

Suggestions for a Stimulating Reading Group Discussion

Please feel free to explore all of these questions or none. It's your book group, so do what works for you!

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QUESTIONS AROUND AGE GAPS IN ROMANTIC AND SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS

Can a romantic or sexual consensual relationship between a twenty-three-year-old woman and a forty-year-old man ever be healthy? What about a twenty-three-year-old man and a forty-year-old woman?

Does Cisco's honesty at the start of the relationship make a difference to your view?

Did Asiyah enter the relationship with her eyes wide open?

If Asiyah hadn't caught Cisco with another woman, what might the outcome of a committed relationship between Asiyah and Cisco look like?

EROTIC ART VERSUS PORNOGRAPHY

What is the difference between erotic art and pornography?

Which category, in your view, did Cisco's photographs fall into?

INTIMATE IMAGE ABUSE

Given that Asiyah's photographs were taken with her full consent, who should own the rights to her photographs, the photographer or the subject?

How have ideas about intimate image abuse changed over the last twenty-five years?

Was the intimate photoshoot an act of exploitation or intimate and consensual fun?

OTHER RELATIONSHIP DYNAMICS

Do you view Majeed's interventions in Cisco and Asiyah's relationship as primarily caring or controlling?

What are your thoughts about Asiyah and Bilqis maintaining their resentment against Nadira years after their mother's death?

What are your thoughts on Asad's anger at Asiyah for keeping her past affair secret from him?

Is Asiyah's desire to keep her marriage together and consider forgiving Asad, once he is repentant, understandable or foolish?

Should Asiyah forgive Asad? Should Asad forgive Asiyah? Is there any real basis on which they can go forward?

ABOUT THE NOVEL

Would you describe this as a novel about religion and patriarchy, or feminism, or all three?

Would you say misogyny is a persistent theme in this story?

Did your attitudes to any of the characters change a lot over the course of the story? Did you grow more or less sympathetic to Cisco, Asiyah, Nadira or Majeed?

Was the ending satisfying?

What do Asiyah's ideas about reclaiming her body through art, if she and Asad decide to divorce, tell us about how she's changed or what she's learned through her experiences?

RELIGION

If you have a religious belief, do you think your beliefs impacted how you experienced this story?

If you don't have a religious belief, do you think this impacted how you experienced this story?

The word 'guilt' appears in this story several times. Is 'guilt' experienced differently within and without the framework of religion?

Religion is important in the lives of many of the characters in this book. Ultimately, is religion more of a force for good or harm in their lives?

Did you experience any new insights about religion in general or Islam in particular while reading *Reputation*?

How does *Reputation* explore distinctions between fundamentalism, adhering to religious tenets and spirituality, if at all?

Which poses more of a problem to a committed relationship between Cisco and Asiyah, the age gap or the difference in religious beliefs?

MISCELLANEOUS

Why do you think Cisco defers to his housekeeper?

How important is religious compatibility for a marriage or committed romantic relationship?

If school parents pressure Asiyah's employer to fire her due to the published photographs in *What Town Say*, what would be the right course of action for the school to take?

What do you make of Asiyah's attempt to set the record straight by giving the true story to the tabloid paper? What might be her motives?

Gwyneth and the editor of the tabloid don't want Asiyah to expose the true story from her point of view, in which she argues her innocence. This is pragmatism versus lofty idealism. What would have been gained or lost if the editor had published Asiyah's story without obfuscating its authenticity or her identity?