

DISGRACED by Ayad Akhtar

Teacher's pack

PLEASE NOTE This pack includes research material as well as classroom activities , multiple choice questions and open questions. Please cut and paste sections to suit your needs and consider which pages you need before printing.

More information can also be found in the official programme available at the theatre.

THE PLAY: A Brief Summary

Corporate lawyer Amir Kapoor is living a wonderful life: he is happy, in love with his wife, and about to land the biggest promotion of his career. But when he briefly helps his nephew with a case defending a man of Muslim faith, Amir's career and personal life begin to slowly unravel. When Amir and his artist wife, Emily, host an intimate dinner party with their two colleagues and friends, he begins to realize that the life he has built for himself may be a façade. Does achieving a Western ideal of happiness mean that Amir has denied his true Pakistani heritage? The friendly dinner party soon escalates into an intense conversation involving religion, race and violence. Accusations are spoken, truths are revealed, and Amir's life will never be the same again. The Pulitzer Prize-winner for Drama in 2013, *Disgraced* questions whether we can ever truly escape the confines of our upbringing and our heritage.

Read more: <http://stageagent.com/shows/play/4644/disgraced#ixzz41a2Ps2SA>

EXTENDED SUMMARY

This play, set in New York City around 2011/12, is the story of an ambitious South Asian lawyer who, over the course of several months and as the result of several personal confrontations, is faced with several unsettling truths about himself, his situation, and his perspectives. The play asks challenging questions about the nature and purpose of faith, about relationships between white and non-white races in contemporary America, and about the process and responsibilities of creating art.

The play begins with Amir, a busy thirty-something lawyer in a prestigious New York firm, taking work-related cell-phone calls while being sketched by his Caucasian artist wife Emily. Inspired by a racism-defined encounter with a waiter the night before, Emily sees visual and thematic parallels between Amir and the subject of a centuries-old painting by Spanish artist Diego Velazquez. Amir and Emily's conversation, and the sketch work, are interrupted by the arrival of Abe, Amir's hip nephew who has changed his name and style of dress in order to seem more American and/or less of a potential terrorist threat to white Americans. Abe asks Amir to support the case of an Imam (Islamic religious leader) who has been imprisoned without cause. At first Amir refuses, but Emily convinces him he should do so. Later, when a picture appears in a local newspaper of Amir with the Imam, he worries about how he (Amir) will now be perceived at his conservative law firm.

Meanwhile, the similarly ambitious Emily is working towards getting her artwork shown at a prestigious gallery, with the help of Jewish curator Isaac who, one evening some months after the sketching scene takes place, comes to have dinner with Amir and Emily, accompanied by his African-American wife, Jory. Initially friendly conversation soon takes a dark and confrontational turn, as the increasingly drunken Amir (who has just learned that his past is being investigated / questioned by senior members of the law firm) confronts everyone in the room (Emily, Isaac, and Jory) about their beliefs about him and his people.

Eventually, tensions mount to the point where Emily feels she has to calm Amir down. As she takes him out of the room, conversation between Jory and Isaac reveals that Jory has something to tell Amir about his relationship with the rest of the firm. Un-soothed by his conversation with Emily, Amir storms out, followed by Jory who sees an opportunity to tell him what's going on at work. While they're gone, conversation between Isaac and Emily reveals that they had an affair while attending an art fair in England a short time before. As they approach each other again, Jory returns, sees them together, and erupts into anger. Amir also returns, having just learned that Jory has been promoted over him. Amir's drunken, enraged rant triggers physical violence, first between Amir and Isaac and then between Amir

and Emily, who is assaulted.

The final scene of the play sees a now conservatively dressed Abe telling Amir that he (Abe) is in trouble with the law because of a racism-fueled confrontation with a young white woman. Even though Amir offers to help him, Abe is still bitter and angry. After he leaves, Amir attempts a reconciliation of sorts with Emily (who came with Abe) but she refuses. After she's gone, Amir is left alone with a full painted version of the sketch Emily drew earlier ... he looks at it / himself closely as the lights fade, and the play ends.

Characters

Amir – of South Asian origin. A corporate lawyer at odds with his Muslim heritage. Emily's husband

Emily – Caucasian. A painter whose work focuses on the spiritual roots of the Muslim faith. She strives to be even-handed and level-headed in both her personal and professional relationships. On the verge of a major breakthrough, she finds herself and her marriage increasingly threatened by her husband's complicated relationship to his Islamic roots and faith.

Isaac – Caucasian. Jewish. A successful art curator married to Jory. A vibrant and seductive personality, he draws people in with his charmingly quick wit, easy manner and passion.

Jory – African American. Recently made partner in Amir's firm. Married to Isaac. Very forthright and sharp. An articulate and confident woman who has wrestled her way to the top.

Abe – Pakistani American. Amir's nephew. As mainstream American as they come. Becoming somewhat of a young Muslim activist in his community. He is passionate, headstrong, and devout in his beliefs. He loves his uncle and seeks his approval,

while at the same time, the two of them are at idealistic odds regarding the Muslim faith.

‘Islam comes from the desert,’ says the character Amir over dinner at his lavish Manhattan apartment. “From a group of tough- minded, tough-living people who saw life as something ... to be suffered. Jews reacted to the situation differently. They turned it over and over and over. I mean look at the Talmud. They’re looking at things from a hundred different angles. ... Muslims don’t think about it. They submit.”

Read more at <http://www.thejewishweek.com/arts/theater/islam-and-judaism-dinner-menu#ATKHuoA3pLy/Gy86.99>

The Story Behind *Disgraced*

Premiering in 2012 to rave reviews, *Disgraced* was one of the first plays by Ayad Akhtar, who had previously worked as a screenwriter and actor. In his 2012 review for *Disgraced* in *The New York Times*, Christopher Isherwood praised Akhtar’s talent in handling the heavy topics of religion, prejudice and self-discovery.

“In dialogue that bristles with wit and intelligence, Mr. Akhtar, a novelist and screenwriter, puts contemporary attitudes toward religion under a microscope, revealing how tenuous self-image can be for people born into one way of being who have embraced another,” Isherwood wrote.

Akhtar grew up in Milwaukee to parents who emigrated from Pakistan in the 1960s, an experience he drew upon for his first published novel *American Dervish* (2012), a coming-of-age story whose main character also grows up in Milwaukee with Pakistani parents. Like *Disgraced*, *American Dervish* features the bad behavior of Pakistani American men, including drinking and abuse. Because of these disparaging

depictions, it's no surprise that one of the questions Akhtar is asked most is if he considers himself a Muslim. In a 2012 Q&A with *Chicago Tribune* theater critic Chris Jones, Akhtar stated: "I take a lead from my smart Jewish friends and say I identify as a cultural Muslim. Which means I feel informed and formed by the ethos and mythos and the mind-set and the spirituality of the Muslim tradition, without believing in the literal truth of any of its tenets."

In another interview in 2015 with *CBS News*, Akhtar acknowledged to writer Anthony Mason that he has received bad feedback from his community for "airing dirty laundry." He also admitted that his work as a writer, which includes stage plays *The Invisible Hand* (2012) and *The Who & the What* (2014) that deal with similar themes, is about figuring out who he is. Interestingly, although he may be asking a lot of questions, it's not answers Akhtar is searching for.

"The great thing about being an artist is you don't have to find any answers," he said.

And Akhtar is fully aware of how discussing such hot-button topics has the potential to cause more than controversy. When Mason asked Akhtar if he fears his work will make him a target, the playwright admitted to experiencing mixed feelings of fear and paranoia over the possibility, but he also made it a point to mention that "it is the duty and calling of an artist to speak truthfully. That's it. There's no further discussion beyond that as far as I'm concerned. Consequences are what they are." Consequences certainly are a major theme in *Disgraced*. All characters are forced to deal with harsh realities that are results of choices they made. Winner of the 2013 Pulitzer Prize for Drama, *Disgraced* tells a compelling story that will resonate with audiences for its timeliness in today's world.

by Laura Schlereth

<http://www.repstl.org/season/guide/disgraced/>

The Playwright



Ayad Akhtar's (*Playwright*) plays

include *Disgraced* (LCT3/Lincoln Center Theater, 2013 Pulitzer Prize for Drama and 2013 Obie Award for Extraordinary Achievement), *The Who and The What* (LCT3/Lincoln Center Theater and La Jolla Playhouse), and *The Invisible Hand* (The Repertory Theater of St. Louis). Also a Novelist, Akhtar is the author of *American Dervish*, published in 20 languages worldwide. He co-wrote and starred in *The War Within* (Magnolia Pictures), which was released internationally and nominated for an Independent Spirit Award for Best Screenplay. As an actor, Akhtar also starred as Neel Kashkari in HBO's adaption of Andrew

Ross Sorkin's book *Too Big to Fail*. He studied at Brown University and Columbia University's School of the Arts.

GLOSSARY

Al-Qaida Militant Islamist organization founded by Osama bin Laden. Its origins are traceable to the Soviet war in Afghanistan.

Apostate A person who renounces a religious or political belief or principle.

Bonnard, Pierre (1867 – 1947) was a twentieth-century French painter. He preferred

to work from memory, and his paintings often had a dream like quality to them. He was a founding member of the Avantgarde group, Les Nabis.

Charvet A highly expensive men's wear brand. Typical Charvet shirts cost anywhere from \$400 to \$600.

Chorizo A type of pork sausage.

Contrarian A person who opposes or rejects popular opinion, especially in stock exchange dealing.

The Denial of Death is a 1973 work of psychology and philosophy by Ernest Becker. It was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for General Non-Fiction in 1974. The book builds on the works of Søren Kierkegaard, Sigmund Freud, and Otto Rank.

Duplicitous deceitful, deceiving or misleading others.

Fundamentalism A form of a religion, especially Islam or Protestant Christianity, that upholds belief in the strict, literal interpretation of scripture, with no concessions to modern developments in thought or customs.

Gaudí, Antoni (1852 – 1926) was a Spanish Catalan architect, best known practitioner of Catalan Modernism.

Giselle is a romantic ballet about a peasant girl who dies of a broken heart after discovering her lover is betrothed to another.

Goldman Sachs A leading global investment banking, securities and management firm.

Hanif Saeed (Hawn-If Sie-Eed) Fictional character.

Henry Kissinger (born 1923) American Secretary of State from 1973 to 1977 under Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford. He pioneered several controversial foreign policies during his tenure.

Ibn Arabi (1165 – 1240) Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi is known as one of the world's great

spiritual teachers. His work is rooted in the Quran and centers around the thought that each person has a unique path to the truth, which unites all paths in itself.

Imam (E-Mam) As used in the Quran, Imam means leader, symbol, model, ideal, example, revelation, and guide. Historically, the term refers to the religio-political leader of the Muslim community.

Insurance Arbitration is the settlement of a dispute or question at issue by one to whom the conflicting parties agree to refer their claims in order to obtain an equitable decision.

Islamofascism The advocacy or practice of a form of Islam perceived as authoritarian, intolerant, or extremist; specifically Islamic fundamentalism is regarded in this way.

Jerry Saltz (born 1951) American art critic and columnist for New York magazine.

Jihad A term referring to struggle against those who do not believe in Allah.

Joseph Smith (1805 – 1844) was an American religious leader and founder of Mormonism and the Latter Day Saint movement.

La Tur a dense, creamy blend of pasteurized cow, goat and sheep milk from the great wine region of Piedmont.

London Frieze Art Fair One of the world's leading contemporary art fairs that takes place each October in Regent's Park.

Lipitor is a medicine used primarily for lowering blood cholesterol and for prevention of events associated with cardiovascular disease.

Macallan One of the world's most expensive and coveted single-malt Scotch whiskeys. Sotheby's once auctioned off a \$460,000 bottle of WWII Macallan Scotch.

Mahmoud Ahmadinajad (born 1956) The sixth president of the Islamic Republic of Iran. He is criticized in the West for being anti-Semitic and pro-Palestinian.

Martin Amis (Ah-Me) (born 1949) British novelist whose particularly radical views on

the Islamic world have gone under heavy fire.

Matisse, Henri (1869 – 1954) was a French artist who later in life frequently chose orientalist topics for his paintings.

Moisés Alou (born 1966) is a former Dominican-American outfielder in Major League Baseball who played for 17 seasons in the National League.

Moor Originally: a native or inhabitant of ancient Mauretania, a region of North Africa corresponding to parts of present-day Morocco and Algeria. Later commonly: a member of a Muslim people of mixed Berber and Arab descent inhabiting northwestern Africa (now mainly present-day Mauritania), who in the 8th century conquered Spain.

Moroni in Mormonism, an angel, the guardian of the golden plates, which Latter Day Saints believe were the source material for the Book of Mormon.

Mujahideen Term used by Muslims to describe Muslims who struggle in the path of Allah. Recently, this term has been closely associated with radical Islamic militant groups.

Mulla Sadra (c. 1571/2 – 1640) An Iranian Islamic philosopher who led the Iranian cultural renaissance in the 17th century.

“Neat” Pouring an alcoholic beverage in a glass at room temperature with no ice.

Netanyahu, Benjamin (born 1949) is an Israeli politician and the current Prime Minister of Israel. He also serves as a Chairman of the Likud party.

“On the rocks” Pouring an alcoholic beverage over ice.

Orientalism A term used for the imitation or depiction of Eastern cultures by writers and other artists from the West.

Paella A Spanish rice dish.

Pathos A quality which evokes pity, sadness, or tenderness; the power of exciting

pity; affecting character or influence.

Patriot Act This 2001 Act of U.S. Congress, a response to the terrorist attacks of September 11th, dramatically increased law enforcement agencies' abilities to search telephone, e-mail communications, medical, financial, and other records.

Port A sweet wine, most often consumed after dinner with desert.

Public defender A lawyer or staff of lawyers employed by the government to represent in a criminal action a defendant unable to afford legal assistance.

The Renaissance A new enthusiasm for classical literature, learning, and art which sprang up in Italy near the end of the Middle Ages.

Rumi Prolific 13th century Persian poet, jurist, theologian, and mystic. His highly spiritual works have been translated into many languages.

Sanctimonious Making a show of being morally superior to other people.

Sothi Sikander Fictional artist.

Sublime Of things in nature and art: Affecting the mind with a sense of overwhelming grandeur or irresistible power.

Talmud A central text of mainstream Judaism. It takes the form of a record of rabbinic discussions pertaining to Jewish law, ethics, philosophy, customs and history.

The Tate A family of four art galleries that house the UK's national collection of British art.

Thread count Technically, thread count means the number of threads woven together in a square inch of a carpet. The higher the thread count, the softer – and more expensive – the fabric.

Velázquez, Diego (1599 – 1660) was a Spanish painter who was the leading artist in the court of King Philip IV and one of the most important painters of the Spanish

Golden Age.

Victoria and Albert is the world's largest museum of decorative arts and design in London, housing a permanent collection of over 4.5 million objects.

WASP The common meaning is White Anglo-Saxon Protestant.

Disgraced in the Classroom

SYMBOLS AND THEMES IN *DISGRACED*

A. Race Identity: This story involves representatives from four different racial communities: An African American woman, a Jewish man, a Caucasian woman, and a Pakistani-American uncle/nephew team.

B. Justice vs. Order Jory makes a strong case for "when faced with the decision between justice or order, I will always choose order." Adversely, Emily would always choose justice.

C. Disgraced as it relates to *Othello*. There are many comparisons to be made between the Amir/Isaac and Othello/Iago relationships as well as between Amir/Emily and Othello/Desdemona.

Have students bring in current Newspaper articles where the question of justice or order is at play. In addition, have the classroom stage mock trials exploring these two sides of the coin, using events from the articles.

Have students read *Othello*. In what way does Iago manipulate his

friendship with Othello to achieve what he wants and how is that similar to Isaac's treatment of Amir in the dinner party scene? Discuss the master/slave relationship between Amir and Emily. If we imagine that Othello's and Amir's downfalls become their own doing, and they are not a victims of fate, what parallels can be drawn in the tragic flaws of both Othello and Amir?

Excerpt from Disgraced at The Lyceum Theatre

Pre-Show Questions

1. What is the difference between individual and systematic racism? Which do you believe is harder to overcome?
2. Which do you value more: personal freedom or national safety? Why?
3. Should your religion be a factor in whether or not you are hired in certain jobs? Why or why not? Which jobs?

Post-Show Questions

1. In *Disgraced*, Emily was inspired by Velázquez's "Portrait of Juan de Pareja." Have you ever been inspired by a work of art? What was the result?
2. Amir insisted that he should not assist Abe's friend, Imam Fareed. Emily and Abe insisted he should. Which do you believe is the right choice? Defend your position with textual support.
3. What do you believe was the main factor in Amir losing his promotion to partner? Could he have done anything differently to ensure his promotion?
4. In the play, both Amir and Abe change their names. Do you believe this was necessary for them to be successful in life? Is it dishonest for them to change their names? According to *The National Bureau of Economic Research*, "Job applicants with white names needed to send about 10 resumes to get one callback; those with [ethnic sounding] names needed to send around 15 resumes to get one callback." Does this statistic impact your opinion at all? (<http://www.nber.org/digest/sep03/w9873.html>)

Creative Writing Prompts

1. Write the conversation Amir and Jory have off-stage when they leave to pick up champagne.
2. Have you ever felt like you were treated unfairly? What happened?
3. If you were Ayad Akhtar, how would you have ended *Disgraced*? Make sure that the characters are true to who they are.
4. Compare and contrast Shakespeare's *Othello* and Akhtar's *Disgraced*.

Articles Relevant to Discussions about *Disgraced* "Employers' Replies to Racial Names"

<http://www.nber.org/digest/sep03/w9873.html>

"The Dos and Don'ts of Cultural Appropriation"

<http://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2015/10/the-dos-and-donts-of-cultural-appropriation/411292/#article-comments>

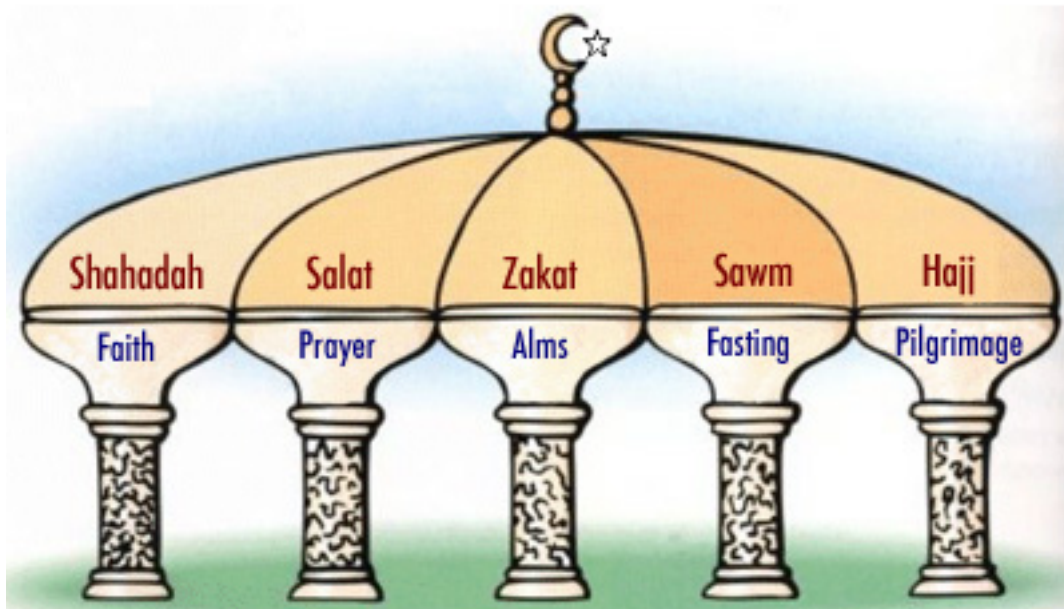
"Is Cultural Appropriation Always Wrong?"

http://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/04/magazine/is-cultural-appropriation-always-wrong.html?_r=0

"Velazquez and the Soul of Juan de Pareja"

<http://blogcritics.org/velzquez-and-the-soul-of-juan/>

The Five Pillars of Islam



Faith

The Shahadah is the first pillar of Islam. It is a declaration of faith spoken by all Muslims. The Shahadah must be spoken publicly before a person can be considered a Muslim. The Qur'an states that the Shahadah must be "spoken by the tongue and with the full assent of the heart". This means that is not simply enough to speak these words; you must also believe them.

Prayer

Salat is the second pillar of Islam. 'Salat' means 'prayer'. It is every Muslim's duty to pray to Allah five times a day. Muslims believe that, through prayer, they become closer to Allah. Muslims often stand shoulder to shoulder when praying as a sign of the equality of humans before Allah.

The Shahadah is so important we whisper it into a baby's ear when they are born so it is the first thing they hear.

Charity

Zakat is the third pillar of Islam. It is the amount of money that every Muslim who is financially able must pay to support people who are poor and needy. Zakat should be given once a year; however, a Muslim can choose when in this year they wish to pay it.

Zakat can be paid to a mosque or to Zakat organisations such as Islamic Relief or Muslim Hands. Traders must give 2.5% of the value of their goods to Zakat. Farmers must give 5% of their crops and livestock to Zakat. Everyone else must give 2.5% of their surplus money.

Fasting

Sawm is the fourth pillar of Islam. It means fasting. When fasting, Muslims do not eat, drink or have sex. Muslims practise Sawm by fasting every year in the month of Ramadan. During Ramadan, Muslims fast from dawn until sunset. By practising Sawm, a Muslim develops sympathy for suffering. It also demonstrates discipline and obedience to Allah.

Muslims do not have to fast if they are under 12, too old, pregnant, breastfeeding, travelling or sick.

Pilgrimage

The Hajj is the fifth and final pillar of Islam. It is the journey to Makkah that every adult Muslim should undertake at least once in their life. The Hajj promotes the bonds of Islamic brotherhood and sisterhood by showing that everyone is equal in the eyes of Allah.

Research and Opinion

Religion is often a source for comedy. In South Park the writers openly mock the story behind Mormonism.

Watch the youtube clip and read the lyrics. Is the clip funny? How do the lyrics make the writers opinion very clear?

Lyric excerpt:

*Joseph Smith was called a prophet
Dumb dumb dumb dumb dumb
He started the Mormon religion
Dumb dumb dumb dumb dumb
Dumb dumb dumb dumb dumb
Joseph Smith was called a prophet-
Dumb dumb dumb dumb dumb
Many people believed Joseph
Dumb dumb dumb dumb dumb
And that night he-ee saw an angel
Dumb dumb dumb dumb dumb
Dumb dumb dumb dumb dumb
Joseph Smith was called a prophet
Dumb dumb dumb dumb dumb
Dumb dumb dumb dumb dumb
He found the stones and golden plates
Dumb dumb dumb dumb dumb
Even though nobody else ever saw them
Dumb dumb dumb dumb dumb
Dumb dumb dumb dumb dumb
Dumb dumb dumb dumb dumb
And that's how the Book of Mormon was written
Dumb dumb dumb dumb dumb
Dumb dadumb dumb dumb dumb dumb
Dumb dadumb dumb dumb dumb dumb*

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PLAY

1. What is Emily sketching?
2. What does Amir want to put on? His pants
 - a) A Hat
 - b) A coat
3. The Velasquey painting is a portrait of
 - a) A Merchant
 - b) A slave
 - c) A king
4. Amir says this on the phone:

“You don't pay me to listen to you. You pay me to listen to me.”
What does he mean?
5. The paralegal made a mistake at work. It was a mistake worth:
 - a) \$700 000
 - b) \$900 000
 - c) \$850 000
6. Who needs to bring down his cholesterol?
 - a) Amir
 - b) Mort
 - c) Isaac

7. What is he doing for his cholesterol?
- a) Medicating
 - b) Meditating
 - c) Mediating
8. What do all the above words mean?
9. Who is Abe?
10. What is interesting about his name?
11. Where was Amir born?
- a) Palestine
 - b) Bangladesh
 - c) New York
12. In the play Amir tells Emily about Rivkah. Who was she?
13. What did Amir's mother do when she heard Amir talk about Rivkah?
14. What did Amir do when he learned that she (Rivkah) was Jewish?
- a) He ignored her
 - b) He spat in her face
 - c) He kissed her
15. According to Amir's mother white women are
- a) Whores
 - b) Bores
 - c) Hoarse
16. Abe wants Amir to help free the Imam who has been in prison for

- a) 4 days
- b) 4 weeks
- c) 4 months

17. What is the term used in the play to describe a group of attorneys (lawyers)

- a) A gaggle
- b) A gang
- c) A gauntlet

18. Emily urges Amir to help the Imam. She says to Amir “ This is going to be good for you at work” Is Emily right? Why or why not? Explain your answer

19. Who is Isaac?

20. What is interesting about what they are having for dinner?

21. Where are Amir’s parents from?

- a) India
- b) Pakistan
- c) Iran

22. Who is Kapoor Abdullah?

23. We’re the new Jews? Who says this? And what is meant by this statement?

24. The book Denial of Death features in a film. What is the name of this film?

25. Who directed the film?

26. What does Isaac want to call his next exhibition?

- a) Impossible Mission
- b) Impossible Art

c) Impossible Heroes

27. Amir calls himself a moor and Emily calls him a muse. Shakespeare wrote a play whose main character was a Moor. What is the title of this play?

28. Read the synopsis of that play by Shakespeare. What similarities does the main character have with this play's main character, Amir?

29. Amir is known for his expensive

- a) Cologne
- b) Apartment
- c) Shirts

30. Amir does something most people don't do when going through a security check at airports. What does he do?

31. Jory says she knows all about racial profiling. Why would she?

32. There have been many cases of racial profiling in the United States involving police brutality. Find 3 such recent cases in online news reports.

33. Amir says that Islamic art is mostly geometric because angels don't enter a house where there are pictures or .

- a) Gods
- b) Dogs
- c) Pets

34. Amir say that Muslims don't think about things, instead they just

35. Do you think this is a fair statement?

36. What is one very long hatemail to humanity, according to Amir?

37. List two points that support Amir's opinion.
38. Now find two points that contradict Amir's opinion.
39. In 1791 Americans were granted (given) the right to
- Bear children
 - Bear grudges
 - Bear arms
40. Does this section of the constitution exist today? Do you think it should exist today?
41. What is an apostate?
42. Who in the play is an apostate?
43. Jory mentions Joseph Smith. Who was he?
44. Why does Jory remember this fact?
45. The word *beat* and *leave* are very similar, which one do you think is the correct interpretation of what is written in the Quran. Research the different interpretations online and try find the most common interpretation.
46. Isaac says that Muslim women who are educated and enlightened choose to wear the veil. Who does he use as an example?
47. Isaac asks Amir how he felt on September the 11th. Amir felt
- Horrified
 - Proud
 - Both horrified and proud

d) None of the above

48. What does Isaac call Amir?

49. Why is Jory feeling very guilty at the dinner party?

50. Amir and Jory leave to

- a) Get cupcakes
- b) Get wine
- c) Get champagne

51. What happened in London?

52. Jory was offered to be a partner in the firm that she and Amir work for. Why does Emily say that this is unfair?

53. The truth comes out during Isaacs private talk with Emily. What does she find out?

54. Isaac is in love with

- a) Jory
- b) Emily
- c) Amir

55. Amir is furious to hear Jory got promoted before he did. Why does Amir feel he deserved the job? He lists a few reasons. What are they?

56. "There is a reason why they call you people animals" Who says this?

- a) Jory
- b) Isaac
- c) Emily

57. And who are “the animals”?
58. Why does someone say this to Amir?
59. Mort, who we never meet in the play, says that Amir is duplicitous. What does this word mean?
60. Is Amir duplicitous?
61. What does Jory tell Amir about Mort?
62. When Isaac and Jory leave, Emily confesses to Amir that she made a terrible mistake. What was it?
63. How does Amir react?
64. Explain what happens in the sequence that follows. Why is it staged in such an unrealistic way?
65. Why is it ironic that Abe is helping Emily to move?
66. What happened to Abe at Starbucks?
67. Why did Amir and Abe’s fathers come to the USA?
68. Why is this ironic now?
69. Look closely at Abe’s lines:
That's what they've done.
They've conquered the world.
We're gonna get it back.
That's our destiny. It's in the Quran.

For three hundred years they've been taking our land, drawing new borders, replacing our laws, making us want be like them. Look like them. Marry their women.

They disgraced us.

They disgraced us.

And then they pretend they don't understand the rage we've got?

How is this different from his attitude at the beginning of the play?

70. How does Emily feel about her work at the end of the play?

71. Do you agree with her feelings?

72. What does Emily give to Amir as a parting gift?

73. Of all the painting Akhtar could have chosen, why do you think he chose this one?

TEXT EXTRACTS

TO ANALYSE PERFORM IN CLASS

Extract 1:

Abe (*looking over at Emily, back to Amir*) Should I come back?

Amir No, no.

Abe You sure?

Amir Yeah. I'm sure. Come in, Hussein.

Abe Uncle.

Amir What?

Abe Could you just call me –

Amir (*finishing his thought*) I've known you your whole life as Hussein. I'm not gonna start calling you Abe now.

Abe *shakes his head. Turning to Amir.*

Emily Hi, Abe.

Abe Hi, Aunt Emily.
He turns to Amir, lighthearted.

Abe (*pointing*) See? How hard can it be?

Amir Abe Jensen? Really?

Abe You know how much easier things are for me since I changed my name? It's in the Quran. It says you can hide your religion if you have to.

Amir I'm not talking about the Quran. I'm talking about you being called Abe Jensen.
Just layoff it with me and your folks at least.

Abe It's gotta be one thing or the other. I can't be all mixed up.

Emily (*riff Amir's reaction*) Amir. You changed your name, too.

Abe You got lucky.
You didn't have to change your first name.
Could be Christian. Jewish.
Plus, you were born here. It's different.

Emily You want something, sweetie? Coffee, juice?

Abe Nah. I'm good.

Amir So what's up?

Emily I'll let you gentlemen talk.

Amir No need. Everybody knows you're in on this. (*To Abe.*) So you've been calling her, too?

Abe You weren't calling me back.

Amir Why are we still talking about this?
I'm a corporate lawyer. In mergers and acquisitions –

Emily Who started in the Public Defender's -

Amir That was years ago. (*Beat.*) Your guy should have been more careful.

Abe Imam Fareed didn't do anything.
Every church in the country collects money. It's how they keep their doors open.
We're entitled, too. He's running a mosque –

Emily He's got the right.
Just because they're collecting money doesn't mean it's for Hamas.

Amir What does any of this have to do with me?

Emily It doesn't matter to you that an innocent man is in prison?

Amir I don't know Patriot Act law. The guy's already got a legal team. Those guys Ken and Alex are amazing.

Abe They're not Muslim.

Amir There we go.

Abe What?

Amir What I thought.

I'm not gonna be part of a legal team just because your Imam is a bigot.

Abe He's not a bigot. He'd just be more comfortable if there was a Muslim on the case, too ...

Amir More comfortable if he wasn't being represented by a couple of Jews?

Abe No. (*Beat.*) He liked you. He said you were a good man.

Amir Well, he might not feel the same if he knew how I really felt about his religion.

Extract 2:

Emily (*reading*) "The defendant, surrounded by a gauntlet of attorneys, struck a defiant tone. He spoke eloquently of the injustices he'd experienced, and what he called an "unconscionable lack of due process". Amir Kapoor of Leibowitz, Bernstein, Harris supported the Imam, stating: "As far as anybody knows, there isn't a case. And if the Justice Department has one, it's time they started making it." (*Beat.*) I don't trunk you look like counsel for the defense.

Amir That's because you know I'm not.

Emily It's because it doesn't say you are.

Amir (*taking the paper*) "The defendant, surrounded by a gauntlet of attorneys, struck a defiant tone." And then she quotes an attorney. Me. Implying that I'm one of the gauntlet of attorneys. She doesn't quote another attorney.

Emily But she says you're just supporting him.

Amir I don't see a just. There's no just supporting him.

Emily It's implied.

Amir I think it reads very clearly that I was supporting his defiant tone. That I was supporting him being defiant.

Emily Isn't he justified?

Amir That's not my point, Em.

Emily Maybe it should be.

Amir The man's basically an alleged terrorist. (*Off another look at the paper.*) Amir Kapoor supported the Imam ...

Emily Even if it does make you look –

Amir (*leaping in*) So it does?

Emily I don't think it does. But even if it does, why is that a bad thing? What you did is right. You're standing up for due process.

Amir It's just ...

Emily What?

Amir Don't you think people are going to think ... (*Beat.*) I guess they'll look at the name, if they know anything at all ...

Emily (*over*) - Amir.

Amir They'll know the name isn't Muslim.

Beat.

Emily Amir. What's going on? (*Beat.*) If this bothers you so much, call the Times. Have them retract.

Amir But the thing is, I did say this.

Emily (*proudly*) I remember.

Amir But after clearly saying I was not counsel for the defendant. (*Beat.*) Why did they have to mention the firm?

Pause.

Emily Baby.

You did the right thing. I am so proud of you. So was Abe. And you'll see. Mort's gonna be proud of you, too.

Extract 3

Jory (*coming in*) What gets me just as much as people who treat the Bible like the Constitution are the people who treat the Constitution like it's the Bible. I mean trying to figure out what a text written more than two hundred years ago really meant? Like it's going to solve our problems today?

Emily Like all that bullshit about the right to bear arms. It was 1791, people.

Amir That's my point. That's exactly what I'm saying, honey.

Isaac Mmm. This is delicious, Em. Really.

Emily I picked up the recipe when I was on a Fulbright in Seville.

Isaac I love Spain. I ran with the bulls in Pamplona.

Jory You did not run with the bulls.

Isaac I watched people run with the bulls.

Amir We went to Barcelona for our honeymoon. Gaudi. The paella. The wine. Spanish wines are so underrated.

Isaac See, this is the problem I'm having ...
You're saying Muslims are so different. You're not that different. You have the same idea of the good life as I do. I wouldn't have even known you were a Muslim if it wasn't for the article in the Times.

Pause.

Amir I'm not Muslim. I'm an apostate. Which means I've renounced my faith.

Isaac (*overlapping*) I know what the word apostate means.

Jory Isaac?

Amir Do you also know that - according to the Quran - it makes me punishable by death?

Emily That's not true, Amir.

Amir Yes, it is.

Emily Have you even read that part? Have you?
It condemns renouncing the faith, but it doesn't specify punishment. The tradition has interpreted it as punishable by death.

Jory Impressive ...

Emily He's repeated it enough, I checked. I have a vested interest, after all.

The women laugh.

Amir Fine.
So let's talk about something that is in the text. Wife-beating.

Isaac Wife-beating?

Jory Great. Could you pass the bread?

Emily Amir, really?

Amir (*passing the bread*) So the angel Gabriel comes to Muhammad ...

Isaac Angel Gabriel?

Amir (*mocking*) Yeah. That's how Muslims believe the Quran came to humanity. The angel Gabriel supposedly dictated it to Muhammad word for word.

Isaac Like Joseph Smith. Mormonism.
An angel named Marami came down in upstate New York and talked to Joseph Smith -

Jory Moroni, honey. Not Marami.

Isaac You sure?

Jory It was on South Park.

Beat.

Amir So like I was saying ...
The angel Gabriel shows up and teaches Muhammad this verse. You know the one, honey.
I'm paraphrasing ...
'Men are in charge of women ... '

Emily Amir?

Amir (*continuing*)
'If they don't obey ...
Talk to them.
If that doesn't work ...
Don't sleep with them.
And if that doesn't work ... '

(*Turning to **Emily**.)* Em?

Emily I'm not doing this.

Amir 'Beat them.'

Jory I don't remember that being in the Quran.

Amir Oh, it's there alright.

Emily The usual translation is debatable.

Amir Only for people who are trying to make Islam look all warm and fuzzy.

Emily The root verb can mean beat. But it" can also mean leave. So it could be saying, if your wife doesn't listen, leave her. Not beat her.

Isaac Sounds like a pretty big difference.

Amir That's not how it's been interpreted for hundreds of years.

Jory (*suddenly impassioned*) No. See. Sometimes you just have to say no. I don't blame the French.

Isaac The French?

Jory For their problem with Islam.

Isaac You're okay with them banning the veil?

Jory You do have to draw the line somewhere.

Isaac Okay, Mrs Kissinger.

Emily Endearing.

Isaac I'm married to a woman who has a Kissinger quote above her desk in the den ...

Jory 'If faced with choosing justice or order, I'll always choose order.'

Extract 4

Jory (*to Isaac*) Are you having an affair with her? Tell me the truth.

Isaac Honey. I already said. We're not having an affair.

Jory So what the fuck were you doing when I walked in here?

Isaac (*going to his wife*) I was hugging her because she was crying.

Jory Get off me!

Emily I was upset they made you partner.

I know how much longer Amir has been there. I was crying.

Amir *turns to Jory. Vicious.*

Amir First you steal my job and now you try to destroy my marriage? You're fucking evil. After everything I've done for you?

Jory *goes over to get her purse. As if to leave.*

Jory I know what I saw.

Amir (*exploding*) You have any idea how much of myself I've poured into that place? That closet at the end of the hall? Where they keep the cleaning supplies? That was my first office!

Yours had a view of the fucking park! Your first three years? Were you ever at work before anyone else in the morning?

Were you ever the last one to leave? 'Cause if you were, I didn't see it.

I still leave the office after you do! You think you're the nigger here? I'm the nigger! Me!

Isaac (*going to his wife*) You don't need to listen to any more out of this asshole.

Jory (*to Isaac*) Don't touch me.

Amir (*to Isaac*) You're the asshole.

Isaac You better shut your mouth, buddy!

Amir (*to Isaac*) Or what?!

Isaac Or I'll knock you on your fucking ass!

Amir Try me!

Jory (*to Isaac*) GET OFF ME!

Inflamed, Isaac finally releases his wife facing off with Amir.

When suddenly ...

Amir *spits in Isaac's face.*

Isaac *wipes the spit from his face.*

Isaac There's a reason they call you people animals.

