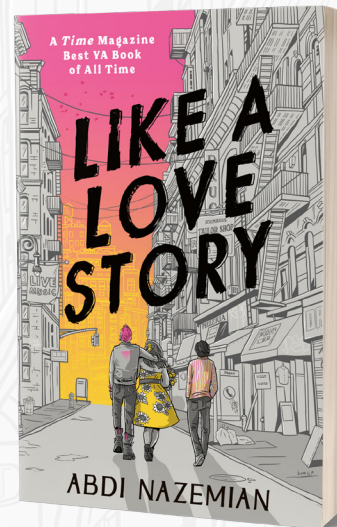


LIKE A LOVE STORY

TEEN BOOK CLUB DISCUSSION GUIDE

From a Stonewall Honor-winning author comes a bighearted, sprawling epic about friendship and love and the revolutionary act of living life to the fullest in the face of impossible odds. Perfect for fans of *Last Night at the Telegraph Club*, *The Black Flamingo* and *If You Still Recognise Me*.



It's 1989 in **New York City**, and for three teens, the world is changing.

Reza is an Iranian boy who has just moved to the city with his mother to live with his stepfather and stepbrother. He's terrified that someone will guess the truth he can barely acknowledge about himself. Reza knows he's gay, but all he knows of gay life are the media's images of men dying of AIDS.

Judy is an aspiring fashion designer who worships her uncle Stephen, a gay man with AIDS who devotes his time to activism as a member of ACT UP. Judy has never imagined finding romance . . . until she falls for Reza and they start dating.

Art is Judy's best friend, their school's only out and proud teen. He'll never be who his conservative parents want him to be, so he rebels by documenting the AIDS crisis through his photographs.

As Reza and Art grow closer, Reza struggles to find a way out of his deception that won't break Judy's heart – and destroy the most meaningful friendship he's ever known.

A Time Magazine Best YA Book of all Time



Abdi Nazemian is the author of *Only This Beautiful Moment* (a Stonewall Award Winner), *Like a Love Story* (a Stonewall Honor book), *The Chandler Legacies* and *The Authentics*. His novel *The Walk-In Closet* won the Lambda Literary Award for LGBT Debut Fiction. His screenwriting credits include the films *The Artist's Wife* and *The Quiet*, and the television series *The Village* and *Ordinary Joe*. He has been an executive producer and associate producer on numerous films, including *Call Me by Your Name*, *Little Woods*, and *The House of Tomorrow*. He lives in Los Angeles with his husband, their two children, and their dog, Disco. Find him online at www.abdinazemian.com

BOOK CLUB DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1.** Like a Love Story takes place during the AIDS crisis in the 1980s. What do you know about the AIDS crisis, and how did you learn about it?
- 2.** Protest is key in the story, with the characters taking part in ACT UP's action to stand up against discrimination and fight for affordable health care. What are the causes you care about? How could you support and further them?
- 3.** Art and Reza's favourite artist Madonna is described in the book as a 'revolution in every sense' and says that 'the opposite of shame is Madonna'. What do you know about Madonna? Do you know her music?
- 4.** Do you have a favourite musician and what do they mean to you? Can you think of other artists who have had a big impact in terms of celebrating and supporting the LGBTQ+ community?
- 5.** Uncle Stephen's film nights are a tradition for our main characters, but they develop into new traditions as they become adults. Do you have traditions with your friends or family? What are they and what do they mean to you?
- 6.** After seeing a film, Art states: "This is a gay film. And I want things labelled as gay. Books and movies and all that. Don't we deserve our own stories?" while Reza hope it won't be "just a gay movie" and that "the people who need to see this movie" will see it. What do you think about the labelling of art in this way? And to whom do you think Reza is referring to when he says, "the people who need to see this movie"?
- 7.** Judy aspires to be a fashion designer and loves to make clothes. Are you interested in fashion? What do you want your clothes to say about you?
- 8.** Art loves photography and uses it to capture the work of ACT UP. He says his 'photos are full of anger'. Do you have a hobby that you're passionate about? Is there anything you want to say with your hobby and/or why do you enjoy it?
- 9.** The idea of found family is at the heart of the story, with the characters supporting each other when their biological families let them down. What does 'found family' mean to you? Who do you choose to spend your time with?
- 10.** Art leaves us with a parting lesson from Stephen: "You are not alone and never will be, because you have a beautiful, constantly evolving history full of ghosts who are watching over you, who are proud of you ... there's no future without a past." What does this mean to you? Why is it important to know your history? Think about what history you may not have been taught, why it might have been left out of the mainstream, and how you could learn more.