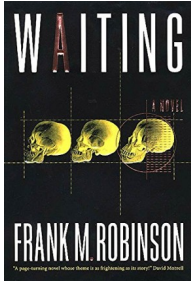




Lambda Sci-Fi

DC Area Gaylaxians



Waiting
By Frank Robinson
Discussed November/December 2005

Discussion Questions

1. The obligatory first question: Did you like the book? Why?
2. How would you categorize this book? SF? Detective? Mystery?
3. What do you think of the premise of another branch of humans evolving alongside us? (Erectus vs. Sapiens) Were the differences from a hidden parallel existence for 35,000 years believable? What was the point in the book where you believed it? Did the trade-offs of telepathy and disease immunity make up for lack of art and language abilities?
4. Were the Old People trying to kill off the humans? Or were they just trying to keep from being found out? What did you think of their habit of disappearing? Could this be possible?
5. Telepathy. We all want it, and they say we humans had it once. Do you believe it here? Why? When did you figure it out? Did you figure out that there was a malevolent telepath before it was spelled out in the text?
6. Speaking of natural selection, do you think that Robinson's discussion of how the Old People morphed to look like the New People worked? What did you think about them finding Talbot and autopsying him after a "freak" accident. Would you have had the same leap of faith that Larry Shea had?
7. Frank Robinson does a great job of laying foundations, in my opinion, that make the reader discover things before Artie figures them out. An example would be the concept that the Old People couldn't sing, and then walking into Lyle's house, and later, Mary's. Do you agree? Were there other places in the book where this seemed to happen?
8. Did the virtual reality scene in the Zoo do what it was supposed to do? Did you feel it was a bait-and-switch? Did the contrast between what Artie saw first and the second time make his appreciation of the Tribe greater? Was it necessary to have the earlier dream sequences?
9. Why was this book set around Christmas? Does it matter? Did you notice the holidays? Why or why not?
10. Did the setting matter for this story? Could it have happened anywhere?

11. Was there a turning point in the book for you, where the hunter became the hunted? If so, what caused it?
12. The Suicide Club was a group of old friends, starting out in their teens and then morphing into a more adult info exchange group. How did the use of the club help the story? Or did it? Were all the characters believable?
13. How did the story benefit from a single point of view? What if it had been told from different characters' perspective, would it have worked?
14. Artie and Mitch were in 'Nam together. What did they do there? How did it change the dynamic of their friendship? How did this help or hurt their figuring out what was going on? Did you think Mitch was one of the Old People at some point?
15. Artie only has the dream of the tribe when his son Mark is around except for one time; chapter 18 when he and Mitch are holed up in the Ritz-Carlton. Is this a mistake on the author's part, a bit to make us suspect Mitch, or could it be something else?
16. What is the significance of the ending? Is Mark the Buddha? What does it mean, and is this a satisfying ending given that all humans will be dead soon?