

EAT YOUR HEART OUT **by Dayna Ingram**

Discussion Questions

1. How do the chapter titles relate to events in the chapters?
2. Given no indicators (such as name, physical description, "queer speculative fiction" genre, etc.) outside of the narrative voice of the main character, what gender would you assign to our protagonist? Is this important? Why or why not?
3. "Except he can't be a man, I know through some place deep and buried, leftover from Man's prehistoric hunting days, some natural survival instinct..." (pg. 14) Is this an authentic feeling? Have there been moments in your own life where you've successfully sensed danger on this instinctual level?
4. By her own admission, Devin does not believe in God. If she did believe in God, how might she reconcile the existence of zombies? How does Devin's atheism help or hinder her throughout the story?
5. Have you ever met a famous person you've fantasized about prior to meeting them? How did that effect your experience?
6. "You've always slept on the left side." "That was out of courtesy when I was staying over at your place. Now it's my place, too. I sleep on the right." (pg. 30) Devin sacrifices more than simple personal possessions in her relationship with Carmelle. At what point does compromise become manipulation? Can you relate to this aspect of Devin and Carmelle's relationship? Why or why not?
7. Devin attributes her zombie-killing abilities to playing video games; Renni's can be attributed to her experience acting in horror movies. In what other ways can our fantasy lives positively inform our actual lives?
8. Devin has a tattoo of an emotional beet on her wrist. How does this image, and the story behind it, help to characterize her? Through what other means do we get to know Devin? How about Renni, or Carmelle?

9. Would you ensure that your cheating partner made it safely away from the zombie hordes? Why or why not?
10. In chapter six, Renni appears to wear her lucky black t-shirt; subsequently, she survives the tale. How much of her survival can be attributed to this t-shirt? Do you have any superstitions that have paid off in your life?
11. Devin continually asks, or wonders to herself, why Renni stays and fights with her. Why might Devin be fixated on this question? Why do you think Renni stays?
12. If you were bitten by a zombie, what would you do with your last few hours as a human?
13. The government's strategy for quelling the zombie outbreak is to quarantine the city and burn the devils out. What are some other strategies they might have employed? Are there nonviolent ways to approach the zombie problem?
14. During periods of heightened emotions, Devin often reacts bodily (crying, urinating, vomiting, etc.). On an evolutionary level, is this a weakness or a strength?
15. What are your impressions of Mr. Machina? How might the story have changed if this character were a woman?
16. Many people develop a psychosomatic reaction to having been bitten by a zombie, whereby they actually believe they are zombies and begin behaving as such even though they are still human. Why do you think Devin is able to avoid this psychosomatic reaction?
17. Although relationship paths are hinted at by the end of the story, we are left to imagine the ultimate fates of the characters. Can you imagine what will become of Renni and Devin? Carmelle and Bambi? Brad and Cherry? Mr. Machina and the kid with the blue bucket?