



Bond Girl

By Erin Duffy
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About the Book

From the moment Alex Garrett steps onto the Cromwell Pierce sales floor, one of the most elite brokerage firms on Wall Street (and is nearly decapitated by a football), it becomes crystal clear her childhood dream job couldn't be more different from her present, frenzied reality. Assigned to the Government Bond desk in the Fixed Income Division, she finds herself one of fewer than a dozen women.

For months she is made to sit and peer over colleagues' shoulders from a child-size folding chair with "Girle"—her floor moniker—inscribed on the back in White-Out pen, with neither a desk nor computer to call her own. Between the hours of 6AM and midnight, she finds herself trekking to the Bronx for \$1,000 wheels of Parmesan cheese, uncovering a secretary's secret Friday night dance party in the conference room, fielding a constant barrage of practical jokes, a love-hate relationship with her boss,

and babysitting a colleague who eats the contents of the vending machine for \$28,000.

Despite friends' pleas for her to quit, Alex keeps her eye on the prize, and advances from lowly analyst to slightly-less-lowly associate in record time. Her colleagues stop calling her Girle and begin calling her Alex; suddenly she has thirty-eight older brothers and one possible boyfriend. And then: The Apocalypse. As her life on "The Street" falls into the depths of intolerable cruelty—both personally and professionally—Alex is forced to choose between accompanying Cromwell Pierce in its descent and kicking off her Jimmy Choos to run for higher ground.

Questions for Discussion

1. Alex is a relatable character for many women despite the fact (and maybe because) she is ambitious and determined to make it in a male dominated world. What does Alex represent that makes her likable to both men and women? Why do you think she's relatable even though many people don't know much about day-to-day life on Wall Street?
2. When we meet Will, he seems to be charming and interested in Alex. Do you think it's possible to pursue a girl while being unavailable? Do you think it's something Alex should have foreseen? What do you think Will's expectations were if he knew he was never going to be with her?
3. Sexual harassment is a prevalent theme in the book. Do you think Wall Street encourages this kind of environment more than other industries? How should Alex have handled the problems with her client? Should she have done anything differently?
4. Chick is a complicated character, but he seems to genuinely care about his employees. Do you think Chick did enough to look after Alex and the other team members, or did he inadvertently encourage the environment by being too nonchalant about some of the attitudes on trading floors? Would you want to work for someone like Chick? Why or why not?
5. Alex and her coworkers are a pretty tight-knit group. How important is camaraderie in the workplace? Do you think it's necessary in order to be successful? Or is this kind of close environment toxic?
6. At the end of the novel, Alex has to make some decisions about what she wants to do with the rest of her life. Should she take the job with Chick and return to Wall Street? Or do you think she should pursue another career? If so, what should she do?
7. Do you think Alex and Will's relationship is an accurate depiction of young love? Do you think she should have heard him out when he tried to apologize to her? What do you think will happen between them in the future?
8. Alex seemed to have been driven to work on Wall Street through a desire to be like her father. How important is family history in determining who you become, and should it play a role at all? Do you think Alex's father would be happy with her decision to quit the firm? Why or why not?
9. Gender roles are explored in the novel. Do you think there's still a glass ceiling for women in certain industries, or do you think in this day and age females are given equal opportunities? Are there some careers that women, by and large, are not cut out for? If so, what?
10. Alex faces multiple challenges in *Bond Girl* that she did not foresee when she took her dream job at Cromwell Pierce—brutally long hours, creepy clients, etc. How has she changed by the end of the novel? What challenges impacted her the most?
11. What movie(s) would you compare your life to? If *Bond Girl* was to become a movie, who would you want to see cast as Alex, Will, or Chick?

About the Author

Erin Duffy graduated from Georgetown University in 2000 with a B.A. in English and has spent ten-plus years in fixed income sales on Wall Street. *Bond Girl* is her first novel.