**A Thousand Nights**

**By E. K. Johnston**

**About the Book**

Lo-Melkhiin killed three hundred girls before he came to her village, looking for a wife. When she sees the dust cloud on the horizon she knows he has arrived. She knows he will want the loveliest girl: her sister. She vows she will not let her be next. And so she is taken in her sister's place, and she believes death will soon follow. But back in their village her sister is mourning. Through her pain, she calls upon the desert winds, conjuring a subtle unseen magic, and something besides death stirs the air in it's place. Lo-Melkhiin's court is a dangerous palace filled with pretty things: intricate statues with wretched eyes, exquisite threads to weave the most beautiful garments. She sees everything as if for the last time. But the first sun sets and rises, and she is not dead. Night after night Lo-Melkhiin comes to her, and listens to the stories she tells and day after day she is awoken by the sunrise. Exploring the palace, she begins to unlock years of fear that have tormented and silenced a kingdom. Lo-Melkhiin was not always a cruel ruler. Something went wrong. The words she speaks to him every night are given strange life of their own. She makes things appear. Little things, at first: a dress from home, a vision of her sister. With each tale she spins, her power grows. Soon she dreams of bigger, more terrible magic: power enough to save a king, if she can put an end to rule of a monster.

**About the Author**

E.K. Johnston had several jobs and one vocation before she became a published writer. If she’s learned anything, it’s that things turn out weird sometimes, and there’s not a lot you can do about it. Well, that and how to muscle through awkward fanfic because it’s about a pairing she likes.  
  
When she's not on tumblr, she dreams of travel and Tolkien. Or writes books. It really depends on the weather.

**If you enjoyed this book*:***

* Spinning Starlight by R. C. Lewis
* Vassa in the Night by Sarah Porter
* Dreamstrider by Lindsay Smith
* Bright Smoke, Cold Fire by Rosamund Hodge
* Ash & Bramble by Sarah Prineas

**Discussion Questions**

1. Besides Lo-Melkhiin, Johnston doesn’t use actual names for her characters. Instead they are “the spinner” or “my father’s father.” How does this affect your view of the characters? Did you notice that they aren’t named?
2. How did the heroine’s relationship with her sister guide the story—apart from the obvious?
3. The heroine makes no secret that she is afraid: “I do fear him,” I said, which was close to the truth. “I fear him as I fear the desert sun and poisonous snakes. They are all part of the life I live. But the sun gives light, and snakes will feed a caravan if they are caught and cooked.”
4. Many have commented that this is not a retelling of *A Thousand and One Nights*, but a reimagining. What’s the difference between the two? What makes this book a reimagining?
5. What did you think of the writing style? There have been conflicting opinions. Some have referred to it as “dense and literary,” while others have called it “vague.” Does the cryptic writing make it a whimsical mystery, or a confusing muddle?
6. *A Thousand Nights* has been repeatedly compared to *The Wrath and the Dawn*, another retelling of the original story. A big difference between the two is that *The Wrath and the Dawn* focuses on romantic love, while *A Thousand Nights* is centered on familial love. What kind of statement does this make, in a genre and age group where romance is often the focus?
7. Johnston has written a sequel of sorts called *Spindle* that is set generations after this book. Do you think that the book needed a sequel? Were there things you were left wondering about?