

Reading Group Discussion Guide

One from Without by Jack Fuller

1. How do people keep their integrity intact in a large organization that makes demands that are difficult and complicated. These bring into question matters of character, sense of self, ethical beliefs, and moral standards
2. Have you ever found yourself in a professional situation where you've been forced to negotiate your integrity? What "aspects" of your private self are non-negotiable? Do you think people tend to negotiate away important things about themselves too quickly and easily? Are job-related or social pressures more likely to cause this to happen?
3. What do you think the title, *One from Without*, means? How does it offer the reader a way to think about any themes of self-identity and integrity, or any other main issues in the novel?
4. A central question in *One from Without* is whether to make the security breach public or hope it goes away. How each character answers that question reveals to us who they really are. What is the role of crisis in revealing character?
5. Have changes in the world we live in put greater strain on people's capacity to withstand outside pressures? Has the increase in attention to privacy on the one hand and secrecy on the other affected the balance?
6. Is the era of "Big Data" already a reality that affects how we live our lives? What are some of those effects and do they make life better or worse? Are you comfortable with companies on the internet, for example, or in credit reporting firms, learning so much personal information about your habits and interests?
7. How do you feel about the lack of privacy in today's world? And do you think there are places where privacy should not be a factor?
8. Before reading *One from Without* were you familiar with the "three body problem"? What are your thoughts on the concept? How does it relate to the novel?
9. When Grace Bondurant shows up in Rosten's life after such a long time, she seems to offer him a second chance for the life he missed out on, or at least a chance at redemption. How much does he risk by his confession to her and what does that confession say about him? How does it influence their relationship and how does that relationship evolve over time?
10. Were you surprised at the choices Rosten makes in the end? Is he protecting the company or the CEO Joyce, or does he have other motives?
11. This story has aspects of corporate intrigue and the pressures of corporate culture sandwiched around a spy thriller. Yet, it ends almost as a romance. How do these various aspects work together to create a more complex, believable story?
12. Is the ending satisfying to you? What do you think happens to the various characters after the novel ends?

13. Robert Olen Butler says that Rosten is “all of us,” an everyman. In what sense is this true and how does Rosten compare to other classic characters you’ve read?

14. Scott Turow mentions that the “deep and compelling” characters “pull you in from the start and propel you through the pages.” *Publisher Weekly* said that “the fascinating lives and personalities” and “the sophisticated depictions of human greed and frailty lead to a surprising, yet believable ending.” Do you agree?

15. Jack Fuller is a Pulitzer Prize winning editorial writer who also ran a major corporation and served on the Boards of others. His career began with a stint in Vietnam writing for the *Stars & Stripes*, and he spent time at the Justice Department where he worked with both the FBI and CIA. Fuller himself has said, “*One from Without* is a novel that took a lifetime for me to be ready to write. It’s the story of life at the top of a public company at the edge of disaster ... and of the key executives desperate to save it one way or another. It’s a world I lived in.” Discuss in what ways these life experiences bring authenticity to the plot and details in the novel?