



The Beauty of Your Face, W.W. Norton
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Reading Group Guide
Discussion Questions

1. The novel opens with Afaf receiving a parental complaint about *The Great Gatsby*. What does this phone call tell the reader about the Muslim community in which Afaf lives and works? What does her response to the parent say about her position within the community?
2. In what ways does blame act as a force of destruction in the book, both physically and emotionally?
3. When Nada disappears, Afaf's family is fractured and Mama pushes Afaf and Majeed further away, acting with some resentment toward them. What damage does this do to the family as a whole, and to each individual member of the family? How are they able to reconcile?
4. The town of Tempest rejects a proposal to turn the vacant convent into a school for Muslim children despite the building's long history steeped in community outreach and religion. After the school opens, it receives bomb threats and is vandalized. Why does acceptance of the Muslim community seem so difficult for Tempest? How does misunderstanding a religion or culture hurt the community at large?

5. Afaf spends much of her childhood and teenage years searching for belonging, in her family, in school, in her community. How does finding Islam provide her with a sense of belonging? In what ways does it fill in the gaps left by Nada's disappearance and Mama's indifference?
6. The shooter is never named in the novel. What is the purpose of this, and why is it significant? Is there a sense of power in not knowing his name? Why does or doesn't it work?
7. At Afaf's hijab celebration, she reflects that "before she could fathom His great bounty, she had loved these women first, could touch and gather their kindness in her hands, could wrap herself in their grace until she could start to love herself again" (p. 000). What is the power of a female community that Islam produces? How do the women serve as catalysts for Afaf's transformation?
8. Where does Afaf find strength to endure the xenophobia and hatred she experiences after putting on the hijab? Does her faith help in this endeavor? Why or why not?
9. Afaf, Majeed, and Nada diverge onto very distinct paths in their adult lives. What might this convey about the complexity of their family dynamics? How do their choices impact their sibling relationships?
10. Why present Afaf's interaction with the shooter from both perspectives? What does this achieve?