

## Cold Summer

**Gwen Cole**

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*Time-travel troubles complicate a budding teen romance in this enjoyable debut.*

Gwen Cole's *Cold Summer* intertwines a budding teen romance with time travel, a nice mix that follows the rules of its universe.

Kale Jackson started time traveling when he was a little boy—and it's a very involuntarily process. He can feel a transportation coming, but he doesn't get to choose where or why. What he's experiencing in the past has already happened, and he can't change the future.

As the story opens, his next-door neighbor's niece, Harper, is coming to stay for the summer, and it's clear right away that both teens are ready to pick up where a years-ago summer friendship left off.

Both Harper and Kale are also going through family challenges—Harper is staying with her uncle because her mother left her, while Kale deals with an emotionally distant brother and a father who doesn't believe Kale's explanations for his regular disappearances. All this pressure comes in addition to the main challenge of Kale's other life in a 1945 foxhole—watching his friends die around him, returning to the present with the physical and mental injuries of war, trying to figure out his purpose in that fight against the Nazis. Harper helps by finding Kale's name in an article about World War II.

Despite this mix of elements and conflicts, the story remains refreshingly grounded. The teen characters are somewhat standard, but that works for this story. The best-developed character in the story is Uncle Jasper—Harper's actual uncle, and Kale's friend. He is a widower who understands both teens and does his best to help them.

The time-travel aspect of the story also wraps up nicely, keeping to its established time line while delivering a satisfying resolution. *Cold Summer* blends two popular teen genres into an enjoyable read.

JEFF FLEISCHER (May/June 2017)

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