



• TOGETHER •  
**WE READ**

UK

21 October to 4 November 2025



## Book club discussion guide

1. *The Persians* is told from the perspective of three generations of Iranian women. In what ways do each generation's perspectives differ or align?
2. As a child, Seema overhears Elizabeth describe her as 'too much' and the Valiet women are all unapologetically "too much" in different ways – too loud, too expressive, too flashy or too prideful. How did the novel make you consider the characterisation of women as being 'too much'?
3. The narrative of *The Persians* jumps back and forth in time to unravel each character's past and present. What did you think about the role of memory and nostalgia in the story?
4. The mother-daughter relationships in *The Persians* are sometimes complicated. How are mothering and motherhood represented throughout the book and how did that portrayal make you consider your own family relationships?
5. On p.126, Shirin says, 'the Revolution was twenty-seven years ago, and still we're living in an endless movie of *where do we go, what do we do?*' How does the novel explore the experience of exile?
6. Early on in the book, we find out details about Elizabeth's younger life that her daughters don't know until much later. How did that impact the way you saw her character compared to how she is viewed by daughters and granddaughters?
7. The Valiats are described as a once illustrious family and we see each woman grapple with that legacy. To what degree do you feel each is defined by their family or how far do they seek to shape their own identities?
8. *The Persians* follows a family over generations against a backdrop of the political and social changes in Iran and the US. How does the novel play with what we might expect of "a state-of-the-nation novel"?
9. Love, in all its forms, recurs as a theme for many of the characters at different stages of their lives. Discuss the types of love explored in the novel. How do we see examples of familial, romantic and unconditional love and what do they mean to the characters?
10. The novel spans decades and ends in March 2006. How might life have changed for the family in the years since?

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