

NOVL BOOK CLUB GUIDE

AN ECHO IN THE CITY K.X. SONG



— Book Club Pick —

PRAISE

“Read this; you’ll walk away changed.”

—Grace D. Li, bestselling author of *Portrait of a Thief*

“Absolutely phenomenal.”

—Zoulfa Katouh, award-winning author of *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow*

“A sweeping, vivid window into a singularly intense moment in time.”

—XiXi Tian, author of *This Place Is Still Beautiful*

“A heart-stopping, nuanced, and important look at the cost—and the power—of revolution.”

—Kelly Loy Gilbert, award-winning author of *Conviction*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. *An Echo in the City* switches between Phoenix and Kai’s perspectives. How do their alternating points of view deepen your understanding of the 2019 Hong Kong extradition bill protests?
2. K.X. Song begins the book with this quote: “Those who wish to fight must first count the cost,” from Sun Tzu’s *The Art of War*. Why do you think this quote was chosen? Do you agree with the quote?
3. Throughout the book, Phoenix describes her experience of belonging to two different worlds: “drifting somewhere indefinable, between East and West” (p. 165). How does this feeling inform Phoenix’s choices. Can you relate to belonging to more than one place or culture?
4. Kai feels a sense of guilt over his mother’s death. Why? How is he processing the grief of losing her, and why does he still send her text messages?
5. On page 240, Charlie tells Phoenix that this isn’t her fight, that she can leave Hong Kong. “Because you’re not like the rest of them! You’re better than them...” How does this make Phoenix feel? Is she different than the other protestors?
6. In Chapter 16, Phoenix has an encounter with a police officer. How does this encounter change Phoenix?
7. For his birthday, Phoenix tries to give Kai a very expensive present. Why does the present make Kai mad?
8. Phoenix and Kai seemingly have very little in common. Do you think that’s true? What draws them together?
9. Art, be it photography, painting, or writing, is a powerful motif throughout the book. In what ways does art inspire or affect the protests?
10. While discussing the protests, Suki states, “We’re not fighting to win” (p. 110). If the protestors are not fighting to win, what are they fighting for?
11. The Hong Kong protestors use the term “add oil” as a rallying cry (example on p. 174). What does the term mean?
12. In the author’s note, K.X. Song says that she was inspired to write this book after noticing that media coverage of the 2019 protests lacked “nuance” (p. 329). What does this fictional story add to your understanding of the protests? Why are historical fiction novels important?