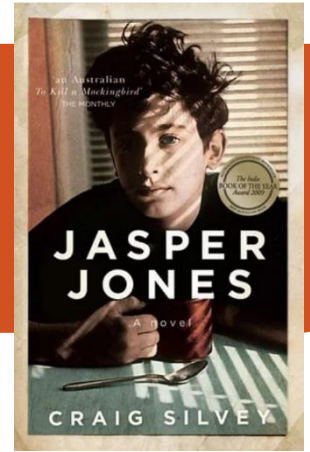




Jasper Jones

Craig Silvey



Author Background

Craig Silvey is an Australian novelist and musician. He grew up on an orchard in Dwellingup, Western Australia and currently lives in Fremantle.

At the tender age of 19 in 2004 Silvey wrote his first novel, *Rhubarb*. In 2007 he released *The World According to Warren*, a picture book affectionately starring the guide-dog from *Rhubarb*.

Jasper Jones has won plaudits in three continents, including an International Dublin Literary Award shortlisting, a Michael J. Printz Award Honour, and a Miles Franklin Literary Award shortlisting. *Jasper Jones* was the Australian Book Industry Awards Book of the Year for 2010.

Silvey's highly anticipated third novel, *Honeybee*, was released in 2020 to wide acclaim.

Outside of literature, Silvey is the singer/songwriter for the indie/pop/rock band *The Nancy Sikes!*.

Book Summary

Late on a hot summer night in the tail end of 1965, Charlie Bucktin, a precocious and bookish boy of thirteen, is startled by an urgent knock on the window of his sleep-out. His visitor is Jasper Jones, an outcast in the regional mining town of Corrigan. Rebellious, mixed-race, and solitary, Jasper is a distant figure of danger and intrigue for Charlie. So, when Jasper begs for his help, Charlie eagerly steals into the night by his side, terribly afraid but desperate to impress.

Jasper takes him through town and to his secret glade in the bush, and it's here that Charlie bears witness to Jasper's horrible discovery. With his secret like a brick in his belly, Charlie is pushed and pulled by a town closing in on itself in fear and suspicion as he locks horns with his tempestuous mother, falls nervously in love and battles to keep a lid on his zealous best friend, Jeffrey Lu.

And in vainly attempting to restore the parts that have been shaken loose, Charlie learns to discern the truth from myth, and why white lies creep like a curse. In the simmering summer where everything changes, Charlie learns why the truth of things is so hard to know, and even harder to hold in his heart.

Discussion Questions

- ❖ When you first read of Jasper's discovery in the clearing, who did you think was the culprit?
- ❖ Do you think that Charlie did the right thing in helping Jasper? Why do you think Charlie agreed to become an accomplice?
- ❖ Jeffrey Lu is Charlie's best friend. Jeffrey is bullied relentlessly due to his Vietnamese heritage, but he is completely unflappable. Did you ever have a friend like Jeffrey?
- ❖ The whole town of Corrigan is based upon the fake facades that many of its occupants have. Being a young confused teenager, Charlie finds it difficult to fit in, noticing a moral duality in the townspeople. Discuss why you think the people of Corrigan feel the need to have opposing personalities, who are not what they claim to be.
- ❖ What do you think the novel says about Australia in the middle of the Twentieth century? Discuss what the book tells us about masculinity in the 1960s.
- ❖ Which of the characters do you think is the most courageous?
- ❖ Racism becomes one of the key themes in *Jasper Jones*. The townspeople of Corrigan judge people based on their race constantly, but almost never talk about race explicitly. Discuss why.
- ❖ Discuss the role of the 'Boo Radley' character in the children's collective imagination.
- ❖ Do you think the novel accurately captures the experience of adolescence, if so, in what ways?
- ❖ Would you choose the spider hat or penis fingers?

References

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