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The Timepiece by Aileen Quin Wietstruk is a captivating middle-grade adventure that fuses the intrigue of time travel with the relatable challenges of growing up. Wietstruk weaves a story that is both thrilling and thoughtful, making it a standout addition to the genre. The adventure of a lifetime begins for Joe when he discovers a unique Timepiece buried alongside the railroad track. He was on his way to the first day of middle school with friends Carlos and Emmalein when he spied a sparkle in the dirt and uncovered the mysterious device. Questions immediately arise: Why was it buried? Who buried it? Was it part of some crime? These initial questions are set aside as the trio hurries to school. Days later, while examining the device, Joe suddenly disappears, finding himself viewing George Washington's spy hanging out her laundry. From there, Joe moves between a variety of periods, discovering a lot about himself on the way.

Wietstruk's storytelling is both engaging and accessible, making the book perfect for young readers. The narrative balances suspense, historical detail, and personal growth, presenting historical events through the eyes of a modern protagonist. Joe's experiences across various periods offer readers a unique lens on history while maintaining a fast-paced, adventure-filled plot. One of the novel's strengths is its character development. Joe's encounters and challenges in different eras force him to confront his fears and insecurities, fostering genuine growth.

The friendship between Joe, Carlos, and Emmalein is portrayed with warmth and authenticity, grounding the fantastical elements in real emotional stakes. Additionally, the book's central mystery—the origin and purpose of the timepiece—adds a compelling layer of intrigue that keeps readers invested until the very end.

— Jessica Lewis, Independent Reviewer

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