# 5 Key Questions

**To get you started on your dual-timeline novel!**

Dual-timeline novels present a unique opportunity—and a unique challenge. They provide scope for innovative forms, for playing with the concept of time and, if it’s something you like to do, introducing paranormal or magical elements. They also give you an opportunity to show the broader meaning of your message, how it resonates across time.

The downside is that they force you to do twice the work compared to a novel that takes place in a single timeframe.

If that doesn’t deter you, understand that with a dual- timeline novel, planning isn’t optional. Just heading to the page and writing to see what happens is a recipe for a manuscript that’s unfocused and disorganized.

This workbook asks the five key questions you must answer before you start typing the first word of your novel (OK, that’s a little dramatic, but I wanted to make the point). Bear in mind that this is only a start. It’s enough, though, to get you on your way to making your dual timelines work together to create a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts.

# Why two timelines?

If you don’t have a good reason why, I guarantee you’ll find it harder to write in this demanding form.

What is it that made you want to do this? What inspired you? And how are two timelines necessary for telling your story?

**Why** *these* **timelines?**

What was it about these two timelines that drew you to them? How did you decide they were the right ones for your story? How are they connected? Which timeline came first for you?

# What point are you making?

What do you want readers to understand after they’ve read your book? Is this a point that requires two timelines to make? Why?

# Will your timelines ever intersect?

The two timelines don’t have to cross each other, but if they do, it’s important to figure out how they will, and what effect that will have on your story. If they don’t temporally intersect, what is the point at which readers will understand the connection between them?

# How much time does each timeline encompass?

Are they both roughly the same length? Or is one covering a longer span than the other? This will affect many decisions to do with balance, scene and summary, and pace.