

**ONLY THIS BEAUTIFUL MOMENT / BY: ABDI NAZEMIAN**

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. In Iran, Moud finds some peace in not being on social media. On page 108, Ava suggests, “maybe not documenting every moment allows us to, I don’t know, be in the moment.” Consider the social media engagement of Moud, Ava, and Shane. How does social media impact their sense of self-worth, belonging, and pride? What connections and/or dissonances do you see between the way social media is discussed in the book and your own perceptions of it?
2. Upon learning about Moud’s name change, Hasan Agha responds, “What is the story behind your name? What history do you carry?” (p. 81) Consider your own name and the story behind it. How does it make you feel? What history do you carry?
3. Moud spends the novel trying to figure out where he “fits” as a gay Iranian-American teenager. How do his identities, cultural background, and life experiences impact his feelings “fitting in” in different contexts? How do these feelings shift throughout the novel?
4. How is Saeed from 1978 different from Saeed in 2019? What has prompted these changes?
5. What ideals and advice does Zip instil in Bobby? What does he implore Bobby to do when he becomes a man? What evidence is there that Baba followed this advice? Who, in your life, is a mentor?
6. In terms of your relationships with friends and family, what are your biggest take aways from “Only This Beautiful Moment”? Share in a reflection.
7. How is resilience an important theme of “Only This Beautiful Moment”?
8. Discuss the significance of the title, “Only This Beautiful Moment”. When do Moud, Saeed and Bobby each experience their beautiful moments? When have you had your beautiful moments? Share in a reflection.
9. Why does Baba say, ‘The things you regret are the things you don’t do, not the things you do’ (p. 384). How has this been true in your own life?
10. When Saeed discovers the truth about his parents in 1978, he describes it as follows: ‘The ground under us shifts, the earth reorients itself. A new past emerges. A strange and frightening history. This isn’t a conversation. It’s a seismic event. My life will never be the same’ (p. 181). In the role of Saeed, write a present-day reflection about these thoughts you had as a younger man, now that you have the benefit of hindsight.
11. How is Bahar different from Shirin? Why is the love between her and Saeed different from his love for Shirin? How does Bahar help Saeed to find himself?