



Lock & Key

Gordon Bonnet

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When Darren Ault meets his friend Lee McCaskill for dinner, he doesn't expect the second course to be a gunshot to the head. Even more unexpected is the fact that the bullet doesn't kill him-instead, it causes the rest of humanity to vanish. Darren's attempted murder has caused a temporal paradox extending back over a thousand years, and now it's up to him to repair the damage. Embarking on a mind-bending journey through time, Darren encounters Vikings, a depressed Norwegian silversmith, an insane highwayman, a cult that believes in salvation through pain, a beautiful Hebridean lass, and Archibald Fischer-the foul-mouthed, Kurt Cobain-worshipping Head Librarian of the Library of Timelines, where all of the possibilities that could ever happen are catalogued, tracked, and managed.

Lock & Key Details

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Author : Gordon Bonnet

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Tony Jay says

Nicely Twisted

I enjoyed the pace and the plot and would have enjoyed more but it ended at an appropriate point. Further episodes could follow but it stands well enough alone. The supernatural is perfectly mixed with technology and very slightly odd humans. The humour is pitched well and doesn't spoil the flow of the plot nor the WSOD.

I might take more by the author, I certainly admire his style and that is half the battle of an enjoyable read. It probably doesn't actually rate four stars but it is a good ironic smile above three.

Peter says

This book is an easy fun read with credible characters and decent dialogue. It was a free download from Kindle, which is real bargain! I would happily have paid a little something for it.

Bernie Gale says

Wow a book with a beginning middle and end.

I have to say I enjoy books based around time-travel but I have been disappointed with recent reads. This was well written and some of the descriptive prose was exceptional I read a few random paragraphs out to friends around me to much amusement.

This is a writer I will seek out, again and again, one of the rare modern writers who have the skill to tell a story and embellish it with the creative use of English.

I through recommend this as a light easy read.

Maureen says

An amusing idea, ALL life trajectories are tracked for every person, ever. That would need to be a pretty big library... with its one human mortal librarian and his assistant. Huh?

The book is full of terrible dialogue from a bad sitcom:

“You know,” Fischer interrupted, opening both eyes, “you have this annoying habit of asking questions that it’s obvious no one in the room has the answers to.”

“Besides, why would a woman go for me when she could have a tanned, athletic, handsome physicist instead?” “Don’t start with the self-pity or I’ll have to throttle you,” Fischer said.

“I’m not some kind of hero type. I’m a bookstore owner.”

And such narrative gems as this:

“He closed the book, frowning in complete incomprehension” (as opposed to incomplete incomprehension)

“He blinked at the sign, and had the peculiar feeling that he was looking at words in another language, a language he didn’t speak. But he realized, with some perplexity, that he could nevertheless read them.”

I finished the book to see if the author could write himself out of the temporal paradox corner he backed into. So he hooked me in enough to want the answer. But I would have to say he wasn’t able to do it. “B” for effort but 1 star for execution.

Bkunkle says

Excellent time travel mystery

If you like time travel novels, I predict that you will like this one. The protagonist is an interesting and likeable guy. The story is well-told and gripping. As with many plots in the genre, it gets a little convoluted, but only a little.

However, Bonnet takes some serious cheap shots at Christianity, showing two extremely fanatical, not to mention evil, itinerant preachers. I realize these are not mainstream Christian characters. But these are the only people in the book with any actual faith, and they could not be much worse.

So if highly unfair treatment of people of faith bothers you, perhaps you should look for another book.

Ankit Garg says

I picked up this book for an obvious reason - time travel. And this book has a lot of it, but mostly irrelevant in my opinion. Don't want to put spoilers here for those who still wish to read the book, hence can't really explain more.

Nevertheless, the book is a quick read. The words are free-flowing, but it ain't no page turner in terms of the excitement a time travel story is supposed to build.

Verdict: Pick it up if you want to read time-travel tales when you have nothing else of the sort.

Jodi Perkins says

I adore the complexities of time travel with all of their rules and paradoxes, and Bonnet's tale doesn't disappoint.

When Darren is shot in the head by his best friend, it creates a paradox that launches all of humanity into a

logical void (i.e. nonexistence). Darren must now travel back to three different time periods to gather information about the divergences and attempt to bring back the human race. I won't spoil the end but I will say that like many time travel stories, the resolution involves circular reasoning, and one particular detail is reminiscent of the movie *Paycheck*. There are no real 'scary' parts in this novel, rather a series of scenes that create some fun tension.

This is a 'smart person' book that weaves one big puzzle and challenges the mind. If you do not already have a fascination with the intricacies of time travel, this might not be the book for you. I, for one, loved every minute of it and now feel a wee bit depressed that it's over.

Staci Troilo says

I recently took the time to read *Lock & Key* by Gordon Bonnet. While I don't typically write science fiction (I've written a short story or two, but not a novel—well, not yet, anyway), I do enjoy reading it. I'm often leery about an unknown author in this genre, because if the storyworld isn't properly developed, if the details of the fiction aren't well-thought out, then the story won't seem real and it's a disappointing read.

Well, I don't know if you've heard of Gordon Bonnet or not, but if you haven't, pay attention.

Last year, I read a book of his called *Kill Switch*, and from the first page I knew I'd want to read all of his work. So when *Lock & Key* came out, I immediately added it to my to-be-read list.

It didn't disappoint. In fact, it thoroughly impressed me.

Lock & Key takes place in the present. Sort of. Well, that's where it starts. Protagonist Darren Ault is an unassuming bookstore owner who, after an ordinary day, meets his best friend, Lee McCaskill (a brilliant scientist) for an ordinary dinner. Then the extraordinary happens.

Lee shoots Darren in the head.

End of story, right? Wrong.

Darren doesn't die. Instead, he's whisked to the Library of Timelines, where the Head Librarian and his administrative assistant are more than a little upset that things have transpired the way they have.

Not only did Darren survive the shooting, the rest of the world has vanished.

The Head Librarian researches the problem and discovers there were three places in the past where timelines diverged, possible places where Darren can make things right and reset the balance of humanity.

With seemingly no other choice, Darren begins a journey through time and history to right the wrongs of temporal disorder and bring humanity back into existence.

So, like I mentioned earlier, if the intricate details of the science fiction world aren't thoroughly considered, the story can fall apart. But Bonnet did a wonderful job of thinking through all the possible problems and pitfalls (and we all know time travel presents a lot of them) and providing the reader with a story that not only logically flows, it thrills.

Each era and locale visited evokes images of what those times were really like. Readers smell the odoriferous scents, hear the sounds of nature, taste the bland local cuisine. We're transported there right along with Darren. And when he's back at the Library, we're treated to witty banter and technological wonders. All this while seamlessly advancing a wonderful plot that keeps the reader rapidly turning pages.

I read the whole novel in one sitting.

Here's an example of the confusing situation Darren finds himself in:

"Man, this stuff makes my head hurt."

"You should complain," Fischer said, a little bitterly. "You only have to keep track of yourself. I have to keep track of everybody who ever existed, and also all the ones who don't. You want my job?"

"No. But still... I mean, that doesn't make sense."

"What doesn't?"

"If my grandma never existed, how can I be here?"

I thoroughly recommend *Lock & Key* by Gordon Bonnet. The characters are three-dimensional, the plot is well-developed, and the settings are rich and tangible. If you love sci-fi, you don't want to miss this novel. And if you're new to the genre, this is a great one to start with.

Arturo says

Character development is lacking, the protagonist fares a little better but doesn't have much personality to begin with, they make decisions that don't make much sense, even for things that seemed basic, e.g. one guy who is supposed to be a jerk but whose job and the fate of humanity depend on the protagonist's mission to right wrongs in a past timeline makes it clear that because intervention close to the timeline of origin hasn't been "locked" any changes could have dire consequences, an unrepairable time paradox, so he's not allowed to touch anything, including food or drink, and what is he given for this mission of unknown length? One sandwich. Only so he can complain how ill prepared he's been for the time jump, which already happened before by not checking the weather in the destination's time of the year. Twice. No mention of how or why, can communicate in perfect english with people in 14th century Norway and 10th century Scotland, probably (as the book goes) by some translation mechanism, which works perfectly except for given names and one word that he has to explain. Caring about detail it bothers me that it works that way apparently just so they make fun of his name, and to mention what a funny sounding word that is. There are some interesting ideas along the story that aren't explored any further, one third-halfway it becomes obvious everything's being prepared for a big reveal, no explanation or suggestions on how it might've happened; it's mentioned often along the story, the protagonist has to just accept it, and that's expected from the reader too. Not for sci-fi aficionados, as an adventure is interesting in bits & pieces, descriptions are good and the author has good command of the written word.

Donald says

I found this to be an entertaining read. Interesting concept and slant on time travel. All in all, it was an enjoyable story. Well done!!

Valter says

It was a nice read, but in the end it left me a bit... so what?

Characters are moderately well written and entertaining, but the protagonist's adventures aren't that much interesting. You go on reading because the events are somewhat funny or curious, hoping to find some worthy ending... but in the end the time-altering explanation is lacking.

Author's writing is good, but the story in itself is disappointing. It has a mind-bending premise, but that looks just an excuse to go in odd places in the past, without much rhyme or reason.

All in all a pleasant read, but I was hoping for more.

Beverly says

Lee McGaskill shoots his best friend Darren Ault in the head, thus causing much of the population to cease to exist. What?! But instead of dying, Darren finds himself on the floor of the Library an instant prior to being shot? This is the first implausible point. Then the Library sends him back in time to three different points of divergence from the current timeline to try to correct them. Except he doesn't know what he's doing or what the divergences are. And the method that the Library sends him to a different point in time isn't explained or how he's pulled back just before being killed.

Except for those items, the stories between all those improbable shifts is entertaining. I actually liked Darren and his willingness to step up to the challenges even though he was woefully unprepared, not very physically strong, and certainly not a ladies' man. A refreshing protagonist. And why his failure to die restored the human population is imaginative as well. I enjoyed this one.

Marcus says

I voluntarily reviewed an ARC of this book in exchange for an honest review

First off, this is a book about time travel. Normally I don't read tales about time travel, but this was an exceptional story. It starts off with a murder and this murder eradicates the entire human race. The person who was killed, instead of dying; gets sent to a sort of limbo in null space where he meets several strange individuals who convince him that he needs to investigate so that he can save his life and the entire human race. This is where the fun starts because he has to be sent back into time to correct some serious divergences. The story is written with an ironic sense of humor with a dry wit. The characters are diverse and well developed and thought out. A good read.

Jilly says

Take a total weenie with a terrible personality and make him travel back in time for some reason.

Ashley says

Well - okay. That was an ending. Yep.

Intriguing at the beginning, dragging through the middle, and then I got to the end and it was actually exciting for a split second before... what? How do I even describe that ending? Any story about time travel will inevitably involve some “We don’t know the philosophy of why this works, it just does,” but this wasn’t in a fascinating way. More like the author saying, “Look, it doesn’t make sense anyway, so just let me end the book the way I want to end it.” I find myself rolling my eyes more than anything.
