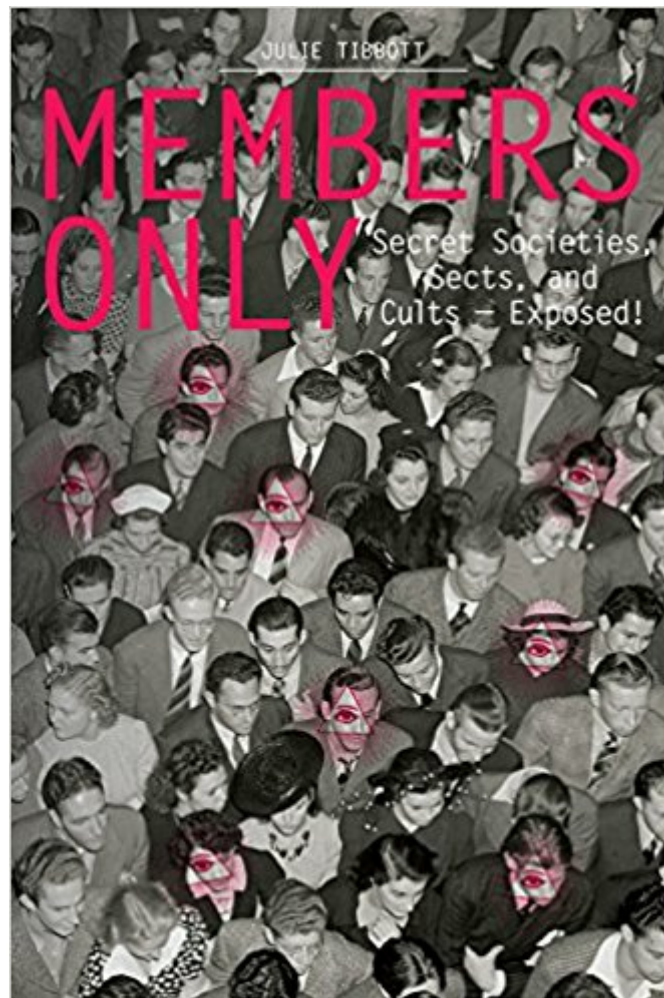




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# Members Only: Secret Societies, Sects, And Cults Exposed!



## Synopsis

No need for secret handshakes or passwords - *Members Only* is your all-access guide to the secret societies, clandestine cults, and exclusive associations that you've always wondered about. Profiling fifty groups, from the centuries-old Freemasons to the snooty Skull and Bones Society to a club just for magicians, this book reveals the secrets of these mysterious organizations - and even tells you how to join up. Get ready to go underground and explore secret worlds that are sometimes shocking, sometimes frightening, and always fascinating.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Gr 6 Up—•This title takes teens behind the shroud of secrecy that surrounds many exclusive groups. With detailed, engaging text and eye-catching photographs, this book will draw in those interested in little-known facts of the deliberately strange. Her short, almost encyclopedic chapters and dry wit will appeal to struggling readers. Despite the title, there are few pages devoted to cults. Moreover, the brief section on "Killer Cults!" and the discussion of the Peoples Temple (whose members committed mass suicide in 1978), along with the inclusion of the violent, left-wing revolutionary group the Symbionese Liberation Army (known for kidnapping heiress Patty Hearst), seem out of place next to sections on bizarre but ultimately harmless groups, such as the Freemasons and the Knights Templar. While the scope of the information is vast and sharply rendered, the book lacks citations. Given this omission, this offering is suitable only for entertainment, rather than for scholarly work. VERDICT An appealing but nonacademic look into a wide variety of secretive groups.—Erinn Black Salge, Saint Peter's Prep, Jersey City, NJ

Julie Tibbott is an editor of teen fiction at a major publishing house. She lives on New York City's Lower East Side, once home to many organized crime syndicates, street gangs, and underground anarchists. She's not a member of any secret societies . . . or is she?

Fascinating book about the underside of society. Tibbott's writing is clear and interesting. I'd recommend to school and public libraries as well as older readers interested in the subject.

The tone of this book is right on point. I really like Ms. Tibbott's voice and subtle sense of humor.

An interesting and diverse look at the different secret societies and cults in the world. Many I have heard of, but didn't know much about them and many I had never heard of before. Full of facts, quirks and history of the different groups. For the groups that I had heard of before, I was able to get a better understanding of who they are, what they represent and the known ins and outs of them. So many times we hear of these groups in passing or bits of them are picked up and used in movies, tv shows and the such, but we just don't really know too much about them to understand if they are being treated incorrectly. I would like to see this book in a larger binding. This is more of a coffee table type book than a sit down and read through, because it doesn't go into the full history of each group, but does give quite a bit of information to get one through the basic understanding of them. I could honestly see this book sparking many a debate in a social atmosphere when friends are getting together. It's also a great book to give to anyone who has such interests, because it gives the reader enough to go on if they want to do further searching on them. Format wise, I liked the back and white photography throughout the book. Something about B&W creates a more classic look and crisper look. I enjoyed the history and where each are now and further info on each group. I didn't like the pages with all the eyes on them though. They started to bother my own eyes after a bit. I recommend this to just about any reader. Yes, there are some cults that it deals with, but it doesn't get into the nitty gritty of them that may affect one adversely. For the spiritual and religious ones, you don't have spirituality thrown in your face, it grazes over it. A good read for just about everyone. The book is marketed for ages 12+ and I agree with that. An interesting, informative and fun read for the masses.

**MEMBERS ONLY: SECRET SOCIETIES, SECTS, AND CULTS - EXPOSED!** by Julie Tibbott  
profiles over fifty mysterious organizations. From cults and clubs to secret societies, young people

will love the facts and folklore surrounding these exclusive and secretive groups. Tibbott's work of nonfiction is well-organized. Each chapter focuses on a different group. A brief outline includes the date it was founded, its status, exclusivity factor, secrecy factor, threat factor, and quirk factor. Along with a photo, a brief history and background start the chapter. Readers then learn about what it takes to become a member and what it's like inside the organization. Many chapters include icons, logos, and other visuals associated with the group. The chapter concludes with a discussion of related topics from zombies to doomsday prophets. The author's conversational approach will appeal to young readers who are made to feel like they're insiders in this "members only" world. Teens who enjoy reading about conspiracy theories, the lives of the rich and famous, and scary cults will all enjoy reading about the fascinating world of exclusive locations and groups. Although many of the groups will be new to readers, others will be familiar. Secret handshakes, hazing, murder, and magic are just a few activities that will keep readers immersed in the short narratives. Many students are likely to use the book as background information to jumpstart their own investigations. While many works of nonfiction sit on the library shelf, students will check out this one along with books about celebrity gossip, magic, and ghost hunters.

This relatively short book covers 22 societies/sects - how one becomes a member, and what the group supports. Some of the synopses were interest, but too many (14) covered arcane and inconsequential groups that I'd never heard of. Here are some of the more interesting ones: Branch Davidians: Founded in 1955, taken over by David Koresh in 1990, and still in existence. Membership consists of the most radical Seventh Day Adventist believers. Members believe scripture to be infallible and prepare for the second coming of Christ. David Koresh joined in 1982, at age 19 and was exiled in 1984 by the son of its then 77-year-old leader with whom Koresh was trying to father a child, per God's wishes. Some of the group followed Koresh, attracted by his preaching. (Members included educated professionals - from across the U.S. and several other nations.) He (and they) returned after her death, conducting marathon Bible study sessions that sometimes lasted 15 hours. In addition to cursing, drinking and having a rock 'n' roll band, Koresh contended he was entitled to have sex with all the sect's women - even those married and including underage girls. (Men were promised perfect mates in heaven.) Children were told to call their parents 'dogs' - only he was to be referred to as their father. Children were convinced that Koresh would return from the grave and punish them if they interacted with or disclosed information to law

enforcement and non-Davidians. Koresh arranged it so that everyone was forced to rely on him and him alone. Eventually complaints about Koresh brought the ATF, FBI, and Texas National Guard, a 51-day standoff, and the deaths of 76 members - including David Koresh. Fortunately, prior to that horrific ending 21 children and 14 adults had been released. The Symbionese Liberation Army (SLA) was founded in 1973, disbanded in 1975. Their initial goals included ending racism, monogamy, the prison system, etc. Their first act of terrorism occurred on 11/6/1973 when they murdered Oakland's black school superintendent because he supported an identification system for students. The next target was Patricia Campbell Hearst - kidnapped 2/4/1974 from her Berkeley home. Her parents became convinced she was being brainwashed. Two months after her abduction, she and four SLA members held up a bank in San Francisco. This was followed by another bank robbery in L.A., and several shootouts. Per Patty, early in her captivity she was kept blindfolded in a closet and forced to have sex. 'I represent divine principle, total equality, a society where people own all things in common, where there's no rich or poor, where there are no races' - Jim Jones. Jonestown, founded in 1956, ended in 1978 after its members' mass suicide in Guyana. Until the mid to late 1970s, all were welcome; after that, only hardcore believers in 'Father' Jim Jones remained. The group had about 3,000 registered members at its high point in mid-1970s California. At religious meetings, dressed in flashy suits and aviator glasses, Jones would cure cancers, restore mobility to the disabled, and read minds. Later, these feats were revealed to be hoaxes. Later, these feats were revealed to be hoaxes - the 'sick' were parishioners in disguise, and the 'cancerous tumors' expelled were chicken livers. Jones had sexual relationships with many members and oversaw the beatings of others. When media scrutiny intensified, Jones and hundreds of followers fled to Guyana in 1977. Armed guards surrounded the compound, preventing anyone from escaping. A California Representative flew there with a TV crew and reporters, and after entry to the compound, agreed to take back 15 residents pleading to be taken back to the U.S. Before their plane could take off, gunmen sent by Jones opened fire - killing the congressman, an NBC reporter, and three others. Knowing this would bring severe repercussions, he instructed followers to drink cyanide-laced grape Flavor Aid - over 900 died that day. Members were surrounded by armed guards and ordered to drink the solution - some had it forced down their throats. Most of the Peoples Temple membership was comprised of the needy and neglected - urban poor, blacks, elderly, ex-addicts and ex-convicts. 'Miracles' were used to attract new members. Jones demanded absolute loyalty from his followers - they were to call him 'Father,' and prioritize their relationship with him above all others. Husbands and wives were separated, and children isolated from their parents and encouraged to inform on them. Transgressions, such as doubting Jones's divinity (reincarnation of Jesus, Buddha, Lenin,

and others) brought beatings and humiliation in front of the congregation; punishments became more severe after the move to Guyana. Jones was addicted to amphetamines and barbiturates. The majority of members were black, though only white women were allowed into the 'Inner Staff' - Jones' spies, couriers, sex partners, and assistants. Jones also accused everyone of being homosexual - except himself. Members were required to give 25% of their salaries to the church. Wrongdoers were shocked with cattle prods, or being put into coffin-like boxes several feet below ground for extended periods of time. All correspondence in/out was censored, and phone calls strictly monitored - with members coached on what to say. Outside relatives feared their friends/family members were brainwashed. Jones had people prove their loyalty by signing blank pieces of paper, blank power-of-attorney forms, and false confessions that they had molested their children, conspired to overthrow the U.S. government, and committed other crimes. Once he tricked a member into putting her fingerprints on a gun and told her he would have someone killed with it and frame her for the murder if she ever left the group. Both men and women were routinely beaten, coerced into having sex with Jones in private and with others in public. Children were tortured with electric shocks, viciously beaten, punished by being kept in the bottom of a jungle well, made to eat their own vomit, and forced to have hot peppers stuffed up their rectums. Residents spend long hours doing hard labor, with very little sleep - sometimes none at all when Jones summoned them out of bed to listen to rants about conspiracies threatening to destroy their community. Combined with inadequate nutrition broke down members' ability to make rational judgments and weakened their psychological resistance. Sometimes members were subjected to suicide drills, during which they were expected to drink vats of liquid Jones claimed was poisoned - as a test of loyalty and to get them used to the idea they might all be asked to take their lives as a sign of faith. Defectors were to be murdered, and loved ones left behind would suffer retribution --> few tried to escape while family members remained in Jonestown. Two escapees later wrote 'Only months after we defected did we understand the fraud, sadism, and emotional blackmail of the master manipulator.'

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