

Book Discussion

Funny in Farsi by Firoozeh Dumas

1. Share the excerpt that you brought to class: a passage that you found interesting and explain what it means to you.
2. How did Firoozeh respond to the many questions that she was asked about Iran? What did the questions reflect about the knowledge and perceptions about the Middle East? What did Firoozeh's responses reflect about her own cultural identity?
3. What were some of the challenges that Firoozeh faced as an immigrant? How similar or dissimilar are these challenges to ones faced by immigrants from other countries?
4. Firoozeh described the changed reactions to Iranians after 1979 when American hostages were seized in the embassy. How did these perceptions affect her self-esteem and identity? What are some of the responses that Iranian-Americans and Muslims are facing today and how might these reactions shape identity development?
5. What are some examples of family relationships in the Dumas' extended family? How do these relationships compare to your own family relationships? Do families play a different role in Iranian-American families? In other immigrant families?
6. What are some of the gender roles that Firoozeh describes for the men and women in her family? How did opportunities for males and females differ once they immigrated to America? Are these changes in gender roles similar/dissimilar to those experienced by other immigrant groups as they move from 1st generation to 2nd generation?
7. What were some of the cultural and religious traditions observed by Firoozeh's family? What are some that your family observes? How does maintaining cultural and religious traditions affect an immigrant's assimilation into America?