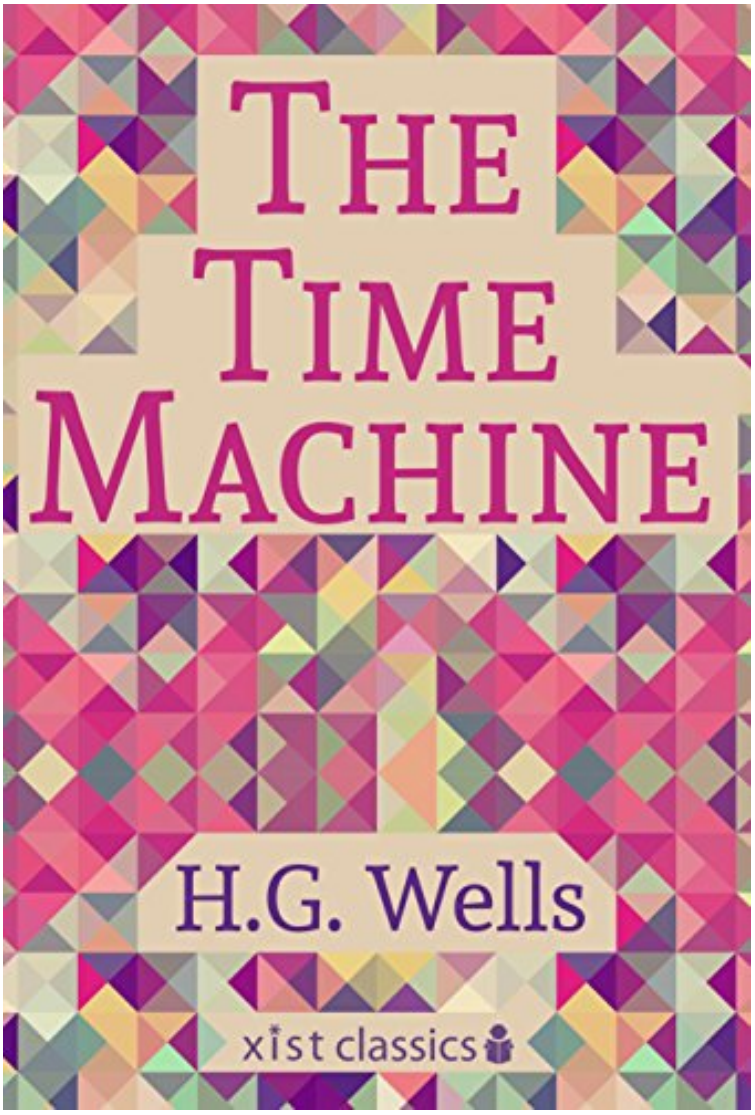
The Time Machine



Par H.G. Wells
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Par H.G. Wells : The Time Machine before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Time Machine:

Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurH.G. Wells popularized the idea of time travel in his 1895 novel, The Time Machine. This classic book tells the story of a Victorian scientist who travels far into the future in a mechanical device he has built. This Xist Classics edition has been professionally formatted for e-readers with a linked table of contents. This ebook also contains a bonus book club leadership guide and discussion questions. We hope youll share this book with your friends, neighbors and colleagues and cant wait to hear what you have to say about it.Xist Publishing is a digital-first publisher. Xist Publishing creates books for the touchscreen generation and is dedicated to helping everyone develop a lifetime love of reading, no matter what form it takes Get your next Xist Classic title for Kindle here: http://amzn.to/1A7cKKl Find all our our books for Kindle here: http://amzn.to/1PooxLl Sign up for the Xist Publishing Newsletterhere. Find more great titles

on our website. ExtraitTable of ContentsAbout the AuthorTitle PageCopyright PageIntroductionChapter 1Chapter 2Chapter 3Chapter 4Chapter 5Chapter 6Chapter 7Chapter 8Chapter 9Chapter 10Chapter 11Chapter 12EpilogueAppendix14AfterwordSelected BibliographyIntroductionBEFORE AIRPLANES, SPACE travel, and atomic energy, before freeways and traffic jams, poison gas and tanks, and just before the dawn of the twentieth century, a nameless inventor in London discovered a way to travel in time, using a mysterious machine assembled in a small private shop.And an unknown journalist named Herbert George Wells (1866-1946) leaped in a few short years to fame and fortune.If this is the first time youve read The Time Machine, then stop right here. Skip over this introduction, for now, and get right to the story. When youre done, if you wish, come back and join the discussion. Its bound to be heated.To this day, H. G. Wells is controversial, and I doubt he would have had it any other way!Welcome back. Now how do you feel about time travel? Perplexed, skeptical, excited, a little sad?By 1895, when The Time Machine was first published in book form, H. G. Wells had lived through years of ill health, married and parted, and tried on a career of teaching, then moved on to journalism and writing reviews. He did not seem very successful at anything, but he was enormously intelligent and ambitious. And he knew he had one story, one idea, one card up his sleeve that could possibly trump all of his disadvantages.A man, traveling in time, using a machine.A Time Traveller.Judging from many drafts and redrafts over at least seven years, Wells knew that he had something bigsomething that could launch his career very nicely indeed, if he only got it right.He finally got it right. After its serialization in William Ernest Henleys The New in early 1895, The Time Machine became a sensation. In an age intrigued by all the possibilities of science and mathematics, Wellss first work of fiction was like a brisk slap in the face. The future will be marvelous, the young Wells told his audienceand also tragic, even horrible. All things biological must end, or give way to new forms, he suggested, following the dour lead of his most influential teacher, Darwins Bulldog, T. H. Huxley.For Victorian England, the picture of humanity divided into the diminutive, weak, and sun-dwelling Eloi and those technological dwellers in underground darkness, the Morlocks, must have seemed particularly grotesquemirroring as it did the tottering class system: quite literally, Upstairs and Downstairs.In this bleak picture of distant futurity, Wells gives us a final glimmer of human love, innocent and childlike, in the outstretched hand of the tiny Eloi Weena . . . love, however, too weak to withstand the brutal forces of evolution and necessity, and far too swiftly destroyed. As a final fillip, Wells shows us that eventually even the necessity of biological evolution will give way, as the sun swells and reddens, life reverts to the crustacean and then to the (possibly) molluscan or protozoan, and the Earth finally freezes over.It is an utterly chilling message, mixing as it does human sentiment, contemporary scientific knowledge, unwavering pessimism, and a sense of cosmic wonder and discovery, with the realization of the limited condition of the human race. As a novelistic tour de force, nothing like it had ever been published.Coming on the heels of decades of speculation about both evolution and geometry, and bringing together recent theories in astronomy and geology, The Time Machine hit the Victorian intellect squarely between the eyes. It was the first modern science fiction novel.Within nine years, H. G. Wells would write seven more novelsThe Island of Doctor Moreau (1896), The Invisible Man (1897), The War of the Worlds (1898), When the Sleeper Wakes (1899), The First Men in the Moon (1901), The Food of the Gods (1904), In the Days of the Comet (1906)and numerous short stories that would shape and define twentieth-century science fiction. By 1914 and the beginning of World War I, Wells was one of the bestselling authors in the English language.He became the twentieth-century prototype of the angry young man, brilliant and full of contradictions. Throughout his life, Wells promoted his changeable brand of socialism yet toyed with (early on, at least) a belief in God, called for equality of the sexes yet was a flagrant womanizer, decried class distinctions yet sought the approval of the rich, the powerful, and the famousand then, just as quickly, denounced them!In the 1920s, his Outline of History would sell millions of copies. He would become so famous and so influential that authors seeking a reputationor at least some intellectual balancewould cock their hats and shy stones at his overwhelming success and his pugnacious attitudes.C. S. Lewis parodied Wellss brand of evolution and rationalism from a theist perspective in his science fiction novels Out of the Silent Planet, Perelandra, and That Hideous Strength. Lewis built an intellectually confused, villainous character named Weston on the frame of a number of scientific acquaintances, possibly including J.B.S. Haldane and Wells. Even as late as 1955, William Golding would reply to Wellss portrait (in An Outline of History) of low, bestial Neanderthals with his own depiction of them as scions of a kinder nature, brutalized by modern humans, in The Inheritors.Wells was a marvelous sounding board, and theres evidence he enjoyed this kind of hurly-burly. What he did not enjoy was a bad review or being ignored.Above all, he hated being ignored.All of Wellss early scientific romances are accessible to a person

of average education. They are clearly and elegantly written, not very heavy on the character bits (but convincing in what is shown), realistic despite their fantastic elements, clear-eyed about animal natureand highly imaginative. They are also thoroughly satirical, though often written with a straight face or at most a wry grimace.These early novels are far more than just adventurous dives into the deep canyons of fantasy. They are more like mountain climbs to the edge of space. They can be disturbing, and intentionally so. Wells knew early on that his audiences enjoyed a good scare; and he enjoyed, in those prewar years of growing tension, placing human folly in cosmic perspective.In writing The Time Machine, Wells claimed to draw his inspiration from Nathaniel Hawthorne, but there is also a touch of Poe in early drafts. Wells was fond of Voltaire, the French philosopher and satirist; he respected but found little useful comparison with Jules Verne, whose own satiric elements are often overlooked. Most often, Wells likened himself to Jonathan Swift, the sardonic Irish author of Gullivers Travels.The Time Machine was compared favorably in one review to Robert Louis Stevensons Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, a masterpiece of psychological horror. The Time Machines horrors are less moral than neutral, however. Its plan is not so much darkly psychological as biological and physical. Whatever our psychology, our class, our politics, Wells says, the laws of nature will betray us. In the greater scheme of things, our personal lives and wishes seem to mean very little.This sensation of doom and claustrophobia at the end of life on Earth, and the end of Earth itself, evokes a new kind of fear, a cosmic fear. In later decades, writers as diverse as William Hope Hodgson, H. P. Lovecraft, and Olaf Stapledon would expand upon Wellss concepts and time scales, with extraordinary results upon philosophy and popular culture. The universe would never look the same to us.Years later, in 1934, Wells would write that horror is easier to create than hope, or uplifting suggestions for improving the human race. His science fiction novels, however, demand reactions entirely other than paralyzed fear; they provide a clear-eyed perspective of our place in the universe, a realistic sense of human smallness, refreshing to this day in our world of simian self-regard.We still need the Wellsian anodyne of these brisk, abrupt, and heated early novels, and in particular, we still need The Time Machine.How did a drapers assistant, son of a man variously described as a cricketer, a gardener, and a shopkeeper, with a sporadic education and in frequent ill health, come to put together something so rich, diverse, and utterly new?H. G. Wells began by studying hard. He took advantage of an experiment in free schooling at the Normal School of Science (after 1890 renamed the Royal College of Science) to listen to some of the great voices and minds of his day. He read everything he could get his hands on: biology, geology, astronomy, and of course geometry. Victorians were masters at playing with geometric concepts, witness Lewis Car-rolls Alice stories and Edwin A. Abbotts masterwork, Flatland (1884). (Abbott was not a mathematician, but a schoolmaster, as was Wells for a time.)A fellow student, E. A. Hamilton-Gordon, presented a paper on the fourth dimension at a meeting of the Debating Society that bore a distinct (though perhaps coincidental) resemblance to an essay by C. H. Hinton called What Is the Fourth Dimension?, published in 1884-1885 in his two-volume collection, Scientific Romances . Hamilton-Gordons talk and possibly Hintons essay are likely the prime influences on Wellss discussion of the fourth dimension and time travel.Earlier still, topologist August Ferdinand Mbius (1790-1868) had described, among other wonders, the one-sided piece of paper that bears his name. Giving a longish strip of paper a half twist and then fastening the ends together produces a marvelous vanishing of one side. (Try itignore the glued or taped part, and run your finger around the entire surface . . . an endless loop! If one can lose geometric features, isnt it possible to gain a few, as well? An extra dimension, perhaps?)Charles Darwin, Alfred Russel Wallace, T. H. Huxley, and other controversial biological thinkers had shown the scientific world that humans had evolved over deep time, and this implied that they could still evolvein Huxleys opinion, not necessarily for the better, but almost certainly in adaptation to a dying world. Wells autographed a copy of the British edition of The Time Machine for Huxley in May 1895:Dear Sir,I am sending you a little book that I fancy may be of interest to you. The central ideathat of degeneration following securitywas the outcome of a certain amount of biological study. I daresay your position subjects you to a good many such displays of the range of authors but I have this much excuseI was one of your pupils at the Royal College of Science and finally: the book is a very little one.Huxley died in June of that year. He probably never had time to read his students novel.The year 802,701, the last date specified in The Time Machine, was far more remote to a scientist in Wellss era than it might seem now. (Though very little science fiction even today ventures so far into the future.) The best scientific speculation of the time placed the age of the solar system at no more than fifteen to twenty-four million years, based on the probability that the sun was a combusting ball of gas.This relatively brief span caused Darwinians and many geologists concern. The Darwinians needed great gulfs of timecertainly more than just tens of millions of yearsto

explain the diversity of life on Earth through slow and gradual evolution. The geologists saw evidence of processes occurring over hundreds of millions of years, possibly even billions of years.Fusion of hydrogen into helium and heavier elements was of course unknown at the time. It wasnt until the 1920s and the researches of deep-sky astronomers like Edwin Hubble that the true size and age of the universe began to be understood, and the Darwinians and geologists could breathe easier. However, Wellss estimate of the time and nature of the death of the Earth was in agreement with the science of the time, and his description of the sun blossoming into a red giant is still accurate enoughthough the Earth is likely to be swallowed by this future monstrosity and crisped, not frozen.Wells acquired skepticism early in his life. As he wrote The Time Machine, he was unsure of what lay ahead for himself, much less the human race. Both personally and historically, the last decade of the nineteenth century was a time of danger and change. Engaged in an affair with future wife Amy Catherine Robbins (whom Wells would nickname Jane), recently separated from his first wife, cousin Isabel, and barely earning any kind of living, Wells likely began each day by being at least a little frightened.Like T. H. Huxley, whose own upbringing was far from upper-crust, Wells distrusted the soothing religious and political babble of the day. Not for him the easy pathway to a gentlemans success and leisure. He could not trust the class system that would have relegated him, by birth alone, to obscurity; the son of a tradesman, Wells clearly saw that unearned privilege and inbred claims of intellectual supremacy draped England and Europe in a shroud of ill omen.Consequently, his first work of fiction is dark, almost hopelessbut for the tiny hand of love offered by a future childlike member of the upper classes, Weena.Later, Wells would regret this self-styled hat flipping and reliance on visceral emotions, aiming instead for a program of intellectual and moral reform, of disciplined hope and warnings of the bleaker prospects of the twentieth century. Still, to his irritation, his early scientific romances remained his most popular works. He had done more than strike a chord; he had composed a new kind of symphony.To the masses of readers around the world, especially in information-hungry America and England, Wells became the prophet of science and a hopeful if stern critic of political and technological progress. Along the way, however, his reputation and his own sense of self-worth were almost derailed by the very violence he predicted with such prescience.As Wells had feared, the ruling upper classes did goof, and horribly, in both politics and military strategy. World War I killed ten million people and ravaged Europe. (Spanish influenza, possibly spread by troop mobilizations and international trauma and stress, killed tens of millions more.) Airplanes and dirigibles dropping bombs on civilian populations, so-called Land Ironclads (tanks), and poison gasall predicted by Wells and all dire products of the science that had fascinated Wellss audience before 1914were used and abused by incompetent, vicious, and even demented politicians and generals.As the bodies stacked up in uncounted pilesmuch of a generation wastedfor many, the promise of science became indelibly tainted. The promise of the prewar modernists, an extraordinary blossom of art and literature, was squashed. Hope and innovation turned into a sense of intellectual and moral defeat, and the drug that best dulled the pain, for some, was a suffocating and hopeless irony.An intellectual upper class had been forming for decades that eschewed everything scientific and technological and adhered to a utopian mix of socialism and elitist aesthetic principles. Before the war, artists and thinkers like William Morris (1834-1896) and William Blake (1757-1827) had voiced strong criticisms of rampant industrialization and untrammeled growth. (Both retained an interest in spirituality and imaginative literature, howeverMorris having produced fantasies that would later inspire Tolkien and others.)The trauma of the war and subsequent social upheaval forced many writers and artists to align their axes of culture with Marx and Freud, rejecting the so-called pure sciences, as well as spirituality, and simultaneously shutting the door on fairy tales, ghost stories, myth, and almost all imaginative storytelling.These new literary Brahmins may have blamed Wells for the truth of the very warnings he had so passionately shouted. Or more simply, they were tired of his raucous and argumentative personality and his extraordinary success. An unfortunate row between former friends and correspondents, Wells and Henry James (who died in 1916), widened the breach.Once a valued member of the literary club, during the war Wells began to be regarded as a self-parodying buffoon, an outcastand an anti-Jamesian. His chief sin was that he was popular; but he also understood the social implications of science better than any man of his time, and still trumpeted rational thought and the possibility of progress. His fiction was intended for more than just aesthetic effect, and this, for the Jamesians and others, became tiresome.The man who had done so much to forecast the twentieth century was regarded by an influential minority as shrill and inflexible, too smart for his own good, and certainly not to be trusted. In literature, some of the old prewar class system lived on through the 1920s and 1930s, reduced to a parade of style, fashion and irony, a Jamesian ghost haunting a twilight world of pale upper-class emotions. Perversely, Wells still desired the

approval of these old friends, yet at the same time mercilessly parodied them. Many could not find it in their hearts to put up with him.Virginia Woolf announced, characteristically, that Wells was passe.Cast out of this new definition of literature, along with Wells, were science itself and, incidentally, that branch of the literature of ideas that was coming to be known as science fiction. Both have been ignored for decades in textbooks and history books, scrupulously replaced by the literature of manners, and by a strange variety of social realism intent on depicting a decaying world without science or scientists.C. P. Snows Two Culturesscience and the humanitieshad split apart, to the detriment of both.Buttressed in their ivory towers, after the atom bomb and the beginning of the space age, and certainly after the first moon landing, those who denied science began to look more and more like Wellss ineffectual Eloi. And sure enough, as Wells had predicted as early as 1893,1 the literature of the masses, including science fiction, began to mock them, and then to absorb themin short, to have them for lunch.Much of academic literature and art went on life support, like a rare plant in a hothouse. Weedy and wild, impolite and scary, H. G. Wells lives on, inspiring millions. To this day, his works and the works of his intellectual children prosper in novels, stories, films, comic books, computer games, and all manner of new electronic media around the world.Wells lived long enough to see another of his predictionsthe atomic bombundergo a horrible birth in the skies over Japan. At the time of his death in 1946, this brilliant man, who had worked so hard for rationality and political planning, returned to his early days of pessimism, but with the harder, darker cast of despairing old age. Wells was convinced that the world was heading down the wrong path, possibly to utter nuclear destruction (Mind at the End of Its Tether [1946]).Finally, he was wrong. Humanity survived the twentieth century. The gigantic and destructive tyrannies of the 1920s and 1930s are gone. The lingering Soviet empire is also gone (something he did foresee). The United States dominates world economics and politics, trading glances with a lumbering, renascent China, which would have made Wellsand most British writersvery uneasy.The prospects are challenging. Dark days and light come and go in alteration, like the flickering of suns from the Time Travellers perspective, but hope remains.Weenas hand is still outstretched.The Time Machine was Wellss first major publication, his first novel. It remains one of the most influential novels ever written, and easily one of the most exciting.Time travel in fiction is common now, in hundreds if not thousands of novels and stories, on television and in motion pictures. (Curiously, it may have been the early ancestors of motion pictures that provided the strongest metaphor for time traveltime as frames on a strip of film.) But before Wells, people had traveled in time only through mysterious forces (Mark Twains brilliant A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthurs Court), suspended animation (Washington Irvings Rip Van Winkle), the aid of spirits (Dickenss A Christmas Carol), or the agencies of the gods.From School Library JournalGrades 4-7--The St. Charles Players perform this readers' theatre-style rendition of H.G. Wells' classic story. Using appropriate sound effects and alternating readers allows listeners to differentiate between characters and to develop a sense of place and time. The lively narration will hold listeners' attention from beginning to end. The story begins with a revolutionary Victorian scientist who claims to have invented a machine that allows him to travel through time. Using flashbacks, he recounts his adventures in the futurist world he visits in his time machine to a group of skeptical friends. This abridged version will work well as an introduction to classic literature in elementary grade classes, but omits too much of the original text for older students. Consider adding this title to audiobook collections that focus on classic, time-tested literature.Sarah Prielipp, Chippewa River District Library System, Mt Pleasant, MI