

# *the* **MISMATCH**

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. Soraya embarks on her plan to get her first kiss from Magnus because she feels that she is behind her peers in terms of life experience; has there ever been a time where you felt pressured to “catch up” to peers in one way or another?
2. Soraya thinks she could never have feelings for Magnus, someone with whom she believes she has little in common, although she soon realizes that’s not quite the case. Have you ever judged someone prematurely, only to find out that you have much more in common with them than you would have guessed?
3. A large part of Soraya’s struggle to find her footing as a young woman has to do with the fact that she has been raised with a set of values from her Muslim parents that often clash with the values of the British culture around her; have you ever faced a similar dilemma, where you had to choose what your values were? Was it difficult for you to decide how you felt? Why or why not?
4. Soraya and Oliver are best friends because they can empathize with each other’s complex family relationships. Have you ever bonded with a friend in a similar way, through a shared, though separate, experience?
5. Although Soraya often seems to feel that she is unable to understand her mother and some of the choices her mother has made, we can see that Soraya’s and Neda’s stories are much more similar than they might seem to be on the surface. Do you think this makes it easier for them to relate to and understand each other, or more difficult? Why or why not?
6. Soraya understandably has a very difficult relationship with her father, both as a result of his adherence to patriarchal values as well as his failings as an individual. How do you think this affected her relationship with her family, with Magnus, and with herself? Have you ever found yourself similarly disappointed in a family member’s choices? If so, how did you react in that situation?
7. When Soraya finds out that Magnus has discussed their sex life with his friends and hears that a bet has taken place, she is upset by the idea that Magnus has been using her. Magnus quickly points out, however, that Soraya herself (through her diary) admitted to using him in a similar way. Do you think that Soraya was right to be upset with Magnus? Was Magnus right to be upset with Soraya? Why or why not?
8. For much of Soraya’s life, her sister, Laleh, has been an enigma. How do you think Soraya felt when she learned the real reason that Laleh left? How do you think the news that Laleh created a good life for herself affects the way Soraya thinks about her relationship with Magnus?