



Time Killer

Todd M. Thiede

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The clock ticks in this suspenseful murder mystery—tough characters, gruesome details, and not a minute wasted.

Todd M. Thiede offers a glimpse into the mind of a fascinating serial killer in a murder mystery that offers a gripping, if often gory, combination of modern suspense and classic detective novel. Through plenty of thrills, chills, and dark details, the killer's message speaks loudly throughout: don't waste people's time.

In the small town of Rockton, Illinois, detective Max Larkin finds himself thrust into a dangerous and gruesome murder investigation when people start dying under grisly circumstances. Clues are few and far between—one surviving victim too traumatized to speak, old police files, a vague description—with not much to go on. The killer seems meticulous. The main clue: "Don't Waste People's Time" written in the victims' blood. The murders grow more and more violent and appear increasingly random. Max and his new partner, Jesse Fairlane, must solve the crime before the murderer strikes again ... and they might just be the next victims.

The story is suspenseful, gripping, and even surprising at times, with plenty of twists in the plot. It's a juicy puzzle for mystery fans. The main issue motivating the murderer—wasting time—may at first seem weak, but as the story progresses, it develops into a strong and compelling force. The plot is well paced with shifts from the murderer's perspective to the detectives' carefully timed, though at times, the jump from one character's point of view to another within the same scene is awkward but can easily be overlooked.

A few of the plot points are slightly predictable, like a prostitute's connection to the murderer, and some key facts about the murderer that become easily deduced—such as where he works. But, as these may have been intentionally scattered tidbits for readers to nibble on, they may be easily forgiven.

Characters certainly prove hearty enough to carry the plot, but do seem a bit stock at times. Max "has been able to get a confession from the hardest of criminals. Having graduated top of his class from the police academy, he broke many records there." Impressive, but not altogether original. While character development isn't often a priority in hardcore detective stories, Max's partner makes a significant self-discovery that does set her somewhat apart.

Suspense and detective novel aficionados should enjoy this story, though some graphic scenes mean *Time Killer* isn't for the faint of heart. Yet, it has all the pieces necessary for that chilling tale best read on a cold and blustery night.

DIANE GARDNER (October 10, 2013)

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