

Skokie Public Library's Book Discussion Guide

Digging to America by Anne Tyler

- This book is a study of characterization. Did Maryam's perspective about "Americanization" change throughout the book?
- Will Susan and Jin-Ho's relationship survive as they grow up? What about the friendship between the two families?
- The *New York Times* called the story "an accidental friendship." Do you agree?
- Tyler shifts points of view throughout the book. What did that add to the story?
- Does Maryam have more in common with Jin-Ho or Susan?
- Discuss the memories of Maryam's husband that she and Sami reveal.
- Is the Donaldson family portrayed as too American?
- Which is more pronounced, the cultural differences between the two families or the differences between the male and female characters?
- Which character is really the heart of the story?
- What changes did you see in Dave after Maryam turned down his proposal? Why do you think she said yes at first?
- Maryam is caught between two cultures. Will she ever feel at home in either one or come to terms with her "outsidedness"?
- Describe some of the humorous scenes in the book. What do they signify?
- Some critics said that the characters in this story are too ordinary and the themes too simple. Do you agree/disagree?
- When did Bitsy begin to give up her ideals about child rearing?



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