

Book Club questions for *Unrest* by Sandra Ann Heath

1. Have you ever had to overcome a cultural divide or try to understand a new culture?
2. Did you attend multiple high schools, like Annie, who attended three different high schools in the course of a year? Or did you live in one place your whole life?
3. Were you ever bullied during your school career? For those of age, do you think bullying was more prevalent during the 1970s?
4. Iranian culture differed most remarkably in the more traditional rural areas of Iran in the late 1970s with regard to marriage and sexuality, and preferences for dress (to cover up). This is the case now in Iran, which has been an Islamic Republic since February 1979. Are you surprised that most Iranians began to reject the western ideals of the Shah during the prelude to the Iranian revolution? Did the novel help you understand the cause and effect of the Shah's significant and quick expansion of Iran's military, the struggle with oil and wealth that did not trickle down to the overwhelming population that lived in poverty in Iran? Did it surprise you that the Shah's leanings toward secularization and westernized ideals were rejected by most classes of people in Iran during the late 1970s? Did you understand how Americans felt about him? How Annie was conflicted from what she saw and what she heard? Did you understand her compassion for the Shah, Nixon, and people in general?
5. Does this novel contradict any beliefs that you've had about Iranians and their culture?
6. Were the nuances in the novel—the displays of good feelings toward the United States from the citizens of Iran compared to those tense and percolating bad feelings about the United States from the new Iranian government and the revolutionaries evident?
7. Does it help you to understand the status of the United States' current relations with Iran?
8. Do you think that Amir seemed innocent in ways that a western 18-year-old might not seem?
9. Do you think Amir seemed hospitable?
10. What were your impressions of him?
11. Who was your favorite character, and why?
12. Did anything about the way Tehran seemed in the 1970s shock you? Even before “purge, persecution, pious” became the order of the day?
13. Do you think that Annie's experience as a military brat made her used to short-term relationships? Is it your opinion that she could have ever embraced Amir on his own terms, even if he were successful in tracking her down in the United States, assuming she wasn't already married?
14. What did you think of John?
15. Did you like the ending?
16. What was your take away from the novel?