



FOR THE
MINDS
AND
WILLS
OF
MEN

Book Club Kit

CAST OF CHARACTERS

FICTIONAL CHARACTERS

WILL OXLEY

Art Insurance detective at All American Insurance

LIZ BOWER

Head of Bower Foundation, art promotor and financier.
Daughter of Industrialist Frank Bower, head of Bower
Manufacturing

IRA FENTON

ALERT private investigator, or 'blacklister,' and former
supervisor at Kips Bay station of New York Steam

ELAINE CARTER

Head of Stable Gallery known for its avant-garde exhibits

RICHARD "DICKIE" LANG

Journalist. Newspaper articles and essays, that sort of thing.

ANDREI ROSCHIN

Russian-American Artist

CHARLIE BEAM

Will Oxley's partner at All American Insurance

JAMES PALMER

FBI agent

LORENZO MARZANO

Fence



ARTISTS

JACKSON POLLOCK

American abstract expressionist painter (b. 1912 – 1956)

WILLEM DE KOONING

Dutch-American abstract expressionist painter known as
an "artist's artist" (b. 1904 – 1997)

FRANZ KLINE

American Abstract Expressionist painter from
Pennsylvania (b. 1910 – 1962)

OTHER REAL-LIFE CHARACTERS

CONGRESSMAN

GEORGE DONDERO

Republican member of the U.S. House
of Representatives from Michigan (served from 1933 – 1957)

PORTER MCCRAY

Prominent arts administrator who served as Director of
MoMA's international program (b.1908 – 2000)

JOHN "JOCK" WHITNEY

An American businessman with a multifaceted career as a
publisher, financier, philanthropist, and horse breeder. A
long-serving trustee of the Museum of Modern Art in New
York City (b. 1904 – 1982)

NELSON ROCKEFELLER

American businessman and politician who served as a
trustee of the Museum of Modern Art from 1932 to 1979



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the significance of the title “For the Minds and Wills of Men” and how does it represent one strategy of the cold war?
2. One of the book’s themes is trust and mistrust. How is this reflected in the novel and how is the theme apropos for the cold war and McCarthyism in America? Are there elements of mistrust in our society today?
3. Liz Bower represents a ‘cold warrior’ (as does Dickie) and the lesser-known men and women who engaged in the cultural and phycological war. What surprises you about her character? And was she a reliable character even though she had secrets to hide? Could she be considered a protagonist?
4. Was the portrayal of Jackson Pollock what you expected? How and how not?
5. During one of the emotional highs of the novel when Will receives a blind memorandum with accusations of communist subversion, he at the same time realizes that abstract expressionism is about the act of painting, the emotion of it. One of the ideologies of abstract expressionism is to emphasize free and personal emotional expression, the use of the physicality of the paint, and the physical act of painting to evoke expressive qualities. Do you see this when viewing abstract art? How is abstract expressionism different from its predecessors of cubism, surrealism, and even impressionism?
6. At the time, most people didn’t believe abstract expressionism was art nor that abstract expressionists were artists. Many people still have that view today about modern and contemporary art. Is there a definition of an art object, or can there be one that is universally applied? What is the definition of beauty and is it necessarily part of the definition of an art object?
7. Liz speaks about art in a specific way, as something that “challenges one to question their beliefs, to challenge the social fabric one lives in. You may be attracted or repulsed by a piece, but art forces you to evaluate your world.” What do you think about this view? What do you think is the purpose of art in society?
8. ALERT was based on an actual private investigative organization and the HUAC trial of artist Andrei Roschin was based on the actual trial of artist Anton Refugier. Did anything surprise you about the anti-communist network and tactics? How has our environment changed and how has it stayed the same?
9. The CIA sought to influence the foreign intellectual community by demonstrating what could be done in a free world, by flooding their communities with propaganda images. What do you think about governments exercising phycological warfare? Have we seen similar tactics today?
10. Did the novel change your perception of art and the countries and cultures from which it came? Liz says, “Great nations need great art” Can you think of other periods in time where the art represents the country and how does the art accomplish this? (For example, French Impressionism and Italian Renaissance?)
11. Will struggles with his love for Liz when he believes she is a communist spy. How would you have reconciled your love for someone who at the time might be considered traitorous to the country? Are there any similarities that could happen today?
12. Who would you consider to be the antagonist of the story? Is it Ira? And can his views be unpacked and understood to some extent? How do we view McCarthyism seventy years later?
13. Near the end of the novel, Will asks the question, if the CIA was funding their psychological war today, why not tomorrow? He says to Pritchett, “I think you’re right, Lou. We don’t ever know. Nothing is as it seems, and I expect it never will be.” Knowing how the CIA secretly used foundations as conduits to fund art exhibits, magazines, newspapers, banks, and universities, does that knowledge change your view of the world around you today?
14. In what ways does Will change by the end of the novel?

DRINKS

Liz drinks scotch, neat, but feel free to mix up your book club evening by serving some 1950s cocktails . . .

VODKA GIMLET

The Gimlet can be considered one of the most classic cocktails; it's simple, elegant, and timeless.

The gimlet is believed to have been created by soldiers in the British Royal Navy during the 18th century. At a time when scurvy was rife on ships, this combination of gin and citrus juice was thought to cure the ailment. The cocktail was named after the doctor, Rear-Admiral Sir Thomas Desmond Gimlet. However, the most famous gimlet recipe didn't appear until 1953 with the British publication of Raymond Chandler's "The Long Goodbye."

- 2 ounces vodka
- 3/4 ounce lime juice, freshly squeezed
- 1/2 ounce simple syrup
- Garnish: lime wheel



TOM COLLINS

If there is any drink that represents the '50s best, it's the Tom Collins.

Gin was all the rage in the 1950s (largely due to remnants of Prohibition) and the Tom Collins (along with its sister drink, the Slow Gin Fizz) took over as the drink of choice at suburban backyard barbecues in the 1950s.

- 1 1/2 ounces gin
- 1 ounce lemon juice
- 1/2 ounce simple syrup, 2:1 ratio
- 3 ounces club soda, or to taste
- Maraschino cherry, for garnish
- Lemon or orange slice, for garnish



NON-ALCOHOLIC PUNCH

Nothing says 1950 like the Tiki-craze.

After WWII, the Tiki culture exploded in America with Tiki bars, Mai Tais, and punch! The GIs returning from the war brought Polynesian Pop with them, and America entered a mid-century Tiki craze. Also perfect for lunches.

- 1/2 cup lemon juice
- 4 cups cold white grape juice
- 1 liter club soda, chilled
- 1 med orange, halved and sliced
- 1/2 cup sliced strawberries
- 1/2 cup sliced fresh peaches
- Ice cubes, optional



* The beatniks stuck with red wine.

FASCINATING FACTS

Long-time MoMA trustee John “Jock” Whitney’s polo-playing partner was **DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE CIA.**

The predecessor to the CIA was the Office of the Strategic Services (O.S.S.) members of which included chef **JULIA CHILD.**

BOTH POLLOCK AND DE KOONING MARRIED ARTISTS who were prominent women in the abstract expressionist movement (Lee Krasner and Elaine de Kooning).

The fedora hat was first worn by women in the 1880s and became a popular fashion statement and symbol for **WOMEN’S RIGHTS ACTIVISTS.**

DE KOONING STOWED AWAY on a ship to the United States at the age of 23, settling in New York City in 1927.

During one winter, the de Koonings had to **SELL BLOOD** to buy kerosene in order to stay warm.

Senator Joseph McCarty died of cirrhosis of the liver in 1957 at **AGE 48.**

POLLOCK WAS EVENTUALLY BANNED FROM THE CEDAR BAR for ripping the bathroom door off its hinges and hurling it at Franz Kline.

Bill’s wife, Elaine De Kooning, was an art critic for **ART NEWS.**

For his studio in Springs, Pollock moved a dilapidated barn fifty feet closer to the house by rolling the structure over logs. He and a neighbor only moved the structure **4 FEET THE FIRST DAY.**



HOW TO PAINT LIKE JACKSON POLLOCK

- 1** Place the canvass on the floor.

- 2** Grab a stick, dried paint brush, and turkey baster and dip an instrument into a can of paint.

- 3** Drip, drizzle, pour, and splat paint onto the canvas, standing on the floor or from on top of a ladder.

- 4** Shift around the canvas, throwing or spraying the paint down as if drawing in the air.

- 5** Continue until you have perfect balance, or a knotted mess.

FURTHER READING

NON-FICTION

- Frances Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters*
- Mark Stevens and Annalyn Swan, *de Kooning. An American Master*
- Steven Naifeh and Gregory Whitesmith, *Jackson. An American Saga*
- Irving Sandler, *The Triumph of American Painting*
- Will Gompertz, *What Are You Looking At? The Surprising, Shocking, and Sometimes Strange Story of 150 Years of Modern Art*
- Jennifer Dasal, *ArtCurious: Stories of the Unexpected, Slightly Odd, and Strangely Wonderful in Art History*
- Arthur Danto, *What Art Is*
- Peter Burger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*
- Mary Gabriel, *Ninth Street Women*
- Peggy Guggenheim, *confessions of an art addict*
- Simon Schama, *Power of Art*
- Robert Hughes, *The Shock of the New*

FICTION

- Ian McEwan, *Sweet Tooth*
- Joseph Kanon, *Los Alamos*
- Sloan Wilson, *The Man In The Gray Flannel Suit*
- Grace Metalious, *Peyton Place*
- John Updike, *Run Rabbit Run*
- Jack Kerouac, *On The Road*

