

Here's a lively set of discussion questions for your book club meeting about *Benjamin's Choice*—designed to spark fun, deep, and personal conversations:

Themes & Worldbuilding

1. **Tanninim vs. Longevity:** The tanninim and humans coexist in this world, but their relationships are complex. How does the absence of the tanninim affect Great Zimbabwe? Would you want to live in a society with dragon-like beings watching over you?
2. **Power & Leadership:** Jonadab is groomed to lead, but Shona emerges as a natural leader despite her youth and "disability." What qualities make a good leader in this world? How does the book challenge traditional ideas of strength?
3. **Secrets & Sacrifice:** Siloam and Elizabeth keep huge secrets about Shona's identity. When is it justified to withhold the truth "for someone's own good"? Have you ever kept a secret that weighed on you?

Characters & Relationships

1. **Benjamin's Dilemma:** Benjamin mentors Jonadab but grows to admire Shona. Do you think he made the right choice in supporting her? Would you have done the same?
2. **Jonadab: Villain or Victim?** He's often cruel, but his father's abuse shapes him. Do you think he's redeemable? What would justice look like for him?
3. **Shona's Growth:** From a timid girl to a confident Anah, what moment marked her biggest turning point for you?
4. **Elizabeth & Joah's Love:** Their separated romance is sustained through letters. How did this subplot affect your reading experience? Could you endure such a long separation for love?

Creative Interpretations

1. **Casting Call:** If this book were adapted, who would you cast as Shona, Benjamin, or Jonadab?
2. **Alternate Ending:** How do you think Shona's story will continue? Predict her next challenge as Anah.
3. **Predicted Fate:** The beginning of chapter three provides two pivots—one for the entire story and one for Benjamin's future. Benjamin understands "this had to be the right thing to do even though it might cost him his life." Predict what the heavenly reply of "It will, my child. But you will make the right choice" will mean for Benjamin in the next novella.

4. **Symbolism Alert:** The *chinyavda* sting, the cattle disease, and Shona's acid saliva—what might these details represent beyond the literal?

Personal Reflections

1. **"Seeing Thoughts":** Shona can't read minds like other tanninim. Would you want that ability? How might it help or harm relationships in *your* life?
2. **Mentorship Moments:** Benjamin, Siloam, and Elizabeth all guide Shona. Who's been a pivotal mentor in your life? What made them impactful?
3. **Justice or Mercy?** Shona imprisons Chuma instead of harming him. Was this the right call? How would you handle a bully in power?

Fun & Hypotheticals

1. **Tanninim Traits:** If you could have one tanninim ability (flight, acid saliva, super strength), which would you pick and why?
2. **Book Club Potluck:** What dish from the book (like *zviyo* porridge or *muboora* leaves) would you bring to share—or avoid?

Bonus Question: Would you rather spend a day herding cattle with Shona or haggling in the marketplace with Benjamin?

These questions balance analysis, personal connection, and playful imagination. Happy discussing!

P.S. For extra fun, consider assigning "tanninim" or "Longevity" factions to book club members to debate key choices in the story!