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## **Lizard Larson and the Time Keeper**

Gary Natoli

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Reviewed by Rachel Dehning for Reader Views (7/24)

5\* - Versatile, enjoyable, and relatable time travel

Elizabeth Larson is a typical 14-year-old girl in New York City - she feels misunderstood and different and is attempting to balance school and home life with varying success; she also prefers to be identified by a different name - Lizard. She differs from a typical 14-year-old by having unique time-altering abilities and the hand-selected task, given by the mysterious Time Keeper, of saving her parents and the world. Assuming this is a solo mission, she learns to entrust the help of her best friend, crush, and so-so girl as they take on the futuristic enemies of deception, power, and time travel. Lizard perfects how to learn from her mistakes and the importance of leading with your gut.

"Lizard Larson and the Time Keeper" contains all the elements of a successful YA and Sci-Fi novel - mystery, thrill and suspense, a coming-of-age main character, an antagonist (or multiple), and time travel. In addition, the story has similarities to well-known filmography/topics such as "Willy Wonka," "Lord of the Rings," and the TVA from the series "Loki," making the story versatile, enjoyable, and relatable. Lizard's reactions and thought processes are realistic of a modern-day teenager, but she has a good heart and bravery to balance the scales. The story includes all the inner workings of a believable and successful superhero origin story, with Lizard facing monumental hurdles and internal challenges through losing her parents and learning about herself and her capabilities in and outside of time. While not perfect, Lizard meets the requirements of a good role model for females ranging from young girls to adults based on her positive internal qualities and dealings with external situations in a necessary manner.

The book cover caught this reader's eye and presented whimsical and mysterious, piquing interest and immediate hypotheses of what lies in store for the reader, with the target readers/audience being appropriate for lovers, acquaintances, and connoisseurs of time and all things mysterious within the restricting confines of our current existence. While the topic of time travel is not achievable yet, the author raises (potential) false hopes by portraying adequate and hope-raising knowledge in the science and the possibility of this anticipated topic; however, he does well to keep the audience in check by addressing the dangers and downfalls of the mixed-reviewed topic. This reviewer suggests that "Lizard Larson and the Time Keeper" is rated M for mature based on slightly graphic/violent scenes throughout and slight language; however, there is little to no romance, which was refreshing, given the younger age of the heroine.