a country's involvement was that complete?