



## Now You See Him

By Eli Gottlieb  
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### Introduction

His name was Rob Castor. Quite possibly, you've heard of him. He became a minor cult celebrity in his mid-twenties for writing a book of darkly pitch-perfect stories set in a stupid sleepy upstate New York town. Several years later, he murdered his writer girlfriend, and then committed suicide. . . .

With extraordinarily luxuriant and evocative prose, award-winning author Eli Gottlieb takes us deep into the human psyche, where the most profound of secrets are kept. *Now You See Him* is a wrenching and enthrallingly suspenseful story that mines the explosive terrains of love and paternity, marriage and its delicate intricacies, family secrets and how they fester over time, and ultimately the true nature of loyalty, trust, friendship, envy, deception, and manipulation.

### Questions for Discussion

1. How do the revelations at the end of the book condition your understanding of Nick the narrator's stalled marriage? In particular, how much do they explain his strange, numb passivity?
2. What does this book have to say about the way early friendships can subtly determine the course of a life?
3. Typically, in contemporary fiction, the implosion of a marriage is seen through a woman's eyes, but in this case, our narrator is a man. When on page 45 he says, "Truth, at least marital truth, is curved, not straight," is that a male perception?
4. In what way do Nick and his wife's relationship with Doctor Purefoy the therapist reflect a typical American psychotherapeutic experience?
5. After his adulterous kiss with Belinda in the parking lot (page 96), Nick says, "Pity is a vasodilator of the heart, just like love." Pitying his wife, he then pronounces himself more in love than ever. Is that possible? Or is he simply, guiltily trying to excuse himself?
6. Nick Framingham seems to feel that his wife has a monopoly on the affections of his children, and that they turn to her (page 145) on "reflex" for a "first response" to their jokes or when they're in pain. Is that a fair depiction of a typical man's point of view?
7. Did you guess, from drunken Shirley Castor's hints, that Nick was an illegitimate child, or did you have to wait to the end of the book to find out?
8. When Lucy Framingham, in her last scene with her soon-to-be-ex husband (page 258), says, "The thing about Rob is . . . he envied you bad," does that jibe with your sense of the relationship between the two old friends?

### About the Author

Eli Gottlieb's *New York Times* Notable Book, *The Boy Who Went Away*, won the prestigious Rome Prize and the 1998 McKitterick Prize from the British Society of Authors. He lives in Boulder, Colorado.