

Reading Group Guide
THE THREE-DAY AFFAIR
By Michael Kardos

AUTHOR BIO

Michael Kardos is the author of the novel *The Three-Day Affair* and the award-winning story collection *One Last Good Time*. His short stories have appeared in *The Southern Review*, *Crazyhorse*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Blackbird*, *Pleiades*, *PRISM international*, and many other magazines and anthologies, and were cited as notable stories in the 2009, 2010, and 2012 editions of *Best American Short Stories*. Michael grew up on the Jersey Shore, received a degree in music from Princeton University, and played the drums professionally for a number of years. He has an M.F.A. in fiction from The Ohio State University and a Ph.D. from the University of Missouri. He lives in Starkville, Mississippi, where he is an associate professor of English and co-director of the creative writing program at Mississippi State University.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- Discuss the significance of the title.
- Which character did you find yourself identifying with most? Why?
- How do your feelings toward Will, Jeffrey, and Nolan change throughout the novel? What about toward Marie?
- Will narrates the novel in first person. How do you feel about the way he tells his story and reveals information? What does his storytelling approach say about him?
- To what extent are Will, Jeffrey, Nolan, and Evan “ordinary guys”? To what extent are they not?
- *Publishers Weekly* praises the novel’s “vicious closing sting.” What, specifically, do you think the magazine was referring to? What did you find to be the novel’s biggest surprise?
- Do the characters’ actions conform to what you believe about human nature?
- How do the two primary settings—the recording studio and the Princeton University campus—contribute to the novel?

- At what points in the novel does power shift between the guys and Marie?
- Does it matter that these men attended an Ivy League college? How would the novel be different if they'd gone to college someplace else?
- Discuss the role of music in the novel.
- How do the literary works referred to in the novel—Sartre's play *No Exit*; Fitzgerald's novel *The Great Gatsby*; the short stories of Thomas Mann—help to illuminate the novel's themes?
- William Faulkner wrote, "The past is never dead. It's not even past." How might this quote apply to *The Three-Day Affair*?
- What did you find most surprising?
- Late in the novel, Jeffrey calls Will a "winner." What does he mean? Do you agree?
- Which part of the novel stood out most for you?
- Okay—go for it: Who should play these people in the movie?