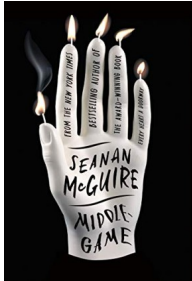




Lambda Sci-Fi

DC Area Gaylaxians



Middlegame
By Seanan McGuire
Discussed September 2023

Discussion Questions

1. Did you finish the book? Why or why not?
2. What did you think of the structure of the story, alternating between character viewpoints?
 - a) Did you find it intriguing or just confusing?
 - b) How do you think it did or didn't support the plot or concepts of the book?
3. How was the pacing of the writing?
 - a) Did it pull you in quickly and keep you turning pages, or did you think it took too long to get started and had sections that were a slog to get through?
4. What did you think of the swapping of the stereotypical gender roles of "boys are good at math, and girls are good at language?"
 - a) What did you think about the author's views on how kids and adults treat smart kids, and how that's related to gender and how they're smart (e.g., it was harder for Dodger being a girl good at math than for Roger being a boy good at language)?
5. What did you think of the author's presentation of how being extra smart in one subject and struggling in another can impact kids (and adults)?
6. What did you think of the different moral presentations of the different characters?
 - a) Were the villains too one-dimensional, or were they good, evil fun? Were there moments you found yourself agreeing with and empathizing with Reed (e.g., his anger at how Asphodel was treated as a woman)?
 - b) What did you think about the range of morality in the characters, e.g., sometimes they did horrible things for good goals?

7. What did you think of the more horror-like elements of the plot, like the Hand of Glory, Leigh's violence, and Reed and Leigh's treatment of the kids (and mothers)?
8. What did you think of the presentation of different sexual orientations and gender identities? For example, would you think of Dodger as asexual?
9. What did you think of the relationship between Dodger and Roger?
 - a) How did it mirror traditional romantic relationships in stories (the phrase "you complete me" comes to mind, lol), and how did it challenge them?
10. What did you think of the presentation of loneliness in the book?
11. What did you think of the world building in the book?
 - a) Seanan McGuire often sets her books in our current world, but alters certain facts about it. How does this compare to creating a new world?
 - b) What did you think about the idea that Baum, Twain, and Lovecraft were alchemists trying to influence the world through their novels?
12. Have you read any other books by Seanan McGuire? If yes, how did Middlegame compare to them in terms of tone and complexity (and how much you liked them)?