



### Discussion Questions: *Immortal Longings*

Folger Book Club—April 2024

1. What are your first impressions of the novel? If asked, what would you say this novel is about?
2. If you were familiar with Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* before reading the novel, where do you see its influence? If you weren't, did you feel you were missing anything while reading?
3. This is Chloe Gong's debut adult novel, but she has earned high acclaim as a YA author. What do you think marks the difference between adult and YA? What would have been different about this book had it been YA?
4. Gong has said she's more interested in adapting Shakespeare's themes than his plots. What themes from *Antony and Cleopatra* do you recognize here? Does she come to the same conclusions as Shakespeare?
5. Productions of *Antony and Cleopatra* often include stark contrasts between Rome and Egypt. What do you see as the geographical equivalents in *Immortal Longings*? What defines them? Do you see these qualities further reflected in Calla, Anton, and August?
6. With some, but not all, of the residents of San-Er able to jump bodies, what impact might that have on trust within the society? Between people? Between citizens and the rulers? Are there any characters within the book you think truly trust each other?
7. What does the ability to jump do to a person's sense of self? How do the different characters reconcile this quality with who they believe themselves to be?
8. Who do you consider the main character of the novel? Why? Did you find any of the characters sympathetic? Who were you hoping to triumph in the end?
9. How does the concept of *qi* change your understanding of the tropes being employed in the novel? How do you feel about the author's decision to closely link its abilities with the capacity for violence?
10. Will you read the other books in the trilogy? Why or why not? What do you think will happen in the future installments?