ReadingGroupGuides
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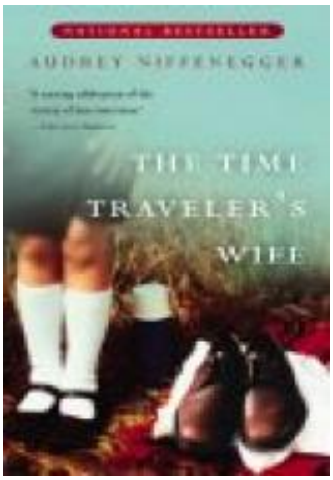
The Time Traveler's Wife

by Audrey Niffenegger



About the 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 36, and were married when Clare was 23 and Henry 31. 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.

Discussion Guide

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.

Author Bio

Audrey Niffenegger is a visual artist and writer who lives in Chicago and London. Her book art, prints and paintings are included in the collections of the National Museum of Women in the Arts, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Newberry Library, and the Library of Congress, among others. In 2019, she founded Artists Book House, a non-profit center for the literary and book arts. Ms. Niffenegger was also one of the founders of the Columbia College Chicago Center for Book and Paper Arts. She was a Professor at Columbia College until 2015.

Her books include the novels THE TIME TRAVELER'S WIFE, LIFE OUT OF ORDER and HER FEARFUL SYMMETRY, as well as the graphic novels RAVEN GIRL, THE NIGHT BOOKMOBILE and BIZARRE ROMANCE (with Eddie Campbell). THE TIME TRAVELER'S WIFE has been adapted into a film, an HBO television series, and a West End stage musical. Other adaptations include a ballet of RAVEN GIRL, which was created by the choreographer Wayne McGregor in 2013 for the Royal Opera House Ballet.

Critical Praise

"Inventive and poignant."

?*Entertainment Weekly*

"Amazing trip."

?*People Magazine*, Critic's Choice

"...a beautifully crafted book."

?*St. Petersburg Times*

"I heartily recommend **The Time Traveler's Wife**, an enchanting novel, which is beautifully crafted and as dazzlingly imaginative as it is dizzyingly romantic."

?Scott Turow, author of **Reversible Errors** and **Presumed Innocent**

"There's no way you can stop reading."

?Becky Ohlsen, *Bookpage*

"Fiercely inventive, slyly ambitious, and lovingly told, **The Time Traveler's Wife** sparkles as it fearlessly explores the delicate interplay of love and time."

?Anne Ursu, author of **The Disapparation of James** and**Spilling Clarence**

"An odd and enchanting love story..."

?Charles Dickinson, author of **A Shortcut in Time**

"Niffenegger's debut novel is creating quite the stir."

?David Exum, *The Boston Herald*

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