Lambda Sci-Fi
DC Area Gaylaxians



the Kindly Ones
By Melissa Scott
Discussed March 2014

Characters

Viewpoint Characters	Major Players
• Leith Moraghan, Captain of the Pipe Major • Trey Maturin, off-worlder Medium for the Halex kinship • Guil ex-Tam'ne, a pilot out of Destiny • Rehur, an actor of Witchwood Company and ghost of Halex kinship	• Eldrede Halex, Matriarch of the Halex kinship • Rohin Halex, Demi-heir of the Halex kinship and twin to Rehur • Alkres Halex, ult'eir of the Halex kinship and highest-ranking survivor of the Brandr attack • Ixora Halex, hoobey racer and cause of the Halex/Brandr feud • Yslin Rhawn, a Holder under the Halex who wants to rule the kinship • Haldrid Brandr, Patriarch of the Brandr kinship • Anath Brandr, a voice of reason among the Brandr • Fen Erling, a member of the Brandr kinship whom Ixora blames for the hoobey race accident • Shemer Axtell, Patriarch of the Axtell kinship • Araxie Fyfe, Matriarch of the Fyfe kinship • Landret Orillon, Patriarch of the Orillon kinship and ally to Alkres • Signe Orillon, Heir of the Orillon kinship • Ume-Kai, minne actor and friend of Rehur

Off-worlders: Idris Tham Askel Sabas Orino Slade Orteja Dario Yan Dr. Pausha Ran **Port employees:** Oslac Rhawn Corrie ex-Rhawn Costa ex-Rhawn Dessick Jan Parmarista Jan **Necropolis residents:** Ash Rowan Disa Belit ex-Fyfe Solvar Cho Vieva Lulan ex-Halex Shoba	**The Halex:** Magan Halex (Heir) Rosser Halex Tabat Iossea Coronis Halex Halena Asbera Ingvarr (Holder) Tirey Ingvarr Corol Ingvarr Gazel Ingvarr Jaben Ingvarr Barthel Ansson (Holder) Jesma Ansson Fres Ansson Ruland Ansson Ulrika Ansson Hastain Jannah	**The Brandr:** Reidun Brandr (Demi-heir) Elgeve Brandr Eyre Brandr Katel Erling Hesed Elgeve (Holder) Stennet Fira (Holder) Soem Jan (Holder) **The Fyfe:** Elam Fyfe Tasma Fyfe **The Orillon:** Berild Hildur Galar Tam'ne (Holder) Edlin Tam'ne

Quick Summary of Aeschylus's *Orestia*:

- *Agamemnon*: Agamemnon, King of Argos, returns home from the Trojan War. His wife Clytemnestra murders him in revenge for his sacrifice of their daughter Iphigenia, and her lover (and Agamemnon's cousin) Aegisthus takes the throne.
- *The Libation Bearers*: Orestes and Electra, the surviving children of Clytemnestra and Agamemnon, plot to avenge Agamemnon. Orestes kills Clytemnestra and Aegisthus.
- *The Eumedides*: Tormented by ghosts and Furies for his matricide, Orestes seeks solace from the Gods. Athena convenes a jury of Athenians, and after a trial Orestes is acquitted in a tied vote.

Discussion Questions

1. Did you finish the book?
2. Did you like the book? Why or why not?
3. Did you prefer one character's viewpoint over the others? Did you find the viewpoints distinct? Were there other characters whose viewpoints you feel would have added to the book?

4. The book's title is a reference to *The Eumenides* (literally, "the gracious ones" or "the kindly ones"; an epithet for the vengeful furies), the final play in Aeschylus's classical *Orestia* trilogy. Were you familiar with the *Orestia*? If so, did you find the thematic connections (and other mythological references, including place names) interesting or distracting?
5. Like the *Orestia*, *The Kindly Ones* also breaks roughly into three sections: the first focuses on worldbuilding about Orestian culture, the second on political maneuvering, and the third on open warfare. Did you prefer one section to the others? Did you feel they connected well?
6. In addition to being influenced by a classical play, *The Kindly Ones* contains its own plays-within-a-play. Did you find the descriptions of holopuppet theater interesting? Do you feel it added to the book?
7. Did you find Orestes's social code, particularly its adoption of social death in place of actual death, plausible? Why or why not?
8. Did you find the climax of the book convincing? Did you feel the characters' decisions and the radical social change flowed naturally from what had been shown previously in the book?
9. Trey Maturin's gender is never made clear by the text. When did you first notice the ambiguity? Did you find yourself thinking of them as male or female despite the lack of stated gender? If so, which one? Did it change as you read?
10. How do you feel about the book's handling of LGBT material in general, including the relationship between Leith and Guil and the depiction of Ume-Kai? Do you think of the relationship between Trey and Rehur as an LGBT one?
11. Did you feel the book's science fictional nature was essential to the text? Could it have been recast as fantasy, and, if so, would it have altered your enjoyment? Were the hints of wider science fiction worldbuilding interesting to you? Would you have preferred more or fewer references to off-world events and mores?