

Book Club and Reader's Guide for **Thunder: The Shadows are Stirring** By: Hannah Sullivan

1. Early in the book, Olivia, Sam, and Jamie face a life-changing tragedy. How does their upbringing of “positive thinking” help them deal with the situation? Is this plausible? How do you think you would cope if faced with a major loss?
2. If, like Ethan, you were told you have the job of protecting someone with your life, would you be able to accept it? Would it matter what the reason was? How do you think Ethan’s past and personality help him with being able to accept his role?
3. Olivia is the oldest of her siblings. Do you think this helped her accept the responsibility of her role? Knowing what’s at stake, would Gunther have pushed her into accepting it, had she been unwilling? Why or why not?
4. Would it be hard for you to have Gunther’s role? To guide and let go, but not to be able to complete the tasks yourself?
5. Callie says random acts of kindness, even small gestures, spread light and goodness throughout the layers of existence. Have you ever done anything like that for someone else, just because you wanted to? Have you ever benefitted from someone else’s random act of kindness? How did either situation make you feel?
6. Topher places his student in a dangerous situation because he doesn’t think things through. Should he have been forgiven as easily as he was or do you think more consequences should have occurred? Why didn’t Gunther want to let Topher go, even though he was willing to step down? What do we learn about everyone’s characters through their responses at the Circle Time following the safety breach?
7. Ethan says they would never want to completely destroy the full entity of evil, just maim it enough to force it back down to the deepest of Layers. Why not? What would be wrong with a world filled only with goodness?
8. How can light come from dark, goodness from evil? How can a positive be found in a tragedy?
9. Both Sam and Olivia voice their self-doubts. Does this make them weak? What are their strengths and weaknesses? What helps them through, or do they get stuck?
10. “Thunder” isn’t only about layers; it’s about balance. How so? How do the elements of the various Shadow Dwellers (the People of the Hills, Lake, Wind, and Flame) play a role in this?
11. Do you see life as having actual layers to reality and truths, or is it more black and white for you?
12. Do you think someone who is labeled “bad” can ever be changed to “good,” as Gimpy and Guts were? How many acts of kindness or goodness does it take to become classified as “good”? How many times can you make wrong choices or do harmful things before you are classified as “bad”? Does it take

more than one time in either case; is it dependent on the magnitude of the act? Who are you more willing to forgive?

13. Towards the end of the book, Greenie suggests that people who do good, do it for selfish reasons—because they have a certain agenda. Does this have any effect on the good deed? If someone does something “good” just because they can gain from it, does the “good” that results from the deed become anything less?

14. Would you be able to sacrifice someone you love in order to save someone else (or a whole world of people)? Would you sacrifice the world to keep your family together? Would you want to sidestep the choice and let someone else take care of it, whatever the repercussions may be?

15. Whom would you like to meet in a land where fairytales and folklore can be real? Do you think they would be how you imagine them? Would you want them to be?

16. At the end of the book, after seeing Ethan, Olivia mentions that now she knows she can begin to find herself. Why? Did she mean that she needed his strength and support to become herself; or is it something more than that? What does he represent to her? Would she have been able to find herself if anything had happened to any of the boys?