

Welcome to this starter pack—a guide to help you organise your very own *catskull* book club. Here's what you can find on this page:

I. Discussion questions to help you get started.

II. Book Club etiquette

III. Bonus Resources

I. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does the catskull mean to you? How does that meaning change as Ram's journey continues?
2. What do you notice about the way each chapter is written? What effect does it have on pacing and mood?
3. What do you notice about the form of the novel? What elements stood out to you as unlike the others? What effect do these differences have?
4. Which scene(s), chapter(s) or character(s) stood out to you and why?
5. How do these characters and their dynamics with each other develop throughout *catskull*?
Pick any pair to discuss
 - Ram and Kass
 - Ram and Paris
 - Ram and Logan
 - Ram and Uncle Arun
 - Ram and Matthew/Jiahao
 - Kass and Logan
 - Kass and Paris
6. All the characters grapple with the mistakes they've made. Do you believe them to be the mistakes they've made? Do their actions determine who they are? Are some characters more forgivable than others? Why so?
7. How do the characters deal with justice? What is considered just? What is the difference between just and lawful?
8. How is masculinity interpreted, internalised and expressed by the characters?
9. Discuss the role that family plays for Ram and Kass.
10. What role does the education system play in the setting of *catskull*? In what way does the education system and school setting become a stage for the themes of the book to develop?
11. How does the novel depict violence? How did you respond to that representation of physical violence?
12. What other stories does *catskull* remind you of? How is *catskull* similar or different to those stories?
13. What does the book format demand from the story of *catskull*? How would that be different in a film, a TV show, a comic book, or an audio experience?
14. What do you think of the ending as a bookend to *catskull*?

II. BOOK CLUB ETIQUETTE

Thank you to Group Reading Committee and Kei Franklin for helping to craft this section! Here are some tips to help you organise your book club:

- **Establish a workable schedule:** Decide as a group how frequently you'd like to meet to talk about the book.
 - You could read the whole book together (e.g. 1-2 chapters every week/month);
 - Or, you could read specific chapters based on an agreed theme/topic;
 - Or, you might want to join a public reading group that is currently reading the book, and follow their schedule.

Deciding upon the level of commitment and schedule beforehand can help maximise engagement for all members of your book club.

- **Before the book club:** We recommend assigning someone in your group to facilitate the discussion. Most successful book clubs have a clearly defined 'host'— someone who can take the lead and direct the flow of conversation. The host can provide a general overview of the chapter/book, share discussion questions, and help to focus the conversation. This will make the session more engaging and meaningful.
- **During the book club:**
 - You might want to begin with some simple warm-up questions. If you have new members, introduce yourselves (name, age, favorite animal, pronoun, why they've joined the session, etc.). Do a Check-In by asking everyone to describe how they are feeling that day—you can be creative by inviting people to use colors / textures / types of weather to describe how they're feeling, rather than emotions. A good book club is also a fun social space.
- At the first session, you may want to collectively agree on some discussion guidelines, which will help the space be inclusive and safe for all participants. Some suggested guidelines are:
 - Avoid using discriminatory language. (If you're not sure if something sounds discriminatory, it probably is.)
 - Avoid using difficult or inaccessible words and concepts. If you feel that certain terms are useful but it's possible that not everyone knows or understands them, explain them.
 - Agree that it is OK to ask for clarifications and that is also OK to make mistakes—we avoid shaming individuals for any reason.
 - We agree to speak from our own perspective, rather than attempting to represent the opinion of a larger group or anyone else.
- As a 'host', try and be aware of group dynamics. Pay attention to how much space any one individual is taking up. Try to balance out who is speaking, and provide openings for different people to contribute to the discussion. You can also include this in your discussion of group guidelines (e.g. We agree to 'share the mic').
- **At the end of each book club session:** We recommend doing a Check-Out—ask everyone to share how they feel, or any final thoughts they might have.

- **Considerations for online book clubs:** If you're holding your book club online, here are some extra tips for you.
 - Pick a convenient time so that folks from other time zones can join!
 - Mute audio when not speaking.
 - For hearing people, the use of hand signs can be really useful to convey information to each other, without having to interrupt the speaker. Plus they're fun! [There are many hand signs you can use, and this video \(Signs #2, 4, 10 & 11\) is a good example of what we mean!](#) Feel free to come up with your own unique hand signs, and test them out before you start the discussion.
 - Have fun with virtual backgrounds (related to the topic or not).

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III. BONUS RESOURCES

In response to the themes featured in *catskull* which include inequality and discrimination experienced by migrant workers and minority groups in Singapore, the following resources below point to the advocacy work by community groups working to improve migrant worker rights and contribute to anti-racist discourse. This is a non-exhaustive list and is meant to be a starting point towards education and getting involved in the community.

Migrant worker advocacy and information:

- [Migrant Mutual Aid SG](#)
- [Migrant Worker Death Map](#)
- [Transformative Justice Collective](#)
- [Human Beings Are Not Cargo](#)
- [Humanitarian Organization for Migration Economics](#)
- [TWC2](#)
- [Workers Make Possible](#)

Anti-racism efforts and resources:

- [Community Action Network](#)
- [Minority Voices](#)
- [SG Brown Queers](#)
- [Beyond the Hijab](#)
- [Brown is Redacted: Reflecting on Race in Singapore](#) edited by Kristian-Marc James Paul, Mysara Aljaru and Myle Yan Tay

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You can pre-order a copy of *catskull* [here](#).

Thank you to Yan for helping us develop this book club starter pack! [Please reach out to us](#) if you would like Yan to join or be involved in your book club.