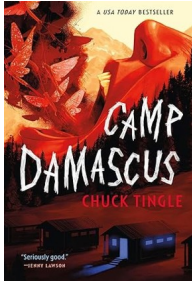




Lambda Sci-Fi

DC Area Gaylaxians



Camp Damascus
By Chuck Tingle
Discussed October 2024

Characters

Our Heroes

Rose Darling (Pachid)
Willow Crogall (Raziel)
Saul Green (Mephasser)

Villains and Other Neverton Folks

Luke and Lisa Darling
Dr. Smith
Isaiah, Martine, Kingdom Kids, campers
Pastor Pete Bend
Ally Robertson (Lepaca)
Prophet Cobel, Founder of the Kingdom

Discussion Questions

1. Did you finish the book? Did you like it? Why or why not?
2. Had you read any or been aware of Chuck Tingle before reading Camp Damascus? Based on what you knew of Chuck Tingle, was the book what you expected?
3. There are numerous references to Peter Pan in the story (Neverton/Neverland...the Darlings...the animated version playing on the hospital TV)...why do you think Tingle did this?
4. The main character, Rose, is – by her own statements – on the autism spectrum. Do you think the author did a good job incorporating that into Rose throughout the story? Did you realize she was autistic before it was explicitly mentioned? Did the portrayal of her autism seem authentic or exploitative or somewhere in between?
5. There is a lot of exploration of faith, spirituality, and religion (and the differences between them) in the story – did these explorations feel natural and did they add or detract from the story?

6. As part of the exploration of autism, Rose – whose perspective we see the story from – regularly thinks about or delves into interesting and unusual factoids. Did you like this aspect of the story? Were any of the factoids particularly interesting? Did you feel that the factoids provided anything to the main line of the story?
7. As is typical of Tingle's work, the importance of love is at the core of the story "...The true drive behind every twisting screw and buzzing saw, every turned page and highlighted text, is simple and breathtakingly obvious. It's the motivation behind nearly every epic journey since the beginning of time: love." Even the "villains" seem motivated by love (albeit a "sick, ass-backward love" as Saul puts it) - How did you feel Tingle did building a story with such horrific elements yet making it at its core a story about love?
8. There is no question that this is an LGBT-centric book. It's central driving force involves a gay-conversion camp; our main character is – once she breaks free of her confines – queer. What did you think about the portrayal of queer existence in the book?
9. Manifesting horrific things as real in a physical "demonic" way was a hallmark of Buffy (Rose's love is even named Willow, clearly suggesting a nod to Buffy). How effectively do you think the manifestation of the horror of gay conversion as a demonic ritual worked for the story?
10. What did you think about the unanswered questions left by the book? Questions like what ARE the demons? Is there a higher power at work in the story?
11. Okay...let's talk about the Chuck Tingle in the room.....
12. Based on this book, would you read more Chuck Tingle? (He has a non-erotica novella entitled "Straight"; and a recently released second horror novel titled "Bury Your Gays")