

## Sentient Australia – Draft Two – Review questions

Help review the work by commenting on or answering these questions.

1. Would you like to see this on screen?

Yes, I definitely would, because it's a great original story that has a solid visual component which the author employs in a very smart way. I especially like the author's pacing throughout. It is fast in the beginning because it quickly establishes the setup, the genre and the premise, and it is organically less so when we need more time to understand what the characters are trying to achieve.

2. What elements are working and what's not

I think the plot is working well, and I appreciate how the author introduces the characters. I honestly cannot say there's something NOT WORKING as it's overall a very well crafted story. I would, however, suggest the author restructure the flashbacks — they seem (sometimes!) a bit confusing, especially when written next to a dream sequence or between very short PRESENT DAY scenes. Also, while I know how important it is to give ACTION more space, I think the draft would be more engaging with more dialogue in it. And the existing dialogue is just great, by the way!

3. Comment on craft

- Structure — Like I said, the flashbacks tend to weaken it.
- Theme of leadership — Works well.
- Characters, unique, clear in your mind? Motivated? Authentic or lacking in character depth? — Maybe some of them aren't motivated enough, like the supporting characters (Heidi | Senator Hass, for example).
- The World — Well-written.
- Originality — Good! I like the variety of the characters, their unique voices. distinct voices
- Dialogue — I love it, I wish there was more of it!

4. Comment on the use of withholding information. The Author withholds information and answers but then provides those solutions later. Does this work for you? — It does, however, it sometimes feels a bit overwhelming.

5. The conflict – Is it engaging? — It is, but it's not super clear in the scenes in which the supporting characters act.

6. The survivors do not know this is an alien invasion until the end. Does this make them look stupid? — It doesn't, but if the author "misled" them and the readers first and then let them know the truth, it would be, probably, more engaging.

Does the reader switch off from the story because they would rather just get straight to the alien conflict? — No.

7. Are there cliché elements? — Maybe Heidi seems like a cliché character...
8. After reading the whole script, how would you describe the character of Dr. Amon Teicher? What do you know about him? — He is a mysterious scientist with some dark intentions and not so strong personality. I thought he would have been stronger.
9. Should the Commodore follow through to pursue Lt. Commander Dowd at the end of the story? Does he lose his sting because he goes to rescue his dying son? — I cannot decide, honestly.
10. The Lt. Aiden Frank line. Aiden Frank is Lt. Commander Dowd's Ghost. He is Frank's mentor just like Admiral Frank was his. He dies under the care of Dowd. He takes his own life. This story is fed, NON-LINEAR into the timeline. It takes us away from the world of the red storm and falling ash. It tells us of Dowd's history and his commitment to the Admiral. It establishes Dowd's military family. It allows the Commodore to use it to pursue his grudge. It is a central tenant of the work. That said, it may not work. As the reader, were you willing to take that journey and can you see a bigger picture evolving OR was it distracting, of little interest etc? — I was, but I also wanted to know more about the past conflict between the two.
11. Navy talk – The Author DE-Jargoned the work for easy reading. Does that take away from the authenticity of a military Sci-fi? — I am not able to answer this question, sadly.
12. The Author sells the Biological warfare angle hard hoping the 'magic' of storytelling doesn't allow the reader to think too much about how this being traditional biological warfare is a ridiculous proposition. Did you find yourself questioning this during the read or were you happy to take the journey and didn't care about the science? — I didn't care much about the science because I followed the characters who, I think, are interesting. I wanted to know more about them and their past issues.