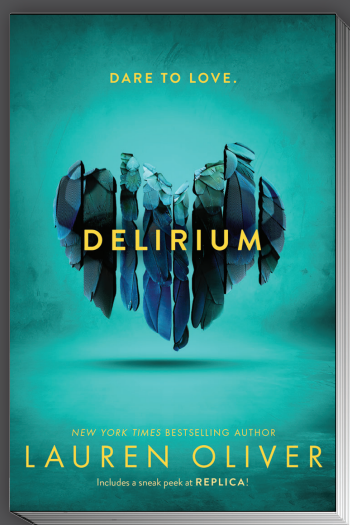


THE LAUREN OLIVER

COLLECTION DISCUSSION GUIDE

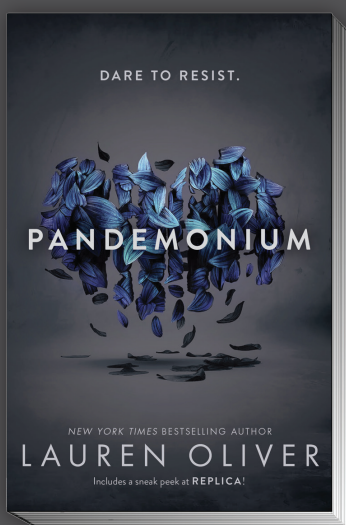
DELIRIUM • PANDEMONIUM • REQUIEM • REPLICAS

SMART QUESTIONS FOR BOOK CLUBS, READING GROUPS, AND CLASSROOMS TIED TO LAUREN OLIVER'S *NEW YORK TIMES* BESTSELLING FANTASY TRILOGY, WHICH EXPLAINS FORBIDDEN LOVE, REVOLUTION, AND THE POWER TO CHOOSE, ALONG WITH THE FIRST NOVEL IN HER STUNNING DUOLOGY, WHICH EXPLORES ISSUES OF INDIVIDUALITY, IDENTITY, AND HUMANITY



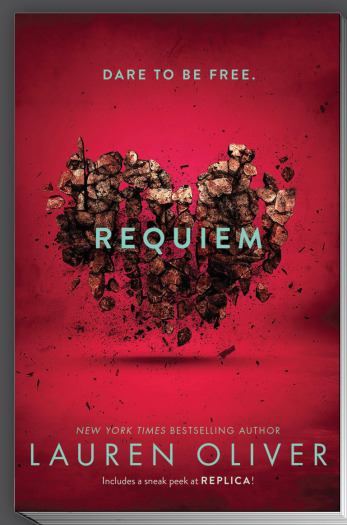
“Another deft blend of realism and fantasy.”

—*ALA Booklist*



“An absorbing mix of dark dystopian lore and romance novel.”

—*Boston Globe*



“A dystopian tour de force.”

—*Kirkus Reviews*
(starred review)



“Electric, heartbreaking, pulse-pounding, and timely.”

—Victoria Aveyard, author of the #1 *New York Times* bestseller *Red Queen*



ABOUT THE BOOK

Lena Haloway is looking forward to her eighteenth birthday, when she will undergo the cure for the disease of love or *amor deliria nervosa*. To prevent the disease's spread into Portland, Maine, where Lena lives, the government has secured the city's borders with a wall that separates the cured from unregulated lands, or the Wilds, and the uncured. But with ninety-five days left before her procedure, Lena meets Alex, a boy from the Wilds, and starts to question the government's power over her freedom of choice and even her own heart.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. List the symptoms of *amor deliria nervosa*. How dangerous are they? What would lead someone to classify love as a disease? Do you agree that, in some ways, love could be thought of as a disease? Why or why not?
2. *The Book of Shhh* says, "Marriage is Order and Stability, the mark of a Healthy society" (p. 11). What role do you think marriage plays in Lena's society? What role do you think marriage plays in today's society? Is love an important part of marriage? Should people be able to marry whoever they want? Why or why not?
3. Lena longs for "the promise of the cure," which she describes as "the chance to be reborn: newer, fresher, better. Healed and whole and perfect again" (p. 112). If given the chance, would you want to be cured? What are some reasons that a person might wish to undergo the treatment?
4. Describe Hana and Lena's relationship and the role that jealousy plays in their friendship. Are you ever jealous of your friends? What effect does that have on your behavior or your feelings for them?
5. Near the beginning of the story, Lena says that the words *I love you* are "strange and terrible" (p. 40). Why? How do Lena's feelings about those words change during the course of the story?
6. Describe Lena's memories of her mother. The things they did together are viewed as dangerous in Lena's society. Do you have childhood memories that are similar to Lena's? What do you think your life would be like if those memories were inextricably linked to feelings of wrongdoing and guilt? How do things change for Lena when she discovers the truth about her mother?
7. The government's raids are incredibly invasive, and Lena says that "private property laws are suspended on raid nights. Pretty much every law is suspended on raid nights" (p. 202). Why do the citizens allow such raids to take place? Would you know if your government was headed in this direction? Would you be able to turn things around? How would you go about it?
8. Alex refers to the government's tactics as "smoke and mirrors" (p. 270). What does he mean? Do you agree? What does it take to keep people obedient?
9. Lena says she's glad she has "lost control" (p. 311), and begins to think that while love can be painful, "the pain only makes it better, more intense, more worth it" (p. 265). Do you recognize these feelings? Do you agree that it is necessary to lose control or feel pain in order to be happy?

Questions written by Kate Coxon, Academic Dean of Rocketship Si Se Puede Academy, Palo Alto, CA.



ABOUT THE BOOK

After an anguishing escape over the wall that secures her freedom but that leaves Alex captured by Border Control, Lena finds herself living in the Wilds. Numbed by her grief that Alex is lost forever, Lena is reborn as a warrior for the resistance. She infiltrates Deliria-Free America, a sinister organization that promotes the idea of an even-earlier cure, and is kidnapped with Julian Fineman, poster child and son of the founder of the DFA. As they join forces to escape the underground, the unexpected bond of trust and love that develops has them choosing each other and promising allegiance to the cause of freedom.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does Lena mean when she says she is being born again? She tells readers that the new Lena is “not born all at once,” but rather “step by step—and then, inch by inch” (p. 6). Why is that? Who else in the story is born again? Are they reborn by choice, necessity, or both? Can you give a real-life example of this type of dramatic rebirth?
2. Lena shows obvious signs of trauma and shock after escaping Portland. What other characters exhibit those signs? Describe the feelings of grief and survivor’s guilt that many of the people in Raven’s group seem to share. How do they cope with their distress? When Sarah tells Lena that “you get used to it after a while” (p. 45), what do you think she means? Does time heal, or does it numb?
3. Raven refuses to acknowledge her past: “There is no before. There is only now, and what comes next” (p. 21). Describe Raven. Why would she refuse to talk about the past? As it turns out, what does it mean for her to live in the “now” and “what comes next”? Contrast the choices she and Lena make throughout the story.
4. In Lena’s world, what does it mean to be fully human? Are the people living in the cities human? What about the Invalids or the Scavengers? Once she reaches the Wilds, Lena says that at times she feels like an animal. She also says that priests and scientists agree that “at our heart, at our base, we are no better than animals” (p. 113). Do you agree? If that were true, could the cure change it?
5. The DFA says that it is “sometimes necessary to purge the weak in order to evolve to a better society” (p. 52). Thomas Fineman also says that he is “willing to accept the consequences” of forced vaccination and is “brave enough to sacrifice a few for the good of the whole” (p. 54). What was your reaction as you read that?
6. Lena says that “hatred is a high tower,” and in the Wilds she starts “to build, and to climb” (p. 166). What does Lena hate? Does this hatred change over the course of the story? Is it related to who and what she loves?
7. Did your thoughts about Thomas Fineman change at all after hearing Julian’s story about his brother’s death? How do you think Thomas became who he is? What are his intentions? What does he care about, and what is he really seeking?
8. Describe what you think it is like to be a parent in Lena’s world. Two very different parents appear in the story: Lena’s mother and Julian’s father. Is Lena’s mother who you would have expected after reading *Delirium*?

Questions written by Kate Coxon, Academic Dean of Rocketship Si Se Puede Academy, Palo Alto, CA.



ABOUT THE BOOK

When Alex miraculously escapes the Crypts and returns to the Wilds, Lena is torn between her former love for him and her commitment to Julian. With the government's plan to breach the Wilds and wipe out the resistance, a stronger, tougher Lena finds herself fighting beside a bitter, distant Alex. When Hana, Lena's best friend before the war who is now paired with new mayor Fred Hargrove, makes amends for an old betrayal, forces are set in motion for a new world order to emerge. Will Lena, Alex, and Julian have faith in a new tomorrow, with the freedom to love and to choose when the boundaries dissolve?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In *Requiem*, we hear directly from Hana in addition to Lena. Why do you think Lauren Oliver chose to add another voice in the third volume of the trilogy? How is Hana's perspective different from Lena's? What about this story requires telling it from two points of view?
2. Early on, Lena tells Alex that "the old Lena is dead" (p. 32). Why does she say this? Is she telling the truth, or putting up a tough façade? Describe the changes that have taken place in Lena (or another character) throughout the series. Share evidence that shows whether the protagonists have become more mature, describing what it means to be an adult in Lena's society.
3. There are times when it is difficult to tell whether Hana believes the propaganda she's heard all her life. She blames herself for her troubles, repeatedly wondering whether she is defective. What do you think? Do you think that other characters might share her questions? If you were Hana, would you believe you lived in a utopia or a dystopia?
4. Fred begins as a sympathetic character: he is the son of a martyr and a crusader in his own right. What does he stand for in the eyes of the people? Does his public image matter, given what you see in his treatment of Hana? Identify the point in the story when Fred is revealed as a villain; do you find him to be a realistic character in the remainder of the story? Why or why not?
5. Select two or more themes or central ideas from the story and analyze their development over the course of the text; possible themes include freedom, love, friendship, abandonment, and sacrifice. Analyze how these themes interact and build upon one another, then use these themes to guide you as you provide an objective summary of the text.
6. Freedom and love are two words that appear frequently in the story. Choose one and trace its use throughout the book. What various definitions do the characters assign to your word? What images do they use to evoke its meaning? Provide specific textual evidence.
7. Hana's father tells her that *amor deliria nervosa* is a disease of "selfishness" not love (p. 73). Do you agree? Would you advise Grace (or another character who is coming of age) to have the procedure done? Discuss the value or horror presented by the cure. Provide reasons and evidence from the text to support your arguments.
8. Read the biblical account of the judgment of Solomon (1 Kings 3:16-28). How does the original story differ from the version in *The Book of Shhh* (p. 9-10)? Which version do you find more compelling and why? Do you think Hana (p. 10) and Lena (p. 260) would have identified with the baby if they had read the original story?

Questions written by Kate Coxon, Academic Dean of Rocketship Si Se Puede Academy, Palo Alto, CA.

ABOUT THE BOOK



Two girls, Lyra and Gemma, whose backgrounds are mysteriously intertwined, are bound together as they discover the truth of their origins. Lyra, an experimental subject at Haven, a secretive island research facility, knows little of the world beyond its carefully guarded grounds and less about Haven's purpose. Gemma, a lonely, isolated teen except for her one friend, April, feels trapped by her parents' abnormal fear for her health and safety. When Gemma questions her father's former connection to Haven, she

embarks on a search that unites her with Lyra, as they uncover secrets about their identities that will have them redefining what it means to be human.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Lyra says that there is "no truth at Haven except for the physical" (*Lyra*, p. 25). Explain what she is referring to, citing strong textual evidence from the novel. Discuss some "truth" about life and the world that Lyra discovers after escaping from Haven. Lyra believes that she is "floating, gliding toward a new life" (*Lyra*, p. 113). How would you picture a "new life" for Lyra?
2. Explain what Lyra means when she wonders, "What kind of God was it who made people who would do what they had done to her" (*Lyra*, p. 148)? Why does the staff at Haven refer to Dr. Saperstein as "God"? Explain how some believe he is usurping God's place. When Dr. Saperstein says that Haven is "a research facility, not a playpen," what does he mean (*Lyra*, p. 54)? What can you infer about Dr. Saperstein, knowing that his experimentation has a high death rate and that many of his subjects fail to thrive? Explain how Dr. Saperstein could be labeled "Dr. Frankenstein," using proof from the story.
3. Lyra questions the role of fathers when she says, "In natural-born humans fathers served no purpose" (*Lyra*, p. 14). Given her experiences at Haven, explain why she feels this way. After learning about her own father's sacrifice, how do Lyra's views of fatherhood change? Gemma calls Lyra's father's love for her, "a love so turned around and imperfect and blind it could only be called faith" (*Gemma*, p. 260). What does she mean? How would Jake define the role of fatherhood? Explain the reasons behind Gemma's complicated relationship with her dad and why she often felt like "deleting him from her life" (*Gemma*, p. 94).
4. When Gemma learns that she is a replica she says, "Her old world had exploded and she'd been born again into a new one" (*Gemma*, p. 134). Explain what she means. Explain how you might feel if you were in her place. Do you think having a clone, someone engineered to look and act like you, would infringe upon your right to self-determination? Is the replication of an individual a potential danger to human identity? Why or why not? What kind of life would your replica lead? Would he/she live like a unique person or like a genetic prisoner? Can you think of any problems replicas could have integrating with families and society at large?
5. Why does Caelum reject Lyra when he learns she is human and not a replica? How does Lyra convince Caelum they belong together even though she understands "his separateness" (*Lyra*, p. 235)? What does Lyra mean when she says, "Every person, no matter how they were formed or where, had a heart that worked the same way" (*Lyra*, p. 235)? With their first kiss, Lyra and Caelum discover, "They were born for the first time in their bodies. They were born together" (*Lyra*, p. 236). Explain the importance of this rebirth for them. Explain how they both now have a "place" in the world.

Discussion Questions continued on the next page . . .

Discussion Questions *continued* . . .

6. Describe Gemma and April's friendship. When they joke that "either they were two aliens in a school of humans or possibly *the only two humans in a school of aliens*," what do you think they mean (*Gemma*, p. 7)? How does it make you feel when Lyra admits she really doesn't know the meaning of friendship? Do you think Gemma and Lyra could develop a friendship based on some of the common ground they share? Why or why not?
7. When Gemma says of her genotype, Cassiopeia, that they are "two people built of the same material, but radically separated by experience," what does she mean (*Gemma*, p. 139)? Which do you believe is more important in determining a person's identity: environmental (nurture) or genetic (nature) factors? Explain your answer. How does Gemma feel when she learns the truth about how and why she was replicated? Do you think she will ever feel "normal" again? Explain why you either agree or disagree with April when she says, "Normal is overrated" (*Gemma*, p. 283).
8. Why does Pete call Gemma "amazing" and "perfect" and how does it make her feel (*Gemma*, p. 245)? Explain what Gemma comes to realize about her birth when she says, "Monsters weren't made, at least not by birth or fate or circumstance. Monsters chose to be monsters" (*Gemma*, p. 258)? Gemma says "that the people we're supposed to know best can turn out to be strangers, and that near strangers can feel so much like home" (*Gemma*, p. 275). Explain why Pete feels like "home" to Gemma.

Questions written by Mary VandeWater, Professor Emerita of Reading and Basic Education, Nassau Community College, Garden City, NY.

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THEMES AND TOPICS

In discussing Lauren Oliver's trilogy, *Delirium*, *Pandemonium*, and *Requiem*, and her novel *Replica*, the first in a duology, consider how the central ideas from these stories emphasize many of the same issues, and analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding the development of plot, characters, and structure throughout the four novels.



1. Analyze the structure of each of the novels in the trilogy and in *Replica*. *Delirium* begins each chapter with an epigraph or quotation to suggest its theme. *Pandemonium* orders events by alternating between the past, "then," and the present, "now." *Requiem* presents the competing perspectives of Lena and Hana. *Replica* mirrors the stories of Lyra and Gemma. How does the author use each of these techniques to help you gain insight into the plot and the overall meaning of the text? Give an example of how one of these techniques creates a sense of mystery, tension, or surprise. Which technique do you feel is most effective? Explain how it furthers your understanding of the author's purpose in writing the text.
2. Lena and Hana from the trilogy and Gemma and Lyra from *Replica* can be considered complex characters since they exhibit conflicting motivations. Explain the reasons why each is conflicted. Discuss how each character changes as the story progresses. Explain how the choices they each make advance the plot of the story. How do their flaws play a role in understanding their complexity? Use evidence to support your analysis of the text.

3. In *Requiem*, Hana describes her mental state before she is cured as “torn apart by feeling, split in two, caught between loyalties and desires” (p. 10). Explain her feelings, citing specific textual evidence to support your analysis. Discuss other characters like Lena, Alex, and Julian from the trilogy who struggle with similar competing emotions. Support your inferences about these characters with proof from the text. Explain how this quote can be used to describe how Lyra and Gemma feel in *Replica*. Share a personal experience where you made a difficult choice that necessitated weighing your wishes against those of family and friends.
4. When Hana talks about her friendship with Lena in *Requiem*, she wonders, “How can someone have the power to shatter you to dust—and also to make you feel so whole?” (p. 56). Discuss why their friendship is both problematic and satisfying. How does the affirmation of their friendship propel each of these characters to move forward? Discuss other friendships and alliances in the trilogy that are characterized by similar challenges. Explain how this quote could be used to describe Gemma and April’s friendship in *Replica*.
5. In *Requiem*, the final novel in the trilogy, Lena says that if “you take down the walls,” you still aren’t certain if “it will bring freedom or ruin, resolution or chaos” (p. 391). Explain what she means. Discuss both the connotative and figurative meaning of the word “walls” as it relates to the story. Why does the author end the story in this uncertain way? Would you also describe the ending of *Replica* as uncertain when Gemma says, “She didn’t know what was coming for her, but she knew she would be ready” (*Gemma*, p. 284) and when Lyra says, “No matter what happened, no matter what trouble came, they would face it together” (*Lyra*, p. 236)? Would you use a word other than “uncertain” to describe the conclusion? Explain.
6. The trilogy takes place in a time period that could be described as an alternate present, while *Replica* is set in the present. What impact does the author’s choice of setting have on your understanding of the story? Describe specific elements of the settings that help you gain insight into the problems the characters are facing. Does making the setting familiar and recognizable make you feel more comfortable or more fearful about the unfolding of the story? Explain your answers.
7. Dystopian fiction is characterized by a nightmarish system set up by the state and designed to destroy individual integrity. Explain how the trilogy can be characterized as dystopian. Also, dystopian fiction is often deliberately written to frighten the reader. Discuss the parts of the trilogy that you found most disturbing. Did you ever feel a sense of futility and hopelessness for any character and their situation? Discuss these circumstances by providing specific evidence from the text. In addition, the trials of the protagonists in dystopian fiction serve as an emblem of injustices. Select your favorite protagonist and provide textual evidence from the novels that support their role as a fighter against wrongdoing. Consider the elements of *Replica* that could be described as dystopian.
8. Explain why the trilogy and *Replica* could both be labeled cautionary tales. Discuss the moral issues raised in both. How does the author use gruesome imagery to reinforce her moral messages? How do both of these stories demonstrate the pitfalls of unbridled greed?
9. Consider the themes of individuality, identity, and freedom of choice embedded in the novels. Analyze how these ideas are central to the development and understanding of each story. Discuss how these themes interact and build upon one another to put forth the author’s message. Summarize your insights on the importance of constructing our own unique and distinct personality as it relates to the author’s message.
10. The novels thematically explore the trade-off between the value of order and stability versus freedom and choice in one’s life. Give examples from the novels of the harsh price characters have to pay to feel secure and protected. Why are some characters compelled, in the final evaluation, to select freedom over security? What do you think the author is saying about the essential needs of humans?

11. In the novels, some of the characters are “reborn” through the power of love. Select a character pairing (possible choices are Lyra and Caelum, Gemma and Pete, Lena and Julian) and find a passage that uses lyrical language to show how love has renewed them. For example, in *Delirium*, when Alex professes his love to Lena, she says, “That thing the heart of hearts of me—the core of my core—stretches and unfurls even further, soaring like a flag: making me feel stronger than I ever have before” (p. 378). Describe how love reawakens and helps your characters resolve the conflict they are experiencing.
12. In *Requiem*, Lena says “that people are new every day. That they are never the same. You must always invent them, and they must invent themselves, too” (p. 98). Select a character from one of the novels and summarize the newness or changes that they exhibit over the course of the story. Explain the reasons for the transformation of their identity and their new outlook on life.
13. In *Requiem*, Hana says that her “memories seem like snapshots from someone else’s life” (p. 52). Explain the disconnect she feels between her memories and her current life. Select another character from the novels who is having difficulty reconciling their memories with their current reality. Possible choices include Lena, Lyra, and Gemma. How does the author use this pull to the past to add interest and mystery to the unfolding of the plot?
14. Words like *alien*, *uncureds*, *animal*, *Invalids*, *monster*, and *sympathizers* appear throughout the four novels. Explain how these terms are used to dehumanize whole groups of people in the stories. What causes this intolerance towards these groups? Who would you hold responsible for this condition? What do you believe about a society that has social perfection as its goal? Discuss the difference between working toward a better society rather than toward an ideal one.
15. In the trilogy, when Lena hears poetry for the first time she says it “isn’t like any writing I’ve ever heard before. I don’t understand all of it, just bits of images, sentences that appear half-finished, all fluttering together like brightly colored ribbons in the wind” (p. 295). Relate Lena’s feelings about hearing poetry for the first time to Lyra being read a story for the first time in *Replica*. Lena’s reading is restricted to an approved list of titles. What three books would you need on your own list? Describe what Lyra’s first trip to a library might feel like.

Questions written by Mary VandeWater, Professor Emerita of Reading and Basic Education, Nassau Community College, Garden City, NY.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Photo by Charles Grantham

LAUREN OLIVER is the author of the teen novels *Before I Fall*, *Panic*, *Vanishing Girls*, *Replica*, and the *Delirium* trilogy: *Delirium*, *Pandemonium*, and *Requiem*, which have been translated into more than thirty languages and are *New York Times* and international bestselling novels. She is also the author of two standalone novels for middle grade readers, *The Spindlers* and *Liesl & Po*, which was an E. B. White Read-Aloud Award nominee, as well as the *Curiosity House* series and a novel for adults, *Rooms*. Lauren’s novel *Panic* has been optioned for film by Universal Studios and her debut novel *Before I Fall* has been filmed by Awesomeness Films and will be distributed by Open Road. A graduate of the University of Chicago and NYU’s MFA program, Lauren Oliver is also the cofounder of content development company Paper Lantern Lit. You can visit her online at www.laurenoliverbooks.com.

Aligns with the English Language Arts Common Core Reading Literature Standards: RL. 9-10.1, RL. 11-12.1, RL. 9-10.2, RL. 11-12.2, RL. 9-10.3, RL. 11-12.3, RL. 9-10.4, RL. 11-12.4, RL. 9-10.5, RL. 11-12.5, RL. 9-10.7, RL. 11-12.7