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

### **From Publishers Weekly**

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.

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### **From Booklist**

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

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