

# Stories of Your Life and Other Stories

for book by Ted Chiang

## Questions for Discussion

### **Tower of Babylon**

Questions: What is interesting about life on Tower of Babylon? Where does Hillalum find himself instead of Heaven, and what might this mean?

### **Understand Division by Zero**

Question: Renee is in anguish as mathematics is not entirely consistent. Her husband is not bothered by this fact. How does her attempted suicide affect their relationship?

### **Story of Your Life**

Question: Quote from Chiang, "If you know what's going to happen, can you keep it from happening? Even when a story says that you can't, the emotional impact arises from the feeling that you should be able to." Do we try to affect the future, and how might this impact our lives?

### **Seventy-Two Letters**

Questions: Well, what did you think of this? The sculptors with the clay? What was something that stood out to you?

### **The Evolution of Human Science**

Question: Humans have been superseded by metahumans of their own creation. How does the role of humans change? *There are no characters in this editorial story.*

### **Hell Is the Absence of God**

Questions: Neil is angry with God after his wife dies. What does he learn about people in the support group? How are the angelic visitations different from what we might imagine?

### **Liking What You See: A Documentary**

Question: In a distant future, technology allows humans to remove judgements based on what we see. How would that affect our lives? Would you be in favor of calliagnosia or not?

# ARRIVAL (the Movie)

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Which story in the book *Stories of Your Life and Other Stories* by Ted Chiang is the movie idea based?
2. How is the movie the same and different from the short story version?
3. Would you have picked the same chapter in the book from which to base a movie, and why?
4. Why is the story narrated by a linguist, Dr. Louise Banks?
5. How is the timeline of the story unusual and why do we see it through the eyes of Dr. Banks?
6. Why were the aliens named heptapods?
7. What was the role of Dr. Gary Donnelly from the U.S. Army in communicating with the aliens? Why was there a physical barrier between the humans and aliens?
8. How did the aliens write? What was different about the languages Heptapod A and Heptapod B?
9. Fermat's Principle of Least Time applied to the language of the Aliens. They did not experience time sequentially, and experienced it how?
10. Why do you think Dr. Louise Banks began to experience time differently? Why would that be an emotional experience?
11. Does the knowledge of her future cause Dr. Banks to try to change any of the events?
12. What do you think you might have done in a similar situation? Does this impact your thinking about the concept of free will?