

"The First Fifteen Lives of Harry August" (Claire North)

Well, that was a jolly good romp. It provides a new take on the time-travel theme. Invariably time travel plots are logically impossible. Remarkably this one appears to be logically self-consistent. The plot is gripping enough to keep the pages turning over rapidly and its 400 pages fly past. A good holiday read, but not a suitable subject for deep literary analysis, were I capable of such. I thought the ending was slightly weak, but that's only a minor observation. Overall I'd recommend it as entertaining light reading.

Preposterously precocious young women. Seems to have words pouring out of her.

You'd expect me to comment on the physics. I confess to a slight irritation that "quantum" is being used, yet again, as more or less synonymous with "magical". Ah well, mustn't get too serious about it. It's not intended to be taken as science, I do realise. Is there such a thing as a "quantum mirror"? Only in sci fi, as far as I am aware - unless you rather trivially regard all mirrors as quantum mirrors, because, of course, reality *is* quantum, damn it.

Harry ostensibly catches Vincent out in an anachronism, namely mentioning the strong nuclear force in 1940. We were told that would be 30 years too soon. Actually, it isn't. The strong force was a necessary postulate as soon as Rutherford (actually Marsden) demonstrated the existence of the nucleus in the first decade of the twentieth century - and explicit models of the strong nuclear force by Yukawa and others were proposed in the 1930s following Chadwick's discovery of the neutron in 1932. Oops!

And alas, Harry's replacing of the order of Th-234 by Th-231 would hardly have gone unnoticed since Th-231 has a half-life of about a day and would have been Proactinium 231 by the time it arrived.

Score: 60010