

### Reading Group Notes

In *Death Message*, Thorne has to deal with a lot of conflicting emotions. Does this endear the character to you more? Do you see these emotions affecting the character's future development? Would you say that Thorne experiences a wider range of emotions than is normally seen in a crime novel?

This is a 'Columbo' book, with the reader knowing who's responsible for the crime from the start. Does this distract you or entice you to read more on how the solution is met? Through using this narrative structure, would you say that Mark Billingham is interested in exploring other kinds of responsibility?

Discuss Thorne's taking the law into his own hands with Zarif. Is it a satisfying solution? What might the implications have been if Thorne had behaved differently?

In this book, we get to see more of the background of Thorne's companions. Do you think the author does this for any particular reason? Which of them do you prefer and why?

Do you prefer Thorne when he's in a relationship or when he's single and brooding? Does Mark Billingham use different language to describe Thorne's emotional states?

Do you think that the Thorne novels can be read as standalones or do they benefit from being read in an episodic nature? Do you like returning to a series character? How do you think Thorne has grown from book to book?

What are the themes of the book and how does the author develop them? Thorne plays online poker throughout the book. If you have a knowledge of online gaming, does this make you read these passages differently?