

### In at the Deep End Book Club Questions

1. On the first page Julia says, “I’d always preferred the idea of sex to sex itself.” Why do you think she feels this way at first? How do Julia’s attitudes towards/ relationship with sex evolve over the course of the novel?
2. In an interview, author Kate Davies said, “I wanted to write about someone who is thrilled when she realizes queer culture is her culture.” How would you describe Julia’s experience of coming out? To what extent would you say Julia understands queer culture initially, and how does her understanding of queerness (both her own and in general) change over time?
3. The novel is set in contemporary London, of which the author says, “I don’t think there has ever been a better time or place to be queer.” What role does London, with its different spaces, culture and subculture, play in the story? How would you characterize the novel’s portrayal of the LGBTQ+ experience in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?
4. On page 54 Julia says, “I was going to find someone to be a lesbian with... She would be my best friend. We would have a truly equal relationship.” What does this sentiment reveal about the way Julia imagines the dynamics of a same-sex relationship will be? How are these preconceived notions challenged or complicated?
5. Much of the tension between Julia and Sam stems from their different ideas of what a romantic relationship should look like. Discuss their different expectations. What do these differences reveal about each character?
6. Discuss the evolution of Sam and Julia’s relationship. Were there warning signs early on that Sam’s behavior is problematic? At what moment (or moments) would you say Julia starts to truly question Sam’s attitude towards her?
7. On page 272, Julia says, “I didn’t like that everyone was happy about our break-up. They just saw the headlines of the relationship... but I saw the grey areas.” Discuss this sentiment. Why does her friends’ reaction to her break-up upset Julia? What is it that she sees that they don’t see, and vice versa?
8. The novel is, in part, an exploration into the nature of toxic relationships. What aspects of toxic relationships are revealed by Julia’s personal experience? Why does Julia have such a difficult time admitting that her partner is controlling?

9. After she breaks up with Sam for the last time, Julia considers the story of their relationship from Sam's perspective and thinks, "It's hard to accept you're a villain in someone else's story" (308). Discuss the significance of this realization. Do you think that Julia comes to terms with being a "villain" in Sam's story?

10. The novel ends on a hopeful note: Julia is starting over with a new life and a new partner. And yet, Julia continues to have mixed feelings about Sam, and admits that she still cares about her. How would you describe the place Julia has come to at the end of the novel? How has her experience affected her awareness of herself and her own emotional landscape? After everything she has been through, in what ways has she changed and what aspects of her personality remain the same?