

Exit West (Hamid) - Discussion Questions

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Discussion Questions

We'll add publisher questions if and when they're available; in the meantime, please use our LitLovers talking points to start a discussion for Exit West...then take off on your own:

1. In what way does war distort everyday life for those who live in its midst? How does Mohsin Hamid convey the fear of truck bombs and snipers, armed checkpoints and surveillance drones? What effect does it have on the people who live through it? Have you ever lived in a war zone?
2. Describe Nadia and Saeed, their outward personalities and inner thoughts. Nadia is more driven, perhaps, while Saeed is more introspective. What attracts them to one another?
3. After the two leave home, they end up in a makeshift refugee camp. Talk about what that was like?
4. In the couple's attempts to immigrate to other countries and other continents, Hamid writes, "It was said in those days that the passage was both like dying and like being born." What do you think he means?
5. Why do you think the author uses the device of a magical door, almost as if purposely recalling C.S. Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*? In what way is crossing territories, always under threat of thirst, punishing heat and sun, or frigid nights, comparable to stepping through a magic door?
6. Saeed continues to pray. What is he praying for? What does he believe prayer is about?
7. How does the hardship of exile change Saeed? How does it change Nadia, who seems more adaptable? Most of all, how does it test—and ultimately change—their relationship?
8. The primary story of Nadia and Saeed is interrupted with stories of threats and travails in other corners of the world. For what purpose might Hamid have interjected those brief scenarios?
9. How does each new home they settle in receive the couple? How are they made to feel? How well do they blend in to the existing cultures and population?

10. What does one of the book's final declarations mean: "We are all migrants through time."

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