

Reading Group Guide

Stopwatch

1. Do you believe Micah handled the escape from the Wheel as well as could be expected? Should he have made more certain that Micaiah and Walter were with him? What does his handling of the Earth-side business say about him as a Timekeeper, as a leader, apart from his twin brother?
2. Throughout the series so far, Walter has had personal issues, but remains an otherwise solid, staunch character. What does his reaction to imprisonment and subsequent hallucinations say about his mental state? Are they hallucinations or could he have some kind of visitor? How does his invocation of the “one more hour” philosophy help or hurt him? In what other circumstances might an otherwise ordinary person react so passionately?
3. It becomes abundantly clear that Micaiah is far more powerful than he has been given credit for until now, and that he and Rifun have a history. How does this change his role so far? Should he have shown more of his power earlier on? How would things have changed at the warehouse? At the coup? If his excuse was that he was trying to protect his brother, does that justify his action or inaction?
4. While writing, the author made an on-the-fly decision to have Micaiah lose his leg in the escape. (Author: “I didn't realize he'd lost it until it was gone, but I couldn't have them escape everything completely unscathed, and Walter's psychological wounds were nothing new to deal with.”) How does this affect Micaiah as the one everyone looks to for guidance? Do you believe this adversely influences his plans to retake the Wheel?
5. Tommen hasn't really had a normal life in the modern era since he was a little kid, and even then, it was pretty tumultuous. Do you believe the Suppression slowed him down or freed him to be normal? How does it affect his relationship with Becky? His dad? The twins? How does his Suppression affect him considering the Tracker attacks?
6. Walter is told that he is mentally unfit to return to duty right away. Do you agree? Why or why not? What do you believe would be most beneficial to help him return to normal life, knowing that he can't hope to explain his recent ordeal in the black cells?
7. It is revealed that Micaiah's ventures to bars, clubs, and so on were really excuses to go meet his wife, whom he is separated from because of threat from Rifun. Given the power Micaiah has demonstrated so far, what does this say about Rifun? Do you believe there could be something to the Akari, which most have dismissed as mere legend?
8. Kayla insinuates that they are both part of some kind of Akari society separate from the Cult. How does this change the power dynamic surrounding the Time industry normally, as well as the coup and the Cult? Why, if they have so much more power than the average Time Agent, do you believe they have remained so low-key?
9. What role does silence and paranoia play in the decision to attack the Wheel? The only report anyone had about goings-on was the initial trials. In six months of isolated silence, what sorts

of things could one conjure up? What do you believe was going on? Is there a chance Rifun and Cassius might not be quite as fanatically evil as they are made out to be?

10. What do you think of Micaiah's plan to initiate a Time Trial, something akin to suicide for humans? Do you think there could be more motivation behind it than simply trying to wrest control of the Wheel away from Rifun?
11. How does Doug's betrayal affect the battle for the Wheel? Do you think Micaiah should have ordered a retreat? Do you believe others could have been part of the deception? What does that say about the Akarin as a whole? Was it a good idea for Micaiah and the Akarin to press on despite this betrayal and the shifting of the odds against them?
12. Twice now, Rifun has been defeated and he has managed to escape. What does this say about his fighting abilities? His Akari abilities? His character?
13. Do you believe anything in the Time industry will really change now that the Hands have been reinstated?
14. What do you make of Rifun's unusual behavior at the end, both in terms of his reference to "the Author" and his veiled threats against Tommen? Do you believe he has really been defeated?