CITY ON FIRE

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BOOK CLUB DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In what ways did you feel that Cato’s relationship with his mother and sisters was unusual? Did you enjoy the way this relationship was portrayed?
2. Cato is challenged to stand up to Maius, even though he feels inadequate, and has failed in the past. Have you ever faced a similar challenge? How did you handle it?
3. Ariella is angry at God for the suffering he’s allowed in her life and the lives of her people. In what ways have you struggled with this same issue?
4. Ariella convinced she’s invincible and doesn’t want to admit weakness or need for help. Can you relate? Are you able to seek help from others and from God?
5. Pompeii is a city reveling in its decadence. How did you feel about the way the author portrayed the society? Did it make you uncomfortable? Did you feel it was realistic? In what ways do you think our society parallels the Roman world in its obsession with death and sex? Would you say the world is getting worse or improving?
6. This story takes place in 79 AD. How familiar are you with the church’s history in this period? What new things did you learn about the history of Christianity through the story?
7. Pompeii is considered a “lost city” because its location was unknown for many centuries. Why do you think we have such a fascination with “lost cities”?
8. In what ways do you feel that the author’s travels through Pompeii and other ancient lands have informed her writing? Would you like to travel to Pompeii, Italy? Why or why not?
9. Cato and Ariella faced numerous obstacles to their relationship, including religious, ethnic and social differences. Have you ever had to overcome obstacles to pursue a relationship or friendship? In what way was it difficult?
10. Cato and Ariella are exposed to the gospel through the witness of a house church that is largely in hiding. How do you feel about the way in which the Church today is reaching out? Is it more or less effective than the first-century Church?
11. The eruption of Vesuvius and the escape takes up much of the latter part of the book. How did you feel about the author’s treatment of this tragic historical event?
12. Romans 9:18-24 talks about the sovereignty of God in the events of history. How does Ariella reconcile her past and her nation’s defeat with the idea of a loving God?