

The Ruby Tear Catcher by Nahid Sewell
Discussion Points

Discuss how Leila fits in to a world where she is surrounded by such conservatism. When does she realize she is different from other Iranian girls? Is she a free spirit, a rebel, or just a woman who knows what she wants?

Discuss Leila's conflict with the two worlds represented by her parents and their respective families and their ways of thinking.

Leila adores her brother from childhood to adulthood. Despite the favoritism shown toward Amir by her mother and the rest of the Iranian society, why does she so fiercely love him?

What are the parallels in Leila's relationship with her father and with Jack? Baba and Jack are very different, yet alike. Is that what draws Leila to Jack?

Discuss Leila's relationship with her mother. Why does she need her mother's love so badly? When does she stop trying? How does she fill the void? What role does her grandmother play?

Why does Leila's mother want her daughter to be raised in her own image? When Baba asks Maman "How could you not want the best for your daughter, Soraya?" is he suggesting Maman resents her own daughter?

Discuss the conflicts Leila and Jack experience in their relationship. How are their perspectives similar and yet different?

Discuss the similarities between Leila and Jack. Is it their similarities that draws them together or their differences?

How does the Islamic revolution change life for Leila and her family?

What is the significance of the fire? Is the date symbolic?

How does the Shah's death affect Leila and her outlook toward Iran's future?

Discuss how the Islamic revolution changes the face of Iran and its impact on the culture and people.

Why does Leila agree to marry? Is it to please her parents, who grieve their son's death? Is she simply the dutiful daughter? Does she hope to find the love she once knew in Farhad? When does she know it was the wrong decision? Did she ever imagine she'd fall victim to her husband's abuse like her cousin Neda and many other women?

Discuss Leila on her wedding day. Is she the blushing bride and does she have the fairy-tale wedding every girl dreams of? What is the irony in the *pa takhti* ceremony gifts in her case?

What leads to the changes in Farhad?

Discuss the irony and agony surrounding Leila's pregnancy.

How is Leila able to keep her sanity and endure six months in jail?

Why does Mojtabah risk his life to free Leila? Is it to repay a debt to Baba for gaining his release when he was jailed? Is Mojtabah a believer in "family above all"?

Why do Mahmood and Fatemeh risk their lives to free Leila? Is there obligation to the master-servant relationship, or do they feel a bond and loyalty to the Moradi family?

Discuss the significance of the Discourse on Fundamentalism article. How does the article relate to Leila's story? Jack's?

Why do the Paris school and Principal Forté remind Leila of the torment room in jail and Lt. Mehraban? What helps Leila to overcome her fears?

What is the significance of the conversation between Leila and Jack in Paris about Christianity and Islam?

What is the significance of the ruby tear catcher? Discuss everything it symbolizes.