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## Suggested Reads

*The Moor's Tale*  
**Leila Lalami**

*Miracle Creek*  
**Angie Kim**

*Exit West*  
**Mohsin Hamid**

*Afterlife*  
**Julia Alvarez**

*On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*  
**Ocean Vuong**

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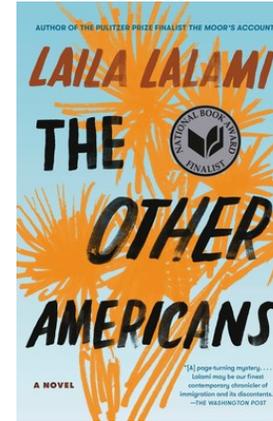
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## A Novel Idea Book Club Discussion Questions



### From the Author's Website

Late one spring night, Driss Guerraoui, a Moroccan immigrant in California, is walking across a darkened intersection when he is killed by a speeding car. The repercussions of his death bring together a diverse cast of characters: Guerraoui's daughter Nora, a jazz composer who returns to the small town in the Mojave she thought she'd left for good; his widow Maryam, who still pines after her life in the old country; Efrain, an undocumented witness whose fear of deportation prevents him from coming forward; Jeremy, a former classmate of Nora's and a veteran of the Iraq war; Coleman, a detective who is slowly discovering her son's secrets; Anderson, a neighbor trying to reconnect with his family; and the murdered man himself.

Driss's family confronts its secrets, a town faces its hypocrisies, and love—messy and unpredictable—is born. Timely, riveting, and unforgettable, *The Other Americans* is at once a family saga, a murder mystery, and a love story informed by the treacherous fault lines of American culture.



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## Discussion Topics

1. *The Other Americans* is at its heart an immigrant story. How do you interpret the concept of “home” in this novel?
2. How is *The Other Americans* a novel about storytelling and the importance of stories, everyone’s stories? And the importance of telling and listening to stories?
3. Everyone in the novel is an outsider in some way. How? Discuss each of the characters and their place as outsider or “other,” whether it is by race, religion, or class.
4. “How strange the work of memory . . . what some people remembered and others forgot.” (p. 138) Comment on this quote in relation to the novel as a whole.
5. How is this a general tale of our time and a story specific to its place, Southern California? Describe the setting. How does nature (and in particular the Mojave Desert and the Joshua Tree National Park), play a part in the novel?
6. Why do you think Lalami tells this story using many different voices and writing in the first person for each voice? And why does she turn to the second person for Salma’s chapter? How does this affect your reading? How do you relate to the various characters?
7. What does it mean to you to be an American?

**ADAPTED FROM PENGUIN RANDOM  
HOUSE READERS GUIDE**

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## Author Biography

Laila Lalami was born in Rabat and educated in Morocco, Great Britain, and the United States.

She is the author of four novels, including *The Moor’s Account*, which won the American Book Award, the Arab-American Book Award, the Hurston/Wright Legacy Award and was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in Fiction. Her most

recent novel, *The Other Americans*, was a *Los Angeles Times* bestseller, a best-of-2019 selection from NPR, *Time*, and *Kirkus*, and a finalist for the National Book Award in Fiction.

Her essays and criticism have appeared in the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Washington Post*, *The Nation*, *Harper’s*, the *Guardian*, and the *New York Times*. She has received fellowships from the British Council, the Fulbright Program, and the Guggenheim Foundation and is currently a full professor of creative writing at the University of California at Riverside.

She lives in Los Angeles. Her new book, a work of nonfiction called *Conditional Citizens*, will be published by Pantheon in Fall 2020.

**FROM THE AUTHOR’S WEBSITE  
PHOTO FROM THE AUTHOR’S WEBSITE**

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