

Hey! Thanks for being interested in my Spooktober (Sbooktober?) Book Club!

Are you interested in reading a kick-ass book about a slasher-obsessed Indigenous teen who sees the world through blood-red-tinted goggles? A book that worships at the altar of classic slashers, while building a brand-new slasher mythos to plunge into? A book that self-analyzes through the lens of feminist horror academia and has something to offer for veterans and newcomers of the genre alike?

Well, do I have a book for you: *My Heart is a Chainsaw* by Stephen Graham Jones.

You know what would also be cool? Watching the movies that inspired the book! That's right, this is a comprehensive celebration of some really classic slashers.

HOW MUCH WILL YOU NEED TO READ/WATCH:

Expect to read somewhere around 60 pages per week, for seven weeks. The book is 398 pages long, but it's paced like a slasher flick so it GOES. I plan on screening movies on Tuesdays + Thursdays on the Spooktober Discord Server (<https://discord.gg/URwcjuQ9pm>). Discussion on Sundays (or just in the chat whenever haha).

Don't worry too much about being able to make it to each screening, just show up for ones that are convenient/interesting for you! They're simply a fascinating accompaniment to a really fun book.

This kicks off on Monday, May 29th, and will continue until mid-July!

LINKS TO COPIES OF THE BOOK:

(I recommend checking some local bookstores first to avoid using online booksellers, but I get it if you've gotta use Amazon etc.)

Audible:

https://www.audible.ca/pd/My-Heart-Is-a-Chainsaw-Audiobook/1797123327?source_code=GDGPP30DTRIAL547122322005C&ds_rl=1250324&source_code=GDGPP30DTRIAL547122322005C&gclid=Cj0KCQjwslejBhDOARIsANYqkD1Q2HjqFQdpnBg3TUIJUfLdcmdqXBJ92antzSnE1PUajM_mdED9gnUaAlz3EALw_wcB&gclidsrc=aw.ds

Amazon CA:

<https://www.amazon.ca/Heart-Chainsaw-Stephen-Graham-Jones/dp/1982137630>

Amazon US:

<https://www.amazon.com/Heart-Chainsaw-Lake-Witch-Trilogy/dp/1982137649>

SYNOPSIS:

Goodreads:

<https://www.goodreads.com/en/book/show/55711617>

In her quickly gentrifying rural lake town Jade sees recent events only her encyclopedic knowledge of horror films could have prepared her for in this latest chilling novel that

“will give you nightmares. The good kind, of course” (*BuzzFeed*) from the Jordan Peele of horror literature, Stephen Graham Jones.

“Some girls just don’t know how to die...”

Shirley Jackson meets *Friday the 13th* in *My Heart Is a Chainsaw*, written by the *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Only Good Indians* Stephen Graham Jones, called “a literary master” by National Book Award winner Tananarive Due and “one of our most talented living writers” by Tommy Orange.

Alma Katsu calls *My Heart Is a Chainsaw* “a homage to slasher films that also manages to defy and transcend genre.” On the surface is a story of murder in small-town America. But beneath is its beating heart: a biting critique of American colonialism, Indigenous displacement, and gentrification, and a heartbreaking portrait of a broken young girl who uses horror movies to cope with the horror of her own life.

Jade Daniels is an angry, half-Indian outcast with an abusive father, an absent mother, and an entire town that wants nothing to do with her. She lives in her own world, a world in which protection comes from an unusual source: horror movies...*especially* the ones where a masked killer seeks revenge on a world that wronged them. And Jade narrates the quirky history of Proofrock as if it is one of those movies. But when blood *actually* starts to spill into the waters of Indian Lake, she pulls us into her dizzying, encyclopedic mind of blood and masked murderers, and predicts exactly how the plot will unfold.

Yet, even as Jade drags us into her dark fever dream, a surprising and intimate portrait emerges...a portrait of the scared and traumatized little girl beneath the Jason Voorhees mask: angry, yes, but also a girl who easily cries, fiercely loves, and desperately wants a home. A girl whose feelings are too big for her body. *My Heart Is a Chainsaw* is her story, her homage to horror and revenge and triumph.

WEEK ONE: Monday, May 29

Prologue + Chapter 1 + 2 (pg. 1-48)

- Nightschool
- Just Before Dawn
- Slaughter High

Relevant Movies:

- **Friday the 13th**
- **Halloween**
- **Nightmare on Elm Street**
- **Scream**

Discussion Questions

1. The prologue features two characters visiting Proofrock late at night, using the town canoe, and ending up torn apart in the lake. How does this set up what's to come, especially considering the slasher theme of the book?
2. We meet Jade Daniels in chapter one, and she's immediately throwing out slasher references left and right. How does her obsession with horror movies color her world?
3. Proofrock is a town undergoing some serious changes, and has quite the storied history. What do we learn about our setting in the first chapters?
4. The idea of the "final girl" in slashers is brought up often. Jade even seems to project the idea of the "ideal final girl" onto Letha Mondragon. Why does she relate to this idea so much, and why does she seem to need a "final girl" to manifest in Proofrock? What does it mean to Jade, deep down?

WEEK TWO: Monday, June 5

Chapters 3-5 (pg. 49-109)

- The Initiation
- Graduation Day
- Curtains

Relevant Movies

- **Scream**
- **The Burning**
- Nightmare on Elm Street
- Scream 2
- **Bay of Blood**

Discussion Questions

1. Jade gets access to a cell phone that isn't her's (featuring some footage that we, as the audience, have already seen first-hand). How does this new perspective change the way Jade sees things? Does this affirm what she already believed?
2. Mr. Holmes has some scathing things to say about Proofrock and the so-called "Founders" who have moved in and started changing things. What do we learn about the local goings-on, and how is Proofrock changing?
 - a. How does Jade feel about Mr. Holmes, and what can we find out about their relationship from her essay-writing?
3. What is the significance of Drown Town? Let's discuss some Indian Lake LORE!
4. In your opinion, do Jade's "slasher requirements" cover all of the necessary events that make a slasher distinct from other horror movies?
 - a. Which of her requirements have been met so far?
5. Does Jade have the makings of a "final girl," or does she more embody the character of the slasher?

WEEK THREE: Monday, June 12

Chapters 6 + 7 (pg. 110- 158)

- Silent Rage
- Don't Go In the Woods

Relevant Movies:

- **Sleepaway Camp**

- **Night of the Hunter**
- **Don't Go In the Woods**
- Jaws
- Grizzly

Discussion Questions

1. We've been reading all of Jade's "history" essays after each chapter up until this point. Now Jade wants Letha to study what she's written in order to prepare for her "final girl" duties. Do you think this will get Letha into the slasher mindset? Why or why not?
2. Deacon Samuels, a Terra Nova Founder, is found dead - seemingly by bear attack. More and more bodies are stacking up, but nobody (other than Jade) sees any pattern to it. Is Jade seeing a pattern that doesn't exist, or are people refusing to see what's right in front of them? Does Jade's reputation as "That Horror Girl" have an impact?
3. How do you feel about the townsfolk getting together to hunt whatever is causing all of the deaths (including that gigantic pile of rotting elk)?
4. Sheriff Hardy has his moment in the spotlight, telling Jade about his experience at Camp Winnemucca (Camp Blood). How did the mini-slasher that took place there when he was a kid impact him, and the town of Proofrock as a whole? Why doesn't this come up more often as slasher-adjacent events start happening?

WEEK FOUR: Monday, June 19

Chapters 8 + 9 (pg. 159 - 223)

- Happy Birthday to Me
- Visiting Hours

Relevant Movies:

- Last House on the Left
- **Dead and Buried**
- **Blood Rage**
- **Child's Play**
- Carrie
- IT
- Home Sweet Home

Discussion Questions

1. Letha meets up with Jade after reading her essays, and has not come away with the same conclusions that Jade had hoped she would. How does this change the "slasher cycle" for Jade?
2. Mr. Holmes admits something big to Jade as they wait for Letha and Hardy to get an answer from Jade's mom. In return, he wants Jade to answer some of his questions, specifically about why Jade doesn't see rape-revenge movies in the same way she sees slashers. Do the same rules apply? Why would Jade write only about slashers, while avoiding this other subgenre?
3. Jade's ban from the 4th of July party, along with getting fired from her janitorial job for carving THE LAKE WITCH SLAYINGS into a bathroom stall, sends her into a bit of an existential spiral. She asks herself questions about slashers: Have there been Indians in slashers? Has there ever been a Black final girl? Can you think of any slashers that meet

these criteria? Why are these important questions, both for Jade and for slashers at large?

4. How does Greyson Brust's death impact Proofrock? What are the implications of (the recently deceased) Deacon Samuels' meddling with the accident?
5. During a conversation with Shooting Glasses, the bespectacled worker wonders why Jade looks to slashers for all the answers, especially because "everyone dies in those movies." Jade replies "but they really live first." Discuss.

WEEK FIVE: Monday, June 26

Chapters 10 + 11 (pg. 224 - 281)

- Stage Fright
- Don't Go in the House

Relevant Movies:

- **Just Before Dawn**
- Black Christmas
- Stage Fright
- The House on Sorority Row
- **Behind the Mask: The Rise of Leslie Vernon**
- The Nail Gun Massacre
- High Tension
- The Prowler
- **My Bloody Valentine**
- Scream 4 (breaking its own rules)

Discussion Questions

1. Jade's stuff is put into trash bags by her dad, essentially making her homeless. Almost immediately afterward, she finds out that the Terra Nova Founders are starting a scholarship fund that would pretty much secure the future of any kid coming out of Proofrock, but doesn't extend to her. How does Jade react, and how do you think this impacts her view of the world around her?
2. After escaping the jail, Jade encounters a baby bear running away from something. What kind of connection does she feel to this creature? How does it connect with her thoughts of escapism?
3. Jade finds a body riddled with nails, and then spots a masked man firing at Shooting Glasses. The mask comes off, and it's Theo Mondragon. What's going on here? Is this proof that he's the slasher?
4. In the Horror 101 essays this week, Jade discusses what the slasher feels towards the final girl. It's not about love or hate, but about having someone special to kill them after a lifetime of pain and misery. They have to transform that person into the final girl through a gauntlet of blood, and when it's over - it's glorious. Has anyone in Proofrock been through this gauntlet yet?

WEEK SIX: Monday, July 3

Chapter 12 (pg. 282 - 330)

- Final Exam

Relevant Movies

- **I Know What You Did Last Summer**
- **Kristy**
- **Jaws**

Discussion Questions

1. Jade is invited by Letha onto her dad's boat for the night, and they have a little horror movie sleepover. Do you think Letha is taking the threat at all seriously? Does she know something Jade doesn't?
2. What does Jade shaving her head represent?
3. Chaos breaks out aboard the house boat, resulting in some crazy casualties. Who do you think was the head of flowing hair Jade saw behind Letha before she jumped off the boat?
4. How about that pile of rotting elk? And those two construction worker corpses? Does this cement Theo Mondragon as the slasher? Is there enough evidence?

WEEK SEVEN: Monday, July 10

Chapter 13 + Final Chapter (pg. 331-398)

- Hell Night

Relevant Movies:

- Hell Night
- **Curtains**
- Hatchet
- Burial Ground
- **Grizzly**

Discussion Questions

1. In the end, Theo Mondragon was A killer, but not THE killer. What was he up to? Why was Letha so dead-set on defending him?
2. Mr. Holmes finally gets the answer to "will she or won't she?" What was the answer, and how does this impact your view of Jade's character?
3. Who do you think the true final girl is? Jade, or Letha? Could it be both?
4. Why does Jade feel like she has to stop the forest fire? After all Proofrock and Indian Lake have put her through, what does she gain from playing hero?
5. How does the grand finale - baby bear being defended by mother bear - make you feel?
6. Is Letha's name pronounced LETH-UH or LEE-THA?

MASTER LIST OF MOVIES MENTIONED/REFERENCED:

<https://boxd.it/lo8UO>