



## **THE GROUNDHOG FOREVER** by Henry Hoke

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### **CONVERSATION STARTERS**

- The central surreal conceit of the novel finds Thing 1 and Thing 2 trapped in the sequel to a real film. What does this reveal about our symbiotic relationship to pop culture? Is there a film or piece of media that you feel has never left you, that you still live inside?
- The main characters are given pseudonyms by their professors, and the author also gives all other characters, including real famous people, nicknames throughout the book. What effect does this have? When does it shift and why?
- Describe the effect of the novel's frequent references to Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass* and to Washington Irving's "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" and "Rip Van Winkle."
- What does the presence of Bill Murray do to the narrative? How does proximity to fame transform Thing 1 and Thing 2's experience? If you've encountered celebrities in your own life, what was your reaction? Do these encounters create a sense of "before" and "after"?
- The author describes this book as a queer sequel to the original film. Besides the main characters being LGBTQIA, how do the book's themes, structure, and narrative explore the concept of queerness, especially in contrast to the original Groundhog Day film?
- The tragic attacks of September 11th, 2001 were the pivotal moment when Thing 1 and Thing 2 bonded with each other and with the city of New York. What role do tragedies, personal or global, play in how we orient our lives? How do these events mark time? Do they warp it?

- How does the book identify and explore Thing 1 and Thing 2's struggle with depression?
- A backdrop of the endless April 27th, 2004 in this novel is the ongoing American war in Iraq and Afghanistan. In what ways and in what moments does this overseas aggression haunt the lives of the main characters?
- The friendship between Thing 1 and Thing 2 is at the core of the novel. In what ways are they symbiotic, and in what ways do their personalities conflict? How do their differing experiences with their race and gender complicate how they interact with each other, and with the world?
- More than even their own immortality, Thing 1 and Thing 2 grapple with the idea of artistic immortality. Can we ever know the influence that our art, or our lives, will have on the world? Is this important in art-making, in living, or irrelevant?
- If you could choose one day of your life to repeat forever, what day would it be? Would you attempt to change anything?