



Timeline

David Wailing

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It's always risky, meeting a strange man for the first time. But not for Joanna O'Donnell. Not in the year 2022.

Her auto – a digital assistant – has scoured his history, his entire timeline. Working for a detective agency, Joanna knows how to unearth secrets.

Joanna's auto calculates that her date is 85% compatible with her. At last, she's found her match!

And then, moments before they meet, Joanna's auto reports there is a 24% chance this man will kill her.

'Timeline' is a 10,000 word short story, part of the Auto series including 'Relationship Status', 'Friend Request', 'Backup' and 'Copy'.

'Timeline' is the winner in both the Science Fiction category and Short Stories and Novelettes category of the Best Indie Books of 2012 Awards run by Indie Book Bargains.

'Timeline' can be download in multiple formats for free from the author's website at <http://www.davidwailing.com/stories/t...>

Timeline Details

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From Reader Review Timeline for online ebook

Elle says

An interesting short story that I enjoyed even more so than the first in this 'world' Relationship Status !

This book had an advantage from the start. We already knew the world it was set in and there wasn't as much explaining to do, this made for a very smooth and well laid out short story that packed a real punch.

I especially enjoyed the added bits of information of somewhat improved technology from the last short.

The idea of it was quite terrifying. How can a computer know something that major?

I really liked, and thought it was incredibly smart, when her auto, who in theory is her in a computer, started doing her job. It made perfect sense.

The ending was a surprise, I was expecting something completely different to happen!

Joo says

Timeline is another short story set in the same world as Relationship Status.

I suppose it is similarish to Relationship Status in that the autos are taking over a human's life choices. I felt this one had more tension I read it in one sitting (well one lying as I read it in bed lol) and I was on the edge of my proverbial seat as Joanna was racing across London.

It was a decent length for a short story. Just short of 1k locations translates to about ten thousand words. The length was perfectly suited to this story, but I want more from Mr Wailing.

J.S. Egan says

In creating the world of Timeline and Relationship Status, Wailing obviously has thought hard about how technology might evolve and the result is plausible... often disturbingly so.

Timeline is everything a short-story should be - fast-paced, exciting, imaginative and insightful; with a unexpected denouement.

Lorraine Versini says

I'm not sure I like all that "Auto" business... Really frighten me, this story did, even gave me a nightmare! It's another great story set in the not-so distant future where mankind has become heavily dependent on digital stuff to the scary point where (ok I'm exaggerating, but only a teeny weeny bit) the auto would tell people what they want to watch on telly (ok not the best example, but you get the idea). A future that is unlikely to happen? I don't think so...

What is great about this story, and about Relationship Status to the same extent, it's that David Wailing has taken the present, evolved it into a future that is rather plausible, added to it a little pinch of humour (and I still think there is a certain element of satire), and transformed the whole into an interesting and rather thought-provoking story. I really hope there are more stories to come. But for now, after reading all this, I think that the only auto I'll use is my "automobile"...

Sharon Benham says

I am not a reader of short stories usually but having enjoyed David's other work I couldn't wait to read this. I assumed that with short stories you couldn't really get to know a character. But I was pulled in straight away. Started reading it before I went to work and then carried on at lunch time. I was nearly late down because I didn't want to put it down. I finished it the same day, which is not hard to do with a short story. David's ideas in Timeline are great. I love the technology and the idea of how it can affect us. There are only really two characters in the story but they are great and well written.

I have loved all of David's work so far and would highly recommend Timeline. It will be 77p well spent. I really look forward to what's coming next.

Rosen Trevithick says

I'm not really a science fiction fan so was surprised to find that Timeline is my favourite David Wailing title so far. This short story is amusing, eye-opening and fills you with adrenalin.

It starts as a romance and quickly becomes an exciting crime thriller. Wailing makes use of the same intrusive, futuristic technology introduced in his earlier short, Relationship Status, to tell the tale. Once again, this provides a witty commentary on modern technology, which I enjoyed as much as the storyline.

There are many little gems of brilliance hidden within the story. Look out for the part about private healthcare insurance and the sneaky reference to the 'porch' music introduced in Wailing's novel Fake Kate. I also enjoyed the (mis)use of statistics, which really appealed to me.

When reading from my Kindle, I tend to highlight any truly brilliant bits of text. By the time I finished this short, I'd highlighted half the book.

Patti (baconater) says

A great short story that I think looks uncannily into the future when social networking and the information highway will be ever more ingrained in our lives.

Highly recommended.

Jud says

A fabulous short story that really had the adrenalin going! I had no idea how it was going to end. Again the whole auto thing kind of freaks me out, especially when it comes to the deceased still being able to communicate with the living. The whole idea always has me wondering if this is the way our society is heading and will we one day not really socialise with our colleagues friends and neighbours? A great thrill of a read.

Tim says

Compelling reading. And with Google Specs / Project Glass already well into development and street testing, it's not that far from being entirely plausible.

And somehow I find that rather disturbing. Blink. Send.

Jonathan Hill says

It is 2022 and Joanna is going on a date with a man, her auto (a digital assistant) has scored at being 85% compatible with her. But there is also a 24% chance he will kill her. This is the intriguing premise to this short story.

Science fiction is not my genre at all, but I enjoyed this interesting and rather thrilling take on social media in the future. Is this science fiction or just reality for the future?! Whatever the answer, David Wailing draws a world that seems far-fetched on the one hand but frighteningly believable on the other.

What has thrown this man together with Joanna? Why is her auto telling her she will be killed by him? I will not spoil the story but it is a genuine page-turner and I raced to the satisfying conclusion. I have never been overly fond of this futuristic sci-fi genre but Wailing's story engaged me enough to want to look at his other 'auto' stories, and this is an indication of the quality and readability of his writing. Well worth a look.

Kath Middleton says

This is another short story set in the same imagined future as Relationship Status. Technology is managing people's lives to such an extent that their 'autos' or on-line assistants can take care of all daily needs including making and updating friendships. I enjoyed both these stories for the way they make me think about our current penchant for sharing our lives through digital media. Some of David's ideas seem wonderful and some absolutely monstrous! I wonder how far we will go in ten years? Currently certain on-line retailers cannot reliably predict which books I would like to read!

David Wailing's writing is clear, light hearted and modern in style and he tackles some unusual subjects and does it in depth. I like his style!

Luna maxwell says

Love this book wish that it had a better ending maybe a twist :)

Tommy Howell says

This was a free Kindle story. It's pretty short, but packs a lot of interesting extensions of today's technology into such a short tale. The story is set around 10 years in the future and the main character is using her latest technological marvel to do her job and to find a boyfriend. What should have been a simple meet and greet with a handsome fellow turns into a harrowing detective story as her digital assistant begins warning her that her date has an ever-escalating chance of being her murderer.

Much of the story was filled with incidental things like a shopping trip and virtual chat that expanded on how much the facebook-style timeline has pervaded the lives of everyone in 2022. Many of the technology extensions seem natural and likely. I thought the least likely idea was that the "autos" (personal assistant devices) would emulate the personalities of their owners. This kind of artificial intelligence seems more than 10 years away.

I liked the way the main mystery resolved itself and that a second mystery was left dangling with a fairly easy answer for the reader. I'd be interested in reading more stories set in this future.

Allison says

I enjoyed this short story immensely. The premise was new but not foreign - how would your life change if privacy and social connections were inescapable? How intrusive is social media now - how much information do we willingly and unwillingly share about ourselves? How is that information used, dispersed? Can that information paint the wrong picture of our personality and actions - or alibi us in case we are suspected in a crime.

Can that information be used to frame us for a crime we didn't commit?

All these elements are present in this book, and I must admit since it's set in 2022 - it's not an implausible picture of the near future if social media and interaction continues on the path it is currently on.

I love how the author weaved this tale - using technology as the focal point of the story without unnecessary geeky jargon to overshadow the plot. It was the perfect mix of innovation and technology currently available. There was enough suspense to keep me going, but a resolution that left me satisfied at the end - something often lacking in short stories - they either end up being cliffhangers or anti-climatic.

I think I would read more from the author, especially the two books featured at the end of the short story. Both blurbs seemed interesting, it's nice to see a Kindle story formatted so well.

Emma says

I am not usually a fan of short stories, but any thing by David Wailing is an exception to any rule in my book! He has an ability to create characters that are not only believable but loveable too. Even in his short stories you glean enough information on each character to feel that you 'know' them.

With 'Timeline', and indeed 'Relationship Status' his vision for how technology will evolve, in the next decade or so, is genius. I can absolutely imagine us all walking around with our own Autos.

Timeline was a funpacked read that I know I will return to again and again.
