

## Discussion Questions for *The Caged Graves*

1. Before she arrives in Catawissa, Verity's courtship and engagement with Nate is conducted entirely by letters. Compare and contrast this with today's online dating. How are they similar and how are they different?
2. In the Civil War, it was possible for men to pay their way out of conscription or to pay another man to fight in their place. Discuss the morality of this. If the paid replacements served voluntarily, was there anything really wrong with the practice?
3. Discuss the charms created by Asenath for luck and to ward off evil or sickness. How do they compare to feng shui, horoscopes, *The Power of Positive Thinking*, and *The Secret*? People today don't like to admit they're superstitious, but are they still trying to influence events with charms?
4. Verity is offended by what she considers to be racist remarks from her uncle. Yet, when she encounters a dark-skinned man in the swamp, she believes he will harm her. What does this say about the effect stereotypes have on our attitudes, even when we try to overcome them?
5. A heroine in a historical novel should be true to her time period, and yet she needs to appeal to the modern day reader. What about Verity makes her seem like a "modern" girl? How is she true to her time period?
6. Verity is encouraged by several people, including her father, her fiancé, and her pastor, to leave her mother's grave alone and not stir up old memories and gossip. Why does Verity ignore this advice? Why is the matter of a grave so important to her? Do graves carry the same importance today?