

Dear Reader,

Whether you explored the expertly curated shelves at your local indie bookstore or combed the internet for your next read, you've somehow come across *Those She Banished*. Now that you have placed this book in a small corner of your private library or on the bedside table as you prepare to sleep, we begin a journey together.

Wherever you are, and wherever this book lands - Thank you.

When I sat down to write this book, my hands flew over the keyboard guided by all of my dreams of sharing this story with the world. No small amount of research, creativity, hope, and a little personal backstory trauma went into the creation of this book. Each character was created to build upon the world of Nassaeren and has guided me on an adventure I could have never imagined would come true.

A story isn't just ink and paper. It's taking the hand of a stranger that will become your closest companion until the last page. As a neurodivergent and plus size woman, I wanted to give those like me a heroine that feels *real*. My hope is that what you find inside the pages makes you feel seen. If these characters stay with you long after you close the cover, then they belong to you now, too.

This Book Club Kit has been carefully curated to immerse you and your friends in the world of Nassaeren. Within this kit you'll find a Spotify playlist for ambiance, snacks, beverages, and a discussion guide that will deepen your book club meeting. I truly hope that you and your group enjoy your travels through the realm of Talav Aira, and the lands of Nassaeren.

With all my gratitude,

D.E.K. Blair

Discussion Guide:

World-building & Lore

- Did the author do a good job of making the rules and history of this world feel realistic?
- What political, cultural, or social issues from our modern world did you see reflected or metaphorically explored in this fantasy world?
- If you were dropped into this universe tomorrow, would you want to live there or would you try to find the nearest portal home?
- Did you find the maps, glossaries, or appendices helpful, or did you skip them entirely?
- Did you feel the book leaned more heavily toward the fantasy plot or the romance? Did the high-stakes conflict ever get overshadowed by the relationship?
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- How well did the setting enhance the mood of the story? Did the author's writing style make the world feel alive and immersive?

The Romance & Tropes

- What specific romantic tropes did you spot (e.g., enemies-to-lovers, forced proximity, fated mates, shadow daddy)? Did the author execute them well or did they feel tired?
- How would you rate the chemistry and compatibility between the main characters? Did you find yourself genuinely rooting for them, or were you more interested in the side characters?
- How did you feel about the physical intimacy and "spice" level? Was it well-integrated into the plot, or did it feel distracting?

Magic & Power Systems

- What are the rules of the magic system in this book, and did the "cost" or consequences of using magic feel high enough?
- How does the presence of magic or special abilities affect the balance of power among different groups, classes, or cultures in the story?
- If you could steal one magical ability, object, or companion creature from this book for yourself, what would it be?

Characters

- Did the main character actually earn their heroic status, or did it feel too easily handed to them by destiny?
- Which character do you think is definitively hiding a massive secret, and did you trust their decisions throughout the plot?

- Did the characters have genuine chemistry, or did the romance feel forced into the plot?
- How did the main characters evolve individually throughout their journey? Did their romantic connection push them to grow, or did it hold them back?
- What did you think of the villain or opposing forces? Were their motivations believable, or did they feel like a flat obstacle just meant to drive the plot forward?
- Which major twist or betrayal shocked you the most, and did you see it coming?

Theories & Future Predictions

- This book is the start of a series, what are your wildest theories for the next installment?
- Romantasy is notorious for mid-series heartbreak. Do you think the main couple will stay together, or is a betrayal or death looming in book two?
- What major unanswered questions left you staring at the wall when you finished the last page?

Plot & Pacing

- Did you see the major plot twists coming, or did the author completely catch you off guard?
- Did the final battle or magical confrontation live up to the buildup, or did it resolve too quickly?
- Did the ending resolve the story satisfyingly, or did it leave you with more questions than answers?
- This book leaves room for a sequel—are you genuinely excited to read the next installment, or are you happy stopping here?

Fun "Icebreaker" Questions

- If this book gets picked up for a movie or TV show, who would you cast as the main characters?
- If you had to assign a specific theme song or music genre to the main character, what would it be?
- Would you personally fall for the main love interest, or would you run in the opposite direction?
- Which side character would you rather date?

Snacks:

- Baked Brie - Top the brie wheel with dried cranberries, toasted pecans, and a drizzle of maple syrup or honey before wrapping in a croissant dough and baking.
- Pear and Walnut Crostini - Toasted baguette slices brushed with olive oil, topped with smeared goat cheese or pimento cheese, thin slices of fresh winter pear, and crushed walnuts.
- Winter themed Charcuterie Board of your choosing

Beverages:

- Mulled Apple Cider - 1 gallon of apple cider, thick slices of orange, cinnamon sticks, allspice, and nutmeg all spiced to taste and warmed in a crock-pot
- Cranberry Orange Mule (Mocktail): Mix tart cranberry juice, fresh lime juice, and a splash of orange juice. Top with fiery ginger beer and garnish with a sprig of fresh mint and frozen cranberries.
- Cranberry Orange Gin Fizz: Shake gin, tart cranberry juice, fresh lemon juice, and simple syrup, topped with a splash of club soda.
- Red Wine of your choice

Playlist:

https://open.spotify.com/playlist/3JUK1KKk1lXqkNunbWCiqo?si=xXDUzxHRRamld4szW_iYyw