

Nomadland Film and Book Discussion Questions

TITLE: *Nomadland*

SUBTITLE: *Surviving America in the Twenty-First Century*

AUTHOR: Jessica Bruder

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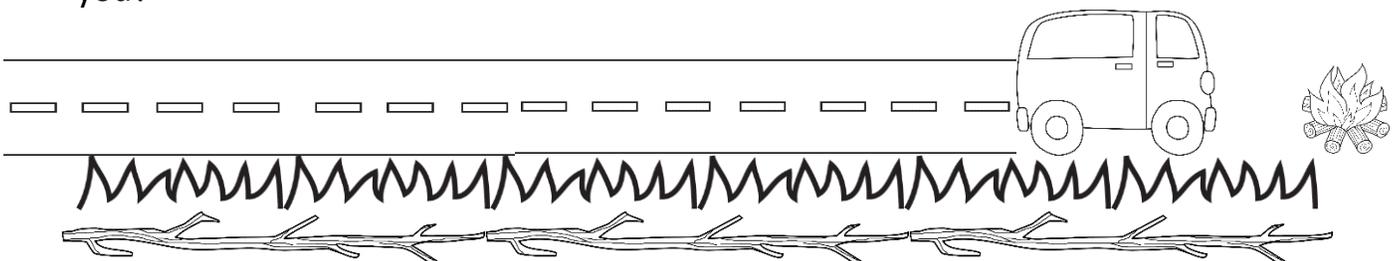
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Film Discussion Questions

1. A beginning scene is when Fern is putting many of her belongings into storage. And ending scene is when she parts with them. Discuss her experiences leading to having few belongings.
2. When did the town of Empire close down? Why?
3. Later in the movie, what reason did Fern give for remaining in Empire, Nevada, for some time after her husband died?
4. What were some of Fern's seasonal jobs? How did she travel and live at the various locations? What did you think about the scene with the 2 gallon, 5 gallon, and 7-gallon containers? How do you imagine nomads like Fern can exist without running water?
5. In one scene, Fern is giving a haircut outside to another nomad. What comforts of home do nomads have to do without? Could you live that way?
6. Discuss the various friends Fern has along the road and some of their conversations about why they have become nomads.
7. Discuss the relationship between Dave and Fern. Why do you think Fern did not choose to live in the guest house and kept traveling after looking closely at the main house when everyone was asleep?
8. Discuss Fern's relationship with her sister Dolly. What was Dolly's viewpoint? What was Fern's viewpoint?
9. What did you think about people gathering around a fire in Swanky's memory? Why did they throw rocks in the fire?
10. Fern visits the ghost town, factory, and her former home. How did those scenes impact you?



Book Discussion Questions

1. Discuss the many things Jessica Bruder researched to write the book, even working at Amazon and the beet harvest. How difficult do you imagine it was to prepare for writing the book?
2. Discuss the ways the book and film presented the story differently. Of course, books and movie adaptations are always different. What was striking about the nonfiction information in the book, especially regarding the work conditions?
3. What precipitated the move to vans, cars, and RVs for most of the people Bruder interviewed? Had you realized how the economic downturn had affected such people before learning these facts?
4. Bruder realized that even Boston, where she was from, had some similar situations as she looked around at vans and so on when she returned? What did she notice that were "tells" for the nomadic lifestyle? (Are you looking at vans and RVs differently now?)
5. What were some of the jobs and hardships associated with the work? What does Amazon call these temporary workers? How are the jobs advertised?
6. Why do some businesses and parks hire older people?
7. There is some discussion in the book that nomads are primarily white people. What problems would people of color face living a nomadic lifestyle?
8. What were some of the terms people used, such as "vanily?" What names did they give their homes on wheels? What were some of the jokes about living as nomads?
9. What books were passed around from person to person? Why were those authors and titles popular?
10. Several of the people interviewed have blogs. Did you find any of them online? What do they teach? What were some of the lessons taught at Rubber Tramp Rendezvous? How else did the community help each other?

