

Reading Guide



EREWHON



★ About the Author ★



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TRENT JAMIESON is a multi-award winning Australian novelist and short story writer. He is the author of *Day Boy*, the *Death Works* series, and the *Nightbound Land* duology. His picture book *The Giant and the Sea* won the 2021 Environment Award for Children's Literature. When he's not writing, Trent works as a bookseller at Avid Reader in Brisbane.





★ Book Discussion Questions ★

These suggested questions are to spark conversation and enhance your reading of *The Stone Road*.

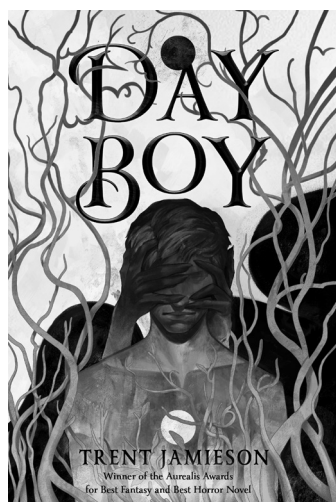
1. *The Stone Road* starts with Jean's birthday party and a visit from the mysterious Graceful Man. Jean isn't surprised that something terrible happens on her birthday. How would you feel if your birthdays were constantly beset with troubles? And how would you feel if you were one of the townsfolk of Casement Rise?
2. Jean realizes quickly that there are secrets being kept from her, and that her grandmother, Nancy, has been protecting her by telling her nothing about her family's past. Do you feel this was the right strategy? What would you have done in Nancy's place?

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3. The Clever Birds in the book derive their name from the phrase “Who’s a clever bird?”. They are based on corellas, a type of cockatoo. Could you have stood still like Jean through the gyre of wings? What do you think they were looking for in Jean? Would they have found it in you?
 4. The Husklings are monstrous creatures, bat-like and squabbling, but also capable of great sensitivity and art. What do you think the writer is saying about the nature of art, and the monstrous? Do you agree?
 5. Jean’s best friend is Lolly Robson. They are both outsiders and see that reflected in the other. Did you expect the trajectory that their relationship took? Have you experienced friendships like Jean and Lolly’s? How did reading about their friendship make you feel?
 6. Jean and Nancy walk the Stone Road, the path of the dead, by taking mycota broth. Mycota is another word for fungi, and in the book, its ingestion distorts and clarifies the landscape through which the characters walk. What were you expecting to see in the Mumbling City? How would you have dealt with facing one of the angry dead?

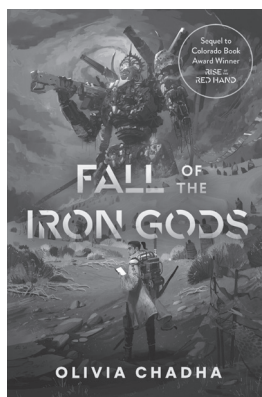
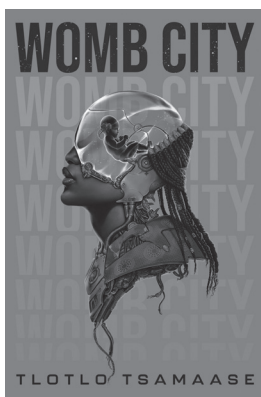
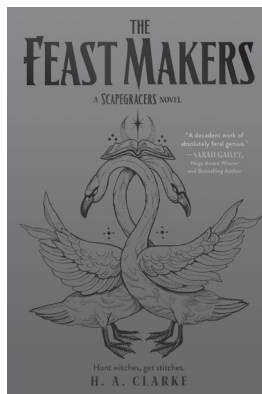
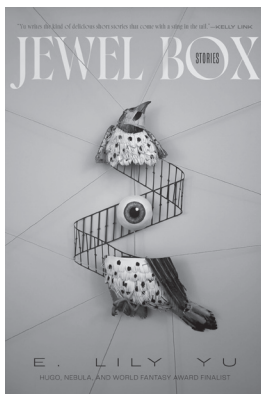
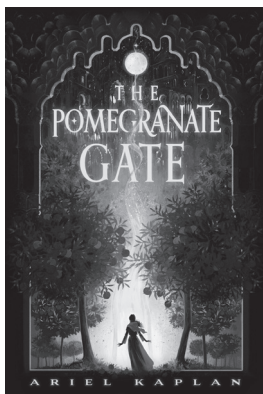
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7. *The Stone Road* was a novel drawn in part from the Aurealis Award-winning short story “Cracks,” but there is also another character drawn from the author’s earliest published story “Threnody,” Sal the Threnodist. They’d always wanted to return to that character and in the writing of *The Stone Road*, Sal unexpectedly appeared. What do you think might be the challenges of creating a novel out of the seeds of a short story?
 8. The dead grumble and complain, but for Jean and Nancy, the dead are very physical presences grabbing and clawing at their feet. Jean must learn to face their power or forever be cowed by them. How do you carry the weight of your past, and how have the dead shaped your world?
 9. This book is set in the same world as *Day Boy*, but the worldbuilding is deliberately loose, using slightly different terms for locations and concepts. How do you think this world may have come about? Why might the author have avoided telling readers exactly what happened?
 10. Furnace is a constant presence in the book through the smell of its smoke and the visitations of its master, the Graceful Man. What were you expecting Furnace to be?

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11. The citizens of Casement Rise live a long way from the Red City, a region ruled by vampires. It's a hard life so far from the Red City, in a region that even the vampires tend to avoid. What could be the benefits of living in Casement Rise?
 12. *The Stone Road* is filled with clocks and mirrors and magical doors, and deliberately plays with reflections and echoes. What elements did you notice were reflected? Bearing that in mind, what were your feelings about the ending of the book? Have those feelings changed since you finished reading?

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