



Together Tea

By Marjan Kamali
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Introduction

1. Describe the relationship between Mina and Darya at the beginning of the novel. What is it like at the story's end? What do they learn about each other and themselves as the story goes on? Compare the two women. Are they more similar to each other than they know?
2. Darya believes in numbers and is confident that her spreadsheets hold the right match for her daughter. Is her thinking flawed? What discoveries does she make that challenge her confidence and change her thinking?
3. Why is Darya so determined to see Mina married? What would be Darya's ideal man for her daughter?
4. What is your opinion of arranged marriages? Do they have advantages over love matches? What might have happened if Ramin's name had been on Darya's grid? Do you think Mina would have felt the same way if their meeting had been arranged rather than a matter of chance?
5. Mina's parents encourage pursuing passion, like Darya's Saturday math camp. Painting is Mina's passion. Why do her parents discourage her from becoming an artist and insist on her going to business school? Why is rebuilding the family's wealth and prestige so important to them?
6. What did Mina's family lose when they left Iran? Why didn't they stay? What did they gain by coming to America? How does growing up American impact who Mina is and the choices she can't or cannot make? Why does Darya feel that she will never be an American, like her children? Is she right? What about Parviz?
7. Why does Mina want to visit Iran? What propels Darya? What are their impressions of their homeland once they arrive? How has it changed and how is it the same? What lessons does the visit hold for both of them? Do they find what they are looking for there?
8. Describe Darya's marriage. Is she happy? What draws her to her new classmate Sam? What does he represent for her? Do you believe in true love? Can we be happy with one person as well as another? Is it possible to adapt our hearts?
9. What did you know about Iran before you read the novel? What did you learn about Iranians and their culture from reading *Together Tea*? What common misconceptions do you think Americans and Iranians hold toward each other? How can we break through our prejudices? How would you fare living in a repressive regime such as Iran's?
10. Compare Mina's stuffing artwork under her bed with Darya's storing away her math notebooks. Why is it that Mina is finally able to pursue her passion? Is she able to fulfill her potential due to growing up in the U.S., returning to Iran, seeing Bitra again, visiting the artist in Isfahan or all of the above? What role does Bitra play in Mina's decisions in the U.S. after she returns?