

JASMINE ZUMIDEH

NEEDS A WIN

SUSAN AZIM
BOYER

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you think Jasmine's "little white lie" on her college application is justified? Have you ever told a lie you considered justified? What were the consequences?
2. Jasmine faces hostile behavior from her classmates, but she also experiences microaggressions from her friends. How does this dynamic affect her friendships and her feelings about her place in her school community?
3. Put yourself in Jasmine's shoes. Would you lie on your application? Pretend Ali wasn't your brother? Spread a rumor about Gerald? Keep the truth from Bridget? Would there be any point at which you would come clean and tell the truth? Or do you see lying as a necessary means to getting out of a place that stifles you?
4. Between the Watergate scandal, in which the president authorized a break-in to his opponent's headquarters, and her father's affair, Jasmine paints a picture of a culture of dishonesty. Do you think Jasmine's behavior can be explained away as a product of this culture, or does she have an obligation to the truth no matter what? How would you characterize our culture today?
5. Discuss the idea of family and how those bonds affect Jasmine. Each of Jasmine's parents has a hand in neglecting Jasmine and Ali, in their own way. How do you think this affects Jasmine's sense of identity and feeling of belonging? How do you think it affects her relationship with Ali? What role does Amme Minah play in the book?
6. The toxic situation that erupts between the US and Iran drastically changes Jasmine's life. Are there any pivotal points in your life, or in history, that you feel have affected your life forever? Have you experienced media events or headlines that have made you feel ashamed like Jasmine does?
7. Did you think Jasmine deserved to win or lose the election? What do you think she learned from the experience?
8. Discuss the time period. Do you think Jasmine's story would have played out in a similar way if the same global events happened today? Why or why not?
9. Jasmine often feels caught between two labels or ideas—Iranian and American, an aspiring music journalist but stuck in her hometown. How does she show her frustration, and how do these labels or ideas cause additional tension in the novel?

