

*Hello, Universe*  
**Discussion Guide**  
Grades 3-7

**Before Reading: to activate schema, build background knowledge, and set a purpose.**

- Before reading, have a class discussion to activate prior knowledge about friendship and how to be kind to one another
- Before using this book with your class or recommending the book to students we suggest reading the book closely to determine if it is a good fit. Consider saying to your students:
  - “This book contains topics and language that may be sensitive. Not all books fit all readers. If you are uncomfortable with this book, you have the right to stop reading it, but please pick another.”
- Frontload vocabulary (see vocabulary list)

**During Reading: to engage students, check for understanding, and make connections.**

Chapters 1 - 5

- Compare and contrast Virgil to Valencia.
- What did Virgil learn about Gulliver?
- How does Virgil feel about “turtle”?

Chapters 6 - 10

- Why did Virgil take the long way to Kaori?
- Explain Kaori and Virgil’s relationship.
- Compare Valencia and Malaya.
- What happened at the Super Saver?
- What kind of person is Chet and his dad?

Chapters 11 - 15

- What is Valencia interested in and why?
- What does Chet think of Valencia? Why?
- What is Kaori trying to do?

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Chapters 16 - 20

- Who is Sacred?
- What did Chet do? Why?
- Why did Virgil go into the well? Describe the journey into the well.
- Who did Chet run into? What happened?
- To whom does Valencia compare herself to? Why?
- Why did Valencia and Roberta stop being friends?

Chapters 21 - 25

- Why does Valencia seek out Kaori?
- Why do you think Valencia had a weird feeling?
- What lessons does Kaori teach Gen?
- How does Kaori know something was wrong with Virgil?
- Who/who is Pah?
- What did Virgil find in the well?
- What's Ruby's destiny and the significance of the story?

Chapters 26 - 30

- How does Virgil describe Bali?
- What does Bayani mean and why does Ruby call him that?
- Why does Valencia have to go to Virgil's house?
- Why did Chet want to catch a snake? What happened?

Chapters 31 - 35

- What does Kaori think of her past life?
- Why do they need to find a rock with scales?
- What was Virgil thinking while he was stuck in the well?
- Who did the girls find in the woods?
- How did Valencia know the snake wasn't poisonous?

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Chapters 31 - 35

- What does Kaori want to do with Valencia? Why?
- How does fate influence the story this far?

Chapters 36 - 40

- What will Virgil do differently if he ever got out?
- What happens when they try to start the ritualistic ceremony?
- What did Valencia realize when she got Zola's text?
- How did they rescue Virgil?
- What connection do Virgil and Valencia have?

Chapters 41 - 42

- How did the well change Virgil?
- How did his family react when he came home?
- Infer what will happen from the "hello" text.

**After Reading: to summarize, question, and reflect.**

- How do you compare and contrast Valencia's character traits to Virgil's?
- What did the well represent in the story?
- Micro-/Meso-/Macro Environment Systems: Levels of Setting\*: Notice the name and the aspects of a character's environment. This may be based on the author's information or on what you can infer based on text details. Then, think about which of these is important based on the conflicts that the character is experiencing.

**If your students enjoyed this book...**

- Encourage them to continue to discuss it and refer to it in other lessons and conversations.
- Let them explore more about the topic by reading other books with similar themes, structure, characters, or content.