The Three-Body Problem

Author: Cixin Liu

Liu was born on June 23, 1963 in Beijing. He grew up in Yangquan, Shanxi, where his parents had been sent to work in the mines. Due to the violence of the Cultural Revolution, he was sent to live in his ancestral home in Luoshan County, Henan. Liu graduated from the North China University of Water Conservancy and Electric Power in 1988. He then worked as a computer engineer at a power plant in Shanxi province.

He is a nine-time winner of China's Galaxy Award, and has also received the 2015 Hugo Award for his novel *The Three-Body Problem*, as well as the 2017 Locus Award for *Death's End*. He is also a winner of the Chinese Nebula Award. He is a member of the China Science Writers Association and the vice president of the Shanxi Writers Association.

Learn more about Cixin Liu's passion

Link to information about the Chinese equivalent to the Hugo Award, the Galaxy Award: Galaxy Award (China)

Link to other Chinese science fiction titles that Cixin Liu recommends: liu cixin recommends

Other books by Cixin Liu (*available at Burbank Public Library)

Remembrance of Earth's Past series:

1. *The Three-Body Problem* (2014)*
2. *The Dark Forest* (2015)*
3. *Death's End* (2016)*

Novels

*Ball Lightning (2018)**
*Supernova Era (2019)**
The Cretaceous Past (2021)

Learn more about the math of *The Three-Body Problem*

Neil deGrasse Tyson Explains *The Three-Body Problem*:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6GfIDwwxfsM

Learn more about the Cultural Revolution

Cultural Revolution

The Cultural Revolution : a people's history, 1962-1976 by Frank Dikötter

Ten years of Madness : oral histories of China's Cultural Revolution by Jicaj Feng.

Other books recommended by Burbank Public Library staff:

Books that Cixin Liu credits with influencing him to write Science Fiction:

2001: a space odyssey by Arthur C. Clark

Rendezvous with Rama by Arthur C. Clark

Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea by Jules Verne

Other hard-core Science Fiction

The Martian by Andy Weir

Seveneves by Neal Stephenson

All Systems Red (The Murderbot Diaries, #1) by Martha Wells

Discussion Questions for *The Three-Body Problem*:

1. The novel is not written chronologically but instead jumps in time and across points of view. Why do you think Liu Cixin chose to tell the story in this fashion? Would you have preferred a more linear structure?

2. *The Three-Body Problem* can be categorized as "hard science fiction," delving deep into real-life scientific concepts and in particular the titular "three-body problem" in physics. Did you enjoy all the science in the novel? Did you feel like the author did a good job of explaining it to a lay audience, or was there anything you struggled to understand?

3. The book depicts humanity encountering a more technologically advanced alien civilization. How does this first contact scenario compare to how you imagined it? What insights does it offer about cultural differences and perspectives?

4. How familiar were you with China's Cultural Revolution? How does Liu's depiction of this era impact your understanding of Ye's motivations and mindset? In what ways does the Cultural Revolution and its aftermath loom over the novel's narrative and themes?

5. Ye Wenjie's decisions have universe-altering consequences. Do you sympathize with her actions or not? What would you have done in her situation?

6. What did you think about the balance between plot and character development versus exploration of big ideas in the novel? Which characters did you most enjoy getting to know? Who would you have liked to see more fleshed out?

7. The book touches on themes of government control, authoritarian regimes, and the trade-offs between freedom and security. What commentary does the novel provide on these issues?

8. How does the book make you think differently about science, technology, morality, humanity's place in the cosmos, or other big philosophical questions?

9. This book is the first of a trilogy. Do you intend to read the additional books? If so, what are you hoping they'll cover?

10. If you've seen the Netflix adaptation, what did you think of the changes made to the story? Did they enhance or take away from your enjoyment?