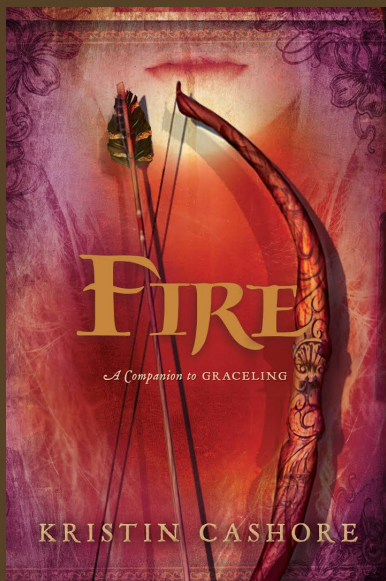


# Fire Reading Guide



## Questions and Ideas for Consideration

**High Fantasy:** How does *Fire*'s setting in a mythical realm of kings and castles allow for a unique kind of message or social commentary?

**Monster:** What commentary is Cashore making through *Fire*'s special abilities, and her status as the last human monster? How is "monster" defined and complicated?

**Power:** Who has power in the text and how do they derive it? What power acts upon characters? How does guilt play a role?

**Gender:** Consider ways that *Fire* complicates gender roles, presents romantic relations, and comments on sexuality. How does the text approach these issues differently than other examples of YA fiction you've read?

**Choice and Control:** What commentary on the concept of control does the text make? How does choice play an important role in the story, and what does the text say about the limits of choice and control?

**Embodiment and the Self:** How is *Fire*'s identity and experience shaped by her body? What other factors play a role in her conception of selfhood?

**Character:** Consider the nuance Cashore develops in characterization. How, for example, do Brigan and Nash differ? How do Clara and Garan differ? What role does Hannah play in the story? How is *Fire*'s relationship with Archer and Brigan different?

## Daybook Possibilities

- If you were to write a fantasy story, what kind of world would you create? Describe what unique fantasy elements would occur in this world and how it would be different than the real world.
- Although the film rights have been purchased for *Fire*, there is no movie adaptation in the works yet. How would you adapt the story? What actors would you use? How would you change it to fit length restrictions?
- Research other high fantasy stories and compare *Fire* to them. How does Cashore fit a tradition of fantasy, and how does she break from it?
- Check out Kristin Cashore's other works, *Graceling* and *Bitterblue*, and/or visit her blog. Connect what you discover to your reading of the text.
- Often, fantasy literature has connections (or can be connected) to issues relevant to the culture during the time it is written. What connections can you make between *Fire* and contemporary social, political, or world issue?
- Create your own illustrations for *Fire*.

## Suggested Critical Reading

"Helping Girls to Be Heroic?: Some Recent Arthurian Fiction for Young Adults" by Fiona Tolhurst

"'High Fantasy' in America: A Study of Lloyd Alexander, Ursula LeGuin, and Susan Cooper" by Lois R. Kuznets

"Form as Fantasy—Fantasy as Form" by Caroline Hunt

"Welding Brass Tits on the Armor: An Examination of the Quest Metaphor in Robin McKinley's *The Hero and the Crown*" by Anna E. Altmann

"Images of Evil: Male and Female Monsters in Heroic Fantasy" by Nancy Veglahn

## Background and Context

Published in 2009 by Kristin Cashore, *Fire* is set in a land where animal and human "monsters" have the ability to enchant and control through their beauty and mental powers. As the last human monster struggling to find her place in the kingdom nearly destroyed by her father, Fire soon becomes wrapped in a web of adventure, danger, romance, and political intrigue, all while seeking to understand herself and claim her power. Cashore has also written two other stories that take place in the same realm: *Graceling* and its sequel *Bitterblue*.