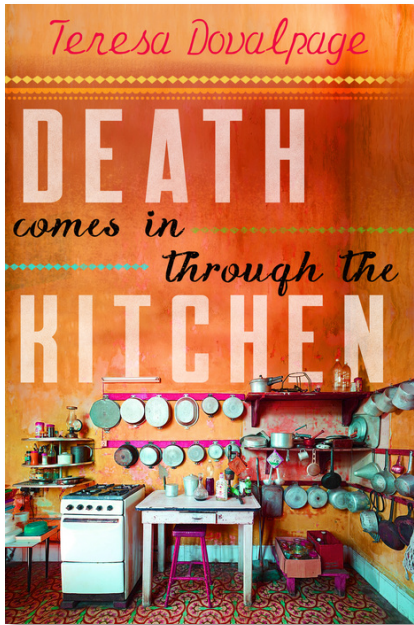


# Death Comes in through the Kitchen

By: Teresa Dovalpage

## Discussion Questions



1. *Death Comes in through the Kitchen* is set on the eve of the Black Spring crackdown, when 75 dissidents—journalists, librarians, and human rights activists, among others, many of them teenagers—were imprisoned, tried, and sentenced to maximum security prison on charges of collaborating with the US. The crackdown was condemned by the international community as a human rights violation. How is this impending crisis visible in the backdrop of the novel?
2. What do you think of Yarmi's commitment to the Revolution? How would you describe her level of patriotism—admirable, overzealous, required by law? To what degree is her patriotism the reason she died? Are there right or wrong ways to die for one's country? Whose decision is ultimately the correct one?
3. What kind of person is Matt Sullivan? Was he duped by Yarmi, or was there a genuine component to their relationship? To what degree is he a victim of a con artist, and to what degree is his situation his own fault?
4. Different characters react to the Cuban government's legal and social strictures in different ways: some, like Martinez, obey the law in letter and spirit; some, like Padrino, operate within the system but know tricks for getting around it; some, like Isabel, shamelessly exploit the system whenever they can; some, like Yoni, would do anything to get out. Which of these characters' choices do you relate most to? Whom do you find naïve, whom do you find selfish, and who do you think has the best chance of finding real happiness? Does the book suggest right or wrong paths for citizenship when a regime is demanding or difficult for its citizens to live under?
5. Usually, mysteries that contain recipes are considered part of the "cozy" genre. Other hallmarks of a cozy mystery are: a) "clean" content, characterized by humorous elements and a lack of sex or violence; b) an amateur sleuth, usually female, who is not a cop, medical examiner, or other forensic professional; c) an intimate ("cozy"!) setting like a village or small town, where everyone knows one another; d) a satisfying resolution in which the crime is unequivocally solved. In your opinion, in what ways is *Death Comes in through the Kitchen* a cozy mystery? In what ways does it defy genre conventions?