

Book Club Discussion Questions for *THE LABBITT HALSEY PROTOCOL* BY ANDREW RYAN

ISBN: 978-0-9802088-0-1 (print)

"I've always been suspicious of the assumption that great intelligence would be an unqualified benefit — that the madness that so often accompanies it can be cavalierly dismissed. So I asked the question: Suppose there were an entire subpopulation of extreme geniuses, well beyond anything that would occur naturally. What would that really look like?"

- Andrew Ryan, author.

Ryan describes *The Labbitt Halsey Protocol* as a thought experiment to answer that question and in the process poses some interesting questions about our own world — from the responsibilities of a parent to his or her child to business ethics and the consequences of our decisions.

The Story & Characters

1. What character did you sympathize most with and why? What does that say about you?
2. Who did you dislike the most? Why?
3. Was Ann a good mother? Were her motives true?
4. Should the parent-child relationship be different when the child has far superior intelligence? Should the child be given more freedom or rights or be able to make decisions? Are parent expectations different of that child?
5. Might Ann have been better off embracing Henry's fatalism?
6. What were Leon's motives? Were they altruistic or malignant?
7. Should the government have done more to integrate and help these people?
8. Do you think the government and contractors really operate this way?
9. Have you witnessed a breach in business ethics like Ann's? Did you feel your position would be compromised if you blew the whistle?
10. Was Steve's anger justified? Misplaced?
11. Would you have forgiven Ann if you were Calvin? Did he overreact?
12. Did you feel Ann could have salvaged her relationship with Calvin if she had been more honest? Less honest?
13. Was Ann raped? Was Sicherman raped? Were they both raped? Neither?

14. Do you agree that sleeping together was the only choice of action Ann and Sichertman had?

Nihilism

1. Do you think nihilism is freedom or a prison? Why?
2. Do the XEN deserve pity or contempt?
3. Do you feel the XEN had the right to treat others with contempt?
4. Can an irrational response ever be the right response?

Bioethics and Genetic Engineering

1. Can you imagine a scenario where Labbitt Halsey Genomics' experiment would be a success? What would the *normals* feel as a result?
2. Instead of creating genius or advantage, should Labbitt Halsey have created a more equal ability – leveling the playing field?
3. Are you relieved or disappointed that the experiment failed? Did it fail? Was it worth it?
4. How do you feel about *in vitro* genetic manipulation?
 - a. What if it cured Downs Syndrome or autism?
 - b. What about choosing the gender of your child? Eye or hair color?
 - c. Should geneticists be allowed to manipulate DNA to make someone more athletic, intelligent, or perhaps just to live longer?
 - d. How much genetic engineering should we be doing? More? Less? Why?
 - e. Is it playing God?
5. With the tantalizing possibility, would you have considered their procedure for your own children? Do you know someone who might?