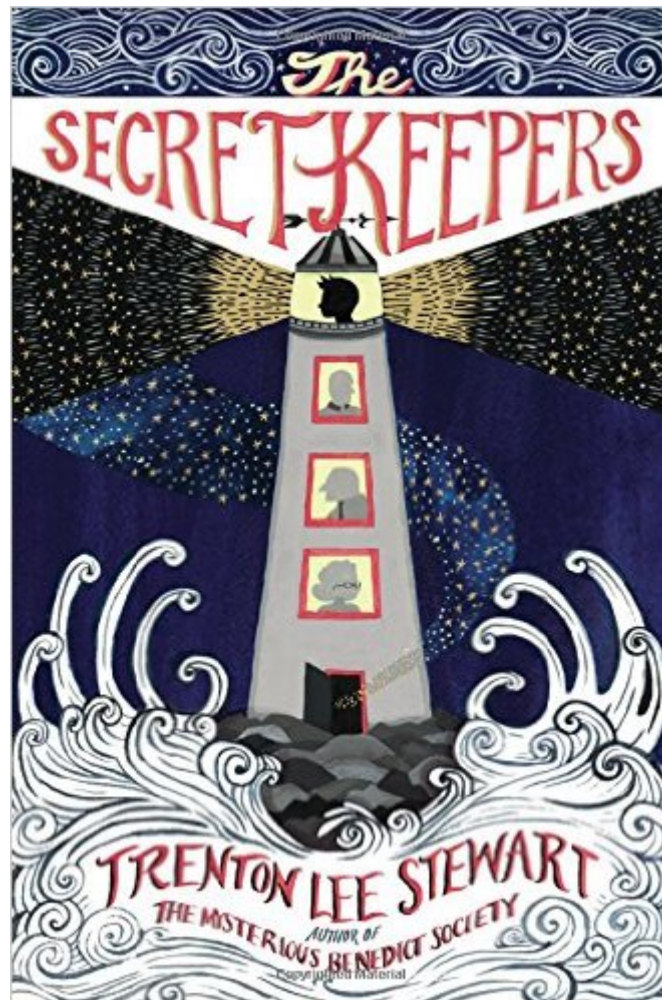


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The Secret Keepers



Synopsis

A heart-pounding mystery adventure laced with magic and humor by the author of the New York Times bestselling series, *The Mysterious Benedict Society* A magical watch A string of secrets A race against time When Reuben discovers an extraordinary antique watch, he soon learns it has a secret power and his life takes an intriguing turn. At first he is thrilled with his new treasure, but as one secret leads to another, Reuben finds himself torn between his innately honest nature and the lure to be a hero. Now he is on a dangerous adventure--full of curious characters, treacherous traps, and hairsbreadth escapes--as he races to solve the mystery before it is too late. Even with fearless Penny, mighty Jack, and the wise Mrs. Genevieve on his side, can Reuben outwit and outmaneuver the sly villain called The Smoke and his devious defenders the Directions and save the city from a terrible fate? In this ingeniously crafted novel, acclaimed New York Times bestselling author Trenton Lee Stewart invites readers to join the adventure, decipher the clues, and ask themselves the question: Is knowing a secret a gift or a curse?

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviews Â (30 customer reviews)

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Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

Customer Reviews

I'd never read Trenton Lee Stewart's previous novels, especially the *Mysterious Benedict Society* series which is hugely popular, and I was curious to learn what the source of this popularity was. *The Secret Keepers* is a darker novel than I had expected with a lonely, somewhat troubled child wandering around a decaying, older city. The lead character is named Reuben and while he is out

investigating some of the more mysterious locations in the city, he discovers an extraordinary antique pocket watch during a particularly stressful episode that results from his carelessness and slightly reckless behavior. Reuben soon learns that the pocket watch has a secret and mysterious power and his largely feral life takes an interesting turn. He is initially quite excited about his newly discovered treasure, but the watch seems to possess its own destiny which it insists that he share with it. Its power soon becomes obvious as one dark secret leads to another and Reuben is confronted with a multitude of dilemmas that pit his basic honesty and reserved nature against the powerful allure of fame and heroism. Like so many literary reluctant heroes, Reuben must deal with the stark reality that he's been thrust into a dangerous adventure filled with a host of strange characters, a series of threatening events that might end in disaster and some unlikely, last minute escapes. All of this occurs while he's busily rushing to solve the central mysteries that confront him before he finds himself another victim of this unknown power. There are helpful friends that he meets along the way but Reuben must outwit and defeat a strange and powerful villain called The Smoke and his evil defenders called the Directions and rescue his already decaying city from its awful destiny.

In the *“The Secret Keepers”*, Trenton Lee Stewart creates an entertaining, if somewhat long, novel for young readers. Elements reminiscent of *“The Lord of the Rings”* and *“The Wizard of Oz”* are combined in the imaginative story that emphasizes strength of character, working together against a common enemy, and the importance of family. An urban adventurer, twelve-year old Reuben Pedley discovers an ornate box containing a beautiful antique watch. The watch has only an hour hand. Thinking it might be valuable enough for him to sell and to help his single mother, Reuben visits several of New Umbra's watchmakers. Only the elderly Mrs. Genevieve provides guidance with respect to the watch and, in the process, becomes a trusted friend. As Reuben works to discover the origin and importance of the watch, he encounters the enforcers - *“the Directions”* - for and the representative of - *“the Counselor”* - the elusive, unseen, all-seeing *“The Smoke”*. During his quest to learn the origins and importance of the watch, Reuben discovers its power and the evil it can perpetuate. He discovers the strength of working with others to overcome those who seek to oppress individuals and to destroy others. *“The Secret Keepers”* has facets that remind one of Nazi Germany and totalitarian societies. New Umbra and its depressed landscape seem to be like the ghettos in which Jews were segregated. The Directions are loyal, unthinking minions like the SS, enforcing rules and severely punishing those who do not conform. The Counselor is a Mussolini-like subordinate, feared but fearing The Smoke. Reuben,

Mrs. Genevieve, and the Meyer family are the Resistance, operating under cover of night and in secrecy to overcome their oppressors.

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