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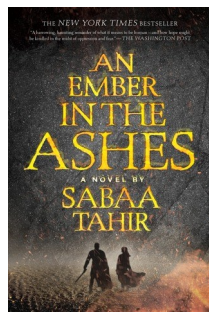
**TEEN NEWSLETTER EARLY WINTER 2021**

**EMBER IN THE ASHES BOOK REVIEW**

**BY TESSA KRZYZANOWSKI, 16**

**PLOT**

*Ember in the Ashes* by Sabaa Tahir tells the story of Elias Veturius and Laia of Serra, a young man and woman living in the Martial Empire living two very different lives, but each one full of great danger and magic.



Elias trains to become one of the Empire’s most ruthless warriors, a Mask, at Blackcliff Academy under his cruel mother the commandant, but secretly he hates it and wishes to escape. Then when the emperor dies, he and a handful of other students at Blackcliff are thrown into a series of challenges designed to destroy them. The two who survive will become the new Emperor and Bloodshrike, the emperor’s right hand man. The challenges will test Elias like he has never been tested before, they will try to rip his humanity from him, but could this be his chance of escaping the empire he never wanted to be part of?

Laia of Serra is part of a group known as the Scholars, long ago the Scholars were conquered by the Martial Empire. Laia lives with her grandparents and older brother Darin. Her parents were leaders of a group of Scholar rebels, but they were executed. Now, Laia finds out that her older brother has a secret. He has been learning how to make Serric steel, the material the weapons of the Martials are made of and one thing that makes them virtually unconquerable. When the Empire catches wind of this, Laia’s grandparents are killed and Darin is arrested. Darin tells Laia to run, and she listens. Laia of Serra begins a quest to find her brother and ends up becoming a slave at Blackcliff Academy. Now her fate and her story will become twisted with Elias’s.

**REVIEW**

This book is so good, and the series has easily become one of my favorites! The world is heavily based on the Roman Empire, but it also has a lot of Sabaa Tahir’s creative-world building in it, and the way it is woven into the story feels so natural and it’s super interesting. The characters are three-dimensional and have their strengths and weaknesses. The struggles and dangers the characters must face feel real and you get very invested in reading this book to see if they prevail or not. It has cool plot twists, and just really keeps you on the edge of your seat. I would recommend this book to anyone who likes dark fantasy and is around 15 or older. The politics of this world are heavily discussed and focused on in this series, and I personally feel that the story would be really lacking without this, but if you don’t like that this might not be the series for you. However, I do think you should at least pick up this book and just try out a couple pages, just to see if you get sucked into this world like I did.

**EVERLOST BOOK REVIEW**

**BY BRENNAN POWELL, 13**

**REVIEW**

*Everlost* by Neal Shusterman. It was a good read, but designed for a certain type of reader. It was a little slow, but was still fun to read and definitely worth reading! You get stuck in it and get excited to read it some more! That’s it!



