

NATIONAL BOOK CLUBS

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LEAVE THE WORLD BEHIND by Rumaan Alam Discussion Questions

1. What were your first impressions of Amanda and Clay? Ruth and G. H.? Did your understanding of them change as the novel progressed, or did they uphold your initial expectations?
2. At the beginning of the novel, Amanda makes a grocery list. How may this list reflect her background and her hopes for the days ahead? Think of a trip or a vacation you've taken in recent years and how you prepared for it. What do you think your approach to planning a trip says about you? How is it similar or different from Amanda's approach?
3. Leave the World Behind is a work of fiction, written before the COVID-19 outbreak and the societal uprisings that have shaped 2020. If you had read the novel before 2020, do you think you would have had a different response to it? If so, in what way?
4. For much of the novel, Amanda, Clay, Ruth, and G. H. can't agree on whether or not they are truly in danger. Why do you think they found it so hard to assess their situation? What would you have done if you were in the shoes of Amanda and Clay? Ruth and G. H.?
5. Ruth and G. H. are separated from their daughter and grandsons for the duration of the crisis, while Amanda and Clay have their kids with them. Do you think that changes their response to the situation they are facing together?
6. How do you think the children, Archie and Rose, see the world in comparison to their parents? Do they share a similar vision of it? If not, how so?
7. In Leave the World Behind, the families grapple with the sudden loss of communications technology—cell phone, internet, and satellite services all fail. What is your relationship to technology? Do you embrace it? Do you wish our society handled its role in our lives differently?
8. This novel pairs two couples together who are from different demographic backgrounds in terms of race and wealth. How did those qualities impact the way they interact with one another?



9. What do you think this book says about the role of friends and neighbors? Do you think these characters will have to fend for themselves, or is there hope that they will have others to lean on? What do you think happens to these families after the book ends?