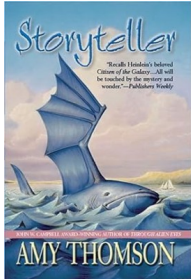




Lambda Sci-Fi

DC Area Gaylaxians



Storyteller
By Amy Thomson
Discussed July 2006

Discussion Questions

1. Thomson scatters scenes of the first contact between humans and harsels throughout the book. How do these first contact scenes compare to other authors? Were they necessary for the text?
2. The settlers on Thalassa theoretically come from the countries surrounding the Mediterranean Sea. Does Thomson maintain that element? Is that detail necessary to the story?
3. What do you think of the institutionalizing of the storyteller occupation? I'm specifically thinking about the contrast between that guild structure and the Pilots Union.
4. Pilot-Teller works behind the scenes to manage the culture and economy of Thalassa. Is the book intending to be Utopian? If so, is the book intending to be didactic in its utopianism? And, if it is intending to teach, what message regarding cultural structures are readers supposed to take from the book?
5. Harsels change sex at the end of their lives in order to procreate. Further, a gender-bending nun gets included in the final scenes. Is the book trying to convey a trans-positive message? If so, how does it succeed? How does it fail?
6. As he grows up, Samad discovers that he is gay. Is the story of his coming out a positive portrayal of gay and lesbian life?
7. Both Samad and the Teller have a difficult time maintaining a "traditional," longterm, sexual relationship while fulfilling their duties. What various reasons does the book give for this? Were you pleased by this setup? Or displeased?
8. Given the emphasis on the Human-Harsel Compact during the mating scenes in the middle of the book, was the book attempting to convey an environmental message? If so, what was the message?
9. This book was shortlisted for the Gaylactic Spectrum Award in 2004 along with many other books read by this group: Nalo Hopkinson's *The Salt Roads* (winner), Chris Moriarty's *Spin State*, Lynn Flewelling's *The Hidden Warrior*, Robert Sawyer's *Hybrids*, Geoff Ryman's *Lust*, Steven Harper's *Trickster*, and Johanna Sinisalo's *Troll*. How does *Storyteller* measure up?