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## Johnston Public Library Book Discussion Questions

### Home Fire by Kamila Shamisie

#### Summary

The suspenseful and heartbreaking story of an immigrant family driven to pit love against loyalty, with devastating consequences

Isma is free. After years of watching out for her younger siblings in the wake of their mother's death, she's accepted an invitation from a mentor in America that allows her to resume a dream long deferred.

But she can't stop worrying about Aneeka, her beautiful, headstrong sister back in London, or their brother, Parvaiz, who's disappeared in pursuit of his own dream, to prove himself to the dark legacy of the jihadist father he never knew. When he resurfaces half a globe away, Isma's worst fears are confirmed.

Then Eamonn enters the sisters' lives. Son of a powerful political figure, he has his own birthright to live up to—or defy. Is he to be a chance at love? The means of Parvaiz's salvation? Suddenly, two families' fates are inextricably, devastatingly entwined, in this searing novel that asks: What sacrifices will we make in the name of love?

#### Discussion Questions

1. The opening section begins with Isma Pasha nearly missing her flight. Talk about her treatment at the hands of "immigration" officials at Heathrow. How did the indignities she suffered at their hands make you feel?
2. Isma's voice is one of compromise and accommodation: how else might you describe her?
3. Talk about Parvaiz Pasha and his quest to honor his father, Adil. What kind of man, husband, and father was Adil, and what did his faith mean to him? When Parvaiz's eyes are opened to the caliphate and its atrocities, did you wonder how he could have been so misled?
4. What do you think of Isma and Eamonn Lone's relationship? Do they have a genuine connection? Why doesn't Isma let on that she knows who Eamonn's father is?

5. What are your thoughts about Aneeka? How does she define herself in relation to her faith, and how does her attitude toward Islam differ from her sister's?
6. Talk about the vast differences between the two families, the Pashas and the Lones.
7. Consider Aneeka's relationship with Eamonn — she is clearly manipulating him, but does she have a higher purpose? As she puts it: "Why shouldn't I admit it? What would you stop at to help the people you love most?"
8. After Isma informs the police that Parvaiz has left for Syria, Aneeka is appalled: "You betrayed us, both of us. Don't...expect me to ever agree to see your face again. We have no sister." Is Aneeka's anger justified? Would it have been better directed at her brother who betrayed them both? What do you think?
9. Where should Isma's loyalty lie: with her brother or her country? By informing the police of Parvaiz's intentions, did she make the right or wrong decision? Can there be a correct moral decision when faced with the impossible choice between family loyalty and duty to society?
10. What is meant by the title, "Home Fire" How does it differ from the World War I meaning, "keep the home fires burning."?
11. Talk about the relevance of Home Fire to today's world. What do you see in the novel that illuminates and/or resonates with current concerns?
12. Kamila Shamsie has drawn inspiration from the ancient playwright Sophocles and his drama Antigone. Antigone, the daughter of Oedipus, was prohibited by law from burying her brother. You may wish to do a little research in order to better understand Shamsie's conception — her modern take on the Sophoclean tragedy.

Summary from the publisher and Discussion Questions from litlovers.com.