

Bone Worship, by Elizabeth Eslami: Reading Group Guide Questions

1. Relationships between a child and either parent are always evolving, nuanced, and frequently fraught with misconceptions on both sides. In Jasmine's relationship with her father, what are some of the misconceptions she had about her father and he of her? And what about Jasmine's mother?
2. At the close of the novel, Jasmine is on track to become a keeper at the Arrowhead Zoo. A keeper takes care of, nurtures, and protects the zoo's animals, who are unable to provide for themselves. How is this mirror Yusef's desire to nurture and protect Jasmine? Does he see himself as Jasmine's "keeper" and her potential new husband as a sort of "keeper" as well?
3. Eyes are an important theme in *Bone Worship*, from Yusef's chronic struggle with them to Dr. Ahmadi and Yusef's affianced back in Iran, who wore jewels in the corner. Discuss their meaning and importance.
4. Bones and specifically the theme of worshipping bones play a significant role in the book. Jasmine's college work was focused on bone worship among elephants. Her father is a radiologist and takes x-rays of bones. How else is the image of bones used in this novel, and what might be some of the connections between these different forms of bone worship?
5. Discuss the role of the flashback scenes in Iran. What is the significance of Jasmine not really knowing about her father's past (or confronting him about it), but choosing instead to imagine it? How does she use these imagined stories to aid her present situation? Can you contrast Jasmine's daily life in her American hometown with her imaginings of her father's childhood in Iran?