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MCGILL-VARGAS

# AMERICAN GHOUL

YOU CAN'T KILL  
SOMEONE WHO'S  
ALREADY DEAD.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In what ways does the novel deviate from typical vampire lore? In what ways is it similar? Discuss whether or not variations of the vampire tale continue to revive interest in the topic. If not, why do you think vampire stories have endured for so long?
2. Lavinia asks, "What's the worst thing you've ever done?" to discern whether someone is trustworthy or not. Why do you think Lavinia never posed this question to Simone? How do you think Simone would have answered? Given Simone's propensity for lying, under what circumstances do you think she would answer honestly?
3. The incident at Ft. Pillow Nate references was a real historical event that Lavinia isn't aware of. Do you think her knowledge of that event and his participation in it would have changed her opinion of Nate?
4. Despite Simone's betrayal in the end, she did express her love for Lavinia in the story. Discuss whether you feel Simone's feelings were genuine or not and why.
5. Lavinia equates being a ghoul as another type of slavery. In hindsight, if you were Lavinia, would you have remained with Miss Tillie or gone with Simone?
6. Lavinia's revelation to King about Simone causes tension in their relationship, yet she welcomes him back into her life. If you were Lavinia, would you have been as forgiving? Why or why not?
7. When Nate reveals his background, he tells Lavinia that he isn't keeping it a secret on purpose. What are some pros and cons to Nate's approach?
8. Lavinia believes playing along with the Raduts in their vampire hunt is keeping Simone safe. Do you think this belief could have led to Victor's eventual outcome?
9. Compare and contrast Lavinia's and Valerica's relationships to their partners. Which of the relationships would you choose to be in and why?
10. Lavinia continues to believe Simone will break her out of the jail in Indiana. Assuming Simone survived Norquist's transformation attempt, do you think she would come to Lavinia's rescue again? Why or why not?
11. Lavinia differs from other "Renfields" in vampire tales. How do you think Lavinia's circumstances and the novel's time period lend to those differences?
12. Lavinia and Simone have numerous arguments about trust, though neither seem to completely give it. Do you think one woman's distrust is more justified than the other? Why or why not?
13. Lavinia has some religious foundation but doesn't believe in Norquist's "voodoo." How does Lavinia's background and experiences lend to her shifting religious beliefs?
14. What do you think drove Lavinia to make the choice she made at the end? Do you think that decision or the alternative would be true freedom for her?
15. Do you think Lavinia and Simone's relationship would be relevant today? How would today's understanding of race and gender impact their relationship?