

The Modigliani Scandal Study Guide

The Modigliani Scandal by Ken Follett

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Plot Summary

The novel opens in a Paris bakery shop. The baker is making his second batch of bread that morning. Business is good. Outside, he sees an attractive girl and decides that it is safe for him to look since his wife is out back with the employees. He decides the girl is too skinny for his tastes but is very sexy. She entered his shop and purchased a loaf of bread. The baker detects an accent in her French, perhaps English. At the sound of the voice of his wife, Jeanne-Marie, the baker's fantasy ends.

The girl is Dee Sleign. She is talking about going to graduate school and writing her thesis on drugs and art when her boyfriend Mike suggests that she talk to an old man that he knows. He might be able to provide her with some information for her thesis. She does and comes up with information that there is a lost Modigliani in Italy. She decides to find the painting, and this begins the suspense of the novel.

Dee isn't the only one interested in the lost painting. There is also Julian, who is opening his own art gallery with the financial backing of his father-in-law. There is also Charles Lampeth, the uncle of Dee, who owns one of the leading art galleries in London. He hires the detective Lipsey to find the lost painting. They both want the lost masterpiece.

Interwoven with all of this is Peter Usher. He is a young painter who is angry at the art establishment. He decides to get even by concocting an art forgery scheme to prove his point that the dealers have no real love of art are motivated by greed. They are receiving the money that should go to the artist. He doesn't make money off of the forgery swindle since the purpose was to make a point, not to get rich on the ransom.

The Modigliani Scandal is Ken Follett's first novel. He published it under a pseudonym before he became famous as an author. Even though the book received good reviews, Follett was not happy with it and regarded it as a failure at first because it came out differently from the book he intended to write. The novel is now published under his name and he no longer views it as a failure.

The novel is a thriller about crime in the art world. It contains all of the elements of suspense that Follett's other works contain and is difficult for the reader to put down, once they begin reading the book. The reader wants to know what happens next. The novel has a very surprise ending that is not anticipated by the reader.



Part I, Chapters 1-5

Part I, Chapters 1-5 Summary

The novel opens in a Paris bakery shop. The baker is making his second batch of bread that morning. Business is good. Outside, he sees an attractive girl and decides that it is safe for him to look since his wife is out back with the employees. He decides the girl is too skinny for his tastes but is very sexy. She enters his shop and purchases a loaf of bread. The baker detects an accent in her French, perhaps English. At the sound of the voice of his wife, Jeanne-Marie, the baker's fantasy ends.

Dee Sleign leaves the shop thinking that Frenchmen are sexier than Englishmen. She had been enjoying her summer in Paris but knows it will end soon and she will have to decide what to do with the rest of her life. As she enters her apartment building, the concierge tells her that she has a telegram. She makes coffee and she and her boyfriend Mike sit down to breakfast. The telegram reports her exam results, which means she can go on for her PhD if she wants to. Mike offers her a job and she declines. She wants to write her thesis on the relationship between art and drugs. He suggests an artist that he knows that she should talk to.

Dee talks to the man who lives above the smelly fish shop. She sees a small fortune in post-Impressionist paintings hanging on his walls. They were collected from different artists in payment for their debts. The old man enjoys talking with Dee. She smokes a joint with him as they talk about artists and drugs. He tells her of an artist named Dedo, who used drugs when he painted and how he had to burn the paintings when he was evicted. She writes her Uncle Charles that she is on the trail of a lost Modigliani.

Charles Lampeth is at the house of his friend, Lord Cardwell. They are discussing the art market. Lampeth is also in the art world, having owned a gallery. Cardwell asks for a rough estimate of the value of his art collection and says he wants to sell it. They decide that the collection must be broken up since it will command a higher price that way. Lampeth leaves and goes to the Belgrave Art Gallery.

He greets his junior partner, Stephen Willow, and tells him that they have to talk about Peter Usher, whose work they assumed when the Sixty-Nine Gallery went bankrupt. They talk about holding a show for his work and the fact that Lord Cardwell wants to sell his collection. They decide not to make definite commitments for the show. Lampeth tells Willow to buy a collection of Modigliani sketches that are available in Munich.

Lampeth finds the postcard from his niece in the mail and reads the message: "Then he sat back and thought. His niece had a way of giving the impression she as a feminine, scatty young thing; but she had a very sharp brain and a certain cool determination. She usually meant what she said, even if she sounded like a flapper of the 1920s" (Part I, Chap. 2, p. 29).



Lampeth goes to the office of Lipsey's. It is a very discrete detective agency. They charge a high price for their discretion. He shows Mr. Lipsey the postcard from Dee and says he wants them to find the missing painting. Lampeth doesn't want Dee to know that he has hired Lipsey.

Lampeth decides to host a Modigliani show, putting the Usher show on hold for now. Usher is at the gallery reception and comes to see him. They have a loud discussion about Lampeth not doing Usher's show and Usher walks out.

Peter goes to the Dixon & Dixon gallery on Bond Street to see Mr. Dixon. He wants Dixon to handle his work. In response to Dixon's questions, he tells him what his paintings have sold for and that he isn't happy with Belgrave. Dixon says that they can't handle his work and that he feels that Usher's works are overpriced. Usher begs him, but Dixon remains firm. Usher leaves in a rage.

Usher pedals his bike to Kings Road where an old friend of his, Julian Black, is opening a gallery. Julian is happy to see him but says he can't handle his work, which hasn't been selling well. The only income Usher has now is his part-time teaching. Usher likes teaching but he doesn't like the idea of those kids trying to make a living at art. He decides to lecture his students about the business of art.

Julian goes to the newspaper office to see Mr. Jack Best, a reporter. Since Best is the art critic, Julian begins to tell him about the gallery he is opening. Julian wants to talk to the reporter and explain the philosophy behind his gallery, but Best tells him to send him an invitation to the opening and they will talk then. Julian had plans to visit all of the art critics personally, but now begins to reevaluate his plans as he is walking down Fleet Street.

Julian goes home and tells his wife what happened with the reporter. He doesn't have the money to buy paintings for the gallery, so he has some that will be loaned on a commission basis. He asks his wife, Sarah for some money, and they begin to fight, having a very strained relationship to begin with. He leaves the house, taking Sarah's Mercedes and goes to see his father-in-law, finding him on the golf course at this club. Julian asks for more money and is told that his father-in-law doesn't have any cash right now. He tells him to find some good buys and he will give him the money. He leaves and is driving and decides to visit an actress, Samantha Winacre, he met the other night. Instead of calling, he drives to her house.

Anita is walking to Samantha's house. She lets herself in and begins to straighten up. She wakes Samantha by bring her a cup of tea that she made. She helps Samantha dress and prepare for a script conference. Anita wants Sarah to go to college but there is no way that the girl can. She wants to stay and work for Samantha. Samantha says she will keep her employed while she goes to school and she will have a lawyer draw up the papers so Sarah is secure. Samantha spends very little of her money. "Perhaps she ought to patronize artists. But the art would was such a pretentious upper-class scene. Money was spent with no clear idea of its value to real people: people like Anita



and her family. No, art was not the solution to Samantha's dilemma" (Part I, Chap. 5, p. 69).

Samantha leaves for her meeting with the agent and a film producer. They discuss the script and Samantha says that the production doesn't have a purpose. They decide to meet again in another week to discuss the production. At a party later that evening she meets a man named Tom Cooper, who introduces her to speed.

Part I, Chapters 1-5 Analysis

The book opens with the main characters being introduced. Mike is an art dealer living with Dee, who just received her degree in Art History. He wants her to come into business with him but she wants to work for her PhD in art and do her thesis on drugs and art. Her uncle is an art expert who is going to help his friend sell his art collection.

Lampeth had words with artist Peter Usher at the gallery reception. Usher is angry because Lampeth is not holding a show of his works, and walks out of the Belgrave Gallery. He tries to find another gallery to handle his works, but they won't take him on. His work hasn't been selling well.

Julian does not have a happy marriage. He is impotent with his wife and she goads him into anger. She chides him because her father bought the house they live in, gave him the money for gallery, and she pays for their expenses. Instead of being patient and helping him, she keeps goading and chiding him.

Samantha is on the verge of turning down a script because she doesn't think that the production makes a statement or has a purpose. She has her lawyer draw up papers stating she will put Anita through school. She decides she couldn't be a patron of the arts. At party, she meets Tom Cooper, who introduces her to speed.



Part II, Chapters 1-5

Part II, Chapters 1-5 Summary

Dee is on a train traveling through Northern Italy. She is running low on money, having enough for her fare home after a few days in Livorno. She was tracking the lost Modigliani. She fantasizes about finding the lost Modigliani, thinking, "It might even become known as the Sleigh Modigliani - it would make her name. Her career would be secure for the rest of her life" (Part II, Chap. 1, p. 82).

Once she arrives in Livorno, she finds a hotel, changes clothes, and goes out to walk around the city. She has to find a way of narrowing down the search. She can't look at every painting on every wall in the city. She tells the hotel proprietor that she came to Livorno to look at the paintings and she wants to see Modigliani's birthplace. He sells her a guidebook.

A priest tells her that there is a vault full of paintings in the crypt and that no one has looked at them in years. He leads her to the vault. She has decided to look at the churches closest to Modigliani's two homes first. The paintings are covered with dust so she uses her panties to wipe the dust, having nothing else with her. There are no Modigliani's; the same at the second church. She returns to the hotel. Something about Modigliani is bothering her but she doesn't know what, and she falls asleep thinking about it. She wakes up with a start remembering what was bothering her: Modigliani was Jewish.

Dee goes to see a rabbi and tells him the whole story. He tells her that the painting may be on the Adriatic Coast at a town called Poglio. As she walks back to her hotel, she realizes she does not have enough money to hire a car for the trip. As she is wondering who she can ask for money, she sees Mike pull up to the hotel.

Reporter James Whitewood arrives to interview Samantha. Anita lets him in and Samantha introduces him to Tom Cooper. They discuss some of the latest gossip about Lord Cardwell selling his art collection. After the interview he talks to her agent, Joe, who finds out that she's turning down the script. Joe has his assistant, Andrew Fairholm, find out what he can about Tom Cooper. Julian drops by Samantha's to ask her to attend the opening of his gallery and shows him a card from Dee. Tom is interested when he hears that Sarah is the daughter of Lord Cardwell and that he is selling his art collection.

When Samantha finds out that Joe had Tom Cooper investigated, she fires him.

When Julian leaves, he keeps thinking about the postcard; "He had to go after the lost Modigliani. It would be exactly what he needed - a real find. It would establish his reputation as a dealer and attract flocks of people to the Black Gallery. It was not in line with gallery policy, but that did not matter" (Part II, Chap. 3, p. 106). He knows if he



could find the picture, his father-in-law would give him the money to buy it; however, he doesn't have the money to travel to Italy. He considers different ways of raising the money to travel to Italy. He decides to drive Sarah's car and sell it, and then tell her it was stolen. He leaves the house and takes the car to a used car lot, looking for a price. He receives only one thousand six hundred fifty pounds for the Mercedes, which is eighteen months old.

Julian takes a taxi back to his home and finds Sarah in bed with two other men. Julian grabs a Polaroid camera and takes pictures of them. He stuffs the negatives in an envelope and runs out of the house and mails them to Samantha, since he doesn't know anyone else he could send them to. Returning to the house, Julian confronts Sarah and the two men. Sarah and Julian talk after the men leave. He tells her he sold her car. If she tells her father, he will show him the negatives.

Lipsey, the detective hired by Lampeth, is in Paris. Lipsey is excited about the case and is doing the work himself: "But only part. The rest of the reason had something to do with Lipsey's own interest in art; and something to do with the smell of the case. It was going to turn out to be interesting, he knew. There was an excitable girl, a lost masterpiece, and a secretive art dealer - there would be more, much more. Lipsey would enjoy untangling the whole thing. The people in the case; their ambitions, their greed, their little personal betrayals - Lipsey would know of them all before long" (Part II, Chap. 4, pp. 120-121).

Lipsey doesn't have much to go on - just a postcard, an address, and a picture of Dee. He is looking for who gave Dee the information about the Modigliani. Lipsey realizes that he doesn't know where Dee's clue came from. He walks into a fish shop and shows the proprietor the picture of Dee, but he doesn't recognize it. He goes up to the apartment over the fish shop and knocks on the door. He finds the old man that Dee had talked to but the man finds out that he is a detective and won't tell him anything.

As Lipsey is leaving the area by the fish store, he recognizes Peter Usher in the street. Lipsey next goes to the apartment where Dee had been living. He bribes the concierge into letting him into their apartment. He takes a blank notepad that had been next to the phone and learns that Mike and Dee are in Italy. Outside, in a café, he uses a pencil to find the address of the Livorno hotel on the notepad. In Livorno, Lipsey bribes the hotel proprietor for information. Dee arrived alone and left with a man for Poglio.

Peter Usher and his friend, Mitch, had a plan to paint fakes, sell them, and then admit what they had done for a publicity stunt. He approaches a man named Durand from Meunier for a job. The firm acts as agents for artists. Using Lampeth as a reference, Usher obtains a job in the packing department. After a few days, Peter finds what he came to steal - a rubber stamp. The stamp says "Certified at Meunier, Paris" (Part II, Chap. 5, p. 137). He cuts the rubber part of the stamp from the handle and places the rubber and some stationery in an envelope and addresses it to Mitch, then has the firm mail it. Peter quits the job and returns to London.



Back in London, Mitch isn't happy about the trail Peter left, including Lampeth's name as a reference and the envelope mailed from the firm's mailroom. As they are working, there is a knock on the door. A policeman is there. They wonder how they got caught so quickly. Usher answers the door only to find that Mitch left the lights on in his car.

Part II, Chapters 1-5 Analysis

Dee goes to Lovorno, Italy in search of the missing Modigliani. She doesn't plan ahead very well because she didn't take much money with her. After exploring Catholic churches she remembers that Modigliani was Jewish and goes to talk to the rabbi, who steers her to the coastal town of Poglio. Luckily, Mike arrives, because she doesn't have the money to go to Poglio.

Samantha is continuing her relationship with Tom Cooper, and when her agent has Cooper investigated, she fires the agent.

Julian needs money to go to Italy and sells his wife's car. Money and Sarah's attitude are among the many problems in the marriage. Their marital problems aren't helped much when he finds her in bed with two other men and takes pictures of the scene. If she tells her father about the car, he will show him the pictures.

Lipsev, the detective, begins his investigation in Paris. All he had from Lampeth is a postcard, an address, and a picture of Dee. From the picture on the postcard he finds the fish shop and the old man. Lipsey is good at bribing people to obtain the information that he requires. From Dee's apartment's concierge he obtains enough information to go to Livornia. From the hotel proprietor, Lipsey finds out about Poglio.

Peter Usher and Mitch have their art swindle scheme in operation. They will paint pictures and sell them as the real works. To carry the scheme out, Peter travels to Paris and takes a job at an art agent's warehouse in order to steal an authentication rubber stamp used by the dealer. Mitch isn't happy because Peter left a trail that they could be traced through.



Part III, Chapters 1-5

Part III, Chapters 1-5 Summary

Lipsev travels to Rimini on the Adriatic Coast of Italy. He rents a car and drives to Poglio and goes into a bar. He thinks that Dee and her boyfriend haven't arrived yet. He is interested in what led her to Poglio. Lipsey walks around the village and finds Mike's blue Mercedes. He walks into the bar and the proprietor tells Dee that he was the man that was asking about her.

Lipsev talks with Mike and Dee and tells them that he is staying in Rimini. They tell him they are looking for a valuable painting. Mike adds that they think the painting is in a chateau five miles away. Having the information that he wants, Lipsey tells them that he is moving on.

Lipsev drives out to the chateau and meets the Contessa di Lanza. He asks to see the inside of the house and she says that he can. She gives him a tour, explaining some of the construction. She shows him the art collection and makes it clear she is willing to sell it. After examining the paintings, Lipsey is sure the Modigliani is not among them, but he takes her contact information and says he will talk to friends in London about her collection. He wonders if Mike sent him on a wild goose chase.

Mike tells Dee that Lipsey was looking for her no matter what he said. Nobody goes to an out-of-the-way place like Poglio without a reason. He asks Dee who would have known about the Modigliani. She says she wrote about it to Samantha and Uncle Charles. Mike admits that he sent Lipsey on a wild-goose chase.

They decide to begin their search at the church and find the priest. "'We're trying to trace a man,' Dee began. 'His name was Danielli. He was a rabbi, from Livorno, and we think he moved to Poglio in about 1920. He was ill, and not young, so he probably died soon after'" (Part III, Chap. 2, p. 165). The priest tells them that there is no family by the name of Danielli in Poglio. They tell the priest that they are looking for a painting and he tells them that it is unlikely that they will find it in Poglio.

As Mike and Dee walk out of the church, Mike asks if they should be married in a church. They talk about what kind of house Dee would like. They find an old man who remembers Danielli and tells them he lived on the road west of the town. They find that the bartender knew it all along and he tells them that the man will meet them in the bar that evening.

The priest is relaxing after lunch when there is a knock on the door. There is a man asking questions about a painting. He asks if there is a family named Modigliani in the village. The priest, knowing Modigliani was a great Italian master, tells the man there is no such painting in the small village. The man is Julian. Outside, he looks around and



wonders where to start. He starts going door-to-door, asking about the painting. He sees Mike and Dee walk out of the bar and get into a blue Mercedes.

Peter and Mitch are loading their paintings into the back of Mitch's van. They had carefully thought out their plan. Peter drove the paintings to a college campus and called a taxi. The paintings were loaded in the taxi with an address for delivery at the Hilton Hotel. They felt that the paintings now couldn't be traced to Usher's house in Clapham.

His wife Anne is waiting at the Hilton with Mitch. Mitch makes a phone call presenting himself as a small dealer from Nancy, who is representing the estate of a collector. The man they contact is Ramsey Crowforth of Crowforth's, a gallery in Piccadilly. They meet with him and present a certificate with Meunier's seal and letterhead. They sell him a painting. They return to the Hilton and check out. They had an account in the name the check was made out to and cash it. Anne goes into Harrod's, enters a dressing room, and dons old clothing. They drive home, and Mitch goes to buy negotiable securities and deposits the small balance in a bank account. He tells the bank they had a successful art transaction. A week later the securities are safely in the bank's vault and Mitch transfers them to another bank.

The Black Gallery is decorated with an interesting futuristic items. Samantha walks in and finds Julian behind the desk. She asks Julian to get them invited to Lord Cardwell's house for dinner before the gallery opening.

Tom is walking through a street market. There is a pub at the other side of the market. He enters the pub and asks for a man named Bill Wright. He wants Bill to do a job for him involving works of art, and tells him that the job is worth one million pounds. The two men drive off together and stop near a house in Trafalgar Square. They go in to see a man named Mandingo, and the men discuss Lord Cardwell's art collection. Tom will be going there for dinner.

Part III, Chapters 1-5 Analysis

Lispey talks with Mike and Dee and learns that they are on a treasure hunt, looking for a lost painting. He finds out where they think it is and drives out to the chateau. The Modigliani is not there.

Mike and Dee talk to a priest at the church, but he has no knowledge of Danielli and doubts that there is any artwork of value in the town. They find an old man who remembers Danielli and tells them that he lived west of the town. Mike and Dee find that the priest and the bartender both knew of Danielli.

Julian arrives in Poglio and also questions the priest. He knocks on several doors and asks about the painting, and then sees Dee and Mike get into a blue Mercedes.

Mitch, Julian, and Anne successfully pull off the sale of the fake artwork. They had done a lot of planning and tried to make it difficult for anything to be traced back to them.

Tom Copper had concocted a plan to steal Lord Cardwell's art collection.



Part IV, Chapters 1-5

Part IV, Chapters 1-5 Summary

Reporter Louis Broom is sitting in the newsroom working on a story about pollution when he receives a phone call. "Good. Listen carefully, because I won't repeat anything. The biggest fraud in the history of art was perpetrated in London last week" (Part IV, Chap. 1, p. 206). The anonymous voice goes on to tell him about the sale of a fake Van Gogh and Munch to major art galleries. When the paper publishes the story they will be told why they perpetrated the crime.

Professor Peder Schmidt had been a lecturer at Oxford and meets Louis in a London bar. They go to look at the Van Gogh at Claypole's gallery. The painting is called "The Gravedigger". The professor asks Claypole how he obtained the painting and the gallery owner tells him the story. Schmidt tells Claypole that it's the best forgery he has ever seen. All they can piece together is that the forgeries were purchased from a man at the Hilton named Renalle.

Louis bribes the Hilton Hotel clerk to see the register and finds the information he is looking for about a woman named Renault. He checks the bank and finds that an account had been opened in the name of a man who had been on vacation. The clerk says that the money is in the bank vault. When they check they find it is missing and the trail ends.

Scotland Yard is cited as saying the scheme is the work of professionals.

After reading the paper, Mitch and Peter go out for a walk. Since the story has appeared in the paper, they call with the explanation for what they did. The dealers are motivated by greed and receive the money that should go to the artist. They can't even identify a forgery. Peter will return the money if they provide a building with low cost rents for artists in the Central London area. He wants the reply to his demands to appear in the paper.

A friend of their, Arnaz, greets that and congratulates them on their crime. They talk about the complication Arnaz presents. He can finger them for the crime. They ask Arnaz what he wants and he says wants two copies of a painting he brought with him. They look at the painting and ask where he got it from.

Samantha and Tom have their dinner with Lord Cardwell. Samantha finds out that Lord Cardwell financed Julian's gallery. Julian mentions a Modigliani he bought that was hidden in a little town in Italy. Lord Cardwell financed the purchase, Julian tells Samantha and Tom. Samantha says that a friend of hers mentioned a lost Modigliani. As the dinner small talk continues, Samantha asks Lord Cardwell how he began in business and he tells her the story. Cardwell takes Samantha and Tom to see his private gallery.



Willow tenders the resignation of his position with Belgrave over the fake art swindle, but Lampeth refuses to accept it. He and the other experts were taken in by the fake art. They begin to discuss business. They have the Modigliani show planned, and they talk about the works that will be in it. After the meeting, Lampeth goes to see Lipsey. Lipsey has a lost Modigliani for Lampeth to examine. Lambeth pays him for painting.

There is a meeting of the London art gallery representatives over the conditions presented in the anonymous phone call. They have a proposal to establish a trust fund to receive the money and then to pay ninety percent to the galleries for the forgeries. They work out the details and then work on the statement to the press. "'It's not just the money.' Lampeth sat down heavily and swallowed half his drink. 'It will be years before the art world recovers from a blow like this. The public now thinks we're all frauds who don't know the different between a masterpiece and a seaside postcard'" (Part IV, Chap. 3, p. 230).

Willow spots a shopping bag in the gallery. They find the securities in the bag. Just then Louis Broom walks in, saying he received an anonymous phone calls saying that the ransom had been paid.

Julian takes a painting to the home of Gaston Moore, who is one of the most respected art critics. He asks Moore to authenticate a painting for him. Moore says that he can't prove that a painting is real and that there is no way to do so. But he thinks the Julian has an authentic painting and wants to do a chemical test. Julian says he can. After the chemical test, Moore tells Julian that he has a fake.

While driving back to London, Julian thinks about the situation. No one would know it was a fake if he hung it in his gallery, but eventually the truth would become known and he would be ruined. He decides to show the picture and drives to his father-in-law's home where they are all meeting for dinner. Lampeth has gathered Cardwell's art collection to sell and there is only one painting remaining. It is the Modigliani, and Julian tells him it is the same as the one he has.

Samantha is high on drugs and is squeezed into a van with Tom and his people. The group goes to Cardwell's house to steal the art collection. They disable the alarm system and enter the house. At the same time, Julian decides to switch his phony Modigliani with the one Lampeth bought. He finds the door open. Tom's thieves find that the paintings are gone and Julian sees them walking out with one small painting. He recognizes Samantha in the moonlight. He takes his false Modigliani and hangs it in the gallery where the stolen one had been.

At breakfast the next morning, the butler finds the signs of the break-in and tells the family. As they call the police about the break-in, Julian leaves and drives quickly to London to Samantha's house. He tells her he wants the painting back. If she doesn't give it to him, he will call the police, so she gives him the painting. He takes it to Moore and it is also a fake.



Tom is angry when he finds out that Samantha gave Julian the painting. There is a knock on the door and three men are there for Tom. They beat him and then take him with them.

Mike and Dee are looking at the painting they have in the London apartment. "I do. I think what a terrible, loathsome, brilliant pair of crooks you and I are. Look what we've got: this beautiful painting, for practically nothing; material for my thesis; and fifty thousand pounds each.' She giggled" (Part IV, Chap. 5, p. 252).

They had gone back to the bar that night in Poglio. Mike tells Dee to keep Lipsey occupied. Then Julian arrives and introduces himself. They are all looking for the same painting. Mike says he has the painting in the car and goes out of the room. Dee does what she was told and keeps the men busy. Mike goes in back and asks if Danielli had ever stayed there. The bartender's wife says yes. He asked if he left any paintings and she says yes, so he buys it from them for eighty pounds.

Mike had the forgers make two copies of the painting that he sold to Lipsey and Julian.

Part IV, Chapters 1-5 Analysis

The art swindle scam is reported to news reporter Louis Bloom via anonymous phone call. He brings in an old professor of his who is an art expert, and the professor declares the Van Gogh to be a forgery. They trace the money as far as they can and bring the police in.

Since the article appeared in the paper, Peter calls and tells him the reason for the crime. The dealer receives most of the money for artwork instead of the artist. Peter says he'll return the money if they use part of it to provide low rent studios for the artists. He wants the answer to appear in the newspaper. The only one who can finger them for their crime is a friend of theirs named Arnaz. His price for keeping quiet is that he wants them to make two copies of a painting. The art gallery people meet and decide to accept the terms, and they have the money paid to a trust fund. The ransom is paid in the form of a shopping bag of securities left in the gallery.

Samantha and Tom have their dinner at Cardwell's. They discuss the lost Modigliani, which Julian bought with Cardwell's money, and Cardwell shows them his private art gallery.

Lampeth pays Lipsey for the Modigliani he has found.

Everybody's schemes clash the night that Julian spends the night at Lord Cardwell's. Cardwell has given his art collection to Lampeth to sell and has one of the missing Modiglianis. Julian, who has found that his is a fake, plans to switch it with Lampeth's. He walks in on Tom's group trying to rob the gallery of the art collection. Finding it empty, they leave with the Modigliani. Julian goes to Samantha's and retrieves it. It turns out to be a fake also.

The real painting was purchased from the bartender and his wife by Mike. He had Usher and Mitch paint the forgeries that he sold to Lipsey and Julian.



Characters

Peter Usher

Usher is an artist that the Belgrave Art Gallery took over after the previous gallery that handled his works went broke. Usher breaks with Belgrave and can't find another gallery to handle his work. He teaches art on a part-time basis and that his is only source of income. He is irate about the fact that artists receive nothing while they are alive. The art dealers are the ones that make the money that should go to the artist. Usher is recognized in Paris by the detective, Lipsey, on the street where the old man lives above the fish market. Peter and his old friend, Mitch, had concocted an art swindle scheme as a publicity stunt. They would paint fakes of masterpieces and sell them. Then they would let the world know what they had done. In order to add authenticity to the fakes, Peter goes to Paris and obtains a job with an art dealer long enough to steal some letterhead and a rubber stamp used in authentication. They paint the forgeries and sell them, and then report the incident to the newspapers along with their demands. When the art dealers agree to provide funding for low rent studios for artists, they return the money they received for the forgeries. Usher's whole purpose was to prove the point that the art galleries can discern between original paintings and forgeries and that they are motivated by greed, not love of art.

Julian Black

Julian is a friend of Peter Usher's from their school days. He is opening an art gallery but refuses to handle Peter because he thinks that Peter's paintings are overpriced and are not selling very well. He likes art but does not call himself an artist and does not think of himself as talented. He is married to Sarah who is the daughter of Lord Cardwell. His marriage is very strained since he is living off of his wife and her father's money. It is Lord Cardwell who gave Julian the money to open the art gallery, but it wasn't enough to do it properly. Julian finds out about the lost Modigliani from the postcard that Dee sent to Samantha. He decides to try to find the picture, knowing that Lord Cardwell will put up the money to buy it if he finds it. He sells his wife's Mercedes to finance his trip to Italy. Julian appears in Poligo when Mike and Dee are there since he is also looking for the lost Modigliani. He buys what he thinks is the real one, only to find that it is fake. He then tries to replace it with what he thinks is the real one that Lampeth bought, but finds that it is also a fake.

Mike Arnez

Mike is the man that Dee is living with in Paris. He is a thirty-nine-year-old from California. Mike is in the business end of the art business. He follows Dee to Italy. He picks her up in Livorno and they drive to Poglio. While they are looking for the painting he asks her to marry him. Mike is the one who purchased the real painting left behind by



Danielli. When he, Dee, Lipsey and Julian are all in the bar, he tells Dee to keep the men busy while he goes in back to talk to the bartender and his wife. They had the painting that was left behind by the man Danielli and they sold it to him. Mike is the one who sold the forgeries to Lipsey and Julian.

Dee Sleign

Dee, whose name is Delia, is spending the summer in Paris and is living with Mike. She knows that she soon has to decide what to do with the rest of her life. Dee has a B.A. degree in Art History and is considering entering a graduate program. She is twenty-five years old. After talking to the old man that Mike sends her to, Dee is convinced that there is a lost Modigliani and sets out to find it. She travels to Italy trying to track the missing picture. Mike comes and joins her in Livorno and they head to Poglio. She does not know that Mike bought the painting from the bartender until the end of the book.

Lord Cardwell

Lord Cardwell is a wealthy friend of Charles Lampeth and is the father of Sarah Black, the wife of Julian Black. Cardwell has an extensive art collection that he wants to sell. He is providing the financial backing for Julian's gallery and also tells Julian that he will pay for the Modigliani if it is authentic.

Dunford Lipsey

Lipsey is the detective that Lampeth hires to find the lost Modigliani. He travels to Paris and finds the fish shop and the old man who told Dee about the Modigliani. He then goes to Italy and meets Dee, Mike and, later, Julian there. He comes up with one of the copies of the Modigliani that he passes on to Lampeth.

Charles Lampeth

Charles Lampeth is the uncle of Dee Sleign. He owns the Belgrave Art Gallery and has Stephen Willow as a junior partner. Lampeth hires a detective agency to find the missing Modigliani.

Louis Bloom

Louis is a newspaper reporter who receives an anonymous phone call about the sale of fake painting to two art galleries. He contacts an old professor of his and they go to look at the paintings.



Sarah Black

Sarah is the daughter of Lord Cardwell and the wife of Julian Black. Her marriage to Julian is very strained since Julian is living off of her and her father's money.

Anne Usher

Anne is the wife of Peter Usher. She is involved with Peter and Mitch in the art swindling scheme and takes part in selling the forgeries.

Mitch

Mitch is Peter Usher's friend from school. He is also a part of the art swindle scheme with Anne and Peter.

Stephen Willow

Gallery Willow is the junior partner of Charles Lampeth at the Belgrave Art.



Objects/Places

Paris, France

Paris is where the book opens, with Dee and Mike living there. It is where Dee went to school and visits the old man and learns about a lost Modigliani.

London

London is where Charles Lampeth lives and owns the Belgrave Art Gallery. It is where the art swindle takes place.

Belgrave Art Gallery

The Belgrave Art Gallery is one of the best known galleries in London.

Clapham

Clapham is where Peter Usher lives.

King's Road

King's Road is the location of the Black Gallery, which is owned by Julian Black.

Fulham

Fulham is the section of London where Julian Black's house is located.

Livorona

Livorno, Italy is where Dee travels to looking for the lost Modigliani.

Rimini

Rimini is a town on the Adriatic coast of Italy.

Poglio

Poglio is a town on the Adriatic Coast of Italy.

Dunroamin, Crawford

Dunroamin, Crawford is the home of the well respected art critic Gaston Moore.



Themes

Relationships

One of the themes of the book is the relationships between some of the main characters. There is the budding romance between Mike and Dee. They have been living together for one year at the opening of the novel. Since Dee is finished with her B.A. degree, she knows she has to make some decisions about her future. Mike wants her to work for his art business, but she prefers to attend graduate school and write her thesis on drugs and art. When she goes to Italy to look for the lost Modigliani, Mike follows her. In Poglio, he talks about marriage. At the end of the book, she changes her mind about graduate school and wants to go into business with Mike. She still won't commit to marriage but wants to stay together.

Another relationship is that of Julian Black and his wife, Sarah. Sarah is the daughter of the wealthy Lord Cardwell, who provided the financial backing for Julian's art gallery. Julian has no money of his own and is basically living off of his wife and the gifts from her father. They have a very strained marriage and Julian is basically impotent. Money is a bitter issue with them. Their situation worsens when Julian comes home and finds her in bed with two men. They both keep goading each other into making their situation worse.

Proving a Point

Many of the main characters in the novel have a point to prove, either to themselves or to someone else. Julian, who is in an unhappy marriage, is trying to prove himself to his wife and to the art world. If he finds the lost Modigliani, he will prove himself in the art world and many important people will come to his gallery. He will be successful and that will raise his standing in the eyes of his wife and improve their marriage, he thinks.

Peter Usher also has a point to prove, and that was the purpose of his forgery swindle. He believes that all art dealers have no love for art and are in the business for the money. They are motivated by greed. They receive the money that should go to the artist and they can't distinguish between an original painting and a forgery. Since most artists are not recognized until after their death, they are poor during their lives. This was the point he wanted to prove with the forgery swindle, and also that he is as good an artist as the masters were, or he couldn't have painted the forgeries that fooled the experts.

Another person who wanted to prove herself was Dee. At the beginning of the novel she and Mike are talking about their future plans. He wants her to go into the art business with him but she decides to go to graduate school. At the end of the book, she decides to give up graduate school and go into business with Mike. She says she has proved that she is as good as he is and can hold her own in business.



Greed

Greed is another underlying theme of the novel. The novel is about the world of art, meaning the painters, the collectors, and the dealers. Peter Usher's point of view is that the dealers are the ones making money off of the artists. This is their prime motivation, not the love of art. They can't tell the difference between a forgery and the real thing. This is the point he makes with his forgery swindle. He and Mitch were not motivated by greed in the swindle since they returned all of the money from the sale of the forgeries. They were proving that they were as good painters as the masters were and that the dealers were the ones making the money and not the artists.

Another character motivated by greed was Mike. He saw a chance to make a fast buck and he didn't hesitate. He quietly bought the lost painting from the bartender in Poglio and didn't say anything. He had Peter Usher and Mitch make two copies of a painting that he sold to Lipsey and Julian as the real lost Modigliani. He and Dee each made fifty thousand pounds off of the deal. Even though he doesn't think he would do anything like that again, he sees nothing wrong about taking their money because they would have done it to him.

Style

Point of View

Ken Follett writes *The Modigliani Scandal* from the third person point of view. The author is the narrator of the novel. He fills in the details of where the locations for the action are and what the main characters are doing and thinking. There is a lot of dialogue in the book where the characters explain their thoughts, actions, and motivations, but the rest of the details are provided by the narrator.

Use of the third person is a method of providing the reader with more information about the characters and the action of the novel. If the novel were written from the first person point of view, the reader would only have knowledge of the events that took place in the presence of the character who is telling the story. This would severely restrict the knowledge of the reader. The use of the third person avoids this problem.

Setting

There are several settings for the action of the novel. The story begins in Paris where Dee is living with Mike. She has completed her schooling and goes to interview an old man for information about her thesis. While talking to the old man, she learns about a possible missing Modigliani and goes to Italy to find it. Peter Usher also spends some time in Paris working for an art dealer long enough to steal letterhead and a rubber authentication stamp that he requires for his forgery swindle scheme.

Most of the action in Italy is in the small town of Poglio, although Dee first goes to Livorno and Lipsey to Rimini. They search through churches and houses looking for the lost masterpiece and don't find it. Apparently the man Danielli stayed with the bartender.

London and its environs are also a setting for much of the novel's action. This is where the major galleries were located, such as the Belgrave, which is owned by Charles Lampeth. It is also where Peter Usher and Mitch paint and sell the forgeries to get the art dealers to meet their demands. London is where most of the main characters of the novel live and it is where they all end up at the end of the book.

Language and Meaning

The language and meaning of the novel are clear and simple. There are a few terms of French, but for the most part, the novel is written in straightforward everyday English. There is no jargon of any kind in the book, which is one of the reasons it is fast reading. There are a few French terms that may slow the reader down unless the reader is familiar with French, but there are few and they are so common that most readers will know what they mean. If the reader doesn't know the meaning of the French words, it



doesn't detract from the story in any way. The use of French words makes the scenes a little more realistic in Paris.

Most readers will have no problems with the language and the meaning of the words and will find the thriller to be fast reading.

Structure

The novel is divided into four parts with five chapters in each part. The parts are entitled, "Priming the Canvas", "The Landscape", "Figures in the Foreground", and "The Varnish", and basically follow the steps in painting a canvas. Even though the divisions aren't really needed, they are a clever touch in fitting the action of the novel into those headings.

The book contains a Table of Contents, which makes the above fact more obvious. For the most part, the story is chronological, although there is some jumping around which sometimes confuses the reader, but it is nothing that the reader can't handle. The characters are well-developed and their motivations are revealed during the action of the novel.

The novel has a surprise ending that is not really anticipated by the reader, even if the reader has paid attention throughout the course of the book. The last chapter ties together all of the missing pieces and answers whatever questions the reader has been thinking. The structure works well for the novel, as does the style of writing.



Quotes

"She slanted her head back and brushed her hair behind her ears to let the hot sun shine on her face. It was wonderful, this life, this summer in Paris. No work, no exams, no essays, no lectures. Sleeping with Mike, getting up late; good coffee and fresh bread for breakfast; days spent with the books she had always wanted to read and the pictures she liked to see; evenings with interesting, eccentric people." Part I, Chap. 1, p. 13

"No, he kept none. But he had given some to somebody - I had forgotten, but talking to you brings it back. There was a priest, in his hometown, who took an interest in Oriental drugs. I forget why - their medicinal value, their spiritual properties? Something like that. Dedo confessed his habits to the priest, and was granted absolution. Then the priest asked to see the work he did under the influence of hashish. Dedo sent him a painting - only one, I remember now." Part I, Chap. 1, p. 20

"There were no prices on the works: a deliberate policy. People had the feeling that any mention of cash would be greeted with a disapproving frown from one of the elegantly dressed assistants. In order to maintain their self-esteem, patrons would tell themselves that they, too, were part of this world where money was a mere detail, as insignificant as the date on the check. So they spent more. Charles Lampeth was a businessman first, and an art lover second." Part I, Chap. 2, pp. 25-26

"Conversation broke out in scattered places, and gradually spread until it filled the room with a continuous buzz, and the crisis was over. It had been a bad mistake to tell Usher the news here in the gallery at a reception: there was no doubt of that. Lampeth had made the decision at the end of a long, exciting day. In future he would go home early, or start work late, he resolved. He was too old to push himself." Part I, Chap. 2, p. 35

"So they don't buy, and the painter dies young. Then, in a few years' time, one or two perceptive people begin to see what he was getting at, and they buy his pictures - from friends he gave them to, from junk shops, from flyblown art galleries in Bournemouth and Watford. The price rises, and dealers start buying the pictures. Suddenly the artist becomes (a) fashionable and (b) a good investment. His paintings fetch astronomical prices - fifth thousand, two hundred thousand, you name it. Who makes the money? The dealers, the shrewd investors, the people who had enough taste to buy the pictures before they became trendy. And the auctioneers, and their staff, and the salesroom, and their secretaries. Everybody but the artist - because he's dead." Part I, Chap. 3, p. 44

"He drank from his glass, and poured more whisky. Anne said: 'I don't believe you. It would take almost as much genius to copy a great painting, and get it right, as it would to paint it in the first place.'" Part I, Chap. 3, p. 47

"The two began painting furiously. Peter outlined a man leaning on a shovel, dabbed in some grass at his feet, and started to give the man overalls. Mitch began with a face:



the lined, weary face of an old peasant. Anne watched with amazement as the two pictures took shape." Part I, Chap. 3, p. 48

"There had been a time when nothing made him nervous. That was many years ago. He had been a champion schoolboy, distance runner, head prefect, leader of the debating team. It seemed he could do nothing but win. Then he had taken up art. For the umpteenth time, he traced his troubles back to that crazy, irrational decision. Since then he had done nothing but lose. The only prize he had won was Sarah, and she had turned out to be a phony kind of victory. Her and her gold Parkers, he thought. He realized he was clicking the button of the ballpoint compulsively, and stuffed it back into his jacket pocket with an exasperated sigh. Her gold everything, and her Mercedes, and her gowns, and her bloody father." Part I, Chap. 4, p. 51

"He felt curiously free. He had done the unpleasant things he had been obliged to do, and was experiencing a sense of relief, despite the fact that he had achieved nothing. He had not really expected Sarah or her father to cough up - but he had been forced to try. He also felt quite irresponsible toward Sarah. He had rowed with her and pinched her car. She would be furious with him and there was nothing to be done for it." Part I, Chap. 4, p. 60

"Dee strolled through the town aimlessly, killing time before dinner and wondering how to go about searching for the picture in this vast place. Clearly, anyone who knew of the picture's existence could not know it was a Modigliani; and conversely, if anyone knew there was such a Modigliani they would not know where it was or how to find it." Part II, Chap. 1, p. 83

"People hired Joe to help them make money. People with talent: something Joe had never understood, except he knew he didn't have it. Just as Joe couldn't act to save his life, so his clients could not do business. He was there to read contracts, negotiate prices, advise on publicity, find good scripts and good directors: to guide naïve, talented people through the jungle of the show business world." Part II, Chap. 2, p. 98

"He had to go after the lost Modigliani. It would be exactly what he needed - a real find. It would establish his reputation as a dealer and attract flocks of people to the Black Gallery. It was not in line with the gallery policy, but that did not matter." Part II, Chap. 3, p. 106

"Where could he send it to? A piece of paper fluttered down to the ground, having been dragged out of his pocket with pen. He recognized it as the scrap on which he had written Samantha's address. He picked it up." Part II, Chap. 3, p. 116

"He thought about Charles Lampeth as he washed and shaved. Like all the clients, he was under the impression that a small army of detectives worked for the agency. In fact there were only half-a-dozen; and none of them could have done this job. That was part of the reason Lipsey was doing it himself." Part II, Chap. 4, p. 120



"The wrinkled yellow face was completely expressionless, but Lipsey was now sure that this man had put Dee on the track of the picture." Part II, Chap. 4, p. 124

"The idea which had struck him and Mitch simultaneously, that drunken evening in Clapham, had burst with all the freshness and glory of a tropical dawn. It had seemed simple, too; they would paint some fakes, sell them at astronomical prices, then tell the world what they had done." Part II, Chap. 5, p. 131

"It looked as if Miss Sleign, with or without her boyfriend, had not yet arrived at Poglio. It was quite likely: Lipsey had been hurrying, and they had not. They had no idea anyone else was after the Modigliani." Part III, Chap. 1, p. 152

"Today, when a couple of complete strangers had arrived out of the blue, and asked for Danielli by name, they had touched an old, raw nerve in the priest; and he had protected the Jews again. The inquiry was bound in the past, and no longer worth sinning about. Still, he had not had time to think - which was the reason for most sins, and a poor excuse." Part III, Chap. 3, p. 173

"'Young man, do you really think there is a Modigliani here in Poglio? I am no student of these things, but even I know that Modigliani was the greatest Italian painter of this century. It is hardly likely that one of his works lies unnoticed anywhere in the world, let alone Poglio.'" Part III, Chap. 3, p. 175

"The line about representing the estate of a dead collector is great. That makes it plausible that a minor dealer in Nancy should be arranging the sale." Part III, Chap. 4, p. 186

"'No need,' said Tom. 'There are only thirty paintings. I'll have the whole thing sussed out beforehand. Bill here is working with me. The job will take maybe quarter of an hour.'" Part III, Chap. 4, p. 201

"Yes, but what about this: 'The forger covered his trail so well that Scotland Yard believe he must have had the help of an experienced criminal.' I reckon I'm the brilliant forger and you're the experienced criminal." Part IV, Chap. 1, p. 213

"Then take. I am Renalle, the master forger, and I am about to tell you why I did it. I wanted to prove that the London art scene, in its concentration on master-pieces and dead painters, is phony. The best ten dealers in London cannot tell a forgery when they see one. They are motivated by greed and snobbery, rather than love of art. Because of them the money going into art is diverted away from the artists themselves, who really need it." Part IV, Chap. 1, p. 214

"The man picked up the parcel he had brought with him. 'I want two copies of this.' He handed it to Mitch." Part IV, Chap. 1, p. 217



"'Arnaz has us by the balls, Peter,' Mitch says. 'He's the one person in the world who can finger us for the police. All it would take would be one anonymous phone call. And we haven't got out deal with the art dealers yet.'" Part IV, Chap. 1, p. 217

"Cardwell was such a pleasant, charming man, that she began to feel guilty about planning to rob him. Still, he was losing the pictures anyway, and his insurance would pay up. Besides, the Sheriff of Nottingham was probably quite charming." Part IV, Chap. 2, p. 221

"'Well, the painting looked good. It looked like Pissarro, it was signed, and there was a provenance from Meunier's. I thought it was worth eighty-five thousand pounds. He asked sixty-nine thousand, so I jumped at it. He said he was from an agency in Nancy, so it seemed quite simple not used to handling high-priced works. You came back a couple of days later and approved the purchase, and we put the work on display.'" Part IV, Chap. 3, p. 224

"Suddenly Julian realized that, for the first time in his life, he was contemplating murder. He shook his head, as if to clear it of confusion. The idea was absurd. But alongside such a drastic notion, the risk of showing the picture diminished. What was there to lose? Without the Modigliani, Julian hardly had a career anyway. There would be no more money from his father-in-law, and the gallery would probably be a flop." Part IV, Chap. 4, p. 239

"The point is, this had to be smuggled out of the country. The Italian laws do not permit export of works of art without permission, and if we asked for permission they would try to take it from us. I propose to take the painting to London. This means I have to break the laws of two countries - since I shall have to smuggle it into Britain. In order to cover myself, I will require whichever of you bids highest to sign a piece of paper saying that the money was paid to me to cancel a gambling debt." Part IV, Chap. 5, p. 254

"'Well, I went around to the back of the bar and spoke to the wife.' Mike said. 'I simply asked her if this was where Danielli stayed, and she said yes. I asked if he had left any paintings behind, and she showed me this. So I said: "How much do you want for it?" That was when she called her husband. He asked for the equivalent of one hundred pounds.'" Part IV, Chap. 5, p. 254



Topics for Discussion

How does Dee come to think that there is a lost Modigliani?

What is the cause of the problems between Sarah and Julian?

Why is Julian interested in the lost Modigliani?

How does Lipsey find the old man who told Dee about the Modigliani?

What was the art swindle of the century that Peter Usher and his friend Mitch concocted?

What was the reason for the forgeries?

How was the forgery swindle resolved?