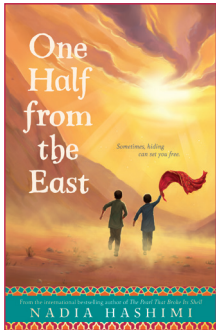


Book Club Discussion Guide

Are you in a mother-daughter book club or looking to start one? Show your children the benefit of discussing literature with their peers by starting a book club where parents talk about one title and the children talk separately about a related title. Everyone can then come together to share their thoughts on their books. To get you started, here are some discussion questions for two books by bestselling author Nadia Hashimi that share related themes and characters.

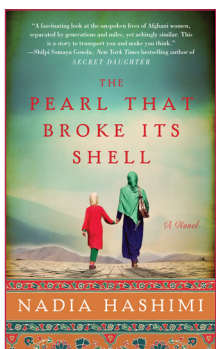
For Daughters



One Half from the East is an emotional, beautiful, and riveting coming-of-age journey to modern day Afghanistan that explores life as a *bacha posh*—a pre-teen girl dressed as a boy.

- What is a *bacha posh*? Why does Obayda's family decide to make her one? How do they think this will help their family?
- During the book, Obayda says, "One little letter fell off the back end of my name and my world changed." (p. 76). How does her life change when she becomes Obayd? What are the benefits and what are the drawbacks of being a *bacha posh*?
- In Obayda's village, boys and girls are treated differently. How do you think boys and girls are treated differently where you are from? Do you see any similarities?
- Why do Rahim and Obayd try to go to the mountain? What do they believe will happen if they pass under a rainbow? Do you think something magical happens when Obayd is able to pass under a rainbow?
- What is important about the Wizards hat? Why is it important to Rahim and why does it become important to Obayd? Have you ever had something that you believed was lucky or gave you extra confidence?
- Obayda's mother says Rahima and Obayda are "the best of both worlds—one half from the east and one half from the west." (p. 108). What do you think this means? Does it refer to more than just the fact that they are both *bacha posh*?

For Mothers



The Pearl that Broke Its Shell explores the entwined stories of two Afghan women separated by a century who find freedom in the tradition of *bacha posh*, which allows girls to dress and live as boys . . . until they are of marriageable age.

- Rahima says that Khala Shaima's story about Bibi Shekiba transformed her, and indeed, this is a novel about transformation. In what ways, besides dressing as males, do Rahima and Shekiba transform themselves?
- Rahima loves being *bacha posh* for the freedoms it brings: being able to work in the market, play soccer, and go to school. What are the disadvantages of her newfound freedoms and what are the consequences for Rahima and her family?
- The word *naseeb*, or destiny, comes up often in *The Pearl that Broke Its Shell*, as each woman is repeatedly told that she must accept her fate. When do Shekiba and Rahima accept their *naseeb* and when do they rebel against it? Do you believe in the concept of *naseeb* in your life?
- What do you make of Shekiba and Rahima's experiences with their husbands' other wives? Are they helped or harmed by them? Could you adapt to that kind of married life?
- Do you believe that Rahima and Shekiba's stories end happily? What do you think became of them in the years after this book ends?

Questions for *The Pearl that Broke Its Shell* courtesy of Nadia Hashimi.