



### Discussion Questions: *The Latinist*

Folger Book Club—June 2024

1. What are your first impressions of the novel? If asked, what would you say this novel is about?
2. Were you familiar with the Daphne and Apollo myth before? If so, where do you see it echoed in the novel? Who is Daphne and who is Apollo? Does it shift? What is the impact of having “Daphne’s response” at the end? What does it say about the myth’s relationship with the novel?
3. What does this book say about relationships within the world of academia? Which relationships are transactional and which, if any, are genuine?
4. How does Tessa’s identity as a woman impact her navigation of a male-dominated field? How does she compare to the other female characters we meet?
5. Why did the author use Florence’s translation throughout the book? How does her relationship with Tessa compare to Tessa’s relationship with Chris? How do her passages relate to their respective sections?
6. Translation serves as its own form of metamorphosis. How else is change and transformation represented in the book?
7. Why do you think the author chose to set this book in 2010? What would be different about this book if it were set today?
8. What did you think of the ending? Was a confrontation between Chris and Tessa inevitable, or did the way it played out come as a surprise?
9. This book is often characterized as a thriller. Do you agree? What characteristics do you associate with the idea of a thriller? Which are present here? If not a thriller, what would you characterize it as?
10. How do Chris and Tessa’s relationships with their parents affect their relationships with each other?