



# A Gentleman in Moscow



## About the Author:

Born and raised in the Boston area, Amor Towles graduated from Yale College and received an MA in English from Stanford University. *A Gentleman in Moscow* was published in 2016 and remained on the New York Times bestseller list for more than a year. Towles has also written a number of short stories and the introduction to the 75th anniversary edition of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *Tender is the Night*. Before becoming a writer, Towles worked as an investment professional for over twenty years and now writes full time in Manhattan, where he lives with his wife and children.

## Inside the kit:

- (8) copies of the book
- (1) book club guide

## About the Book:

(from the back cover)

When, in 1922, thirty-year-old Count Alexander Rostov is deemed an unrepentant aristocrat by a Bolshevik tribunal, he is sentenced to house arrest in the Metropol, a grand hotel near the Kremlin. An indomitable man of erudition and wit, Rostov must now live in an attic room as some of the most tumultuous decades in Russian history unfold. Unexpectedly, the Count's reduced circumstances provide him entry into a world of emotional discovery as he forges friendships with the hotel's denizens. But when fate puts the life of a young girl in his hands, he must draw on all his ingenuity to protect the future she deserves.

## Suggested Reads:

*Bel Canto* by Ann Patchett

*Peculiar Ground* by Lucy Hughes-Hallett

*There, There* by Tommy Orange



# A Gentleman in Moscow

1. To what extent is *A Gentleman in Moscow* a novel of purpose? How does the Count's sense of purpose manifest itself initially, and how does it evolve as the story unfolds?
2. Over the course of Book Two, why does the Count decide to throw himself from the roof of the Metropol? On the verge of doing so, why does the encounter with the old handyman lead him to change his plans?
3. The Count's life under house arrest is greatly influenced by his relationship with four women: Nina, Marina, Ann, and Sofia. What is the nature of the Count's relationship with each of these women? How do those relationships differ from his relationship with the members of the Triumvirate—Andrey and Emile?
4. The majority of *A Gentleman in Moscow* is told in the third person from the Count's point of view. There is, however, an overarching narrator with a different perspective than the Count's. Initially, this narrator appears in footnotes, then in the Addendums, then in the historical introductions of 1930, 1938, and 1946. How would you characterize this narrator? How does he differ from the Count in terms of his point of view and tone of voice? What is his role in the narrative?
5. In the 1946 chapter, Miska, Osip, and Richard each share with the Count their perspective on the meaning of the revolutionary era. What are these three perspectives? Are you inclined to agree with one of them; or do you find there is some merit to each?
6. How does the narrative incorporate the passage of time, and does it do so effectively? Thematically speaking, how does the Count's experience of Time change over the course of the novel and how does it relate to his father's views as embodied by the twice-tolling clock? What does the novel suggest about the influence of individuals on history and vice versa?
7. At the opening of Book Five, the Count has already decided to get Sofia out of Russia. What occurs over the course of Book Four to lead him to this decision? Why does he choose to remain behind?
8. Near the novel's conclusion, what is the significance of the toppled cocktail glass in Casablanca?
9. This is a novel with a somewhat fantastical premise set half a century ago in a country very different from our own. Nonetheless, do you think the book is relevant today? If so, in what way?