

Full Marks for Trying – Reading Group Questions

- At the beginning of *Full Marks for Trying*, Brigid talks about the difficulty of writing a memoir and not making it just ‘about yourself’. In the book, which other people and/or histories are included? And what effect does this have on the book? Can the lines of history and memoir become blurred?
- How important are the other characters in the memoir? Which ones particularly stood out for you and why?
- Brigid describes her close and extensive family, as well as many close friendships. How do you notice these relationships shifting as her career in London blooms?
- The word ‘home’ is very important in *Full Marks for Trying*. Which of Brigid’s many homes do you think affected her most strongly?
- Brigid asks whether ‘is it just that looking back from a distance of over sixty years has coloured it all with a rose tint?’ How are Brigid’s memories depicted in the book? Do you think that memory has this ‘rose-tinting’ effect, making things seem better than they were?
- How are the problems of class and wealth dealt with? Do Brigid’s views seem fixed, or contradictory?
- How is London in the 1960s and the fashion world of that time described in the memoir? Did it make you view the era differently, or confirm your preconceptions?
- Did you have a favourite anecdote? Did any of Brigid’s stories made you laugh out loud? How do you think she achieves her comic effects?
- How are war (the conflict in India and the Vietnam War in particular) and history depicted in the memoir? How formative were Brigid’s early years spent in India? Discuss the portrait she paints of colonial life during the last days of the British Raj and how her perception of this experience might have changed as she grew up.
- Brigid had a successful career from a young age; what do you think young women today can learn from her experiences?



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