



Discussion Questions

Digging to America by Anne Tyler

Source: About.com, www.randomhouse.com and Madison Public Library

1. What does the title “Digging to America” refer to? Who is digging to America in this story?
2. How do the characters define America and what it means to be an American? Sami? Maryam? The Yazdans?
3. Maryam defines herself as an outsider. In what ways is she an outsider? Is her outsidership her own doing or an inevitable part of living in a foreign country?
4. Which other characters are outsiders? In what ways do they attempt to belong?
5. Which family do you think is more successful in raising children? Which has more fun with childrearing?
6. Which were the funniest vignettes to you?
7. What roles do Jin-Ho and Susan play in the story?
8. Is the humor in the book, e.g. the pacifier party, for laughs only, or is author trying to make a point?
9. Anne Tyler writes the book from many perspectives. Why?
10. Who are your favorite and least favorite characters in the book? Why? Has your opinion changed while reading?
11. Is the ending hopeful?
12. To what degree is this book a satire of contemporary parenting? Did Tyler write a mostly ‘real’ story?