

Cat Ninja Presents: Time Buddies

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Andrews McMeel Publishing (Jun 25, 2024)

Softcover \$12.99 (160pp)

978-1-5248-8820-6

In the charming graphic novel *Time Buddies*, a spin-off from the Cat Ninja series, a schoolboy and a talking owl traverse millennia.

On a museum field trip, Bentley is fascinated by hieroglyphics and sees one image that resembles him. In the future, Hoot the owl also sets out on a class time-travel trip. Klutzy Hoot couldn't find a field trip buddy, but when her malfunctioning chrono-belt lands her in Bentley's bedroom, the two of them travel together: to the age of the dinosaurs, Ancient Egypt, the Gold Rush, and Leonardo da Vinci's studio.

Boy and bird are a complementary pair on these alternative history capers: Bentley is wary but full of facts and practical ideas; Hoot is brave and impulsive. Bentley channels Indiana Jones as he searches for the missing piece of an enchanted jigsaw puzzle "beneath the cushions of the Couch of the Pharaohs," a stone monolith. Hoot challenges the outlaw Wyatt Burp to a pie-eating contest in 1850s California. Bentley gives da Vinci a pet goldfish to console him for never achieving human flight.

Each of the first four chapters is devoted to a separate time-travel adventure with distinct author and illustrator credits. The stories join up in the fifth chapter, "Glow Time: Rewind," a zany mash-up of all the locations and characters. A closing fact check section explains where the creators took historical liberties. The result is an engrossing combination of familiar history and joking, made-up details. For instance, during the Mesozoic era, the characters meet a "Mustachasaurus Rex," who has flamboyant facial hair.

Contrasting science with superheroes and fantastical adventures with the safety of home, *Time Buddies* is a lighthearted graphic novel that approaches history without fear, because "time travel means you can always be back in time for supper."

REBECCA FOSTER (July / August 2024)

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