

Stealing a Summer's Afternoon - Book Club Questions

1. Over the course of the novel, Elliot becomes more bold, assertive and impulsive. Was this transformation driven by a feeling of power or helplessness? Did you prefer the Elliot you met at the beginning or the one you left at the end?
2. Elliot brings a variety of people into his scheme, from his best friend to people he's never met. Why did he decide to keep Marcy out of the loop?
3. What do you think Marcy's reaction would have been if Elliot had confided his plan from the very beginning?
4. Elliot and Elise agree to keep their relationship platonic, mostly for Marcy's sake. Based on the state of their respective marriages at the end of the novel, were you disappointed or relieved that they didn't end up together?
5. Elliot and his mother have a bit of, if not a love-hate relationship, an attend-and-tolerate relationship. But on the day he goes to switch the paintings in her room, he connects with her in a way he hasn't before. What causes this sudden empathy and compassion toward his mother?
6. Given his financial situation and his relationship with his employer, was Elliot justified in stealing the paintings? Is stealing ever justified? If so, does that justification come more from what Elliot needs, or from what Howard deserves?
7. How did you feel about the scene where Elliot gets the paintings from Isaac? Elliot feels "a pang of guilt for leading him on like this." Assuming no one notices the switch, should Elliot still feel guilty?
8. At the end of the novel, were you disappointed that Elliot and Marcy couldn't resolve their differences? Do they have a future together? Do you think Elliot should stay in New York and try to rebuild their relationship, or are they better off taking a break?