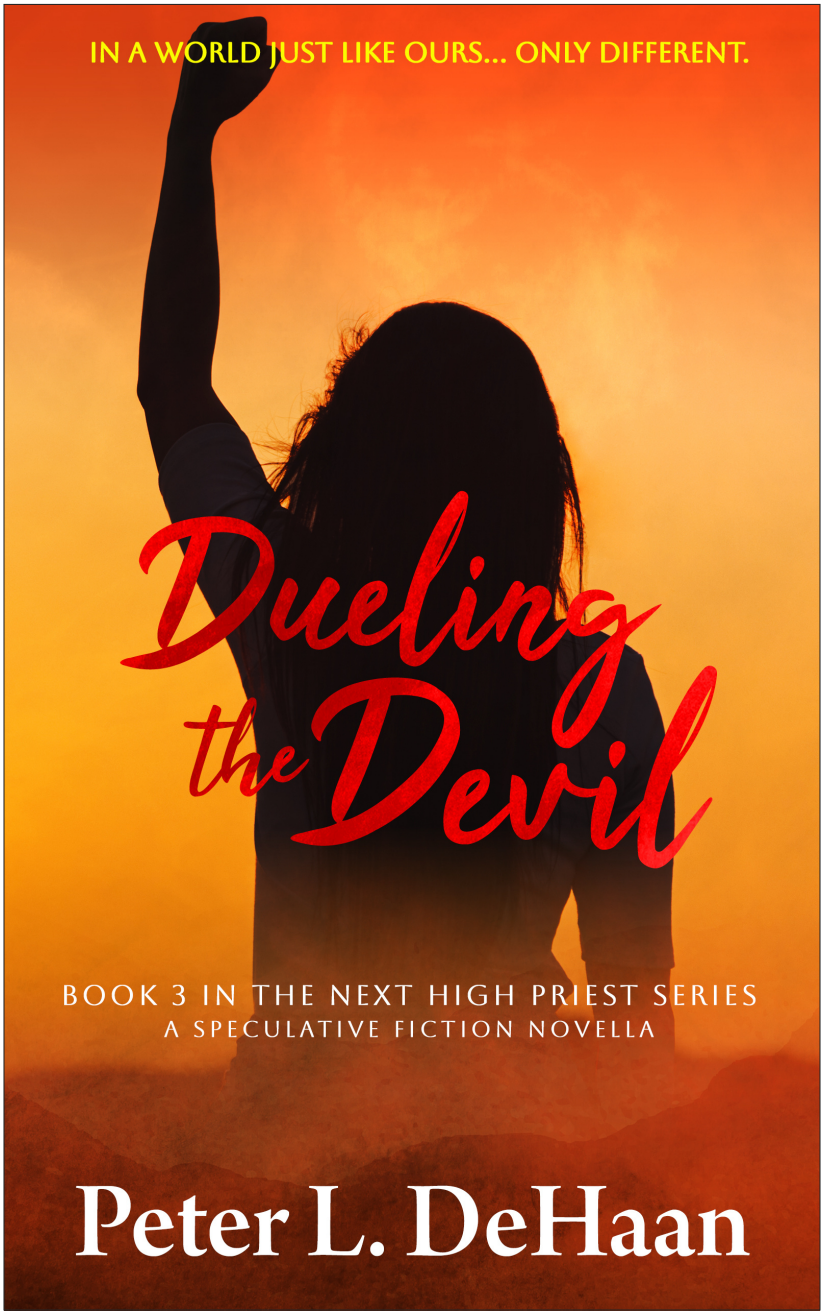


Discussion Guide for

Dueling the Devil

by Peter L. DeHaan

For book clubs

PeterLDeHaan.com

How to Use This Guide

Please finish the book first. The questions mention later events in the story.

Work through the chapter sections in order, or choose the groups that fit your meeting. There are no right or wrong answers—share what stood out to you. Save the whole-book questions for the end of your discussion.

Chapters 1–3: Standing Up to Pompous Jack

Emma faces her first direct clash with the arrogant man in charge and receives her first clear direction from the Sovereign about how to start fixing the Temple.

1. How did you feel when Emma stared down Pompous Jack and refused to back down?
2. What made Emma decide to divide the priests into groups even though she didn't know the full plan yet?
3. Why do you think Jennifer's situation with Pompous Jack hit Emma so hard?
4. What does Emma's reaction to the demons surrounding her reveal about her growing faith?
5. How did Junior's quiet support affect the way Emma handled these early days?

Chapters 4–6: Sorting the Priests and Losing Freedom

Emma divides the priests into Alpha, Beta, and Gamma groups and then finds herself locked down by Pompous Jack's new rules and a cruel tutor.

1. What surprised you most about how the three groups reacted to Emma's announcement?
2. How did Pompous Jack's meeting with Emma change the tone of the story?
3. In what ways did the tutor's treatment of Emma feel especially unfair?
4. Why do you think Emma kept trying to stay respectful even when she was furious?
5. What turning point made you realize how trapped Emma had become?

Chapters 7–9: The Protest and the Assault

Emma watches the staff protest from her window, then gets pulled into a dangerous confrontation that leaves her injured and isolated.

1. How did you react when Emma decided to join the protest from her window?
2. What did the guard's attack reveal about how far Pompous Jack was willing to go?
3. Why do you think Emma's first instinct after being handcuffed was to pray?
4. How did the news coverage of the protest change the stakes for everyone at the Temple?
5. What moment in these chapters made you most worried for Emma's safety?

Chapters 10–13: Poison, a Secret Elevator, and Chloe's Visit

Emma discovers her food is poisoned, finds a dumbwaiter, and gets a surprise visit from her best friend, who has to stay hidden until she can slip out past the guard.

1. How did learning about the poisoned food change the way you saw the food server?
2. What made Chloe's arrival through the dumbwaiter such a turning point for Emma?
3. Why do you think Emma was willing to risk everything to keep Chloe hidden?
4. How did the two girls' conversation about faith feel different from the rest of the story?
5. What part of their sleepover gave you the biggest sense of hope?

Chapters 14–16: Faking Illness and Getting Rid of a Guard

Emma pretends to be dying and secretly records Pompous Jack, her dad visits with hard news, and the guard who attacked her is arrested.

1. How did Emma's "deathbed" performance make you feel about her acting skills?
2. What did her dad's visit show about how much the family was suffering because of her situation?
3. How did the Sovereign's instructions about the guards feel different from earlier guidance?
4. What moment made you cheer out loud for Emma in these chapters?

Chapters 17–19: A Heavenly Trip, a Test, and a Reunion

Emma rests in the Sovereign's presence and learns what lies ahead, returns to find her body gone, and wakes up surrounded by the people who brought her home.

1. Before Emma faces what's ahead, the Sovereign tells her she must first rest. Why do you think rest came before the battle?

2. The Sovereign tells Emma, "My followers advance my kingdom when they help the poor, heal the sick, and point people to me." What do you make of that description?

3. How did you feel when Emma's spirit came back to the palace and found her body wasn't there?

4. Emma's parents, Joshua, and the Gamma group priests all worked together to bring her home. What did their teamwork show about the people around her?

5. Looking around the room, Emma realizes "they were her people now." Who are the people you know you can depend on?

Chapter 20: The Duel

After a celebration lunch, Emma sends Pompous Jack's guards away, then faces him in a fierce battle in the spiritual realm while angels cheer her on.

1. How did the reunion lunch scene feel after everything Emma had been through?

2. Why was firing the guards such an important step for Emma?

3. How did you feel when Emma realized she had to fight Pompous Jack's spirit?

4. What part of the battle surprised you most?

5. How did the Sovereign's words during the fight change the way you saw Emma's strength?

6. What did the angels' reaction to her victory tell you about the bigger picture?

Chapter 21: The End . . . or Is It?

Emma keeps her battle scars, Pompous Jack is arrested, and his parting words hint that more challenges are coming.

1. Why do you think Emma chose not to heal her battle scars right away?
2. What did Pompous Jack's final words to Emma make you think about the future?
3. Why do you think the author ended the book with both victory and a warning?
4. How did Emma's growth from the first chapter to the last show up in these final scenes?
5. What loose end are you most curious to see resolved in the next book?

Whole-Book Discussion Questions

1. Which character changed the most in your eyes and why?
2. What moment felt like the biggest turning point for Emma's faith?
3. How did the story balance everyday problems (school, friends, family) with huge spiritual battles?
4. Which scene would you most want to watch on screen and why?
5. What did Emma's relationship with the Sovereign teach you about trusting God in hard times?
6. How did the book make you think differently about standing up to people in power?
7. Which supporting character felt most like someone you'd want as a friend?
8. What part of the spiritual realm descriptions stood out to you?
9. How did the story handle the theme of justice without feeling preachy?
10. Which scene made you laugh out loud or smile the biggest?
11. What did you think about Emma's choice to keep some of her battle wounds?
12. How did the ending leave you feeling about the next book in the series?
13. What real-life situation reminded you of something Emma faced?
14. Which line from the Holy Text in the story stuck with you the most?
15. Who would you recommend this book to and why?

About the Author

Peter L. DeHaan is an adult who dreams of being a teenager. When he's not contemplating grown-up thoughts, his mind retreats to the domain of invented worlds with his loyal and most real, yet still imaginary, friends.

His first published adventures come to life in The Next High Priest Series—a faith-friendly speculative fiction adventure in a world just like ours . . . only different.

Read the Rest of The Next High Priest Series

Dueling the Devil is book 3 of The Next High Priest Series. The full series:

1. Seeking the Sovereign
2. Confronting the Chaos
3. Dueling the Devil
4. **Reforming the Religion**
5. Freeing the Prisoners
6. Fighting the Fanatics
7. Perfecting the Priesthood
8. Pursuing the Politicians
9. Restoring the Repentant

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