Discussion guide: 8 sessions

Homo Amans: Field Report on a Species That Destroys Itself for Love, by Alfredo Rosadilla

A guide for reading the book as a group (a small group) or as a reading pair. Each session covers one or two chapters and offers questions to talk through. The guide does not reproduce the text of the book: it relies on the chapter titles and on what each reader can recognize in their own experience.

How to use it

- **Pace.** One session a week, or whatever pace the group prefers. Each one is designed for a conversation of about an hour, but the group decides the length.
- **Before each session.** Read the chapters listed. Underline one passage that resonated and one you disagree with.
- **Ground rules.** Speak from your own experience ("this happens to me"), not about third parties who are not there. What is shared in the session stays in the session. Nobody is required to share.
- **What it is and is not.** It is a reading and conversation guide. It is not therapy and does not replace it: if a conversation overwhelms you, seek support from a mental health professional.

Session 1: The contradiction

Read: the introduction and Chapter 1, "First Observation: A Species in Contradiction."

1. What made you keep reading, or hesitate, in the introduction? What did you expect from a book like this?
2. Chapter 1 is about the distance between what we say we want and what we end up choosing. When in your life did you notice a distance like that?
3. What is the difference between "knowing" something about your relationships and having that knowledge change what you do?
4. If you could answer one question about your patterns by the end of the book, what would it be?

Take away: write that question down; in session 8 you come back to it.

Session 2: A misunderstanding and two models

Read: Chapter 2, "The Great Misunderstanding: They Call It Love. It's Biology," and Chapter 3, "The Two Hardware Models: Male and Female."

1. Chapter 2 argues that very different things get called "love." What different things have you called love at different moments?

2. How does it change the way you look at a relationship if you treat it as something you can observe, not only feel?
3. Chapter 3 sets out two models of how people operate. Which parts of that description did you find useful, and which did you question?
4. What happens in a conversation when two people are working from different assumptions about what the other needs?

Take away: this week, notice one moment when you and someone close to you were asking for the same thing in different words, and write it down without judging it.

Session 3: What he calls love, and what he fears

Read: Chapter 4, "The Male Observed: What He Calls Love," and Chapter 5, "His Real Fears: The Ones He Never Admits."

1. What stood out to you in these portraits? What felt fair and what felt unfair?
2. Whatever your own gender, which fear in Chapter 5 feels closest to you, or to someone you have known?
3. What is the difference between needing space and pulling away so as not to feel?
4. What would you like the other person to understand about a retreat, and what would you like to understand yourself?

Session 4: Pulling away, status and ego

Read: Chapter 6, "Why the Male Runs When He Is Needed Most," and Chapter 7, "Status, Ego and Love: The Male Trinity."

1. Have you seen (or lived) a retreat at the exact moment the other person needed closeness? How did it feel from each side?
2. Chapter 7 links status, ego and love. What place do competence and recognition have in how you connect with people?
3. Which is harder: asking for help or accepting it?
4. What small, concrete gesture would make it easier to stay in a difficult conversation?

Session 5: What she calls love, and what she fears

Read: Chapter 8, "The Female Observed: What She Calls Love," and Chapter 9, "Her Real Fears: The Ones She Expresses in Confusing Ways."

1. What stood out to you in these portraits? What do you recognize, in yourself or in others?
2. The title of Chapter 9 mentions fears expressed in confusing ways. How do fears like that tend to look from the outside?

3. What do you do when uncertainty in a relationship becomes hard to hold? What really helps, and what only relieves it for a while?
4. How would you ask for what you need without it sounding like a reproach?

Session 6: Testing and connection

Read: Chapter 10, "Why She Tests, Pushes and Challenges," and Chapter 11, "Emotional Connection as a Biological Need."

1. Which testing or pushing behaviors do you recognize, in yourself or in others? What were they really looking for?
2. What is the difference between asking for connection and putting someone to the test?
3. Chapter 11 treats emotional connection as a need. How do you usually ask for it, and how do you usually receive it?
4. What would change in your most important relationship (partner, friend or family) if that need were named out loud?

Session 7: The clash and the loop

Read: Chapter 12, "The Clash of Systems: Why They Fight Over the Very Thing That Binds Them," and Chapter 13, "Two Brains, Two Languages: Real Neuroscience."

1. Think of an argument that keeps repeating. What is the script, step by step, without looking for someone to blame?
2. At what point in the loop could you do something different? What would it be?
3. Which part of the loop is hardest to see while you are inside it?
4. What small, concrete agreement could two people make to interrupt it?

Session 8: Attraction, choice and closing

Read: Chapter 14, "Real Attraction: What Each Hardware Looks for in the Other," Chapter 15, "Love as a Conscious Choice: When Biology Is Not Enough," and the conclusion.

1. What draws you to the people you connect with? What do you look for in them that you may not give yourself?
2. Chapter 15 talks about love as a conscious choice. What does choosing mean to you, and what is not up to you?
3. Go back to the question you wrote down in session 1. How would you answer it today?
4. What are you taking from the book and from these conversations? What will you try differently next week?

This guide is supporting material for Homo Amans. It contains no text from the book and does not replace reading it, therapy or professional advice.