

PICADOR

# Discussion Guide

## *The Time Collector*

by Gwendolyn Womack

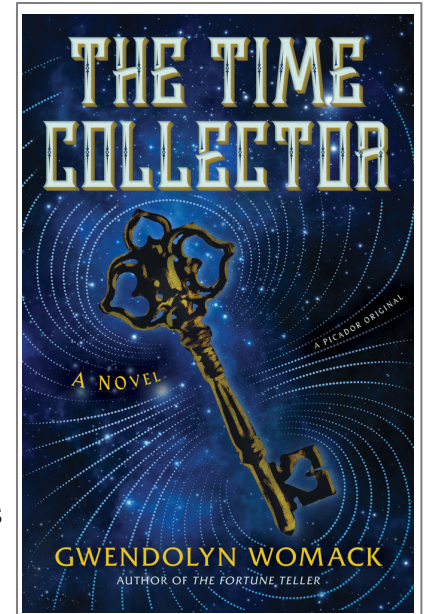
*Travel through time with the touch of a hand.*

### ABOUT THE BOOK

Roan West was born with an extraordinary gift: he can perceive the past of any object he touches. A highly skilled psychometrist, he uses his talents to find and sell valuable antiques, but his quiet life in New Orleans is about to change. Stuart, a fellow psychometrist and Roan's close friend, has used his own abilities to unearth several out-of-place-artifacts or "ooparts"—like a ring that once belonged to the seventeenth-century mathematician and philosopher René Descartes, but was found buried in prehistoric bedrock.

The relics challenge recorded history, but soon after the discovery, Stuart disappears, making him one of several psychometrists who have recently died or vanished without a trace. When Roan comes across a viral video of a young woman who has discovered a priceless pocket watch just by "sensing" it, he knows he has to warn her—but will Melicent Tilpin listen? And can Roan find Stuart before it's too late?

The quest for answers will lead Roan and Melicent around the world—before it brings them closer to each other and a startling truth—in the latest romantic thriller from Gwendolyn Womack, the bestselling, PRISM Award-winning author of *The Memory Painter* and *The Fortune Teller*.



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## QUESTIONS AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1) Have you ever heard of psychometry before? Do you think it is the same as being a psychic?
- 2) Have you ever experienced a moment like Melicent or Roan have, where you touched an antique and had a sense of the story that might exist inside of it? Or felt a strong emotional tie to an object that you couldn't explain?
- 3) What did you think of Sun's character? Did her backstory surprise you? If so, in what ways?
- 4) Ooparts, or out-of-place artifacts, are real archaeological phenomena. If you were an archaeologist and had to discuss ooparts with a classroom, how would you explain their existence to your students?
- 5) Have you ever visited a crop circle? Do you think they are manmade, or is there a more mysterious force behind their creation?
- 6) Were you able to guess who was behind the abductions and the murders? What led you to suspect them? Or were you caught off guard like Melicent?
- 7) Roan decides not to take Melicent with him when he travels to Mexico. Did you empathize with his decision? What would you have done if you were in his shoes?
- 8) If you were a psychometrist, how would you use your ability? What would you accomplish?
- 9) One of the narrative's central ideas is that objects hold memories that can reveal the hidden truths and secrets people carry with them. Which character surprised you the most?
- 10) At one point, Roan thinks, "Souls left echoes of their lives on earth. Was there a way to follow the echoes back to the original voice?" Do you agree with him? And do you think that kind of time travel will ever be possible?
- 11) Roan's Time Room charts how time pieces have evolved over the centuries, from antiquity to the most advanced contemporary inventions. Where do you see our ability to understand and "capture" time heading in the future?

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Originally from Houston, Texas, Gwendolyn Womack studied theater at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks and holds an MFA in Directing Theatre, Video, and Cinema from California Institute of the Arts. She is the *USA Today* bestselling author of *The Fortune Teller* and the RWA Prism Award-winning reincarnation thriller, *The Memory Painter*. She resides in Los Angeles with her family



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