

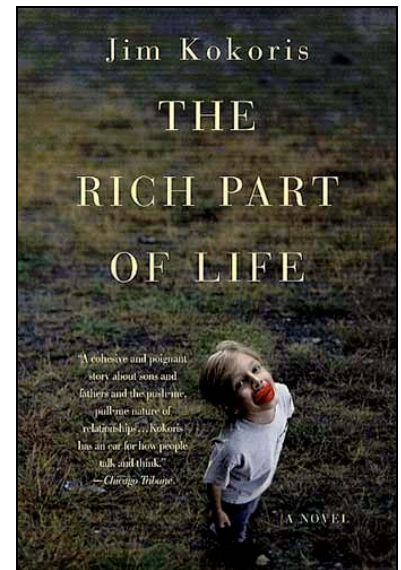
READING GROUP GUIDE

The Rich Part of Life by Jim Kokoris

St. Martin's Press

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Introduction to *The Rich Part of Life*

After Teddy loses his mother to a car accident, he and his young brother are left with their eccentric Civil War professor father, who is more able to discuss Confederate footwear than his sons' day at school. But Teddy's father plays the lottery with his wife's old numbers, and wins \$190 million, immediately transforming their lives forever. For the first time, the family must learn what "the rich part of life" really is. Creating the perfect balance of humor and pathos, Jim Kokoris takes us on an unforgettable journey through the ups and downs of this revelation of unexpected wealth.

Praise for *The Rich Part of Life*

"Mr. Kokoris's talent is evident on every page. He is in touch with the human spirit and offers, in this post-modern world, a refreshing hope for redemption."--Howard Bahr, author of *The Black Flower* and *The Year of Jubilo*

"In *The Rich Part of Life*, Jim Kokoris has created the rarest of literary gems-- a narrator who is pure of heart yet entirely authentic. He writes through the eyes of Teddy Pappas with both clarity and innocence. This debut novelist is one of tremendous promise, and I look forward to all of his future books."--T. Greenwood, author of *Nearer than the Sky* and *Breathing Water*

"A hilarious gem. Kokoris has a David Sedaris-like ear for the lyrical quirks and idiosyncrasies of his ridiculous yet endearing family of characters. A wonderful comic novel on a par with Richard Russo, at once madcap and absurd, with a plot that is always engaging, compelling, and yes, heartwarming."--Richard Rushfield, author of *On Spec*

Reading Group Guide Questions

1. Theo can be a reclusive and emotionally cut-off person. Discuss whether you think that he has doubts about keeping Teddy; remember he is being asked to raise the child of a woman who is going to divorce him.
2. Do you think Bobby Lee really wants Teddy, or is the money his sole motivation?
3. There are many reasons for Theo's attraction to Gloria Wilcott. Do you think he would have continued the relationship if the scene at the country club had not taken place?
4. How are the themes of the random nature of life and luck explored in this novel?
5. At the end of the story, how do you think Theo and Teddy feel about having won the lottery?
6. Do you think the winning of the lottery helps Theo to acknowledge his love for Teddy?
7. How and why do Theo, Teddy, Maurice, Carl the Bear, and Dr. Spiral behave as heroes in this novel? Who do you think is the true hero of the book?
8. Some readers feel that Bobby Lee is more confused than evil. Would you have liked to see him more sympathetically portrayed, or do you think the book needs a "bad guy"?

About the Author

Jim Kokoris lives in the Chicago area with his wife Anne and their three sons. He is a graduate of the University of Illinois. *The Rich Part of Life* is his first novel. Jim's humor has appeared in *The Chicago Tribune*, *USA Weekend*, *The Chicago Sun-Times* and *Reader's Digest*.