

False Friends *Book 2*

IMPERATIVE EMBER



When every truth
burns, silence
becomes the
deadliest weapon

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Book Club Guide

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Imperative Ember – Discussion Guide

Imperative Ember explores obedience, perception, and psychological vulnerability. Moritz arrives in Málaga seeking stability through language learning, but his synaesthesia shapes how he experiences memory, emotion, and meaning. Alongside this, Lola's fascination with fire reflects how unresolved childhood guilt can influence adult behaviour. The grammar theme of the imperative – associated with instruction and direction – mirrors the novel's exploration of authority, influence, and compliance.

Discussion Questions

- 1) How does Moritz's synaesthesia influence the way he experiences language and emotion?
- 2) In what ways can heightened perception increase both sensitivity and vulnerability?
- 3) Why is Moritz drawn to structure and routine at this stage in his life?
- 4) How does the novel blur the boundary between support and control?
- 5) How does language learning function as both stabilising and destabilising?
- 6) At what point do instructions stop feeling helpful and start feeling coercive?
- 7) How does the imperative as a grammar theme relate to authority and obedience?
- 8) How does Lola's relationship with fire reflect unresolved childhood guilt?
- 9) How does the San Juan tradition function symbolically in the novel?
- 10) How does childhood experience continue to shape behaviour in adulthood?
- 11) How does the novel portray the psychological impact of believing one has caused harm?
- 12) How do different characters respond to feelings of responsibility or guilt?
- 13) How does the school environment create reassurance while also creating tension?
- 14) Which characters appear supportive, and how far can that support be trusted?
- 15) How does isolation influence decision-making and dependence on authority?
- 16) How does ambiguity influence both Moritz's understanding of events and the reader's interpretation?
- 17) Does the story suggest obedience can feel comforting as well as limiting?

Themes

- synaesthesia and perception
- obedience and compliance
- authority and influence

- psychological vulnerability
- routine and stability
- language and identity
- childhood trauma
- guilt and responsibility
- fire symbolism
- San Juan ritual symbolism
- institutional pressure
- dependence and trust
- ambiguity and interpretation

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