

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 01 The Saur's built an entire civilization on the belief that humans were an ancient threat—much the way humans view dinosaurs as relics of a dangerous past. If the situation were reversed and an evolved dinosaur returned to Earth, how do you think humanity would react?

- 02 Filo is, in a very literal sense, manufactured—engineered as part of someone else's plan. But aren't we all, in some way, the byproduct of someone else's plan? Does how a person comes into existence have any bearing on who they're allowed to become?

- 03 Hex and Datou were raised on the edge of the very system Mai is running from. For each sibling, what is the moment their loyalty to that system breaks? Whose arc resonated more with you, and why?

- 04 Jura reacts fiercely when she discovers Filo sneaking around with her offspring. What's really driving that defensiveness? If you caught your children with the same extraterrestrial human who took your best friend from you, how would you react?

- 05 As the crew approaches Earth, they call out the dysfunction and disunity of our real world. Seen through outsiders' eyes, what does this reflect about humanity? What, if anything, would it take to change that?

- 06 Jade is grieving a biological mother she never got to know. Filo is fighting for a mother figure who chose him over herself. How do these parallel relationships shape what "family" means in the book? How does the story distinguish between the family you're born into and the family that you choose?

- 07 Lusit is judged and cast aside as a "defect." How does the Saur Classification system work as a critique of real-world hierarchies—economic, racial, ability-based, or otherwise?

- 08 Dr. Hothbee believes humanity is a lost cause and that "starting over" on Mars is the only path forward. Does the book treat his ambition as villainous, visionary, or both? Where do you place him morally?

- 09 Corvus is an AI—but he's also, in many ways, a brother to Filo. What does SAUR suggest about the nature of consciousness and connection? Can programmed feelings truly be considered love, or family?

- 10 A tension running through the whole book is chaos vs. control. What are the advantages and dangers of each? If you had to build a society around one, which would you choose?

- 11 Mai may be the most layered character in the book. Is she running from something, or toward something? Did your answer change as the story unfolded?

- 12 Every villain is the hero of their own story. What story do you think Ovira tells herself about who she is and what she's doing? Is any part of it true?

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- 13 Filo has no powers and is outmatched—physically and mentally—by every Saur on the planet. Mai, classified a neut, spent her life bullied and underestimated. Yet both learn to turn being overlooked into a weapon. How does each of them use the world’s low expectations to their advantage? What does the book suggest about the power of being underestimated?
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- 14 The story closes with Filo at the helm of the ship, finally embracing his role as captain. Is this a reaction to the danger Mai is in? A response to having clear direction for the first time? Or something deeper? Where do you think this leaves him heading into the next book?
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- 15 If you could ask Kayla one question about this book, what would it be? (You can email her — she actually reads them.)
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