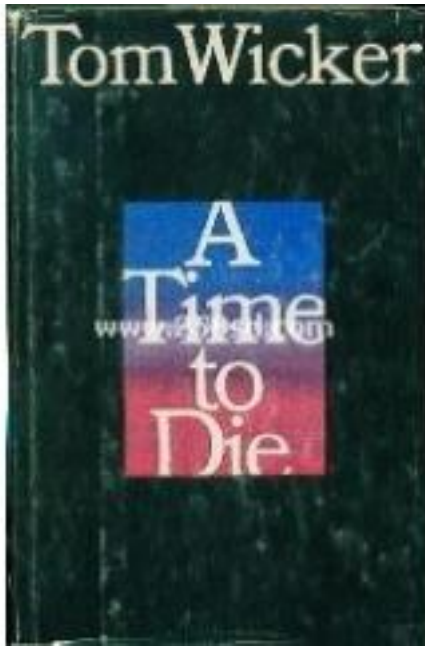


A Time to Die



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CHAPTER I
The Thing Jumps
The luncheon of the Bill Fay Club on Friday, September 14, 1971, was a gregarious affair as usual. The scene of the feast was the executive dining room of the National Geographic Society in the Society's elegant building on Seventeenth Street Northwest, a few blocks from Lafayette Square and the White House. Members had sipped sherry in the office of Francis S. S. a Geographic editor, then moved into the dining room for lamb chops and an excellent wine. S. S. girth suggested his standing as one of Washington's ranking gourmets; among many other accomplishments, he was the mainspring of the Bill Fay Club--an ad hoc group named in memory of a former Irish Ambassador and conversationalist of renown. Members met at random for good food and what they assured

themselves was \"the best talk in Wash-
>ington.\" Sometimes it may have
been.
> Around Shot at the long table high above Seventeenth Street were
> Ambassador Frank Corner of New Zealand; Ambassador Egidio Ortona of Italy; A.
Doak Barnett the China specialist (a visitor that day); J. Carter Brown the
director of the National Gallery of Art; John Walker Brown's immediate
predecessor; William McChesney Martini the former chairman of the Federal
Reserve Board; Herman Wouki the novelist; Richard Scammon the
political analyst and statistician; Edward P. Morgan the radio and television
commentator; and Tom Wicker political columnist and associate editor of
The New York Times. Former Secretary of Defense Clark Clifford and Herbert
> Block the Washington Post's famous Herblock as gentle in person as
> ascerbic in ink--were frequently at the club table but were not present that
day. These were erudite men in everything from art to politics as Tom
> Wicker had come to know. He always studied Franc Shor's wine

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