



Double Time

Vincent E. Sescoc

Clinton Helms, Illustrator

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The year is 2097. Seventeen-year-old Jaynie is inadvertently transported back in time to Civil War-era Virginia and picked up by a traveling minstrel show. Her twin, Jason, is sent back by their scientist father to collect Jaynie. Jason meets Daniel, a runaway slave, and the two travel together for the three weeks it takes to find the girl. Along the way they are jailed, escape in a Confederate air balloon, and spend two days in a cave with members of the Underground Railroad. A strong bond grows between the two and they become “more like brothers than friends.”

They discover that the minstrel is really a Confederate officer with a plan to shoot and kill the many Yankee officials who plan to be in his audience. A stroke of luck, coupled with the assistance of the minstrel’s female friend, foil the assassination plans and the twins escape back to 2097. Their three-week experience teaches them not only American history, but an understanding of their own care and concern for each other, and the true meaning of friendship.

Sescoc’s first novel, *Double Time* accurately describes the battle at Brandy Station, Virginia. Jason and Daniel, from their stolen Confederate spy balloon, watch as “the lines of horsemen moved rapidly down country roads” and see “smoke belched from hidden cannons” as “Confederate resistance was overrun by hard-charging troopers whose slashing sabers and pistols took a terrible toll.” To Jason, it looked like a “museum display, except this was real, and it included 20,000 men.”

The detailed description of the “dashing, handsome and always impeccably groomed” General Jeb Stuart, who wears “a red-lined cape, gold sash with tassels flying, thigh-high black boots, gold spurs and a black slouch hat topped with a black ostrich plume” makes him come alive. The portrayal of Stuart, and many other real-life officers, contributes to the book’s vivid realism.

Quietly interwoven within the story are the themes of strong family ties and racial understanding. “They talked about many painful issues, but with every hug, tear, high five and handshake, they came closer to... family.”

Jason says, simply, “The only regret I have is leaving Daniel... he sure taught me a lot about life.” *Double Time* is highly imaginative and will certainly appeal to young readers who enjoy history mixed with fantasy and adventure.

LINDA COOLEY (July / August 2001)

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