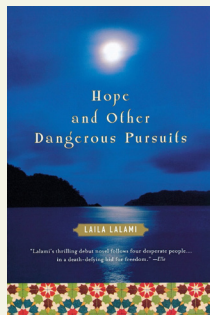


# In Reading Groups

Book Discussion Guide from the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship

by Elizabeth Andrasi Deere



## *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits*

by Laila Lalami

Four Moroccans illegally cross the Strait of Gibraltar in an inflatable boat headed for Spain, each with his or her own story. What propels them to risk their lives in search of a better future?

### Part I: Before

1. Can you imagine yourself in the boat with Murad, Halima, Aziz, Faten, and the rest of the travelers? What are you feeling? What would have spurred you to seek refuge in another country? What do you see? Smell? Hear? Physically feel? Do you taste anything? Do you say anything?
2. As you read, consider if there are any characters you relate to. To whom do you relate? In what ways?
3. In what ways is hope dangerous? What are other dangerous pursuits throughout the book? Should hope be dangerous? Should these other pursuits?
4. Who is labeled The Fanatic? What influence does she have on those around her? How is she treated? Where is her hope?

5. Whether or not a woman wears a hijab is a recurring theme throughout the book; pay attention to this as you read. What are the different attitudes about whether or not one should?
6. A second theme is joblessness. How does this affect the characters and the people in their lives?
7. What do we learn about Halima in the chapter, Bus Rides? What is her life like? Describe her character. Where is her hope?
8. Who do we learn about in the chapter titled Acceptance? What is his life like? How is he treated? Where is his hope?
9. What do we learn about Murad in the chapter, Better Luck Tomorrow? How does he fit into his family? Into the world? Where is his hope?

10. Why does each character decide to get in the small boat where we first meet them?
11. Are there any scenes that are particularly striking? Which ones? Why do they stand out?
12. What do you notice about the other people in the main characters' lives? Is anything surprising or intriguing to you?

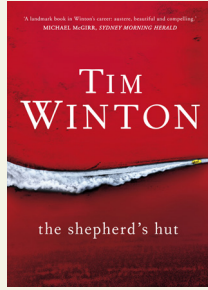
### Part II: After

Consider what has shifted in the identities of the four main characters as their story moves along. Pay attention to themes of nostalgia and consider how the main characters remember and interact with their culture in their lives now.

13. Where is Halima when we meet her again? How is she received? How is her life? Where is her hope?
14. How is Faten surviving after the boat ride? What are her relationships like? How does she remember life before the boat ride? Where is her hope?
15. What has Aziz's life been like since we last heard from him? How is he treated at the airport? How is he treated at home? What has changed since he left?

# NEXT MONTH

16. Where is Murad when you meet him again? What is his life like at home before he finds work? Where is his hope as the book ends?
17. Laila Lalami, the author, writes convincing dialogue, revealing inner monologues, and creates vivid descriptions of the setting where her diverse characters find themselves. How did her words pull you into the story? What different emotions did you experience? What will you carry with you from this book?



## *The Shepherd's Hut*

by Tim Winton

Jaxie Clackton flees from the scene of his father's violent death and strikes out for the vast wilds of Western Australia. But once he discovers he's not alone out there, all Jaxie's plans go awry. He meets a fellow exile, the ruined priest Fintan MacGillis, a man on whom his life will soon depend.

**Elizabeth Andrasi Deere** is a freelance writer and editor who lives in Charlottesville, Virginia, with her husband and puppy. A native Texan, she graduated from Truett Theological Seminary in May of 2016.