



Book Discussion Guide

1. Who is your favorite character and why?
2. Who is your least favorite character and why?
3. Does a world without any nature sound appealing to you? What in our world would you fight to keep?
4. Dorveday feels less loved because she was “ordered” to be born. Does Dorveday’s mother love her? If so, why does she hide her feelings for her daughter?
5. What makes a family? Talk about the different kinds of families we see today.
6. Have you ever thought of running away? Has anyone you know run away? How would it impact your family if you left?
7. What do you think about Mannit’s “glitches”? Is he more than he seems?
8. After Robo gets repaired, he seems to have his own strong desires that go against his programming. At what point do we consider a robot to be alive? If we create robots, should they have emotion?
9. Which life would you prefer to have: Aza’s, where everything is decided for you, or Varmel’s, where you have to make choices that might end up being wrong? Why?
10. Would you rather be like Aza, brainwashed into believing he is happy, or like Dorveday, seeing the truth and struggling to understand and change it? What is happiness?
11. Dorveday becomes friends with a strange group in Oz. What does each of her friends teach her, and how does she change because of these lessons?
12. At what point in the book did you start to distrust Cian? Or did you always think he would come through in the end?
13. The people of Zal are not supposed to form deep friendships. They also believe that you cannot be friends with people different than yourself. Think of you and your friends—what is the same about each of you, and what is different? What binds you as friends?
14. Velmar discusses the downside to everyone being the same, but Dorveday is concerned about the conflicts differences cause. What do you think about our differences? Are they important? Do our differences make our country stronger or weaker?
15. We often feel pressure to be like others—at home, at school, in any social group. Are there times when this is good, or should we always follow our own desires?

16. Is it better to do what you believe is right no matter what, or better to stay silent to avoid conflict with the group?
17. Could you survive without your computer or smartphone? Where would you go if you needed information and couldn't simply look it up? What survival skills might be needed in an emergency?
18. Have you ever thought about the idea that other people might be able to control your ebooks and possibly what you read? Do you think that sometimes print books are better for letting ideas get out into the world?
19. Our Constitution guarantees free speech and the freedom of the press. Do you think there are times when certain books or ideas should be banned?
20. Does Dorveday's increasing independence of thought make her weaker or stronger when she returns to Zal?
21. Do you think Dorveday is different at the end than she was at the beginning? What do you think she will do after the end of the book? Will she continue to fight against the Ministry, or will they wear her down and she will conform?
22. Does magic exist? Or is magic simply something science cannot yet explain? Is there actually a difference?
23. The Witch used evil methods in trying to save Oz. Is harming a few for the greater good of many ever acceptable? How might this apply to war?
24. If you could change anything about our world you wanted, what would you change? What can you do right now to help forward your dream or support your cause?
25. Dorveday changed a great deal in Oz just by being herself. Do you think only great heroes change the world, or do small everyday acts of kindness, generosity, and compassion make the biggest difference?

ABOUT KERRY:



Kerry Gans is the author of *The Witch of Zal*, [several short stories](#), and [a family history book](#). She is a chocoholic theater geek, believes libraries are magic, and considers Chincoteague Island her perfect writing retreat. When not writing, she haunts cemeteries and dusty archives in search of long-dead ancestors and pursues her most important work-in-progress, her daughter.

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