

NO ORDINARY LIFE

Discussion Questions

1. Do you think Faye is a good mother, a good person? Do you think she failed Emily?
2. Faye was Molly's manager, and sometimes the line between doing what was right for Molly her daughter and doing what was right for Molly the star became blurred. Do you think Faye handled the double role well?
3. Sean was an opportunist who returned to ride the coattails of Molly's success. Faye protected the kids from the truth of why he came back as well as the truth about why he left in the first place. Do you think this was the right thing to do? Do children see themselves as a reflection of their parents? If so, is it better for them to view their parents in the best light?
4. What do you think of Sean? Do you sympathize with him at all? Were his motives entirely selfish or do you think he returned hoping for reconciliation? Did he redeem himself by walking away? Do you think he is out of their lives forever?
5. Was Faye to blame for Emily's rape? Sean? If Emily had not been raped, how do you think the story would have played out?
6. Everyone wanted something from Molly. How much is too much? Should Faye have brought Molly to the suicide scene to save Ethan? Is Faye to blame for his death?
7. By sabotaging the show, Faye betrayed Tom, who had found his place in the world and was thriving. Do you think Tom will revert back into his shell or continue to thrive? Did Faye choose the welfare of Emily over the welfare of Tom? If Tom discovers what Faye did, how will it affect him? Will he be able to forgive her?
8. What do you think lies ahead for Molly? Will her celebrity follow her or will she be able to return to a "normal" life?
9. As Faye discovers, celebrity is more than just fame. With it comes money, power, privilege, and enormous responsibility, along with lack of privacy, danger, and stress. Do you think, had Faye realized what she was signing up for, she would have been more equipped to protect her family? Or do you think, regardless of how aware she was of the perils, celebrity by its very nature is corruptive?
10. The media played a significant role in the story. How do you feel about the way the media pursues celebrities? Do you think there should be boundaries? What about those celebrities who are under eighteen or those who are famous by association but who didn't choose to be famous—siblings, parents, the children of celebrities?
11. A disproportionate number of child stars have issues. Do you think their celebrity causes them to struggle or are people who choose to be celebrities predisposed to having difficulties? If you believe it is the first, what do you think can be done to protect child actors and their families from the dangers of stardom?
12. Does it affect your impression of the story to know that much of it is semibiographical—based on the stories of real child stars? Has your perception of child stardom changed?

13. How do you feel about Faye implicating Mitten for something he didn't do? Do you think the end justified the means? Do you think there was another way?
14. Faye frames Beth for leaking the images of Mitten and Gabby. Do you have sympathy for Beth or do you think she got what she deserved?
15. Graciela (Gabby's mom) admitted she sold her daughter for a better life. Is there some validity to this? Is it okay for a child to sacrifice some or all of their childhood to provide better circumstances and a more promising future for the family? How would you feel about your child being the provider of the family? How would it change the family dynamic? How much sacrifice is too much—free time, friends, sports, education, innocence?
16. The way the laws are currently written, a child star can end up with little or none of the money they earn. The Coogan Law requires that fifteen percent of a minor's earnings be set aside in a trust until they turn eighteen. Do you think this is enough? Should parents be able to manage the remainder of the money or should an independent party be responsible? Should parents/siblings be compensated because the child actor's celebrity affects them as well?
17. Molly is discovered through a YouTube video. Do you think there should be regulations on posting images of someone without their consent?
18. Have you ever experienced celebrity? If so, how did it affect you and those around you? Most of us want to be acknowledged as special or for doing something well, but do you crave fame? Would you rather have constant recognition or anonymity?
19. After reading this story, do you feel differently about celebrities? Who is the most famous person you've met? What was the experience like? How do you think the experience was for them?
20. Who was your favorite character? Why?
21. Movie time: Who would you like to see play each part?