

Part 7

You are going to read a magazine article in which four different people talk about their favourite science fiction books. For questions **43–52**, choose from the people (**A–D**). The people may be chosen more than once.

Mark your answers on the separate answer sheet.

Which person

immediately felt familiar with the subject matter of the book?

43

says that the book has influenced how they judge other science fiction novels?

44

mentions that their interest in sci-fi was maintained by this book?

45

appreciated the fact that the writer gives readers the opportunity to use their imagination?

46

found elements in the book of a type of story they disliked?

47

initially struggled to understand what was happening in the novel?

48

doubts whether many writers would be capable of producing something similar?

49

enjoyed the opportunity to see things from a completely different point of view?

50

was given the book because of their love of a particular location?

51

finds the characters in the book are familiar, despite their origins?

52

Favourite science fiction books

A Tom

I have to admit it took me a while to finish this novel. The story involves a group of friends with special powers who are now being called on to help save the world. Every time I stumbled across someone that felt like a superhero from comics, I'd put it down again in disgust, as their plots had always felt so predictable to me. When I finally got down to giving the book my full attention, I realised what I'd been missing. What the author does is to use the story to crack open a much deeper issue – moral, philosophical, whatever. And every detail counts, as he really stretches the boundaries of storytelling in ways most authors wouldn't even attempt, let alone be able to pull off. Some readers will disagree, I know, but I now compare any sci-fi book I read with this one – and most of them fall short.

B James

In my opinion, you can't write science fiction well if you haven't read any – but then neither can you write it if you haven't read anything else. Many authors just use jargon which makes their work meaningful only to a limited group of fans. When I first started reading this novel by an author who's better known for literary fiction, I found the plot rather confusing, but soon discovered that the fantasy world she'd created was brought dramatically alive by her skill. I was transported to the past and the future by her unusual imagery, which left out just enough detail to allow me to fill in the gaps and form my own idea of her world. In this story, the writer gets inside the mind of a dog – a non-human brain, and an alien mentality. We're invited to picture the dog's timeless world, and experience everyday life through eyes other than our own. That to me is the essence of true sci-fi.

C Anna

One of my favourite haunts has always been the vast heated greenhouse in the botanical garden in my city. And the more spiky and monster-like the plants that are growing there, the more fascinating I find them. So when I mentioned this to my mum, she spotted an opportunity to interest me in literature, and presented me with *Plant Monsters*. I read it in one sitting, excited by an instant sense of recognition. After all, I knew these plants already. What appealed, I think, was the writer's love of addressing the great 'What if...?' questions: what if monster plants such as these broke loose and started to take over the planet? Enter the hero Jamie King, tasked with saving the world. Yet it's the plants that root themselves most firmly in the reader's memory. The writer describes them in great detail botanically, but in my mind's eye they were the ones growing in a greenhouse – right in the heart of my city.

D Sarah

It wasn't easy to pick just one book as my favourite by this writer. She's written so many, all of which I've read, and all of them are weird but somehow true. Fantasy and sci-fi get mixed up with domestic family tales so that awkward teenagers are having to cope with mythological creatures and superhuman powers. I loved sci-fi even before I read these books, but might have outgrown it had it not been for *Universe* and its characters. The book's about other worlds, which I loved, but the people in it are very much of this one. They're eccentric, lonely, funny, sometimes selfish, but always characters I can identify with. I find it really interesting to discover how they make their way through the situations they find themselves in. And her interesting insights into why children can have problems with other family members during their teenage years have been a very helpful guide to me.