

SUDBURY SCI-FI

Sudbury time twist, Wence Horai. Three Tree Press, 1984. 95 pp. \$11.95, \$4.95, cloth, paper. ISBN 0-88823-085-0, 0-88823-083-4.

This story of four teenagers on a trip to Sudbury's moonscape lacks excitement. The four, staying with friends of one of their parents, come upon a structure that transports them back two billion years to the impact of the huge meteorite that forms the copper-nickel deposit of Sudbury.

The main characters, Cindy, Bill, Kate and Jim, use dialogue that is often stiff and unnatural, and attempts at humour appear strained. The dialogue and passages explaining the character's thoughts give the impression that these are four very unusual teenagers, to say the least. Kate at one point bursts into tears at the thought of stars eventually dying. The reader feels little empathy for the characters because they are so stiff and lifeless.

Lines like "without having to plumb her (Cindy) memory for weather forecasts, she knew it was going to be a beautiful day," jar the reader. A simple "the forecast was for a beautiful day" would suffice. A few lines later, "observing the apples ripening on the tree in the Lawton back yard, Cindy said, 'I think it's going to be a beautiful day'" seems redundant.

Parts of the story appear to be simply fillers — e.g., a paragraph explaining the seating arrangements on the bus to Sudbury and a few pages about a pick-up driven by a steam engine which is never featured in the story again.

The story itself opens with a dream which has little to do with the rest of the plot and serves only to add to the strangeness of the characters.

The adults too, at times, appear unreal. Stan, a professor at Laurentian University, the friend they are staying with, is excited by a pre-historic trilobite that the children bring to him from the time structure. Apparently he would prefer to return it to the time structure so he won't have to explain it to his colleagues.

The actual appearance of the meteorite watched by the children from the time structure is anti-climactic and the story simply fizzles out. It would have been better if the author had got to the meat of the story earlier and developed the segment with the meteorite more fully.

The story lacks realism in the dialogue and actions of the main characters; the trip through time, which should be a good idea for a story, doesn't work.

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