

## STORIES OF YOUR LIFE AND OTHERS DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### TOWER OF BABYLON

- How does Ted Chiang's version of the story differ from that of the Bible?
- How did your feelings about the tower and the mission of the people change over the course of the story?

### UNDERSTAND

- What does this story seem to imply about intelligence? What is intelligence?

### DIVISION BY ZERO

- How does the structure of the story (8, 8a, 8b) (9, 9a=9b) aid the point of the story?

### STORIES OF YOUR LIFE

- How did you feel with the realization that all of the "memories" were actually from the future?
  - How did this structure of the story aid in the point of the story?
- Based on what you know about Heptapod B, do you think the layout of this story is similar to how it would be written in Heptapod B?
- If you already knew how the story went, would you still want to hear it?

### SEVENTY TWO LETTERS

- What does this story seem to imply about human power and their role over one another?

### EVOLUTION OF HUMAN SCIENCE

- Is the quote below actually a reassuring fact?
- Would you allow your theoretical children to become "enhanced" knowing there will come a time when you can no longer relate to them?

### HELL IS THE ABSENCE OF GOD

- Why do you think Neil was saved just to be damned?

### LIKING WHAT YOU SEE: A DOCUMENTARY

- If calli actually existed, how would the world change if everyone was indeed forced to have it?

### GENERAL QUESTIONS

- What was your favorite and least favorite story?
- What does Chiang suggest about human perception of the world?

## Reference Material

### TOWER OF BABYLON

Genesis 11:1-9 (NIV)

Now the whole world had one language and a common speech. As people moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar\* and settled there. They said to each other, "Come, let's make bricks and bake them thoroughly." They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar. Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth." But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower the people were building. The Lord said, "If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other." So the Lord scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. That is why it was called Babel\*\* -- because there the Lord confused the language of the whole world.

\* Hebrew word for Babylonia

\*\* Babel sounds like the Hebrew word for confused

### STORIES OF YOUR LIFE

"Well if you already know how the story goes, why do you need me to read it to you."

"Because I wanna hear it"

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### EVOLUTION OF HUMAN SCIENCE

"We need not be intimidated by the accomplishments of metahuman science. We should always remember that the technologies that made metahumans possible were originally invented by humans, and they were no smarter than we."

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