

Discussion Questions for Interpreter of Maladies by Jhumpa Lahiri

1. One of the requirements for a short story is that the ending should tie up loose ends, while at the same time ending with a revelation or surprise. Do Ms. Lahiri's stories accomplish this goal? Why or why not?
2. A number of the stories deal with the romantic relationships between men and women. Do these stories accurately portray these relationships? Why or why not?
3. All the stories depict lives of Indian people, either in America or in India. Do you believe that the lives of the characters reflect the culture and heritage of India and the struggles some of the characters face adapting to life in the U.S. and Canada?
4. Do Ms. Lahiri's characters reflect the struggles faced by people who immigrate to another country? Why or why not?
5. The main character in the story "Interpreter of Maladies" changes his perceptions of his passengers, the Das family, during the story. What causes him to change his mind about these characters? Do the Das family seem like typical tourists, even though they are originally on Indian descent? Have the Das family become "Americanized" and therefore lost their connection to their original homeland? What is the "malady" being interpreted in this story?
6. Are the characters in these stories fully developed? Why or why not?
7. Which story did you like the best? Please provide examples for why you liked a particular story.