



FLATIRON
BOOKS
NEW YORK

The Reign of the Kingfisher

Reading Group Guide

Welcome to the Reading Group Guide for *The Reign of the Kingfisher*. Please note: In order to provide reading groups with the most informed and thought-provoking questions possible, it is necessary to reveal important aspects of the plot of this novel—as well as the ending. If you have not finished reading *The Reign of the Kingfisher*, we respectfully suggest that you consider waiting before reviewing this guide.

1. When Peter suggests that Marcus is “nostalgic” for the years of the Kingfisher, Marcus gets upset and says it isn’t true. Do you believe him? And if not, what exactly is it about those years that Marcus would be nostalgic for?
2. What do you think attracted Wren to join the Liber-teens to begin with? Do you think it was her loyalty to Parker or something about the group itself that appealed to her?
3. For much of the novel, Marcus seems unwilling to believe that the Kingfisher could still be alive. Is it simply because he believed the police’s version of events, or are there other reasons?
4. Tillman’s father obviously admired the Kingfisher, but it isn’t at all clear what Tillman thinks about the Kingfisher. Based on what you know about her and her personality, do you think that Tillman also admires the Kingfisher? Why or why not?
5. In many ways, the book revolves around the Kingfisher, but he is rarely seen on the page. How did you feel about that? How would the story have been different if the Kingfisher was a more prominent character on the page?
6. Did you read Stetson as subverting the law to instill necessary order or as mostly interested in furthering his career and accolades?
7. Peter tells Marcus that “superheroes” are boring because they possess inarguably good motivations and fight against unquestionably evil villains. Do you agree? What makes the Kingfisher different from the “superheroes” that Peter describes?
8. When the video is released showing Paulina and Miss May, Wren feels that she has caused it by trying to help, even going so far as to call herself “chaos.” Do you think that she bears responsibility?
9. When Tillman meets with Baxter Bedford, he says that the reason the cops aren’t looking for those in danger (himself and Penny) is because they are men with criminal records, and the police see them as worthless. However, Abe Dawson tells her it is because Stetson is trying to cover up his involvement with the Kingfisher. Who do you think is right? Can both be true?
10. How would you describe Miss May’s relationship with the Kingfisher? She doesn’t seem comfortable calling it “love.” Do believe her? What else might it be?

11. When Marcus talks to Stetson at the end of the book, he seems to imply that Stetson should dismiss the charges against Wren; he says that, because Wren and Stetson are somewhat similar, she may be able to help him in the future. Do you believe that Wren and Stetson are similar? In what ways? Do you think she would ever work with him, and if so, under what conditions?
12. Who did you most empathize with in the book? Who do you most sympathize with? What characters did you think were most alike to each other? Who did you think was the most “heroic”?
13. If you had lived during the Kingfisher years and read Marcus Waters’ articles, would you have seen him the Kingfisher as a hero? What if you knew the things that occurred behind-the-scenes with Stetson, Peter, and Miss May? Would that change your perception?
14. Wren, Tillman, Paul Wroblewski, Parker, Peter, Marcus, Stetson, the Kingfisher, and the Chicago Police Department all have ideas of what justice should look like. Whose version of justice do you prefer and why?
15. If the Kingfisher is still alive at the end of the book, why do you think he didn’t ever return?