

Further Reading

Rich and Pretty
Rumaan Alam (2016)
ALAM

Forging a deep bond throughout their shared childhood, college years, first jobs and first loves, Sarah and Lauren experience secret envy and horror over aspects of each other's lives before the realities of their disparate responsibilities challenge them to retain their bond from increasingly distant perspectives.

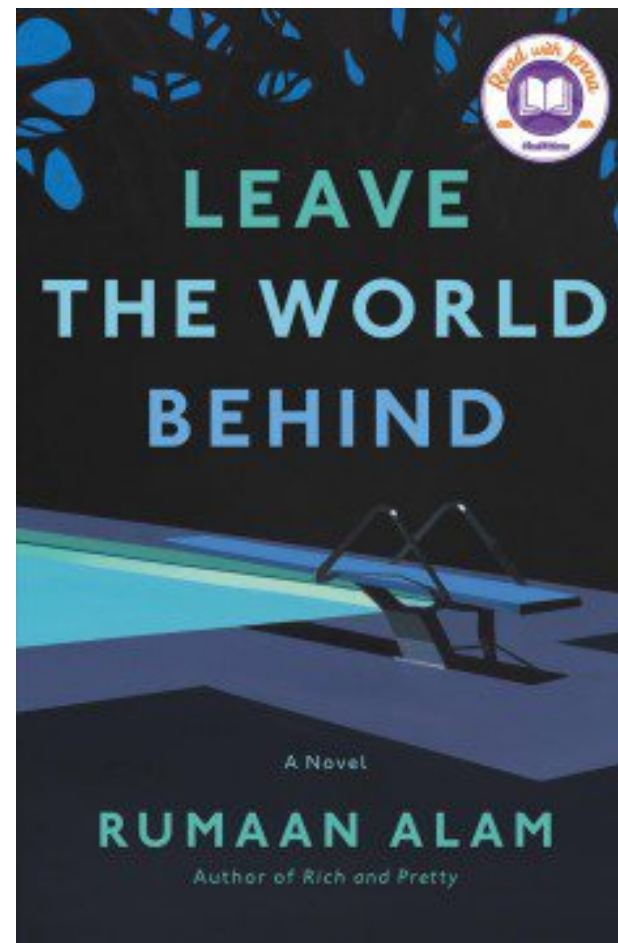
The Snakes
Sadie Jones (2019)
JONES

A family visit at a snake-infested hotel in Burgundy is complicated by a new husband's insecurities about his psychologist wife's wealthy parents, difficult personal secrets and a brutal tragedy.

The Cabin at the End of the World
Paul Tremblay (2018)
HORROR TREMBLAY

A family vacationing at a remote cabin on a quiet New Hampshire lake faces a home invasion by four strangers carrying menacing but unidentifiable objects who claim to be acting to save the world.

Book Discussion Guide



About the Book

Amanda and Clay head out to a remote corner of Long Island expecting a vacation: a quiet reprieve from life in New York City. Ruth and G. H. are an older couple—it's their house, and they've arrived in a panic. They bring the news that a sudden blackout has swept the city. But in this rural area—with the TV and internet now down, and no cell phone service—it's hard to know what to believe. Should Amanda and Clay trust this couple—and vice versa? What happened back in New York? Is the vacation home, isolated from civilization, a truly safe place for their families? And are they safe from one another?

Discussion Questions

1. The book starts off very domestic. We read about Amanda and Clay's trip to the house in the country, going to the grocery, making dinner, having vacation sex, etc. Why do you think the author started off the book in this way? Do you think having the book start off simple really makes it more impactful when that's all taken away later on?
2. Everything changes when G.H. and Ruth arrive to the house. What were your initial thoughts as this scene unfolded?
3. Right away, Amanda distrusts G.H. and Ruth—she even thinks they're faking being the owners at one point. What did the introduction of G.H. and Ruth reveal about Amanda and Clay's true nature?
4. The characters are literally in the dark on what is happening to the city, and to the country. What would you have done if you were any of the characters? Would you have stayed in the house and waited or would you have ventured out to see what was happening?
5. With the couples stuck at the house, there's a focus on the bigger issue but it also reveals more about true personalities, parenting styles and such. Which, out of G.H., Ruth, Amanda and Clay, did you find the most interesting? How did their relationships evolve as the book went on?
6. What did you think about Archie and Rose and their reactions to everything going on around them compared to the adults?
7. When did the novel devolve from domestic fiction to dystopian fiction? What did you think about the scene with the first loud noise?
8. The adults try to figure out what's happening—war, a hurricane, plane crashes, etc. At the same time, the author gives little hints that the world is very much on fire—people dying, camps, never going back home again, etc. As you read the novel, what did you think was actually happening?
9. We never really got the answer to what the disaster was. Did that bother you it was an open-ending? Why do you think the author made the choice not to detail the disaster?
10. Some say that the ending with Rose finding the house with DVDs is hopeful in a way—that while the adults are panicking, she tries to find a solution. What are your thoughts about this?
11. The author did not write this story with the 2020 pandemic in mind. What was it like for you to read this during our own pandemic? Did it make the novel more scary or was it oddly comforting in a way? Let's chat about this.

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