

# READING GROUP GUIDE

1. How did your impressions of Wallace shift as the novel progressed? Throughout his journey, what does he discover about first impressions?
2. What do Wallace and Hugo need from each other? How are they affected by their memories of childhood? What forms of healing do they bring to each other as adults?
3. Did you perceive the Manager to be wise or wicked? When he gave Wallace one more week (after referring to him as a flaw in a system that has previously worked so well), how did you expect Wallace to spend those days? What would you have wanted to accomplish in that time span, under the same circumstances?
4. How does Alan Flynn's arrival change the atmosphere at Charon's Crossing Tea and Treats? How did you react to the fears he raises regarding the aftershocks of an unnatural death and the possibility of becoming a Husk?
5. When Mei tells the story of her life, especially her mother's tenacity, what does she reveal about her own motivations and inspiration? What makes her well suited to her assignments?
6. Discuss the characters' relationship to clothing. What is it like for Wallace to adapt to a different approach to covering himself?
7. How do Nelson and Apollo transform the characters? What role do they play in helping us realize the presence of new pathways for finding our purpose?
8. What contradictions does Cameron's experience raise about fate and free will? What does it take to "trust that we have you," even when you're "unhooked"?
9. Discuss Wallace's relationship to Naomi. If you were in his realm, what would you want to say to someone left behind? (P.S. Since you're not actually in that realm, you might be able to go ahead and say those heartfelt things to your someone now.)
10. Where does Desdemona's approach to the afterlife fit in with the Manager's? What does Nancy and Lea's experience illustrate about the process of making peace with the death of a loved one?
11. Discuss the novel's title. What is the theme of the messages that are whispered? What did you learn about love and life by eavesdropping there?
12. TJ Klune has been widely praised for creating fantastical worlds populated by heartwarming characters. How did *Under the Whispering Door* enrich your experience of other books by Klune that you have read? How do his imaginary settings reveal truths about the real world?



TJ Klune is a Lambda Literary Award-winning author (*Into This River I Drown*) and an ex-claims examiner for an insurance company. His novels include *The House in the Cerulean Sea* and *The Extraordinaries*. Being queer himself, TJ believes it's important—now more than ever—to have accurate, positive, queer representation in stories.

