

Love, Hate & Other Filters

by Samira Ahmed



QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1 The book is called *Love, Hate & Other Filters*. What kinds of filters does the title refer to? How do the characters use filters? What filters do we use in our daily lives?
- 2 Maya begins her story with the phrase ‘*Destiny sucks.*’ How does the novel address this? Do you believe in destiny or are we in control of our own futures?
- 3 Maya’s story is told in the first person, whereas the bomber’s story is told from the third person point of view. Why do you think the author made that choice? How did it influence the way you related to the protagonists of the two stories?
- 4 Maya lives in Batavia, a small town in Illinois. How important is this setting to Maya’s story and the challenges she faces?
- 5 Maya tells Phil she doesn’t know how to both be a good daughter and chase after her own dreams. Why are these things at odds? Does Maya change her mind over the course of the book?
- 6 Phil teaches Maya to swim – a life skill – but learning to swim means something more to Maya. Why is it so significant?
- 7 When we first meet Kareem he is a possible love interest for Maya, but he transforms into something different. How did you feel about Kareem? Why does he still hold an important place in Maya’s life?
- 8 Maya’s parents seem to have a lot of concerns and fears about their daughter and her future. Can you understand why Maya’s parents react in the way that they do? How do you think their own experiences affect their attitude to Maya’s life?
- 9 Maya and her family are victims of Islamophobic attacks. Why does this happen? Do the actions of an individual reflect on the group? Should they? Are we responsible for the actions of someone else in a group we identify with – religion, race, class, sexual orientation, ethnicity, etc?
- 10 One of Kareem’s mantras is ‘*carpe diem.*’ In what ways does this manifest in the novel and is it a positive edict to live by?

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