



NANCY: This beautifully written story of a new relationship, tested by disastrous, displacing life events creates a window into the struggles that many face these days on our planet. With over 66 million displaced people and 22 million refugees worldwide, this story becomes a commonplace life for so many, yet so disturbing and unknown to so many of us. So gently, the story guided us into places that open our eyes and provoke concern. I worry that my country provides less and less of an open door for the people confronted with war and weather tragedy.



PRISCILLA: I was impressed with Saeed and his determination to not have sex before marriage. Good for him! Don't you like a story when someone keeps their values even during a rough time? And he always was praying, as well. Do you think he was Christian? They didn't really say. Why didn't he explain that?



SALLIE: The displacement of people worldwide is alarming. And over half of those displaced are children. My heart goes out to them. Kudos to Hamid for writing about this important topic. It's so easy to forget or close our eyes to the suffering of people without a home. I used to work for the Church of the Brethren's Refugee Center. Many people do get relocated and start new lives, but that's a difficult process. And with our immigration policies now? Very hard.



ABIGAIL: Did you catch the reference to non natives, once they got to the USA? It was very subtle, but he talked about how the non-natives have such a negative attitude toward the newcomers. He said it was hard to understand, because the non-natives didn't belong here either. That's the difficulty I have with the American policy on immigration today. Why so harsh now? Think about our ancestors.



MOLLY: I found it interesting how he described the former slave family in the USA. They were very accepting of him, because someone married a person from his country. Did you notice how the identities were rather understated and I think obviously so? There's a lot happening just below the surface of this story. Layers of reality and subtle commentary. I liked the book very much.



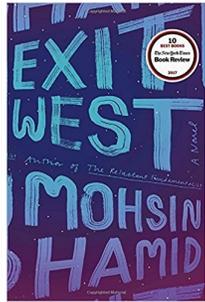
KATHARINE: So many connections to what's going on around the world today. Syria, climate change, Muslim displacement, climate migration, genocide, struggle, making room for the displaced. Again, I can see this book helpful for college classes in history, geography, political science and even religion. I believe Saeed was Muslim, Priscilla. Muslims pray a lot. Did you know?



JANE: Well, they were quite enterprising, Saeed and Nadia, don't you think? They managed to get out of one bad situation after another. But I suppose they are the exceptions more than the rule. Such a hard experience for them. I can only imagine what it's like for others. Should we be doing something about this? Maybe our churches are doing something and we can get involved?



Discussion Guide



About the Book

Book Title: Exit West

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Questions for Discussion

1. What were your general impressions of this book?
2. In this novel, Hamid explores the topic of displacement and refugee migration. In 2018, the UN reports there are 65.6 million people displaced worldwide. How much do you know about displacement? In what ways did this book enlighten your view?
3. Have you known people who experienced war in their neighborhood and/or who were displaced from their country? If so, how have their experiences been similar or different?
4. How did Hamid portray the places Saeed and Nadia lived? How were these places different and the same? Mykonos, London, Marin.
5. What did you think of the symbolizism of “the door”. Listen to the Magical novel interview below. What does the door mean mean to you?
6. In this interview, the author also says we’re all migrants. What do you make of that idea?
7. How would you describe Hamid’s form of writing? Why do you think this book has been on the New York Times best seller list and is winning awards?
8. If you wrote your own autobiography, what would you call it and what would you write about?
9. Read over the MAMs comments on the book. Which of them do you most agree with and why?
10. In what ways, if any, will this change your life or perspective?

Watch these videos of Moshid on YouTube:

“Magical novel 'Exit West' explores what makes refugees leave home” (PBS Interview)

“Aspen Words Presents: Mohsin Hamid”