



The Silver Wind

Nina Allan

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Nina Allan's *The Silver Wind* is a twisting, haunting work of speculative fantasy, pulsing with the dull ache of a fading dream and intoxicating its audience with disorienting what-ifs.

When Owen, a clockmaker's apprentice, is tasked with building a timepiece for a rich client, he has no idea that his skills are being plied to test the fabric of time itself. The client's daughter fills Owen in on the plot, but the pull of building a tourbillion of such power is too much for Owen to resist; by the time he arrives home, future worlds have already begun to bleed into his present. The die is cast.

What follows are interconnected stories from across an intimately intertwined multiverse of possibilities. Characters recur: as lovers in some iterations of the present, as siblings deceased or siblings far-flung in others. Tragedies happen or don't, and family bonds are forged and tested. Curiosities are common, including a mysterious dwarf who roams the beach and doesn't age, who appears in pictures in and out of time; a broken watch that's healed; and institutions devoted to sending people through rifts between universes. Timepieces are ever-present, the stuff that connects one dimension to the next.

In one present, the beach dweller encounters Martin, another recurrent character, and greets him like a friend who's integral to the past and future:

You were always so insistent that time streams could not run parallel to each other without leaking through, that on some level our alternate selves would carry an awareness of each other. A trace-awareness, you used to call it. A seepage between universes. I insisted you were wrong. ... [now] I'm beginning to think you might have had something.

Working through the eerie and mysterious locations of Nina Allan's book requires concentration, imagination, and an eye for detail, but all are rewarded. This funky trek through time should not be missed.

MICHELLE ANNE SCHINGLER (September / October 2019)

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