



Lambda Sci-Fi

DC Area Gaylaxians



Of Wars, and Memories, and Starlight
By Alette de Bodard
Discussed May 2023

Discussion Questions

1. Did you enjoy the stories in this collection? What did (or didn't) you like about them?
2. Did you have one or more favorite stories?
3. The collection contains sample stories from two of Bodard's "universes": "Xuya" stories (SF); and "Dominion of the Fallen" stories (Fantasy). Did you prefer one "universe" over the other? Are there particular themes that the stories in each of these "universes" seemed to have in common?
4. Did you sense any particular motif or theme common to all or most of the stories in the collection?
5. None of the stories in the collection are "light-hearted." Did this affect your enjoyment of this collection?
6. The "Xuya" stories are heavily influenced by Bodard's own Asian (particularly Vietnamese) heritage – such as referring to some characters as "Elder Sister" or "Second Aunt." How did this affect your appreciation of the stories?
7. What's your opinion about the "flamboyant" naming conventions Bodard uses – for example the names of the various Mindships and the titles of the stories themselves?
8. What did you think about Bodard's inclusion of Queer characters in various stories?
9. Births – often violent births – figure prominently in several "Xuya" stories. How did this compare with depictions of birth that you've encountered in other SF stories?
10. Men (or males) are either minor characters or totally absent from many of the stories in the collection. Did this affect your enjoyment of the stories?
11. The "Xuya" stories often contain elements of advanced science (such as nano-tech and cyber-tech) that come across as "magical." In contrast, the "Fallen" stories posit that angelic beings have come down to Paris and are competing for dominance – but the stories include various "non-magical" elements (such as the nature of fungal life). Did these combinations affect your enjoyment of the stories?
12. Do you think that this collection has given you a good idea of Bodard's styles, success, and themes?

13. Based on the stories in this collection, do you think you'd like to read other works by Aliette de Bodard?

Further Reading

“Xuya Universe” Novel & Novellas:

- On a Red Station, Drifting (2012)
- The Citadel of Weeping Pearls (2015)
- The Tea Master and the Detective (2018)
- Seven of Infinities (2020)
- The Red Scholar's Wake (2022)

“Dominion of the Fallen” Series:

- The House of Shattered Wings (2015)
- The House of Binding Thorns (2017)
- The House of Sundering Flames (2019)

“Obsidian and Blood” Series: (Aztec historical fantasy with magic)

- Servant of the Underworld (2010)
- Harbinger of the Storm (2011)
- Master of the House of Darts (2011)