



THE OPIUM PRINCE BY JASMINE AIMAQ



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR READERS AND BOOK CLUBS

1. In what ways does Daniel's personal story mirror the history of Afghanistan during this period? In what ways does it differ?
2. What choices did Daniel have following the accident? In the face of Taj's blackmail?
3. How are Daniel and Taj alike and different? Did you find one more sympathetic than the other, and if so, why?
4. What are the ultimate goals of the Communist revolutionaries? Do you think they succeed to those ends? Why or why not? Did you empathize with Leila and her role in the movement?
5. What is the importance of Daniel's father, Sayed Sajadi, to the story? How does he influence the course of events?
6. How has this novel affected your understanding of what jihad means?
7. Sex trafficking, particularly of underage youths, comes to play a prominent role in the novel. How is this common, even normalized practice from the era viewed and treated by each character?
8. "In America, [Daniel's] friends sometimes used the phrase 'becoming a statistic' like it was something to be avoided. They complained about the government turning them into a number. What a luxury that would have been for Telaya, to find her name on a ledger. To be a statistic" (p. 24). Kochi nomads are intentionally bypassed in the eyes of the law. What is "the importance of being counted" (p. 140)? Are there pitfalls as well as benefits?
9. How does Afghanistan's opium trade seem to differ from other global drug operations? Taj mentions an honor code—how does that function in this case?
10. What is the relationship between the opium khans and the government? What is implied when Taj states, "I am not interested in politics" (p. 314)?
11. What might Telaya's ghost represent to Daniel? At what moments does she appear to him?
12. Why is Rebecca unhappy with Daniel? Why did he feel that he couldn't tell her everything, and how might the story have been different if he had communicated more openly with her?
13. What do the tonal differences between the prologue and epilogue say about how Daniel has changed?
14. Do you feel that the final message of the novel struck a hopeful note, or one of tragic histories destined to repeat themselves across generations?