

## ~ Book Club Questions ~

1. Why is it important for people to believe Zahra is married to her cousin, Firzun?

2. What did you expect would happen to Firzun?

### THEMES

3. Violence towards women is one of the themes of *The Afghan Wife*. Zahra's husband Mahmoud is violent towards her and the new regime in Iran appeared to sanction violence towards women. How did Zahra and Nasim deal with this in their own ways?

4. All of the characters in the book are Muslim, but their personal interpretation of Islam is very different. What are the key differences you noticed while reading?

5. Zahra is constantly torn between her love for Karim and her family ties. Why does she remain loyal to Firzun?

6. How important is loyalty to family and friends in the novel?

7. How important is the sense of place in the novel (Tehran, Iran)? Would the novel still have had the same impact if it had been set in a different country?

8. Why didn't Zahra tell Karim the truth about her status? She loved him so why didn't she trust him?

9. Poetry and literature feature in the novel. In what way does this bring Zahra and Karim closer?

10. Do you think that the book would appeal to men as well as women?

11. What other themes and concerns in the novel interested you? You could consider politics, civil disturbances, apathy, breakdown in law and order.

How do these events affect ordinary people?

### CHARACTERS

12. Nasim devises a plan that appalls Zahra. She thinks that Nasim is callous. What is your opinion of Nasim?

13. Esmat, Karim's mother, is a strong woman. What would she have thought if Karim had told her he was going to marry Zahra, 'a servant'?

14. How did Zahra's five-year-old son Ahmad add tension to the narrative?

15. Firzun often makes derogatory comments about Karim. Was he protecting Zahra or was he jealous?

16. How does the author build up the tension before the embassy raid?

17. Karim plans to take Zahra to the United States. Are they likely to face discrimination during the continuing American hostage crisis?

