



PLEASE NOTE: In order to provide reading groups with the most informed and thought-provoking questions possible, it is necessary to reveal important aspects of the plot of this novel—as well as the ending. If you have not finished reading *Olga Dies Dreaming* by Xochitl Gonzalez, we respectfully suggest that you may want to wait before reviewing this guide.

Olga Dies Dreaming

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Olga and Prieto are highly-motivated, career-focused people who are invested in their communities. In what ways do the divergent trajectories of the two siblings reflect their different relationship to their hometown of Brooklyn? To the values of the society around them?
2. Family is an essential thread in this story and we see this through different lenses—whether it’s Olga cunningly providing napkins for Mabel’s wedding or whether it’s Prieto rooting Olga on from the sidelines. Which of these moments resonated with you and how you show up for those in your own family? Why?
3. Mateo enters Olga’s life and unapologetically discloses his own backstory. How does their romantic relationship change and influence some of the decisions Olga makes?
4. Evaluate Olga and Prieto’s relationship with Blanca. How does their sense of self change as their relationship with their mother evolves throughout the novel?
5. The landfall of Hurricane Maria is crucial to the overarching plot, especially as we witness the lack of U.S. intervention in the aftermath. How does Gonzalez bring the discourse around aid and relief to the forefront of this novel through her characters?
6. How important was it for readers to hear Blanca’s voice through her letters to her children? What did the letters reveal about Blanca’s decisions when it came to her family? How did they make you feel about her choices?

7. How do the changes to the neighborhood where they grew up in affect Olga, Prieto and their friends and other family members differently? How does it feel unfair? How does Olga reconcile the transformation of her own life with the gentrification around her? how does it differ to Mateo?
8. Both Olga and Prieto are children of the diaspora, but they have different relationships to their communities and to Puerto Rico. Does one approach seem better than the other to you? Is it important to feel connected to one's roots?
9. This novel also exists with the backdrop of multiple weddings. How does class change the role of weddings for the various stakeholders? How is the culture of wedding planning juxtaposed with everything that's at stake for Olga and her family?
10. Share your thoughts on the novel's ending. Could things have turned out differently for Olga and Prieto? What about Blanca and Mateo?
11. In the beginning of the novel, Olga sees herself as more successful than Mabel. What do you think has shaped that notion of success and how do we feel that might have changed by the end?
12. The characters in this novel have all experienced large traumas. What are some of the healthy and unhealthy ways they have moved past them?

