

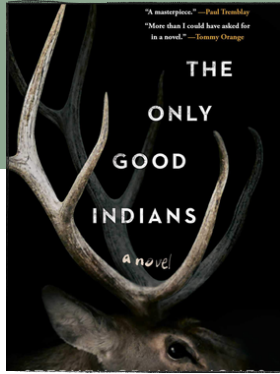
Discussion Questions

October 15

6:30 p.m.

COVER TO COVER

The Only Good Indians



by

Stephen Graham Jones

BOOK CLUB

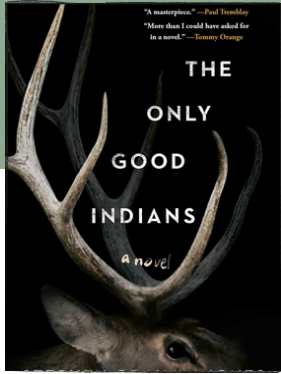
- 1 The story opens with a dark and pessimistic headline that rings true by the end of the prologue. What do you think of Ricky's prediction? Do you believe what he saw that night or was it a figment of his imagination? Could he have changed the outcome?
- 2 Lewis is haunted by one afternoon of hunting with his friends, instead of all the other hunts he's been a part of. What about that hunting trip was unique? Do you understand how it was a violation?
- 3 Lewis believes he is being pursued by the spirit of the young mother elk he killed. How does his recent string of bad luck chip away at his sanity? Discuss the combination of factors that push him over the edge. Would these circumstances have driven you insane?
- 4 Lewis convinces himself that Elk Head Woman has infiltrated his life first as Shaney, then as Peta. What convinced him each time? Did you expect him to kill them both? If so, at what point did you realize he would go that far?
- 5 As the story unfolds, it seems less and less likely that Ricky and Lewis were imagining that an elk was after them. What did you believe was happening at this point in the narrative?
- 6 Discuss reading the chapters as told through the Elk's voice. Why do you think the author chose to include this point of view? What fresh insight does it provide? How did it change your understanding of the first few chapters?
- 7 Having already heard Lewis's account of that night ten years ago, how does hearing the Elk's version of events change your perspective? Does it make the revenge justified?
- 8 We've had little access into the world Lewis and Ricky left until the novel moves to Blackfeet Nation. Discuss what you learn about the reservation from Gabe and Cassidy
- 9 As the story progresses, the chapters continue to be told from the perspective of a pivotal character but with one significant difference: moments from the Elk's perspective are now interspersed. Discuss this narrative choice. How does it affect your view on the unfolding events?
- 10 On page 156, Gabe mentions emptying his dad's freezer of the last bit of elk meat from their hunt ten years ago and feeding it to the dogs. How does this moment tie into what is happening now? How does it foreshadow what is to come?
- 11 Describe Denorah. Discuss how she ties into what is happening with Elk Head Woman and why she is involved in what happened ten years ago
- 12 As the three embark on the sweat, they reveal more about life as a Blackfeet, both past and present. Discuss the challenges they face and their differing methods of dealing with them. What, if anything, was surprising or unexpected about their experiences and their conversation during the sweat?

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- 13 When Elk Head Woman sets her plan in motion, things unravel quickly for Cassidy and Gabe. She has no remorse for anyone who gets caught in the crossfire. Discuss how everything from one angle implodes, but from her standpoint goes like clockwork. Do you think this level of violence is warranted? Is this revenge or overkill?
- 14 Denorah and Elk Head Woman go toe-to-toe on the basketball court long before the true game begins. Why does Elk Head Woman draw this out? Imagine you are in Denorah's shoes. Could you run, fight, and endure for as long as she does?
- 15 Denorah brings the saga full circle in the end. How does she influence the outcome? How do her actions compare to the choices her father made? What is the relationship with her parents? The day's events have a significant ripple effect in the tribe. Why is Denorah's story passed on?