

# Reading Guide

## *OldEarth Neb Encounter*

### Elementary

**1** Amin is Neb's grandson, and his wife, Gizah, is Aram's daughter. Their families are distantly related, yet they are very different from their parents and grandparents. They want to understand their history better to help their child. Do the people of the past make a difference in today's world and in the lives of future generations?

**2** Zuri is an alien trying to limit the technology connected to his body. What influences have encouraged him to think differently from the other members of his race? Is exposure to new ideas dangerous or advantageous or both? How and why?

**3** Using secret powers that he doesn't understand, Uz has managed to gain a great reputation in his lifetime. How do Neb's and Uz's lives correlate? How are they different? Do unseen, secret powers actually exist in real life?

**4** Who are some of the most significant characters in the book? Why do you think so?

**5** There are several stories being told in the novel, which one did you find most interesting? Why? Do lives intertwine in place and time as shown in the novel?

### Secondary

**1** Amin is reluctant to ask his father to tell him the stories of past generations. Why? Can family history really affect our present lives? How?

**2** Eva faces many challenges personally and as a woman in a male-dominated clan. Is she ever able to make personal choices? How are her opportunities affected by the people around her?

**3** Ashkenazi has chosen a safe path in life, hoping to stay clear of problems he can't control. Does his choice save him from danger? What other decisions might he have made?

**4** Seth is considered wise for his years, but he is seriously challenged by dangerous forces. What other qualities did Seth need to protect his people? Can a person remain innocent and battle evil successfully?

**5** How does the intertwining subplot involving the alien races add depth to the human drama? Does observing a new culture change the observers so they may no longer fit as comfortably in their old society?

### **Adult/Book Clubs**

**1** Who were some of your favorite characters? Why? What part of their personality stood out?

**2** Several of the characters make life-changing decisions. Not all the decisions led to good ends, no matter how well-intentioned. Is there an example where good intentions were not enough? What does that say about human interactions?

**3** How are the women's lives different from the men's? Despite those differences, does everyone still have free will to make personal judgments and decisions?

**4** How does retelling the stories of the past change some of the characters? Can knowing the truth about family history make a difference in how the present and the future is perceived?

**5** The sci-fi storyline intertwines around the human drama. Could humanity at its worst and best have something important to say to a race of highly developed beings?

### **Paperback/Journal Reflections**

**1** Which character did you enjoy reading about? Who did you dislike? Did they remind you of anyone in real life?

**2** Despite good intentions, sometimes things worked out poorly for certain characters. Does that make life meaningless? What carried the heroic characters beyond despair when things were not working out well?

**3** Few characters attempt to truly understand other characters. Is that true to real life? Can a person honestly understand another? Does the attempt, no matter how imperfect, still have value?

**4** How much family history do I know? Do I wish I knew more? How could I find out? Would it be better if I didn't? Am I brave or wise enough to know the ugly side of family history and not let it direct my future?

**5** What might my life say to an alien race if they could see what I have lived through? Would they be impressed? Do I care what anyone else thinks? Should I care?