

A TEMPEST OF TEA

Dear Reader,

For the longest time, I wanted to write something dapper—crisp clothes and the cutthroat alleyways of old London—but when my protagonist set foot on the page with her brown skin and foreign roots, straightening her tweed suit and tucking her pocket watch away, she was angry. I realized, then, that I couldn't write "something dapper" without also addressing colonialism.

Thus, *A Tempest of Tea* was born.

Arthie Casimir doesn't quite belong anywhere, something many of us understand quite well. She's also driven, a no-nonsense kind of girl who takes comfort in that fact and who doesn't care that she doesn't belong. If the empire wants to say that a pistol lodged in stone was placed there by a divine hand, waiting for a savior to draw it free, she'll figure out how it was rigged, holster it in front of the masses, and call herself king. If the empire wants to wreak havoc in her homeland an ocean away and steal from her people, she'll defy them by establishing a prestigious tearoom known as Spindrift and stealing right back.

It makes her notorious, and she's fine with that. Deep down, she knows it's the only recognition she'll receive, because when girls like us ignite change, move mountains, and build ourselves up, the world turns the other way. It doesn't care about the ones who don't fit in the mold that society deems normal. It doesn't care about the ones who are different. Yet we persevere. We might not know why, at first. We might even question the effort we're putting into our dreams and goals, at first. But as Arthie soon realizes, all actions, no matter how small, have an impact.

In my debut novel, *We Hunt the Flame*, we saw a girl fighting for her own kingdom. *In A Tempest of Tea*, we see a girl and her crew fighting for a country that isn't theirs to save, but they'll do it anyway. Oh, and did I mention there are vampires?

Welcome to White Roaring, where the streets are dark but the hearts are darker.

Pour yourself a cup of tea and settle in.



Look sharp,
Hafsah Faizal



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