

TANGERINE DISCUSSION GUIDE

- 1 From the early pages, the settings at Bennington College and especially Tangier become central to the story. How do these settings help to reveal the central characters?
- 2 Lucy and Alice seem to be opposites that complement each other in many ways, providing what the other lacks in a kind of “symbiotic” relationship. Break down what each provides to the other and your impressions of this portrayal of female friendship.
- 3 The novel raises themes of memory and the way it can become stories that fit our own narratives. How did this affect how you read this book? Did you feel Alice and Lucy were reliable narrators?
- 4 The novel takes place in the 1950s, and Lucy in particular brushes against the expectations of women to wear dresses instead of pants, get married and stay home instead of having a career. How else does Lucy’s character subvert and rebel against norms?
- 5 The trip to Chefchaouen is a major turning point in the novel. What was your reaction to these events?
- 6 Mangan’s Tangier is one of mint tea and gin and tonic; oppressive heat and crystal blue waters; the thrill of the exotic and also a foreboding threat of danger. Have you visited a place that left a strong impression on you? If you had to describe the mood of that place in three words, what would they be?
- 7 The male characters we see in the novel – primarily John and Youssef – play supporting but important roles. Discuss these characters.
- 8 What conclusions did you make regarding Aunt Maude’s involvement in Alice’s life? Is her guardianship a lifeline or an undoing? Discuss your feelings about Maude’s decision-making, and what you believe to be the motivations and influences guiding her.
- 9 The backdrop of revolutionary fervor in Morocco seems to heighten at key moments in the story of Alice and Lucy. What did you make of this element of the story and how it interplays with the larger themes of the novel?
- 10 The book concludes with a “celebration” of sorts. Discuss your reactions to the ending.

