

## Children's Literature Reviews

Item 3 of 130

---

### Hole in the sky

*Pete Hautman.*

[Contributor biographical information](#)

[Publisher description](#)

[Sample text](#)

[Table of contents only](#)

New York : Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2001.

179 p. ; 22 cm.

### Annotations:

In a future world ravaged by a mutant virus, sixteen-year-old Ceej and three other teenagers seek to save the Grand Canyon from being flooded, while trying to avoid capture by a band of renegade Survivors.

### Best Books:

[Children's Choices, 2002](#) ; International Reading Association; United States

[Middle and Junior High School Library Catalog, Ninth Edition, 2005](#) ; H.W. Wilson; United States

[Middle and Junior High School Library Catalog, Supplement to the Eighth Edition, 2002](#) ; H.W. Wilson; United States

[Outstanding Books by Wisconsin Authors and Illustrators, 2002](#) ; Wisconsin Library Association; United States

### Awards, Honors, Prizes:

[Heartland Award for Excellence in Young Adult Literature](#) Finalist 2003 United States

### State and Provincial Reading Lists:

[Golden Sower Award, 2003-2004](#) ; Nominee; Young Adult; Nebraska

[Tayshas High School Reading List, 2002](#) ; Texas

### Horn Book Guide:

Fall 2001 Older Fiction Rating 2, Superior, well above average.

### Reading Measurement Programs:

Accelerated Reader

Interest Level Upper Grade

Book Level 5

Accelerated Reader Points 7

Lexile, MetaMetrics, Inc.

Lexile Measure 700

Reading Counts-Scholastic

Interest Level High School

Reading Level 6.1

## Reviews:

### **Roger Leslie (Booklist, Apr. 15, 2001 (Vol. 97, No. 16))**

In 2028, a killer flu ravages the human race. To avoid contracting the virus, Ceej Kane, his uncle, and his sister, a "Survivor" who is no longer contagious, live in isolation near the Grand Canyon. When his uncle and sister disappear, Ceej fears that they've been kidnapped by Kinkas, flu marauders who travel the region trying to infect others. While searching for his missing relatives, Ceej and his friend Tim meet a young Hopi who, guided by the spirit of her grandfather, searches for Sipapuni, the entrance her ancestors believe leads to another world--a place free of disease and humankind's only hope for survival. Thanks to Hautman's skillful storytelling, Ceej's long, detailed journey is more than mere adventure. The author gives depth to the characters by changing points of view in each section, and he manages to create a mystical, magical theme without interrupting the pace of the story. As in *Mr. Was* (1996), Hautman promises much and delivers impressively. Category: Books for Older Readers--Fiction. 2001, Simon & Schuster, \$16. *Gr. 9-12.*

### **Gwynne Spencer (Children's Literature)**

I am an absolute sucker for books that start with a map, like *The Hobbit*, or Piers Anthony's "Xanth" books. This latest, *Hole in the Sky*, begins as an apocalyptic novel. A couple of kids and their uncle have survived the end-of-the-world virus at the Grand Canyon Lodge and meet up with a couple of other lucky dudes who are eking out an existence (you visualize *Road Warrior* crossed with *Dances with Wolves*). But they find out that Glen Canyon Dam is about to blow because the evil Kinka--survivors-of-the-plague--have killed the dam caretakers, and so begins the journey to heroism. It is a novel about survival, serendipity, allegiance and destiny. Fans of Lois Lowry and C. S. Lewis will love this novel. It is like *Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen meets *The Stand* by Stephen King. The writing is spare, forthright and unembellished. The characters are cinematic, engaging and lovable/hateable. For preteen and teenage kids who love to imagine a world not infested with parents and other troublesome adults, it is a story they will eagerly plow through. Infused throughout with the majesty of the "biggest hole on earth" and the legends of the Hopi world below this one, reachable through the sipapuni (a real place on the Little Colorado), this will be the perfect book for kids who are headed to the Four Corners or The Grand Canyon. 2001, Simon and Schuster Children's Publishing, \$16.00. Ages 10 to 14.

### **Rebecca Joseph (Children's Literature)**

Following the outbreak of a deadly flu, the earth is left with two kinds of peoples--survivors who live with different side effects and those who have never been infected. One of the latter, Ceej, lives in isolation near the Grand Canyon with his uncle and survivor sister, Harryette. Their lives are threatened when a band of crazed survivors kidnap Ceej's uncle and sister. In his quest to save them Ceej encounters a Hopi girl, Bella, who is searching for Sipapuni, a mysterious portal that leads to another world. A mix of science fiction, adventure, and mysticism, this fascinating book keeps the reader on edge until the very last page. 2001, Simon & Schuster, \$16.00. Ages 12 up.

### **Kirkus (Kirkus Reviews, April 15, 2001 (Vol. 69, No. 8))**

The 1918 influenza outbreak killed 100 million people, but in 2028, the pandemic known simply as the Flu wiped out more than five billion. Now, in 2038, the Flu is on its third wave, wreaking fear among the healthy who live spread out in small communes and towns across the US. However, 1.3 million Survivors do exist. Although immune to the effects of the Flu, Survivors lose all body hair, and many develop impaired physical and or mental functions. In addition to the Flu itself, many are terrified of a rebel band of Survivors called the Kinka, who bring death and destruction wherever they go. Hautman's ("Stone Cold", 1998, etc.) sci-fi, adventure, survival, and Native American mysticism combine in the vastness of the Grand Canyon and center on four teens who each tell a part of the story. Ceej has never left the confines of his uncle's makeshift house, but knows survival skills and the layout of the land; Bella is the world's sole Hopi Indian; Tim, Ceej's best friend, travels around the country with a safe trader; and Harryette, Ceej's older sister, is a Survivor left deaf and without the ability to speak. What ensues is a foiled effort to save a dam and the environment when the Kinka capture Harryette, Ceej's uncle, and Hap, the trader. Together, Ceej, Bella, and Tim must rescue Harryette, defend themselves against the Kinka, and make their way to the Hopi's Sipapuni, which is an opening to the next world. Hautman at his best. 2001, Simon & Schuster, \$16.00. Category: Fiction. Ages 13 up. © 2001 Kirkus Reviews/VNU eMedia, Inc. All rights reserved.

**Paula Rohrlick (KLIATT Review, May 2001 (Vol. 35, No. 3))**

In the year 2036, a mutant strain of flu has wiped out most of the Earth's population. Civilization has broken down, and people live in tiny isolated communities, fearful of contact with anyone who might carry the virus. Ceej, age 16, lives a lonely life on the north rim of the Grand Canyon, with only his uncle and his older sister Harryette for company. Harryette is one of the Survivors, those few who contracted the dreadful flu and were not killed by it but only damaged: she can no longer hear or speak, but communicates using sign language. Their only contact with the outside world is a trader named Hap, who comes by with supplies once a month bringing along his 16-year-old son Tim, Ceej's only friend. Hap and Ceej's uncle are worried about the Glen Canyon Dam upriver from the canyon, which is in danger of overflowing and creating a dangerous flood. The two go off to try and open the sluice gates, but when they don't return in a few days, and Harryette goes missing too, the two boys head into the canyon in search of them. There they encounter a Hopi girl named Isabella, on a quest to find a sipapu (hole) in the sky that her grandfather had spoken of as a holy place, and pass through it to another world. The three team up to find the missing family members, locating them in the clutches of a fanatical group of survivors called the Kinka. Ceej and Isabella fall in love, and so do Tim and Harryette, whom they manage to rescue. Though infected with the virus, Isabella and Tim find the hole she was searching for, as the floodwaters rush down toward the canyon. This strange but involving SF adventure story incorporates mysticism in its discussion of the sacred Hopi belief in the sipapu. The four main characters each relate a section of the book, so we see the characters from different angles and get to know them well. Hautman, author of the YA novels *Stone Cold* and *Mr. Was* as well as books for adults, writes lyrically about the Grand Canyon, and the tense plot will keep readers turning the pages. KLIATT Codes: JS--Recommended for junior and senior high school students. 2001, Simon & Schuster, 192p, map, \$16.00. Ages 13 to 18.

**Deborah Stevenson (The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books, June 2001 (Vol. 54, No. 10))**

As the prologue explains, the year 2028 brought a lethal, quickly spreading flu to the human race; now, in 2038, the diminished population is divided into Survivors (all of whom have lost their hair, making them readily identifiable, and who have suffered some permanent impairment), and those yet to catch the disease. Ceej--Charles Jacob--is sixteen, living a self-sufficient life with his uncle and with his Survivor sister, Harryette, in rural Arizona; he's left on his own with his friend, Tim, when it looks like there's trouble with the river that provides the water supply and Tim's father, Ceej's uncle, and Harryette journey to open the dam. When they fail to return as expected, Ceej and Tim take off after them, on their way encountering Bella, a part-Hopi girl in search of the legendary Sipapuni, place of emergence, through which they can reach another world. The three discover that the lost relatives have been taken by the Kinka, a survivor cult, and they determine to save them--but for some it may be too late. The deadly-flu plot is a sci-fi standard, and though Hautman fudges on his science a bit the details of the disease are narratively effectively conceived; the Kinka and their religious view of their place are particularly ingenious and credible. The story moves considerably more slowly than one would expect for such an exciting subject, however, and the four different narrators (Ceej, Bella, Tim, and Harryette each get a turn) confuse rather than enrich. The book is imbued with a certain millenarian vision, with hints of the future for the children of the Kinka, for Tom and Harryette, and for Ceej and Bella, who disappear into the place of emergence, but readers are more likely to want a solid ending and the answers to some questions (does Bella die of the flu she's contracted? What happens to Tim and Harryette?) than ineffable mysteries. There's still some atmospheric action and philosophical explorations here, and some young adults may find it provocative. Review Code: Ad -- Additional book of acceptable quality for collections needing more material in the area. (c) Copyright 2001, The Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois. 2001, Simon, 179p, \$16.00. Grades 7-10.

**Horn Book (The Horn Book Guide, Fall 2001)**

In 2028, a mutant strain of influenza decimates the world's population, leaving small communities of the uninfected and an even smaller number of Survivors. When his uncle and sister disappear, sixteen-year-old Ceej finds them being held captive by the Kinka, a group of flu survivors who view the disease as "the Judgment of the Divine." Readers will appreciate the novel's intense action and fascinating premise. Category: Older Fiction. 2001, Simon, 181pp, \$16.00. *Ages 12 to 14*. Rating: 2: Superior, well above average.

**Billy Jack Rankin (The Lorgnette - Heart of Texas Reviews (Vol. 14, No. 4))**

The year is 2038, and only 38 million people remain on earth. A deadly flu virus has decimated the earth's population for the past ten years. Only one out of two thousand that contract the virus survive, and that survivor has something wrong physically, mentally, or both. Ceej Kane's sister Harryette is one of those survivors. Together they live with their uncle on the rim of the Grand Canyon. When Harryette and her uncle disappear, Ceej and his friend Tim go in search of them. Along the way, they meet up with Bella, a mysterious Hopi girl. She has been

searching for a magical portal that her people think is the entrance to the Promised Land. The portal exists somewhere along the Grand Canyon. Both searches become dangerous but exciting. This novel will make young readers stop and think about their beliefs and what is really important in life. The heroes and heroines are easy to identify with. The ending will leave readers on the edge of wonderment. Fiction. Grades 7-12. 2001, Simon & Schuster, 179p, \$16.00. Ages 12 to 18.

**Jamie S. Hansen (VOYA, June 2001 (Vol. 24, No. 2))**

In 2028, an especially virulent strain of influenza has decimated Earth's population. Only two groups of people remain--the fortunate ones, who have avoided contracting the disease, and the not-so-lucky Survivors, who survived the ravages of the disease but live with the horrendous mental or physical side effects. Living in isolation near the Grand Canyon with his uncle and Survivor sister, Harryette, who has been rendered mute by the disease, sixteen-year-old Ceej Kane is one of the fortunate ones. After all, his little family has shelter, water, food, transportation, and guns and can barter for luxuries such as canned food and chocolate bars. Ceej's life is altered forever, however, when both uncle and sister disappear, possibly kidnapped by a crazed band of Survivors called The Kinka. With his best friend, Tim, and a strange Hopi girl called Bella, Ceej sets out to rescue his family. Bella is on a quest of her own to find the Sipapuni, a mysterious door that the Hopi believe leads to another world. Hautman's all-too-plausible novel seamlessly melds futuristic fiction, a survival saga, and touching romance. His vivid account of the three protagonists' journey through the harsh desert landscape, their breathtaking meetings with the Kinka, and the flawless ending make this compulsively readable title a sure winner. The striking cover art will make this book fly off the shelves. VOYA CODES: 4Q 4P M J (Better than most, marred only by occasional lapses; Broad general YA appeal; Middle School, defined as grades 6 to 8; Junior High, defined as grades 7 to 9). 2001, Simon & Schuster, 192p, \$16. Ages 11 to 15.

**Subjects:**

[Science fiction.](#)  
[Grand Canyon \(Ariz.\) Fiction.](#)

**Link to a Web Feature or Search for Other Works by:**



[Hautman, Pete, 1952-](#)

**Search for other reviews by:**

[Roger Leslie](#)  
[Gwynne Spencer](#)  
[Rebecca Joseph](#)  
[Kirkus](#)  
[Paula Rohrlick](#)  
[Deborah Stevenson](#)  
[Horn Book](#)  
[Billy Jack Rankin](#)  
[Jamie S. Hansen](#)

Language	Call Number	LCCN	Dewey Decimal	ISBN/ISSN
English (eng)	PZ7.H2887 Ho 2001	00058324	[Fic]	0689831188 9780689831188

View the [MARC Record](#) for this item.

