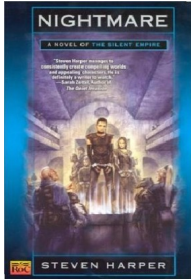




Lambda Sci-Fi

DC Area Gaylaxians



Nightmare
By Steven Harper
Discussed July 2003

Discussion Questions

1. Did you enjoy *Nightmare*? Why, or why not?
2. The story of Evan/Lizard/Kendi's life covered in this book can seemingly be divided into three distinct periods: (1) capture, slavery, and Mistress Blanc's frog farm (pp. 1 - 69); (2) schooling with the Children of Irfan (pp. 70 - 197); and (3) the murder/mystery story (pp. 198 - 357). Do you feel these three parts of the story fit together?
3. *Nightmare* is a prequel to *Dreamer*, Harper's first "novel of the Silent Empire". If you have read both books, do they "fit" well or is there a "disconnect" between the two novels? Do you prefer one of these novels over the other? If so, why?
4. A number of books we've discussed deal with the concept of "virtual reality" – for example: William Gibson's *Neuromancer*; Keith Hartman's *The Gumshoe*, *The Witch And The Virtual Corpse*; and Clive Barker's *Weaveworld*. How does Harper's handling of "virtual reality" (the Dream) compare/contrast with these other works? How well do you feel Harper handles the version of "virtual reality" depicted in his books?
5. One reviewer has referred to Kendi as "an inspiring ethnic gay protagonist". What do you think about this statement?
6. Lizard/Kendi enters into three homophilic relationships over the course of the story: one with Pup (on Mistress Blanc's frog farm); one with Pitr (his flying instructor); and one with Ben (Mother Ara's son). Do you think Harper did a good job of depicting these relationships? Do they "ring true" to you? How do these relationships inter-relate? If you have read *Dreamer*, does Harper carry this GLBT element over into Kendi's later life?
7. What do you think about "the Wisdom of Irfan" (pp. 149 & 150)?

Recommended Additional Reading

Other books in the *Silent Empire* "series":

- *Dreamer*
- *Trickster*