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# RC 704 Timeline



## Synopsis

An old man wearing a brown robe is found wandering disoriented in the Arizona desert. He is miles from any human habitation and has no memory of how he got to be there, or who he is. The only clue to his identity is the plan of a medieval monastery in his pocket. So begins the mystery of Timeline, a mystery that will catapult a group of young scientists back to the Middle Ages and into the heart of the Hundred Years' War. Imagine the risks of such a journey. Imagine the impossible.

## Book Information

Audio CD

Publisher: Random House Audiobooks; Film Tie-in edition edition (November 6, 2003)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1856868117

ISBN-13: 978-1856868112

Product Dimensions: 4.2 x 1.4 x 5.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.1 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars 2,192 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #4,530,189 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #40 in [Books > Books on CD](#) > [Authors, A-Z](#) > ( C ) > [Crichton, Michael](#) #19476 in [Books > Books on CD](#) > [Literature & Fiction](#) > [General](#) #118778 in [Books > Literature & Fiction](#) > [Contemporary](#)

## Customer Reviews

When you step into a time machine, fax yourself through a "quantum foam wormhole," and step out in feudal France circa 1357, be very, very afraid. If you aren't strapped back in precisely 37 hours after your visit begins, you'll miss the quantum bus back to 1999 and be stranded in a civil war, caught between crafty abbots, mad lords, and peasant bandits all eager to cut your throat. You'll also have to dodge catapults that hurl sizzling pitch over castle battlements. On the social front, you should avoid provoking "the butcher of Crecy" or Sir Oliver may lop your head off with a swoosh of his broadsword or cage and immerse you in "Milady's Bath," a brackish dungeon pit into which live rats are tossed now and then for prisoners to eat. This is the plight of the heroes of Timeline, Michael Crichton's thriller. They're historians in 1999 employed by a tech billionaire-genius with more than a few of Bill Gates's most unlovable quirks. Like the entrepreneur in Crichton's Jurassic Park, Doniger plans a theme park featuring artifacts from a lost world revived via cutting-edge science. When the project's chief historian sends a distress call to 1999 from 1357, the boss man doesn't tell the younger historians the risks they'll face trying to save him. At first, the interplay

between eras is clever, but *Timeline* swiftly becomes a swashbuckling old-fashioned adventure, with just a dash of science and time paradox in the mix. Most of the cool facts are about the Middle Ages, and Crichton marvelously brings the past to life without ever letting the pulse-pounding action slow down. At one point, a time-tripper tries to enter the Chapel of Green Death. Unfortunately, its custodian, a crazed giant with terrible teeth and a bad case of lice, soon has her head on a block. "She saw a shadow move across the grass as he raised his ax into the air." I dare you not to turn the page! Through the narrative can be glimpsed the glowing bones of the movie that may be made from *Timeline* and the cutting-edge computer game that should hit the market in 2000. Expect many clashing swords and chase scenes through secret castle passages. But the book stands alone, tall and scary as a knight in armor shining with blood. --Tim Appelo --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"And the Oscar for Best Special Effects goes to: *Timeline*!" Figure maybe three years before those words are spoken, for Crichton's new novel. Despite media reports about trouble in selling film rights, which finally went to Paramount. As cinematic as they come, a shiny science-fantasy adventure powered by a superior high concept: a group of young scientists travel back from our time to medieval southern France to rescue their mentor, who's trapped there. The novel, in fact, may improve as a movie; its complex action, as the scientists are swept into the intrigue of the Hundred Years War, can be confusing on the page (though a supplied map, one of several graphics, helps), and most of its characters wear hats (or armor) of pure white or black. Crichton remains a master of narrative drive and cleverness. From the startling opening, where an old man with garbled speech and body parts materializes in the Arizona desert, through the revelation that a venal industrialist has developed a risky method of time-travel (based on movement between parallel universes; as in Crichton's other work, good, hard science abounds), there's not a dull moment. When elderly Yale history prof Edward Johnston travels back to his beloved 15th century and gets stuck, and his assistants follow to the rescue, excitement runs high, and higher still as Crichton invests his story with terrific period detail and as castles, sword-play, jousts, sudden death and enough bold knights-in-armor and seductive ladies-in-waiting to fill any toy store's action-figure shelves appear. There's strong suspense, too, as Crichton cuts between past and present, where the time-travel machinery has broken: Will the heroes survive and make it back? The novel has a calculated feel but, even so, it engages as no Crichton tale has done since *Jurassic Park*, as it brings the past back to vigorous, entertaining life. Agent, Lynn Nesbit. 1,500,000 first printing; Literary Guild main selection; simultaneous large-print edition and audiobook. (Nov. 16) Copyright

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Another incredible Michael Crichton page-turner. We have a high-tech billionaire intent on creating a new entertainment industry enabling authentic tourism through a version of time travel. His company makes some progress in developing quantum mechanics to allow short trips to any time or place through quantum foam. The book opens with the unfortunate tale of earlier travelers when the technology was not quite perfected. Actually this is more like being faxed so a few transcription errors will cause later problems, if your veins and arteries are slightly misaligned for example. I tried several times to understand the physics that are presented to show why many believe in multiple universes based on simple experiments with light but my brain is too small. A group of medieval scholars and grad students is employed by the quants in archaeological restoration of a French mill, town, chapel, and chateau which was the site of a 14th century battle between locals and English knights. The group believes this is a cultural and charitable project of their benefactor who also owns the Gutenberg bible. When they find out it is part of a plan to make money through time tourism, the Professor goes to the 14th century to check it out. His short trip does not go as planned and the others decide to go back to find him. The 14th century is a difficult time. The quiet (no background noise) is appealing but the violence, fighting, political intrigue, and lack of gender equality is a concern to 21st century visitors. Crichton has crafted an exciting back-and-forth between the 14th and 21st century teams as both deal with violence, tech issues, political infighting, and lack of honesty and transparency with their colleagues. I did not see the 2003 film which failed miserably at the box office. I don't know if the story was too complex for the big screen or if the casting of the aged Scottish comedian-singer Billy Connolly caused the demise.

The first book I ever read by Crichton. I love the blend of history and Sci-Fi. I remember reading this and playing the pc game-Timeline-and loved them both. The movie...not so much. I still read this book over and over, simply because I think this is one of his best novels. I highly recommend to any Crichton fans.

This book was a fun read. In many ways it reminded me of Jurassic Park because it has a similar type premise: Scientist fiddles around with something he probably shouldn't, chaos ensues. The only criticism I have is that (because so much goes wrong,) at times I was finding myself thinking with frustration: "What now?!" ...But despite the rather formulaic unfolding of the story, it still

manages to entertain the reader in a popcorn-type suspense yarn that is a great way to spend a rainy day, or a sleepless night. It IS a page-turner that does not get bogged down in overly complicated explanations about multi-verse theory or quantum physics, but provides enough information to provide the average reader enough verisimilitude to make this "time-travel" yarn seem plausible. This is the first book I've read by this author, and I think that I will take a look at some of his other works ....and what better complement can I give than that?

Michael Crichton's *Timeline* was in a group of recommended books to read before our trip to Toulouse. It's a Sci-Fi time travel book that takes place in the Toulouse area, so it has quite a bit of history about the area, which was great fun. Not a must read book by any means, it reads like a screenplay, as many of Crichton's books do. But for some good light reading with some interesting history and some fun characters, we would give it a thumbs up.

The movie came on the other night, and I watched it for the 2nd time. My son mentioned that the book was totally different. So, I got the Kindle version to see how different. I've read a few of Crichton's books, and liked them. But, this time, I couldn't help comparing his writing style to Jules Vern. He wrote a backstory for nearly each character, and there were pages of explanations for the time period they were in. Not once, but several times. Ditto with the worm hole machine, that was thick with tech jargon. I did some speed reading over those parts. He did a lot of research for those subjects, and wanted the readers to know it. The plot was good, but I felt as though I was reading a book written in the 19th century. It got off to a very slow start, but just as I thought things would pick up, it slogged down with the stuff going on at ITC. I didn't like the swearing; I got the point that Doniger was a jerk, but it can be done without swearing. (Doniger reminded me of a former boss who had screwed over so many people, he kept a handgun in his desk drawer.) The reader isn't told how the employees explained away the boss' disappearance. Johnston was one dimensional, and it wasn't revealed how the French found their way onto the castle grounds, the night of the battle. I think it was mentioned once, that they were looking for a tunnel, or passageway there, but none of the characters actually told them about it. In the movie, Claire was every bit a lady; in the book, a whore. When she's caught having sex with a man in a position of power, she straightens her shoulders, lifts her head, and falls back on the poor, helpless female excuse. Marek seems to admire her for that. Near the end, there's a thin hint he may like/love/lust for her, but we're not given a clue how she may feel towards Marek. She kissed Marek, Chris, manipulated another man she was intimate with, had sex with a man of the cloth, flirted with others, what's not to like? The movie

explored their relationship, but the book is told from Chris and Kate's point of view, so discovering at the end that they married, was more of an afterthought. And Claire was a woman of title with property; why would she marry a man with nothing, when she made it plain she needed security? She was in danger of losing her late husband's holdings, and Marek had nothing to bring to the table. Marek must have known, by marrying her, that he would alter the future. Since he wasn't born into that time, ANYONE he married would change things. Also...if someone were to be left behind in the past, the odds would be too high of ever finding what they did with their life. That part wasn't believable. There are countless numbers of lords and ladies, names unknown, who never left a mark on history. In the end, Johnston, dour as ever, was thinking that Marek really wasn't happy in his chosen life. He doesn't know, yet he's looking at the stone carvings that say otherwise. The crease on the side of Marek's face is creepy, cause de Kere had one. Since he came through the machine that once, we can only hope it was a battle scar. Anyway, it's all just hypothetical.

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