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# Tyme's End

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Reviewer:

[Rebecca Butler](#) [3]

Editor's Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

3

H J Martin is the owner of Tyme's End, a desolate and dilapidated house in the country. The novel recounts three episodes ? in 2006, 1996 and 1936 ? when some lonely soul in the house comes into contact with him, with his memory or with his ghost.

The story is dark, gothic and disturbing, reminiscent of classic gothic novels such as Walpole's **Castle of Otranto**. The theme that recurs through the three episodes, which appear in reverse chronological order, is the effect of history, time and human manipulation to undermine and destroy relationships.

Collins adds a complication which seems to me to be unnecessary and confusing. The main character in the episode set in 2006 is called Oliver Gardner. The main character in the 1936 episode has exactly the same name. As we read, it transpires that the contemporary character is the other's grandson. Of course it is not unknown for boys to be named after their grandfathers. But for a time, reading the book, we are not certain whether we are witnessing a time slip. The coincidence of naming might easily create confusion in the mind of a young reader, possibly undermining the will to press on.

One of Collins's strengths as a writer is to raise issues without seeming to do so. In one episode she hints at a homosexual relationship the fulfilment of which would at that time have been a criminal offence. In another she describes the effects of post traumatic stress brought on by experiences in the First World War. These issues float convincingly just below the gothic surface texture of the novel. Collins manages to avoid importing contemporary values into these situations, giving them the capacity to generate cultural shock.

Collins is an expert dramatic writer. She finds her way convincingly into the minds of these male characters set in different historical periods. It is of course difficult for a novelist to judge the required narrative pace for a novel of this type. The novel needs to brood but not to falter. Sometimes this book falters.

Running Order:

60

**Links:**

[1] <http://savfkn.booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/tymes-end>

[2] <http://savfkn.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/187>

[3] <http://savfkn.booksforkeeps.co.uk/member/rebecca-butler>