

HOME Book Discussion Group, Lynden Sculpture Garden

<https://www.home-at-lynden.org/home-book-discussion-group>

Dancing in the Moonlight, by Homeira Qaderi May-August 2022

READING GUIDE & DISCUSSION

The reading guide below is based on book group meetings over four sessions listed below. Please adapt accordingly to your needs, as some of the guiding points are intentionally repeated for clarity of discussion, or to connect old and new discussion points brought up at different points of the book.

- First session, Preface to Chapter 2
- Second session: Chapters 3-6
- Third session: Chapters 7-10
- Fourth session: Chapters 11 to end

1) First session: Introductory and first impressions.

2) Second session, Chapters 3-6:

- **Themes and messages:** Up to chapter 6, what are the major themes based on what Qaderi has directly revealed to us? What are the underlying or minor themes? What are the intended and perhaps unintended messages be from Qaderi's writing?
- **Perspectives:** How may Qaderi's work be perceived by those who are refugees and those who are not? How may her work be perceived by those who are from Afghanistan and outside of Afghanistan?
- **Author's voice, style and authenticity:** Our book group prioritizes first hand perspectives. However, what might the difference be between a writer that is reporting, narrating and telling a story? Which would be Qaderi's style? How may you describe it?

3) Third session, Chapters 7-10:

Deeper dive at the **author's voice, style and authenticity** in relation to firsthand perspectives and narration:

- Who is the voice heard here? Where is she coming from? What is the narrator's **background**, e.g. education, economic, ethnic/race, religious belief, class, etc?
- How would an **ideal narrator's voice** be projected according to you?
- What are the **judgments** that Qaderi makes in her observations within the secret school in the *hammam*? How are there differences (in observations) between the girls' expressions and actions, e.g. about makeup, dance and rebellion?
- What are the consistent values as well as **inconsistencies** of any first hand narration? And this particular narrator, if any?

4) Fourth session: Chapters 11 to end

- **Narrator:** Is Qaderi a believable or unreliable narrator of her own story? Does this writing style elevate the story, or question its integrity? Is either intentional?
- **Compare and contrast:** In relation to narration style, what might be the differences between Qaderi's *Dancing in the Mosque* and Abdulrazak Gurnah's *Admiring Silence*? (Both we discuss reliable and unreliable narrators).
- **Refugee story and interest:** What might critical readers interested in deeply diving into refugee stories and issues look for? Are there values and worldview, or a type of writing framework and style that one would look for?