

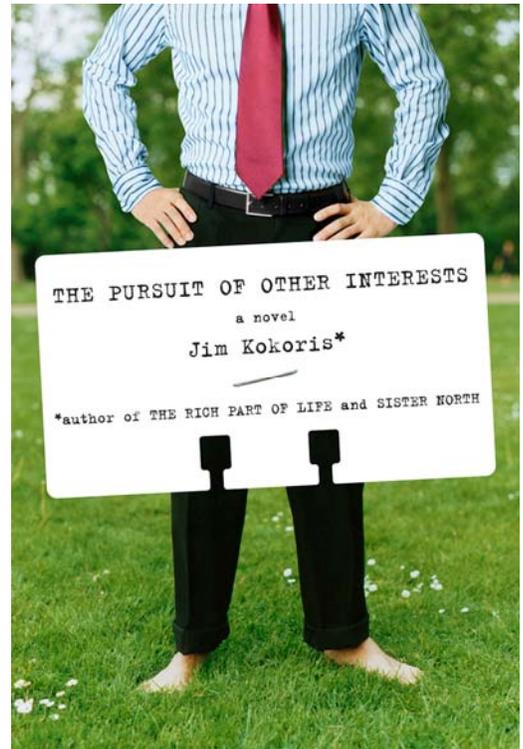


The Pursuit of Other Interests

By Jim Kokoris

ISBN-13: 978-0-312-36548-6

ISBN-10: 0-312-36548-9



About this Guide

The following author biography and list of questions about *The Pursuit of Other Interests* are intended as resources to aid individual readers and book groups who would like to learn more about the author and this book. We hope that this guide will provide you a starting place for discussion, and suggest a variety of perspectives from which you might approach *The Pursuit of Other Interests*.

About the Book

Charlie Baker is a neurotic but charming 50-year-old workaholic CEO of a major Chicago ad agency who seems to have it all: an impressive house in an upscale suburb, an equally impressive salary, the requisite pretty wife and accomplished son. All of this comes crashing down when Charlie is unceremoniously fired. In an instant, his life is transformed from corporate titan to just another out of work American.

For Charlie—an admitted workaholic—a world without a job is a strange world indeed. Rather than tell his family, every morning Charlie leaves home to spend his days at an outplacement firm, where he meets a cast of equally desperate corporate misfits. As Charlie reluctantly embarks on a journey of self-discovery, he finds out what happens when his work life is lost and his real life begins.

Humorous, poignant, and honest, *The Pursuit of Other Interests* offers a glimpse into the lives, hearts, and minds of the 21st-century American family.

Praise for *The Pursuit of Other Interests*

"*The Pursuit of Other Interests* has the absurd hilarity of *And Then We Came To The End* coupled with the poignancy of *Death of a Salesman*. Compellingly readable. Utterly entertaining. Thought provoking. I was hooked by the first line and willingly pulled into the downward spiral of Charlie Baker's life. He's endearing and quirky in an embarrassingly real way. We are all Charlie, single-mindedly chasing after what we think we want, and then, when we get it, realizing we sped past the truly important things in life. Jim Kokoris absolutely nails the character of Charlie, with humor and pathos. I give it two thumbs up and five stars."

--Patricia Wood author of *Lottery*

Praise for *The Rich Part of Life*

"Watertight...so packed with zany Americana that you fear it might burst." --*Los Angeles Times*

"Impressive...a novel of character." --*Newsday*

"A cohesive and poignant story...Kokoris has an ear for how people talk and think." --*Chicago Tribune*

Praise for *Sister North*

"Unexpected, hilarious, and more than worth the trip." --*The New York Times Book Review*

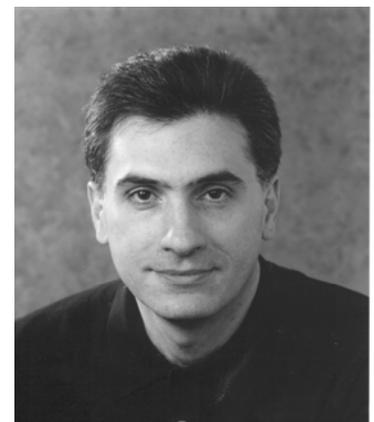
"Few novelists explore, much less capture, the religious imagination with the talent Jim Kokoris invests in these pages. *Sister North* is an impressive achievement."- *Chicago Tribune*

"A compelling story of forgiveness and spiritual awakening . . . imaginative, deeply felt." --*The Dallas Morning News*

"A tender poignancy permeates this charmingly profound yet deviously humorous portrait of redemption and renewal." --*Booklist*

About the Author

JIM KOKORIS's work has appeared in the *Chicago Tribune Sunday Magazine*, *USA Weekend*, *Chicago Sun-Times*, and *Reader's Digest*. He is the author of the novels *The Rich Part of Life*, which has been published in 15 languages and for which he won a Friends of American Writers Award for Best First Novel, and *Sister North*. A graduate of the University of Illinois, Jim lives with his wife and their three sons in the Chicago area. Visit Jim Kokoris online at www.jimkokoris.net



Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think Charlie is a workaholic? Why do you think *anyone* is a workaholic?
2. Do you think Charlie would have come to the same conclusions about his life and his family if he hadn't been fired?
3. At one time, Charlie seemed to have had a more balanced life. What do you think happened? Can success change people that dramatically?
4. Do you think Donna really wanted to divorce Charlie at one point? Do you think she would have if he hadn't started changing?
5. If Charlie had gone to the interview and been offered the job at Xanon, do you think he would have accepted it?
6. Do you think people like Charlie can really change? Or do you think he might eventually return to his workaholic ways?
7. What do you think happens to the Bakers?

**To have Jim Kokoris visit your reading group
or call-in for discussion contact:**

jim@jsha.com



Contact us at readinggroup@macmillanusa.com
Don't forget to check out our monthly newsletter!
www.readinggroupgold.com