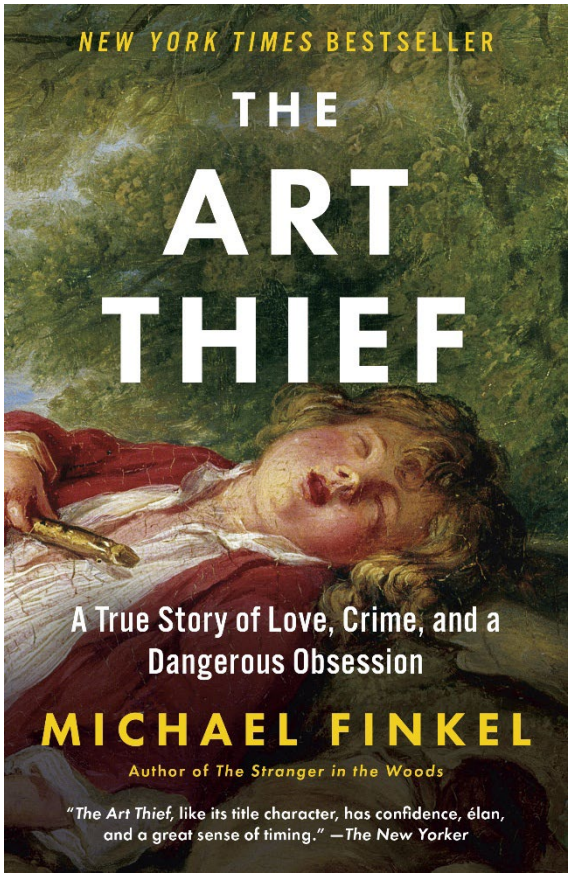
The Art Thief
by Michael Finkel

Martin County Library System Book Discussion Kit:

The Art Thief by Michael Finkel



Included in the Kit:

- Book summary
- Author biography
- Discussion questions
- Recipe suggestions

Book summary

Stéphane Bréitwieser is the most prolific art thief of all time.

He pulled off more than 200 heists, often in crowded museums in broad daylight.

His girlfriend served as his accomplice.

His collection was worth an estimated $2 billion.

He never sold a piece, displaying his stolen art in his attic bedroom.

He felt like a king.

Until everything came to a shocking end.

In this spellbinding portrait of obsession and flawed genius, Michael Finkel gives us one of the most remarkable true-crime narratives of our times, a riveting story of art, theft, love, and an insatiable hunger to possess beauty at any cost.

Source: PenguinRandomHouse.com

https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/611687/the-art-thief-by-michael-finkel/

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Meet the Author

Michael Finkel is the author of *The Art Thief, The Stranger in the Woods*, and *True Story*, which was adapted into a 2015 motion picture. He has reported from more than 50 countries and written for *National Geographic, GQ, Rolling Stone, Esquire, Vanity Fair, The Atlantic*, and *The New York Times Magazine*. He lives with his family in northern Utah.



Photo: © Doug Loneman

Source: GoodReads.com

https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/206768.Michael_Finkel

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Discussion Questions

1. Discuss Breitwieser's views on museums as "prisons for art." What do you see as the purpose and role of museums?
2. Breitwieser also says, “The story of art is a story of stealing.” What did he mean by that and to what extent do you agree? How does Breitwieser’s story fit into the history of stolen and looted art over centuries?
3. Breitwieser stole over $2 billion worth of art but did not try to sell or profit from it. What does this say about his motivations?
4. Why do you think Breitwieser was so obsessed with art? What drove his compulsion to steal it?
5. Are you a big art fan? To what degree can you empathize with Breitweiser’s passion for and visceral reaction to art? Or is there anything else that you feel as passionately about?
6. Why do you think Breitweiser was seemingly unable to stop stealing art, despite multiple close calls? What parallels do you see between Breitwieser’s obsession with art and typical characteristics of addiction?
7. What did you think of Breitwieser's relationship with Anne-Catherine? Was she a victim or willing accomplice?
8. How did Breitwieser's childhood and relationship with his mother shape his personality and later actions?
9. Do you think it’s credible that Breitwieser’s mother never suspected what he was doing?
10. Why do you think Breitwieser’s mother, Mireille Stengel, ultimately reacted by destroying pieces of the collection in such an extreme way? Do you think she deserves some blame for enabling her son’s crimes?
11. Why was Breitweiser so successful in his career as an art thief? What differentiated him from other thieves?
12. How does Breitwieser’s story illustrate the conflict museums face between accessibility and security?
13. Discuss your reactions to Breitwieser. Did you sympathize with him at any point? Why or why not?
14. What do you think happened to the over 80 pieces of stolen art that are still missing?
15. Why do you think we are so fascinated by stories of art theft and heists in general?

Source: bookclubs.com

https://bookclubs.com/discussion-guides/the-art-thief-a-true-story-of-love-crime-and-a-dan

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Recipes

Savory French Market Snack Paper Cones

Serve paper cones filled with: grapes, cubed cheeses, almonds, baguette crisps

This recipe is for a charcutier board but the recipe we create can be “inspired by” this recipe by making individual servings – or just leave it as a board

Charcuterie Board



Ingredients:

- Cheeses (Chose 3, 5, or 7, depending on party size):
- Hard cheeses: manchego, cheddar, swiss, gouda, gruyere, parmesan etc.
- Soft cheese: brie, triple cream, goat cheese, havarti, burrata, cream cheese with pepper jelly on top. Could also you blue cheese or gorgonzola, or anything you like!

Meats:

- Cured Meats like prosciutto, salami, ham, chorizo, capricola, soppressata, summer sausage is a good inexpensive option

Savory accompaniments:

- Nuts: almonds, candied pecans, pistachio nuts, cashews, walnuts, macadamia nuts.
- Briny, pickled or marinated: olives, cocktail onions, cornichons, dill pickles, pepperoncini, olive tapenade or bruschetta.
- Savory Dips and spreads: Whole ground mustard, hummus, ranch, balsamic dip, romesco.
- Cold cut veggies, if desired

Sweet accompaniments:

- Fresh fruit and berries: grapes, apples, pears, oranges, raspberries, blueberries, blackberries, strawberries.
- Dried fruit: apricots, cherries, figs, pineapple, mango

- Sweet spreads: Fig butter, orange marmalade, blackberry jam or other sweet spreads.
- Chocolate: a few pieces of quality dark chocolate or chocolate covered nuts.

Crackers:

- Pita crackers, whole grain crackers, croccantini, or your favorite kind of crackers
- Toasted baguettes or mini toasts crackers

Instructions:

Choose your board, depending on your party size. You could always use multiple boards if needed. See my notes in the post for more board ideas and links.

Start with the cheese as it anchors the board. Work in odd numbers, so, depending on the size of your party, choose 3, 5, or 7 types of cheeses to place around the board.

Fold and add the meats: fold them in half and fan them out like a dec of cards, or folding them in half twice, so they are easy to grab. For thin meat (like prosciutto) fold them in a light and airy ribbon. Watch my video for visuals on how to fold cured meats before placing them on the board.

Add savory and sweet accompaniments. Separate colors in a way that allows the brightest colors to stand out and place foods together that pair well together. For example, mustard, briny foods and nuts near salami and sopresseta, and sharp cheeses like parmesan. Pair sweet accompaniments like fresh fruit, jams, and candied nuts, near the brie cheese or goat cheese. Cheddar cheese pairs well with savory and sweet.

Fill in extra space with crackers, and then any extra gaps with nuts or fruit.

Source: TastesBetterFromScratch.com

https://tastesbetterfromscratch.com/charcuterie-board/

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Chef John's Peach Blackberry Flognarde

Ingredients:



- 1 ¼ cups milk
- ⅔ cup white sugar
- ½ cup whole wheat flour
- 3 eggs
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- ½ teaspoon fresh thyme leaves
- ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 pinch salt
- 1 pint fresh blackberries
- 1 fresh peach, sliced

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Butter a casserole dish.

Whisk milk, sugar, and flour together in a large bowl. Add eggs, vanilla extract, thyme leaves, black pepper, and salt; whisk until batter is smooth.

Spread blackberries and peach slices out in the prepared casserole dish. Pour batter over the top.

Bake in the preheated oven until fruit is hot and batter is set, about 45 minutes. Cool completely.

Source: AllRecipes.com

https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/237500/chef-johns-peach-blackberry-flognarde/