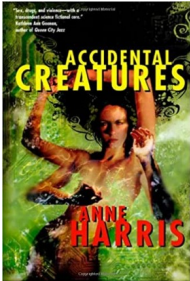




Lambda Sci-Fi

DC Area Gaylaxians



Accidental Creatures
By Anne Harris
Discussed April 2000

Discussion Questions

1. Are the character's motivations in this book clear? What are Nathan's, Hector's, Helix's, Chango's, Ada's, Benny's, Hyper's, Liliith's? This should help you tackle the rest of it!
2. There is much discussion in the book about corporations as organisms. Nathan's mother, for instance, speaks of a company as an animal controlled by another. Liliith says a company is a single entity, a creature itself. Why do you think Harris asserts this premise in the book?
3. In the book, Harris has clearly clumped the middle class into the inhabitants of Vattown; a small group indeed given the surrounding masses of the wealthy and the impoverished. What is the statement here? To what degree could the conjectured development of this class parallel our own society and its possible direction? Is there class eradication going on in the book? Why do you think so, or not?
4. (ties in with above) The setting of Detroit helps make the story landscape more real. True or false? Does the setting make the story a natural extension of science and society? Is the scientific and political world in AC a natural extension of our own? How?
5. There is an undercurrent in the book about the role of the corporation in government, especially concerning the lives and compensation of employees. In classic automotive Detroit, there have been numerous inroads (and losses) in employee rights and protections, UAW or not. Any parallels in this work?
6. In another regulatory vein, what is the IEPA and why does it get so little play in this world? P89 has a clean air IEPA regulation, but there isn't any clean water act. What's going on? Does this modify your thinking about the previous question?
7. What does it say about a society that condones the contamination of an entire class of workers in an industry? Why are mutants called 'sports'? The youth are sterilized prior to becoming vat divers.
8. Is Hyper really a sport? Or does he use it as a rationale for his oddity? Is he an inventor like Hector Martin?
9. The drug, Blast, is prominently featured in a popular soap opera. There are reefer brand cigarettes. Many other drugs are featured and there seems to be nothing bad associated with drug use. The societal

framework seems to support and almost encourage this lifestyle. Why are drugs so condoned in this world? What are the motivations here?

10. Lilith had sex with Hector to stimulate herself to have a brood. (The Lilith are parthenogenic) Was sex between Chango and Helix only for stimulating Helix to nest, or was there something more involved? Why then did Helix have sex with Hyper?
11. In folklore and traditional (Jewish) mythology, specifically the Alphabet of Ben Sira, Lilith was created from the earth to be a companion to Adam as first woman. Problems arose because of equality. She was cast into the sea as a daemon to prey on infants and 100 of her offspring were to die every day. What do you think about Harris's incorporation of this myth into the story. What do you think the purpose of Lilith's (the character in the book) dream origins, and why do they mesmerize and calm everyone down at the end?
12. In one section, Hector's strict Jewish Sabbath ritual is juxtaposed against the Nathan at dinner with other executives at the Club. Why?
13. Benny goes from being a good guy in our minds to being evil incarnate. How do you feel about this? Who is Benny really trying to help? He claims he saved everyone by sacrificing Ada, so is he justified?
14. Was Helix's false memory believable? How long had she really been with Hector? Why is Helix so into the role playing of the interactive soap opera? What character does she chose and why?
15. What about the brains, and what happened between them and the Lilith at the end? The brains are hyper-intelligent but isolated; does this have any significance? Is there a societal parallel here? What is the significance of the blue poly?
16. We've dealt with Oz quite a bit. Is it odd that Oz is part of Detroit's future? Is there any significance to a part of the city being called Oz?
17. Why is this book called Accidental Creatures? The creatures were deliberately created by GeneSys.