

# BOOK CLUB KIT

## THE PRISONER OF PARADISE

A FANTASTICAL NOVEL OF TINTORETTO'S  
RENAISSANCE MASTERPIECE



[www.robsamborn.com](http://www.robsamborn.com)

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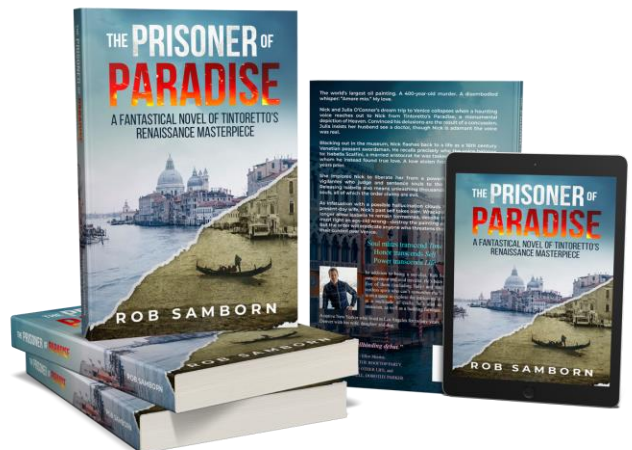
I am thrilled you have chosen *The Prisoner of Paradise* for your book club! In this kit you'll find some materials to help you plan and get inspired for an engaging and fun gathering, including:

- The Prisoner of Paradise Playlist
- Discussion Questions
- A Conversation with the Author
- Suggested Wine Pairings
- Art Inspired by The Prisoner of Paradise

I'm not just an author but a reader.  
There's nothing I enjoy more than  
discussing books with people.

If you're interested in having me attend  
your gathering to answer questions about  
my novel (online unless in-person is  
possible), I'd be honored to be a guest at  
your book club. Please don't hesitate to  
reach out to me at

[author@robsamborn.com](mailto:author@robsamborn.com).

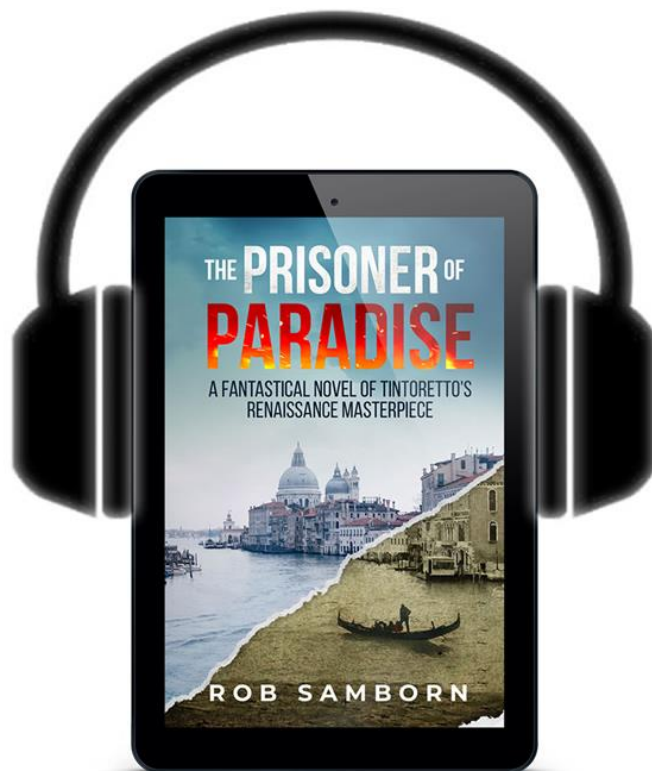




# PLAYLIST

There are a number of songs mentioned in *The Prisoner of Paradise* and I almost always write to music. I curated this playlist with music included in or inspired by the book.

The playlist is available on Amazon Music and you can add it to your Alexa device. <https://robsamborn.com/book-clubs-and-playlist>



# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

***\*\*WARNING: Spoilers ahead!\*\****

1. What is/are the central theme(s) of the book? Did it resonate with you?
2. What would you have done if you were in Nick's shoes? What about Julia's? Have you ever been in a situation in which your significant other was convinced of something that you couldn't believe or strongly disagreed with?
3. Were the souls evil or good?
4. Do you believe in souls? What about soul mates?
5. What were your thoughts on the Order's beliefs? Do you think it's possible that one soul could cross seven lives?
6. Have you been to Venice? If not, did reading the book make you want to go? And if you have been, would you like to return?
7. Though the book is obviously fiction with fantastical elements, did it seem realistic to you? Did you look up anything in the book to see if it's real?
8. Have you ever been so taken with a piece of art or music that you felt attached to it?
9. Many of della Porta's actions are driven by his beliefs and desire to protect the Order. Do you think he's inherently a bad person?
10. When Nick tried to destroy the painting to free Isabella, he was going to release thousands and supposedly evil souls just so he could release one. Were his actions justified?
11. Why did Nick fail in freeing Isabella? Did you want him to succeed?



# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

12. After Nick fails, Isabella tells him to kill Julia so that he can be sentenced into the painting alongside her. Was she doing this because she had been imprisoned for so long she'd do anything to be reunited with Angelo? Or was she actually a vindictive soul who would kill anyone who got in the way of her own happiness?
13. Did you admire or disapprove of Nick/Angelo and Isabella? What about Julia?
14. Who was your favorite main character? Which character did you relate to the most?
15. Have you ever experienced an unexplainable event that you investigated?
16. The flashbacks were not in chronological order. Did you find this confusing? Why do you think it was done this way?
17. What were your favorite scenes?
18. Did it feel like the Order only operated in Venice? Or is it possible that they're bigger than that?
19. Do you want to read the sequel (*Painter of the Damned*, releasing Oct. 25)?
20. Nick is the main character of *The Prisoner of Paradise* and it takes place in just a few days, but if the story continued for ten years, who would be the main character?
21. Do you have questions for the author?





# A CONVERSATION WITH THE AUTHOR

## **Can you tell us a little about the inspiration behind *The Prisoner of Paradise*?**

I've been to Venice three times and I've found inspiration for different story ideas around every corner. It's such a unique place - beautiful and mysterious. I was inspired to write *The Prisoner of Paradise* on my second trip to Venice, after seeing other paintings by Jacopo Tintoretto, located in the Scuola Grande di San Rocco. His paintings are so lifelike and imbue so much emotion, I couldn't help but wonder who the models were. As the idea for a book about souls trapped in a painting germinated, I researched Tintoretto's work and discovered his masterpiece, *Il Paradiso*, located in the Doge's Palace. In a glance, I knew it was the perfect painting. As I researched the room it was located in, along with the building and the history of the complex and the painting, the idea unfolded before my eyes. I visited the Doge's Palace and *Paradise* on my third trip to Venice.

## **What influences do you see coming through in this novel?**

I consume a massive amount of content, so there's quite a bit, from Dostoevsky's *The Double* to *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. I'm inspired by complex characters and rich plots that transport a reader to another time or place. Most noticeable in *The Prisoner of Paradise* is probably the work of Dan Brown and Diana Gabaldon.

## **What, to you, are the most important elements of good writing?**

In order: character, story, dialogue, active writing, sentence construction & variation.

## **If you could meet your characters, what would you say to them?**

Great question. First off, I'd thank each and every one of them. What I'd say next depends on the character, since they're all individual people. It also matters if they survived to the end. ;-)

## **What's next? Can you tell us anything about what you're currently working on?**

I'm currently working on the third book in the series. The second book, *Painter of the Damned*, releases Oct. 25, 2022 and continues the story, picking up after *The Prisoner of Paradise* ends. Book 2 goes much deeper in all aspects and while it sticks with all the themes and conceits established in book 1, it will take the reader in a very unexpected direction, with heightened stakes. Book 3 expands on all of that exponentially. As the reader continues deeper into the series, in retrospect, they'll look at book 1 as an origin story in some respects.



*Rob and his wife, Tiffani, a few years back on a trip to Venice.*

# SUGGESTED WINE PAIRINGS

## REDS



2019 Isola Augusta Schioppettino delle Venezie IGT

*Juicy style from an environmentally-conscious family winery in Venezie.*

~\$17

<https://www.wine-searcher.com/find/isole+augusta+schiodpetino+igp+venezie+italy>

2018 Banfi Centine Toscana

*Vibrant Super-Tuscan with fine tannins and a pleasant heft. (Rob's choice!)*

~\$12

<https://www.totalwine.com/wine/red-wine/sangiovese/banfi-centine-tuscan-red/p/2607750>

## WHITES



2020 Tiefenbrunner

*Bright, quaffable Pinot Grigio from Trentino-Alto Adige.*

~\$13

<https://www.totalwine.com/wine/white-wine/pinot-grigiopinot-gris/tiefenbrunner-pinot-grigio/p/11327750>

2020 Tenuta Sant'Antonio Scaia Bianca

*Well-made Venetian white from a unique blend of Garganega, Trebbiano Soave & Chardonnay.*

~\$13

<https://www.wine-searcher.com/find/tenute+st+antonio+scaia+bianca+garganega+chard+veneto+igp+italy/2020/usa>

**Wine Pairings by True Wine, Inc.**

Learn wine the fun way with the [wine education app](#) used in over 50 countries around the world.

[www.truewine.io](http://www.truewine.io)



# PRISONERS OF ART

Prisoners of Art is a collective of Venetian artists who have created artwork inspired by *The Prisoner of Paradise*. The collective is made up of the fabulous artists below. Please follow them on Instagram, as well as the collective's page. Below is a sample of their incredible work. For information on purchasing originals or prints, please contact the artists directly or Rob. Additional artwork and shows coming soon!

Andrea Marin: <https://www.instagram.com/andreamarindrawings/>

Carla Bagno: <https://www.instagram.com/carlabagno/>

Franco Sergio Bianchi: [https://www.instagram.com/abstract\\_venice/](https://www.instagram.com/abstract_venice/)

Gianni D'Este Widmann <https://www.instagram.com/widmannvenezia/>

**PRISONERS OF ART:** <https://www.instagram.com/theprisonersofart/>



Rio del Ghetto  
Gianni D'Este Widmann



Paradiso di Tintoretto  
Franco Sergio Bianchi



Enzo Paganelli  
Andrea Marin



Poveglia  
Carla Bagno





# THANK YOU

Thank you for including *The Prisoner of Paradise* in your book club. It's an honor and I'm grateful. As a small token of appreciation, I'd love to send everyone in your book club bookmarks and signed bookplates that can be affixed to the inside cover of your books (unless we meet in person, in which case I'll sign all the books).

Please follow me on social media! You can find my links on my website:  
<https://robsamborn.com/inquiries>

I sincerely hope you liked *The Prisoner of Paradise* and found it to be both thrilling and thought-provoking. If you enjoyed the novel, please consider to take a few moments to leave a review on Amazon, Goodreads or the place of purchase, or social media to help spread the word.

Debut authors rely on reader reviews and are grateful for each one. You have my heartfelt thanks for your readership and support!

