



UNDER THE PENDULUM SUN

DISCUSSION • GROUP • NOTES

CATHERINE HELSTONE'S BROTHER, *Laon*, has disappeared in Arcadia, legendary land of the magical fae. Desperate for news of him and his missionary work, she makes the perilous journey, but once there, she finds herself alone and isolated in the sinister house of Gethsemane. At last there comes news: her beloved brother is riding to be reunited with her soon – but the Queen of the Fae and her insane court are hard on his heels. JEANNETTE NG'S debut novel, *UNDER THE PENDULUM SUN* (Angry Robot, 2017), is a darkly Gothic fantasy without equal.

- 1) Each chapter starts with an extract from a real book that has been amended to fit a world where Arcadia exists. What do you think the author meant to imply with these extracts?
- 2) How would you categorize this book in terms of "genre"?
- 3) *Under the Pendulum Sun* is set in a version of Victorian England, but would it be drastically changed if it were set in another time?
- 4) In what way does Arcadia mirror, reflect or distort our own reality, and how did the author achieve such effects?
- 5) How do the rules of Arcadia and its very existence both reaffirm Catherine's religious faith and challenge it?
- 6) The setting of Arcadia and Victorian England are important, but the house at Gethsemane is also almost a character by itself; how does the house create its own micro-setting?
- 7) The book has a very deliberate pace and structure – how was this achieved and how effective did you find it?
- 8) What other books or films did you find were echoed in this book? Do any associations fall outside the fantasy genre?
- 9) *Under the Pendulum Sun* is very visual, especially in terms of the strange fae. What for you was the most striking image in the book?
- 10) What are the moral and ethical implications explored in the book, especially the ending?

SUGGESTED FURTHER READING

- ◆ Susanna Clarke – JONATHAN STRANGE & MR NORRELL
- ◆ Charlotte Bronte – JANE EYRE / Emily Bronte – WUTHERING HEIGHTS
- ◆ Jean Rhys – WIDE SARGASSO SEA
- ◆ Shusaku Endo – SILENCE
- ◆ Zen Cho – SORCERER TO THE CROWN
- ◆ CRIMSON PEAK (film)
- ◆ Jeannette Ng – *The Science of the Pendulum Sun* [online article:

<https://medium.com/@nettlefish/the-science-of-the-pendulum-sun-e7116070d4ce>]