



Book Club Discussion Points

The Colours

T.M. Parris

A thriller set in Monaco and France featuring money laundering and art theft. Third in the Clarke and Fairchild spy thriller series. Published April 2021.

Around 350 pages (Paperback version), 88,000 words

Average rating 4.2/5 on amazon.co.uk (64 ratings as of Jan 2023)

Available on Amazon as an e-book, paperback and case laminate hardback

Universal link: <https://books2read.com/thecolours?store=amazon>

Blurb

A Van Gogh to die for. A price tag worth killing for.

Ambitious MI6 agent Rose Clarke and rootless mercenary John Fairchild are drawn to Monaco in pursuit of a traitor's fortune which includes the most valuable painting in the world.

But they are not alone. The traitor in exile, an outcast from Britain and Russia, is determined to keep his assets. Clarke and Fairchild have both suffered at his hands and have their own motivations to see him destitute or worse. The Russian authorities are desperate to reclaim what's theirs.

When a ragtag bunch of thieves arrives on the scene, the stakes get even higher and innocent people get mixed up in the chase.

But nobody is who they first appear to be, and a bid for wealth and power becomes a fight for survival against a corrupt and wealthy elite.

How ruthless are they all prepared to be?

Real-life reference: a painting thought by some to be by Leonardo Da Vinci was sold at auction in 2017 for US\$450,000. Many of the offshoring details are taken from *The Laundromat* and other material about the Panama Papers and similar leaks from the world of offshore finance.

Discussion questions:

1. First impressions matter: Fairchild, Rose, Zoe and Pippin feature in chapters 1-4. What do we learn about them from these very first pages?
2. It's not all plain sailing for Clarke and Fairchild. Which is worse in this book: Fairchild's treatment of Rose or Rose's treatment of Fairchild?
3. Who has lost most by the end of the book, Rose or Fairchild?
4. Walter is shocked at the eventual fate of the painting. Were you?
5. Is Zoe's treatment of her boss justified? Is Rose right to accuse him of enabling organised crime?
6. What picture of the world of fine art does *The Colours* present?
7. The character of Pippin turns out to be no more real than a portrait on canvas. Did you find him convincing?
8. Several scenes in *The Colours* echo famous paintings by Vincent Van Gogh. Did you notice any of them?
9. Rose quotes Somerset Maugham's famous description of Monaco as "a sunny place for shady people". What features of Monaco and this part of the world are most important in this book?