



THROUGH THE LENS

Movie Discussion Guide: Nomadland

Nomadland is a 2020 American drama film based on the 2017 non-fiction book, *Nomadland: Surviving America in the Twenty-First Century* by Jessica Bruder. The film is written, produced, directed, and edited by Chloe Zhao, and stars Frances McDormand as a van-dwelling, working nomad who leaves her hometown after her husband dies and the sole industry closes down, to be “houseless” and travel around the United States. David Strathairn also stars in a supporting role. A number of real-life nomads appear as fictionalized versions of themselves, including Linda May, Swankie, and Bob Wells.

Discussion Questions:

- What are some reasons Fern is living as she is?
- What are some reasons Bob and others in this community identify as to why they are living as they are?
- Can you relate in any way?
- Why do you think Fern decided not to return to a more ‘normal’ lifestyle?
- What are some advantages of the kind of community they experienced?
- Does that lifestyle appeal to you at all?
- What is your emotional response to *Nomadland*?