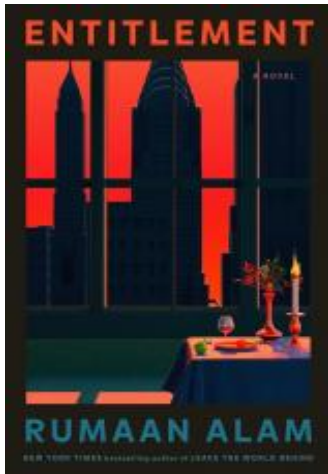


Entitlement

by Rumaan Alam



About the Book

A novel of money and morality from the *New York Times* bestselling author of *LEAVE THE WORLD BEHIND*.

Brooke wants. She isn't in need, but there are things she wants. A sense of purpose, for instance. She wants to make a difference in the world, to impress her mother along the way, to spend time with friends and secure her independence. Her job assisting an octogenarian billionaire in his quest to give away a vast fortune could help her achieve many of these goals. It may inspire new desires as well: proximity to wealth turns out to be nothing less than transformative. What is money, really, but a kind of belief?

Taut, unsettling and alive to the seductive distortions of money, *ENTITLEMENT* is a riveting tale for our new gilded age --- a story that confidently considers questions about need and worth, race and privilege, philanthropy and generosity, passion and obsession. It is a provocative, propulsive novel about the American imagination.

Discussion Guide

1. Rumaan Alam's novel, *ENTITLEMENT*, is a taut story about the new relationship between a young Black woman and an older white billionaire who is distributing his vast fortune. How do you see the book exploring themes of need and worth, race and privilege, philanthropy and generosity, passion and obsession?
2. As Brooke grows closer to billionaire Asher Jaffee, stepping into her role as his protégée, she gains access to a new, bewitching way of living that begins to distort her sense of reality. Describe this distortion of wealth. How does it shape Brooke?

3. Within Brooke's own tight network of friends and family, conflicts arise surrounding who has access to money and who does not. Which other characters are shaped by wealth --- its lack or the desire for it?
4. ENTITLEMENT brings New York City to vivid life. Discuss this sense of place and the ways in which Brooke's relationship with New York begins to evolve as she grows closer to Asher and further from her peers.
5. Race plays an integral role in the novel, affecting how the characters are perceived by others, as well as how they perceive themselves. How does ENTITLEMENT contend with the relationship that exists between race and money?
6. The looming threat of the "Subway Pricker" casts a shadow over the novel's characters as they navigate daily life in the city. What do you think the Subway Pricker represents? What do you make of Brooke's encounter with the person she believes to be the Subway Pricker?
7. Asher is committed to giving away his fortune, and yet it's clear he delights in the things it affords him, such as multiple homes, the acquisition of rare artwork, and more. Do you see these impulses as mutually exclusive? What do you think the author is saying about the responsibilities those with immense wealth have to everyone else?
8. Brooke and her brother are adopted, and Brooke's inner circle consists of aunts and close friends who feel like family. How does ENTITLEMENT explore chosen family? In what ways can family provide sustenance that money cannot? For which characters is chosen family not enough?
9. Kim uses her family money to buy a luxury apartment, but she sees herself as asserting her independence. What is the connection between independence and money?
10. When Brooke tells Matthew about her own plans to buy an apartment, the following is said of Brooke: "There was conviction in her eyes. Maybe, if you looked long enough, it would seem like madness." Do you see madness in Brooke? What is the relationship between envy and madness? How do you perceive the changes Brooke undergoes over the course of the story?
11. Many people make Asher Jaffe's world run smoothly, from his longtime secretary, Natalie, to Christopher, his driver, to the people working at his foundation. What opportunities do we have to see their humanity beyond their relation to Asher?
12. Brooke finds a worthy cause in Ghalyela's Brooklyn dance academy. But when Brooke tries to give her a grant from the Asher Jaffe Foundation, Ghalyela says, "You come here and tell me that I must need something. But, sister, I did not ask you here. And I did not tell you that we were in need." Does Ghalyela represent true independence from the gravitational pull of money?
13. At times, Brooke alludes to the sexual feelings she has for Asher. How does this speak to larger ideas around sex, power and money?
14. Discuss the party at Asher and Carol's house. What do you think about Brooke's decisions at the end of the novel? What ultimate purpose did Asher and Brooke serve for each other?

15. In our culture, it is largely considered taboo to openly discuss money and class, but in ENTITLEMENT, these conversations are centered. Why do you think the author made this choice? What did you take away from this?

Author Bio

Rumaan Alam is the author of the *New York Times* bestselling novel LEAVE THE WORLD BEHIND, which was a finalist for the National Book Award and adapted into a major motion picture, as well as three other novels: ENTITLEMENT, THAT KIND OF MOTHER and RICH AND PRETTY. His writing has appeared in *The New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *The New Yorker* and elsewhere. He lives in Brooklyn.

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