

## ***City of Sparrows***

Eva Nour

Reading Group Guide

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1. The story about the baby sparrow at the beginning of the story has particular significance to the plot. What does it mean? Is it significant that the bird is a sparrow, and not some other kind of bird? How does the book's ending reflect on this opening incident?
2. Social media and texting are used to convey plot and emotion from a distance. How is this used to detail Sami and Sarah's relationship?
3. How important are real-life political events in *City of Sparrows*? How much of the history did you know before reading—and did you learn anything that surprised you?
4. Sami is a soft-spoken character. What effect does Sami's demeanor have on the story?
5. Although the story is rooted in realism, superstition and the supernatural frequently crop up. What purpose do the jinn serve in the narrative? Do you think the author wanted you to believe these specters were real, or hallucinations?
6. Animals hold particular significance in *City of Sparrows*—cats in particular. Cats are often compared to humans and humans are described as having cat-like features. Some characters devote care to these animals. What do cats symbolize, or signify, in this story?
7. The notion of free will is a central theme in *City of Sparrows*. How does Sami enact his free will?
8. *City of Sparrows* is based on true events experienced by the real-life Sami. Why do you think Eva Nour chose to write this story as historical fiction instead of nonfiction?
9. Eva Nour is a journalist by trade. How does her professional background affect the narrative of *City of Sparrows*? Does the fact that she's writing under a pseudonym influence the believability of the book for you?