



6700 Merle Hay Road, Johnston, IA 50131 • Voice: 515-278-5233 • Fax: 515-278-4975 • info@johnstonlibrary.com

Johnston Public Library Book Discussion Questions

The Time Traveler's Wife by Audrey Niffenegger

Summary

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.

Discussion Questions

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.

Discussion Questions from www.ReadingGroupGuides.com