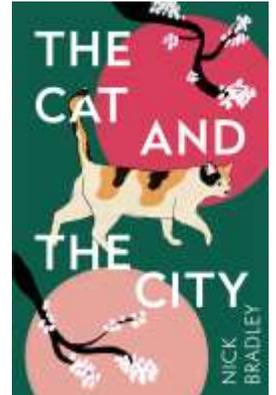


## The Cat and The City by Nick Bradley – Discussion Guide

In Tokyo – one of the world's largest megacities – a stray cat is wending her way through the back alleys. And, with each detour, she brushes up against the seemingly disparate lives of the city-dwellers, connecting them in unexpected ways.

But the city is changing. As it does, it pushes her to the margins where she chances upon a series of apparent strangers – from a homeless man squatting in an abandoned hotel, to a shut-in hermit afraid to leave his house, to a convenience store worker searching for love. The cat orbits Tokyo's denizens, drawing them ever closer.

In a series of spellbinding, interlocking narratives – with styles ranging from manga to footnotes – Nick Bradley has hewn a novel of interplay and estrangement; of survival and self-destruction; of the desire to belong and the need to escape.



### Questions

1. Who were your favourite and least favourite characters? Why?
2. Some of the chapters have very different styles; which was your favourite and least favourite chapter? Why?
3. What do you think this book did or didn't capture about Tokyo? How does it compare to your own experience if you have visited, or other representations you have seen or read?
4. Is it ever possible for a work of fiction to depict a whole city, particularly one as big as Tokyo?
5. How do you feel about the homeless being taken off the streets? (This has happened in all Olympic cities in the past, and is not just unique to Tokyo).
6. Can we ever forgive or forget? Did Ryoko make the right choice at the end? What would you do?
7. How do you feel about George and Mari's relationship? Was one of them more to blame than the other?
8. The book uses techniques such as manga, in 'Hikikomori, Futoko & Neko', photos in 'Trophallaxis', and footnotes, in 'Copy Cat' – did you think they added to the story, or distracted you?
9. In 'Chinese Characters' Ogawa talks about kanji and how its 'characters shift meaning when placed alongside others'. Did any of the fictional characters in the book shift for you from story to story?
10. What does the cat represent to you?



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