

***Stealing Ghosts* by Lance Charnes**
Discussion Questions

1. The back-cover synopsis for this novel says that Matt's "doing a bad thing for the best of reasons." Can good intentions make up for doing the wrong thing? How do Matt's and Carson's sins stack up against those of the other characters (seen and unseen)?
2. Put yourself in Ron Bowen's and Julie's positions. If the only way you can retrieve a priceless family treasure is to steal it, would you? If not, how else might you get that treasure back if legal measures have failed?
3. Do you have mementos of your grandparents or earlier relatives? If so, are there some that seem more precious than others? Why are they special? What resonance do you find in Julie saying about her grandmother's other paintings (p. 282 in the print edition), "Those are just things she owned. This [meaning the portrait] is *her*"?
4. Did Julie become Gillian, or was she Gillian all along? Use examples from the text to support your conclusion.
5. Have you ever been in a romantic relationship with someone of a significantly different age? If so, were you the older or younger participant? Why did you do it? What did you learn from the experience?
6. Is Ute Kinigader a victim or co-perpetrator of her father's crimes? Why?
7. Matt and Geisman debate how they should deal with Ute Kinigader after they interview her (Chapter 63, starting on page 298 of the print edition). Whose argument do you agree with more: Matt's, or Geisman's? Why? What third approach can you propose that they didn't discuss?
8. Part of Matt's motivation to finish this project is to atone for what he helped do to Ida Rothenberg, a Holocaust survivor his gallery cheated. Do you think he succeeds? Why or why not? What's your definition of "atonement" or "redemption" in this situation?
9. Who was your favorite character, and why? Who was your least-favorite character, and why? Who was the strongest character, and what made him/her seem that way to you?
10. If you also read *The Collection*: Describe how you think Matt's and Carson's relationship has changed from that story to this one. Why do you think this change happened? What do you expect of their relationship in future stories?
11. With which character do you identify with most closely? Why?
12. Did anything happen that surprised you? If so, what and why?