



Public  
Libraries

# ***Running Out of Time***

by

**Margaret Peterson Haddix**

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## SUMMARY

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What if you grew up thinking that you lived in a small village in the year 1840 only to discover the year is really 1996 and the whole world around you is a tourist site created by heartless scientists? 13-year-old Jessie faces just that and it is up to her to escape from the village to get modern medicine to save the lives of her sister and the rest of the village children.

184 pages, 5th grade and up



## BOOK REVIEWS

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### Editorial Reviews

#### **From School Library Journal**

Grade 5-8? This absorbing novel develops an unusual premise into the gripping story of a young girl's efforts to save her family and friends from a deadly disease. Jessie Keyser, 13, believes that the year is 1840. In truth, she and her family, along with a small group of others, live in a reconstructed village viewed by unseen modern tourists and used as an experimental site by unethical scientists. Jessie discovers the truth when her mother asks her to leave the village and seek medical help for the diphtheria epidemic that has struck the children of the community. Jessie must cope with the shock of her discovery; her unfamiliarity with everyday phenomena such as cars, telephones, and television; and the unscrupulous

men who are manipulating the villagers. The action moves swiftly, with plenty of suspense, and readers will be eager to discover how Jessie overcomes the obstacles that stand in her way. While she is ultimately successful, the ending is not entirely a happy one, for several children have died and others are placed in foster care to await resolution of the complex situation. This realistically ambiguous ending reflects the author's overall success in making her story, however far-fetched, convincing and compelling. Haddix also handles characterization well; even secondary characters who are somewhat sketchily drawn never descend into stereotype. This book will appeal to fans of time-travel or historical novels as well as those who prefer realistic contemporary fiction, all of whom will look forward to more stories from this intriguing new author. Lisa Dennis, The Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh  
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**From [Booklist](#)**

Gr. 4<sup>^</sup>-7. What if the costumed workers at historical sites really lived there, and tourists watched them through hidden cameras rather than from pathways? What if those workers and families were not allowed to leave, ever? Jessie lives in the 1840s, or so she believes until her mother sends her on an escape mission outside the fence, where it's 1996. The suspense and the cataloging of differences as they appear to Jessie are the best parts here. The resolution of the plot, which includes the revelation that the inhabitants have been used for scientific experimentation, comes too fast, but the quirky twist on time-travel fiction will keep the attention of readers. *Mary Harris Veeder* --*This text refers to the [Hardcover](#) edition.*



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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Spoiler alert! Some of the questions contain key elements of the plot. Do not read if you don't want to know what happens!

1. Describe Clifton. What is it like to live there? Is there anything that would make you suspect that something odd is happening?
2. What kind of person is Jessie? What about her makes her mom put so much faith and confidence in her?
3. How does Jessie react when her mother tells her the truth about Clifton? How would you react?
4. How do you feel about Jessie's parents keeping the truth from their family?
5. What is it like for Jessie to be around modern day school kids taking a tour of the historical preserve? What observations does she make about their clothing and behavior?
6. Frank Lyle (Isaac Neeley) justifies sacrificing the lives of some Clifton residents by saying that the Clifton project, in the long run, will save lives by strengthening the human gene pool. Do you agree with the idea of sacrificing a few in order to save many? What problems can this lead to?
7. Do you think Jessie's parents deserved to get their children back?
8. What do you think the author was trying to accomplish with this novel?
9. Even though this book is a work of fiction, do you think that anything like the events in this book could happen in the world today? Why or Why not?
10. Predict how Jessie will survive in the modern world. What challenges await her and her siblings?

\*\*\*Most of the questions were found on the Multnomah County Library Website: <http://www.multcolib.org/talk/guides-running.html>



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Margaret Peterson Haddix grew up on a farm near Washington Court House, Ohio. She graduated from Miami University (of Ohio) with degrees in English/journalism, English/creative writing and history. Before her first book was published, she worked as a newspaper copy editor in Fort Wayne, Indiana; a newspaper reporter in Indianapolis; and a community college instructor and freelance writer in Danville, Illinois.

She has since written more than 20 books for kids and teens, including *Running Out of Time*; *Don't You Dare Read This, Mrs. Dunphrey*; *Leaving Fishers*; *Just Ella*; *Turnabout*; *Takeoffs and Landings*; *The Girl with 500 Middle Names*; *Because of Anya*; *Escape from Memory*; *Say What?*; *The House on the Gulf*; *Double Identity*; *Dexter the Tough*; *Uprising*; *Palace of Mirrors*; *the Shadow Children series*; and *Found*, which is the first book in a new series, *The Missing*. Her books have been honored with the International Reading Association's Children's Book Award; American Library Association Best Book and Quick Pick for Reluctant Young Adult Readers notations; and more than a dozen state reader's choice awards.

Haddix and her husband, Doug, now live in Columbus, Ohio, with their two children.

\*\*\**The author information was taken from the official website of Margaret Peterson Haddix: <http://www.haddixbooks.com>*

\*\*\**Check out this cool site for more information about the book and author: <http://www.thinkquest.org/Jo110073>*



## IF YOU LIKE...

### *Running Out of Time*

by Margaret Peterson Haddix,  
*you might like the following books, too!!*

*Among The Hidden, by Margaret Peterson Haddix.*

*Eva by Peter Dickinson*

*Feed by M. T. Anderson*

*Gathering Blue by Lois Lowry*

*The Giver by Lois Lowry*

*The Green Book by Jill Paton Walsh*

*House of the Scorpion by Nancy Farmer*

*The Last Book in the Universe by Rodman Philbrick*

*The Messenger by Lois Lowry*

*White Mountains by John Christopher*