

The Story of Us by Catherine Hernandez

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS HERE** (Ideally 10 questions to guide discussion of the title):

Did having the story narrated by a fetus/newborn work for you or did it put you off the book altogether. Explain why or why not.

Explain the importance of the ‘maybe babies’ to the story. Who/what do they represent? Would the story work without them? Would it have the same impact?

The Story of Us explores the world of the Overseas Filipino Worker as caregiver. Discuss the ways in which MG is subject to abusive/exploitative dynamics.

At one point MG notes that “Canadians are so good at expecting more, more, more, even on your days off, even when their kids act like monsters.” What do you make of this cultural critique? What can be done to change the situation?

Where is - what is - “home” for MG as part of the Filipino diaspora?

Liz and MG are both marginalised as individuals. Hernandez writes “I don’t know truly know what life is like for you, but I imagine in your line of work, people don’t often see you as a human being with needs and feelings, am I right? But you deserve to be treated with respect. It’s the same as Liz. She deserves to be seen as a person. “ Describe the similarities in the ways in which Liz and MG are not treated with the respect they deserve? Describe the ways in which each of them are resilient, and where that resilience comes from.

Together, Liz and MG go on a “journey of allyship” that, eventually, leads to them becoming a chosen family. What are the key moments that propel this journey?

Liz - in losing her memory(ies) to Alzheimers - is being silenced and erased, paralleling the susceptibility of queer histories to being lost. Discuss the ways in which Liz has been silenced, and also the ways in which MG, and Liz’s community, come together to bring her history to life.

What about Justin? What are his motivations? Why did he not retaliate after the golf club incident?

What do you understand the title to mean? Who is/are the ‘Us’ being referred to?

How do you understand the matryoshka dolls on the cover of the book?

In an interview Catherine Hernandez commented that she felt that she set out to “write a book that feels like a hug, that feels like love.” Was she successful?

This novel explores legacy and history. What will your legacy be?