



# Book Club in a Bag

## Discussion Questions

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### “Behold the Dreamers” by Imbolo Mbue

1. Describe Jende and Neni Jonga as we first meet them. Talk about their naiveté, as well as their perseverance—the lengths, for instance, the couple goes to prepare Jende for his interview. Trace how they change during the course of the novel.
2. As Jende drives Clark and Cindy Edwards about New York, what do we learn about them and their way of life? Is it as glamorous as one would expect? What does Neni learn when she stands in as nanny for their son in Southampton? Are the Edwards good people?
3. At one point, Jende and Neni wonder how people who are as wealthy as the Edwards are could "have so much happiness and unhappiness skilfully wrapped up together." What is the answer to that?
4. What do Jende and Neni love about the U.S? Has reading their story enabled you to see American life with a fresh perspective?
5. Talk about the immigration and legal bureaucracy that is designed to discourage, if not outright prohibit, immigrants from fully achieving the American Dream.
6. And speaking of the American Dream, is the title of Mbue's book ironic...or not? Are the Jongas the only ones in the book who seek the dream?
7. Mbue writes about Jende: "He was an honest man, a very honest man." How does his attempts to live in American change him? Is it worth securing a life in the United States if doing so destroys who he is?
8. How does Mbue portray the 2008 economic collapse and its effect on both the top and the bottom socio-economic levels of society?

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