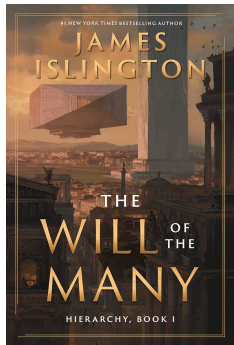




Lambda Sci-Fi
DC Area Gaylaxians



The Will of the Many
by James Islington
Discussed August 2026

Discussion Questions

1. Did you finish the book? Did you enjoy it?

Characters:

2. What did you think of Vis? Did you find him to be a sympathetic protagonist?
3. Vis is exceptionally skilled at nearly everything (combat, academics, strategy, etc.). Did his competence feel earned by the plot and his backstory, or did it feel like a convenience the story leaned on too heavily?
4. Ulciscor's obsession with uncovering the truth about Caeror's death drives much of the story. Did you sympathize with Ulciscor's grief and need for answers?
5. How is Vis's character arc affected by the relationships he forms with Callidus, Eidhin, Emissa, and Aequa at the academy? Do you agree with his decision to continue keeping his true identity secret?

World Building:

6. Much about the Catenan Republic appears to be inspired by Ancient Rome. Did you enjoy this aspect of the book, and do you think Islington did a good job with it?
7. How well does the “Will” pyramid system work as both a magic system and a political commentary on inequality? Does it feel grounded and believable?
8. The magical school trope has obviously been done before (*Harry Potter*, *The Magicians*, *Fourth Wing*, etc.). Did Islington’s take on it feel fresh, tired, or somewhere in between?
9. A key theme in the book is compromising to survive vs. total resistance. At what point does strategic compliance become complicity in an evil system? Do the Republic’s Octavii have a moral obligation to fight back against the Hierarchy? (“The decision may have been made by the few, Diago, but it’s the will of the many that killed your family.”)

The Plot:

10. How did you react to the revelations surrounding the Labyrinth and the island’s ruins?
11. The book is pretty ambiguous about the role of Veridius and Religion with respect to the Academy and the pre-Cataclysm ruins. What do you think is going on there?
12. Did Vis’s placement decision at the end of the book surprise you? Do you think he made the right choice?
13. The book is long, but do you think it is deservedly so? Are there any sections you would have shortened or cut?
14. Are you planning to read the sequel?