

Reading Group Guide

Tick Tock

1. Micaiah states, “If Walter was willing to die for his secret, then we are obligated to keep it also.” Do you agree or disagree? How do you think the story going forward would have changed if the twins would have told Tommen the truth? What does it say about the character and integrity of the twins?
2. How does Tommen's relationship with his friends change once Eric and Varad realize the power he has and the truth of what happened? What is their reaction to suddenly gaining similar abilities? How would you have responded? Do you believe they are justified in feeling betrayed?
3. Do you think the Hands' decision to refuse Tommen was justified? Consider the argument from a moral, ethical, legal, political, business, and religious standpoint. How does each view affect the outcome? Which viewpoints do you believe contributed the most to the split vote?
4. Despite Tommen's desire to become a Scout and generally explore the world and the universe beyond West Virginia, he finds that he is unable to enjoy being on Sifura's world. Have you ever felt similarly, where you desperately wanted to do something or go somewhere, but once you got there, overshadowing circumstances prevented you from truly enjoying the experience?
5. What obligations does Tommen have as ambassador of the “Monkey Tribe” to the Xur? To the D'bok? What does he make of Sifura proclaiming an alliance between the two peoples?
6. What do you make of Dreja and the council's decision to use Tommen's quest and Sifura's strength and notoriety as an excuse to be rid of a political ally? Despite limited knowledge of either culture, with Dreja's admission that they were never not going to honor his request for the hasax, how do you think Tommen's quest would have changed had Sifura lost the challenge?
7. While trapped in the cave, Sifura tells two stories about the Akari—one mythological, one historical. How does Tommen respond to each? What do you make of the stories? How do you think the Akari story got to Sifura's world? Do you think it could have originated there instead and gone to the Wheel? What do you think it could be?
8. What do you think was S'bal's purpose on the rescue mission? Do you think he could be a spy for Rifun and Cassius? Do you believe he attempted to hurt or kill Sifura after Tommen left?
9. Was Tommen right to be skeptical of Foyez? Should he have been more skeptical? What tipped the scales to make Tommen trust him? What do you make of Foyez's motivations?
10. Consider Rifun's two major appearances at the end of the book. What do you make of his riddle? How did Rifun's display of power affect the otherwise happy ending? How does appearing in Tommen's dream affect Tommen's thoughts and actions? Do you believe Rifun really was there, or was it just a figment of his imagination?

11. Having heard Walter's confession, do you think Tommen would have been justified in feeling angry toward him? Resentful? Something else? How does Tommen forgiving his dad impact the ending and the story going forward, including their relationship? Have you ever confessed something to someone expecting one reaction, and gotten something totally different?