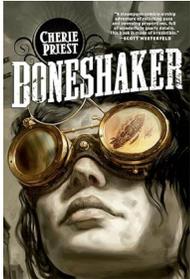




Lambda Sci-Fi

DC Area Gaylaxians



Boneshaker
By Cherie Priest
Discussed April 2010

Discussion Questions

1. Do you like this book? Why or why not?
2. Is the book a "good" book or simply a clever combination of hot, timely conceits (zombies, pirates, zeppelins, and steampunk)?
3. Does Priest's pushing back of the gold rush work?
4. The name Briar Rose could be an allusion to the fairy tale. Is it? If so, who is the princess? The prince? And, are we dealing more with a Brothers Grimm version or Jane Yolen's version? Or is the name "Briar" just a reference to a thicket, as the mid-book comment about the alternate name "Heather" suggests?
5. Are any of the other names in the book (Maynard, Wilkes, Leviticus, Ezekiel, Blue, Minnericht, Boneshaker) meaningful in a symbolic way? If so, how? And, does their use add to the book?
6. Do you think this book was attempting to make any statements about race or immigration? Or, was the use of Chinese and Native American characters simply an attempt to be true to the setting (something that doesn't always happen in fiction, where worlds are frequently whitewashed, so a statement in itself)?
7. The third person limited point of view (POV) used throughout the book alternates focus, chapter by chapter, from Briar to Zeke. Does that work for you? How quickly did you notice the pattern? Would the book have been significantly better presented from a different POV?
8. What does the framing of the book with the reporter, Hale Quarter, do for the book? Does it add to the book or do you think those are just extra pages?
9. The book begins with (1) the Seattle map, (2) the Kettell quote, and (3) the chapter from Quarter's book; do you like these fake historic introductions to alternate history novels? Or, are they cop outs that allow the author to avoid strong exposition within the action of the novel?
10. Boneshaker follows Priest's novella "Tangle Foot" as the second piece set in this world, which she has started marketing as The Clockwork Century. This year Subterranean will publish Clementine and Tor will publish Dreadnought, two more novels in the world. What do you think about novels that share a world, but not characters or plot lines? Is the shared world a meaningful marketing device for you, the reader?