

Lorikat

Book Club Reading Guide

Hi, I'm Erzsebet, author of **Lorikat**. The questions in this guide are ones I asked myself as I researched, wrote and re-read the novel. If a juicy bit of discussion comes up about a question that isn't in the guide, let me know and I can add it. Thank you for choosing my novel to discuss! -erz

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1. Which character do you find most sympathetic in **Lorikat**? Which one would you invite to coffee? Who would you block on social media?
2. Characters in **Lorikat** encounter ghosts. Do the supernatural elements detract from the scientific elements? Would the story lose anything if the supernatural elements were eliminated?
3. Pilar is a psychic. What influence does her age have on your experience of her prognostications? Would you go to Fort Chamberlin after finding the necklace?
4. Anne and Pilar communicate through the Ouija board. Do you believe it was really Pilar speaking to Anne, or could it have been Anne's imagination?
5. Where did you have to suspend your disbelief the most when reading **Lorikat**? Which was more believable: the science or the ghosts? Why?
6. Which is more frightening: the science or the ghosts?
7. Anne ruined her reputation and relationship by fabricating data. She is recruited by FIASCO due in part to her scientific malfeasance. What does that say about the structure and purpose of FIASCO?
8. Anne steals and takes credit for MYR. Prothero finds the same proof hidden in her room. To what extent is Anne culpable for the terrible outcome of the FIASCO project? Would it have turned out just as badly without her, as claimed by Prothero?
9. Contrast the difference between Reinhorn and Prothero's handling of the MYR discovery. How do you think Ehlani would have handled MYR had she been the one to discover it? Would her faith be a factor in her decision?

10. The effects of BlueOut are modeled loosely on the Havana Syndrome of the 2010s. Although there is no scientific evidence supporting a sonic “trigger” that caused Havana Syndrome, was the use of sonic amplification realistic in **Lorikat**?
11. **Lorikat** was inspired by Stanislaw Lem’s **His Masters Voice**. If you have read **HMV**, what parallels can you draw? In general, do you notice or care about “conversations” between books?
12. Do you believe that Baylone’s interview could undermine public trust in science? Should the government limit public access to information about scientific research? What would the world look like if nations collaborated on science instead of competing? Would public trust in science increase?
13. Do Teryan, Wittenberg, Baylone or Abandonato come across as cartoon villains? Is it believable that people in power would make the same decisions the characters make?
14. Ethical questions abound in **Lorikat**. Anne fudged data to get funding for a project she felt was worthwhile. Baylone misdirects and misleads the public as to the nature of FIASCO. Prothero uses Eye Spy without telling Ehlani or Timo. Can an unethical action ever be justified? At what cost?
15. Early drafts of **Lorikat** had a prologue and an afterward by a fictitious editor. Both provided context on the worldwide impact of BlueOut. Neither added to the main story and I cut them. Would you have preferred to have that information?
16. The initial ending of **Lorikat** did not have anything other than the bird heads on spikes under the slide. Would you have found that ending satisfying? Does the addition strengthen the emotional impact?
17. In English civilization, Gothic literature came to ascendancy during times of political upheaval. The United States is in the throes of political upheaval. Does the future of American (in)stability influence your reading choices? If so, what made you decide to read **Lorikat**?
18. Women in traditional Gothic literature are victims of predation, typically by men in authority. Who is a victim in **Lorikat**? Is victimhood “egalitarian?”
19. Scholar Carol Stenf posits Gothic literature is a reaction to the certainty of scientific explanations. By that reasoning, calling **Lorikat** “Gothic sci-fi” is a nonsensical statement. Thoughts?
20. Gothic literature uses setting as a character. In what way is Fort Chamberlin a character? Would **Lorikat** have been equally effective if it was set elsewhere or is the isolation of the fortress necessary to the atmosphere of **Lorikat**?