



The Discoveries of Julia Xero Series Book Club Questions

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

[The Secret Humankind](#), [The Secret Aftermath](#), [The Secret Countdown](#)

The Secret Humankind



She keeps her head down and cleans up messes. When the body count starts rising, will trying to make a living get her rubbed out?

Julia Xero is stuck in survival mode. After losing the only person she loved, the introverted orphan longs to escape her toxic employment for the zen of crime and trauma scene decontamination. But when she lands her dream job and is called to a bloody rooftop with a decapitated corpse, she's horrified to come face to face with an otherworldly shark-toothed assassin.

Furious to learn she's been enlisted by a clandestine race of beings against her will, Julia's dismay fountains when she finds out they implanted her with a neck bomb to ensure her lips stay tightly sealed. Fit to be tied, and her thunderous confrontation with her boss hitting a deadend, the stubborn young woman begins plotting ways to leave the energy-powered entities in her dust.

Can she outwit an ancient civilization before her carotid goes boom?

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

1. **Character Development:** How does Julia Xero evolve throughout the story? What key events contribute to her growth?

2. **Themes of Secrecy:** What role does secrecy play in the lives of the Secret Humankind (SH)? How does it affect their interactions with humans?
3. **Motivations:** What do you think motivates the SH to intervene in human affairs? Are their motivations justified?
4. **Moral Dilemmas:** Discuss the moral implications of Julia's involvement in cleaning up crime scenes. Do you think she should have participated, given the circumstances?
5. **Friendship and Loyalty:** How do Julia's relationships with characters like Stan and Ruiz influence her decisions? What does this say about the importance of friendship in times of crisis?
6. **Power Dynamics:** How is power portrayed in the book, particularly between the SH and humans? Who holds the most power, and how is it exercised?
7. **Symbolism of the "Spidey Sense":** What does Julia's "spidey sense" represent in terms of her character and her experiences? How does it guide her actions?
8. **Conflict Resolution:** How do the characters approach conflict resolution? Are their methods effective or problematic?
9. **Impact of the Past:** How do Julia's past experiences in foster care shape her worldview and her reactions to current events in the story?
10. **Role of Technology:** Discuss the significance of technology in the narrative. How does it aid or hinder the characters in their quests?
11. **Foreshadowing:** Can you identify any instances of foreshadowing in the book? How do they enhance your understanding of the plot?
12. **Cultural References:** How do the various cultural references (like the mention of high fructose corn syrup) contribute to the story's themes or character development?
13. **Narrative Style:** How does Oliver's writing style affect your engagement with the story? Are there particular passages that stood out to you?
14. **Ending Reflection:** What are your thoughts on the ending of the book? Do you feel satisfied with how the story concludes, or do you wish for more resolution?
15. **Future Implications:** Based on what you've read, what do you think might happen next for Julia and the SH? Would you be interested in reading a sequel? Why or why not?

The Secret Aftermath



A twenty-year-old secret lies revealed. Someone wants it reburied at any cost. She's now marked for termination with extreme prejudice.

Julia Xero is in shock. At twenty-two, the introverted orphan found her dream job cleaning up after the dead and even acquired a family worth staying and fighting for. The semi-stuck-up hidden race she works for doesn't take the news that she's not entirely human well, but Julia stubbornly stands her ground despite one of them "shockingly" trying to kill her outright.

Remanded into her employer's custody, Julia is desperate to skip past these inane distractions so she can concentrate on stopping the true danger—a plot to neuter a large portion of humanity without their consent. More than willing to kick ass and take names, Julia obstinately pushes forward despite the realization that someone can't abide her very existence.

Can Julia stay alive long enough to discover and stop her new nemesis while keeping her newfound family from becoming collateral damage?

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

1. **Character Development:** How does Julia Xero evolve throughout the story? What key events contribute to her growth?
2. **Themes of Identity:** How does the concept of identity play a role in Julia's journey? In what ways does she struggle with her sense of self?
3. **Power Dynamics:** Discuss the power dynamics between the Secret Humankind and humans. How do these dynamics affect the characters' relationships?
4. **Moral Ambiguity:** Are there characters in the book that embody moral ambiguity? How do their actions challenge your perceptions of right and wrong?
5. **Friendship and Loyalty:** How do friendship and loyalty manifest in the story? Which relationships stand out to you, and why?
6. **Symbolism:** What is the significance of the tracking device/bomb in Julia's neck? How does it symbolize her situation within the Secret Humankind?
7. **Conflict and Resolution:** What are the main conflicts in the story, and how are they resolved? Do you find the resolutions satisfying?
8. **Cultural References:** The book includes various mythological creatures and cultural references (e.g., Dryads, Nagas). How do these elements enhance the story?

9. **Foreshadowing:** Can you identify instances of foreshadowing in the narrative? How do they build suspense or anticipation for future events?
10. **Narrative Style:** How does Gloria Oliver's writing style influence your reading experience? Are there particular passages that stood out to you?
11. **Emotional Impact:** Which scenes elicited strong emotional responses from you? Why do you think they had that effect?
12. **Role of Women:** Discuss the portrayal of female characters in the book. How do they navigate their roles within both human and Secret Humankind societies?
13. **Consequences of Actions:** What are some consequences faced by characters due to their choices? How do these consequences shape the plot?
14. **Mystery Elements:** How does the mystery surrounding Julia's origins drive the narrative? What techniques does the author use to maintain intrigue?
15. **Future Implications:** Based on the ending, what do you think might happen next for Julia and her friends? What unresolved issues remain?

The Secret Countdown



The Doomsday Clock is counting down. She has no idea how to stop it. Can our heroine drag humanity's enemy into the light before time runs out?

Julia Xero is growing increasingly frantic. After barely escaping the jaws of death, the young loner has finally found a place where she belongs. But if she doesn't find and stop mankind's unknown nemesis, the future lives of millions of children will be ripped away.

Frustrated by the lack of progress, she feels the pressure rise exponentially when an unknown woman from Julia's recently discovered secret past chisels her way back into her life. Raging at the added stumbling block of dealing with the nurse's emotional damage, the stubborn young woman begins juggling in earnest as she careens ever closer to the razor's edge.

Can she find her elusive enemy and stop their nefarious plot before it's too late?

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

1. **Character Development:** How does Julia Xero evolve throughout the story? What key events contribute to her growth?
2. **Themes of Guilt and Redemption:** How do the characters grapple with feelings of guilt, particularly Tanaka? In what ways do they seek redemption?
3. **Emotional Projection:** Tanaka has the ability to project her emotions onto others. How does this ability affect her relationships, particularly with Julia?
4. **Trust and Manipulation:** Discuss the theme of trust in the book. How do characters navigate trust and manipulation, especially in their interactions with one another?
5. **Friendship Dynamics:** Analyze the friendship between Julia and Tanaka. What challenges do they face, and how do they support each other?
6. **Conflict and Resolution:** What are the main conflicts in the story? How are they resolved, and what does this say about the characters involved?
7. **Cultural References:** The book incorporates various cultural elements (e.g., Japanese culture with Tanaka). How do these elements enhance the story?
8. **Role of the Council of Purpose:** What is the significance of the Council of Purpose in the narrative? How do their actions impact the main characters?
9. **Symbolism of the Yeti:** The yeti serves as a powerful symbol in the story. What does it represent, and how does it relate to Julia's journey?

10. **Power Dynamics:** Discuss the power dynamics between different characters, especially between Julia, Tanaka, and Councilor Şēru. How do these dynamics shift throughout the story?
11. **Foreshadowing and Suspense:** How does the author build suspense throughout the narrative? Are there specific moments of foreshadowing that stand out?
12. **Personal Sacrifice:** What sacrifices do characters make for one another? How do these sacrifices shape their relationships and the overall plot?
13. **The Concept of Home:** How is the idea of home portrayed in the book? What does it mean for Julia and Tanaka, especially given their pasts?
14. **Moral Ambiguity:** Are there characters who embody moral ambiguity? Discuss how this complexity adds depth to the story.
15. **Ending Reflection:** What are your thoughts on the ending of the book? Do you feel it provides closure for the characters, or does it leave room for further exploration?

