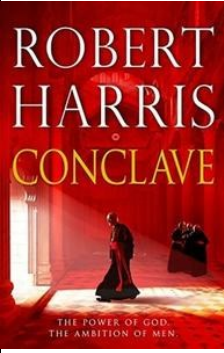




Discussion Guide



About the Book:

Conclave

Author: Robert Harris

Vintage Press, 2016

Website www.penguin.co.uk/authors/165242/robert-harris

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Questions for Discussion

1. What were your general impressions of this book?
2. What has been your involvement with the Catholic church? What was your knowledge about the pope selection process prior to reading? Do you think it was an accurate portrayal? Why or why not?
3. In what ways did the author's descriptions help you imagine the setting for the Conclave? What surprised you about the physical places where this story took place?
4. The story is told primarily through the lens of the "Dean" Lomeli. What did you think of this character? Why do you think the pope chose him as a manager? In what ways he do his job well?
5. Do you think this story provides a positive perspective on the Catholic church and the pope selection process? Explain.
6. Discuss what you thought of each of the cardinals who received numerous votes. Bellini, Lomeli, Benitez, Adeyemi, Tedesco, Tremblay.
7. Did you figure out who would be chosen in advance? What did you think of the final outcome?
8. How do you think the Catholic church developed this process to choose a next pope? Do you think that process should be changed? Why or why not?
9. Would you read another book by this author? Why or why not?
10. What do the MAMs have to say about the book? Whom do you agree with?

Listen on YouTube:

Robert Harris | Conclave LFF Premiere Red Carpet Interview (3:32)

Robert Harris - Conclave - Truth Vs. Fiction (1:48)

Robert Harris Discusses Getting into the Head of a Cardinal (2:09)



NANCY: A wonderfully written, intriguing story that captures an imaginary pope selection process. With a backdrop of the Sistine Chapel and the Vatican, Harris crafted believable characters and carries us along through riveting disclosures and ballots. It makes me wonder how much the story compares to real life.



ABIGAIL: In the Amish church, they chose their leaders by lot. This process seems better than that! I enjoyed reading this book. The Catholic church has such a hierarchy, foreign to our Quaker church. Mostly, I just found it very interesting to read, trying to imagine what it's like for the cardinals.



SALLIE: I didn't think I'd like this book, but it was a good read. I also watched the movie, which captured the story well, but I liked the detail in the book better. Very believable. I liked the interactions of the characters vying to be Pope. Certainly a different way of doing things than in my Church of the Brethren!



PRISCILLA: A very strange process to select a pope! I had no idea. We certainly don't have anything like this in my church, either. I really liked the Dean character. He did a great job handling the issues that came up and challenging the cardinals to make a good choice. And I liked how he prayed, too, even though it was hard.



MOLLY: Yes, I agree with Priscilla, a very weird process. Made me realize I don't really know much about the Catholic church. How did that College of Cardinals develop? The white and black smoke signals? Very realistic that when they almost elected a Black pope, something else happened. Typical.



JANE: I've been to the Vatican and the Sistine Chapel, so I enjoyed imagining the setting in which this all took place. Very cool. I watched the movie, too, and the scenery is quite dramatic. I liked Sister Agnes. She had guts!



KATHARINE: I thought he did a good job characterizing the factions and failings within the Catholic church. It was also a very believable, with an inside view of the pope selection process, which is shrouded in secrecy for the most part. This would be great for students studying the development of the church.