

Reader's Guide Discussion Questions for Book Groups

- 1) After reading *DYING IN DUBAI*, did your perception of Dubai change, and if so, how? How does the depiction of that city in the memoir differ from the way it is presented in the media?
- 2) Part One of the book is titled "*Coming Apart*." What comes apart, and does it become whole later in the story?
- 3) How did the status of women in Dubai affect the author's experience there? In what ways would this crisis have played out differently had it occurred in the United States?
- 4) In *DYING IN DUBAI*, the city becomes a mirror of and a catalyst for change in Roselee's marriage, her view of her husband, and herself. How did the dual nature of Dubai mirror the duality in Jerry? How did his life and his behavior there continue to affect his widow once she returned home to a life without him, and how does she come to terms with the unanswerable questions about her husband's actions there?
- 5) Wali gives Roselee a resonant image of how mourning changes over time:

"The death of a loved one is something so huge, at first as big as the universe, surrounding and swallowing us completely. Gradually it becomes smaller, only as big as the world, then an ocean, then a tree, and then as big as a large person who stands next to us all of the time. Finally, it merges with us, and we carry it inside ourselves, wherever we go." He held an imaginary ball. "It becomes portable, manageable, a part of who we are and will always be."

How does Wali's image serve as a guide for her mourning, and as a thread throughout the memoir?
- 6) In his eulogy, Roselee's brother said his sister and brother-in-law's love story taught him that "love and adversity" go hand in hand. Do you agree?
- 7) The author considers her marriage "real," but not "perfect." What does she mean by that distinction? Were the pitfalls inherent in any long-distance relationship ameliorated by Roselee and Jerry's long marriage, or did their years together make the separation more painful? Do you identify with the challenges facing the author in her marriage and after? What do you think of how she handled them?
- 8) Roselee does much of the work of grief on her own. How do her relationships

with family and friends impact that journey? In what ways did they support her and in what ways not? What does this say about the nature of grief?

- 9) What role did writing the memoir have in the author's healing process? Have you used writing to work through difficulties in your life? Was it helpful?
- 9) What do you take away from *DYING IN DUBAI* about love, loss, solace and renewal?