

The Psychology of Time Travel

Kate Mascarenhas

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Past, present, and future collide in *The Psychology of Time Travel*. Kate Mascarenhas layers science, romance, and mystery to explore humans' relationships not only to each other but also to time itself.

Four scientists—Margaret, Barbara, Grace, and Lucille—uncover the mechanisms of time travel in 1967. Despite this exciting discovery, Barbara proves incapable of handling the strain that time traveling places on her mind, and she embarrasses her teammates during a television interview. Ostracized from the group, she is forced to give up traveling for good.

Fast forward to 2018: Barbara's psychologist granddaughter, Ruby, is swept up in a mystery when a body is discovered in the basement of a museum. Thus begins a search for answers within the Conclave—an organization of time travelers created and headed by Margaret, with its own society and laws separate from the rest of England.

A large cast of characters is present, expanding ever wider as the nonlinear novel progresses. Each chapter is headed with a date and a character's name. The intersections of the ensemble across time provide an interesting puzzle to solve, but there is very little space in which to fully develop their various points of view.

Thought-provoking concepts peek through, primarily focused on how time traveling affects the psyche, including a traveler's relationship with death. There is little concern for the logistics of traveling, and the idea of paradoxes is brushed aside with surprising ease. Characters interact with their future selves—sometimes multiple future selves at once—with few consequences and without creating multiple timelines. There are some attempts to address current social issues—mainly racism and the treatment of LGBTQ people—but these moments are fleeting.

With plenty of twists and turns, *The Psychology of Time Travel* is a provocative thought experiment.

MEAGAN LOGSDON (January/February 2019)

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