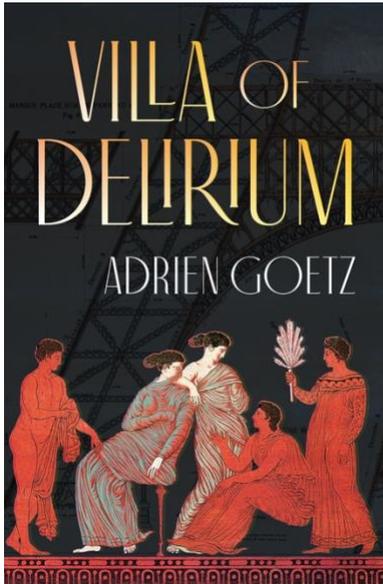


Reading Group Guide to *VILLA OF DELIRIUM*



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Author Adrien Goetz is an art history professor and editor of the Louvre Museum’s magazine. He could have written a nonfiction history book about the Villa Kerylos, or a biography of Theodore Reinach. Why did he instead use a real setting, the Villa Kerylos, for a novel about a fictional character, Achilles?
- How does the Eiffel Tower, designed by Gustave Eiffel, the friend of the Reinachs for whom Achilles’s mother works, relate to the Villa Kerylos? If one represents the past and history and the other the future, does Goetz (or Achilles) seem to prefer one or the other?
- How does Theodore Reinach and his family’s love of ancient Greece affect the way they view the world?
- Compare Achilles’s love affair with Ariadne to his relationship with other characters, the villa itself, and Alexander’s crown.
- What role do war and violence play in Achilles’s life? What about in the life of the Villa Kerylos?
- Joseph Reinach “survives in the collective memory ... because Marcel Proust turned him into a character: Brichtot, who bores all the guests at Madame Verdurin’s dinner parties.” How important are reputation and “collective memory” for the Reinachs?
- Does the villa blueprint at the end of the book make reading easier or more interesting? How does Goetz use space to aid in the telling of his story?
- The Dreyfus affair was a controversy about a Jewish captain in the French army named Alfred Dreyfus, who was convicted of treason, leading to a debate about nationalism and anti-Semitism in 19th century France. How does anti-Semitism manifest itself in the novel?
- Veracity and forgery are important issues with respect to the Saitapharnes tiara and the golden crown of Alexander. Might the Villa Kerylos be considered a “forgery”?
- *Villa of Delirium* is framed as a treasure hunt and ends with two mystery-like revelations. Do you see the book differently after reading the epilogue?

LINKS

Take a virtual tour of the Villa Kerylos here: <https://my.matterport.com/show/?m=mKYfyL93x6y>

Read the *New York Times* article by Eve M. Kahn about the Villa Kerylos and *Villa of Delirium* here: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/31/style/villa-kerylos-french-riviera.html>

Look at the Villa Kerylos’s website here: <http://www.villakerylos.fr/en/>