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Gather together your favorite **#FearlessWomen** and discuss a different acclaimed science fiction or fantasy novel every month. We'll get you started with a few questions here, but encourage you to think up your own. Don't forget to join the conversation online by sharing your thoughts—and the **#FearlessWomen** hashtag on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

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The information and discussion questions that follow are intended to enhance your reading of *City of Lies*. Please feel free to adapt these materials to suit your needs and interests.

- 1. There is a tendency in SF/F to have characters, especially 'strong female leads', adopt masculine characteristics in order to be heroic—how does the novel tie traits and skills usually associated with femininity to strength and heroism? How do the characters of Kalina and Hadrea exemplify and challenge this?
- 2. Assassins and poisoners often appear in SF/F books, but how does it alter the story to have the hero save people from poison? How does that relate to the frequent appearance of banquets in fantasy fiction and how in many societies poison is a woman's tool?
- 3. Religion—both the lack of faith and the act of faith—plays a large part in *City of Lies*. What other SF/F fiction (recent or more classic) examines the role of politics and religion? How does it mirror or contrast with our own world?

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- 4. In what ways does the family structure of Sjon society alter the way relationships, loyalties, gender roles, and sexuality are presented? What advantages and disadvantages has this created for their society as compared to a more traditional patriarchal model adopted by the neighboring empire? How drastically would modern real world societies change if this basic structure had been adopted?
- 5. *City of Lies* examines friendship and sibling relationships and how those relationships withstand internal and external pressures. Do you think genuine love and loyalty can exist between people whose relationships are at their core unequal? Can love between siblings and friends overcome the expectations we place on each other?



