



# FRIENDS OF THE PALM SPRINGS LIBRARY BOOK CLUB

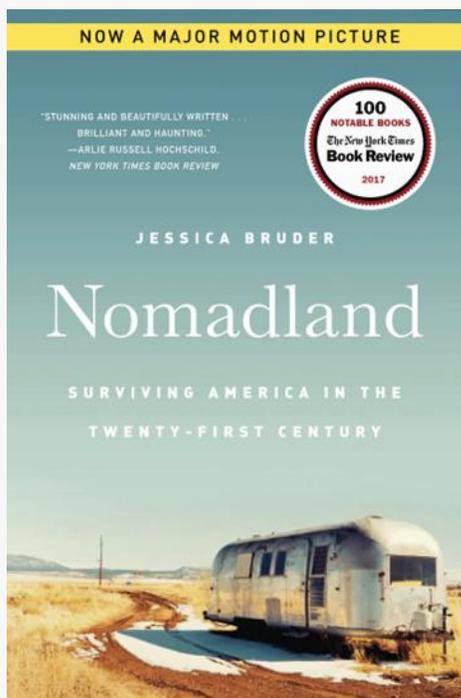
FOPSL Book Club: October 15, 2021

Book: *Nomadland*

Author: Jessica Bruder

Discussion leader: Ruth Lindemann

## Ruth Lindemann Leads Discussion of *Nomadland*



Summary of Friends of the Library Book Club, October 15. Ten people attended this meeting via Zoom.

Ruth Lindemann led the discussion of this month's selection, *Nomadland* by Jessica Bruder, beginning with biographical information about Bruder, a journalist. A couple of participants noted the similarity between this book and *Nickel and Dimed* by Barbara Ehrenreich; in both cases the writers immersed themselves in the lives of their subjects in order to get a more in-depth and accurate look.

Readers were impressed with the sense of community among the "nomads," how they were supportive and sharing even when many of them had little to share. They were compared to pioneers in that they worked cooperatively along the way, although the pioneers usually had a specific destination in mind where they hoped to settle permanently.

Some of the readers had seen the movie, and we discussed the differences between the two, including how the land itself is a character and has more impact in the film than the book.

We also discussed the contrast of the romanticism and "lure of the open road" with the actual experiences of most of these nomads. Participants noted the difference between people who can afford to have a home base and travel around the country in RVs for adventure and relaxation and those who, because of economic hardship, must travel in order to find jobs, to be nearer to family at times, or to escape bad weather. The consensus was that the author did a good job of showing this objectively. A few people said that the movie "glamorized" this lifestyle more than the book did.

One topic that generated much discussion was the strenuous, sometimes brutal work that these people—many of them senior citizens—engaged in, in order to afford gas and supplies to move on. Many worked at Amazon and walked miles every day on concrete floors, sometimes in 100°-plus temperatures. Others worked in beet factories, which sounded equally if not more unpleasant.

We also discussed Linda May, who played herself in the movie and attended the Academy Awards ceremony. The popularity of the book and movie changed her life dramatically; she is now worth millions of dollars and has bought acreage in Taos, NM, rather than building her Earthship in Douglas. She is still living "off the grid," however.

Overall, this book appeared to be one that was enjoyed by all discussion participants.

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Friends of the Palm Springs Library Book Club meets online

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