

FOLGER BOOK CLUB



Discussion Questions: *The Death I Gave Him*

Folger Book Club—May 2025

1. What did you think of this novel? If asked, what would you say this book is about?
2. Were you familiar with Shakespeare's *Hamlet* before reading this novel? If so, how did the context of Shakespeare's play inform your reading? If not, does reading this novel make you more curious about the play?
3. Liu's book greatly reduces the number of characters in Shakespeare's play. What is the effect of the consolidation? Are there characters you missed or wish had been included?
4. It becomes clear early on that Felicia, the Ophelia character, survives the ordeal. How did it change your reading to know she would make it through? Do you wish that had been a later reveal, or did you appreciate knowing in advance? What about Hayden?
5. How does this novel treat the human body in relation to the technological systems found in the lab? What are the similarities? Differences?
6. Similarly, what are the limits of memory we see in both the human characters and in the recorded logs of Elsinore? How is memory deemed to be accurate? Which do you find to be more trustworthy at the end of the novel?
7. What did you think of Horatio? Did you find yourself seeing him as an embodied character, or did you focus on him as an AI presence? Is he more or less real in the novel than the characters who exist outside of Elsinore Labs?
8. What do you think about the presence of AI in the story, and did it affirm or challenge how you view AI in the world right now?
9. How does communication function within the novel? How is it manipulated?
10. Why do you think the author chose to adapt *Hamlet* in this way? Are there other Shakespeare plays you would be interested to see set in a technologically advanced, AI world? Are there other characters that would lend themselves to becoming an AI presence?