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Posted on 05 May 2017 By Audrey Niffenegger

A Most Untraditional Love Story, This Is The Celebrated Tale Of Henry DeTamble, A Dashing, Adventuresome Librarian Who Involuntarily Travels Through Time, And Clare Abshire, And Artist Whose Life Takes A Natural Sequential Course Henry And Clare S Passionate Affair Endures Across A Sea Of Time And Captures Them In An Impossibly Romantic Trap That Tests The Strength Of Fate And Basks In The Bonds Of Love Back Cover Very unusual for me but DNF, so I did not give it a rating It s the story of a couple in love where the man comes back at various ages before and after he initially met his wife When that happens we get the perspective on what s going on from both him and her I m not a fan of romance or sci fi, so I guess the combination of the two turned me off I always give a book at least 20 pages and this one had so many good reviews, I went back and gave it another twenty pages but just couldn t get into it image from astronomytrek.com I m only adding this book because it annoys me that it popped up on the most popular reads People, this book is terrible Do yourself a favor and pretend you d never heard of it My short answer is that it s just no good, the long version is in the following list, which I call The Problems I Have With The Time Traveler s Wife 1 The author is indecisive Rather than accepting that this is a science fiction novel, she tries to write a social commentary, romance, and art and music novel all rolled into one There is so much name dropping that it s distracting classical music, entomology, poetry, romance languages, library science, the American punk scene, constructivist

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painters, you get the idea they're all continually cropping up at the most inane times. What should give us a better understanding of the characters actually paints them as shells of people, identified only by superficialities. There is one completely pointless mention of a Moholy Nagy poster that really annoyed me. I had five years of design school and while I know who Laszlo Moholy Nagy is and how to correctly pronounce his name, I couldn't pick one of his paintings out of a lineup of his contemporaries, so I didn't even buy that this dude who has spent half of his life in limbo was some kind of expert.² The title character's entire life and family are so difficult to relate to that I immediately hated her. She grew up in a house that has books written about it, irritating architecture reference, and everyone must dress for dinner at her parents' house, as if this were a Brontë novel.³ Her family employ five black servants. In a Christmas scene, for which the servants are unchained from the stove and allowed into the dining room, the cook actually toasts to Miz Abshire. This book was written in 2004. How can the Mammy have any place here? She isn't even the only racially stereotyped character in this book. The traveler's childhood downstairs neighbor, a grandmotherly woman he refers to as Kimmy, speaks in a broken English which could have been stolen directly from a hateful gold rush era cartoon.⁴ The book skips back and forth between the point of view of the title character and the time traveler himself, but there is absolutely no difference in their voices. I think I actually got confused a few times about who was speaking.⁵ The phrase, she was pale under her makeup, was used three times.⁶ The chapters dealing with infertility were completely unoriginal, boring, and emotionally flat.⁷ Not only are conversations unnecessarily long, but they are often followed by page after page of internal dialogue as the characters rehash and analyze every point of said conversation. Sorry, this was so long, but this might be the worst book I've ever read and I'm really confused by all the good reviews. I recently read *The Time Traveler's Wife* and was pretty disappointed the author somehow manages to turn such an awesome premise—the dude actually time travels into something pretty flat and dull. The first hundred pages really hooked me, but after a while I started to get irritated by 1. All the name-checking of hipster-approved bands in an attempt to establish Henry's supposed punk cred. He liked

Schindler's List

The Mists of Avalon

The Running Man

The Elfstones of Shannara

2010: Odyssey Two

Foundation's Edge

Moo, Baa, La La La!

The Blue Sword

Pawn of Prophecy

Howliday Inn

A Pale View of Hills

Queen of Sorcery

The Man From St. Petersburg

The Skull Beneath the Skin

The Dark Wind

the Violent Femmes in 1991 That s why he s so badass
Seriously 2 The food porny descriptions of the meals they eat
Some paragraphs read like the menu of a pretentious bistro.3
The awful ethnic stereotypes that characterize the few non
white characters Nell, the mammy esque family cook complete
with dialect , or Charisse, the childlike Filipina.4 The fact that
everyone is successful and at least upper middle class, if not
fabulously wealthy Even Henry somehow manages to keep his
job at the Newberry library for 20 years, despite his habits of
disappearing for odd stretches of time, not keeping
appointments, and, oh, running around naked in the stacks
from time to time It would have been interesting to me if his
disorder kept him from having any normal kind of professional
life.5 The lack of character development in the protagonists
after they finally meet as adults All of a sudden, they meet and
they re in love The author gives lip service to Henry s
womanizing and drug problems, but really, they don t seem to
pose much than a passing problem for Clare because she
already knows they ll get married And even as a married
couple, their biggest source of conflict whether they can or
should have a child is extrinsic, rather than intrinsic to their
personalities characters Clare never really seems to be
bothered by her lack of independence, or the fact that she s so
tethered to Henry because he had a part in making her who
she is, etc.By the time I actually got to the end of the story, I
was too emotionally distanced from the characters to really be
moved by what happens to them the burden of plot winds up
outsripping any kind of nuanced characterization Bad science
fiction and bad romance Bah humbug. Why can t there be a
negative star rating I hated, hated this book And yes, I did
finish it All way too many pages of it But, in my defense it was
foolishly the only book I brought with me when I was
hospitalized for 24 hours after wisdom tooth surgery, and when
your options are daytime soaps or this wretched bookwell, at
least I got to read the ending and conclude definitively that it
wasn t worth it Okay, now that I ve gotten a bit of a rant out, let
me be a little organized about my dislikes 1 The sex More
accurately, the sex after sex after sex, in graphic detail not
pornographic detail, granted, but WAY than I wanted to picture
, at all sorts of different ages Wow Yeah, I just hated that If it
serves a purpose to the plot, fine, include it, but don t give me

Fevre Dream

A is for Alibi

Space

every single move I just don't need to know that.² The plot was convoluted I can say this fairly because I read it in practically one sitting, and while I was able to keep things straight, it would have served the book better to not attempt to take in so many subplots and minutiae.³ Okay, I will admit that for having a sci-fi premise, the concept of time travel as outlined here was at least moderately believable. What I didn't like was that it wasn't especially original anyone seen *Journeyman* yet had the pretension that it was.⁴ The whole crux of the novel was the great love story between Henry and Claire. Yet, as a reader I'm much more interested and moved by two NICE people ending up together, and staying together, than two people I just don't like that much. Let's face it, Henry is not a great guy. And there's that whole poor rich girl thing going on with Claire I just wasn't feeling it. Okay, all of that said, I really don't recommend this book to anyone. I realize there are a lot of people that like it I know I checked the reviews expecting to be completely vindicated, but alas, it seems I'm in the minority but those people who like it apparently enjoy a different class of book than I do. There are so many great works out there, why waste your time with this.

NATIONAL BESTSELLER

AUDREY NIFFENEGGER

"A soaring celebration of the
victory of love over time."

—CHICAGO TRIBUNE

THE TIME
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WIFE

