

FARRAR STRAUS GIROUX *DISCUSSION GUIDE*

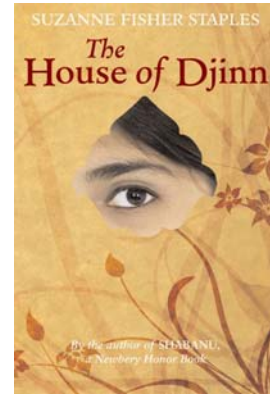
THE HOUSE OF DJINN

by Suzanne Fisher Staples

Reading Level

Grades 7 up

*"Atmospheric and suspenseful . . . Like most of Staples's fiction, this work significantly enlarges the reader's understanding of a complex society." —**Starred, Publishers Weekly**



"Readers will ponder the questions about responsibility and freedom Staples raises in the intriguing marriage drama." —**Booklist**

About the Novel

A commanding sequel to the Newbery Honor Book *Shabanu: Daughter of the Wind and Haveli*

It has been ten years since Shabanu staged her death to secure the safety of her daughter, Mumtaz, from her husband's murderous brother. Mumtaz has been raised by her father's family with the education and security her mother desired for her, but with little understanding and love. Only her American cousin Jameel, her closest confidant and friend, and the beloved family patriarch, Baba, understand the pain of her loneliness. When Baba unexpectedly dies, Jameel's succession as the Amirzai tribal leader and the arrangement of his marriage to Mumtaz are revealed, causing both to question whether fulfilling their duty to the family is worth giving up their dreams for the future.

Discussion Questions

1. Where does the title of the book come from?
2. How would you describe a djinni?
3. Djinn and spirits (Daoud's and Baba's ghosts) are never far from humans. What purpose do they serve?
4. Throughout the book, the author juxtaposes the male and female points of view, Western mores and tribal traditions, and romantic ideals of love and familial obligations. Find examples and compare and contrast.
5. Create a family tree for Mumtaz. Discuss why Leyla is upset when Jameel is named tribal leader and his arranged marriage to Mumtaz is announced.

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6. Describe Baba. What kind of man was he? How do Mumtaz and Jameel feel about him? What are Baba's hopes for his descendants?
7. Why did Omar choose not to succeed his father as tribal leader.
8. Discuss Jameel's and Mumtaz's responses to the proposition that they marry each other. Can you understand their reactions and, ultimately, their decisions? What would you do in their position?
9. Author Suzanne Fisher Staples says, "The idea for the fictional story of Jameel and Mumtaz in THE HOUSE OF DJINN is based on the real story of a prominent Pakistani family who became my good friends when I lived in Pakistan." How does this information affect your reading?



About the Author

Suzanne Fisher Staples, a former UPI correspondent, is the author of many acclaimed books for young readers, including the Newbery Honor Book *Shabanu*; *Shiva's Fire*, a *Publishers Weekly* Best Book of the Year; and *Under the Persimmon Tree*, an ALA Best Book for Young Adults and an ALA Notable Book. She lives in Nicholson, Pennsylvania.

For more information on Suzanne Fisher Staples:

Web sites:

www.fsgkidsbooks.com

Includes a biography of the author and additional information about her books as well as excerpts and other teachers' guides.

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18 West 18th Street, New York, NY 10011

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