
Discussion Questions for THE SCOLODERUS CONSPIRACY

1. Which of the book's characters did you like the best? The least? Which three characters would you invite to dinner?
2. The United Americas Trade Federation attempted to unite the continent under a single government to provide for a "common good," and the *Libre Voyageurs* opposed them. Which group appealed to you more?
3. When we first meet Professor Taylor, he is lecturing about the failures of higher education and to make his point, he resigns from the University. Do his comments reflect issues in education today? Is the ready availability of "answers" changing the types of questions we ask? Is there a parallel between the 'archive data' Taylor refers to and the Internet?
4. Throughout the story, the author explores the role of deception in controlling how people define reality. Who was the greatest deceiver?
5. How does Professor Taylor's world-view change as he interacts with the other main characters (i.e., meeting Chief Delegate Nevin, helping Major Marcus, encountering General Leland, and confronting "Lieutenant Colonel Phillips")?
6. Why did Colonel Hammond remain a passive figure throughout the story? What would have changed his confidence in "Karen" as his daughter? How did the *Libre Voyageurs* keep him disoriented about his own experiences?
7. Ms. Finley (the hospital administrator's receptionist/secretary) moves almost unseen through the story; yet, she provides the information for discovering the plans and the location of the *Voyagers*. Why was she so cooperative?
8. Karen Hammont enters the story as a "true believer" *Libre Voyageur*, and then she becomes the significant figure in undoing the *Voyageur's* plan. What changed her mind?
9. Professor Taylor, General Leland, Brad Alleena (aka Lt. Col. Phillips), and Karen Hammont lied to people about their intentions and played active roles in hiding the truth from others. Does the purpose of a lie justify it?
10. General Leland used Colonel Hammond as the bait to distract the *Voyageurs* from a deeper, more sinister plot. How did it "go wrong" and how did it "work"?
11. Is the United Americas Trade Federation very different from the U.S. government? Are there groups in this country who are similar to the *Libre Voyageurs*?
12. Did the ending surprise you? In what ways?
13. At the end of the story, shouting over the noise of the evacuation helicopter, Colonel Sloan says, "General Leland knows of a cabin down there in the mountains. It's just a few miles from the Kingston airport—we will radio the coordinates" (page 351). This description is strangely similar to Karen's home (page 30). If Leland knew of Karen's existence, what are the bigger implications for the storyline? How would you reinterpret the General's interactions with Professor Taylor? With the Chief Delegate?
14. What would you tell the author about his story?
15. Is there an overall message in "Scoloderus"? If so, what is the message?