

# VERACITY: Reading Group Guide

## **overview**

It is the near distant future in a country that used to resemble America. In response to a Pandemic that occurred thirty years prior, the government has taken control over every aspect of a citizen's life: where they live, where they go, what they say, who they love. By in large, the populace has accepted this shift from freedom to security. Basic needs have been provided for via state-managed sex, the anesthetizing drug Occlusia, and a mandated, yet stable, workforce. It is a country no longer run *by* the people or *for* the people but *over* the people. It is a totalitarian regime in which art, nature and all other things that threaten to transcend a forced resignation have been banned.

## **topics of interest questions**

The resistance operates on the principle that an *educated* populace will not stand for the continuation of a totalitarian state. Do you agree? Why or why not?

If Harper's sentient abilities are the opposite of critical thinking, why is she so important to the resistance?

What kind of power does the control of language provide the government?

How does not being able to identify a thing via language inhibit a person's ability to process it?

Why did the government choose to name itself The Confederation of the Willing?

To keep the masses in lock step, the government has provided them such placebos as state-paid sex and medication. What pain do these placebos mask and what would happen if they were taken away?

Security versus freedom. Which is more important? Discuss what the loss of either would mean to you, the country, and the planet.

In addition to language, the following has been largely banned by the Confederation of the Willing: nature, art, religious freedom, and civil rights. Why? What would happen if access to any or all of these were legal?

Precedent. What does this word mean, in both literal and applicable terms? For example, how does something that seems to be a positive step in the now open the doors to something dangerous down the road? Why should all legislative actions be considered for both their immediate and long-term possibilities?

In the Confederation, when a crime is committed, a corresponding punishment ensues. What does the absence of a jury or a system of further inquiry portend?

The church has become an extension of the government. It is the very thing that prompted our forefathers to make the first amendment one that separates church and state. How has the marriage of these two given Confederation leaders an easy path to power?

During the Pandemic, the populace is inexplicably motivated to follow along with the government's excavation of their former country. Why?

Media plays a huge part in the government's control. How?

Why is it important for Lazarus to present *The Book of Noah* to the country? What might the information contained within this book awaken in citizens?

Harper has lived in a world of conflicting ideals nearly her entire life. What inspires her to accept the invitation to become a member of the resistance?

The Confederation of the Willing has spread the idea that Christ was not persecuted. According to their story, "He came into the world recognized and was

ceded all power. No struggle required.” How does this interpretation fit their agenda?

What is the difference between fact and opinion? How do you recognize one from the other? How do you think this difference is manipulated in the news, marketing, etc.?

The Confederation of the Willing uses emotional manipulation to secure its citizens’ regard. Do you see this technique in use today? Does hate play a large role in modern news and media?

In the beforetime, the fewer adjectives and adverbs in a news story, the more likely it was to be straight facts, unprejudiced by emotion or bias. How do the reports coming out of the Confederation provide an insight into their motivation? How does this compare to today’s news?

**character questions**

Why does Harper have such a hard time accepting Ezra?

Why does Ezra harbor such resentment for Harper?

Harper has envisioned John Gage as things he could never possibly be. Why?

Despite Lazarus's good intentions, was Rita's rescue from the Confederation the right thing to do?