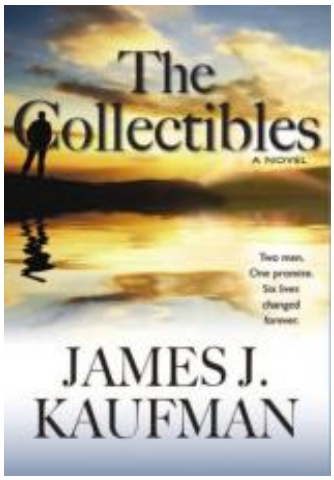
The Collectibles

by James J. Kaufman



About the Book

"Do what the other fella can?t. Be what the other fella ain?t, and then help the other fella.?

Joe Hart has never let go of his uncle?s words. An orphan from the unspoiled Adirondack mountains, Joe leaves his humble beginnings and goes on to distinguish himself, first as a Navy submarine commander, then as an attorney unequaled in his field. But Joe's world crashes with an unexpected tragedy.

A child of wealth and privilege from New York?s Upper East Side, Preston Wilson harbors a fear of financial failure. When that fear threatens to become reality, Preston tracks down the one attorney who might be able to save him. Joe reluctantly decides to help --- but only after extracting a promise that Preston will fulfill an unspecified condition when called upon. Preston, desperate, agrees.

Too soon, Joe calls in his unconventional IOU. The self-absorbed Preston balks when Joe tells him he must meet, earn the trust of and care for several people. Each of Joe?s "collectibles" --- none of whom Preston would ever want to know --- has a serious personal challenge. Can Preston find the integrity to make good on his promise to Joe? Does he have a choice?

Discussion Guide

1. Joe Hart distinguishes himself not only by his leadership, but by a rare humanity that compels him to reach out to others who could be viewed as very different from him. In what ways have you reached out to others you would consider different from you? How did it impact you? The other person? Is there a person or group of people you would feel particularly uncomfortable reaching out to? Why?

2. Preston?s fear of being considered a financial failure caused him to make choices that could have resulted in financial

failure --- a self-fulfilling prophecy. What fears have challenged you? How have you overcome them? Who did you turn to for support?

3. Discuss the similarities between Joe and Preston; between Preston and each of the Collectibles.

4. Would you have helped Preston? Why or why not? Why do you think Joe decided to help him? Have you ever been in a situation where someone that you didn?t particularly want to help asked for your help? How did you respond? Under what circumstances do you believe it?s okay not to help?

5. Could you have made the three promises to Joe: to tell him everything, to tell him the absolute truth and in the future to do something for him no matter what it was? Why or why not?

6. At one point Joe Hart tells Preston Wilson, ?Sometimes in life you have to have enough faith to make an irrevocable commitment.? Describe a time in your life when you made such a commitment. What were the challenges in honoring that commitment? How has the situation turned out? Was it worth it?

7. Joe?s wife, Ashley, nicknamed the people he helped the ?Collectibles.? Commonly, collectibles are sought-after knick-knacks or other objects of value. Why would Ashley choose this nickname? Was it appropriate?

8. Which of The Collectibles would you feel most comfortable meeting? In what ways would you have offered help? How did Joe offer help?

9. What do you think Preston learned from each of the Collectibles? What did you learn?

10. How do you think Joe?s death will affect each of the Collectibles? Do you think Preston will fulfill his promise to Joe? Will Preston and Marcia stay married?

Author Bio

An attorney, businessman and former judge, James J. Kaufman has published several works of non-fiction.

THE COLLECTIBLES, his debut novel, draws heavily from his experiences in law, his dealings in the business world, and his interactions with people from widely different backgrounds. Kaufman lives in Wilmington, North Carolina, with his wife, Patty, and is working on his second novel. Visit his website, http://www.jamesjkaufman.com.

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