

DEATH AND A CROCODILE DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. Do you think Roxana and Livia make a good team? Are they too much alike, or do they balance each other well?
2. Do animals enhance your enjoyment of a story? What did you think about the role Nemesis the cat played in this book?
3. Roxana says to Livia, "I'd hate to see you become dignified, my lady, It would ruin you." What does she mean by that? Do you agree with her?
4. Livia faces an arranged marriage. This was standard practice in her time and culture. Livia accepts the inevitability of it yet hopes she can have some say in the matter. Discuss the struggle between obedience to parents and following your own heart and dreams.
5. Why did Livia dislike Avitus at the start of the book? What misconceptions about him did she learn were incorrect by the end of the book?
6. A typical Roman mindset saw slaves, women, and children as unimportant; having few rights and little say in how they were treated. Compare this with the teachings of Jesus. How does Livia's treatment of slaves differ from others?
7. In Roman society a man's *dignitas* was very important. *Dignitas* encompassed a man's status, honor, reputation, and power. How does prizing *dignitas* run counter to the values taught by Jesus?
8. Marcellus displayed the outward good looks and charm that Avitus lacked, but which one proved to be the better man in the end? Our society elevates image over character. What pitfalls does trusting a polished image lead to?

DEATH AND A CROCODILE DISCUSSION GUIDE

9. During her investigation, Livia makes some choices that led to dangerous situations. When does courage become foolhardy? How does one decide which risks are acceptable and which are not?
10. Many of the characters in the book, including Avitus and Roxana, are misfits in some way. Did that help you connect and sympathize with them? Do you sometimes feel like a misfit?
11. Pansa, the wise leader of Livia's house church, says, "I'm afraid most people never see beyond the skin to what is underneath. In so doing they miss the most important facts in life." What does he mean by that? How have you found it to be true?
12. Marcellus changes his behavior based on the people around him. What kind of red flags does that raise for you? Where should we draw the line between meeting the expectations of others and standing firm in our beliefs and values?
13. Who was your favorite character? Why? Who was your least favorite, and why?
14. What surprised you the most in this story? Why?