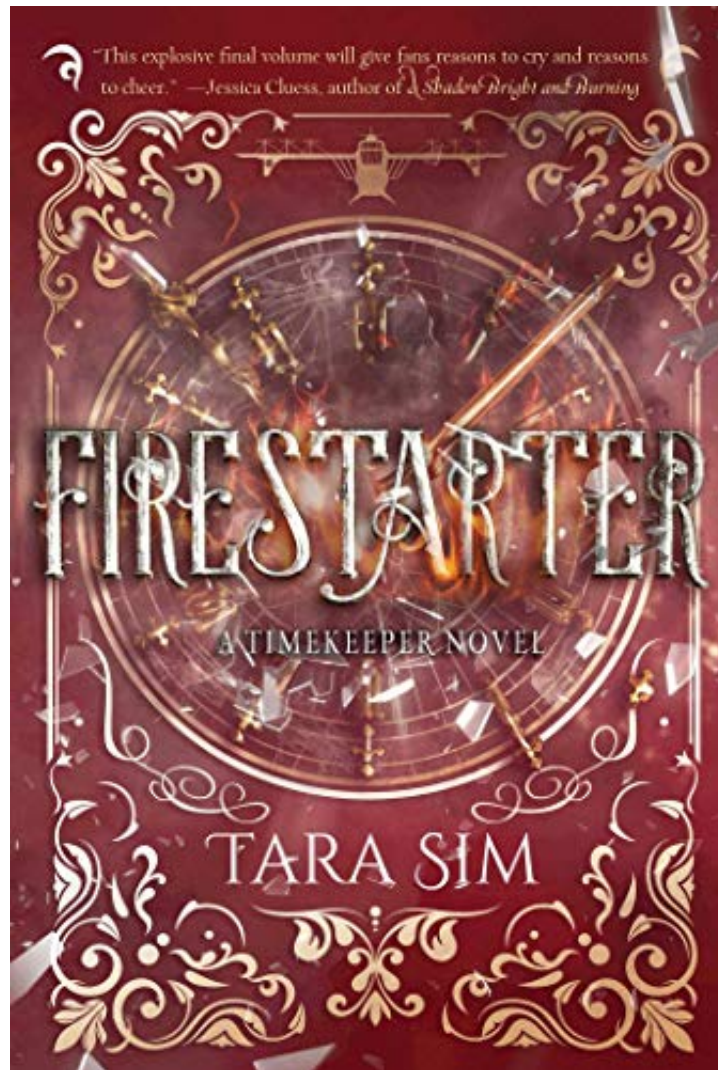


# Firestarter (Timekeeper Book 3)

by

**Tara Sim**



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## Synopsis

The final installment of the Timekeeper trilogy. The crew of the Prometheus is intent on taking down the world's clock towers so that time can run freely. Now captives, Colton, Daphne, and the others have a stark choice: join the Prometheus's cause or fight back in any small way they can and face the consequences. But Zavier, leader of the terrorists, has a bigger plan—to bring back the lost god of time. As new threats emerge, loyalties must shift. No matter where the Prometheus goes—Prague, Austria, India—nowhere is safe, and every second ticks closer toward the eleventh hour. Walking the line between villainy and heroism, each will have to choose what's most important: saving those you love at the expense of the many, or making impossible sacrifices for the sake of a better world.













































## What people say about this book

D. Rose, "Ultimately satisfying, but too much pain. Ultimately, this final book ends the trilogy in a mostly satisfying way, but the reader goes through entirely too much pain and stress before reaching that end. Things just go from bad to worse from the cliffhanger end of Book 2 through the first half of Book 3. The relationship between Colton and Danny becomes agonizing, and, when they finally get a break, and have time for each other, disaster strikes. Suffering and literal torture follow. I was totally entranced, but found the reading experience more stressful than enjoyable. There are too many plot developments, too much pain and suffering. I too have lost my love, and I feel as if the author channeled her pain at losing her father into her book. It is that raw. I'm reminded of Sam's speech in Lord of the Rings: "It's like in the great stories Mr. Frodo. The ones that really mattered. Full of darkness and danger they were, and sometimes you didn't want to know the end. Because how could the end be happy? How could the world go back to the way it was when so much bad happened?" Maybe it's me being too maudlin, but I feel a story shouldn't hurt so much. And things don't go back to the way they were at the end of Book 1. The roller-coaster continued until the last quarter of the book when everything became pain and suffering and loss during the ultimate show-down. The final chapters of the book plunged Danny into misery and emotional anguish. It is not until the very end that we are given the happy ending, and, while it was mostly satisfying, I feel that I could have done without reading Book 3, and I possibly even wish I had stopped at the end of Book 1."

Sahi, "A fitting intense end to the trilogy.. CW: torture, violence and deaths When I started reading this trilogy in part due to our Stars and Sorcery book club, I never thought I would be binge reading the whole thing in the same month. But once I began, I really wanted to know what was going to happen next and couldn't help but stay up late nights to finish it all. And wow was that an intense finale. As far as final books in a fantasy series go, we all have a few standard expectations - lots of tense moments, action sequences, major revelations and realistic consequences - and this book delivered them all and how. I can't believe that this is the same story that took place in a small town in Timekeeper because of the way this world has expanded, and the unbelievable implications of clock towers and time on innocent people. The author just ramps up the pacing and action many notches here, with the story spanning rebels fighting for freedom, terrorists seeking destruction and control, desperate youngsters fighting for family and love, gods fighting gods for supremacy, and an extremely intelligent megalomaniac villain pulling the strings behind it all. The story and writing was equal parts exciting, horrifying and heartbreaking and I just couldn't put it down. There were parts where I thought it dragged a little or instances where I thought it was all too convenient, but it was great writing overall. I don't know how the author manages to make me care about Danny so much, even when I'm infuriated with him. There is an inherent loneliness in him that I relate to so much, and he cares a lot about his friends and family which all make him a great protagonist to root for. But his single minded

obsession with Colton unnerved me at times, especially when he wouldn't let Colton grieve or feel anger properly for what was done to him, and felt jealous Colton's feelings about the people from his past. But he also suffers greatly throughout the book, both mentally and physically and considering his already traumatic history, I couldn't hold any grudge against him for too long. He is really put through the wringer this time but when it's really necessary, he puts out all the stops to do what's important for the greater good and I just kept wishing that things turn out better for him towards the end. But it was definitely Colton and Daphne who stole the show for me. Colton's trauma is truly unimaginable and I was in awe of the way he tried to process it all while also struggling with the intense situations he is put in constantly and having to make choices with high a price. His journey from being a happy positive clock spirit to someone who can feel the full rage of human emotions and care for so many people, and then make more sacrifices though he has already done so much - he has a great character arc and I really loved reading about him. Daphne on the other hand has a different kind of evolution, understanding to let go of the past and finding a new home and future for herself, while also doing whatever she can for the greater good. I really don't want to talk more about these three or the remaining wonderful cast of side characters who all have their own unique journeys and leave a memorable impression on the reader, because the author doesn't shy away from making them all suffer and also killing some of them. It's been quite a while since I've seen so many significant character deaths and other consequences in a YA fantasy and I have to hand it to the author for making such bold choices. In the end, all I want to say is that this was an intense finale to a fun and interesting fantasy series and I'm glad I finally got around to reading it. It's a great feeling when you discover a wonderful new author (to me) in the first month of the new year. And if you are someone who likes the idea of an alternate Victorian England, time controlling clock towers and spirits, lots of Greek mythology influences, an angsty forbidden love story and lots of POC and queer characters - then you should totally check out this series. And now that I've finished the author's entire backlist in a month, I guess I have no choice but to find another wonderful author!!"

RV, "An intense, heartbreaking, yet ultimately uplifting end to a beautiful series. "It was in these moments the world fell away. It was just the two of them, one heartbeat, two bodies, soft whispers. Danny's heart was bigger than himself; it crowded the room, the house, the town, all of this island on a cold battering sea." With Firestarter, as if weaving the strands of time like one of her clock mechanics, Tara Sims brings the Timekeeper series to a powerful, at times heart stopping and emotionally draining, end. This third and final book allows the moral ambiguities she so carefully balances in the earlier books to unravel and spin out of control; what we, as readers, found so rare and precious in the lives of her characters is suddenly at risk. From the apparent wreckage, Ms. Sims weaves another kind of beauty, a deeper vision of her world, just as lovely yet very different from when Danny Hart first came to fix Enfield's clock tower and fell in love with a spirit named Colton. How can I care so much about these characters? I was so emotionally involved with them that there were times in this book that I simply stopped reading,



just to delay facing what I felt would inevitably happen. Sometimes I was right, other times I wished I'd been right - because what actually happens is unforeseen and far more intense than I expected. Ms. Sim is not afraid to follow the Hero's Journey, no matter where it leads, even when it is disquieting. In *Timekeeper*, Book 1, we get a precious, beautiful vision of two boys who overcome the odds for their love. In *Chainbreaker*, Book 2, we get a beautiful and inventive work of art, whose power is viscerally felt in both the story itself and in the way it's lovingly crafted. It sets us up for the grand finale, which we might expect to be a reprise of earlier story elements in a major key, a theme and variation on a grander scale. Well, times change. Things break. Including, in this series, people. In *Firestarter*, Book 3, Ms. Sim takes her storytelling close to the fantasy equivalent of an epic tragedy. It takes courage, it seems to me, to have the characters she's created, her close knit ensemble of family, friends, and lovers, good people who've already faced the worst they can imagine, now endure the unimaginable. Danny, Colton and Daphne face horror after horror, and, in the process, question everything they believe, even who they are, as they struggle to survive and not become mirror reflections of the horror around them. As *Firestarter* begins, I was caught off guard by my loathing for Zavier, the one-armed commander of the airship *Prometheus*, and Edmund, his smug second in command, who have kidnapped the trio. I envisioned a number of unpleasant ends for both of them, along with their misfit crew. But loathing is a relative, comparative emotion, and the book soon introduces others who make Zavier and Edmund look like tantrum-throwing brats in a pre-school romper room. By the end, there is heartbreak but also redemption, despair but also transformation. Another reason I stopped reading every so often is because I didn't want it to end. It's an intense ride, but the characters - including Cassie, Christopher, Leila, Akash, Meena, and more - are good, essentially kind, people, and, while I wanted their story to end well, I also wanted to spend more time with each of them. But stories do end. In the case of the *Timekeeper* series, though, I've purchased hard copies of the books that now rest proudly in my home library. Their story might have ended, but I can still keep these wonderful people close to me."

Arkham Reviews, "A strong finale. I often call this series my guilty pleasure. While I'm not generally one for romance stories - and admit that these books are not perfect - I do just thoroughly enjoy reading these books. A large part of that is Sim's unique world-building. The concept of clock towers controlling time is so simple, yet I've never seen anything like before. The world of *Timekeeper* still feels huge. It's grand and complex, filled with different factions that have their different beliefs and goals. The introduction of the thoroughly scary Builders in this story further emphasised this, adding to the mix a counterpart to Zavier's mission to restore the true flow of time. Yet, although I would never say that this novel got boring, I will admit that there are still some issues with the pacing. While the start and end of *Firestarter* are really action packed it does meander a bit towards the middle. I think this is possibly because the novel spends a lot of time focusing on the romantic scenes around its middle, with Daphne and Akash finally getting together and Danny and Colton engaging in a couple of very soft sex scenes.

While I do like both of these pairings, it did derail the storyline a bit. Xavier begins with a strong goal in mind, though doesn't really do anything to move towards this until the final act. This brings me to the largest issue that I have with this season finale. A lot of stuff just happens within this story that does not really have an explanation. We never really find out why Xavier's magic water holds such permanent time properties, even so long after the water dries. We don't find out exactly how Xavier comes to the conclusion of how to break the prison. There is so much in the climax that does not really make sense, but I won't go into that here because of spoilers. To enjoy, you just really have to suspend your disbelief. The climax of the story is lovely, but did feel a little neat. While a few characters do die (some rather violently), I was glad that the story ended on a positive note. I have to admit that Sim did a great job of keeping me on my toes. For the longest time, it was hard to predict how Danny and Colton's story could possibly end. Yet, I think that some may be a little disappointed. As previously noted, the novel does play a few conveniences (including a deus ex machina that is both literal and figurative) in order to bring about its happy ending. Yet, for my gripes, the thing that I truly love about Firestarter is still the core cast. It still exists as a novel of grey areas, with good characters forced to make questionable decisions and bad ones having understandable motivation. Danny and Colton's relationship is complex and not always roses, with the two continuously growing stronger through the way that they challenge each other. Both Daphne and Xavier also get a lot of growth over the course of the story, also forced to confront beliefs that they hold. While Xavier starts out as an outright villain, he becomes more sympathetic as he reveals more of his past. Daphne, conversely, grows through her gradual forgiveness of Akash and finds new strength through embracing her roots. Yet the rest of the crew of the Prometheus kind of blur into one. A lot of characters are introduced in this book and I really found it hard to remember who was who as I wasn't given any time to get to know them. When a handful are killed off, I found it difficult to care as I just hadn't connected with any of them. Anyhow, I think that about covers everything. All in all, the Timekeeper series was not perfect but I certainly enjoyed reading it. It's certainly one that I would recommend."

Ebook Tops Reader, "Fantasy love story. Book one started out as a love story between a spirit and a young man, and ends up as a dark fight for survival in book three. Couldn't put it down, Excellent"

Angie, "SOBBING\* I love this series so much. I'm so happy I got a chance to read this series, This book was a fantastic ending to an fantastic story. I felt so many emotions just reading each chapter. No spoilers but I'm super happy with the ending. After everything they deserved it. DO YOURSELF A FAVOUR AND PLEASE READ TIMEKEEPER TRILOGY."



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