

Faded Glimpses of Time: The Tempus Trilogy

Nyah Nichol

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Nyah Nichol's science fiction novel *Faded Glimpses of Time* toys with the consequences of time travel and technological research.

Having returned from a future in which she became an evil version of herself, Wren is terrified of the orb—an object with the power to manipulate people's internal temperaments and external realities. She is unsure of whether defeating her future self was the right choice, since her future exploits changed the past: her friend Alex now has blue eyes, and there's a newfound world security organization, DAWN, whose origins are shady.

Wren and Alex's mentor, Rob, is the security director of DAWN's confidential technology and research subdivision, DAIR. When someone betrays them during a reconnaissance mission to secure time travel technology, time collapses and resets. As the only individuals who remember the previous timelines, Wren and Alex seek out clues to halt the time loop.

Multiple timelines are explored before the time-resetting catastrophes, with each reset switching between the perspectives of Wren, Alex, Rob, and Tolli, an agent whom Wren befriended in a future timeline. And as Wren and Alex uncover clues about DAWN and the resetting timelines, secondary characters are introduced, including Li, DAIR's director; Wren's childhood friend, Cass; and Tolli's colleagues. Their relationships to the story are stated in bare terms, though, with explanations of their past or future connections to others. In thought and speech, they all sound alike.

The book's descriptions of the time distortions and timeline collapses are dramatic and engaging. However, understanding relies on knowledge of the future timeline from which Wren returned, which is mentioned only in passing in this volume. Wren and Alex's missions are varied, but they follow a pattern: they work to smoke out the traitor in DAWN's midst, and to understand the nature of the space anomalies related to time's collapse, on repeat. The same is true of their reactions to the horror of reliving the same timeline over and over. More interesting are the technological advancements in the background of their exploration, including the time machines and human biomechanical augmentations.

Later, mysteries arise surrounding Wren's deceased uncle and Alex's missing father, resulting in additional suspense. The significance and power of the orb are clarified, as well. Still, by the book's end, much is left to be inferred.

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ALI ORTIZ (July 30, 2022)

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