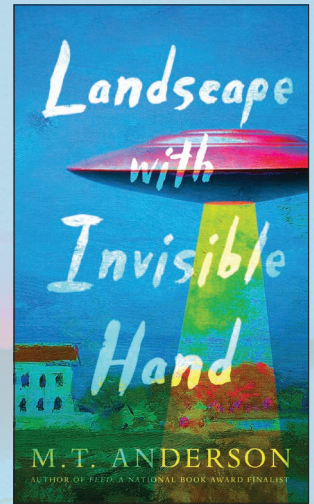


# Landscape with Invisible Hand

M. T. ANDERSON



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The vuvv are unlike depictions of alien life in other books and popular media. How do their characteristics and impact on Earth highlight current concerns over the future of our planet and species?
2. What makes the 1950s such an interesting period for the vuvv to be obsessed with? Why do you think M. T. Anderson chose that era?
3. What does Adam's plight suggest to you about art in the face of hopelessness? Adam's art is a commentary on the state of humanity in his time, the poverty he's surrounded by, and the apathy of the vuvv. If only one or two others appreciate what he's trying to achieve, are his efforts still worthwhile?
4. Why are the chapters titled as if they were paintings? How did that affect your reading of the text?
5. Adam's mother looks at everything in terms of how likely it is to go her way. What does her constant use of percentages and odds reveal about how she sees her world? How is it different from Adam's vision?
6. Compare the health-care crisis in the novel to the health-care discussions happening in America and around the globe today. As Adam notes about his chronic illness, "I've tried to get some kind of medicine to help with it—the vuvv can apparently solve this kind of thing in five minutes—but we have minimum insurance coverage. All the medicine in the world won't help if you don't own it" (page 52). How would Adam view the current state of health care in America and the battle over health-care bills in the U.S. Congress?
7. Discuss the irony of the vuvv's fascination with and demand for "true love." How does their demand for it affect what they're getting?
8. Similarly, when there's monetary compensation or compulsion for something, does that necessarily affect the sincerity of the results? Producing art for public consumption can be a business like anything else; what is the difference between consumers assigning value and creators assigning value?
9. In the novel, the vuvv are the ones that assign value to goods and services and dictate the economy. What does that suggest to you about how arbitrarily something's worth is decided?
10. The text doesn't gloss over the reality of living with a chronic illness like Adam's. He is constantly thinking of his health and how it affects his every move. Why do you think it's rare to read about the everyday aspects of something like Merrick's Disease, from the tedious to the unpleasant to the potentially life-threatening?
11. Did the novel turn out as you expected? If not, how was it different? What did you think would happen with the art competition?
12. Adam's art stands apart because he shows Earth since the vuvv invasion as it truly is, problems and all, instead of harkening back to a glorious pre-vuvv era. Is it easier to call for a return to some kind of imagined perfect past than to acknowledge how fractured society has become and how much work must be done to move toward a better future? Why might one outlook seem more appealing? How would you try to find a common ground with someone whose outlook opposes yours?
13. Adam and Chloe end up making their own lives into a work of art online. What does this say about social media? What are the benefits of and problems with having our lives online?
14. What does *Landscape with Invisible Hand* suggest about the experience of colonization? Are there real-world examples that the vuvv colonization of Earth reminds you of?
15. How do you interpret the novel's ending? What impression do you think M. T. Anderson hopes to impart upon his readers?
16. *Landscape with Invisible Hand* is a satire. How does that affect your reading and interpretation of it? Why do you think the author chose satire as the right means to unpack such questions about art, truth, and value?



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