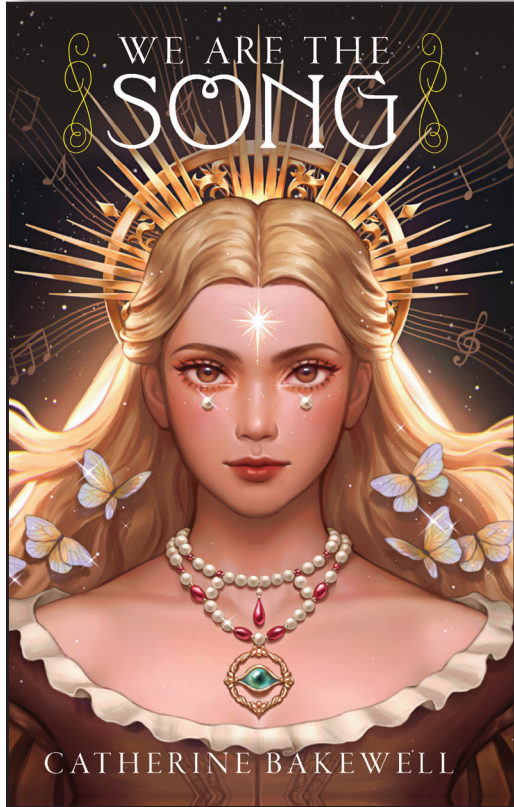


HOLIDAY HOUSE READING GROUP GUIDE



9780823448890 · e-book: 9780823452859

We Are the Song by Catherine Bakewell

ABOUT THE BOOK

A lush and beautiful fantasy set in a world where music is magic and the fate of many thrones lies with one girl . . .

Twelve-year-old Elissa has been raised in seclusion as a devotee of the Mother Goddess. She is a special child, a blessed child, a child who can sing miracles into being. Her voice can heal wounds, halt landslides, cure hunger—and even end wars.

But there are those who would use her gift for darker things. And when Elissa finds herself the farthest from home she's ever been—along with her vain and jealous music tutor, Lucio—she will have to develop the judgment to decide who wants to use her song to heal . . . and who wants to use her song to hurt.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Discuss the structure of the novel. Books are often divided into parts. This novel is divided into movements. How is this an effective way to convey the music theme?
- The climax of a novel is the turning point. In which movement does the climax in the novel occur? The chapters are called verses. How does each verse advance the plot? What is the purpose of the finale?
- Twelve-year-old Elissa has been given the gift of song. Discuss the power of her music. She travels with Lucio, a seventeen-year-old composer. Define their distinct roles.
- Why does Lucio warn Elissa that she must obey Caé by only performing the role given her? How does he feel it his duty to control Elissa?
- Describe Elissa's image of Caé. How does Elissa fear the Goddess? Explain what Lucio means when he says that Caé is "unknowable." What is revealed about Caé at the end of the novel?
- Discuss the war between Acuto and Basso. How is the war about power? In what ways are Elissa and Lucio warriors? What is their weapon? Describe each battle in the war. How do Elissa and Lucio change their battle plans along the way? Who possesses the most power by the end of the novel?
- Elissa's mother and father are in prison for blasphemy. What crime did they commit? How does Elissa come close to committing the same crime?



- Cite times in the novel that Elissa is homesick and dreams of being reunited with her family. Debate whether their imprisonment is a warning to Elissa to follow Caé's plan for her. At what point does she learn her parents' fate?
- Discuss the meaning of the quote "We aren't performers. We are mouthpieces of the Goddess" (p. 9). How often do they have to reiterate their role as they travel to the various kingdom?
- Who is Veronica? What role does she play in the story? Why does she appear when Lucio is away?
- Veronica sees that Elissa has composed a song she calls Song of Restoration. Explain what Elissa means when she says, "The song is just a collection of notes" (p. 33). How might Elissa define composition? When does a "collection of notes" become a composition?
- Discuss the power of the Song of Restoration. How does Lucio react when he learns that Elissa has composed a song? Why is he afraid when he learns of Veronica's visit?
- What is King Massimo like? Why does he want Elissa and Lucio to remain in his court? How does this request create a "war" within Elissa? Explain the joy that Elissa brings to the Queen.
- When does Elissa realize that she must leave the palace? How does she use the magical power of her voice to escape? Veronica called Elissa "smart and resourceful." How do we know that Veronica is right?
- Good vs. evil is a common theme in fantasy. Identify the evil characters in the book. How do they attempt to destroy good in the world? Does the novel end in hope? Does the ending explain the title of the book?

ABOUT THE CREATOR



Catherine Bakewell is a writer, artist, freelance editor, and an opera enthusiast. She has lived in Spain and in France, where she romped through gardens, ate pastries, and worked on her novels. Learn more about her at catherinebakewell.com.

