

The Map of Time: A Novel (The Map of Time Trilogy)

By Félix J. Palma

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This rollicking page-turner with a cast of real and imagined literary characters and cunning intertwined plots stars a skeptical H.G. Wells as a time-traveling investigator.

Characters real and imaginary come vividly to life in this whimsical triple play of intertwined plots, in which a skeptical H. G. Wells is called upon to investigate purported incidents of time travel and to save lives and literary classics, including *Dracula* and *The Time Machine*, from being wiped from existence.

What happens if we change history?

Félix J. Palma explores this provocative question, weaving a historical fantasy as imaginative as it is exciting—a story full of love and adventure that transports readers from a haunting setting in Victorian London to a magical reality where centuries collide and a writer's mind seems to pull at all the strings.

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Editorial Review

Review
"Palma makes his U.S. debut with the brilliant first in a trilogy, an intriguing thriller that explores the ramifications of time travel in three intersecting narratives." -- starred "Publishers Weekly" review

"Strange and wonderful. Magical and smart. Felix J. Palma has done more than written a wonderful novel, he's concocted a supernatural tour de force. Time travel, tragic love, murder and mystery all combine in what is nothing short of a surprising, satisfying and mesmerizing read." - M.J. Rose, International Bestseller

""The Map of Time" recalls the science fiction of Wells and Verne, and then turns the early masters on their heads. A brilliant and breathtaking trip through metafictional time." --Scott Westerfeld, "New York Times" bestselling author of "Leviathan"

"Lyrical storytelling and a rich attention to detail make this prize-winning novel an enthralling read." -- starred "Library Journal" Review

"Readers who embark on the journey...will be richly rewarded. --starred "Booklist" review

"Palma uses the basic ingredients of steampunk -- fantasy, mystery, ripping adventure and Victorian-era high-tech -- to marvelous effect. " --"Seattle Times"

"'Intellectual thriller' is not an oxymoron in this case. Eccentric, informed. Time travel, H.G. Wells, Jack the Ripper, robots, romance, changing history, destroying classic literature. Spot on narration. Good clean fun." --"Tulsa World"

""The Map of Time "is a singularly inventive, luscious story with a core of pure, unsettling weirdness. With unnerving grace and disturbing fantasy, it effortlessly straddles that impossible line between being decidedly familiar, and yet absolutely new." --Cherie Priest, author of "Boneshaker"

"Palma is a master of ingenious plotting." --"Kirkus Reviews"

"A big, genre-bending delight." --"The Washington Post"

About the Author
Félix J. Palma has earned more than a hundred awards for his short stories. *The Map of Time* is his first book to be published in the United States.

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I

ANDREW HARRINGTON WOULD HAVE GLADLY died several times over if that meant not having to choose just one pistol from among his father’s vast collection in the living room cabinet. Decisions had never

been Andrew's strong point. On close examination, his life had been a series of mistaken choices, the last of them threatening to cast its lengthy shadow over the future. But that life of unedifying blunders was about to end. This time he was sure he had made the right decision, because he had decided not to decide. There would be no more mistakes in the future because there would be no more future. He was going to destroy it completely by putting one of those guns to his right temple. He could see no other solution: obliterating the future was the only way for him to eradicate the past.

He scanned the contents of the cabinet, the lethal assortment his father had lovingly set about assembling after his return from the war. He was fanatical about these weapons, though Andrew suspected it was not so much nostalgia that drove him to collect them as his desire to contemplate the novel ways mankind kept coming up with for taking one's own life outside the law. In stark contrast to his father's devotion, Andrew was impassive as he surveyed the apparently docile, almost humdrum implements that had brought thunder down to men's fingertips and freed war from the unpleasantness of hand-to-hand combat. Andrew tried to imagine what kind of death might be lurking inside each of them, lying in wait like some predator. Which would his father have recommended he blow his brains out with? He calculated that death from one of those antiquated muzzle-loading flintlocks, which had to be refilled with gunpowder and a ball, then tamped down with a paper plug each time they were fired, would be a noble but drawn-out, tedious affair. He preferred the swift death guaranteed by one of the more modern revolvers nestling in their luxurious velvet-lined wooden cases. He considered a Colt Single Action revolver, which looked easy to handle and reliable, but discarded it when he remembered he had seen Buffalo Bill brandishing one in his Wild West Shows. A pitiful attempt to reenact his transoceanic exploits with a handful of imported Red Indians and a dozen lethargic, apparently opium-drugged buffalo. Death for him was not just another adventure. He also rejected a fine Smith & Wesson: that was the gun that had killed the outlaw Jesse James, of whom he considered himself unworthy, as well as a Webley revolver, specially designed to hold back the charging hordes in Britain's colonial wars, which he thought looked too cumbersome. His attention turned next to his father's favorite, a fine pepperbox with rotating barrels, but he seriously doubted whether this ridiculous, ostentatious-looking weapon would be capable of firing a bullet with enough force. Finally, he settled on an elegant 1870 Colt with mother-of-pearl inlays that would take his life with all the delicacy of a woman's caress.

He smiled defiantly as he plucked it from the cabinet, remembering how often his father had forbidden him to meddle with his pistols. But the illustrious William Harrington was in Italy at that moment, no doubt reducing the Fontana de Trevi to a quivering wreck with his critical gaze. His parents' decision to leave on their trip to Europe the very day he had chosen to kill himself had also been a happy coincidence. He doubted whether either of them would ever decipher the true message concealed in his gesture (that he had preferred to die as he had lived—alone), but for Andrew it was enough to imagine the inevitable look of disgust on his father's face when he discovered his son had killed himself behind his back, without his permission.

He opened the cabinet where the ammunition was kept and loaded six bullets into the chamber. He supposed that one would be enough, but who knew what might happen. After all, he had never killed himself before. Then he tucked the gun, wrapped in a cloth, inside his coat pocket, as though it were a piece of fruit he was taking with him to eat later on a stroll. In a further act of defiance, he left the cabinet door open. If only he had shown this much courage before, he thought. If only he had dared confront his father when it had mattered, she would still be alive. But by the time he did so, it was too late. And he had spent eight long years paying for his hesitation. Eight years, during which his pain had only worsened, spreading its slimy tendrils through him like poison ivy, wrapping itself around his insides, gnawing at his soul. Despite the efforts of his cousin Charles and the distraction of other women's bodies, his grief over Marie's death refused to be laid to rest. But tonight it would all be over. Twenty-six was a good age to die, he reflected, contentedly fingering the bulge in his pocket. He had the gun. Now all he needed was a suitable place to

perform the ceremony. And there was only one possible place.

With the weight of the revolver in his pocket comforting him like a good-luck charm, he descended the grand staircase of the Harrington mansion in elegant Kensington Gore, a stone's throw from the Queen's Gate entrance to Hyde Park. He had not intended to cast any farewell glances at the walls of what had been his home for almost three decades, but he could not help feeling a perverse wish to pause before his father's portrait, which dominated the hall. His father stared down at him disapprovingly out of the gilt frame, a proud and commanding figure bursting out of the old uniform he had worn as a young infantryman in the Crimean War until a Russian bayonet had punctured his thigh and left him with a disturbingly lopsided gait. William Harrington surveyed the world disdainfully, as though the universe were a botched affair on which he had long since given up. What fool was responsible for that untimely blanket of fog which had descended on the battlefield outside the besieged city of Sebastopol, so that nobody could see the tip of the enemy's bayonets? Who had decided that a woman was the ideal person to preside over England's destiny? Was the East really the best place for the sun to rise?

Andrew had never seen his father without that cruel animosity seeping from his eyes, and so could not know whether he had been born with it or had been infected with it fighting alongside the ferocious Ottomans in the Crimea. In any event, it had not vanished like a mild case of smallpox, leaving no mark on his face, even though the path that had opened up in front of his hapless soldier's boots on his return could only be termed a fortunate one. What did it matter that he had to hobble along it with the aid of a stick if it helped him reach his present position? For, without having to enter any pact with the devil, the man with the bushy moustache and clean-cut features depicted on the canvas had become one of the richest men in England overnight. Trudging around in that distant war, bayonet at the ready, he could never have dreamed of possessing a fraction of what he now owned. How he had amassed his fortune, though, was one of the family's best-kept secrets, and a complete mystery to Andrew.

THE TEDIOUS MOMENT IS now approaching when the young man must decide which hat and overcoat to pick from among the heap in the hall closet: one has to look presentable even for death. This is a scene which, knowing Andrew, could take several exasperating minutes, and since I see no need to describe it, I shall take the opportunity to welcome you to this tale, which has just begun, and which after lengthy reflection I chose to begin at this juncture and not another; as though I, too, had to select a single beginning from among the many jostling for position in the closet of possibilities. Assuming you stay until the end of this tale, some of you will no doubt think that I chose the wrong thread with which to begin spinning my yarn, and that for accuracy's sake I should have respected chronological order and begun with Miss Haggerty's story. It is possible, but there are stories that cannot begin at their beginning, and perhaps this is one of them.

So, let's forget about Miss Haggerty for the moment, forget that I ever mentioned her, even, and let's go back to Andrew, who has just stepped forth from the mansion suitably dressed in a hat and coat, and even a pair of warm gloves to protect his hands from the harsh winter cold. Once outside the mansion, the young man paused at the top of the steps, which unfurled at his feet like a wave of marble down to the garden. From there, he surveyed the world in which he had been brought up, suddenly aware that, if things went according to plan, he would never see it again. Night was gently spreading its veil over the Harrington mansion. A hazy full moon hung in the sky, bathing in its soft glow the immaculate lawns surrounding the house, most of them cluttered with flower beds, hedges, and fountains, dozens of oversized stone fountains decorated with excessively ornate sculptures of mermaids, fauns, and other mythical creatures. His father had accumulated such a large number of them because as an unsophisticated soul his only way of showing off his importance was to buy a lot of expensive and useless objects. In the case of the fountains his extravagance was excusable, because they combined to soothe the night with their watery refrain, making the listener want to

close his eyes and forget everything except the sound of that hypnotic burble. Further off, beyond the neatly clipped lawns, stood the immense greenhouse, graceful as a swan poised for flight, where his mother spent most of the day marveling over the exotic flowers that sprouted from seeds brought back from the colonies.

Andrew gazed at the moon for several minutes wondering whether man would ever be able to travel there, as had the characters in Jules Verne and Cyrano de Bergerac's works. And what would he find if he did manage to land on its shimmering surface—whether in an airship or shot out of a cannon or with a dozen bottles of dew strapped to his body in the hope that when it evaporated he would float up to the sky like the Gascon swashbuckler's hero? Ariosto the poet had turned the planet into a warehouse where lunatics' reason was stored in vials, but Andrew was more drawn to Plutarch's idea of it as the place where noble souls went after they left the world of the living. Like Plutarch, Andrew preferred to imagine that the moon was where dead people dwelled. He liked to picture them living at peace in ivory palaces built by an army of worker angels or in caves dug out of that white rock, waiting for the living to meet death and to carry on their lives there with them, exactly where they had left off. Sometimes, he imagined that Marie was living at that very moment in one of those grottos, oblivious to what had happened to her and grateful that death had offered her a better existence than life. Marie, pale in all that white splendor, waiting patiently for him to decide once and for all to blow his brains out and come to fill the empty space in her bed.

He stopped gazing at the moon when he noticed that Harold, the coachman, had followed his orders and was standing at the foot of the stairs with a carriage at the ready. As soon as he saw his young master descending the flight of steps, the coachman rushed to open the carriage door. Andrew had always been amused by Harold's display of energy, considering it incongruous in a man approaching sixty, but the coachman clearly kept in good shape.

"Miller's Court," the youth commanded.

Harold was astonished at his request.

"But sir, that's where—"

"Is there some problem, Harold?" Andrew interrupted.

The coachman stared at him for a moment, his mouth hanging ludicrously half-open, before adding:

"None whatsoever, sir."

Andrew gave a nod, signaling that the conversation was at an end. He climbed into the brougham and sat down on the red velvet seat. Glimpsing his reflection in the carriage window, Andrew gave a sigh of despair. Was that haggard countenance really his? It was the face of someone whose life has been seeping out of him unawares, like a pillow losing its stuffing through an open seam. In a certain sense, this was true. Although his face retained the harmonious good looks he was fortunate enough to have been born with, it now resembled an empty shell, a vague impression left in a mound of ashes. The sorrow that had cast a shadow over his soul had taken its toll on his appearance, too, for he could scarcely recognize himself in this aging youth with hollowed cheeks, downcast eyes, and an unkempt beard who stared back at him in the glass. Grief had stunted him, transforming him into a dried-up, sullen creature. Fortunately, the cab began to rock as Harold, having overcome his astonishment, clambered up to his perch. This took Andrew's attention away from the blurred face sketched onto the canvas of the night. The final act of the disastrous performance that had been his life was about to begin, and he was determined to savor every moment of it. He heard the whip crack above his head and, caressing the steely bulge in his pocket, he let himself be lulled by the carriage's

gentle sway.

THE CARRIAGE LEFT THE mansion and drove down Carriage Drive, which bordered the lush vegetation of Hyde Park. Gazing through the window at the city, Andrew thought that in less than half an hour's time they would be in the East End. This ride had always fascinated and puzzled him in equal measure, because it allowed him to glimpse in a single sweep every aspect of his beloved London, the world's greatest metropolis, the giant head of an insatiable octopus whose tentacles stretched over almost a fifth of the world's surface, holding Canada, India, Australia, and a large part of Africa in its viselike grip. As the handsome carriage sped east, the salubrious, almost countrified atmosphere of Kensington soon gave way to the crowded urban environment of Piccadilly, and beyond to the Circus where Anteros, the avenger of unrequited love, protrudes like an arrow fired at the city's heart. Beyond Fleet Street, the middle-class dwellings seemingly huddled around St. Paul's Cathedral gradually came into view. Finally, once they had passed the Bank of England and Cornhill Street, a wave of poverty swept over everything, a poverty that people from the adjoining West End knew of only from the satirical cartoons in *Punch*, and which seemed to pollute the air, making it foul to breathe as it mingled with the stench rising from the Thames.

Andrew had last made this journey eight years earlier, and since then he had always known that sooner or later he would make it again for the very last time. It was hardly surprising then that as they drew nearer to Aldgate, the gateway to Whitechapel, he felt slightly uneasy. He gazed warily out of the window as they entered the district, experiencing the same misgivings as he had in the past. He had never been able to avoid feeling overwhelmed by an uncomfortable sense of shame knowing that he was spying on what was to him an alien world with the dispassionate interest of somebody who studies insects. Over time, though, his initial revulsion had turned into inevitable compassion for the souls who inhabited that junkyard where the city dumped its human waste. And, peering out of the window, it seemed as if there was every reason for him to feel that compassion still: London's poorest borough had changed relatively little in the past eight years. Wealth brings poverty in its wake, thought Andrew, as they crossed the ill-lit, rowdy streets, crammed with stalls and handcarts and teeming with wretched creatures whose lives were played out beneath the menacing shadow of Christ Church. At first, he had been shocked to discover that behind the dazzle of the city's façade there existed this outpost of hell where, with the Queen's blessing, human beings were condemned to live like beasts. But the intervening years had made him less naïve, so that he was no longer surprised to see that even as the advances of science were transforming the face of London and the well-to-do amused themselves by recording their dogs' barks onto the wax-coated cylinders of phonographs or conversed via telephone under the glow of Robertson's electric lamps, while their wives brought their children into the world still groggy from chloroform, Whitechapel had remained immune to all this progress, untouchable beneath its rotten shell, drowning in its own filth. A quick glance was enough to tell him that crossing into this world was still like sticking his hand into a hornets' nest. It was here that poverty showed its ugliest face, here that the same jarring, sinister tune was always playing. He observed a couple of pub brawls, heard screams rising from the depths of dark alleyways, and glimpsed a few drunks sprawled in the gutter while a gang of street urchins stripped them of their shoes. They exchanged glances with a pair of pugnacious-looking men standing on a street corner, the petty rulers in this parallel kingdom of vice and crime.

THE LUXURIOUS CARRIAGE CAUGHT the attention of several prostitutes who shouted lewd proposals to him, hitching up their skirts and showing their cleavage. Andrew felt a pang of sorrow as he gazed upon this pitiful back-street spectacle. Most of the women were filthy and downtrodden, their bodies bearing the mark of their daily burden. Even the youngest and prettiest could not escape being stained by the misery of their surroundings. He was revisited by the agonizing thought that he might have saved one of these doomed women, offered her a better life than the one her Creator had allotted her, and yet he had failed. His sorrow reached a crescendo as the carriage rattled past the Ten Bells, emitting an arpeggio of creaks as it turned into Crispin Street on its way to Dorset Street, passing in front of the Britannia pub where he had first spoken to

Marie. This street was his final destination. Harold pulled the carriage up next to the stone arch leading to the Miller's Court flats, and climbed off the perch to open the carriage door. Andrew stepped out of the coach feeling suddenly dizzy and was aware that his legs were shaking as he looked around him. Everything was exactly as he remembered it, down to the shop with grimy windows run by McCarthy, the owner of the flats which stood beside the entrance. Nothing he saw indicated to him that time also passed in Whitechapel.

"You can go home now, Harold," he told the coachman, who was standing in silence at his side.

"What time shall I fetch you, sir?" asked the old man.

Andrew looked at him without knowing what to say. Fetch him? He had to stifle a sinister laugh. The only thing fetching him would be the cart from the Golden Lane morgue, the same one that had come there to fetch what was left of his beloved Marie eight years before.

"Forget you ever brought me here," was his reply.

The somber expression that clouded the coachman's face moved Andrew. Had Harold understood what he had come there to do? He could not be sure, because he had never given a moment's thought to the coachman's intelligence, or indeed to that of any servant. He always thought that at the most they possessed the innate cunning of people who from an early age are obliged to swim against the current in which he and his class maneuvered with ease. Now, though, he thought he detected in old Harold's attitude an uneasiness that could only have come from his having guessed Andrew's intentions with astonishing accuracy. And the servant's capacity for deduction was not the only discovery Andrew made during that brief moment when for once they looked directly at each other. Andrew also became aware of something hitherto unimaginable to him: the affection a servant can feel for his master. Despite the fact that he could only see them as shadows drifting in and out of rooms according to some invisible design, only noticing them when he needed to leave his glass on a tray or wanted the fire lit, these phantoms could actually care about what happened to their masters. That succession of faceless people—the maids whom his mother dismissed on the flimsiest grounds, the cooks systematically impregnated by the stable boys as though conforming to some ancient ritual, the butlers who left their employ with excellent references and went to work at another mansion identical to theirs—all of them made up a shifting landscape which Andrew had never taken the trouble to notice.

"Very well, sir," murmured Harold.

Andrew understood that these words were the coachman's last farewell; that this was the old fellow's only way of saying goodbye to him, since embracing him was a risk he appeared unwilling to take. And with a heavy heart, Andrew watched that stout, resolute man almost three times his age, to whom he would have had to relinquish the role of master if they had ever been stranded together on a desert island, clamber back up onto the carriage. He urged on the horses, leaving behind an echo of hooves clattering into the distance as the carriage was swallowed up by the fog spreading through the London streets like muddy foam. It struck him as odd that the only person he had said good-bye to before killing himself should be the coachman and not his parents or his cousin Charles, but life was full of such ironies.

That is exactly what Harold Barker was thinking as he drove the horses down Dorset Street, looking for the way out of that accursed neighborhood where life was not worth thruppence. But for his father's determination to pluck him from poverty and secure him a job as a coachman as soon as he was able to climb onto the perch, he might have been one more among the hordes of wretched souls scraping an existence in this gangrenous patch of London. Yes, that surly old drunk was the one who had hurled him into a series of jobs that had ended at the coach house of the illustrious William Harrington, in whose service he had spent

half his life. But, he had to admit, they had been peaceful years, which he did when taking stock of his life in the early hours after his chores were done and the masters were already asleep; peaceful years in which he had taken a wife and fathered two healthy, strong children, one of whom was employed as a gardener by Mr. Harrington.

The good fortune that had allowed him to forge a different life from the one he had believed was his lot enabled him to look upon those wretched souls with a degree of objectivity and compassion. Harold had been obliged to go to Whitechapel more often than he would have liked when ferrying his master there that terrible autumn eight years ago, a period when even the sky seemed to ooze blood at times. He had read in the newspapers about what had happened in that warren of godforsaken streets, but more than anything he had seen it reflected in his master's eyes. He knew now that young master Harrington had never recovered, that those reckless excursions to pubs and brothels which his cousin Charles had dragged them both on (although he himself had been obliged to remain in the carriage shivering from cold) had not succeeded in driving the terror from his eyes. And that night Harrington had appeared ready to lay down his arms, to surrender to an enemy who had proved invincible. Didn't that bulge in his pocket look suspiciously like a firearm? But what could he do? Should he turn around and try to stop him? Should a servant step in to alter his master's destiny? Harold shook his head. Maybe he was imagining things, he thought, and the young man simply wanted to spend the night in that haunted room, safe with a gun in his pocket.

He left off his uncomfortable broodings when he glimpsed a familiar carriage coming out of the fog towards him from the opposite direction. It was the Winslow family carriage, and the bundled-up figure on the perch was almost certainly Edward Rush, one of their coachmen. To judge from the way he slowed the horses, Rush appeared to have recognized him, too. Harold nodded a silent greeting to his colleague, before directing his gaze at the occupant of the carriage. For a split second, he and young Charles Winslow stared solemnly at one another. They did not say a word.

"Faster, Edward," Charles ordered his driver, tapping the roof of the carriage frantically with the knob of his cane.

Harold watched with relief as the carriage vanished once more into the fog in the direction of the Miller's Court flats. He was not needed now. He only hoped that young Winslow arrived in time. He would have liked to stay and see how the affair ended, but he had an order to carry out—although he fancied it had been given to him by a dead man—and so he urged the horses on once more and found his way out of that dreaded neighborhood where life (I apologize for the repetition, but the same thought did occur to Harold twice) was not worth thruppence. Admittedly, the expression sums up the peculiarity of the neighborhood very accurately, and we probably could not hope for a more profound appraisal from a coachman. However, despite having a life worthy of being recounted—as are all lives upon close scrutiny—the coachman Harold Barker is not a relevant character in this story. Others may choose to write about it and will no doubt find plenty of material to endow it with the emotion every good story requires—the time he met Rebecca, his wife, or the hilarious incident involving a ferret and a rake—but that is not our purpose here.

And so let us leave Harold, whose reappearance at some point in this tale I cannot vouch for, because a whole host of characters are going to pass through it and I can't be expected to remember every one of their faces. Let us return to Andrew, who at this very moment is crossing the arched entrance to Miller's Court and walking up the muddy stone path trying to find number thirteen while he rummages in his coat pocket for the key. After stumbling around in the dark for a few moments he found the room, pausing before the door with an attitude which anybody able to see him from one of the neighboring windows would have taken to be incongruous reverence. But for Andrew that room was infinitely more than some wretched lair where people who hadn't a penny to their name took refuge. He had not been back there since that fateful night,

although he had paid to keep everything exactly as it had been, exactly as it still was inside his head. Every month for the past eight years he had sent one of his servants to pay the rent for the little room so that nobody would be able to live there, because if he ever went back, he did not want to find traces of anyone but Marie. The few pennies for the rent were a drop in the ocean for him, and Mr. McCarthy had been delighted that a wealthy gentleman and obvious rake should want to rent that wretched dwelling indefinitely, for after what had taken place within its four walls he very much doubted anybody would be brave enough to sleep there. Andrew realized now that deep down he had always known he would come back, that the ceremony he was about to perform could not have been carried out anywhere else.

He opened the door and cast a mournful gaze around the room. It was a tiny space, scarcely more sophisticated than a shack, with flaking walls and a few sticks of battered furniture including a dilapidated bed, a grimy mirror, a crumbling fireplace, and a couple of chairs which looked as if they might fall apart if a fly landed on them. He felt a renewed sense of amazement that life could actually take place in somewhere like this. And yet, had he not known more happiness in that room than in the luxurious setting of the Harrington mansion? If, as he had read somewhere, every man’s paradise was in a different place, his was undoubtedly here, a place he had reached guided by a map not charting rivers or valleys but kisses and caresses.

And it was precisely a caress, this time an icy one on the nape of his neck, which drew his attention to the fact that nobody had taken the trouble to fix the broken window to the left of the door. What was the point? McCarthy seemed to belong to that class of people whose motto was to work as little as possible, and had Andrew reproached him for not replacing the pane of glass, he could always have argued that since he had requested everything be kept just as it was he had assumed this included the window-pane. Andrew sighed. He could see nothing with which to plug the hole, and so decided to kill himself in his hat and coat. He sat down on one of the rickety chairs, reached into his pocket for the gun, and carefully unfolded the cloth, as if he were performing a liturgy. The Colt gleamed in the moonlight filtering weakly through the small, grimy window.

He stroked the weapon as though it were a cat curled up in his lap and let Marie’s smile wash over him once more. Andrew was always surprised that his memories retained the vibrancy, like fresh roses, of those first days. He remembered everything so incredibly vividly, as though no eight-year gap stretched between them, and at times these memories seemed even more beautiful than the real events. What mysterious alchemy could make these imitations appear more vivid than the real thing? The answer was obvious: the passage of time, which transformed the volatile present into that finished, unalterable painting called the past, a canvas man always executed blindly, with erratic brushstrokes that only made sense when one stepped far enough away from it to be able to admire it as a whole.

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Mike Greene:

Have you spare time for the day? What do you do when you have more or little spare time? Sure, you can choose the suitable activity to get spend your time. Any person spent their own spare time to take a walk, shopping, or went to typically the Mall. How about open or read a book titled The Map of Time: A Novel (The Map of Time Trilogy)? Maybe it is for being best activity for you. You know beside you can spend your time with your favorite's book, you can cleverer than before. Do you agree with it is opinion or you

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