

THE GIRL OF FIRE AND THORNS

BY RAE CARSON

ABOUT THE BOOK

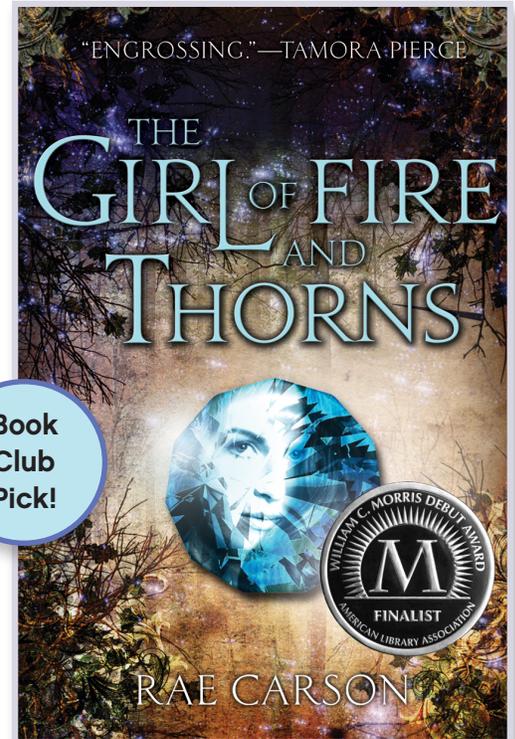
Once a century, one person is chosen for greatness. Elisa is the chosen one. The one who has never done anything remarkable, and can't see how she ever will.

Now, on her sixteenth birthday, she has become the secret wife of a handsome and worldly king—a king whose country is in turmoil. A king who needs her to be the chosen one, not a failure of a princess. And he's not the only one who seeks her. Savage enemies, seething with dark magic, are hunting her. A daring, determined revolutionary thinks she could be his people's savior, and he looks at her in a way that no man has ever looked at her before. Soon it is not just her life, but her very heart that is at stake.

Elisa could be everything to those who need her most. If the prophecy is fulfilled. If she finds the power deep within herself. If she doesn't die young. Most of the chosen do.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Throughout Elisa's journey, she faces constant judgment from those around her—her own family, her attendants, her enemies—and even from herself. Which characters base their judgments on her physical appearance and which see through to Elisa's true self? Does that tell us more about Elisa, or about the character who is passing judgment?
2. Elisa says, "All my life, I've been reminded that I am destined for service" (p. 7). How did growing up with such reminders shape her personality? How do you think Elisa would have been a different character without the Godstone and her call to service? Imagine and describe an alternate life for her.
3. Who are the bravest characters? The most cowardly? What are the differences in the ways they act?
4. Belen betrays Elisa and the rest of their band to the Inviernos. Why did he believe he was doing the right thing? Was Elisa right to forgive him?
5. Every bearer Elisa learns of has died young, after a great trial. Is performing the act of service for the greater good worth sacrificing herself? What would you fear most if you were in Elisa's place?
6. At what point do you think Elisa becomes a true leader? Why?
7. Think about the religious elements of Elisa's world—the *Scriptura Sancta*, the meaning of the Godstone, the rituals of the worship service described on pp. 84–86—and compare and contrast them with real-world religious beliefs and customs. Do you think Elisa's religion closely resembles any real-world religion, or does it contain elements from different belief systems? What similarities can be found between the cause of Elisa's war and the root of real-world religious conflicts?
8. Rae Carson transports readers to a vivid, exotic world. What elements of her writing and the story are most evocative to you? Make a list of words that contribute to the strong sense of atmosphere in *The Girl of Fire and Thorns*.
9. Consider Elisa's thought: "I didn't need faith in God so much as I needed faith in myself" (p. 422). What roles do Elisa's faith in God and her faith in herself play in the outcome of the story? Does one play a bigger role than the other?
10. What do you think will happen in book two? Write your own first chapter for the second book, and give it a title.



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