

Mary Shelley: Mother of Science Fiction

Mary Shelley wrote the genre-bending *Frankenstein*, which reads like a gothic horror novel but is actually the very first work of science fiction. In this activity, you will find a full discussion of Shelley's life, along with questions to get a conversation started, a fun science fiction in literature trivia quiz, and additional activities to further enrich the activity.

Preparations & How-To's

- Print the discussion or [share on a TV screen](#).
- Print the science fiction in literature trivia quiz. Distribute the [version with no answers](#), allowing people to work on their own or in teams. Alternatively, read from the [version with the answers](#) to do the quiz as a group.
- Use the Discussion Questions to help get a conversation going.
- Check the [Additional Activities section](#) for more information to bring to the activity.



Mary Shelley: Mother of Science Fiction

Introduction

Science fiction has been a popular genre in literature, film, television, and other media for over 200 years, thanks in part to the writings of English author Mary Shelley. Besides providing entertainment, this genre of writing typically also criticizes present-day society, and it is often said to inspire a “sense of wonder.”

Mary Shelley's own work often makes the argument that cooperation and sympathy are the best way to reform society. Her seminal work, *Frankenstein*, shows a science-based horror that happens when human empathy is lacking in a society.

Mary in Youth

Mary Shelley was born Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin in 1797 in Northwest London. Her life was marred by many tragedies. Her mother died from complications of childbirth, which left young Mary to be raised by her father, older half-sister, Fanny, and beloved housekeeper and nurse, Louisa Jones.

Mary's mother, Mary Wollstonecraft, was a writer, philosopher, and advocate of women's rights, and today she is considered one of the founding feminist philosophers. Mary's father, William Godwin, was a philosopher, novelist, and journalist who ran a publishing house and a little shop that sold books, maps, stationery, and games. The Godwin household was filled with literature, as Mary's father felt it imperative that his daughters be educated and have a mind of their own. When Godwin remarried, he chose another highly educated bride with two children of her own, Mary Jane Clairmont.

Mary Jane Clairmont Godwin was an author who was also fluent in French. She worked as a translator and an editor of children's books. Although William Godwin's second marriage was a success for the two spouses by all accounts, Mary and her stepsister, Claire, did not get along with Clairmont. Coupled with the fact that the family business was unable to turn a profit, leading to the constant fear of debt collectors and debtor's prison, tensions seemed to run high in the Godwin household throughout Mary's teen years.

The family's bright wit and reputation of being charming hosts to literary and philosophy salons saved them from absolute poverty, though. Mary's father frequently had his debts paid off by philosophical devotees such as Francis Place, a social reformer of the era. Meanwhile, Mary continued to be informally educated by the many intellectuals who socialized with the family. The household was graced with visitors such as poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge and former vice president of the United States Aaron Burr. Mary also had a governess and tutors, and she attended a boarding school for a short time while her family could afford it. Throughout it all, Mary was writing. She kept journals and wrote short stories, poems, and even plays.

In 1812, when Mary was just 15, her father made an unusual choice to send his daughter to live with his friend, the progressive William Baxter, in Scotland. Perhaps it was in part to keep peace in the house between his wife and children. However, Godwin wrote to Baxter that he was "anxious that [Mary] should be brought up... like a philosopher, even like a cynic," making it clear the move was at least partially for educational purposes.

Whatever his reasons, young Mary was delighted to suddenly be away from the dirt and grime of bustling London and her cramped childhood home. She made herself at home in the spacious Scottish manor, quickly making friends with Baxter's four daughters. The following summer, she was so eager to return that she then stayed for nearly an entire year. Mary recalled her time there as fostering her creativity: "I wrote then—but in a most common-place style. It was beneath the trees of the grounds belonging to our house, or on the bleak sides of the woodless mountains near, that my true compositions, the airy flights of my imagination, were born and fostered."

Discussion Questions

- Mary showed a talent for writing at a young age. What interests or hobbies did you have as a child? Do any activities you did as a child still bring you joy?
- Mary spent a long time away from her family at a very formative age. How do you think this affected her as a person?

Love and Shelley

At some point between Mary's stays in Scotland, she met the poet-philosopher Percy Bysshe Shelley. Estranged from his first wife, Percy Shelley found himself a regular visitor at the Godwins' London home. He bailed out Godwin's father from some debts using his personal funds. Percy Shelley felt an enormous connection to Mary's father, citing Godwin's book *Political Justice* as what had inspired him to eschew his family's aristocratic views and use his family's money to instead fund social justice and reform.

However, when Percy's family cut him off, promises of substantial funding to Godwin never came to fruition, and the two men had a falling out. This falling out did not impact Mary's burgeoning romantic feelings for Percy, and the two began to meet in secret. Already showing a tendency to blur the line between death and life and love, Mary's chosen spot to meet Percy was at her

mother's grave. The location may have been where she felt safe from prying eyes, but perhaps she also imagined her mother watching over her as the couple fell in love.

Due to the unfortunate situation between Percy Shelley and William Godwin, the news of the couple's plan for marriage was met not only with derision but with a complete refusal to allow the marriage to happen. Inspired by her mother's own views on marriage, feminism, and freedom, Mary saw Percy Shelley as precisely the man she was meant to be with. She felt he was an intellectual equal who shared her views on social reform and intellectualism. Taking her stepsister Claire with her, she and Shelley secretly eloped and set off for France in 1814.

The group saw the direct horrors and ravages of war as they traveled through France, writing in their shared journals sentiments such as "The distress of the inhabitants, whose houses had been burned, their cattle killed and all their wealth destroyed, has given a sting to my detestation of war."

The newlyweds read Mary's mother's writings, wrote their own pieces, and shared critiques of each other's works as they traveled. When a lack of money finally forced them back to England, they found that neither of their families would have anything to do with them, socially or financially. Percy Shelley was often away from home during this period, as he sought to dodge the very creditors that he had once hoped to pay off on behalf of others. The newly wedded couple were poverty-stricken, living and writing in cramped London apartments, which they continued to share with Claire. It was amazing that Mary had the time or energy to write as prolifically as she did, as she was often ill or pregnant during this time. She would have four children throughout her life, but only one, her last-born son, Percy Florence Shelley, would live past infancy.

Discussion Questions

- Percy Shelley was Mary Shelley's first love. What do you remember about your first love?
- Percy Shelley gave up his family fortune and his comfortable life for his beliefs that money and status should be used to effect social change. What would you give up for your beliefs?

The Birth of Frankenstein

In 1816, the threesome went off to spend the summer in Geneva. The plan was to stay with the poet Lord Byron, with whom Claire was having a child. Mary wrote in a later book that the journey to Geneva held a desolate landscape and that she had a sense of foreboding, but this may have been because she had already suffered so much misfortune in her life and was writing of nightmares that plagued her.

However, despite the incessant rain that plagued the trip, the group seemed to not let it dim their spirits. They spent their days reading, writing, rowing on the lake, and staying up until dawn most nights talking and discussing all matter of topics. It was during one of these late nights in front of the fire that Byron suggested each guest use the dark weather and natural surroundings to inspire a ghost story. He said that the tales would be shared at a later point to see who had written something "lively."

Mary found herself unable to think of a ghost story. She later recollected that each morning she was asked if she had begun her story yet and that her lack of even an inkling of an idea caused her great anxiety. Perhaps it was this anxiety that gave her the nightmare she had one night. One late night in mid-June of that year, she was unable to sleep. She described experiencing a "waking dream" that filled her with such horror that she began to write immediately:

I saw the pale student of unhallowed arts kneeling beside the thing he had put together. I saw the hideous phantasm of a man stretched out, and then, on the working of some powerful engine, show signs of life, and stir with an uneasy, half vital motion. Frightful must it be; for supremely frightful would be the effect of any human endeavor to mock the stupendous mechanism of the Creator of the world.

Although she thought it would be nothing more than a short story for the group's amusement, her husband saw great potential in it. He encouraged her to take it further and to create a novel from it. The tale that ended up being published was the story of Dr. Victor Frankenstein, a young scientist who creates an intelligent creature in an unusual scientific experiment, but, unwilling to make the sacrifices necessary to ensure a happy and healthy life for his creation, causes all manner of mayhem, chaos, and horror in his community.

There has been great speculation almost since the publication of the novel that a woman could not have written it. Although Mary took steps to shield her work from such opinions by publishing it anonymously at first, when the truth came out, the novel that had been so popular was suddenly derided. The London literati declared that Percy Shelley must be the true author. However, contemporary literary scholar and poet Fiona Sampson has declared that this simply could not have been the case. She based her statement on the actual notebooks in which the story and novel were originally written. She writes: "When I examined the notebooks myself, I realized that Percy did rather less than any line editor working in publishing today."

Perhaps just as telling is Percy's own opinion of his wife. He was forever Mary's champion, and it seems unlikely that he would have allowed her to take credit for such a popular work had she not actually written it. "My husband was, from the first, very anxious that I should prove myself worthy of my parentage, and enrol myself on the page of fame. He was forever inciting me to obtain literary reputation." In other words, Percy Shelley married Mary because he found her to be his intellectual equal and was sincere in wanting to support her success.

Like many of Mary's writings, *Frankenstein* can often be interpreted as fictionalized rewritings of her own life and the losses she had suffered. Her other novels, such as *Mathilda*, *The Last Man*, and *Cloudesley*, seem to have characters based on real-life people from Mary's social circles and her family. While *Frankenstein* is the first science-fiction novel (renowned science-fiction writer Aldous Huxley has named her one of his greatest inspirations), she also wrote novels in the gothic style and many pieces of nonfiction. She peppered all of her work with the radical Enlightenment philosophies that her mother and father taught her. You can also see the slow decline into what could be called ennui or apathy. While her earlier novels show that the individual can change society for the better, her later novels, including *Frankenstein*, show that the individual has no control over the world or history.

For the entirety of Mary's career, she was taken quite seriously as a writer. Although her politics were often overlooked in her fiction, she was considered to be a great political philosopher and reformist by her contemporaries. *Frankenstein* was an anomaly in that its darkness was what made male reviewers feel that a woman could not have written it, not even a woman as talented as Mary.

Discussion Questions

- What are your thoughts on why it was so unbelievable to male critics that a woman could have written *Frankenstein*?

- Many popular science-fiction authors have cited Mary Shelley as an inspiration. What do you think about Mary's notion that science can be just as scary as supernatural evil?

A Widowed Writer

On July 8, 1822, Mary's life was once again most violently accosted by death. On that date, Percy Shelley, his friend, and a boat boy set sail on a short trip down the coast of Italy from Livorno to Lerici. They were to meet up with Lord Byron to discuss a new publication. Unfortunately, that particular route is subject to rough waters and the inexperienced crew set out early in the day only to be caught in a storm shortly after. Days later, Shelley's body washed ashore. Mary was utterly heartbroken, clinging to her last living son, Percy Florence, for the rest of her life.

After her husband's death, the Shelley family attempted to take Mary's son from her, stating that they would not pay for his upbringing otherwise. As Mary was just 24 when she was widowed, it may have been the more sensible choice. However, Mary was determined to keep her last living child close to her. She fought for the right to raise her son and eventually managed to eke out a small stipend from the Shelleys each year for herself and her son. For the rest of her income, she went to work. During this time, she wrote several novels, including *Valperga* and *The Last Man*.

Mary also worked to honor her late husband by editing and helping create collections of Percy Shelley's work. Savvy as to what would sell to the changing tides of readers, she worked with publishers to change Shelley's reputation from that of a radical political reformist to that of a romantic poet. Shelley's father, Sir Timothy, banned Mary from writing a biography on his son, fearing it would ruin the family's reputation. However, Mary skirted the issue by giving heavy biographical notes to each poem, essay, or letter that she edited into publishable volumes. She declared in 1824, "I am to make him beloved to all posterity."

In addition to being a writer of great talent herself, she was also a fantastic editor. Mary took Percy's messy, almost illegible notebooks and created chronological volumes of his work. This method made it easier for everyone to read Percy Shelley's work, which helped promote him to the masses.

Discussion Questions

- Despite being a well-respected author in her lifetime, she was better known as the wife of Percy Shelley and the daughter of her reformist father for many years after her death. Have you had any experience being compared to others in your family? Before today's discussion, what did you know about Mary Shelley?
- Mary Shelley clearly loved her husband, devoting a great deal of time to making sure his works were available to the public after his death. Do you think Percy Shelley would have achieved so much posthumous fame without her devotion?

Science Fiction: A Unique Genre

Science fiction has been called the "literature of ideas." This type of writing typically explores the potential consequences of scientific, social, and technological innovations. The stories occur when scientific knowledge is greatly advanced from where we currently are, using ideas about advanced medical and scientific technology, space exploration, time travel, parallel universes, and extraterrestrial life.

Science fiction traces its roots to ancient mythologies and has moved forward to encompass fantasy, horror, superheroes, and more. Because there are so many subgenres, most critics split the genre into two distinct camps: hard science fiction and soft science fiction. Hard science fiction tries to use factual scientific logic and discusses math, physics, computer science, engineering, and chemistry. Soft science fiction explores sociology, history, politics, psychology, and economics, which are considered the “soft” sciences. Works of both hard and soft science fiction typically criticize modern society through metaphor.

While today we may be tempted to read Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* as a horror story, we would be remiss in doing so. The tale is undoubtedly horrifying, but the book itself shows a horror that was completely man-made, in a lab, in the name of science. The reanimation of the dead did not come from magic, necromancy, or a deal with the Devil.

The tale is perhaps even more horrifying because a life is created using advanced medical technology simply to see if it is possible, and then society grimly chooses to destroy that life with its bare hands. Science that is devoid of humanity is a very cruel concept indeed. For Mary Shelley, the initial idea might have come from a “waking dream,” but it was her philosophies on social reform and the welfare of the poor and disabled that gave the story the humanity that makes it truly horrifying.

Discussion Questions

- What do you think of science fiction as a genre? Do you ever read science fiction? If so, do you prefer “hard” or “soft” science fiction? Do you have any favorite authors?
- Do you enjoy science-fiction films? If so, what are some favorites? Why?

Additional Activities

1. Write your own science-fiction tale by using one of these [660 out-of-this-world writing prompts](#), carefully divided into subgenres so it’s easy to choose a subject you are interested in. You can also use our [Write a Novel in 30 Days](#) activity if you want to expand on your ideas.
 2. Use *Frankenstein* as a book club selection, using these [chapter-by-chapter discussion questions](#) to start a more meaningful conversation.
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Science Fiction in Literature Trivia

(Quiz Only)

Test your science-fiction knowledge. Circle your best guess and then go over the answers as a group.

1. What novel written by H. G. Wells and published in 1895 is considered to have popularized the idea of time travel?
 - A. *The Time Machine*
 - B. *The Island of Dr. Moreau*
2. What 1969 satirical science-fiction novel by Kurt Vonnegut is told by the unreliable narrator Billy Pilgrim, who tells his story in nonlinear flashbacks as he time travels?
 - A. *Neuromancer*
 - B. *Slaughterhouse-Five*
3. What is the subtitle of *Frankenstein*?
 - A. *The Modern Prometheus*
 - B. *The Fallen Angel*
4. What major film was inspired by the 1968 Philip K. Dick novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*?
 - A. *Blade Runner*
 - B. *The Matrix*
5. Much of the action in *Frankenstein* happens in Germany, but where does the novel begin?
 - A. Geneva
 - B. The North Pole
6. What 1965 epic science-fiction novel by Frank Herbert tells the story of young Paul Atreides, has five sequels, and was turned into a miniseries in 2000 and a movie in both 1984 and 2021?
 - A. *The Lazarus Effect*
 - B. *Dune*
7. What is *Frankenstein's* first name?
 - A. Victor
 - B. Vincent

8. What young adult science-fiction novel by Madeleine L'Engle is about Meg, whose scientist father goes missing after working on a mysterious government project?
- A. *Invitation to the Game*
 - B. *A Wrinkle in Time*
9. What dystopian science-fiction novel written by George Orwell in 1949 is set in Airstrip One, a province of the superstate Oceania, and run by a dictatorial leader called Big Brother?
- A. *1984*
 - B. *The Martian*
10. What author and professor of biochemistry wrote over 500 books, including *I, Robot*, before his death in 1992?
- A. Isaac Asimov
 - B. Ray Bradbury
11. In H. G. Wells' classic novel *The War of the Worlds*, Earth is invaded by creatures from where?
- A. Mars
 - B. Venus
 - C. The moon
 - D. Saturn
12. Which of these feminist classics is **NOT** science fiction?
- A. *Woman on the Edge of Time* by Marge Piercy
 - B. *The Awakening* by Kate Chopin
 - C. *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood
 - D. *Herland* by Charlotte Perkins Gilman
13. Which of these authors is considered part of the golden age of science fiction, as written about in *Astounding* by Alec Nevala-Lee?
- A. Ursula K. Le Guin
 - B. Isaac Asimov
 - C. Madeleine L'Engle
 - D. Arthur C. Clarke

14. What Ursula K. Le Guin novel won the Hugo, Nebula, and Locus awards?
- A. *The Lathe of Heaven*
 - B. *The Left Hand of Darkness*
 - C. *The Dispossessed*
 - D. *A Wizard of Earthsea*
15. Which Hugo Award–winning book was first published in 2008 but wasn't translated from Chinese to English until 2014?
- A. *Roadside Picnic*
 - B. *Stories of Your Life and Others*
 - C. *The Three-Body Problem*
 - D. *Ghost in the Shell*
16. Who is the first science-fiction author to win a MacArthur Genius Grant?
- A. Margaret Atwood
 - B. Octavia Butler
 - C. Isaac Asimov
 - D. Robert A. Heinlein
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Science Fiction in Literature Trivia

(Quiz with Answers)

Test your science-fiction knowledge. Circle your best guess and then go over the answers as a group.

1. What novel written by H. G. Wells and published in 1895 is considered to have popularized the idea of time travel?
 - A. *The Time Machine*
 - B. *The Island of Dr. Moreau*

Answer: A. *The Time Machine*. The term *time machine*, coined by Wells, is now almost universally used to refer to such a vehicle or device. The novel uses a frame story set in Victorian England, while Wells' text focuses on a recount of the otherwise anonymous Time Traveler's journey into the far future.

2. What 1969 satirical science-fiction novel by Kurt Vonnegut is told by the unreliable narrator Billy Pilgrim, who tells his story in nonlinear flashbacks as he time travels?
 - A. *Neuromancer*
 - B. *Slaughterhouse-Five*

Answer: B. *Slaughterhouse-Five*. Vonnegut was an American writer with a career spanning over 50 years that included 14 novels, three short story collections, five plays, and five nonfiction works published in his lifetime. While serving in the Army during World War II, he was captured and imprisoned in a meat locker of a slaughterhouse, which actually saved his life when the city was bombed. He published his first novel in 1952, a science-fiction novel called *Player Piano*.

3. What is the subtitle of *Frankenstein*?
 - A. *The Modern Prometheus*
 - B. *The Fallen Angel*

Answer: A. *The Modern Prometheus*. The subtitle is an allusion to Prometheus, the Greek titan who, in some versions of the myth, created man.

4. What major film was inspired by the 1968 Philip K. Dick novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*
- A. *Blade Runner*
 - B. *The Matrix*

Answer: A. *Blade Runner*. Philip Kindred Dick was an American science-fiction writer who penned 44 novels and 121 short stories that explored varied philosophical and social questions such as the nature of reality, perception, human nature, and identity. Dick identified one major theme of his work as the question, "What constitutes the authentic human being?" In works such as *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, beings can appear totally human in every respect while lacking soul or compassion.

5. Much of the action in *Frankenstein* happens in Germany, but where does the novel begin?
- A. Geneva
 - B. The North Pole

Answer: B. The North Pole. The story is told through a series of letters between Captain Robert Walton and his sister, Margaret Walton Saville, while Robert is attempting to explore the North Pole. While journeying, Robert meets Dr. Frankenstein, who tells him his tale.

6. What 1965 epic science-fiction novel by Frank Herbert tells the story of young Paul Atreides, has five sequels, and was turned into a miniseries in 2000 and a movie in both 1984 and 2021?
- A. *The Lazarus Effect*
 - B. *Dune*

Answer: B. *Dune*. Frequently described as the best-selling science-fiction novel in history, *Dune* has inspired not only TV programs and films but also science itself, with names of planets from the *Dune* novels having been adopted for the real-world nomenclature of plains and other features on Saturn's moon Titan.

7. What is *Frankenstein's* first name?
- A. Victor
 - B. Vincent

Answer: A. Victor. Dr. Victor Frankenstein was born to a wealthy Italian-Swiss family. After studying chemical processes and the decay of living things, he gains an insight into the creation of life and gives life to his own creature.

8. What young adult science-fiction novel by Madeleine L'Engle is about Meg, whose scientist father goes missing after working on a mysterious government project?
- A. *Invitation to the Game*
 - B. *A Wrinkle in Time*

Answer: B. *A Wrinkle in Time*. First published in 1962, the book won the Newbery Medal, the Sequoyah Book Award, and the Lewis Carroll Shelf Award. It was runner-up for the Hans Christian Andersen Award. The main characters embark on a journey through space and time, from galaxy to galaxy, as they endeavor to save Meg's father and the world.

9. What dystopian science-fiction novel written by George Orwell in 1949 is set in Airstrip One, a province of the superstate Oceania, and run by a dictatorial leader called Big Brother?
- A. *1984*
 - B. *The Martian*

Answer: A. *1984*. The novel was Orwell's ninth and final book. Thematically, it centers on the consequences of totalitarianism, mass surveillance, and repressive regimentation of people and behaviors within society.

10. What author and professor of biochemistry wrote over 500 books, including *I, Robot*, before his death in 1992?
- A. Isaac Asimov
 - B. Ray Bradbury

Answer: A. Isaac Asimov. Asimov was an American writer and professor of biochemistry and a prolific writer, best known for his hard science fiction. However, Asimov also wrote mysteries and fantasy as well as much nonfiction.

11. In H. G. Wells' classic novel *The War of the Worlds*, Earth is invaded by creatures from where?
- A. Mars
 - B. Venus
 - C. The moon
 - D. Saturn

Answer: A. Mars. *The War of the Worlds* has never been out of print and has influenced the creation of half a dozen feature films, several radio dramas, a record album, various comic book adaptations, a number of television series, as well as other books that continue to explore the ideas presented. It was most memorably dramatized in a 1938 radio program directed by and starring Orson Welles that caused public panic among listeners who did not know the Martian invasion was fictional.

12. Which of these feminist classics is **NOT** science fiction?
- A. *Woman on the Edge of Time* by Marge Piercy
 - B. *The Awakening* by Kate Chopin
 - C. *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood
 - D. *Herland* by Charlotte Perkins Gilman

Answer: B. *The Awakening*. Kate Chopin's novel, which takes place in the 1890s, examines the place of women in contemporary society and is not considered science fiction. The other books are sci-fi because they involve themes of dystopia, time travel, or future utopias.

13. Which of these authors is considered part of the golden age of science fiction, as written about in *Astounding* by Alec Nevala-Lee?
- A. Ursula K. Le Guin
 - B. Isaac Asimov
 - C. Madeleine L'Engle
 - D. Arthur C. Clarke

Answer: B. Isaac Asimov. In *Astounding*, Alec Nevala-Lee writes that John W. Campbell, Isaac Asimov, Robert A. Heinlein, and L. Ron Hubbard are part of what is considered the golden age of science fiction that took place in the 1930s and 1940s.

14. What Ursula K. Le Guin novel won the Hugo, Nebula, and Locus awards?
- A. *The Lathe of Heaven*
 - B. *The Left Hand of Darkness*
 - C. *The Dispossessed*
 - D. *A Wizard of Earthsea*

Answer: C. *The Dispossessed*, published in 1974, won all three awards and was one of the few sci-fi novels of the time to receive literary recognition. It achieved a degree of recognition unusual for science fiction due to its exploration of themes such as anarchism and revolutionary societies, capitalism, and individualism and collectivism.

15. Which Hugo Award–winning book was first published in 2008 but wasn’t translated from Chinese to English until 2014?
- A. *Roadside Picnic*
 - B. *Stories of Your Life and Others*
 - C. *The Three-Body Problem*
 - D. *Ghost in the Shell*

Answer: C. *The Three-Body Problem* by Cixin Liu, one of China’s most popular science-fiction novels, was translated into English in 2014. The title refers to the [three-body problem in orbital mechanics](#). It is the first novel of the *Remembrance of Earth’s Past* trilogy, whose second and third novels are *The Dark Forest* and *Death’s End*, respectively.

16. Who is the first science-fiction author to win a MacArthur Genius Grant?
- A. Margaret Atwood
 - B. Octavia Butler
 - C. Isaac Asimov
 - D. Robert A. Heinlein

Answer: B. Octavia Butler. In 1995, Octavia Butler became the first science-fiction writer to receive a MacArthur Genius Grant. The award-winning American science-fiction author was an extremely shy child who found an outlet reading and writing fantasy. By the time she was a teenager, she had begun writing science fiction.
