

Discussion Guide: *The Truth Is*

1. How has Blanca's death affected Verdad? Why do you think Verdad still imagines having conversations with Blanca?
2. Why is Verdad so embarrassed that she doesn't speak fluent Spanish? How does her Puerto Rican heritage shape her in other ways?
3. What do you think Verdad could have done differently during or after the confrontation with Nelly in history class? Why is Nelly expelled while the white girls involved in the fight are only suspended?
4. What initially draws Verdad to Danny?
5. What misconceptions does Verdad have about trans people? How does her understanding of sexual identity and sexual orientation grow over the course of the novel?
6. What terms does Verdad find liberating and helpful in her quest to understand her own and others' identities? What terms does she find limiting, hurtful, or ridiculous?
7. Verdad frequently catches herself stereotyping others, even as she resents the ways she is stereotyped. How does she work to overcome her ingrained assumptions? What is one instance when she still falls short?
8. Verdad's mother reacts negatively to her relationship with a trans person and to her emerging queer identity. Later, Danny describes his dad's reaction to Danny being trans. Compare and contrast the two parents' attitudes and actions.
9. Sarah is upset when Prisha goes into the Maheshwaris' house on her own. In what ways is she an outsider in this context? In what ways is Verdad an outsider among the Underdogs?
10. Verdad says, "God is a hundred billion things but humans are expected to be one." How does this reflect her feelings about the role of religion in her life?
11. For much of the novel, Verdad refers to her classmates by their messaging handles or by labels gender-and-ethnicity-based labels like "Boricua 1" and "White Girl 3." How does this limit her perception of their identities? How do her classmates defy her expectations?
12. What ways does Verdad find to honor Blanca's memory?
13. Verdad has many intersecting identities. How is she navigating them at the end of the novel? What do you think her future holds?