

BOOK CLUB: A Place For Us by Fatima Farheen Mirza

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

- Fatima Farheen Mirza took almost 8 years to write this book. She started when she was 18 years old.
- This is her debut novel. Do you like debut novels?
- She said she loved the characters so much that she didn't want to turn the manuscript in.

STYLE:

- Author lets you in on what the characters are thinking and feeling
- The book is a character study on a family
- Nod to Romeo and Juliet/West Side Story
- Tiny decisions that landed them in the place of the opening scene at the wedding. Small scenes narrowing in on a moment
- In the interview, she talks about inhabiting the characters' perspectives
- A novel about memories that you cannot escape
- Each family member has their own story and arc, but with their interactions with Amar

CHARACTERS:

- Rafiq: Dad
- Layla: Mom
- Hadia: Sister
- Huda: Sister
- Amar: Brother
- Amira: Girlfriend

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS:

- What was your initial reaction to the book? Did it hook you immediately, or take some time to get used to?
- Did you like the writing style?
 - Each family member is asking why Amar ran away and how they were complicit in his leaving
 - Inside every family, there are stories, depth, history, mystery
 - They are all looking back in time, but viewing events through a sense of guilt
- **What themes did you find in the story?**
 - Love, honor, sacrifice
 - What it means to be an American family
 - Parenting



- Honoring your faith but making it your own
- Being an American muslim
- Complexities of faith
- Family dynamics
- Becoming ourselves: we all filter our lives through the lens of our family. We spend much of our lives filtering what do I want to honor from my family and what do I want to leave behind?
- Which character was your favorite and why?
- Which character did you relate to the best and why?
- Was there a character that you hated?
- What were significant scenes in the book for you?
 - The spelling test story
 - Hadia deciding to wear the head covering and then after 9/11
 - Amar's conversation with his father at the wedding. I just wanted them to talk.
- **What does the title mean to you?**
 - Amar is constantly engaging with his faith but can't find his place in it. Hadia is outwardly obedient but inwardly questioning. The girls have a new version of the faith (they don't want arranged marriages) but Amar can't find his place. We all have values that we keep from our parents' faith.
- **Did you like the ending?**
- **Did your opinion of the father change in the end?**

