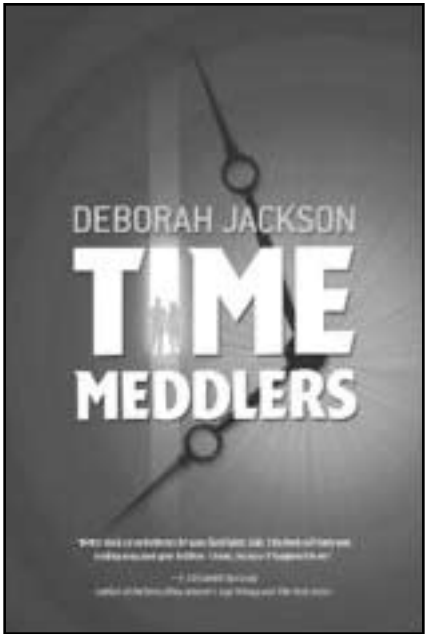


BOOK REVIEW



Muddying the Stream of Time

By **stephen a. haines**
Time Meddlers
by **Deborah Jackson**
LBF Books, 2006
ISBN 09773082-8-6



It's a snowy day in Ottawa's eastern suburbs. Having once again clashed with her father over leaving Toronto for "the wilderness" of the national capital, Sarah Sachs is in no mood for snow. She's in no mood for foolish surprises, either.

Swirling flakes fail to hide the shock of her life - an SUV passes through a boy walking across the street toward her. This bizarre incident is but the beginning of a sequence of unexpected events. The boy, who proves rude and distant, is Sarah's neighbour and classmate. As "loners", they almost inevitably form a loose alliance. That connection will lead to an amazing adventure.

Deborah Jackson's last book, "The Ice Tomb" [reviewed in the September, 2004 OSCAR], combined history, science and some well-drawn characters in a captivating story. Those characters, however, were all adults. Here, she

follows a similar strategy, but for a younger audience. Sarah and Matt Barnes might be your youngster's classmates. Jackson captures their feelings about school, parents and the world around them with skilled perception. Sarah's folks have divorced, jolting the twelve-year-old's comfortable life. Matt's lost both of his, his father in an inexplicable way. He's disappeared in time.

In pursuit of his father, Matt must deal with his cousin Nadine, who's running the house, the experiment Dr Barnes designed, and Matt's life. Fiercely protective of Dr Barnes' work, she proves the obstacle Matt and Sarah must dodge in their quest. In their efforts, the two children override caution, with unpredictable results. Nathan Barnes, an eminent physicist, had developed a machine to cross time and space. Jackson here adapts current thinking among physicists that there are multiple universes, possibly accessed by tapping something called "quantum foam". Within this foam space and time are indeterminate. You can go anywhere or anywhen. Thrust into the foam, Matt and Sarah are transported elsewhere. As city children, they must learn to cope with an entirely novel environment - and its inhabitants. How they survive and what results from their transportation makes gripping reading. They must prove flexible and innovative. Matt's relation to his father is the pivot point for the story's development, which Jackson handles with consummate skill.

Science fiction has long held a fascination for young, inquisitive minds. What are the alternative possibilities to everyday life? Is the course of history locked in some pattern or can individuals truly have an impact on how events transpire? Jackson poses these questions admirably, showing how the young can act on their own initiative and



Deborah Jackson

maintain a set of effective values. These two clash with adults, with each other and with their peers. But they also learn reconciliation and cooperation between themselves and a larger community. They understand how today's actions lead to tomorrow's results, and selfish behaviour can be carried only so far. This book is valuable for many reasons and an excellent "stocking stuffer" for any young person. Adults should find it of more than passing interest.

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Area Church Service Times

Sunnyside Wesleyan Church
58 Grosvenor Avenue (at Sunnyside)
Sunday Worship Services are at 9 a.m., 11 a.m.
Children's programs are offered during both services.

Trinity Anglican Church
1230 Bank Street (corner of Cameron)
Sunday services at 8 a.m. and 10 a.m.
Church School and Nursery at 10 a.m.

St. Margaret Mary's Parish
7 Fairbairn
Sunday liturgies: Saturday at 4:30 p.m.; Sunday at 10 a.m. and 7:30 p.m.
Evening Prayer: Tuesday at 7 p.m.

Southminster United Church
15 Aylmer Avenue
10:30 a.m.: Worship and Sunday School - September through June

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