



THE WORLD OF RILA'S TALE

Book club reading guide

Rila's Tale: Guardians of the Moonlit Vines · a novel by Momtchil Dimitrov

A novel set in the Bulgarian mountains in 1938. A monk breaks his vow to follow a phrase he cannot forget, and gathers an unlikely company as he goes. Twenty-eight chapters, about 56,000 words — most groups read it comfortably in three weeks. No knowledge of Bulgaria is needed.

These questions are free to print, copy and use.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Two questions to open with, before anyone has read a page.

- 1 Is there something your family has kept going — a recipe, a plot of land, a story — and who decided it was worth keeping?
- 2 What would make you break a promise you had kept for fifteen years?

AS YOU READ

- 3 What is the difference between possessing something and caring for it?
- 4 Which character asked you to reconsider your first impression?
- 5 When does hospitality become an act of courage?
- 6 What does each member of the company bring that the others cannot?
- 7 The mountain is described as though it has a will of its own. Does it?
- 8 Where does the miraculous begin, and where does ordinary care begin?

AFTER THE LAST PAGE

These questions assume everyone has finished the book.

- 9 Was the ending the one you wanted? Was it the one the story owed you?
- 10 Who in this book is a guardian without ever having chosen to be?
- 11 The industrialist believes he is building a better country. Where is he right?
- 12 What would you guard, and who would you trust to guard it after you?

INVITE THE AUTHOR

I am glad to join a book club by video call — half an hour of questions, or longer if the conversation runs. There is no charge. Tell me your group, your date, and your time zone.

info@rilatale.com

BEFORE YOU CHOOSE IT

The first chapter is open to read, and to listen to, at rilatale.com — send it to your group before they commit. It suits clubs that like *The Alchemist*, *The Name of the Rose*, or novels where place is a character. Nothing in it is graphic.

Some mountains keep silence. Rila keeps memory.

