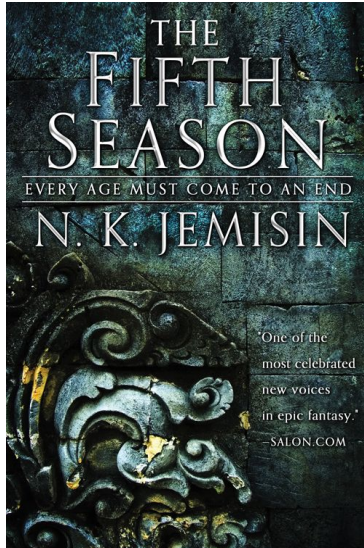




Presented by Writers Rebel NYC and BPL Presents



### ***The Fifth Season: Every Age Must Come to an End*** ***Book One of The Stone Earth Trilogy***

This is the way the world ends...for the last time.

It starts with the great red rift across the heart of the world's sole continent, spewing ash that blots out the sun. It starts with death, with a murdered son and a missing daughter. It starts with betrayal, and long dormant wounds rising up to fester.

This is the Stillness, a land long familiar with catastrophe, where the power of the earth is wielded as a weapon. And where there is no mercy.

### **N.K. Jemisin**

N. K. Jemisin is the first author in the genre's history to win three consecutive Best Novel Hugo Awards, all for her Broken Earth trilogy. Her work has also won the Nebula, Locus, and Goodreads Choice Awards. She was a reviewer for the *New York Times Book Review*, and she has been an instructor for the Clarion and Clarion West writing workshops. In her spare time she is a gamer and gardener, and she is also single-handedly responsible for saving the world from KING Ozzymandias, her dangerously intelligent ginger cat, and his phenomenally destructive sidekick Magpie.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. After the initial shake, Essun describes how her city goes into lockdown. While this book is science fiction, this lockdown is reminiscent of 2020's COVID lockdown. Compare and contrast how the Stillness learns from (or rewrites) environmental history to prepare for the future vs how American cities reacted in 2020 because of COVID.
2. What is significant about Jemisin changing the common term "Mother Earth" to "Father Earth"? What does she convey with this seemingly minor change?

3. How does survival preparedness determine social hierarchy in the Stillness? Where are Orogenes in the social hierarchy? Why? How are they expected to participate in human survival in the Stillness?
4. Alabaster tells Syen, "Survival doesn't mean rightness." Most Western cultures tend to treat humans as the most (or only) valuable creature for many reasons, one being our ability to survive and thrive. How does *The Fifth Season*, and this line in particular, challenge that belief system?
5. Alabaster resentfully brings into focus how use-castes, comms, species, physical appearance, and the local environment are all interconnected in the Stillness when he and Syenite arrive in Allia. How does Alabaster view and dismantle this hierarchy versus everyone else in the Stillness?
6. In the prologue we read, "People die. Old orders pass. New societies are born. When we say 'the world has ended,' it's usually a lie, because *the planet* is just fine." Would you apply this to the real world? Why or why not?
7. As the book progresses, what do we learn about Father Earth's relationship to humans, Orogenic power, and the consequences humans face from brutally dominating both nature and humans? Consider this quote from chapter 20:

According to legend, Father Earth did not originally hate life....once upon a time Earth did everything he could to facilitate the strange emergence of life on his surface. He crafted even, predictable seasons; kept changes of wind and wave and temperature slow enough that every living being could adapt, evolve; summoned waters that purified themselves, skies that always cleared after a storm....Then people began to do horrible things to Father Earth. They poisoned waters beyond even his ability to cleanse, and killed much of the other life that lived on his surface. They drilled through the crust of his skin, past the blood of his mantle, to get at the sweet marrow of his bones.

### More like *The Fifth Season*

- Book Two: *The Obelisk Gate*, N.K. Jemisin
- Book Three: *The Stone Sky*, N.K. Jemisin
- *Watchmen*, television series, HBO
- *Lovecraft Country*, television series, HBO
- *Advantageous*, movie, Netflix
- *An Unkindness of Ghosts*, Rivers Solomon
- *Trail of Lightning*, Rebecca Roanhorse



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