



Book Club Questions

These Impossible Things by Salma El-Wardany

1. Malak, Kees, and Jenna's deep friendship is one of unshakable love and honesty. Discuss why you believe Kees and Malak's differing views about chasing tradition, family, and community approval was the reason for their fracture.
2. These three women are working to hold on to the different parts of themselves—which sometimes contradict one another—to create an authentic life. Discuss your own experiences in having to negotiate and reconcile conflicting parts of your own identity.
3. Discuss Kees and her sister Saba's differing views on marriage, love, and relationships.
4. How do Jenna's views on love and sex stand in contrast to Kees and Malak's? How do you think Jenna's mother's revelation toward the end of the novel would have influenced her behavior had they had these conversations earlier?
5. Describe the ways in which Malak and her life change once she moves to Cairo. Why do you think this change had such an impact, and how does the city affect her sense of self?
6. What did the author mean by the line, "It never fails to amaze her that the real C-word for white people is culture and once it's mentioned people compete to show their respect for it or their knowledge of it"? Discuss whether that resonates with you and your experiences.
7. What were Jacob's motives when he went to Kees and told her the news of Harry's eventual proposal. How do you feel about his involvement in this moment?
8. By the novel's end, all three women have gone through a difficult situation or traumatic event independently. In what ways do you see that being alone impacted their decisions in these situations?
9. Discuss the scene between Kees and her father before the nikah and how that affects Kees's feelings about proceeding to marry Harry? How do you think this impacted your appreciation of her parents' relationship—the sometimes silent but resounding support for each other?
10. Discuss the way the novel's depiction of friendship resonated with you. What does Malak, Kees, and Jenna's relationship say about the bonds of female friendship, as well as regrets, forgiveness, and chosen family?

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