



The Many Lives of John Stone

Linda Buckley-Archer

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An English teen questions all she knows about aging when she encounters a set of journals that date from the present back to the reign of King Louis XIV in this blend of contemporary and historical fiction from the author of the acclaimed Gideon trilogy.

Stella Park (Spark for short) has found summer work cataloging historical archives in John Stone's remote and beautiful house in Suffolk, England. She wasn't quite sure what to expect, and her uncertainty about living at Stowney House only increases upon arriving: what kind of people live in the twenty-first century without using electricity, telephones, or even a washing machine? Additionally, the notebooks she's organizing span centuries—they begin in the court of Louis XIV in Versailles—but are written in the same hand. Something strange is going on for sure, and Spark's questions are piling up. Who exactly is John Stone? What connection does he have to these notebooks? And more importantly, why did he hire her in the first place?

The Many Lives of John Stone Details

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Author : Linda Buckley-Archer

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From Reader Review The Many Lives of John Stone for online ebook

Phoebe Sargeant says

I love stories that combine history and modern day, especially stories that have two intertwining story lines that weave together right at the very end. Stories like this keep the reader guessing and interested in the plot and characters. The Many Lives of John Stone was not one of these books.

First things first, the characters were no where near interesting and never described. It took about 300 pages for the author to finally announce that the main character, Stella Park (or Spark for short *eye-roll*) was blonde. 300 PAGES! The other characters were just stereotypes rolled into stereotypes and I was bored quite quickly.

Second, the love plot felt like it was added only because the author felt like she was forced to add it. It made no sense to the main story whatsoever, and the characters were never around each other enough in order for the chemistry between Ludo and Spark to heat up. Literally she just looks at him and she's entranced but does not see him until the very end of the book and suddenly the author expects us to care about their relationship.

Third, the mystery? Girl, what Mystery?! There was nothing that was revealed in the end that made the whole book worth the read. Something intriguing would be brought up and then two pages later it would be revealed to the reader, but maybe not the main characters. The only mystery I haven't solved yet is why I kept reading.

Fourth, the history made no sense. I love history especially when multiple centuries get tied together but only one time period was reported on, and even still, not that accurately. Even when other time periods were brought in they were only lightly touched upon and given in a pedestrian way. Example: the sounds of bombs during the London Blitz. Everyone knows there were bombs, give me something more!

Fifth, no consistency within the book whatsoever. The characters change personalities constantly and important facts were never brought up again. However, the main mystery of the story is easily guessed by the summary on the back cover.

Finally, the two intertwining story lines made no sense together! I understand that John Stone wanted to account his early life, but none of the characters that were introduced in the present-day story line were ever talked about in the past. Martha's and Jacob's stories are never told and we NEVER learn the backstory of Therese, but don't worry we learn all about John and his troubles with the court of Louis XIV. I just felt like the story that should have been told wasn't and the "mystery" was never there for me.

It failed, so much missed opportunity with this story...

Kristine Asselin says

Quiet, but a lovely read. I especially loved the chapters in Versailles.

Jenna says

An intriguing concept, but a rather tedious delivery. I did enjoy the general writing style, and rhythm of the dialogue, but the alternating points of view (from Spark's, John Stone's, and the anonymous author of the French historical notebooks) made it difficult to truly delve into their minds. Had it been from only Spark's viewpoint, we would've been intrigued, curious, and shocked when the final revelations actually do come up. Instead, all I felt was "finally!!"

This is not a time travel story. It simply takes place in different time periods...

Mlpmom (Book Reviewer) says

The Many Lives of John Stone is an unusual book. Told in multiple dimensions and through two main characters, it is a story unlike any other I have read.

With a very slow start and a writing style truly unique in voice, it took me a bit to get into it but once there, it wasn't hard to read on and want to know the rest of the story.

Sadly this was not a time travel story but rather you traveled back in time through the entries of a diary, and while somewhat disappointed at that, I did enjoy the diary entries.

It was fascinating to learn about court life in France and the history buff in me couldn't help but gravitate towards those entries more than anything else. Especially as the story unfolded and we really got to know who John Stone is.

While sometimes wordy in description, the story did have a unique take on the overall plot of the story and in the end, I did end up enjoying this more than I initially thought I would.

An ARC Copy of this was provided by the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

Mara says

Review coming soon!

Julia says

Very nice

I liked the difference in how things were presented in this book and the exploration of an idea of immorality. The ending is a bit sad, but what we were expecting the entire book. Definitely read if you like emotional turmoil and sweet thoughts.

Tina says

Hmmm...this one is a bit difficult to rate. Overall, I did enjoy reading the book even if it didn't quite live up to my hopes. I almost DNF'd because it is quite slow to get started, but I actually got into it as we went into the past and the story picked up and the writing language became beautiful. I think it will be easier to do a pros and cons list:

Pros:

- Wonderful (sometimes poetic) descriptive writing style, filled with unique metaphors/similes that would be easy to gloss over, but are truly amazing if you take the time to sift out the meaning and realize the accuracy.
- The overall concept of figuring out our purpose and meaning in life; even those who have lived rather long lives, struggle with deciding what they were meant to do in this life of joys and sorrows.
- The emotions and detail of the story line taking place in the past

Cons:

-I really wish we could have gotten a still detailed, but more condensed version of the entirety of the notebooks. There is such detail put into a short portion, but then we receive a brief summary of what happened between then and the present. (view spoiler)

- The biggest "surprise" of the book could be guessed very very early on by most readers, I would imagine.
- The ending seemed to be wrapped up quite quickly and didn't feel like a full, satisfying conclusion.

So, yes, there are more cons than pros. However, I don't regret not DNF'ing. I would probably have given 2 stars, but the author's writing and way with words made me bump it to a 3.

Cindy Mitchell *Kiss the Book* says

Buckley-Archer, Linda *The Many Lives of John Stone*, 529 pgs. Simon and Schuster, 2015. \$11.99 Content: Language: PG (1 swear); Mature Content: PG; Violence: PG.

Spark has been hired to catalog old manuscripts at a remote estate in England. The man who hired her, John Stone, has written his very long life story in notebooks, and has kept his ancestors notebooks as well. He hopes that Spark is the person he can trust with his family's secret of a long life, but as John Stone's own life starts to catch up with him he realizes that Spark means more to him than he thought.

This book had a slow and disconnected beginning, but once the story started to come together, I couldn't put it down. It flashes between John Stone's life during the 1680's in Versailles, and Spark's life in current day England and I found myself so involved in whichever story I was in I didn't want it to switch. I was disappointed in the ending because I felt like it had a couple of loose ends. It's quite a lengthy book and although I enjoyed it I'm not sure young adults would stick with the slow beginning.

MS, HS – OPTIONAL. Reviewer, C. Peterson.
<https://kissthebook.blogspot.com/2017...>

Karina Babcock says

CONTAINS SPOILERS. *The Many Lives Of John Stone* by Linda Buckley Archer. 4/5. *The Many Lives Of John Stone* is a novel that revolves around the concept of longevity and people that are sempervivum. But to the extremist of the extreme of circumstances. Protagonist Stella Park (Spark) is hired to organize notebooks at a man named John Stone's house in Suffolk, England. Two other people live there, named Martha and Jacob, and the description of odd fits them both pretty well. To her surprise Spark finds these notebooks span from modern times all the way back to the sixteen hundreds - and they are all written in the same handwriting and written by someone named Jean-Pierre who lived in the seventeenth century. Stowney House is a peculiar place, and the more she learns about it, the more she realizes she doesn't know about the place, its people and the secrets that all of it has in hiding.

This novel took the concepts of longevity and being a sempervivum to a whole other ball game. The owner of the Suffolk Estate, called Stowney House, is a sempervivum. His name is John Stone; but he's also Jean-Pierre. This was a book unlike any other I'd ever read before - it had narration in a unique format, too. Part of was narrated by Spark, and parts were copies of John Stone's notebooks, his diaries going all the way back from when he worked in the Sun King Louis XIV's palace in Versailles. It was interesting to see the historical input that Jean-Pierre/John Stone had as he grew up a few hundred years ago, and the impact that it had on his life and the lives of others in the modern day.

Ruthsic says

Stella Park (Spark for short) has found summer work cataloging historical archives in John Stone's remote and beautiful house in Suffolk, England. She wasn't quite sure what to expect, and her uncertainty about living at Stowney House only increases upon arriving: what kind of people live in the twenty-first century without using electricity, telephones, or even a washing machine? Additionally, the notebooks she's organizing span centuries—they begin in the court of Louis XIV in Versailles—but are written in the same hand. Something strange is going on for sure, and Spark's questions are piling up. Who exactly is John Stone? What connection does he have to these notebooks? And more importantly, why did he hire her in the first place?

First of all, this is not a time travel book and that blurb is misleading with regards to plot. Considering genres and blurbs are what usually get me into a book, I was a bit miffed on this point. Had I not known of this before going into the book, could my experience have been different? I doubt it. The plot revolves around John Stone, so much so that even in third person account, his full name John Stone is used in every sentence. I get it - it was the anglicized version of his French name, but it was a bit discomfoting to the eye. So John aka Jean-Pierre, lived in the court of The Sun King, a time when being morally upstanding was perhaps not the best in a court full of manipulations. John being what he is (I will refrain from spoiling readers), he is considered an anomaly, but a curious one - something to keep as part of a collection. Most of the book chronicles his time in the court - which hardly has anything much to do with the current era, plot-wise. See, Jean was taught to keep his existence a secret, so he keeps it even in the current age, living with two other people of his kind, in seclusion, somewhere in Suffolk.

He is Monsieur Broody - that's how exhausting his recollection of his 'lives' have been (another way the title

is misleading, along with the cover!). He hires Stella as an intern to organize his archives, but actually wants her to be their Friend, a confidant, based on the fact that he suspects she is his dead wife's daughter. And while he is on a deadline, he takes his own sweet time to letting her know of her heritage, rather than, I don't know - letting her de-crypt the archives and find out herself. No, she gets that at the end of the book, in the form of the notebooks which we read throughout the book. So while there could have been more interesting stories as to his 'family' pasts so that she can understand them better, he regales her with a long saga of his first love and time at the glorious court of Henry XIV.

And what was more frustrating was the slow pace of the book - I was constantly looking at the progress bar to see when it will end. There wasn't much in way of conflict, and the thing about the assassin was never resolved. Why exactly did the assassin strike? I thought there would be contemporary repercussions to it, but nada. The only conflict was a stubborn man's pride and unwillingness to depend on those close to him, but miraculously that is all resolved in a matter of sentences at the end of the book. Basically, this was exhausting for me to read.

Received a free galley from Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers via Edelweiss; this does not influence my opinions or review.

Jen says

One of the most interesting and enjoyable books I have read in a long time. I picked it up to see if it would be a good choice for my teenage daughter, and couldn't put it down. The characters were well written and so interesting and the book was not predictable as I feel so many are. I think it is a terrific read for all ages, not just the YA audience.

Jeff Raymond says

I didn't really understand this one on a few levels. If it's trying to be a time travel/immortal mystery, it's just too quiet to be truly compelling. If it's trying to be a more mysterious historical fiction-type thing, why introduce a minor weirdness that is almost too small to notice halfway through? And why on earth is this being marketed to teens? Age it up, give it some teeth, and you might actually have an interesting story here instead of a book for teens written in sometimes-arcane language that, in part, follows a grown adult doing grown adult things.

Just an overwhelmingly frustrating read that I gave more time to than I ultimately should have. So much potential that missed the mark entirely.

Eleveetha says

IT'S LABELED UNDER "TIME TRAVEL" ON THE SIMON AND SCHUSTER WEBSITE.

Possible description found here:

"When seventeen-year-old Spark takes a summer job working at a secluded house in England, organizing journals that span centuries and all written in the same hand, she discovers her true connection to the people who live there and the trait that makes them unique."

EDIT.

Oooh, yay, GR has a description up!

Elaney says

3.5 stars

Terri says

Review also found at <http://kristineandterri.blogspot.ca/2...>

** I received an advanced copy of this book from the publisher via Edelweiss in exchange for an honest review. The Expected publication date is October 20th**

I am really struggling with how to pen my thoughts on this story. It really is not like any others I have read and I have read a lot of books. It is a melting pot of genres which in my mind is really kind of cool. It is part historical fictions which we all know is my most favored genres, then we also have a YA element (although not a short light read) and part fantasy or paranormal or I am not so sure what to label it.

There really are no mysteries to solve in this story as the synopsis suggests. As the reader you know exactly what is going on and any questions are easily guessed or answered right away. Also some advice for those who wish to read this story. Be patient with it at first. It started a little slow and I questioned my decision to take on this story. It picks up speed and you are rewarded if you stick with it.

Given that the book synopsis does not give much of the story away, I feel I cannot as well. To discuss some of the plot and storyline would be to give spoilers which I do not do. Instead I will leave these parting thoughts

- This is a story that people are either going to love or hate. I don't see many people falling in the middle
 - The historical fiction aspect was my favorite part and what made the story rewarding for me
 - Although I say this is a YA read, it is not a light and fluffy story. I would only recommend it to YA readers who are serious about their books and enjoy a bit of history
 - For everyone else I recommend
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