



Lambda Sci-Fi

DC Area Gaylaxians



Point of Dreams
By Melissa Scott & Lisa Barnett
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Discussion Topics

Because *Point of Dreams* was such a rich novel, I felt it might be better to leave the discussion open-ended instead of focusing on specific questions. I've chosen a number of different areas that appear to be ripe for discussion.

Magic - Phytomancy, Necromancy, Astrology...

The discussion focused mostly on the originality of the magic and the way the magic wove into the story, rather than driving it. Participants in the discussion were particularly intrigued and impressed by the prime form of magic used in *Point of Dreams* - phytomancy - which had not been seen in other works read by any of the participants.

Society - class system, political system, police system...

We discussed the historical influences that had gone into many of the social elements. The participants were all clearly in agreement that this is a society on the cusp of a significant overhaul, with tensions between classes higher as the book closes than at its start. The change in gender roles from the historical periods (mix of 15th and 16th century influences) was interesting.

Theatre - set machinery, actors, the plays...

Although some of the details were fascinating, it seemed to many of the discussion participants that perhaps too much time had been spent in the book on the detailed workings of the theatre. One participant tied the sappy but popular play mentioned throughout the first half of the book (The Drowned Isle) with a recent sappy but popular film (*Titanic*).

Genre - mystery, fantasy, manerpunk, police procedural, romance...

Much like thoughts on the theatre aspects of the book, discussion on this area included talk of whether there were too many genres represented. To some readers, it made it difficult to know which set of expectations and reader tropes were appropriate, which led to some discontent with the book at times.

Style - pacing, descriptions, selected details...

Because of the subject matter and mix of genre-expectations, at times the book moved too slowly for some readers. The descriptions were interesting, but occasionally overwhelmed the story. At times, some readers felt like

the authors were more interested in showing how much research they had done rather than telling the story. On the whole, the style seemed more Jane Austen than modern fantasy, which made for some dissonance in readers, even when they eventually enjoyed the overall package.

Relationships - GLBT, intimacy vs sex, societal mores...

The lack of physical intimacy between the two main protagonists, or the lack of shown intimacy, was noted by some readers. The book was unquestionably GLBT-relationship positive, though remarkably chaste most of the time (again, fitting with the Austen-esque feel).