



# WHEN WE WERE SISTERS

FATIMAH ASGHAR

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BOOK CLUB KIT

# QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

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1. *When We Were Sisters* is full of beautiful language, but it is also an exploration of the ways in which language can sometimes fail us—like when your sister is also like your mother, or when the word *girl* doesn't fully fit. How do the characters navigate these shortcomings of language and move toward their fullest expression of self?
2. What does each of the three sisters at the heart of this novel want? What stands in the way of them getting it?
3. Describe Kausar's coming-of-age. What issues did she face that were universal in nature and/or specific to her background, and/or gender?
4. What does feminism look like in the world of *When We Were Sisters*? What about misogyny?
5. We learn a bit about how Kausar, Aisha, and Noreen have evolved by the time they are adults. What kind of futures do you imagine for them beyond the chapters of this book?
6. Think about the other books, movies, television shows—if any—you've consumed about orphans. How does *When We Were Sisters* expand upon that canon?
7. If you had the chance to ask Fatimah Asghar one question about *When We Were Sisters*—about the writing process, the characters, or the plot, say—what would it be?

# CHARACTER CARDS

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**AISHA**



Aisha thinks she's ten times bigger than everyone. . . . She bares her teeth at the adults and still manages to be cute, still manages to draw their coos out. All bite. All bark.

**NOREEN**



A collector of good grades. A collector of awards. Noreen was made to mother me, her heartbeat pounding against my back, shouting so loud that it fills my entire being, you're held, you're held, you're held.

**KAUSAR**



All the adults say I'm in my own world. I can take up such little space, I promise. I can be loved. It won't cost you much. You won't even know I'm there.

**THE  
COUNCIL**

Whenever we're in council meetings it's usually because we need to decide something . . . Us three, a band of adventurers. My sisters, my Gods, my Mirrors.