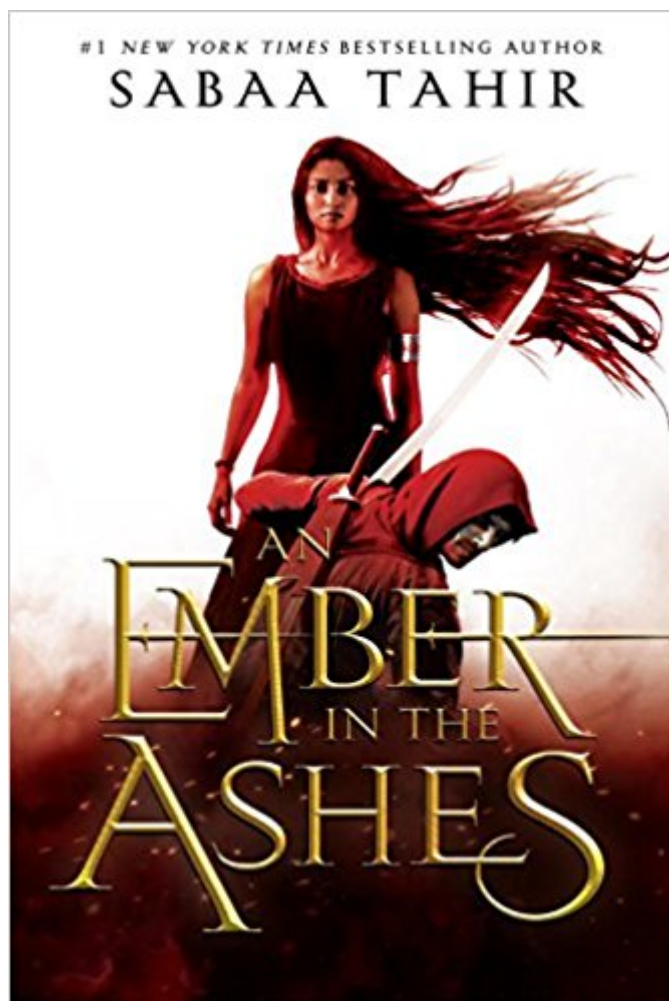


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An Ember In The Ashes



Synopsis

From the #1 New York Times ^Å bestselling author of *A Torch Against the Night*! INSTANT NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER'S BEST YOUNG ADULT BOOK OF 2015 PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD WINNER - FAVORITE FANTASY BUSTLE'S BEST YOUNG ADULT BOOK OF 2015 ^Åçâ ^Å“This novel is a harrowing, haunting reminder of what it means to be human ^Åçâ ^Å• and how hope might be kindled in the midst of oppression and fear.^Åçâ ^Å• The Washington Post ^Åçâ ^Å“An Ember in the Ashes^Å ^Å could launch Sabaa Tahir into JK Rowling territory^Åçâ ^ÅIt has the addictive quality of^Å ^Å The^Å ^Å Hunger Games^Å ^Å combined with the fantasy of^Å ^Å Harry Potter^Å ^Å and the brutality of^Å ^Å Game of Thrones.^Åçâ ^Å•^Åçâ ^Å• Public Radio International "An Ember in the Ashes^Å ^Å glows, burns, and smolders^Åçâ ^Å• as beautiful and radiant as it is searing."^Åçâ ^Å• Huffington Post^Å ^Å ^Å ^Å ^Åçâ ^Å“A worthy novel ^Åçâ ^Åœ and one as brave as its characters.^Åçâ ^Å• ^Åçâ ^Å• The New York Times Book Review ^Å ^Å Laia is a slave.^Å ^Å Elias is a soldier.^Å ^Å Neither is free. ^Å ^Å Under the Martial Empire, defiance is met with death. Those who do not vow their blood and bodies to the Emperor risk the execution of their loved ones and the destruction of all they hold dear. ^Å ^Å It is in this brutal world, inspired by ancient Rome, that Laia lives with her grandparents and older brother. The family ekes out an existence in the Empire^Åçâ ^Å•,çs impoverished backstreets. They do not challenge the Empire. They^Åçâ ^Å•,çve seen what happens to those who do. ^Å ^Å But when Laia^Åçâ ^Å•,çs brother is arrested for treason, Laia is forced to make a decision. In exchange for help from rebels who promise to rescue her brother, she will risk her life to spy for them from within the Empire^Åçâ ^Å•,çs greatest military academy. ^Å ^Å There, Laia meets Elias, the school^Åçâ ^Å•,çs finest soldier^Åçâ ^Å• and secretly, its most unwilling. Elias wants only to be free of the tyranny he^Åçâ ^Å•,çs being trained to enforce. He and Laia will soon realize that their destinies are intertwined^Åçâ ^Å• and that their choices will change the fate of the Empire itself.^Å ^Å

Book Information

Lexile Measure: HL680L (What's this?)

Series: An Ember in the Ashes (Book 1)

Paperback: 480 pages

Publisher: Razorbill; Reprint edition (February 9, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1595148043

ISBN-13: 978-1595148049

Product Dimensions: 6 x 1.2 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 1,329 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #15,194 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #65 in Books > Teens > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Fantasy > Epic #78 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Action & Adventure > Survival Stories #145 in Books > Teens > Romance > Science Fiction & Dystopian

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

An Best Book of May 2015: If the test of a good novel is how badly you want to drop everything to finish it, then Sabaa Tahir's debut *An Ember in the Ashes* gets an A+. The world she creates is rich in fantasy, coupled with echoes of a historical saga, all vividly rendered on the page. Tyrannical leaders and a building rebellion set the stage for dual narrators, Elias, one of the elite, trained from a young age to become a skilled assassin for the Commandant at Blackcliff Military Academy, and Laia, one of the oppressed, forced into the role of spy and saboteur in order to save her only remaining family member. Though diametrically opposed within their society, both Laia and Elias are wracked by internal conflict and driven to great lengths by shame and a desire to escape the bonds of their present lives. A complex relationship between them ensues, and while there is a romantic thread to the story, it is ancillary to the larger forces of political power, crippling deceit, and an undistinguished hope that endures in even the darkest corners of their brutal world. Potent action and liquid language whisk the chapters along all too quickly and while this has not been released as part of a series (yet), there can only be great things in store for author Sabaa Tahir, her *Martial Empire*, and her readers. -- Seira Wilson --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

Named one of the best books of the year by: Barnes & Noble The Wall Street Journal Buzzfeed LA Weekly Bustle Paste Magazine Indigo Suspense Magazine The New York Public

Library Popsugar Hypable *** "This novel is a harrowing, haunting reminder of what it means to be human and how hope might be kindled in the midst of oppression and fear. The Washington Post "[An Ember in the Ashes] thrusts its readers into a world marred by violence and oppression, yet does so with simple prose that can offer moments of loveliness in its clarity. This complexity makes *An Ember* a worthy novel and one

as brave as its characters. • The New York Times Book Review “Sabaa Tahir spins a captivating, heart-pounding fantasy. • Us Weekly “An Ember in the Ashes mixes The Hunger Games with Game of Thrones...and adds a dash of Romeo and Juliet. • The Hollywood Reporter “Blew me away...This book is dark, complex, vivid, and romantic • expect to be completely transported. • MTV.com “Fast-paced, well-structured and full of twists and turns, An Ember in the Ashes is an evocative debut that has left me invested in knowing what happens next. • NPR “Once you get caught up in the story, it’s addictive, and there’s no way you can put it down before you figure out what happens to the characters you have fallen for over the course of the 400 some-odd pages. So I didn’t. • Bustle “One thing I can say for sure: this is a page-turner. There comes a moment when it’s impossible to put it down. Sabaa Tahir is a strong writer, but most of all, she’s a great storyteller. • The Huffington Post “This epic fantasy set in the Martial Empire has it all: danger and violence, secrets and lies, strong characters and forbidden romance and a touch of the supernatural. • The Atlanta Journal-Constitution “A setting inspired by ancient Rome; a fierce battle for freedom in the face of tyranny; and a villain who makes Cersei Lannister and Dolores Umbridge look like a pair of pathetic amateurs...An Ember in the Ashes is at the top of our must-read list for 2015. • MTV.com “Be prepared to be blown away by this fantasy-thriller-adventure. • GirlsLife “An Ember in the Ashes is a book that’s too good to put down. • RedEye “Perfect for fans of Maggie Stiefvater’s The Scorpio Races or Sarah Maas’s Throne of Glass series | The book is already set to be a film, which will be EPIC! • TeenVogue.com “Tahir’s deft, polished debut alternates between two very different perspectives on the same brutal world, deepening both in the contrast. In a tale brimming with political intrigue and haunted by supernatural forces, the true tension comes from watching Elias and Laia struggle to decide where their loyalties lie. • Publishers Weekly, starred review “Tahir’s world-building is wonderfully detailed and the setting is an unusual one for fantasy novels. All of her characters, even minor ones, are fully realized....For fans of Game of Thrones and of Melina Marchetta’s Finnikin of the Rock. • School Library Journal “An original, well-constructed fantasy world...truly engaging. • Kirkus Reviews “An epic fantasy debut about an orphan fighting for her family

and a soldier fighting for his freedom. It's a story that's literally burning to be told. • Hypable.com "First-time novelist Tahir has written an ambitious sword-and-sand adventure story that is notable for its suspense and scope. • Booklist "Here's one of the year's most anticipated young-adult debuts. • io9.com "I was so engrossed with this book that I missed a connecting flight. If that doesn't convince you to read An Ember in the Ashes, I don't know what will. An explosive, heartbreaking, epic debut that will keep you glued to the pages. I hope the world's ready for Sabaa Tahir. • Marie Lu, New York Times bestselling author of Legend "With An Ember in the Ashes, Sabaa Tahir shows us light in the darkness, hope in a world of despair, and the human spirit reaching for greatness in difficult times. • #1 New York Times bestselling author Brandon Sanderson "An Ember in the Ashes is a spectacular page turner that asks readers to consider how far they'd go to save the ones they love. Sabaa Tahir is the next superstar in young adult fiction and her debut is as cinematic as Gladiator and as high-stakes as Game of Thrones. • Holly Goldberg Sloan, New York Times bestselling author of Counting by 7s "A heart-pounding story of love and loss, with the most original world-building I've read all year. Deeply felt and deeply moving, I could not put it down. • Margaret Stohl, New York Times bestselling co-author of Beautiful Creatures "This electric debut is a pulse-pounding action-packed Romeo and Juliet story in a richly imagined world with a great twist and heroic characters you'll root for and won't stop thinking about. • Melissa de la Cruz, New York Times bestselling author of Frozen and The Ring and the Crown From the Hardcover edition.

An Ember in the Ashes had a lot of action and turned out to be pretty entertaining. I didn't really know a lot about it going in; just my brother thought I should read it. There was quite a bit of gritty violence, more than I would normally expect in a book people are classifying as a YA. There is certainly a set up for some romance but I'm not sure it's going the main story. You can certainly see the Roman influence the author used throughout the story and a little Arabian Nights flavor also. I did have a bit of trouble getting into the very beginning because Laia was suffering from a "too stupid to live" complex and was just a little too whiny. She did get better as the story went on. I think my favorite character was Elias and his principles he tries to stick to even when in a no win

situation. Helene grates a little bit... Our bad guys are suitably bad and satisfactorily unlikable. Over all, I was entertained and will keep reading the series.

I was so excited to read this book! And why not? The cover is gorgeous, the plot intriguing, and oh the hype! I really enjoyed watching the book community rally around Sabaa Tahir, and quickly elevate this book to a MUST READ! But, when I finished *An Ember in the Ashes* I came away feeling undecided. Did I like the book? Yes. Did it leave me with burning questions and haunt me for days after reading? No. What I liked: The Characters Sabaa Tahir did so many things well in this book. *An Ember in the Ashes* is written from the dual perspectives of Laia, a Scholar slave, and Elias, a Martial training to be an elite assassin. Tahir moves between their stories effortlessly. The characters are so well developed, that even if the chapters weren't labeled accordingly, there wouldn't be any doubt who's POV we were reading. What I loved most was that every single character was strongly written and well fleshed out, even the secondary characters. You walked away feeling that you knew Cook, Izzy, and Keenan just as well as Elias, Helene, or Laia. The Commandant is scary guys. JUST SAYING. The World Building As a product of her environment, the world of *Ember* is equally as terrifying as the Commandant. The Empire is broken into the Scholars and the Martials. The Scholars are a conquered people living under the iron rule of the Martials. The Martials train their children to be assassins, carrying out the will of the Empire. Horrifying thought, right? The only confusing part for me was that some Scholars were slaves while others lived free. But *Ember*'s world is so much bigger than that. We are briefly introduced to the land of Marinn and the Tribal deserts that border the empire as well. Tahir fills *Ember* with vivid imagery and expertly weaves in touches of folklore and mythology until the world becomes a living breathing thing that jumps off the page. The Romance What I found really interesting is that Tahir didn't fall back on the expected romantic plot devices. Was there a love triangle? Kind of. It was more like a quadrangle. rectangle. diamond? Each of the main characters had more than one love interest. Elias had Helene and Laia, but Laia had Elias and Keenan. Laia and Elias never made sense to me. I was, and still am, firmly entrenched in Camp Helene. She's his girl, mark my words. I also liked that Tahir kept it clean. What I didn't like: There's not much. It was a rough read in terms of the wanton brutality of the Martial class. I can't count how many times I read the word rape. It wasn't a pleasant aspect of the book or the world. Tahir did a pretty good job of tying up all the loose ends while still leaving you with a WHAT HAPPENS NEXT feeling.

There was only one part of the book that I didn't feel was tied up in a neat little bow by the end. Midway through, we are introduced to an ally of the Commandants. She calls him by a certain title and we hear a reference to him in one of the stories told to Laia. We get the idea that this ally is the one behind the scenes, pulling the strings, yet we never really hear anything more. All and all, I did enjoy this book. I was very fond of Elias and Helene. Their strength and honor were very appealing to me, as was their tried and true friendship. The world had a brutal beauty that was equally horrifying and mesmerizing. And while it didn't necessarily leave me wanting for more, it's solid!

"This life is not always what we think it will be," Cain says.
"You are an ember in the ashes, Elias Veturius. You will spark and burn, ravage and destroy. You cannot change it. You cannot stop it."
"You are full, Laia. Full of life and dark and strength and spirit. You are in our dreams. You will burn, for you are an ember in the ashes. That is your destiny."
I was really looking forward to this book, and I wasn't disappointed (much). It's been on my reading list since the beginning of the year after it was already getting media buzz. Paramount has also already bought the movie rights. So, I wanted to discover what the hubbub was all about. *An Ember in the Ashes* is gripping while being surprisingly slow-paced. I guess there hasn't been word of a sequel to the book yet. If it's a stand-alone, readers will be sorely disappointed. If it becomes a series, *An Ember in the Ashes* is one thrilling launching pad to the story. It was one of those books I couldn't put down. I stayed up way to late to finish it. I have few complaints, except for a complicated love quadrangle? I get tired just thinking about it. The Martial Empire is a dark place with threat of death, rape, and severe beatings are real, which makes the story that more urgent and compelling. When Laia is sneaking around Blackcliff Military Academy, I was continually gripped with horror at the consequences if she is caught. Neither of our main characters walk away unscathed. I liked both characters, but I particularly enjoyed Laia's development. She comes into herself towards the end of the book, gaining confidence and control over her desires. They're from different social worlds, but Elias and Laia both long for their freedom. Elias wants to escape his future of dealing death and swearing fealty to an unjust Empire. Laia wants freedom for her imprisoned brother. Their journeys are wrought with difficulties and they will be tested to their breaking points, but through each other they might find deliverance. Would I let my teen read this book? Some of the themes of this book reminded me of *Hunger*

Games&f&ç& ã ã ã •war and rebellion and fighting to the death. Martial Empire is worse than the Capital though. Children are beaten in the military academy, and the Masks (who graduate from the academy) are expected to rape and kill without remorse. Though you feel this threat, especially for the women of this story, there is no graphic sexual violence. The Commandant is a cold, frightening character that dishes much of the abuse. She&f&ç& ã ã ã„çs ruthless, tyrant of the academy. There are some sexual references, but no sex scenes. There are two kissing scenes with some mention of longing, but are relatively short. The soldiers especially talk about sleeping with women and whores. And several times Elias thinks about his love interests without clothing and in intimate embraces. Magic also has a part in this story, which plays out as devilry and is associated with dark figures. An Ember in the Ashes is a more mature young adult book. I&f&ç& ã ã ã„çd save this one until high school, at least. I wouldn&f&ç& ã ã ã„çt recommend it for kids younger than 14. Age recommendation: 16 Language&f&ç& ã ã ã • No common swearing Drugs & Alcohol-- References to getting drunk Sex--2 kissing scenes; Women slaves are treated as property to be used; Whore is regularly mentioned, along with references to the brothel; References to the soldiers having multiple sexual affairs. Laia is threatened with rape twice Violence--Sword and hand-to-hand combat; Character&f&ç& ã ã ã„çs are stabbed in battle; Throats are slit; A ten-year-old boy is whipped to death for deserting; Commandant physically maims slaves as punishments; Laia is nearly beaten to death More reviews on <http://ficklelit.weebly.com/>

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