

THE MIDCOAST BOOK CLUB KIT ADAM WHITE

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
FOOD & DRINK RECOMMENDATIONS
PLAYLIST



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. “We weren’t friends with the Thatches. The Thatches didn’t have friends,” Andrew says. How are the Thatches viewed within Damariscotta? Early in the novel, did you see them as friendless because they were ostracized, because they were elitist—or something else? Did your opinion change throughout the book?
2. Andrew and Ed’s conversation about the nicknames “Trip” and “Chip” nicely and quickly encapsulates some of the differences between the two men. In what ways do they differ, and in what ways are they similar? What is the source of the friction between them?
3. *The Midcoast* moves back and forth in time. How did this shifting timeline affect your reading experience?
4. Consider the robbery scene in which Ed helps Frank, the elderly man, with a snack and sets him up in the bathroom—while robbing him. What does this tell us about Ed’s character?
5. Did you find yourself sympathizing with the Thatches? Why or why not?
6. What do you think was the turning point for the Thatches? When did things finally go too far?
7. Does Andrew feel more empathy or envy toward Ed and Steph? Talk about Andrew’s complicated relationship to the Thatches.
8. Do you think anything in these characters’ lives would have changed if Andrew had sent Steph Ed’s bracelet like he promised?
9. “If you’re happy all the time, you don’t appreciate anything,” White writes. “You have to have contrast, to have low moments to bring out the high moments in relief.” Do you agree? Why or why not?
10. White writes that in Damariscotta, Allie was the smart girl. But at Amherst, she was a below-average student who was accepted only because she was an athlete from a small town. How does this contrast affect her? How does your opinion of yourself change in different settings, or in different crowds? What have those experiences been like?
11. Discuss EJ and Allie’s relationship. How do their parents put different expectations on each of them? How has this shaped the young adults they’ve become?
12. What did you make of EJ’s involvement in Ed’s operation? What was Ed’s responsibility in this situation as a father? How much blame can we place on the Damariscotta PD—especially Chief Hunt? How complicit is Steph?
13. How has the story of the Thatches challenged, changed, or validated your understanding of the American dream?
14. “Why do I feel the need to distinguish myself at all?” Andrew says of his 9/11 story. “Why would I ever wish, if not for a deeper relationship with a tragic event, for a more unusual relationship with a tragic event?” Have you ever experienced this desire, or an urge to connect yourself to a tragedy? Why do you think we tend to do this?
15. Did you find the ending ambiguous? What do you think happens to everyone in the end?

FOOD & DRINK RECOMMENDATIONS FROM ADAM WHITE

BEER **OXBOW FARMHOUSE PALE ALE**
COCKTAIL **THE BURNT TRAILER**
FIRST COURSE **DAMARISCOTTA RIVER OYSTERS**
SECOND COURSE **MIDCOAST SEAFOOD CHOWDER**
THIRD COURSE **RED'S EATS LOBSTER ROLLS**

BEER

OXBOW FARMHOUSE PALE ALE

From Lincoln County's local brewery, located just this side of Cowshit Corner.



COCKTAIL

THE BURNT TRAILER



- One part Allen's Coffee Brandy
- Two parts Moxie (Maine's official soda)

Serve on the rocks in whatever mug or jar you have on hand. No garnish.



FIRST COURSE

DAMARISCOTTA RIVER OYSTERS

The best oysters in the world. If you can get your hands on some Mookie Blues, start there. Serve with lemon and cocktail sauce, or, if cocktail sauce is in short supply, oyster farmer Bill Mook recommends lime and black pepper.



SECOND COURSE

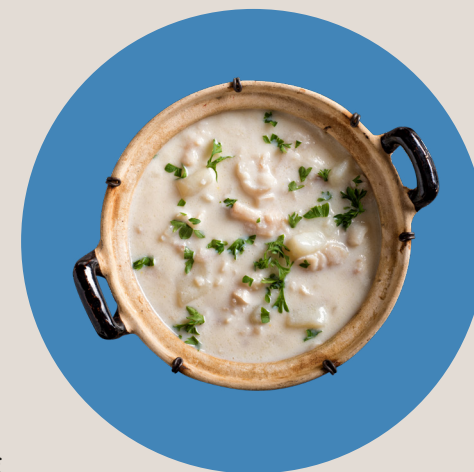
MIDCOAST SEAFOOD CHOWDER

INGREDIENTS

- 1 small yellow onion, diced
- 4 small redskin potatoes, trimmed and diced
- 1 small carrot, diced fine
- 1 stalk celery, diced
- 1 small bulb fennel, diced
- 3 branches thyme
- 1 cup heavy cream or half & half
- 2 cans Bar Harbor Chopped Clams with juice
- ¾ -1 lb. cod or similar white fish
- 1-2 cups chicken broth
- 8 oz. bottle Bar Harbor Clam Juice
- ¾ cup white wine
- 1 tbsp. butter
- Fennel leaves, roughly chopped
- Salt
- Pepper
- Cayenne

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Sauté diced veggies with thyme branches in butter over gentle heat 'til cooked, 4-5 minutes. Lightly season with salt.
2. Stir wine into mixture, increase heat to medium, and cook for 2 minutes.
3. Add chicken broth and bring to a simmer. Mix potatoes, canned clams with juice, and bottled clam juice into mixture and simmer, stirring occasionally, until potatoes are nearly tender, about 10 minutes.
4. Season with more salt, black pepper, and cayenne pepper. Add cream and stir to combine.
5. Stir cod into soup, cover and cook for 3 minutes.
6. Stir gently, reduce heat to medium-low and cook until fish flakes easily with a fork, about 5 minutes. Season again with salt and black pepper.
7. Discard thyme branches and serve while hot, garnished with fennel leaves.



THIRD COURSE

RED'S EATS LOBSTER ROLLS

INGREDIENTS

- Plenty of fresh, cooked lobster meat, including an entire tail (split and de-veined)
- 2 whole claws and knuckle meat
- Split-top hot dog buns
- Melted butter
- Mayonnaise (extra heavy)
- Lemon

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Grill a split-top hot dog bun with Kate's Maine Butter. Brush both sides of the roll with Kate's butter and grill until golden brown.
2. Tear lobster meat (tails, claws, and knuckle meat) into bite-size pieces. Never use a knife; this can impart an oxidized-metal flavor to seafood.
3. Fill the grilled roll with tail, knuckle, and claw meat. Put whole claws at each end of the roll (sticking out).
4. Top the roll with the entire tail, split in two.
5. Serve with Kate's Maine Butter and extra heavy mayonnaise on the side.
6. Let your guests do as they choose. We recommend dipping the tails in the butter.
7. Drizzle the butter over the entire roll.



Red's Eats
World's Best Lobster Shack

Source: [cbsnews.com/news/recipe-reds-eats-lobster-roll/](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/recipe-reds-eats-lobster-roll/)

PLAYLIST

**LISTEN TO THIS PLAYLIST, CREATED BY ADAM WHITE,
ON SPOTIFY**

PROLOGUE. “Rolling Stone” by Bob Marley & The Wailers

Late spring. The coast of Maine. A party. Reggae. Here we go!

I. “Going to California” by Led Zeppelin

Put it in the tape deck and crank up the volume. Andrew’s hitting the road, leaving Maine behind.

2. “Take the Long Way Home” by Supertramp

“When you look through the years and see what you could have been / Oh, what you might have been / If you would have more time.”

3. “Strong Enough” by Sheryl Crow with The Chicks

There’s a very good chance Steph’s listening to this track on the way to Massachusetts. On the way home, too.

4. “Once in a Lifetime” by Talking Heads

“And you may find yourself in a beautiful house, with a beautiful wife / And you may ask yourself, ‘Well, how did I get here?’”

5. “She Came in Through the Bathroom Window” by Joe Cocker

A breaking-and-entering song for a breaking-and-entering chapter.

6. “Caravan” by Van Morrison and The Band

This is what’s on the radio when EJ stays over at his Uncle Chuck’s. Turn it up!

7. “Islands in the Stream” by Dolly Parton and Kenny Rogers

You think Ed’s not singing along in the Silverado? He’s singing along. Top of his lungs. Both parts.

8. “The Eye” by Brandi Carlile

The storm is brewing. “You can dance in a hurricane / but only if you’re standing in the eye.”

9. “Drive-In Movies” by Ray LaMontagne

An artist from Lewiston for a chapter set in Lewiston. “I wanna be the guy who doesn’t like to fight / But who could kick your ass if you touch his girl.”

10. “Wildest Dreams” by Taylor Swift

Allie in college. Freshman year. She’s looking back, out the window of the bus, longing for a past that hasn’t happened yet.

11. “Hero” by Family of the Year

“And we can whisper things / Secrets from our American dreams / Baby needs some protection / But I’m a kid like everyone else.”

12. “Back Down South” by Kings of Leon

A song for EJ. “We’re gonna spit on the rivals / All I wanna know is how far you wanna go / Fighting for survival.”

13. “Most of the Time” by Bob Dylan

“Most of the time / I wouldn’t change it if I could.”

