

# Discussion Notes

- 1. *When is anyone going to wake up and see that I'm actually nearly twelve years old?*** Explore Laila's frustrations about being seen as the baby of the family. Can you understand why she gets annoyed? Do you think she is viewed differently by her family by the end of the story?
- 2. *'How many languages have we got listed?' [...] Mrs Latif starts going around the class and adding to the lists. People are from all different religions too: Quaker, Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Sikhism, Catholicism, Jehovah's Witness, Hinduism . . .*** Discuss the range of religions and cultures explored in this book. Why do you think the author chose to portray so many?
- 3. *The gaps between me and Pari are about what we don't know about each other, but with Kez and me it's like we know too much.*** How does Laila's friendship with Pari compare to her friendship with Kez? Are there any similarities there?
- 4. *Is it always wrong to lie? Is it always right to tell the truth?*** This is something Laila asks herself throughout the story. What do you think?
- 5. *The words on the cover say 'Josie's Book of Protest'. It's written in her arty, swirly handwriting. I wasn't expecting to feel so nervous about opening this. It's like I'm meeting my nana for the first time.*** How do the Protest Book and the memory of Nana Josie influence Laila's actions in this story?



6. *I'm walking along the pavement thinking about the different protests Nana was part of. The oak tree protest worked and some of the really big ones that people all over the world fought for like the Anti-Apartheid movement and the Civil Rights marches. But lots of the other things Nana was campaigning about are still happening.* Why do you think people go on marches, vigils and protests? Have you ever been on one, or would you like to?
7. *I think Janu was wrong to tell me to keep quiet about what those racists did to him, and I can't get that vile message that Pari has to look at every day out of my head. If people are afraid to say or do anything about it, how are things going to change?* Do you think it's important to challenge negative attitudes? Discuss your reasons.
8. *Some of you might have heard of the Levenson family before, through my stories Artichoke Hearts and Jasmine Skies. (Author Note)* Have you read either of these books by the same author? If so, did you notice any common themes and characters with *Tender Earth*?

