

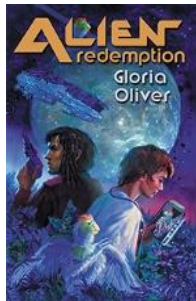


# Standalone Books Book Club Questions

(Gloria can be available for Zoom/Discord/Other chats with the club upon request.)

[Alien Redemption \(SF\)](#), [Cross-eyed Dragon Troubles \(YA Fantasy\)](#), [In the Service of Samurai \(YA Fantasy\)](#), [Inner Demons \(Occult Thriller\)](#), [Jewel of the Gods \(Gender Swapping Fantasy\)](#), [Vassal of El \(Winged-race Fantasy\)](#), [Willing Sacrifice \(YA Romantacy\)](#)

## *Alien Redemption*



**A fresh start. A shocking betrayal. Making first contact, will she discover allies or humankind's doom?**

Claudia Zimmerman survives behind a mask. Set up for a career-destroying fall by her employers, the disgraced medical researcher dons a new identity hoping to secure a job on a merchant vessel. But after she's recognized, the desperate woman attempts a hasty exit, only to reluctantly join the crew when the captain threatens her with blackmail.

Trying to keep her head down and stay under the radar, Claudia is appalled when she's assigned to the landing party on an uncharted planet. But she's elated to find it inhabited by an intelligent humanoid species... until she uncovers her boss's horrific plan.

Frantic to protect the bird-like creatures, will she become a pawn of a deep and sinister plot?

(Wide Release – eBook and paperback)

1. **Character Development:** How does Claudia's character evolve throughout the story? What key events contribute to her growth?
2. **Themes of Trust:** Trust plays a significant role in the interactions between Claudia and the avians. How does this theme manifest in their relationship?

3. **Cultural Differences:** What challenges arise from the cultural differences between humans and the avian species? How do these differences affect communication and understanding?
4. **Moral Dilemmas:** Claudia faces several moral dilemmas regarding the treatment of the avians. What are some of these dilemmas, and how does she navigate them?
5. **First Contact:** How does the book portray the concept of first contact with an alien species? What are the implications of this encounter for both parties?
6. **Power Dynamics:** Discuss the power dynamics at play within the crew of the Holiday and between the crew and the avians. How do these dynamics influence the plot?
7. **Symbolism of Coffee:** Coffee is mentioned as a significant element in the story. What does it symbolize for Claudia and the avians, and how does it reflect their experiences?
8. **Role of Technology:** How does technology impact the characters' lives and decisions? Are there instances where it both helps and hinders their progress?
9. **Empathy and Connection:** The avians exhibit a unique form of empathy. How does this ability affect their interactions with Claudia and other characters?
10. **Conflict Resolution:** What methods do characters use to resolve conflicts throughout the story? Are these methods effective?
11. **Representation of Alien Species:** How are the avians portrayed as a sentient species? In what ways do they challenge or conform to typical sci-fi tropes about aliens?
12. **Impact of Setting:** How does the setting of Turbic Station and the Fringes contribute to the overall atmosphere of the story? What role does it play in character development?
13. **Friendship and Loyalty:** Explore the friendships formed in the book, particularly between Claudia and her crew members. How do these relationships influence their actions?
14. **Consequences of Choices:** Discuss how characters' choices lead to unforeseen consequences. Can you identify a moment where a decision significantly altered the course of events?
15. **Future Implications:** At the end of the book, what possibilities do you see for Claudia and the avians? What might their future hold based on their experiences?

## *Cross-eyed Dragon Troubles*



**A new life she doesn't want. A confusing world to explore. Will she find her way with the help of a mysterious boy and his great beast?**

Talia has no clue about her future. Unable to pick an apprenticeship in her beloved village, the uncertain fifteen-year-old is dismayed when her parents spend precious money sending her to a far-off magic school. Not knowing what to expect, she watches in horrified amazement as a young man and his dragon fall from the sky and claim they're her transport.

As Talia arrives at the institution only to be left to figure things out on her own, she learns the squire and his scaly companion are infamous for failing to complete their bond. And as she grows closer to the strange duo, the inexperienced teen plunges into the middle of chaos, explosive misunderstandings, and a life-altering secret.

Will finally discovering her place lead to danger, or a home she never imagined?

(Kindle/KU and Paperback – Paperback available from multiple retailers)

1. **Character Development:** How does Talia's character evolve throughout the story? What key events contribute to her growth?
2. **Themes of Friendship:** Discuss the dynamics of friendship in the book. How do Talia, Kel, and Clarence support each other, and what challenges do they face in their relationships?
3. **Conflict Resolution:** How do Talia and Kel handle their misunderstandings? What does this reveal about their characters and their ability to communicate?
4. **Role of Dragons:** What significance do dragons hold in the story? How do they reflect the themes of loyalty and companionship?
5. **Bonding Rituals:** The concept of bonding between humans and dragons is central to the plot. What are the implications of this bond, and how does it affect the characters' actions and decisions?
6. **Moral Choices:** Analyze the moral dilemmas faced by the characters. How do their choices impact themselves and those around them?
7. **Setting Influence:** How does the setting of the guild and the dragon dormitory influence the story? In what ways does it shape the characters' experiences?
8. **Symbolism:** What symbols can you identify in the book (e.g., the gem, flowers)? How do these symbols enhance the narrative?

9. **Emotional Struggles:** Talia experiences a range of emotions throughout the story. How does she cope with feelings of helplessness and frustration regarding Kel's situation?
10. **Friendship vs. Duty:** Discuss how the characters balance their personal desires with their responsibilities to the guild and each other.
11. **Foreshadowing:** Can you identify any instances of foreshadowing in the book? How do these hints build suspense or anticipation for future events?
12. **Cultural Elements:** What cultural aspects are present in the story? How do they enrich the world-building and character interactions?
13. **Narrative Style:** How does Gloria Oliver's writing style contribute to the overall tone of the book? Are there specific passages that stood out to you?
14. **Character Relationships:** Examine the relationship between Talia and Clarence. How does their interaction change over time, and what does it reveal about both characters?
15. **Personal Reflection:** Which character did you relate to the most, and why? How did their journey resonate with your own experiences or beliefs?

## *In the Service of Samurai*



**Thrust into political intrigue from beyond the grave, can a boy rise from the depths of despair to become an unlikely hero?**

Feudal Japan. Toshiro “Toshi” Chizuson respects his station. Though his master is frugal to a fault, the young cartography apprentice has plenty to eat and dedicates himself to growing his skills in trade. But the burgeoning mapmaker is horrified when a skeletal samurai enters the shop at dusk and carries him off to serve on a ship of the dead.

Discovering the lifeless crew needs his help to finish the mission they failed to complete in life, Toshi toils to decode foreign charts and instruments. But after a ghostly saboteur attempts to destroy his work, the terrified teen fears he’ll join his ghoulish shipmates in perpetual unrest.

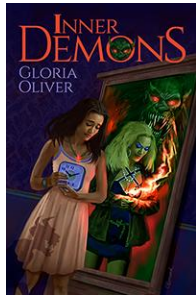
Can Toshi break a sinister maritime curse and finally bring justice to the lost souls?

(Wide Release – eBook and paperback)

1. **Character Development:** How does Toshi's character evolve throughout the story? What key events contribute to his growth?
2. **Themes of Duty and Honor:** The concept of serving one's lord, even after death, is central to the narrative. How do different characters interpret this duty?
3. **Cultural Context:** How does the setting of feudal Japan influence the characters' actions and beliefs? What aspects of Japanese culture are highlighted in the book?
4. **Role of Women:** Discuss the roles of Miko and Himiko in the story. How do they challenge or conform to traditional gender roles?
5. **Supernatural Elements:** The presence of spirits and the supernatural plays a significant role in the plot. How do these elements affect Toshi's journey and decisions?
6. **Conflict and Resolution:** What are the main conflicts in the story, both internal and external? How are they resolved by the end of the book?
7. **Symbolism of the Katana:** The katana, named Swift Wind, is a significant symbol in the story. What does it represent for Toshi and how does it relate to his identity?
8. **Friendship and Loyalty:** Explore the relationships between Toshi, Miko, and Mitsuo. How do their friendships impact their choices and the overall narrative?
9. **Moral Dilemmas:** Toshi faces several moral dilemmas throughout the book. Discuss one or two of these dilemmas and how they shape his character.
10. **Narrative Style:** How does Gloria Oliver's writing style contribute to the storytelling? Are there particular passages that stood out to you?

11. **Foreshadowing:** Identify instances of foreshadowing in the book. How do they enhance your understanding of the plot?
12. **The Role of Humor:** Miko often uses humor to lighten serious moments. How does this affect the tone of the story and your perception of her character?
13. **Impact of Betrayal:** Betrayal is a recurring theme in the book. How does it affect Toshi's relationships and his view of trust?
14. **Imagery and Descriptions:** Discuss how Oliver uses imagery to create a vivid picture of the setting and characters. Which descriptions were particularly effective for you?
15. **Personal Reflection:** If you were in Toshi's position, how would you handle the expectations placed upon you? Would you choose duty over personal desire? Why or why not?

## *Inner Demons*



**Her comfortable life was shattered and she was left behind like trash. Now she will gamble it all to get at the truth. Anyone standing in her way will be annihilated.**

Tamara Williams' life is in chaos. One moment she's cozying down with a cup of tea, and the next she's terrified to find herself on a dark street with headlights heading straight for her! Then to her horror she discovers she has three months of missing time in which she's wrecked her best friend's wedding, scorned and abandoned her family and even blackmailed her boss.

Assuming she's lost her marbles, Tamara seeks blindly for help jittery about what else she might flamboyantly combust if she suffers another attack. Then she meets a man who declares she didn't go postal but was instead possessed by a demon.

Knowing she was taken for a ride and then tossed to the gutter, can Tamara hunt down the supernatural assthat and give it a taste of its own medicine?

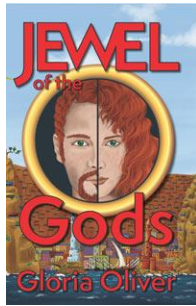
(Kindle/KU and Paperback – Paperback available from multiple retailers)

1. **Character Development:** How do Jensen and Tamara's backgrounds influence their actions and decisions throughout the story?
2. **Themes of Trust:** What role does trust play in the interactions between Jensen, Tamara, and the brothers? How does this affect their relationships?
3. **Moral Dilemmas:** Discuss the moral implications of Jensen's decision to withhold information from his Order. Was he justified in doing so?
4. **Supernatural Elements:** How do the supernatural elements, such as the Ring of Solomon and the existence of angels/demons, shape the narrative?
5. **Symbolism of the Ring:** What do you think the Ring of Solomon symbolizes in the context of power and control?
6. **Fear and Courage:** How do fear and courage manifest in the characters, particularly in Tamara and Jensen? Can you identify moments where they confront their fears?
7. **Role of Knowledge:** How does knowledge serve as both a weapon and a burden for the characters? Consider Jensen's book and its contents.
8. **Conflict Resolution:** How do the characters navigate conflict, both internal and external? Are their methods effective?

9. **Perception of Good vs. Evil:** How does the story challenge traditional notions of good and evil, especially through the portrayal of Jared and Ross?
10. **Isolation vs. Connection:** Discuss how isolation affects Tamara and Jensen. In what ways do they seek connection with others?
11. **Impact of Past Trauma:** How do past traumas influence Tamara's behavior and her relationship with Jensen?
12. **Role of Faith:** What role does faith play in the characters' lives, particularly for Jensen as an ex-priest? How does it affect his decisions?
13. **Foreshadowing:** Identify instances of foreshadowing in the text. How do these hints build tension or anticipation for future events?
14. **Character Motivations:** What motivates Jared and Ross to protect the Ring? Do you think their motivations are purely selfless or do they have ulterior motives?
15. **Ending Reflections:** Based on the excerpts, what do you predict will happen next in the story? What unresolved questions remain for you?



## *Jewel of the Gods*



### **Long Live the King! But will he?**

When fate sends Red and his crewmates to the coveted port of Syrras, it is an opportunity he plans to take full advantage of. Unfortunately, his search for a little adventure hands him a lot more than he ever bargained for.

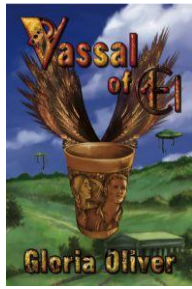
Changed by unknown magics into something other than himself, he's told a terrible secret. One he must now help protect, even as he is tasked to find those responsible. Failure will cost him his body, his way of life, everything that makes him who he is.

(Wide Release – eBook and paperback)

1. **Character Development:** How does Red's character evolve throughout the story? What key events contribute to his growth?
2. **Themes of Loyalty and Betrayal:** Discuss the theme of loyalty versus betrayal in the book. How do different characters embody these themes?
3. **Role of Women:** How are female characters portrayed in the story? What roles do they play in the political and personal dynamics of the plot?
4. **Magic and Illusion:** The use of magic and illusion is significant in the narrative. How do these elements affect the characters' decisions and the overall plot?
5. **Political Intrigue:** How does the political landscape of Wasef influence the actions of the characters? What parallels can be drawn to real-world politics?
6. **Moral Dilemmas:** What moral dilemmas do characters face, particularly Red and Lyara? How do they navigate these challenges?
7. **Symbolism of the Jewel:** What does the "Jewel of the Gods" symbolize in the context of the story? How does it relate to the characters' journeys?
8. **Friendship and Trust:** Explore the relationships between Red and his friends, especially Lucas. How do trust and friendship impact their choices?
9. **Cultural Differences:** How do cultural differences among the various nations represented in the book affect interactions between characters?
10. **Impact of Past Events:** How do past events shape the motivations and actions of current characters? Can you identify specific examples?
11. **Conflict Resolution:** How do characters attempt to resolve conflicts throughout the story? Are their methods effective?

12. **Foreshadowing:** Identify instances of foreshadowing in the book. How do these hints enhance your understanding of the plot?
13. **Setting as a Character:** In what ways does the setting of Wasef contribute to the story? Does it feel like a character in its own right?
14. **Personal Sacrifice:** Discuss instances of personal sacrifice in the book. What do these sacrifices reveal about the characters?
15. **Ending Reflection:** What are your thoughts on the ending of "Jewel of the Gods"? Do you feel it provides closure, or does it leave room for further exploration?

## *Vassal of El*



### **Torn between two worlds, will he be able to save either of them?**

Torren wanted nothing more than to forget his past and endure the life it had forced upon him. One small, begrudging act of kindness, however, embarks him on a path that will bring him face to face with everything he has so heartily attempted to avoid.

In so doing, events that seemed to have no bearing on his old life now appear to be tangled with it and his present.

Caught between the world of his birth and the one he currently lives in, will Torren be able to set aside his hate and guilt long enough to keep both from utter destruction?

(Wide Release – eBook and paperback)

1. **Character Development:** How does Torren's character evolve throughout the story? What key events contribute to his transformation?
2. **Themes of Identity:** How does the theme of identity manifest in Torren's struggle between his past as a Lander and his present as a Chosen?
3. **Emotional Conflict:** Discuss the emotional turmoil Torren experiences when he discovers Larana's true identity. How does this conflict drive the narrative?
4. **Symbolism of Wings:** What do the wings symbolize in the context of the story? How do they relate to themes of freedom and belonging?
5. **Role of El:** How does the presence (or absence) of El influence the characters' actions and beliefs? What does El represent to different characters?
6. **Friendship and Loyalty:** Examine the relationships between Torren, Micca, and Larana. How do their friendships impact their decisions and the overall plot?
7. **Conflict and Resolution:** What are the main conflicts in the story, both internal and external? How are these conflicts resolved by the end of the book?
8. **Cultural Differences:** How do the cultural differences between the Chosen and Landers affect their interactions? Provide examples from the text.
9. **Moral Ambiguity:** Discuss the moral dilemmas faced by Torren and other characters. How do these dilemmas reflect broader societal issues within the story?
10. **Foreshadowing:** Identify instances of foreshadowing in the book. How do these hints shape your understanding of the plot as it unfolds?
11. **Narrative Style:** How does Gloria Oliver's writing style contribute to the mood and tone of the story? Are there specific passages that stood out to you?

12. **Impact of War:** What role does the threat of war play in shaping the characters' motivations and actions? How does it affect their relationships?
13. **Female Characters:** Analyze the roles of female characters such as Larana and Zelene. How do they challenge or conform to traditional gender roles within the narrative?
14. **Redemption Arc:** Does Torren achieve redemption by the end of the book? What does redemption mean for him, and how is it portrayed?
15. **Personal Reflection:** Which character did you relate to the most, and why? How did their journey resonate with your own experiences or beliefs?

## *Willing Sacrifice*



**Her destiny is clear. When outsiders claim a shocking falsehood, will the truth save her realm or send it to its doom?**

La'tiera is fully at peace with her purpose. Living in isolation and marked at birth by the gods to defend the land from darkness, the honorable young woman dutifully waits to sacrifice herself to demons when the time comes. But her intended fate hangs in the balance when she's kidnapped by strangers who insist they offer protection.

Unable to accept that her beloved guardian lied, the curious girl is still glad for the opportunity to see and explore more of the world. And when her people come hunting, La'tiera faces a terrible decision on whom to believe – the man she grew up with, or the kindhearted abductors desperately trying to keep her alive.

With the future resting in her hands, will this uncertain hero choose correctly?

(Wide Release – eBook and paperback)

1. **Character Development:** How does La'tiera's character evolve throughout the story? What key events contribute to her growth?
2. **Themes of Isolation:** Discuss the theme of isolation in La'tiera's life. How does her sheltered existence affect her interactions with others, particularly with Aya and Dal?
3. **Symbolism of the Necklace:** What does La'tiera's necklace symbolize in the context of her identity and her role in the story? How does it impact her decisions?
4. **Role of Rumors:** How do rumors shape the perceptions of characters in the story? Consider La'tiera's thoughts about the viscount's supposed hidden daughter.
5. **Friendship Dynamics:** Analyze the relationship between La'tiera and Aya. What does their friendship reveal about trust and loyalty?
6. **Conflict and Tension:** What internal conflicts does La'tiera face regarding her feelings for Dal? How do these conflicts reflect broader themes in the book?
7. **The Concept of Sacrifice:** How is the idea of sacrifice portrayed in the novel? What sacrifices do different characters make, and what motivates them?
8. **Impact of the Troupe:** How does the arrival of the traveling troupe influence La'tiera's life and choices? What do they represent in her journey?
9. **Perception vs. Reality:** Discuss how perception differs from reality in the story. How do characters misjudge each other based on appearances or rumors?

10. **The Role of Mela:** What role does Mela play in La'tiera's life? How does she serve as a protector, and what limitations does she impose?
11. **Exploration of Freedom:** What does freedom mean to La'tiera, and how does her understanding of it change throughout the book?
12. **Dal's Intentions:** What do you think Dal's true intentions are when he seeks to meet La'tiera? Do you believe he has ulterior motives, or is he genuinely interested in her?
13. **Imagery and Art:** How does La'tiera's passion for painting and drawing serve as a form of escape for her? What do her artworks reveal about her inner world?
14. **Foreshadowing:** Identify instances of foreshadowing in the text. How do they build suspense or hint at future events?
15. **Ending Reflection:** Reflect on the ending of the book. Do you think La'tiera made the right choices? What do you hope for her future after the events of the story?

