

# Reading Group Guide

## Time to Kill

1. Early on, it is established that Tommen and Tyler have been fighting since elementary school. Walter states that as long as Tommen doesn't throw the first punch, he can't fault him too much. Given that Tommen is often mocked for being “chivalrous,” could the constant fighting still be considered chivalrous, even if it is always self-defense? *Is* it always self-defense? Could there be another resolution? How does this change later when Tommen decides to take the fight to Tyler and try to “be done” with the fighting?
2. In the original plans/draft of the book, Tommen and Walter were set to have a very strained, very bad relationship—Walter, who was more cop than dad, and Tommen, who was much more rebellious and much less repentant. How does them having a good relationship affect the story for the better? Are there any drawbacks? Which one makes more sense?
3. What sorts of things do you think Tommen writes about in his “historical fiction” notebook? Do you believe that such an exercise helps or hurts him psychologically?
4. How does Tommen's attitude about public school differ from his attitude about his Timekeeper training? Why do you believe this is?
5. What role does technology—specifically social media—play in Tommen's life? As technology becomes more and more ubiquitous, how does that change the identities of the Time Agents overall? How does it affect their ability to go dark and forge new lives for themselves?
6. Teenagers like to boast, and drugs and alcohol can cause loose lips. Given that it is not unknown for Tommen to engage in illicit activity with his friends, do you believe he has been entirely silent about his Timekeeping abilities? If so, what can you conclude about his attitude or discipline? Does he have the discipline and mental fortitude not to say anything, or does he simply not care and brush it off?
7. How does the perception of the murders change when viewed through a public, non-Time lens? How does Walter work to keep the public in the dark about the Time aspects of the case? How effective is he? How are the public and the other officers affected because of it, especially given the people and circumstances of the warehouse?
8. How does Lily's personality affect the plot, if at all? Would things have turned out differently if she had been more forthcoming about Rifun and Cassius? How would the standoff have changed if Lily had chosen to willingly trade herself for Tommen?
9. Varad laments that eventually, no one will care about the facts and will know only that a minority committed the crimes. Do you agree or disagree? Given how close to the Ferguson Riots the story takes place (story: fall 2013, Ferguson: summer 2014), do you think Varad's father is justified in his quick decision to move the family back to India? How do you think this line of thought will impact the plot in the future?

10. Consider the conversation between Tommen and Cassius in the cave. Why do you think Cassius chose to not only confess to, but detail the crimes? What do you make of the confessions? Does it change how his character is perceived?
11. Given the museum robbery, where both Cassius and Rifun were present; the time in the cave, when Cassius was present but Rifun was not; and the warehouse, when Rifun was present and Cassius was not, what can you conclude about the power dynamic between the men? What is their relationship? Who do you believe is calling the shots? How does the story change based on who is in charge?
12. Throughout the story, Walter is constantly worrying about his son, yet at the last second, refuses to do the one thing that could save him. Does Walter's refusal to share his secret make him selfish? Do you believe Rifun would have released Tommen and walked away had Walter spoken up?