

The Path of Kokopelli: Endless Times: Volume One

Walter Stephen Geeding

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The Path of Kokopelli is a science fiction novel in which two men travel through time and discover what really matters in life.

In Walter Stephen Geeding's science fiction novel *The Path of Kokopelli*, two men try to make their fortunes with the help of mystical artifacts.

While roaming the Missouri woods with his lifelong friend Jim, Jack finds something extraordinary: a collection of gold figurines that allow the owner to travel to fixed points in the past. Following instructions left by the figurines' previous owner, Jack and Jim face life-threatening danger on their way to 1822 New Mexico and the riches that await them there. They've had some incredible adventures before, but nothing that could compare with the thrill of time travel—or the satisfaction of finding where they really belong.

Still, Jack and Jim's time travel victories are unearned: all they have to do is follow detailed instructions from a previous owner of the figurines. Everything goes according to the plan that she lays out for them. The only moments of uncertainty come when Jack and Jim find the portal back to their own time blocked by gun-wielding, nineteenth-century law enforcement officials. The ethics of Jack and Jim's actions are touched upon but under explored.

The narrative includes intriguing historical elements, like the presence of gambler Maria Gertrudis Barceló and pioneer William Becknell. It also includes a fictionalized version of the city of Chetro Ketl in its twelfth-century prime. But a significant portion of the story takes place in contemporary Wyoming, where Jack and Jim find purpose and family on a remote ranch. The connected chapters are slow because of their minute, repetitive details about ranching life. Inaccurate Spanish is used often.

Within the book's time travel sequences, there are stereotypical portrayals of Native Americans and evidence of the appropriation of Indigenous belief systems: Jack is regarded as a god or god's emissary by the reverent, subservient Apache. Offensive language is also used to describe these characters.

Inconsistencies are present throughout. A minor character's name changes midchapter for no reason; it changes back in a later chapter. Another minor character, Jeremiah, appears and disappears with no explanation and does not contribute to the text. Comma splices are frequent, and conversations are grouped in dense single paragraphs.

Still, the book's central conceit—a box of artifacts imbued with time travel powers—is a fascinating one, creating plenty of material for future volumes. Though they're left rattled by their first adventure through time, it seems inevitable that Jack and Jim will be pulled out of their comfortable new lives and into another time period in the future of the series—one that promises both danger and riches beyond imagining.

Part of a series, *The Path of Kokopelli* is a science fiction novel in which two men travel through time and discover what really matters in life.

EILEEN GONZALEZ (August 31, 2022)

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