



LAUNCH TIME

BOOK CLUB KIT

Book I of the Wonderful Week for a Launch Series | Michael D. Young

Welcome to the Launch

A flexible guide for book clubs, classroom reading groups, families, and speculative-fiction discussion circles.

Spoiler guide: Pages marked **SPOILER-LIGHT** can be used before everyone finishes. Pages marked **FULL SPOILERS** discuss the later timeline, Gary and Vincenza, Sergio, the Trebles, and the final reveal.

Launch Time blends comic fantasy, science fiction, time travel, magical technology, meta-narration, and an ensemble quest. J.D. Zaubermann begins with a binary prophecy and a mysterious piece of the Deus Ex Machina (DEM); aspiring actor Gary Baumgartner enters a parallel story after a stranger offers him a role tied to his ancestry. The two strands gradually reveal that “old cast” and “new cast” are not just storytelling language - they are part of the book’s central question about inheritance, identity, and chosen purpose.

The novel also treats humor as more than decoration. Footnotes, pop-culture riffs, failed spells, arcade games, bad coffee, cosmic riddles, and bizarre creatures keep interrupting apocalyptic stakes. That tension gives a club plenty to discuss: when does humor help us face danger, and when does it let characters avoid what they most need to confront?



Quick book-club setup

Best for Readers who enjoy humorous fantasy, time travel, quest structures, magical technology, and ensemble casts.	Suggested group size 4-12 readers. For larger groups, split the spoiler questions by theme and reconvene.
Ideal discussion length 60 minutes for a standard meeting; 90 minutes if you include an activity or chapter map.	Core lenses Power and accountability • lineage vs. choice • performance and identity • old friends/new roles • magic and technology.

Optional opening: Ask each reader to name one object in the novel they would most want to own - the summoning watch, Gopat, a DEM gear, the panpipes, the time controls, or something else - and one safeguard they would require before using it.

Story Snapshot

SPOILER-LIGHT. Use this section to orient the group without revealing the final connections.

The setup

J.D., an immortal survivor of an older magical age, now lives in 1984. A purple-lit gear from the DEM returns to Earth and sends him a binary prophecy warning of a coming “blue screen” for existence. His ghostly friend Petra immediately becomes his accountability partner as he considers combining ancient power with modern computing.

Meanwhile, thirty-five-year-old Gary Baumgartner is trying to make it as an actor in New York. A mysterious Mr. Mercury offers him a far more consequential “role,” tests him with a red leaf, reveals a dangerous magical lineage, and offers two million dollars for an expedition. Gary’s desire to become somebody collides with the possibility that somebody else has already decided who he is supposed to be.

Three early tensions to track

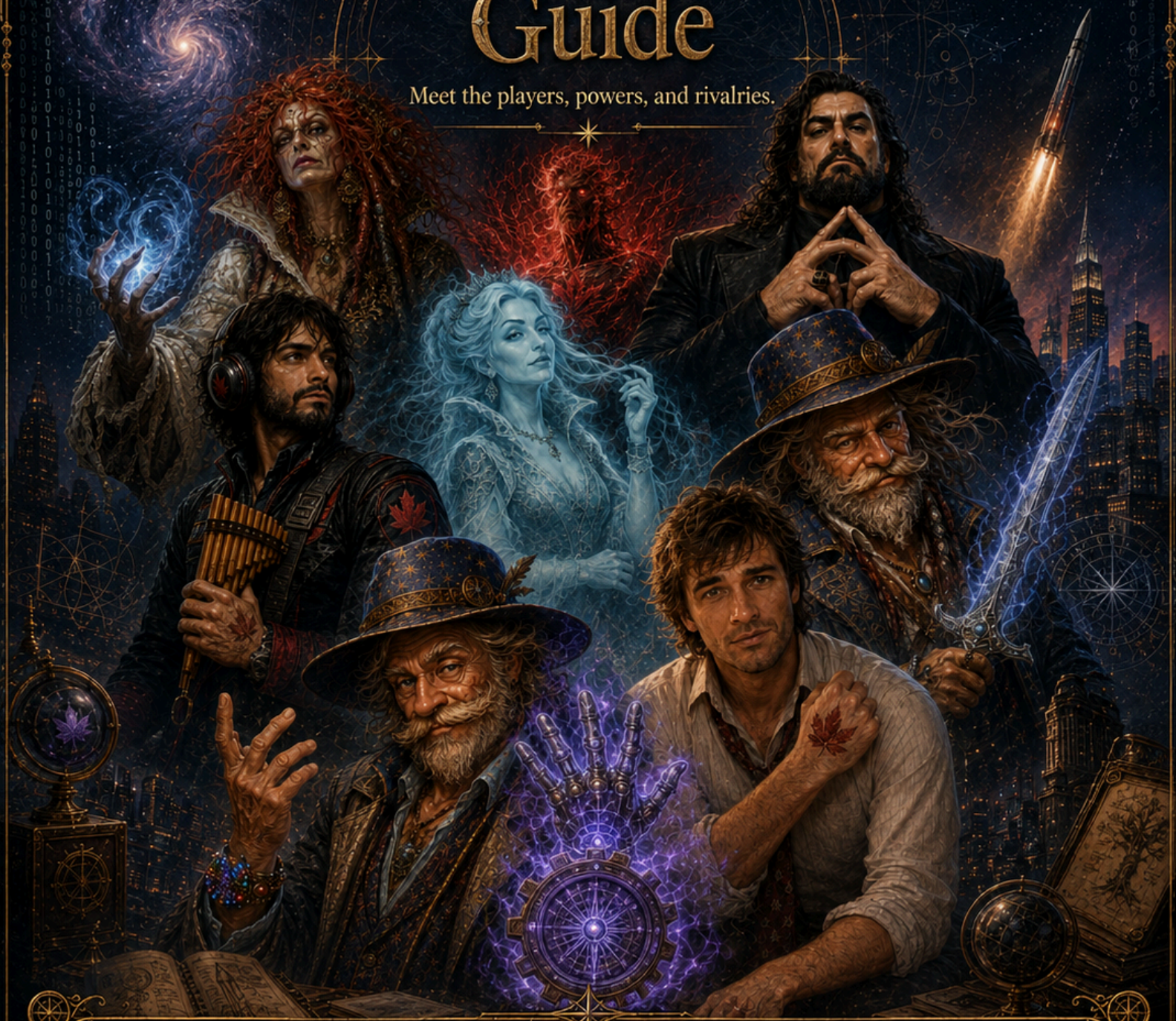
- J.D. knows power corrupts, yet he also believes he may need more power to prevent disaster. What would count as a sufficient safeguard?
- Gary wants a role that finally proves he matters. How does that hunger affect his judgment before he understands Mercury’s real agenda?
- The prophecy says the “ghosts of the past” must inspire a “new cast.” What might inspiration mean: teaching, warning, mentoring, replacement, or something else?

Before-reading or early-reading prompts

1. What makes a prophecy compelling in fiction: clarity, mystery, inevitability, or the possibility of misreading it?
2. Would you trust a powerful artifact more if it behaved like technology instead of magic? Why?
3. What is the difference between receiving a “calling” and being manipulated into a role?
4. When an immortal person lives long enough to outlast friends and cultures, what responsibilities might come with that memory?
5. What should a good mentor do when the next generation is facing a danger the mentor helped create or survive?

Character Guide

Meet the players, powers, and rivalries.



Character Constellation

SPOILER-LIGHT. These are the principal people and forces to keep straight as the cast expands.

J.D. Zaubermann Immortal wizard-turned-journalist, narrator, footnote commentator, and reluctant recipient of an uppercase prophecy. His greatest challenge is not simply gaining power, but using it without becoming the kind of sorcerer he has spent centuries opposing.	Petra A former queen who now lingers as a ghost. She combines affection, skepticism, humor, and moral accountability. Her “veto power” over J.D.’s dangerous ideas makes their friendship one of the book’s ethical anchors.
Gary Baumgartner Thirty-five-year-old aspiring actor in New York. He wants meaningful work, recognition, money, and a life bigger than his tiny apartment. Mercury’s offer turns those understandable desires into vulnerabilities.	Vincenza An archaeologist on the expedition who quickly sees both Gary’s humor and his danger. Their growing trust raises the stakes when Gary’s inherited magic begins acting through him.
Sergio A survivor from a ruined future who enters J.D.’s life through time travel. Initially uncertain and traumatized, he becomes increasingly important as a guide, learner, and eventually a leader.	Gopat A synthetic life form and spell-crafting assistant integrated with J.D. through the DEM/computer experiment. Cheerful, capable, invasive, and not always forthcoming about limitations.
Rightbeard / E.L.M. Old rival, anti-pirate, powerful magic user, and prophecy expert. His return forces J.D. to turn rivalry into cooperation.	Wanda, the Beanwitch Powerful sorceress whose long wait in the Sunken Lands makes her desperate to reopen what was lost. Her goals overlap with J.D.’s only until they do not.
Mr. Mercury The recruiter behind Expedition Red Leaf. He understands Gary’s bloodline, has access to strange off-world objects, and knows exactly how to turn ambition into leverage.	Felgarath An old dark sorcerer whose legacy survives through blood, preserved will, roots, leaves, and the possibility of return.
Tiberius Plinth The Blue Messenger: collector, broker, transporter, ship owner, and master of the Trebles. His commerce connects Mercury’s scheme to a much larger universe.	Adler A mysterious figure who seems to understand the timeline and pushes J.D. toward key choices. His guidance helps, but it also raises questions about agency and manipulation.

Relationships to Watch

The most useful book-club conversations often happen in the space between characters rather than inside individual arcs.

J.D. ↔ Petra

Power needs accountability. Petra knows J.D. well enough to challenge him without treating him as untrustworthy by default.

Gary ↔ Vincenza

Performance gives way to honesty. Gary wants to impress her, but the relationship matters most when he admits fear, danger, and uncertainty.

J.D. ↔ Sergio

The old hero slowly recognizes that surviving the future has already given Sergio expertise. Mentorship becomes reciprocal.

J.D. ↔ Gopat

Convenience versus consent. Gopat can make impossible things easy, but the bond becomes more permanent than J.D. understands when he accepts it.

J.D. ↔ Rightbeard

Old rivalry is not erased; it is repurposed. Shared danger forces both men to decide what parts of the past are worth carrying forward.

J.D. ↔ Beanwitch

Their goals overlap around the Sunken Lands but diverge around Felgarath. Desperation makes the Beanwitch willing to risk consequences J.D. refuses.

Gary ↔ Felgarath

Bloodline becomes a claim of ownership. Felgarath treats ancestry as destiny; Gary's story tests whether inheritance can dictate identity.

Sergio ↔ the rebuilding community

Sergio's leadership matures when he stops equating leadership with having every answer and begins building a team that can act without him.

Relationship lens: Choose one pair above. Track three moments: the first moment of trust, the strongest conflict, and the moment the relationship changes what one character is willing to do.



WORLD & CONCEPTS

Magic, technology, places, and
the rules behind the quest.

World & Concept Guide

A quick-reference page for the novel's magical, technological, and cosmic vocabulary.

DEM / Deus Ex Machina

A reality-altering mechanism whose pieces are scattered. J.D. begins with one returning gear; the book later reveals that the larger hunt is only beginning.

Uppercase prophecy

J.D.'s joking category for the truly consequential kind of prophecy: world-shaping, rhyming, mysterious, and inconveniently vague.

The Beandom / Sunken Lands

The old magical homeland thought lost after a cataclysm. Its buried survival reconnects the present quest to J.D.'s ancient past.

Netherworld

Afterlife realm where many of J.D.'s former companions remain as ghosts with unfinished business.

Magus 1.2 / Gopat

A fusion of spellcraft and software. Gopat can construct spells from requests, but its integration with J.D. introduces questions of control and permanence.

Red leaf / Crimson

A magical inheritance tied to Felgarath. The mark identifies a bloodline and can carry influence as well as power.

Trebles

Cute, fluffy, sonically destructive creatures whose collective songs become an apocalyptic force in the future.

Middlespace

A connective realm/path system linking different places and worlds; it turns portals into routes rather than isolated doors.

Mercury's drums

A prophecy clue that ultimately points beyond Mr. Mercury to off-world trade and Tiberius Plinth's musical technology.

Singhilarity

The looming cosmic threat racing toward the remaining DEM pieces.

Tatsrar

A dark world at the far edge of everything and the next major destination in the quest.

Eagle's Roost

Adler's destination for modifying the stolen ship before the race to Tatsrar.



THEMES & MOTIFS

Identity, destiny, performance, memory, and power.

Themes for Deeper Discussion

Use one theme as the “main lens” for your meeting, or assign a different theme to each pair of readers.

1. Power needs accountability

J.D. is not naïve about power; he is dangerous precisely because he knows how persuasive good intentions can be. Petra’s safeguard role, Gopat’s power, the DEM, Felgarath’s hunger, and Sergio’s mistakes all ask whether ethical power depends more on character, limits, community, or transparency.

2. Lineage vs. chosen identity

Gary and Sergio both encounter a red-leaf legacy they did not choose. The book repeatedly asks whether blood explains a person, predicts a person, or merely creates pressures a person must answer.

3. Old cast / new cast

The ghosts are not brought back simply to repeat an earlier quest. J.D. gradually sees that past heroes may be most useful when they prepare others to act rather than reclaim center stage.

4. Performance and roles

Gary is literally an actor; Mercury offers him a “role”; the prophecy speaks of a “cast”; J.D. performs heroic poses and narrates his own legend. Which performances are masks, and which help characters become who they need to be?

5. Magic and technology

The book refuses a simple opposition between ancient magic and modern machines. Binary prophecy, a spell-programming language, AI-like synthetic life, time controls, alien ships, and musical interfaces all blur the boundary.

6. Humor under pressure

The jokes often arrive immediately beside danger. Humor can be resilience, intimacy, denial, self-protection, or narrative style. Different characters use it differently.

7. Memory, time, and the life not lived

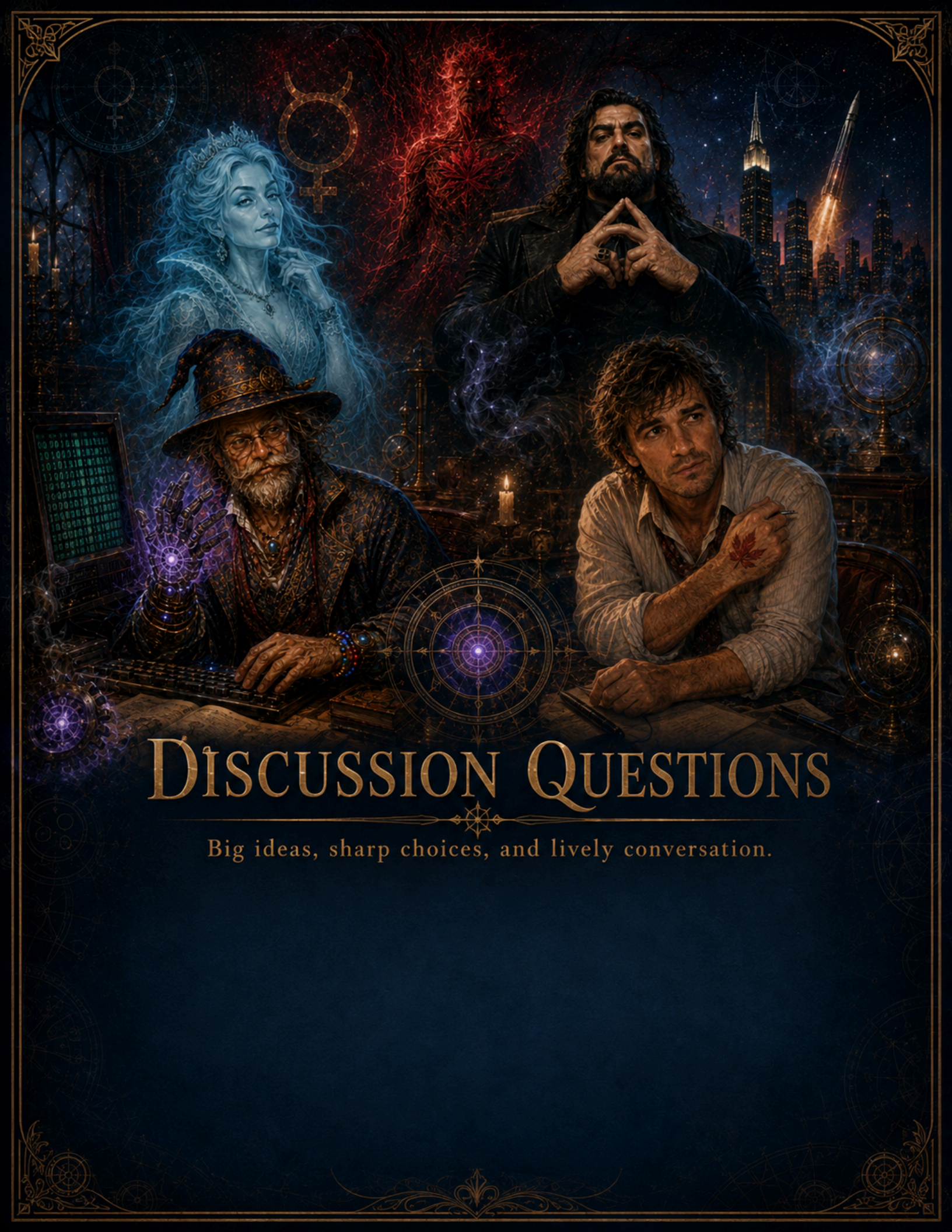
Time travel makes cause and effect unstable, but the emotional question is simpler: if a better life exists in another timeline, what does that mean for the people who remember the harder one?

Motifs & Recurring Images

These details can become excellent “why this image?” questions when discussion stalls.

Binary / code The first chapter title decodes to QUEST. Binary turns prophecy into something simultaneously ancient and modern.	Purple light / gear The returning DEM piece announces power before anyone understands its purpose.
Red leaf / roots / branches Inheritance is visualized as something organic: lineage grows, spreads, binds, and can nourish or imprison.	Blue screens / blue gemstone “Blue” links technological collapse, Tiberius’s identity, and recurring visual clues. Ask where blue signals danger, authority, or direction.
Music Songs can enchant, attack, control, navigate, communicate, and destroy. Music is both art and infrastructure.	Coke / coffee / food Mundane modern comforts keep puncturing epic grandeur. They also become markers of time, civilization, and what people miss after collapse.
Games / auditions / performance Characters repeatedly enter systems with rules they do not fully understand, from Donkey Kong to casting calls to prophecy interpretation.	Doors / portals / passage The novel is full of thresholds that require lineage, knowledge, timing, music, or courage. Ask what each threshold demands from the person crossing it.

Motif challenge: Pick one recurring color, object, or form of music. Find three appearances and decide whether its meaning stays stable or changes as the story expands.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Big ideas, sharp choices, and lively conversation.

Discussion Questions: First Orbit

SPOILER-LIGHT. These work well even if someone has not finished the novel.

1. J.D. opens by summarizing centuries of backstory in a comic, self-aware voice. How quickly did you trust him as a narrator? Where does his confidence help, and where does it hide uncertainty?
2. Why is Petra the right person for J.D. to summon when the DEM returns? What can she tell him that a more agreeable friend could not?
3. Gary receives both a callback for *Oklahoma!* and Mercury's mysterious invitation. What does each option represent emotionally, not just practically?
4. Mercury offers Gary a huge amount of money and a story about noble ancestry. Which is the stronger temptation: money, adventure, identity, or recognition?
5. The novel repeatedly turns modern technology into something that looks like magic to older characters. Which joke or scene best captures that reversal?
6. J.D. knows that power corrupts, yet he keeps searching for ways to use more of it safely. Is that wisdom, rationalization, or both?
7. What effect do J.D.'s footnotes have on pacing and tone? Do they deepen the world, undercut danger, build character, or all three?
8. How does Gary's desire to perform for others shape the way he interacts with Vincenza? When does he become most authentic with her?
9. Why might the prophecy use theatrical language - "ghosts," "cast," "job" - rather than standard heroic language?
10. Which element of the world-building felt most original to you: ghost bureaucracy, magical computing, the Sunken Lands, Trebles, musical technology, or something else?
11. The story constantly mixes absurdity with genuine danger. Which scene made that mixture work best for you?
12. Before the final chapters, who did you think the "new cast" would be? What clues shaped your guess?

Discussion Questions: Deep Space I

FULL SPOILERS. Continue only after everyone has finished the book.

1. J.D.'s experiment requires a forty-two-year wait, so he solves the problem by traveling to the completed result. What does that shortcut reveal about his personality? What does the ruined future reveal about the cost of "solving" problems without understanding their consequences?
2. Sergio chooses to remain in 1984 even after J.D. warns that the timestream may reject him. What makes that choice believable after his experience with the Trebles?
3. Gopat is helpful, funny, and genuinely sentient - but it also becomes fused to J.D. in a way he did not fully consent to or understand. How should we judge Gopat: tool, friend, dependent, parasite, partner, or something else?
4. Both Gary and Sergio develop the red-leaf mark. How did the second appearance change your interpretation of lineage and timeline?
5. The Beanwitch has waited more than a century for a chance to regain what was lost. At what point does understandable grief become reckless obsession?
6. Felgarath talks about Gary as a "branch" growing from an old root. How does that metaphor attempt to erase Gary's individuality?
7. J.D. rescues Rightbeard even when doing so makes escape far more dangerous. What does that moment say about the difference between rivalry and enmity?
8. The ghosts eventually become an "old cast" that helps the living prepare. Is this a story about passing the torch, refusing to pass the torch, or learning how to share it?
9. Sergio is initially defined by survival. Later, rebuilding the future requires collaboration, delegation, and willingness to fail publicly. Which moment marks the real beginning of his leadership?
10. Tiberius treats the Trebles as beloved pets while their roaming devastates worlds. How does the novel use his charm and eccentricity to make irresponsibility more unsettling?

Discussion Questions: Deep Space II

FULL SPOILERS. Questions centered on the last act and the ending.

11. The defeat of Tiberius leaves J.D. and Sergio with a stolen alien ship but no easy way to use it. Why is Sergio's suggestion - give him years to learn while J.D. skips ahead - such an effective use of the book's time-travel premise?
12. J.D. returns to find Sergio making costly mistakes, including trying to solve too much alone. Why is the community's response to his failure important?
13. Sergio eventually says he thought being in charge meant having all the answers. How does the novel redefine leadership by the time he can pilot the ship?
14. The final chapter shows Gary married to Vincenza in 2001 as she reveals that, if their child is a boy, she wants to name him Sergio. What does the phrase "the life he might have lived" suggest about the earlier timeline?
15. Does the ending ask us to see Sergio primarily as Gary's possible son, as an independent person formed by a ruined future, or as both at once? What changes when readers hold both identities together?
16. J.D. and Sergio are now racing the Singularity for the remaining DEM pieces. How satisfying is a first-book ending that resolves the immediate launch but leaves the cosmic problem deliberately open?
17. Adler has guided events across time. When does helpful foresight become manipulation? How much agency do J.D., Gary, and Sergio retain when someone else can see possible outcomes?
18. The book ends with "Excelsior!" after spending much of the story joking about heroic catchphrases. Why does the phrase work differently at the end than it would have at the beginning?
19. The final accounting is stark: one DEM piece in hand, fourteen remaining. How does that numerical reveal change the scale of the series?
20. If you could ask the author one unresolved question before Book II, what would you ask - and what answer would you rather not know yet?



MEMORABLE MOMENTS

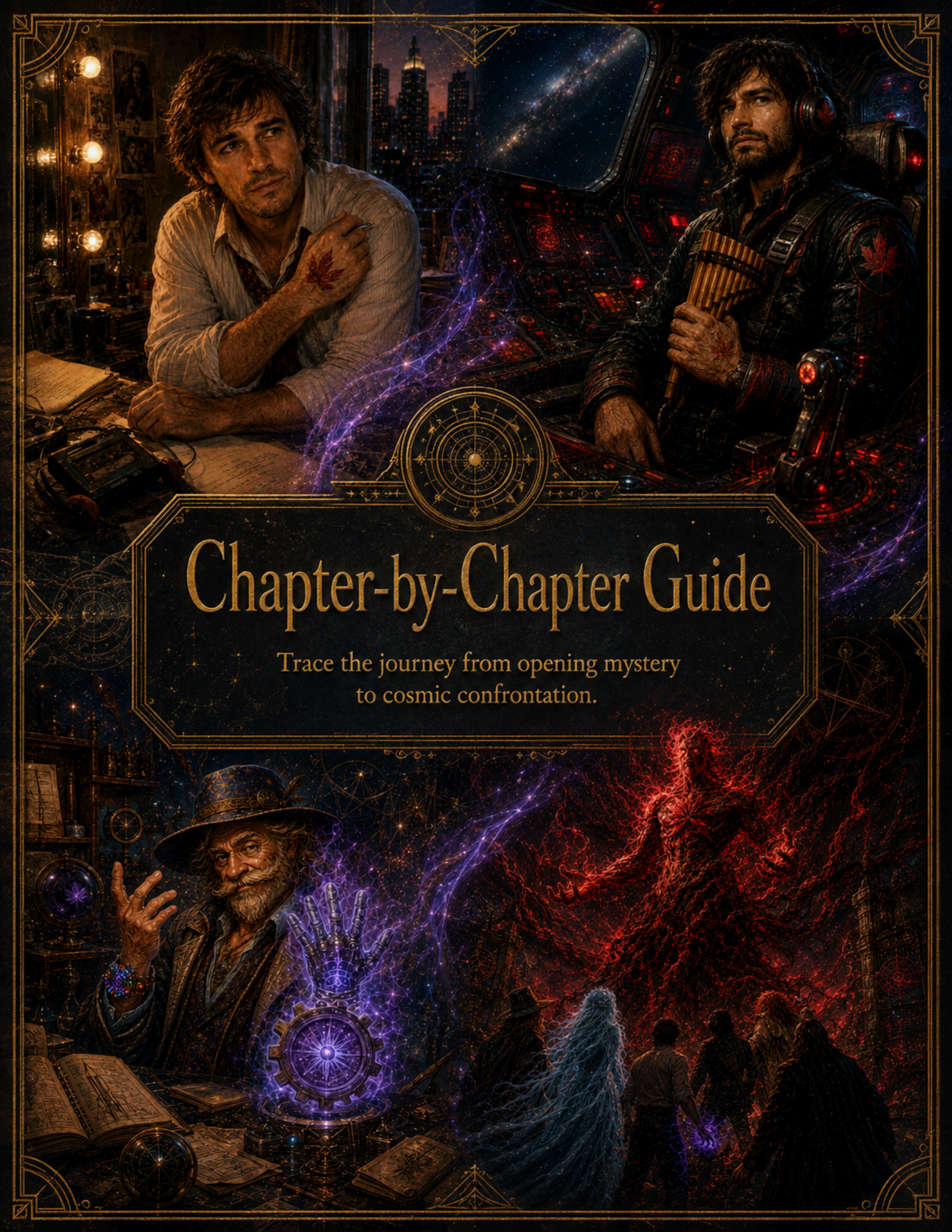
Scenes worth revisiting together.

FULL SPOILERS

Memorable Moments to Revisit

FULL SPOILERS. Use these scenes as anchors when the group wants to move from general impressions to specific choices.

The purple gear and binary prophecy J.D. touches the DEM piece, receives a message in binary, and discovers that his new crisis speaks the language of computers.	Gary's red-leaf test Mercury's leaf burns a five-headed snake mark into Gary's hand, turning a strange job offer into evidence that the impossible may be real.
The forty-two-year jump J.D. retrieves the result of his experiment from a ruined future and meets Sergio while the Trebles transform the prophecy from abstraction to apocalypse.	Gary saves Vincenza from the fire he did not mean to cast The moment turns inherited magic from exciting possibility into a threat to someone he cares about.
Return to the Beandom J.D. finally reaches the buried homeland he has mourned, only to find Felgarath's power rooted through it.	The old cast assembles J.D. realizes "ghosts of the past" and "new cast" describe a mentoring structure, not merely a scavenger hunt.
Sergio becomes the guide J.D. explicitly gives the future-survivor authority over the team's movement because experience, not pedigree, makes him the expert.	The Treble mothership The group infiltrates the alien vessel, confronts Tiberius, and transforms the source of catastrophe into the vehicle for the next quest.
The rebuilding years Sergio's most important growth happens after the battle, as the future community learns to work with alien technology together.	The life that might have been Gary awakens married to Vincenza, learns they are expecting a child, and hears the name Sergio just before the narrative returns to the starship.



Chapter-by-Chapter Guide

Trace the journey from opening mystery
to cosmic confrontation.

Chapter-by-Chapter Discussion Map I

A one-question guide for Chapters 1-11. This is especially useful for clubs reading in installments.

Ch.	Title	Discussion focus
1	01010001 01110101 01100101 01110011 01110100	Why introduce the quest through binary? What expectation does “QUEST” create once decoded?
2	The Upper Case	What makes J.D. accept the prophecy as real even when he does not understand it?
3	Gary's Audition	How does the failed/uncertain audition establish what Gary wants before Mercury offers him something bigger?
4	Uppercase	Which prophecy clue seems most important at this stage, and which seems most misleading?
5	Expedition Red Leaf	What part of Mercury's recruitment would most persuade Gary if you were in his position?
6	Game Over	Why pair J.D.'s debate over dangerous power with an arcade game about simple rules and clear enemies?
7	Message for a Millionaire	At what point does Gary stop merely considering the offer and become psychologically committed to it?
8	Great Googly Moogly	What is the first warning sign that J.D.'s DEM/computer experiment has created more than he intended?
9	Fire at Sea	How does Vincenza's presence change the moral stakes of Gary's new powers?
10	Magus 1.2	Is Gopat's friendliness reassuring or suspicious at this point? What makes you decide?
11	The Hundred and Second Time	What do repeated failed attempts reveal about J.D.'s persistence - and about his tendency to push past warning signs?

Chapter-by-Chapter Discussion Map II

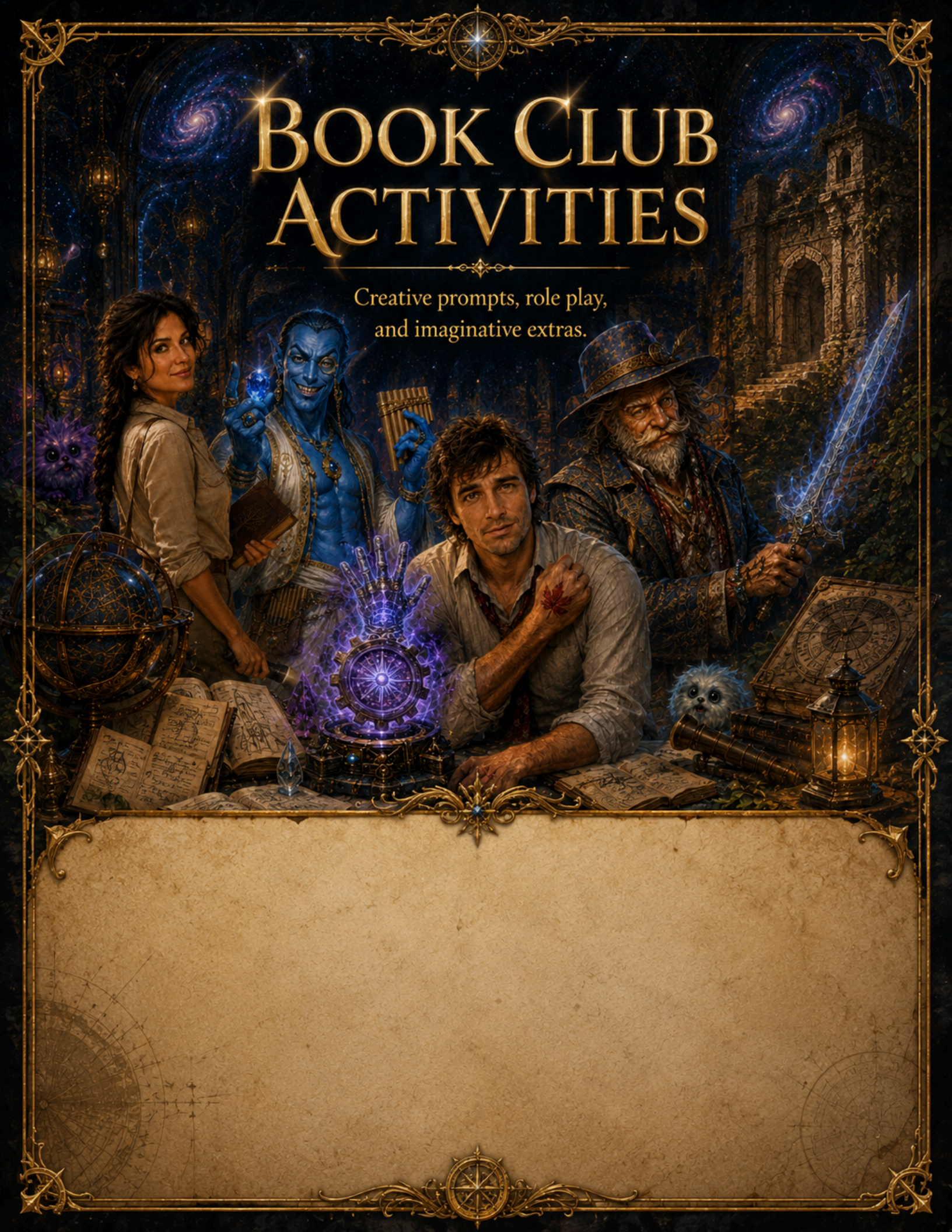
FULL SPOILERS. Chapters 12-21.

Ch.	Title	Discussion focus
12	The Sunken Door	How does the doorway turn ancestry from background information into literal access and danger?
13	Return to the Beandom	What is J.D. expecting from his return home, and why is the actual return emotionally more complicated?
14	Roots and Branches	How does Felgarath use the language of family and growth to justify control over Gary?
15	The Beandom Below	What does the buried state of the Beandom suggest about the relationship between nostalgia and reality?
16	Old Rivals	Why is Rightbeard useful precisely because he is not one of J.D.'s easiest relationships?
17	A Ship for a Quest	How does the search for "Mercury's drums" expand the story from buried fantasy world to cosmic science fiction?
18	The Treble with Trebles	Which member of the "new cast" proves most essential during the infiltration, and why?
19	The Blue	What makes Tiberius dangerous: his power, his carelessness, his charm, or his ability to normalize catastrophe?
20	Excelsior	Why devote so much space to Sergio learning, failing, rebuilding, and sharing leadership before the launch?
21	The Life That Might Have Been	How does the Gary/Vincenza reveal reframe Sergio, the timeline, and the emotional cost of the quest?

Installment-reading tip: Ask readers to write one prediction after each chapter. At the end, compare which predictions were based on genuine clues and which were based on genre expectations the novel deliberately disrupted.

BOOK CLUB ACTIVITIES

Creative prompts, role play,
and imaginative extras.



Activity: Decode the Quest

A 10-15 minute puzzle-and-discussion activity. Works with spoiler-light groups.

Step 1 - Decode the chapter title

01010001 01110101 01100101 01110011 01110100

Hint: each group of eight binary digits represents one ASCII character. You can solve it manually or with any binary-to-text reference.

Answer: QUEST. The title makes the very first chapter a miniature version of the book's larger method: old heroic storytelling translated through modern code.

Step 2 - Prophecy board

Without quoting the prophecy word-for-word, write its major clues on separate cards: **blue screen**, **ghosts of the past**, **new cast**, **twelve and three**, **the tree**, **oldest trick**, **Singhilarity**, and **Mercury's drums**.

Have the group sort each card into one of three columns: **understood early**, **understood late**, or **still unresolved**. Then discuss whether the prophecy feels fair to the reader even when it is unfair to the characters.

Step 3 - Rewrite one clue

Pick one clue and rewrite it so it would be more useful to J.D. but still mysterious enough to belong in a prophecy. Compare versions. What do you gain and lose when prophecy becomes clearer?

Activity: Audition the New Cast

A character exercise built around the novel's performance language.

Imagine J.D. has to cast a five-person team for the next leg of the quest. Available roles: **Leader**, **Skeptic**, **Technical Expert**, **Historian**, and **Wildcard**. Choose from J.D., Petra, Sergio, Gopat, Rightbeard, the Beanwitch, Vincenza, Gary, Grimbalewaith, Squires, Belle, or another character.

Role	Your choice	Why?
Leader	_____	Who can make decisions without needing to be the smartest person in every room?
Skeptic	_____	Who is most likely to notice when the group is rationalizing a bad idea?
Technical Expert	_____	Who best understands the tools, systems, or environments the team will face?
Historian	_____	Who remembers enough of the past to keep the group from repeating it?
Wildcard	_____	Who might solve a problem precisely because they do not think like everyone else?

Debrief questions

- Did anyone choose J.D. as leader? Why or why not?
- Which role changed when you considered the book's ending rather than the beginning?
- Is the ideal "new cast" a replacement for the old heroes, or a deliberately different kind of team?

Activity: The Life That Might Have Been

FULL SPOILERS. A timeline exercise focused on Gary, Vincenza, and Sergio.

The final reveal invites readers to hold at least two versions of history in mind. Use the diagram below as a conversation map rather than an attempt to “solve” every time-travel rule.

Original / ruined path	Changed / possible path
Gary accepts Mercury's expedition. Gary and Vincenza enter the Sunken Lands. Felgarath traps them in the tree. A future Sergio is born in 2001, grows up without knowing his parents, and survives the Treble catastrophe.	Events are altered by J.D.'s interventions. Gary awakens in 2001 married to Vincenza. She is pregnant and says a son would be named Sergio. The narrative calls this “the life he might have lived.”

Discuss

1. What evidence most strongly suggests that the Sergio traveling with J.D. is connected to Gary and Vincenza's possible child?
2. If the timeline changes to give Gary a happier life, what happens to the experiences that made the future Sergio who he is?
3. Is preserving a person's existence more important than preserving the exact history that formed them?
4. Why end on an intimate family revelation and then immediately return to a cosmic race for the DEM pieces?

Activity: Build the Safeguards

A 10-minute ethical-design exercise inspired by Petra and J.D.'s agreement.

Choose one dangerous technology or magical object from the book: **the DEM gear**, **Gopat**, **time travel**, **Felgarath's inherited magic**, **Tiberius's ship**, or **the Trebles**. Your group must design a five-part safety protocol before anyone may use it.

Safeguard	Your rule
1. Authorization	
2. Emergency shutoff	
3. Independent oversight	
4. Testing limits	
5. Consequences / accountability	

Then test your protocol: Which safeguard would have prevented J.D.'s biggest mistake? Which would have blocked a choice the story actually needed him to make? Good safeguards reduce harm, but over-control can also prevent agency.



FACILITATOR GUIDE

Tips for leading a great discussion.

Facilitator Guide

Two ready-to-use meeting formats. Feel free to cut any section that does not fit your group.

60-minute meeting

0-5 min	Opening poll: favorite character, funniest moment, and most desired magical/technological object.
5-15 min	Story reaction: what surprised you about the shift from comic fantasy into time travel and cosmic science fiction?
15-35 min	Choose 5-6 discussion questions. Include at least one question on power, one on identity, and one on the ending.
35-50 min	Character lens: compare J.D. and Sergio as leaders, or Gary and Sergio as people shaped by inherited identity.
50-58 min	Prediction round: what do you think Adler, Tatsrar, and the remaining DEM pieces will demand next?
58-60 min	One-sentence checkout: "The idea from this book I'm still thinking about is..."

90-minute meeting

0-10 min	Opening reactions and favorite footnote/joke (paraphrase rather than read long passages).
10-25 min	Character constellation: each reader chooses one character whose role changed most over the book.
25-50 min	Deep discussion: 6-8 spoiler questions.
50-65 min	Complete one activity: Decode the Quest, Audition the New Cast, Timeline Map, or Build the Safeguards.
65-80 min	Theme debate: "The novel is more about inheritance than power." Take sides, then switch sides and argue the opposite.
80-90 min	Sequel predictions and closing reflection.



LOOKING AHEAD

Predictions, sequels, and lingering mysteries.

Closing Reflections & Sequel Launch

A final page for readers who want to carry the conversation beyond the meeting.

Quick-write prompts

- If you could preserve one lesson from the “old cast” for the next generation, what would it be?
- Write one sentence Gary most needs to hear before entering Club Mercury.
- Write one sentence J.D. most needs to hear before putting on Gopat.
- Write one sentence Sergio most needs to hear before taking responsibility for the rebuilding community.
- What is one “life you might have lived” that helped shape the person you actually became - without requiring you to wish your current life away?

Prediction board for Book II

Adler Ally, manipulator, future self, cosmic guide, or something stranger?	Eagle’s Roost What will the ship modification cost besides time or money?
Tatsrar Why is the next DEM piece on a dark world at the edge of everything?	Singhilarity What does it want from a completed DEM, and why is it racing the heroes?
Gary / Vincenza / Sergio Which version of their family history can survive the next changes to time?	The remaining fourteen pieces Will each piece produce a different kind of power, problem, or moral test?

Final question: The first book ends only after the characters have finally acquired a ship and begun the larger journey. In what sense is *Launch Time* an origin story for a team rather than merely the first leg of a quest?



Prepared as a book-club companion to *Launch Time* by Michael D. Young.
 Designed for easy web embedding, downloading, and printing.