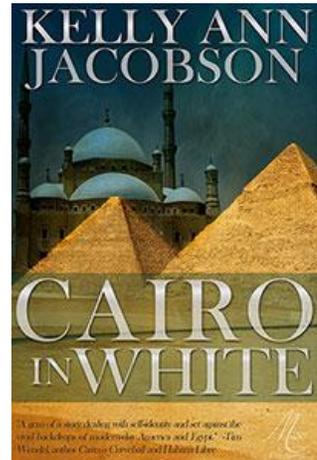


# Cairo in White - Book Club Discussion Guide

As Cairo swelters in the summer of 1986, spunky Egyptian teen Zahra pins on her hijab and faces the heat like a warrior, prepared to risk everything for a secret rendezvous with her lover. But after climbing the Ahmeds' wall and sneaking into their household, Zahra's parents catch her and force her to choose between telling them the truth about her relationship with the Ahmeds' daughter or marrying the son they think she's been sneaking there to see. Years later, Zahra's American daughter, Aisha, steps off a plane at Cairo International Airport and greets her grandparents for the first time. Who is this tall girl wearing black clothes, piercings, and a pixie cut, they wonder, and what secrets does she hold? Zahra and Aisha's lives unfold together as they both grapple with their religious beliefs, social pressures, love, and the search for a place to call home amidst the feminist movement and the Arab Spring.

## Discussion Questions

- In the novel, setting plays a large role. How do the two settings, Egypt and the United States, work with and against each other?
- This novel is a split narrative, with two main point of view characters. Did you prefer one point of view character more than the other? Did you identify with one main character more than the other?
- What role did family and community play in the lives of Aisha and Zahra?
- What were the major conflicts in the story?
- What primary genre would you characterize this book as and why?
- Did you find any of the characters unlikeable? Did your feelings about any of the characters change over the course of the book?
- Both of the main characters in the book are women. What impact does being a woman have on each of them, both in the US and Egypt?
- How might this book relate to your own life?
- What did you think of the ending of the book?



## About the Author



Kelly Ann Jacobson teaches as a Professor of English in Virginia, and she is the author of many published books, including the novels *Cairo in White* and *The Troublemakers* and the poetry collection *I Have Conversations with You in My Dreams*. She also edits anthologies such as *Dear Robot: An Anthology of Epistolary Science Fiction*. Under her pen name, Annabelle Jay, Kelly writes young adult fantasy novels. Her short fiction has been published in places such as *Northern Virginia Review*, *New Plains Review*, and *Iron Horse Literary Review*.