

The Fifth Season – Summary and Analysis

- ▶ **Nora K. Jemisin** won the Hugo Awards for best novel 3 years in a row for the 3 books in the series.
- ▶ She's the first African American writer to win the Hugo award in general.
- ▶ **Setting:** Continent Stillness which is confronted with existential seismic events every couple of years.
- ▶ **Protagonist:** Damaya who can control seismic energy.



Timeline

Damaya: 2, 6, 11, 17

Syenite: 4, 8, 9, 12, 14, 16, 19, 20, 22

Essun: 1, 3, 5, 7, 10, 13, 15, 18, 21, 23

Damaya

- ▶ **Damaya**, an **orogene**, is collected by **Schaffa** from her bad parents and scares her (2, 6)
- ▶ She is trained at the **Fulcrum**, meets Maxixe, Crack, and others, but doesn't have a lot of friends (11)
- ▶ Meets a girl who isn't an orogene, **Binof**, and discovers an ancient socket under the Fulcrum (17)
- ▶ Binof gets taken away and Damaya chooses her orogene name **Syenite** (17f)

Syenite

- ▶ Syenite gets a job in **Allia** with 10-ringer **Alabaster** (4)
- ▶ On the way she learns the terrible truth about nodes (8)
- ▶ There is an attempt to murder Alabaster by poison in inhospitable Allia (9)
- ▶ Syenite removes coral from harbor and reveals an **obelisk** (12)
- ▶ **Guardian** Edki attacks them; Syenite inadvertently destroys the obelisk using her power (14)
- ▶ **Stone eater** named Antimony brings them to **Meov** (16)
- ▶ They stay at Meov for about 2 y and form a relationship with **Innon** and others. Polyamorous relationship with Alabaster x Syenite x Innon (19, Interlude II, 20)
- ▶ They get found out by Guardians which come and kill Innon and most others; S. triggers cataclysmic event, kills her son **Corundum** and all around; Alabaster vanishes (22)
- ▶ She travels the Stillness for 2 y; settles in Tirimo for 10 y, becomes **Essun** (22f)

Essun

- ▶ Alabaster triggers a **fifth season** somewhere else (Prologue)
- ▶ **Jija**, Essun's new husband, kills son **Uche** and kidnaps daughter **Nassun** (1, 3)
- ▶ **Hoa**, the stone eater joins Essun to find her daughter. He senses orogenes. (5, 7)
- ▶ They meet **Tonkee** on the way; Hoa is being strange; they follow the orogene 'signal' (10, 13)
- ▶ They find an underground comm, Castrima. **Ykka** and orogenes live there (15, 18)
- ▶ Turns out Tonkee is Binof. Obelisks follow Essun (21)
- ▶ Hoa 'guarded' Essun for a long time.
- ▶ Antimony brings wrecked Alabaster: 'Have you ever heard of something called a moon?' (foreshadowed Interlude I) (23)

Themes

- ▶ Stone doesn't perish, yet humans still manage to change it.
- ▶ Hierarchies and the power of narratives
- ▶ Subvert expectations, e.g. in identity of protagonist ("40 something black, overweight woman")
- ▶ Fun, interesting, 2nd person authorial voice (video game POV)