



## Skavenger's Hunt

*Mike Rich*

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After young Henry Babbitt tragically loses his father, he can't help but remember the promises of the great adventures they would now never take. Then, on a snowy Christmas Eve, his grandfather reveals that he's tracked down a series of mysterious century-old clues left by Hunter S. Skavenger, the eccentric magnate who launched the first and greatest scavenger hunt.

Hours later, on Christmas Day, Henry finds himself magically transported back to 1885, where he teams up with a ragtag band of youngsters in a quest to solve Skavenger's elaborate puzzle. From New York to the Mississippi riverboats to the streets of old Paris, Henry and his new friends face off not only against brilliant competing teams, but also Skavenger's own dark and elusive nemesis: Hiram Doubt.

## **Skavenger's Hunt Details**

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Author : Mike Rich

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## From Reader Review Skavenger's Hunt for online ebook

### TL says

I received this via Goodreads Giveaways in exchange for an honest review. All my opinions are my own.

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An interesting and fun story (once again, where was this book when I was a kid? haha). Its a "middle grade/children's book" but it doesn't have that feel to it and it doesn't talk down to its intended audience, which was awesome.

(Still not feeling hot so just this short little review, I would recommend though)

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### Brenda says

Originally posted at Log Cabin Library with excerpt

Henry's father, Nathan Babbitt has always said that one day they would go on an adventure together sailing or climbing the highest mountains, but after he's tragically killed in a car accident, their adventuring plans ended. Since then, Henry's mother won't allow him to go outside, she's been cautious and overly protective, especially when it comes to his grandfather and all his wild stories. Then one night on a visit to his grandparents on Christmas Eve, Henry hears the story of one of his grandfather's own adventures of trying to solve the greatest hunt of them all, the Skavenger Hunt. His grandfather also shares the last clue he found, an antique ledger sheet. Unable to sleep, Henry sneaks into his grandfather's study hoping to take a closer look, and while investigating mutters aloud a series of numbers that once added to the ledger transports him back to the year 1885, with the cryptic message:

"To whomever has found this page from my ledger: find me. There is a way back. Or forward. But know this too-when the final empty box of this sheet is full, so ends your adventure. Whatever the date and location, there you will stay. Forever.  
Sincerely, Hunter S. Skavenger"

Henry must now follow the clues wherever they lead and risk each new mark on the ledger bringing him closer to being stuck in the past. Will he be able to find Skavenger in time?

Shortly after Henry arrives in 1885, and while trying to figure out what Skavenger's message means he stumbles upon three other explorers his age, all searching for the next clue in the puzzle. Once they team up, things begin to get interesting as they make their way across New York visiting such landmarks as Central Park, the Grand Central Depot, the Vanderbilt Mansion and The Telephone Exchange in Hell's Kitchen, New York. I think the hunt is my favorite part of the story, reading about the places they visit and following along with their next clue. Their travels even take them by Pennsylvania railroad and boat to destinations like Mississippi and Paris where they meet Mark Twain and Gustave Eiffel. While closely behind Mr. Doubt and

his Dark Men are following their every move. Skavenger's Hunt is a puzzle mystery, mixed with historical fiction, and adventure which I enjoyed very much. There are many twists in Scavenger's Hunt, with one in particular that I'll admit I never saw coming, but the more that I reflect on the story it reminds me of the character of Arthur Slugworth from the 1971 movie Charlie and the Chocolate Factory. Although, Slugworth seemed more mysterious, like what was he promising those children? He also seemed to be more of a test of Charlie's moral character, was he trustworthy and honest, would Charlie be worthy of taking over the Factory? Whereas in Skavenger Hunt, the antagonist frightens Henry and gets in the way, more of an obstacle to overcome. So that, when the twist is finally revealed, it's even more surprising. While there is a resolution to the Hunt, the final twist does leave room for more stories to be written.

\*In exchange for an honest review, a review copy was received from the publisher.\*

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### **Tonja Drecker says**

This is a fun mixture of time travel, history and a good dose of quick paced adventure, making it an entertaining read.

Since his father's death, Henry's life has been anything but adventurous. His mother keeps him safe as can be, and he doesn't argue with her. The yearly visit to his grandparents on Christmas Eve starts with his mother's warning not to spend too much time listening to his grandfather's ridiculous tales, but this is one warning Henry refuses to heed. This time, his grandfather has a special story waiting, one that involves old articles about a mysterious scavenger hunt started by Hunter S. Skavenger in 1882. Hoping to learn more, Henry sneaks back into his grandfather's study in the middle of the night to find a single ledger sheet which transports him back to the last scavenger hunt in 1885.

The story starts out with a pull at the heart strings. Henry is sitting at the museum waiting for his mother as the last child there and already sitting for a long time. His life hangs around him like a weighted cloud, and it's hard not to feel sorry for him. His mother isn't exactly warm, but it's clear she cares for him and is battling her own troubles. When the adventure starts, the reader can only cheer for Henry and be thrilled that he gets a chance to do something adventurous.

Henry has to find his independence, and the dash across time and the world with an evil group on his tail does exactly that. With new friends, he learns to be daring and take risks. There's something happening on every page, and the riddles add a bit of thinking fun. The dabs of history make it interesting for information buffs as Henry runs across numerous historic figures and learns some facts along the way. Although this is a great mixture to liven up history for young readers, there were so many different figures and places (none which went deeper than a brief meeting) that it began to feel like a historic line-up.

The ending comes full circle and wraps everything up while leaving a cute twist and potential for upcoming adventures—which are certain to bring more fun.

I received a complimentary copy through Netgalley and found the mixture of history and adventure so fun that I wanted to leave my honest thoughts.

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## Annie says

**This review was originally posted on my blog, Blossoms and Bullet Journals.**

*Skavenger's Hunt* is a fun adventure about a boy named Henry who goes on a quest to solve the decades-old Skavenger's Hunt. He makes some friends along the way, and learns about himself and his family.

### What I liked

The plot was definitely my favorite element of the book. I really enjoyed the adventure and the way the riddles and everything played out. All of the clues for the scavenger hunt were really clever! I also really liked how the book has some educational value without being a huge info dump. There are a bunch of historical facts that were sort of sneakily sprinkled in, which made it feel like the facts were helping to add to the setting and the plot, rather than just being there to teach the kids reading the book about history. Another thing I enjoyed were the friendships between the kids in the book.

### What I didn't like

My main problem with Skavenger's Hunt was the predictability; however, I felt like the book was a LOT less predictable in the second half than it was in the first. There was a plot twist near the end that I did NOT see coming! As far as characters, I wished the backstories of some of the side characters had been more fleshed out (especially Ernie). Also, the whole thing with Abigail was just annoying. Her character was so unnecessary; Henry just gushed about how pretty she was for one paragraph, and then we never saw her again. I understand how the author wanted to have everything come full circle at the end, but still. In general, Henry was kind of a flat character, and his dialogue felt somewhat unrealistic. (He used weird phrases like "mmmboy" and "looksee," despite him being a 12 year-old in the 21st century. There was one other annoying thing that didn't occur to me while I was reading the book, but I realized when another reviewer mentioned it: Henry and his grandfather deliberately keep the hunt a secret from Henry's mom and grandmother for no apparent reason. This is so stupid and I don't know why I didn't notice it while reading.

Overall, Skavenger's Hunt was a bit on the average side, but it was a fun adventure.

*Thanks to Netgalley and Inkshares for sending me an advance copy of this book in exchange for my honest review.*

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## Vernon Area Public Library KIDS says

Henry Babbit's dad had promised him that they would go on adventures together. But, that was before the accident. As Henry braces for another difficult Christmas without his father, his grandfather shows him a clue from one of the greatest game in America's history that was never solved: Skavenger's Hunt. While examining the clue, Henry is transported back in time to the beginning of Skavenger's Hunt. Henry needs to complete the hunt before time runs out or else he is stuck in the past forever. An fast-paced adventure for history and mystery lovers everywhere!

Recommended for grades 5-8. Lexile Level: NA

Reviewed by Christine Hwang, Youth and School Services, Vernon Area Public Library

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### **Darrell Hovander says**

Fun read! Sort of Back the Future meets National Treasure and a pinch of Wizard of Oz...and I enjoyed all of those.

Skavenger's Hunt would mainly target late elementary/middle school kids. Yet it is fit for the whole family...and I love history. I even went to Wiki several times to learn more about historic timing of events. All good.

Starting the story, it's almost Christmas Day in New York. Main character, young Henry Babbitt is nearing the nativity celebration with family. Henry goes back in time; a time before radio, or cars. As the rookie to a new time period (1885), his first quest is finding Skavenger.

Many famous people from that era are wonderfully crafted into the book. I also love travel, so the fictional visits to locations I have been were enjoyable.

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### **Maria Antonia says**

Basic plot: Henry finds himself back in 1885 on a great scavenger hunt. From New York to St. Louis to Paris, France... he and his rag-tag group of friends are trying to solve the clues to find Mr. Skavenger's treasure.

#### **WHAT'S COOL...**

- 1) I really like the time travel scene. Mike Rich does a really nice job describing how the room changes from the present day to 1885. Very nicely done!
- 2) The book cover is well-suited to the story. I like the little drawings of various hints and clues, all within Henry's silhouette.
- 3) The initial interaction between Jack and Henry is priceless. Especially once Henry realizes who Jack is.
- 4) This is a Westing Game meets The 39 Clues type of book. If you love to solve riddles and figure out clues, you'll probably like this book.
- 5) The stakes are clearly outlined. I definitely felt the "ticking-clock". And while the other kids (Jack, Ernie, and Mattie) just want to find the treasure, Henry's stakes are a little higher. He wants to get back to his own time!
- 6) I loved the cameo appearance of a certain author in the middle of the book. Especially the fact that he doesn't know why they are in his stateroom and how that plays out. This for me was probably the highlight of the book.
- 7) I loved how Henry sometimes got the clue wrong due his not knowing his history. Particularly with the clue in Paris.

## WHAT'S NOT COOL...

- 1) I wish there was more character development between Jack and Henry. It was okay, but I'm not sure I buy Jack's position at the end of the hunt. I think it needed some real heart-to-heart connection between the two boys. We get that a little more with Henry and Mattie (but in my opinion, we don't need this to happen with Mattie).
- 2) Which brings me to Mattie. Not sure she was even completely necessary to the book, other than to have a female character. Ernie could have been a Mattie. I liked her character well-enough, but I just didn't really care too much what happened to her or when she was in danger. And then... at the end I was completely confused by her character.
- 3) Now this is a nit-picky one, but I was overwhelmed with all the CAPITAL LETTERS. I realize that this is to indicate SHOUTING or EXCITEMENT (and I didn't mind the odd one), but it was TOO MUCH!

## FINAL THOUGHTS

My rating is 3 Stars (out of 5) – This was my first ARC\* review and it was fun! This book isn't without faults, but if you love clue hunts, this book is for you ?

\*Note: I received a copy of this title from the people at NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

This review was originally published at my blog.

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## ChallengeGReads says

\*ARC Review\*

A few thoughts on this enjoyable read from Inkshares:

1. This is clearly a Young Adult novel, but as an adult I still thoroughly enjoyed the story so much so that I finished it in a day.
2. The clues and all the notable people the kids meet on their adventure make this book incredibly hard to put down. Each clue has you saying just one more chapter.
3. The one downside for me though is that Henry is a forgettable main character. His companions are much more complex and interesting in comparison. Plus Doubt and his minions put everyone in the shade of their level of creepy.
4. It seems to be a mix of Back to the Future, Tomb Raider, and some teen 80's movie where the kids have an adventure clearly above their skills.
5. The twists at the end!!!!

Overall, recommend for anyone looking for an escapist read to take them away from the problems of the present.

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### **Jennifer says**

Skavenger's Hunt is an enjoyable adventure set back in the 1800s when Hunter S. Skavenger gives everyone the first clue to the largest scavenger hunt ever. There is one boy in the crowd that was magically transported there from the future, and while he wants to participate in the hunt, he also wants a chance to speak with Skavenger in hopes that he will be able to find a way back to his family.

There were times in the book where I wasn't sure if the kids that Henry Babbitt, the kid from the future, joins up with were going to be safe. There are nefarious villains wanting the prize for themselves, and the kids don't know what they might do to get what they want.

The ending for me was a shock. It wasn't too out there for me, but just out there enough that it wasn't something I had thought of while I was reading.

I received a copy of this book from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Author: Mike Rich

Publisher: Inkshares

Publication Date: November 14th 2017

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### **Nikkie Sierra says**

I received this book as an ARC.

Twelve-year-old Henry Babbitt is living a somewhat difficult life due to the death of his father. He has a loving family, but an overprotective mother and a bit of awkwardness keeps him from true happiness. On Christmas Eve night he stumbles upon a time-traveling adventure that both challenges him and changes him. The character development was not superb, but they were likeable. The story line was exciting and allows the reader to meet some historical figures. I would have liked to see more of Henry and how he was affected by his adventures. There was a great opportunity for us to see the positive effects Henry's adventure had on his present life that was missed with this story. Overall, I enjoyed this book and its adventure aspect. I feel middle-grade students will relate to Henry and his insecurities, his heartache, and his quest. The historical aspects of the book along with the mysterious clues will satiate the reader who loves a good adventure book. However, I feel the reader could have been better served if they were able to see Henry's changes in effect.

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### **Fatima Alsuwaidi says**

\*I received an ARC through NetGalley from the publisher in exchange for an honest book review\*

Henry Babbitt is emotionally burnt out by the promise of great adventures getting broken by his father's tragic's death. On Christmas Eve at his grandparent's house, his Grandfather tells him about The Great Skavenger's Hunt, that ran three years in a row since 1883 and how he and Henry's father, Nathan were

trying to find any clues that could be remained to this day. In a moment of excitement Henry sneaks in the middle of the night to find answers about a Ledger Sheet, his grandfather found and thinks it may be connected to Skavenger's Hunt. In a magical Whoosh he finds himself back in 1885. with no clue of how to get back.

Along with his new friends, and also enemies he must solve the unsolvable Skavenger's Hunt. his only hope to get back.

WOW, this is one of the best middle-grade books I've read in a while, full of adventures, friendships, funny and equally suspenseful.

I liked Henry, he's your typical 12-year-old protagonist boy with a good, brave heart and nice attitude. Throughout the entire journey, I was entirely hooked, How they traveled from one place to another, how they handled difficulties. It's quite entertaining for middle graders and even older kids.

My downsize was France and how they tried wine, I thought it was unappropriating and uncalled for along with some bad words coming from Jack.

Overall this is such a good read, a great start for 2018 (year I did start in early December 2017 but who cares)

I would try and get my hands on a physical copy because I personally think it's worth the investment.

Highly recommend it 4.5 stars

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### **Amanda Work says**

The mysterious Mr. Hunter Skavenger has put together the ultimate scavenger hunt that no one in over 100 years has been able to successfully complete. When young Henry Babbitt's grandfather suggests that he and Henry attempt to do the impossible and find and solve all of Mr. Skavenger's clues, it is up to Henry to decide if he has what it takes both mentally and emotionally to meet that challenge. Ultimately, this tale of self-discovery will appeal to the young reader who enjoys figuring out a good riddle mixed in with a healthy dose of adventure, including time travel, scary men in black and clever tidbits of historical trivia.

Would recommend for 4th-6th grade, high interest, medium reading level.

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### **Alexina says**

Thank you to Netgalley for an ARC of "Skavenger's Hunt" in exchange for an honest review.

Summary: Present-day Christmas Eve and Henry Babbitt is celebrating with his family in their New York home. Henry's grandfather begins telling him about a series of century-old clues that he's stumbled upon. Clues that belong to the infamous Hunter S. Skavenger--only the greatest scavenger creator of all time. And,

so, while perusing documents on his grandfather's old desk, Henry is suddenly transported back to New York 1865 which marks the first day of Skavenger's most famous and greatest scavenger hunt. Henry is on a mission to solve Skavenger's hunt because he's dead-sure that it's the only way that he'll be transported back home.

**Opinion:** Overall, I was impressed with one. It took me a few chapters to really get into it but it was worth it. I'd have to say that I'd consider this more of a fantasy/historical fiction read rather than a mystery as I was led to believe initially.

I appreciated the historical facts and getting to meet historical figures like Vanderbilt, Mark Twain, Gustave Eiffel, and the Statue of Liberty but historical fiction has always been my thing so I'm biased.

I liked the pace of the plot and didn't feel like anything more than the beginning and end dragged (when everything was being wrapped up) but I feel like that's often the case with middle grade books. I also thought the clues were solved relatively quickly and it was, mostly, Henry doing all the solving of the puzzles which made it pointless to have his friends.

It's clear that it's setup for a sequel so there's a good chance I'll follow through with this one but I am happy that the series gets grittier as it continues on.

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### **Tom Soma says**

Spellbinding and sweet, Skavenger's Hunt is sure to become a family classic. An unbelievable story that somehow--through both twinkles and tears--beckons the reader to believe. With the detailed yet fantastical creativity of Mark Twain, the warmth and charm of E.B. White, and the whimsical imagination of Madeline L'Engle, Mike Rich weaves adventure, love, and history into a tale that makes my 60-year-old heart feel 12 again. I can't wait to share this treasure with my grandchildren--and I fully expect that, one day, they'll share it with theirs. (Tom Soma, author of "The Secret Ingredient," NewSouth Books, 2014)

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### **Krissy says**

I received an ARC of this book from the publisher via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review, and here it is!

Skavenger's Hunt is a quick-paced, fun adventure story for tweens and early teens. Would recommend for kids interested in history. The story takes place in modern day New York City and several places in 1885. It's a time travel novel of sorts. I enjoyed the care that the writer took in making the locations seem real. He has a real eye for detail. I wish that the characters of Henry (the main character) and his friends Jack, Ernie, and Mattie had been more realistic. They come off as one-dimensional. If I were a 12-year old kid reading this book, I'd want to feel that the characters were more relatable, that they had more personality.

Am going to recommend my 12-year old nephew read this one. Four out of five stars.

