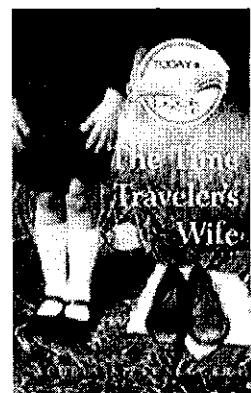


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Reading Group Guide

- About This Book
- Discussion Questions
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- Author Biography
- Excerpt

**The Time Traveler's Wife**  
by Audrey Niffenegger



**List Price:** \$25.00  
**Pages:** 520 pages  
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**ISBN:** 1931561648  
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About This Book

Audrey Niffenegger's innovative debut, **The Time Traveler's Wife**, is the story of Clare, a beautiful art student, and Henry, an adventuresome librarian, who have known each other since Clare was six and Henry was thirty-six, and were married when Clare was twenty-three and Henry thirty-one. Impossible but true, because Henry is one of the first people diagnosed with Chrono-Displacement Disorder: periodically his genetic clock resets and he finds himself misplaced in time, pulled to moments of emotional gravity in his life, past and future. His disappearances are spontaneous, his experiences unpredictable, alternately harrowing and amusing.

**The Time Traveler's Wife** depicts the effects of time travel on Henry and Clare's marriage and their passionate love for each other as the story unfolds from both points of view. Clare and Henry attempt to live normal lives, pursuing familiar goals—steady jobs, good friends, children of their own. All of this is threatened by something they can neither prevent nor control, making their story intensely moving and entirely unforgettable.

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## Discussion Questions

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- 1.** In **The Time Traveler's Wife**, the characters meet each other at various times during their lifetime. How does the author keep all the timelines in order and "on time"?
- 2.** Although Henry does the time traveling, Clare is equally impacted. How does she cope with his journeys and does she ultimately accept them?
- 3.** How does the writer introduce the reader to the concept of time travel as a realistic occurrence? Does she succeed?
- 4.** Henry's life is disrupted on multiple levels by spontaneous time travel. How does his career as a librarian offset his tumultuous disappearances? Why does that job appeal to Henry?
- 5.** Henry and Clare know each other for years before they fall in love as adults. How does Clare cope with the knowledge that at a young age she knows that Henry is the man she will eventually marry?
- 6.** **The Time Traveler's Wife** is ultimately an enduring love story. What trials and tribulations do Henry and Clare face that are the same as or different from other "normal" relationships?
- 7.** How does their desire for a child affect their relationship?
- 8.** The book is told from both Henry and Clare's perspectives. What does this add to the story?
- 9.** Do you think the ending of the novel is satisfactory?
- 10.** Though history there have been dozens of mediums used for time travel in literature. Please cite examples and compare **The Time Traveler's Wife** to the ones with which you are familiar.

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## Critical Praise

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"Inventive and poignant."

—*Entertainment Weekly*

"Amazing trip."

—*People Magazine*, Critic's Choice

"...a beautifully crafted book."

Book Discussion Guides - Middlesex  
 Book Discussion Guides - The Confessions of Max Tivoli  
 Book Discussion Guides - Set this House in Order  
 Book Discussion Guides - Perfect Circle  
 Book Discussion Guides - The Time Traveler's Wife

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**Database:** NoveList

**Booklist Review:** On the surface, Henry and Clare Detamble are a normal couple living in Chicago's Lincoln Park neighborhood. Henry works at the Newberry Library and Clare creates abstract paper art, but the cruel reality is that Henry is a prisoner of time. It sweeps him back and forth at its leisure, from the present to the past, with no regard for where he is or what he is doing. It drops him naked and vulnerable into another decade, wearing an age-appropriate face. In fact, it's not unusual for Henry to run into the other Henry and help him out of a jam. Sound unusual? Imagine Clare Detamble's astonishment at seeing Henry dropped stark naked into her parents' meadow when she was only six. Though, of course, until she came of age, Henry was always the perfect gentleman and gave young Clare nothing but his friendship as he dropped in and out of her life. It's no wonder that the film rights to this hip and urban love story have been acquired.

-- Elsa Gaztambide (*BookList*, September 1, 2003, p59)

**Publishers Weekly Review: /\* Starred Review \*/** This highly original first novel won the largest advance San Francisco-based MacAdam/Cage had ever paid, and it was money well spent. Niffenegger has written a soaring love story illuminated by dozens of finely observed details and scenes, and one that skates nimbly around a huge conundrum at the heart of the book: Henry De Tamble, a rather dashing librarian at the famous Newberry Library in Chicago, finds himself unavoidably whisked around in time. He disappears from a scene in, say, 1998 to find himself suddenly, usually without his clothes, which mysteriously disappear in transit, at an entirely different place 10 years earlier—or later. During one of these migrations, he drops in on beautiful teenage Clare Abshire, an heiress in a large house on the nearby Michigan

peninsula, and a lifelong passion is born. The problem is that while Henry's age darts back and forth according to his location in time, Clare's moves forward in the normal manner, so the pair are often out of sync. But such is the author's tenderness with the characters, and the determinedly ungimmicky way in which she writes of their predicament (only once do they make use of Henry's foreknowledge of events to make money, and then it seems to Clare like cheating) that the book is much more love story than fantasy. It also has a splendidly drawn cast, from Henry's violinist father, ruined by the loss of his wife in an accident from which Henry time-traveled as a child, to Clare's odd family and a multitude of Chicago bohemian friends. The couple's daughter, Alba, inherits her father's strange abilities, but this is again handled with a light touch; there's no Disney cuteness here. Henry's foreordained end is agonizing, but Niffenegger has another card up her sleeve, and plays it with poignant grace. It is a fair tribute to her skill and sensibility to say that the book leaves a reader with an impression of life's riches and strangeness rather than of easy thrills. (*Sept. 9*)

— *Staff* (Reviewed August 4, 2003) (*Publishers Weekly*, vol 250, issue 31, p55)

**Library Journal Review: /\* Starred Review \*/** This debut novel tells the compelling love story of artist Clare and her husband, Henry, a librarian at the Newberry Library who has an ailment called Chrono-Displaced Person (CDP), which without his control removes him to the past or the future under stressful circumstances. The clever story is told from the perspectives of Henry and Clare at various times in their lives. Henry's time travels enable him to visit Clare as a little girl and later as an aged widow and explain "how it feels to be living outside of the time constraints most humans are subject to." He seeks out a doctor named Kendrik, who is unable to help him but hopes to find a cure for his daughter, Alba, who has inherited CDP. The lengthy but exciting narrative concludes tragically with Henry's foretold death during one of his time travels but happily shows the timelessness of genuine love. The whole is skillfully written with a blend of distinct characters and heartfelt emotions that hopscotch through time, begging interpretation on many levels. Public libraries should plan on purchasing multiple copies of this highly recommended book.— *David A. Beronä, Univ. of New Hampshire, Durham* (Reviewed August 15, 2003) (*Library Journal*, vol 128, issue 13, p134)

**Kirkus Reviews** Mainstreamed time-travel romance, cleverly executed and tastefully furnished if occasionally overwrought: a first from fine newcomer Niffenegger.

While the many iterations and loops here are intricately woven, the plot, proper, is fairly simple. Henry has a genetic condition that causes him to time-travel. The trips, triggered by stress, are unpredictable, and his destination is usually connected to an important event in his life, like his mother's death. Between the ages of 6 and 18, Clare, rich, talented, and beautiful, is repeatedly visited by time-traveling Henry, in his 30s and 40s; they're in love, and lovers, when the visits end. In Chicago, now 20, Clare spots Henry, who, at 28, has never seen her before; she explains, and they begin their contemporaneous life together, which continues until Henry dies at 43. (Clare receives one more visit in her 80s, in a moving final scene.) Henry is presented as dangerous and constantly in danger, but—until his grisly and

upsetting final days—those episodes seem incidental, in part because everything is a foregone conclusion, paradox having been dismissed from the start. There's a great deal of such incident; the story could be cut by a third without losing substance. Teenaged Clare is roughly treated on a date; adult Henry beats up the lout. Clare and Henry want to be parents; after a series of heartbreaking miscarriages they have a perfect, time-traveling child. Will Henry's secret be discovered? Henry reveals it himself. Presented as a literary novel, this is more accurately an exceedingly literate one, distinguished by the nearly constant background thrum of connoisseurship. Henry works as a rare-books librarian and recites Rilke; Clare is an avant-sculptress and papermaker; they appreciate the best of punk rock, opera, and Chicago, live in a beautiful house, and have better sex than you.

A Love Story for educated, upper-middle-class tastes; with a movie sale to Brad Pitt and Jennifer Aniston, it could have some of that long-ago book's commercial potential, too.

*(Kirkus Reviews, August 1, 2003)*

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# About.com Contemporary Literature

## Audrey Niffenegger Interview

December 7, 2003

By Mark Flanagan, About.com

Audrey Niffenegger is a writer, artist, and professor in the Interdisciplinary Book Arts MFA Program at the Columbia College Chicago Center for Book and Paper Arts. She is the author of "The Time Traveler's Wife," the inventive and unconventionally rendered tale of Clare, a luminously beautiful artist, and



Henry, a time-traveler. In our interview, Ms. Niffenegger discussed her art and writing, among other things.

**Mark Flanagan:** Can you tell us about your work as an artist and art professor?

**Audrey Niffenegger:** I teach writing to visual artists. We concentrate on merging and combining text and images, by means of artist's books, comics, installations, etc. I also teach letterpress printing, lithography, intaglio, fine edition book making, a seminar on visual narrative, and the occasional drawing class.

My own work is primarily visual novels (in the form of books of etchings), drawings and paintings, photographs, and collages. My gallery is Printworks, in Chicago. I love the intimacy, the obscurity, and the quality of the line in printmaking. My work tends to be narrative, figurative, strange, and quiet.

**MF:** Did you always know you were going to be an artist?

**Audrey Niffenegger:** Yes, although for a while I thought it would be a good career choice to be a jockey. This did not work out as I am 5'9" and horses scare me.

**MF:** Who or what have been the greatest influences in your art? How about in your writing?

**Audrey Niffenegger:** In art, I have been very influenced by Horst Janssen, Aubrey Beardsley, Winsor McCay, Jiri Anderle, Kathe Kollwitz, Joseph Cornell, Goya, Hans Bellmer, and the collage novels of Max Ernst.

As a writer (and a reader), my influences are Richard Powers, Dorothy Sayers, Rainer Maria Rilke, Henry James, David Foster Wallace, Edgar Allan Poe, and Anne Rice. I'm not claiming that I write like any of these authors-only that I admire them, and think about their work.

**MF:** The premise for "The Time-Traveler's Wife" is fascinating! How did you arrive at it? How did you then transform it into a novel? Did you outline the plot, do character sketches, etc.?

**Audrey Niffenegger:** I got the title first, and played around with it for quite a long time, slowly evolving the characters in my head. I wrote the end before anything else, and then began to write scenes as they occurred to me. TTW was written in a completely different order than the one it finally took. I understood early on that it would be organized in three sections, and that the basic unit was the scene, not the chapter. It has a rather chaotic feel to it, especially at the beginning, and that is deliberate—there is a slow piecing together, a gradual accumulation of story, that mimics the experience of the characters. I made a lot of notes about the characters. I had two timelines to help me stay organized, but no outline of the plot.

**MF:** How much of Clare (or Henry) is you?

**Audrey Niffenegger:** Contrary to popular belief, not much. I dyed my hair red as a way of saying goodbye to Clare, as I was finishing the book. She makes very different art from mine, and she's much quieter and more patient. Henry and I share a quirky sense of humor and a taste for punk, but not much else. Henry and Clare are distant fictional relations of Dorothy Sayer's characters Peter Wimsey and Harriet Vane.

First novels are often said to be thinly disguised autobiography. This one uses my places and things I know something about (libraries, paper making) but, alas, this is not my life, and these characters are not me. Ingrid, a character who did start out as a self-portrait, morphed so much that eventually I hardly recognized her.

**MF:** Clare is looking for Kelmscott Press's *Chaucer* when she meets Henry in 1991. Any particular reason you chose it? What about Rilke, Clare's favorite poet? Dorothy Sayers?

**Audrey Niffenegger:** Well, I needed a book the Newberry Library actually owns, and that's a very famous and beautiful book, something I often call up to show my students when we visit the Newberry. **MF:** The novel's musical references are extensive, betraying your punk rock leanings. What are you listening to, these days?



**Audrey Niffenegger:** Here's what's in the stack of CDs next to the stereo: the new Duvall album, ELO's greatest hits, Systems/Layers, by Rachel's, The Ballad of the Red Shoes by Andrew and Beth Bird, Hot Shit! by Quasi, Stories From the City, Stories From the Sea by P.J. Harvey.

I've been going to a lot of live shows lately. The best were Sonic Youth, Quasi, Crooked Fingers, and Danger Adventure, and of course my beloved Avocet (my boyfriend, Chris Schneberger, is their drummer). I also broke down and went to see the Sex Pistols at the Aragon Ballroom, and was semi-amazed to find that it was not too bad. Very peculiar to see them though, and not at all subversive or thrilling. It was somewhat like running into a guy you dated at 17, and he's balding and has three kids, but it's nice to see that they are still out there.

**MF:** Henry and Clare have disparate spiritual ideas. Would you like to talk about where you fall on that subject?

**Audrey Niffenegger:** I'm an agnostic. I don't believe in interfering with other people's religious beliefs. I think it is especially misguided to kill people in the name of God. When I was a child I had a great, encompassing faith, but I've lost it. The evening news wrung it out of me. I stopped going to church and watching television around the same time.

**MF:** Free will -vs- determinism. I think your novel indicates that we have free will in the present. Is this your belief?

**Audrey Niffenegger:** Yes. I'm all for free will. As the novel indicates, even if there was no such thing, we would have to act as though there was, to avoid despair.

**MF:** Was there a central theme that you wanted readers to grasp?

**Audrey Niffenegger:** I wanted people to think about the intimacy of time, how ineffable it is, how it shapes us. I wanted to write about waiting, but since waiting is essentially a negative (time spent in the absence of something) I wrote about all the things that happen around the waiting.

**MF:** What are you working on now?

**Audrey Niffenegger:** A new novel, *Her Fearful Symmetry*. It's set in London, in a flat next to Highgate Cemetery. It's got mirror-image twins, mistaken paternity, a little tiny ghost, an obsessive-compulsive, and an accountant. I'm trying to write a modern Victorian novel. It's very early in the project, though, so it's hard to say what it will be in the end.

**MF:** What do you read? What are you reading now? Have any new authors grabbed your interest?

**Audrey Niffenegger:** I just finished *Stiff*, by Mary Roach, a terrific non-fiction book about cadavers. And Julie Orringer's book *How to Breathe Underwater* was quite wonderful. I loved *Middlesex* (but everybody loves *Middlesex*) and I am happily reading everything by John Irving, whom I'd never read, and who was thrust upon me by Chris, my boyfriend.

**MF:** Are you a very disciplined daily writer? What was your routine while writing the novel? How about now?

**Audrey Niffenegger:** I am very erratic. I write when I have time (which is often in the middle of the night, or on weekends, or whenever I'm not teaching). This past fall I've been book touring, and nothing much got written.

**MF:** What do you do when you're not reading, writing, teaching, or making art?

**Audrey Niffenegger:** I go out to the movies, and to hear bands. I also garden, play with my cats, and lounge aimlessly. I could use more aimless lounging, actually. It's been a busy year.

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## December 2003

### Veronica Bond

#### features

#### **An Interview with Audrey Niffenegger**

*The Time Traveler's Wife* focuses on one relationship, that of Henry and Clare, as both it, and Henry, flow through time. When Clare first meets Henry she is six years old and he has traveled back thirty years to meet her. Set in Chicago, the story goes beyond the typical love ballad to become a story about living in the moment and enjoying people as they come and go through life. I sat down with Audrey Niffenegger, the book's author, at Ann Sathers to discuss her characters, the city, and the creation of books.

**I enjoyed your use of Chicago in the book very much. It was very obvious that you had lived in Chicago, even before I read the back portion about you, I was like, this person has been to Chicago, this person knows Chicago. How much did you intend to use the city as a character?**

A lot, because I sort of started thinking, well, it's really important to give this a grounding in reality. It should be demonstrable to anyone who reads this that this is a real place and these are real people. The premise of the book is so fantastical that it just needed a counterbalance of documentary style places. And I thought it would be fun. I think Chicago's got its own vibe but it's a very practical, accessible kind of place. It's not quite the same thing as vampires in New Orleans or ghosts in Paris. It's kind of an unaccepted place for anything really strange to happen.

**It's nice going through it... you mention Ann Sathers and the Army Surplus store and Oak Street Beach and I'm like, yeah I've been there, I've been there, and I've been there.**

It was a chance to show off the city and the things I like about it.

**I love the pop culture references in it. I like anything like that because I think it makes it more real... you have the Violent Femmes at the Aragon Ballroom...**

I really went to that show! I was sort of like, Chicago is almost like a fan thing. I put in things that I especially love.

**Another thing that I liked...well, I don't really like love stories, and what I liked was that this was a classic love story but I didn't realize it... because it wasn't sappy! It was just written very real with real thoughts and real emotions and not just, "Oh, let's run away together!" There are really big themes of love of in it, but it wasn't overly emotional.**

That's good. [One] reviewer compared it to *Love Story* and I just about died. For me the really interesting part that required a lot of imagination was what it would be like to be married. I think people who really are married -- I've never been married -- I think there's an ordinariness and a day-to-day-ness and I think the shiny newness wears off and after ten years or twenty years you grow accustomed to each other and it doesn't seem all that special that you have that person. And I thought, well, what if that person was always going away and you were always losing them? That might be a little different. You would be forced to really live in the moment, which a lot of people talk about, but I don't think really do it.

**Did you intend for it to be a classic love story? Did you set out to write it that way? There was lot of making real the metaphors that we use about love. Like waiting for someone that you love and knowing that you're going to be with them. From very young Clare knows that she's going to end up with Henry and because he's seen it happen and she has his word. It was very subtle. That brought it away from seeming like a really big love story, even though it was.**

I was working backward, so the initial image -- we probably shouldn't say what that is in case people haven't read it for themselves -- that was the central image to the book and so everything was working to get to that. At the time that I started writing the book I had been through some really unhappy relationships and I said to myself, "Enough of that... I will just write a book... to heck with these real people." But also, my parents' marriage -- my parents are still married -- my father used to travel all the time and in any given week he'd be gone four days and so, as kids, there was my mother trying to cope on her own. And then my grandparents, my mother's parents, my grandfather died quite young. That's actually who the book's dedicated to. One day he had a headache and three days later he was dead. So it was this idea that you can't depend on people to be there, that you can't predict anything. There's probably a certain amount of wishful thinking invested in those characters.

**Did you base Henry's sort of epilepsy-type problem on that? Did you have any intention of making it kind of science-fictiony?**

I was thinking about epilepsy and also about schizophrenia, this kind idea of an electrical storm inside the brain that also, in schizophrenia it's like tuning into some other reality that's falling freely. I like science fiction, but it's not really what I read. So I wasn't trying for science fiction... what I was initially interested in was having one fantastical or strange thing and then regular reality. There's this idea that you change one thing about the world and everything else moves around it. This idea that you're allowed to play with reality somewhat. In my art, I'm somewhat surrealistic... I like changing things.

**I can see very much how you just changed the one element and made it real, how you went to lengths to try to explain it in terms of things that could possibly be real, like something wrong with the brain, treating it with drugs. It was like it was more of a psychological problem rather than a hey-this-guy-can-time-travel problem.**

If it had been mechanical, then he would have been able to control it. I was really interested in having him be completely subject to the whim of his body or time and that to me is more meaningful than popping him in a machine.

**How much did you want to put a message of fate and destiny in the book? It seems like Henry is always going to Clare.**

You just don't see the other times. My editor said, "Well, maybe you could write in more random time travel," but the manuscript was already six hundred pages long.

**So you intended it to be a lot more random?**

In my head it was a lot more random, but I wanted the story concentrate around them, so I tried to hint around that he was going other places. To take you through much of that would really be a detour. It's interesting trying to manage what is essentially a pretty simple story that's kind of spread out and trying to bring it back and make it tight.

**How did you manage the timeline at all? I noticed that in the beginning that the way it was set up they get closer to each other in age.**

I have it at home on my computer -- there's two of them. One is Clare's timeline. The other one is the order that things are happening in the book and where Henry's coming from so I can see what he would know at any given time. What I was mainly working with was who knew what when. So, if I needed a Henry who didn't have a lot of information I would put a younger Henry in. I'll be interested in about ten years to read it and have a lot better ideas of how to do it. For now that was kind of the best I could do.

**One thing I will compliment you on is your use of the present tense -- you switched very well between the characters voices. I find that in a lot of writing, especially now, people try to use different tenses or they'll try to switch between different styles of writing because they think that makes it interesting when, really, you**

**have to have a good story before you can do anything with the format.**

I think a lot of people are trying to be tricky or cool, which is okay. I can read that pretty happily for a while and then I need to read something a little more normal, but it's interesting that people keep trying all these novelties, trying to keep it new. It's amusing to me when people start describing my novel and they talk about it as "Original!" and I'm like, "Okay." To me a lot of the decision was just a product of the material and it had that tense because if you put in the past tense, sooner or later you would have to define some point in time as the present. Then it would just become flashbacks and so forth. I wanted everything to be happening right now. So that was just a very nuts and bolts kind of decision. What I'm hoping is that people will get the feeling that wherever they are in the narrative they're right there, that the other parts may or may not relate sensibly in the customary before and after. I'm hoping for people to be comfortable with the fact that the chronology is all messed up.

**Was it ever difficult deciding on the ending?**

The original thing I had in mind was for Clare to pretty much lose her mind and to be completely incapacitated, but the more I wrote the more I thought, Clare is really a pretty sensible person and she probably wouldn't do that. People have said to me, oh they're both so beautiful and rich and happy, I can't stand it, and I said, they are?

**I like that you didn't make Henry into a martyr. He wasn't on a crusade, he wasn't trying to go back in time to save Clare, he wasn't trying to teach anybody anything, he had no control over doing it. It made it easier to want to know why he was doing what he was doing, or why he was chosen to do that.**

That's interesting... everybody asks themselves if they're different in any way, which is a question that is never really answered... you're just it. The part that happened around 9/11 was interesting because, of course that happened when I was almost done with the book and I thought, wow, I can't really let this go un-addressed. For the most part real world events don't really make it into this book because I didn't want to date it and I didn't want it to be about the world. It's really about this relationship. I figured, you have this gigantic thing and if you don't at least nod at it, it's going to seem glaring in its absence.

**Did you ever want to have Henry change things in the past? Was it hard to keep him from doing that?**

It was actually much easier to write with limitations. A character that could do anything, they could just make everything okay all the time, and then there would be no plot. It was actually really helpful that he couldn't change anything. And then my worldview is actually fairly dark. The idea that you can't change things coincides with the way I wrote the book.

**Do you get questions about the fact that Henry just going back to these places changes them?**

The thing about paradox is you only get into paradox if things can be changed. If everything only happens once and it happens that way with Henry in it, he may be acting, but it's not like the world is going to be any different. Every time that particular thing happened, there he was. It's sort of like every time you do things, you change things, but someone looking back from the future would see it as having a certain amount of inevitability. It's something that bugs me about actual science fiction, this effort to provide all the answers and make everything work out very neatly.

**Did you always want to write a book?**

Yeah. I mean, I only started because I had the idea. I wasn't sitting around thinking, "My God, what should I write a book about?" It took about four and a half years from when I first started scribbling things down to finished manuscript. It's good if it takes a long time because then you have more time to think about everything and you can put more ideas into it. I once did a visual book that took fourteen years... that was a little long. I don't worry too much about how long it took, but then again, with your first one you have no one waiting for it. Nobody cares if you're done, you don't really have anyone to impress yet. Now everybody keeps going, "Hey, how's that book coming along?" The second book is twenty five pages long at the moment. I try not to worry about it, with the

timing of the school year it's hard to do anything.

**What do you teach?**

I teach for a department called Interdisciplinary Arts. It's part of the Book and Paper Center so a lot of what I teach has to do with making books from scrap. Handset type, typography... I teach a class that runs all year and people start off with an idea and they design it, they make the paper, they bind it...

**It's a lot of the physicality of books.**

It's kind of nice, thinking about books as objects.

**Yeah...they're nice possessions.**

Especially if you've made every single thing about it.



### **The time traveler's wife**

By: Niffenegger, Audrey

Passionately in love, Clare and Henry vow to hold onto each other and their marriage as they struggle with the effects of Chrono-Displacement Disorder, a condition that casts Henry involuntarily into the world of time travel.

### **Read-alikes**

1. ***Life after life***

Atkinson, Kate

**Reason:** These moving and thought-provoking novels portray characters whose lives are continually disrupted by time shifts -- in *Life after Life*, the protagonist repeatedly dies and comes back to life, while in *The Time Traveler's Wife*, the protagonist time-travels involuntarily. -- Katherine Johnson

2. ***The swan thieves***

Kostova, Elizabeth

**Reason:** Both of these extravagantly romantic novels deal with the intersection of love and fate. *The Swan Thieves* tells parallel narratives of star-crossed lovers, while *The Time Traveler's Wife* is about a touching romance subject to the whims of time. -- Victoria Caplinger

3. ***Ferney***

Long, James, 1949 Oct. 1-

**Reason:** The characters in these unusual and supernaturally tinged stories of love and loss are powerfully connected through time and space in unfamiliar ways. Both books also offer complex plots and unusual methods of time travel. -- Shauna Griffin

4. ***The confessions of Max Tivoli***

Greer, Andrew Sean

**Reason:** The characters in these moving stories exist in time in a different way than the rest of us do, making a normal romantic life nearly impossible. The developed characters and the relationships they fight for bring tension and drama to both literary books. -- Shauna Griffin

5. ***Overseas***

Williams, Beatriz

**Reason:** Love overcomes time, space, logic, and the laws of physics in these intricately plotted, character-driven novels that focus on star-crossed, chronologically challenged soul mates. At once poignant and witty, these stylistically complex romantic stories juggle multiple timelines and narrative threads. -- Gillian Speace

6. ***Andrew's brain***

Doctorow, E. L., 1931-

**Reason:** A core of passionate relationships -- romantic and familial -- and time out of joint connect these stylistically complex novels. Combined with a leisurely pace, reflective narration, thought-provoking ideas, and humor, these books are challenging and rewarding. -- Melissa Gray

7. ***Replay***

Grimwood, Ken

**Reason:** The Impossible Lives of Greta Wells and Replay are character-driven novels that revolve around what happens to people who experience events at various chronological moments, shifting through time against their will. -- Katherine Johnson

8. *To say nothing of the dog*

Willis, Connie

**Reason:** Though Niffenegger's romantic drama is more character-driven and moving; Willis's historical mystery more intricately plotted and funny; each is compelling, thought-provoking, and engaging. Both use a time travel motif to develop themes of human relationships and responsibilities. -- Matthew Ransom

9. *The impossible lives of Greta Wells*

Greer, Andrew Sean

**Reason:** If you enjoy the character development and the premise of The Time Traveler's Wife , you'll want to read The Impossible Lives of Greta Wells; both are literary novels that revolve around characters who travel involuntarily through time. -- Katherine Johnson

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10. *Every Day* (YA)  
Levithan, David

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