

Movies & Languages 2021-2022

Nomadland

About the movie (subtitled version)

DIRECTOR	Chloé Zhao
YEAR/COUNTRY	2020/ USA
GENRE	Drama / modern day “Western”
ACTORS	Frances McDormand, David Strathairn, Bob Wells, Linda May, Swankie



PLOT

The film is based on the book: “Nomadland, Surviving America in the 21st Century” by Jessica Bruder.

The story is about Fern, who is grieving her life which has been ripped away from her. Her journey begins in Empire, Nevada, one of many American towns built around industry. The gypsum plant where she works closes for good, leaving her and the entire town, for that matter, jobless. To make matters worse, her husband dies, leaving her completely alone. Finding work as a seasonal employee at an Amazon Center, she starts living out of her van to try life on-the-road outside of conventional society.

The movie focuses on modern nomads telling their stories about fulfilling their dreams to travel the country as well as sharing tips and advice on how to live life on the road. The film features the real-life nomads Linda May, Swankie and Bob Wells, who serve as mentors and companions to Fern in her journey across the vast landscape of the American West. In fact, most of the people in the film are non-actors. The only other familiar face is played by the actor David Strathairn, who plays a man who Fern befriends.

McDormand carries the entire film on her shoulders. You want to feel sorry for her, but that's not quite the point of the film. It's more about being lost and the difference a kind gesture from a stranger can make.

Winner of the Golden Lion 2020 Venice Film Festival, the film went on to win three Oscars: best director Chloé Zhao, best film, and best actress in a leading role. The musical score is by Ludovico Einaudi.

LANGUAGE

Mid-Western American



VOCABULARY

Houselessness: another word for homelessness	Makeshift communities: temporary, usually of poor quality
Hitting the road: set out on a journey	Sheetrock: plasterboard made of gypsum (white/grey mineral consisting of Hydrated calcium sulphate)
Stopper: a plug for sealing a hole, also for a neck of a bottle (cork, lid, cap, top, plug)	Counter space: flat surface area for preparing food in a kitchen
Yard sale: sale of 2nd hand items in a private home, usually in the front garden (yard)	Wedding vow: promises a couple makes to each other on their wedding day
Low point: a moment of dispare and loss	Bottle of booze (slang): an alcoholic beverage (in a bottle)
Do that to me either: it does not have an effect on me, either (as well) meaning I am the same as you	Boot camp (rendez-vous): comes from military known as basic training. In this a case, a group assembly
Tramp: another word for vagabond, vagrant	To cashier: a job you do, to receive and pay out money in a store
Overstep one's boundaries: go beyond what is proper or allowed	To be there for someone (we're here for you): being present in a time of need
Embrace the tyranny of the dollar: we are dependent on the dollar in order to survive	The yolk of tyranny: to be forced to live under the conditions which tyranny represents
Workhorse: someone who works hard and covers many different tasks	Be put out to pasture: forced to leave a job because of old age
Get the life boats out because the Titanic is sinking: symbolic in this case, where the Titanic can be modern American society, and the life boats are needed so as not to go under (drown)	Take off in an RV: Leave for somewhere on a Recreational Vehicle
Vandwelling: vanlife is a living in a vehicle full or part-time, done in a van that has been modified with basic amenities, such as house batteries, solar panels, a bed platform, some form of toilet, sink, and storage space	"She takes me where I ain't" (slang): she (referring to a vehicle) takes me where I am not. I am transported to other places which I have not been to
Hospice: health care that focuses on the palliation of a terminally ill patient's pain	Miss out on something: not be able to take advantage of an opportunity
Waste time: spend time on something which is not worth (my time)	Going through something: an emotional phase caused by something unpleasant
Make the difference: do something that will change something for the better	Trade off: you need to sacrifice something to move forward or obtain something



Eons ago: an uncountable amount of time in which something took place in the past	Pot holder: used to hold the handles of a pot so you don't burn yourself
Sell your wares: selling your personal possessions in exchange for money	Boondocks: a rural area, in the middle of nowhere
Sandpaper: paper covered with abrasive material used for smoothing and polishing	To look "ratty": resembling or characteristic of a rat
Do what ya gotta do: do what is necessary or essential to you	Fall back on something: something you can depend upon when in difficulty
Quartzsite Vender Blues: Quartzsite, AZ a town where in January and February people come from all over to buy and sell rocks, gems, mineral specimens	Come around the bend: around the corner or curve of a pathway
Hatching out: come out of a shell, such as birds or chickens	End up on the upside: the positive, beneficial sides to a situation which could otherwise be negative
To be able to relate to something: understand because of personal experience	Thanksgiving, stuffing, gravy, moist: the turkey you eat at Thanksgiving is moist, not dry, gravy is the natural juices made into a sauce, stuffing is what is what you fill the turkey with to create flavor
Get over something: to be healed from physical or emotional pain	See you down the road: metaphorically meaning at one point, somehow, somewhere
We be the bitches (slang): we are the cool, tough women (so don't mess with us)	Squeeze in or squeeze something in: when there is little space, physical or related to time, but makes room to let it in

