

BLINDSIDED

Discussion Guide



Jay Giles

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About this book:

Matt Seattle, a stockbroker in Sarasota, Florida befriends an older stock enthusiast, Joe Jesso. The two fall into a comfortable habit of spending Wednesday mornings together talking about Joe's passion—stocks. One Wednesday, Joe announces—out of the blue—he's gotten married, but refuses to tell Matt much about his new wife.

Matt suspects the new wife may have married Joe for his money. He never expected, however, that a week later Joe would be dead. Convinced he should have done more to help his friend, Matt hires a private investigator, Tory Wright, to look into Joe's death and whether his new wife might have been a 'black widow'.

Tory discovers Joe Jesso wasn't an innocent old geezer. Matt is **Blindsided** by one revelation after another about his friend. Worse, Joe's past places Matt squarely in harm's way. For Matt, who came to Sarasota to rebuild his life after the loss of his family, these new troubles seem insurmountable: The shyster lawyer helping Joe's wife wants money. The National Association of Securities Dealers wants to pull his broker's license. And the head of the drug cartel—from which Joe appropriated money—wants Matt dead.

Matt's only way out is a self-described 'crazy idea'. Can he and Tory pull it off? The surprising twists and turns will keep you guessing right up until the end, when, boom, you're **Blindsided** by the unexpected conclusion.

Discussion questions:

1. Matt Seattle is a normal guy. How does what we know about Matt help us relate to him? How important is it to a story that you strongly identify with the protagonist? How would this story have been different if Matt was less an 'everyman' more a 'James Bond' figure?
2. Matt wanted to protect Joe and keep his new wife from taking advantage of him. Is that realistic? What would you have done to try and help Joe? Do you know an older person who has been victimized? What could have been done in that case to help?
3. Matt draws strength from two very different sources: Dr. Adele Swathmore, his psychologist; and Eddie, his Springer Spaniel. How is the assistance of each crucial to Matt? How are their roles important to the story?

4. At one point in the story, Matt quotes his dad; “For things to get better, they must first get far worse”. Could Matt’s situation have gotten better immediately? Is this a truism of how life works? How many things in your own life have had to worsen before being resolved for the better?
5. When Matt first arrives in Sarasota and opens his brokerage he knows no one. The people he deals with in the course of running his business become friends. Because of Matt’s good-heartedness, as the story progresses, we see these friends become an ‘extended family’. How does this help Matt deal with the loss of his family? How does it affect Matt’s ability to extract himself from this ordeal?
6. William Wilder, aka, Wild Will, Willy the Kid, is a classic ‘gunsel’ character. What other gunsels from detective and mystery novels can you name? What qualities identify Wilder as a gunsel?
7. Paul Raines, the D.E.A. agent, and Lt. Brock Ellsworth of the Sarasota Police seem to be at odds on the best way to help Matt. If you were Matt, how would you have tried to reconcile what these two men are telling you? How does this conflict build tension and suspense?
8. Within the story, Fish’s courtship of Janet serves as a sub-plot. How does this sub-plot move the main story along? How does Fish’s courtship of Janet compare with the developing relationship of Matt and Tory?
9. Discuss the novel’s ending. Should a thriller have this type of ending? How does the Epilogue add to the ending?