

Time Story

W. W. Marplot

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(290pp)

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Three brothers' differing plans for the future collide in the exciting time travel novel Time Story.

In W. W. Marplot's science fiction novel *Time Story*, three brothers run into challenges while they're attempting to change the future for the better.

The eldest brother, Applemon, is a genius who invents time travel devices. Plunkett has grand ideas of getting rich, while Woby is not often allowed to think for himself. Woby and Plunkett decide to travel through time but run into unexpected complications; several possible futures are left a mess because of their interference. Meanwhile, Applemon's nemesis hopes to control time travel. To save a girl—and the future—the brothers work to untangle various time stories.

Dealing with heavy topics including psychosis and the loss of innocence, the book introduces its time-bouncing heroes with speed, developing them on the move. The selfishness of Plunkett's plan is often thwarted by his need to save his brothers from being lost in time. And Woby, who is at first naïve and happy to go along with his older brothers' plans, ages faster than his brothers because he travels for fifteen years: he falls in love, experiences fear, and grows. When he returns to the Agreed Upon Normal Time (AUNT), he has the experience of a thirty-three-year-old; he ends up taking over as the book's central hero, to the surprise of his brothers.

The novel plays with structure in interesting ways: after each chapter is introduced but before the story begins again, there are short chapter summaries to help establish the parameters of the brothers' world; these summaries shorten once the story hits its stride. Run-on sentences and invented words are used to flesh out people's personalities: Applemon's nemesis makes up terms to sound intellectual and hide his nefarious plans, and another person speaks without pausing. Details such as the fact that Plunkett drinks beer despite being nineteen, and that returned Woby has a hard time grappling with the horrors he's witnessed, further impart a sense of who the boys are.

The novel moves through the brothers' time travel experiences with an ever-present sense of mystery, engaging interest as they learn about the nuances of their decisions. In comparison, the book's ending is rushed and too tidy. The full consequences of their time meddling remain to be seen; they're fodder for a possible sequel.

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ADDISSYN HOUSE (April 18, 2023)

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