

Time Hole

John Nielsen

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Part young adult novel and part sci-fi epic, *Time Hole* follows the adventures of Stacy Carver, a seventeen-year-old girl who gets herself into a load of trouble. Her intellectual curiosity causes her to derail and mess with the space station Chronos and the cosmos itself. The sharp wit of this protagonist and the sophisticated plot ensures that both adults and children alike can grab something from this work. From battling a black hole to playing with time itself, *Time Hole* is a fun ride for sci-fi enthusiasts and readers who want a precocious, intelligent, and funny protagonist.

In *Time Hole* Nielsen nails the voice of his teenage protagonist. Stacy is precocious, intelligent, and mature, but she is also seventeen-years old. It makes sense that she would experiment not only with algorithms but be brave enough to tackle and gain entry to the tracking station, Chronos. After all, youth is about exploration, the pursuit of independence, and rebellion. Nielsen takes such themes and adapts them into the genre of science fiction for an interesting effect.

The minor characters in this novel are equally interesting. At one point, Stacy's mother comes into her room and asks that she walk the dog, Dude. When Stacy protests that this is her brother's dog, her mother responds with the witty comment, "He was Matt's puppy, [but] now Matt's discovered the bimbo down the road." Such quick dialogue and humor punctuate *Time Hole* and make it that much more enjoyable.

Nielsen fits a lot of plot into a short space. This makes for a fast-moving novel. People that are not science-fiction aficionados may feel lost amid the chaos and action in the short, yet dense chapters. After all, Stacy is hopping between time and is grappling with some serious science. Still, more could be included about this character's thought process and reactions to the events. Additionally, the politics in the novel could be turned up. The sci-fi genre is known for its metaphors and symbols. Future volumes could tweak and play with possible dystopian worlds as well as time travel.

This novel ends as quickly as it begins. *Time Hole* could span many volumes to follow Stacy's travels through time. The closing of this piece may be the closing of this particular chapter in Stacy's life, but the reader understands that there are many holes and gaps yet to fill, many adventures to be had. After all, history, time, and space are endless, and there seems to be no end to Stacy's curiosity.

LISA BOWER (March 21, 2011)

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