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## The Smoke Hunter: Reading Group Guide

### About the Book:

Frustrated suffragette and would-be archaeologist Ellie Mallory stumbles across a map to a city that shouldn't exist, a jungle metropolis alive and flourishing centuries after the Mayan civilization mysteriously collapsed. Discovering it would make her career, but Ellie isn't the only one after the prize. A disgraced professor and his ruthless handler are hot on her heels, willing to go any extreme to acquire the map for themselves.

To race them through the uncharted jungle, Ellie needs a guide. The only one with the expertise is maverick surveyor Adam Bates. But with his determination to nose his way into Ellie's many secrets, Bates is a dangerous partner.

As Ellie gets closer to her goal, she realizes it's not just her ambitions at stake. A powerful secret lies hidden in the heart of the city - and if it falls into the wrong hands, it could shake the very fate of the world.

### Discussion Questions:

1. Ellie has a very unconventional attitude towards marriage and family for a woman of her time, arguing that it is effectively a form of imprisonment. Do you agree? Do you think there are aspects of marriage and motherhood today that still hold women back? Why or why not?
2. Professor Dawson isn't a natural villain, and often feels uncomfortable or guilty about the unethical actions he witnesses or is forced to engage in. Do you sympathize with him, or find him reprehensible? How far would you bend your moral code in order to protect yourself?
3. Ellie stole the map from the Public Record Office. Do you still think she has more of a right to it than Dawson or Jacobs? Who does the map rightfully belong to?

4. Through most of the book, Ellie lies to Adam about her mission and her identity, even concealing her real name. Do you think this was prudent? Would you have acted differently?
5. Setting plays a powerful role in this story. How is Ellie changed as she moves deeper into the wilderness? How has the time Adam has spent in that environment shaped who he is?
6. Ellie frequently dreams of the priestess of Tulan Zuyua. How much influence do you think those dreams have in what she decides to do about the Smoking Mirror? Is that choice truly Ellie's, or do you think she was manipulated into the action she takes?
7. Adam's background is one of wealth and privilege. Is his current lifestyle a reaction to that upbringing? How do you think his relationship with his father has shaped who he is?
8. How did his first encounter with the Smoking Mirror change Amilcar Cuyoc? Why do you think he refrained from trying to destroy it in the past?
9. Ellie and Adam form a bond through the course of the story. Do you think their relationship has enough substance to last, or is it more a reaction to how they've been thrown together? What challenges do you think the relationship would face as it moves forward?
10. The Smoking Mirror has the power to show you how you can achieve your greatest desire, but it demands a price. Do you agree with Ellie that any sacrifice is too much, even for a desire that would do greater good for many? What would you be willing to do to achieve your greatest wish?