

Book Club Discussion Guide



Peace by Chocolate by Jon Tattrie, Page 1 (April 2022)

Peace by Chocolate: The Hadhad Family's Remarkable Journey from Syria to Canada

By Jon Tattrie

About the author:

Jon Tattrie's books have helped raise a church and topple a statue.

Jon wrote *Peace by Chocolate* through the Master of Fine Arts program at the University of King's College. It tells the true story of how the Hadhad family lost everything in the Syrian war and rebuilt it in Canada. Learn more about them at PeaceByChocolate.ca.

He's the author of six non-fiction books (including a Canadian best seller) and two novels. He works as a journalist for CBC News and has taught journalism at the University of King's College and fiction writing at Dalhousie University. He teaches privately for Dynamic Learning.

Source: Author's website: (<https://www.jontattrie.ca/>)

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About this book:

Tareq Hadhad was worried about his father: Isam did not know what to do with his life. Before the war began in Syria, Isam had run a chocolate company for over twenty years. But that life was gone now. The factory was destroyed, and he and his family had spent three years in limbo as refugees before coming to Canada. So, in an unfamiliar kitchen in a small town, Isam began to make chocolate again.

This remarkable book tells the extraordinary story of the Hadhad family — Isam, his wife Shahnaz, and their sons and daughters — and the founding of the chocolatier, Peace by Chocolate. From the devastation of the Syrian civil war, through their life as refugees in Lebanon, to their arrival in a small town in Atlantic Canada, Peace by Chocolate is the story of one family. It is also the story of the people of Antigonish, Nova Scotia, and so many towns across Canada, who welcomed strangers and helped them face the challenges of settling in an unfamiliar land.

Source: <https://peacebychocolate.ca/>

Discussion Questions:

(General nonfiction questions to get book club discussions off to a good start.)

1. If your book offers a cultural portrait—of life in another country or region of your own country, start with questions a, b, and c:

a. What observations are made in the book? Does the author examine economics and politics family traditions, the arts, religious beliefs, language or food?

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b. Does the author criticize or admire the culture? Does he/she wish to preserve or change the way of life? Either way, what would be risked or gained?

c. What is different from your own culture? What do you find most surprising, intriguing or difficult to understand?

2. What is the central idea discussed in the book? What issues or ideas does the author explore? Are they personal, sociological, global, political, economic, spiritual, medical, or scientific?

3. Do the issues affect your life? How so—directly, on a daily basis, or more generally? Now or sometime in the future?

4. What evidence does the author use to support the book's ideas? Is the evidence convincing...definitive or...speculative? Does the author depend on personal opinion, observation, and assessment? Or is the evidence factual—based on science, statistics, historical documents, or quotations from (credible) experts?

5. What kind of language does the author use? Is it objective and dispassionate? Or passionate and earnest? Is it biased, inflammatory, sarcastic? Does the language help or undercut the author's premise?

6. What are the implications for the future? Are there long- or short-term consequences to the issues raised in the book? Are they positive or negative...affirming or frightening?

7. What solutions does the author propose? Are the author's recommendations concrete, sensible, doable? Who would implement those solutions?

8. How controversial are the issues raised in the book? Who is aligned on which sides of the issues? Where do you fall in that line-up?

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9. Talk about specific passages that struck you as significant—or interesting, profound, amusing, illuminating, disturbing, sad...? What was memorable?

10. What have you learned after reading this book? Has it broadened your perspective about a difficult issue—personal or societal? Has it introduced you to a culture in another country...or an ethnic or regional culture in your own country?

Source: LitLovers (<http://www.litlovers.com>)