

A BOOK CLUB DISCUSSION GUIDE



THE NEW FANTASY SAGA FROM SABAA TAHIR

set in the same world as the unforgettable An Ember in the Ashes series

ABOUT THE BOOK

Prepare for a new fantasy from #1 *New York Times* best-selling and National Book Award-winning author SABAA TAHIR that interweaves the lives of three young people as they grapple with power, treachery, love, and the devastating consequences of unchecked greed, on a journey that may cost them their lives—and their hearts.

An orphan. An outcast. A prince.
**AND A KILLER WHO WILL BRING
AN EMPIRE TO ITS KNEES.**



PRAISE FOR *HEIR*

A *New York Times*
Bestseller

A
GOOD MORNING
AMERICA
YA Book Club
Pick

An
IGNYTE
Award
Winner

A YALSA
Best Fiction
for Young Adults
Selection

★ “A COMPLEX SAGA OF LOVE, MAGIC, AND INTRIGUE
DELIVERED BY A GIFTED STORYTELLER.”

—*Shelf Awareness*, starred review

★ “The stakes are higher than ever in this enrapturing spin-off series, which builds on established lore and adds layers of complexity, culminating in AN EXPANSIVE AND BRUTAL ADVENTURE IDEAL FOR LONGTIME FOLLOWERS AND NEWCOMERS ALIKE.”

—*PW*, starred review

★ “Sabaa Tahir is an expert storyteller and *Heir* is another feather in her cap. This is a book that WILL LINGER WITH READERS LONG AFTER THE FINAL PAGES—enjoy the ride.”

—*Booklist*, starred review

★ “A welcome blend of mystique and weightiness—plus a dollop of romance—that WILL DELIGHT ANYONE SEEKING MORE COMPLEXITY IN YOUNG ADULT FANTASY.”

—*BookPage*, starred review

★ “Tahir is an expert at swoonworthy heroes, fierce females, and slow burn romance. Accompanied by adventure, family and found family ties, and political intrigue, THIS MULTILAYERED, QUICK-PACED STORY IS A MUST PURCHASE.”

—*SLJ* starred, review

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

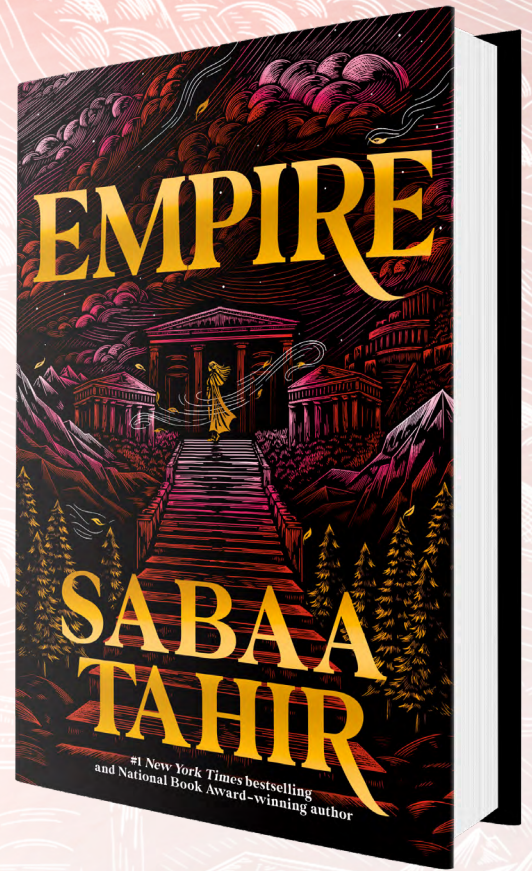
1. Aiz, Ruh, and Laia are known storytellers in their communities. The Kehanni are revered for their storytelling. How do stories impact the actions of the three main characters in the book? Is there a connection in our world to the ways stories can shape our worldview?
2. Quil previously said, “I belong nowhere” (14), and many other characters “long for home” (56). Aiz is fighting to take her people to their homeland. Why does this desire for home become such a driving force in the book? Where is Quil at home? What about the other characters?
3. Quil, Sirsha, and Aiz are strangers to one another when the book begins, but both women become Quil’s love interests. Do you think Quil falls in love too easily? Does his desire for romantic love help or harm him? Would he have fallen in love with the real Aiz? Would he have fallen in love with Sirsha without the Jaduna oath of Adah? Do you want Quil and Sirsha to reunite?
4. Sirsha tells Quil, “Your people have such an archaic view of the arcane arts” (225). Even Aiz knew that—“Ankana considered the Empire to be a backward society, as the Martials had only recently freed their slaves, and still thought of the dona’i—those who were neither male nor female but ascended—as oddities” (166). Why is a country with so much power, control, and wealth so repressed in some ways? Does this remind you of any places in the United States or other countries in the world?
5. How do Quil, Aiz, and Sirsha view their own magic? How does their magic strengthen or weaken their sense of identity? Out of the three, which one has magic that you would most want to have?
6. The theme of bonds is at the center of *Heir*. How do the bonds between characters—Aiz and Div, Aiz and Ruh, Quil and Ruh, Quil and Sirsha - develop throughout the book and how do they drive the plot?
7. How do the sibling relationships—Sirsha and R’zwana, Sufiyan and Ruh - shape the characters in the story? What about the friendship—Quil and Suf, Suf and Arelia, Aiz and Ruh? Which relationships do you enjoy the most?
8. “*When humanity turns on its children*, [Mother Div] was rumored to say, *then you know we are lost*” (455). The novel contains many references to children—the orphans, the child soldiers, the Masks. How does the treatment of children throughout the book reflect on the communities to which they belong?
9. “Every city has ghosts” (81). Which characters are haunted by ghosts and how does that affect them?
10. The Mask motto is “duty first, unto death” (57), and it’s said that Quil’s “family makes much of duty” (58). How does Quil feel about his duty to lead the Martial Empire? Sirsha observes “he looked as if he bore a yoke around his shoulders no one else could see” (154). Why does he feel so burdened by his duty?
11. The book opens with this line: “Aiz wished she didn’t hate her enemies with such fervor, for it gave them power over her” (1). How does this foreshadow the leader Aiz comes to be? Who are her enemies throughout the book? How does her power shift? She believes she is on a “holy mission” (422). Is that true?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS CONT'D

12. Who has power in the book? Quil wants to believe that “*power doesn’t have to corrupt*” (45). Do you agree with Quil?
13. Cero told Aiz, “*Your anger will be the death of you*” (2), but Sister Noa tells her to “hold on to [her] anger” and that anger is better than despair (75). Which one was right?
14. Each character has a different hunger. Aiz has been physically starved as an orphan. Sirsha hungers for freedom. What does Quil hunger for? How does each character’s hunger drive their choices? Does their hunger change throughout the book?
15. Each character in this book is carrying so much grief. Helene tells Quil, “Grief is a strange beast. Some battle it, their souls scarred from its abuse. Some bury it, and live life waiting for it to reemerge. And some tread water, the grief a weight about their necks. Every reminder makes the weight heavier. [. . .] You and I tread water, nephew. And I would not see you drown” (53). Which characters are battling grief? Which are treading water? How does grief affect each of them?
16. Helene tells Aiz, “You think we’re soft because we have so much. But that only gives us more to fight for” (423), while Aiz fights because she has had so little. Which character’s fight do you think is justified? How does their access to wealth or experience with poverty shape their choices?
17. What do you make of the Ankanese words of parting: “*May death claim me first*” (57)? What do you think it means?
18. How do the societies/cultures—Martial Empire, Kegari, Ankanese, and Jaduna—in which the characters were born influence the way they see magic? How about how they see duty, children, and home?
19. Did you trust Aiz as you read? Did that trust ever change to suspicion?
20. Sirsha describes a mural depicting Martial heroes of the war that she sees in the posh central district of Navium. “Sirsha searched the rest of the mural, but her people weren’t represented at all, even though none of those vaunted heroes would have had a chance against the Nightbringer without them” (88). How does the Martial Empire treat the other people—the Ankana, the Jaduna, the Kegari—and how does that make you feel about what happens to them? Are the other groups justified in waging war on the Martial Empire? Is war ever justified?
21. We end the book where we began: with the storytellers. What story do you predict Laia, the chaos storyteller, will tell Quil?
22. Is sacrifice the strongest force in the book? Who sacrifices the most?
23. “All magic came from the same source” (442). What is the source of all magic?

DON'T MISS THE THE
GRIPPING CONCLUSION
TO THE ACTION-PACKED,
RUTHLESS, AND ROMANTIC
FANTASY DUOLOGY THAT
BEGAN WITH

HEIR



ABOUT THE AUTHOR



SABAA TAHIR is a former newspaper editor who grew up in California's Mojave Desert at her family's eighteen-room motel. There, she spent her time devouring fantasy novels, listening to thunderous indie rock, and playing guitar and piano badly. Her #1 *New York Times* bestselling *An Ember in the Ashes* series has been translated into more than thirty-five languages, and the first book in the series was named one of *TIME*'s 100 Best YA Books of All Time.

Tahir's contemporary novel, *All My Rage*, won the National Book Award for Young People's Literature, the Michael L. Printz Award, and the *Boston Globe-Horn Book* Award for Fiction and Poetry.

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