

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR
MIGHTIER THAN THE SWORD
Book #5 in The Clifton Chronicles by Jeffrey Archer

1. The board of Barrington's deals with the IRA's attempted bombing of the Buckingham's maiden voyage by keeping it completely under wraps. Do you agree with that decision? Why or why not?
2. After Sloane forces Sebastian out of Farthings bank, Sebastian feels that he has to think like Sloane in order to beat him, while Sam thinks Seb should act the way Cedric Hardcastle would have in order to win. While both have the same ultimate end goal, the methods are extremely different. Who do you agree with?
3. Were you surprised that Sam left Sebastian? Why or why not?
4. What do you think of Priscilla Bingham? What motivates her to act as she does throughout the book?
5. The depiction of communism in this book is not very flattering. Both East Germany and Russia seem to be prisons from which one only wishes to escape. Do you agree with this depiction? And given how often people in this series have been able to game the capitalist system for their own profit, does capitalism seem like the right alternative? Is there any other?
6. Giles' affair with Karin and his impending second divorce are a real political liability for him. This is reflective of our current political system. What do you think about this? Should a politician's personal life influence voters? Is it an indicator of how someone will conduct themselves professionally, or is it completely separate?
7. Sebastian goes back on his word to Mr. Swann about funding the school theater, but he eventually attempts to make up for it with an even larger than expected check. Do you think this redeems him?
8. Trelford reminds Emma that they have to prove Emma's words were not slander to win the court case, while Virginia simply has prove that they could have been slander. This "innocent until proven guilty" aspect of the law allows for the truly innocent to escape wrongful conviction the majority of the time, but how do you feel about the possibility that it allows the guilty to go free? Which sacrifice do you think is more worth making?
9. Does Major Fisher's suicide make you any more sympathetic towards him?

10. When Giles hears that Major Fisher has killed himself, he feels sorry for him; on the other hand, Major Fisher spent a lot of his life actively working to create bad events in Giles' life. Compare their personalities. What do you think are their greatest differences? Do you see any similarities?
11. Compare the two trials that take place at the end of the book. What do you think the contrast between Russia and England's respective justice systems say about the two countries?
12. This series has spanned in time from the 1920s to the 1970s. Have you noticed any societal changes over the course of those decades? If so, what? Are they positive or negative?
13. What do you think could possibly be in the letter?