

Books by the Stack



The Argonauts by Maggie Nelson

A genre-bending memoir offering fresh, fierce, and timely thinking about desire, identity, and the limitations and possibilities of love and language. At its center is a romance: the story of the author's relationship with the artist Harry Dodge, who is fluidly gendered, as well as her journey to and through a pregnancy, offers a firsthand account of the complexities and joys of (queer) family-making.

Why you'll like it: *Life story, reflective, thought-provoking.*

About the Author: Maggie Nelson is a poet, critic, and nonfiction author of books such as *The Art of Cruelty: A Reckoning*, *Bluets*, and *Jane: A Murder*. She teaches in the School of Critical Studies at CalArts and lives in Los Angeles, California.

Questions for discussion

1. The book is a continuous stream of thoughts, reflections and writings by the author: there are no chapter or section breaks. The style is one of relatively short paragraphs, ranging in length of one sentence to around 20, each separated by extra blank space. Did you find this style of writing difficult to follow?
2. Discuss the implications of the juxtaposition between the author being referred to as “hard to get” and the author’s proclamation of love to her partner. In what way is this juxtaposition contradictory? What does it say about Nelson? About her identity?
3. Has reading *The Argonauts* changed your position on same-sex marriage? Transgender issues?
4. Were you entertained by *The Argonauts*?
5. Was there a passage that struck you as significant or interesting, profound, amusing, illuminating, disturbing or sad? Why?
6. Was there something especially surprising in Nelson’s story? What was it and why?
7. The way a non-fiction book is written can impact a reader’s enjoyment and understanding of it. Was this book written in a way that was easily accessible?
8. What is original about this book? How does it distinguish itself from other books you have read on a similar topic?

(Questions derived from bookrags.com)

