

“A GENUINE HORROR SUPERSTAR.” —*ESQUIRE*

DON'T

FEAR

THE

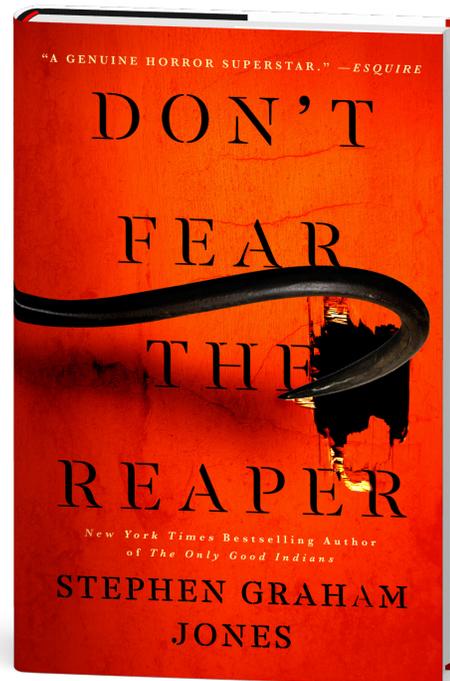
REAPER

*New York Times* Bestselling Author  
of *The Only Good Indians*

STEPHEN GRAHAM  
JONES

**READING GROUP GUIDE**

This reading group guide for *Don't Fear the Reaper* includes an introduction, discussion questions, and ideas for enhancing your book club. The suggested questions are intended to help your reading group find new and interesting angles and topics for your discussion. We hope that these ideas will enrich your conversation and increase your enjoyment of the book.



## INTRODUCTION

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**December 12, 2019, Jade returns to the rural lake town of Proofrock the same day as convicted Indigenous serial killer Dark Mill South escapes into town to complete his revenge killings, in this riveting sequel to *My Heart Is a Chainsaw* from *New York Times* bestselling author Stephen Graham Jones.**

Four years after her tumultuous senior year, Jade Daniels is released from prison right before Christmas when her conviction is overturned. But life beyond bars takes a dangerous turn as soon as she returns to Proofrock. Convicted serial killer Dark Mill South, seeking revenge for thirty-eight Dakota men hanged in 1862, escapes from his prison transfer due to a blizzard, just outside of Proofrock, Idaho.

Dark Mill South's Reunion Tour began on December 12, 2019, a Thursday.

Thirty-six hours and twenty bodies later, on Friday the 13th, it would be over.

*Don't Fear the Reaper* is the page-turning sequel to *My Heart Is a Chainsaw* from *New York Times* bestselling author Stephen Graham Jones.

## TOPICS & QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

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1. *Don't Fear the Reaper* is organized into multiple points of view, punctuated with essays from Galatea Pangborn. How does this structure compare and contrast with the trilogy's first book, *My Heart Is a Chainsaw*?
2. On page 125, Jennifer and Ginger discuss Dark Mill South, with Ginger remarking that he has a "good name." Jennifer replies that "names don't matter...it's what they do that matters." In a trilogy with some great names, from Stacey Graves to twins dubbed Cinnamon and Ginger, how do names affect your understanding of the characters themselves?
3. In the suspense-laden chapter titled "Black Christmas," Letha uses Rex Allen's goose gun against a threat that isn't what it seems. How did the author create the heightened paranoia of this scene? Did you come to the sudden realization at the same time Letha did?
4. Jennifer "Jade" Daniels grapples with her identity throughout the book. When do you think she first considers how her former self may be her saving grace? Consider her conversation with Cinn on page 195.
5. On page 205, Galatea's essay reasons through Dark Mill South's origins and the peculiarities around his victims' final resting places. At this point in the story, what do you think is the truth of Proofrock's latest serial killer?
6. In a conversation with Letha, Jennifer reveals why she gravitated to horror as a child: "I was a scared little girl...I thought if I knew all the rules...that would mean nothing would happen to me!" When you were little, how did you make sense of the world?
7. On page 244, Letha and Jennifer discuss horror's signature actresses, with Jade remarking that "you don't get to pick your genre." If you could pick, what would be your genre of choice?
8. Imagine you are in the police precinct with Banner, Letha, Jade, Hardy, and Cinn on page 347. Based on your knowledge of slashers, what would you suggest the group do to stop Dark Mill South?

9. Jade admonishes herself for “hiding in stupid movie sh\*t” when head-to-head with Dark Mill South. We all hide in something when we’re scared. How do you face down fear?
10. Mr. Armitage shows his true nature as Proofrock’s body count rises. How do his horror fantasies compare and contrast with Jade’s?
11. The book contains a twist ending—when did you first begin to suspect the true nature of Proofrock’s latest massacre?
12. Did you correctly guess who would be the Final Girl at the end of the book?

## ENHANCE YOUR BOOK CLUB

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1. As you read, create a Final Girl Tracker and note who appears to be the Final Girl at various points in the book. Were your guesses ever correct, and what does this cast of characters reveal about horror?
2. With your book club, watch a movie that is mentioned in the book (such as *Night School* on page 241 or *Scream 2* on page 249). How does your analysis compare with the parallels to Proofrock that Jade and Letha pick up on?
3. Jade still feels an affinity for her favorite teacher, Mr. Holmes, all these years after stepping into his classroom. Do you feel similarly fond of teachers from your past? Write a letter to your favorite teacher highlighting the most important lesson you learned. How do you expect book three to work out? How would you like see the series close?