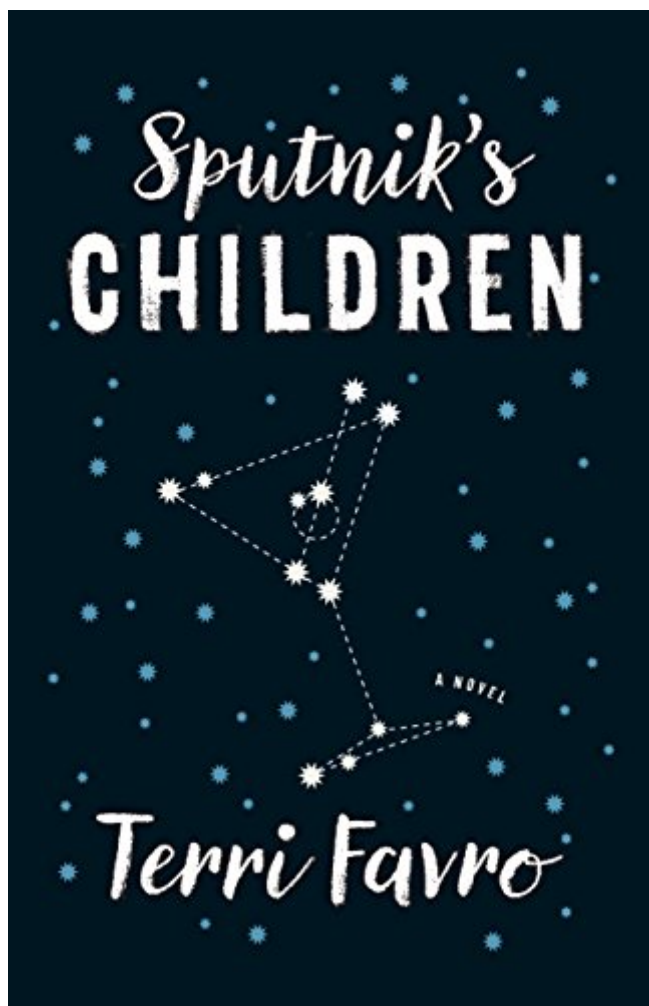


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# Sputnik's Children: A Novel



## Synopsis

A literary, genre-bending novel full of heartCult comic book creator Debbie Reynolds Biondi has been riding the success of her Cold War era—œinspired superhero series, Sputnik Chick: Girl with No Past, for more than 25 years. But with the comic book losing fans and Debbie struggling to come up with new plotlines for her badass, mutant-killing heroine, she decides to finally tell Sputnik Chick—œs origin story. Debbie—œs never had to make anything up before and she isn—œt starting now. Sputnik Chick is based on Debbie—œs own life in an alternate timeline called Atomic Mean Time. As a teenager growing up in Shipman—œs Corners —œ a Rust Belt town voted by Popular Science magazine as —œ“most likely to be nuked—œ —œ she was recruited by a self-proclaimed time traveller to collapse Atomic Mean Time before an all-out nuclear war grotesquely altered humanity. In trying to save the world, Debbie risked obliterating everyone she—œd ever loved —œ as well as her own past —œ in the process. Or so she believes . . . Present-day Debbie is addicted to lorazepam and dirty, wet martinis, making her an unreliable narrator, at best. A time-bending novel that delves into the origin story of the Girl with No Past, Sputnik—œs Children explores what it was like to come of age in the Atomic Age.

## Book Information

File Size: 4729 KB

Print Length: 360 pages

Publisher: ECW Press (April 11, 2017)

Publication Date: April 11, 2017

Sold by:—œ —œ Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B01MPZPCMH

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #1,410,614 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #96

in—œ —œ Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Literary #1638 in—œ —œ Books > Teens > Literature &

## Customer Reviews

The book only picks up in the last 15%. Most of the story revolves around Debbie who likes comics and goes on to be an author. It only moves along when she jumps into an alternate time line. This work was on a Canadian Broadcasting Corporation list of Canlit and I should have chosen an alternative.

I had mixed feelings throughout my reading of Terri Favro's novel, Sputnik's Children. The main issue I had was that the novel starts with a burst of energy. I'd be tempted to say too much energy, with jokes popping out line after line, to the point where it's almost distracting. But then I found myself missing that vigor as the story settled into the alternate reality portion. And, in truth, the novel never fully recovered from that initial shift in tone for me. I found myself reading a bit more out of obligation than an actual desire to read the story. On the other hand, I give the author a lot of credit for a creative premise and often impressive execution. I wish I could give a more definitive statement as to who I think would like this or even if I recommend it or not. It's a tough call, but I do think there's an audience out there that would happily gobble this up, even if it's not a particular standout for me.

Terri Favro's *SPUTNIK'S CHILDREN* is a beautiful, bizarre trip of a novel. It's lush and realistic despite the alternate-past, near-dystopian (parallel) world in which we follow Debbie Reynolds Biondi's character's origin story. The more I think about how to describe what's going on in this book plot-wise, the less confident I am in relaying correct information. It's convoluted. It's unique. It's something I was wholly involved in while reading and, like the best dreams, elusive after the fact. Unreliable narrator? Sure. Nobody said anything about unreliable reviewer. The scope of the themes Favro touches on throughout the course of this book is impressive. I had flashes of *Watchmen* and DeLillo's *White Noise* go through my head while reading. There's so much social and political commentary (Oh, there's racism in Canada, too? Oh, Nixon never resigned from office?), that it's easy to dismiss it as an unimportant part of the story, but it helps construct this somehow familiar yet bizarre setting that is just a half-step away from reality. What I

found most rewarding was the emotion of this story. As Debbie grew up, she had to deal with so much with nobody she could really count on and with no chance to effect change. I had a visceral connection to it and thought it all rang very true. It gave the book the feeling of truth despite its fantastic elements. So...I know this review is not the best. I'm sure it's confusing. I'm going to read this book again - and that's about the highest praise I can give SPUTNIK's CHILDREN.

Your universe is in peril and you have the ability to save it, but only if you give up your life as you know it and everyone you've ever known. Sounds like a premise of a science fiction story, but it's the reality for Debbie in Sputnik Chick: A Girl With No Past. Readers are keenly interested in learning about Sputnik Chick's origin story after 25 years of Sputnik Chick's adventures, despite her being the "girl with no past." To reveal the origin story, Debbie has to reveal the unbelievable story of her childhood from the alternate timeline of Atomic Mean Time, as the comic books are a therapeutic way for Debbie to deal with the traumatic events of her past. I was entertained by the fully realized alternate reality presented in the world of Atomic Meant Time and all the dystopian fears from the Cold War era. The time travel element of this story is a bit Whovian in nature with Debbie encountering the Traveller at various points in both of their lives, often with only one of them aware of the relevance of the other person. Hopping between Earth Standard Time and Atomic Mean Time to tell the story was captivating as a way to intersperse backstory with current narrative, although some of it was incorporated a bit roughly and could have used a bit more finesse to make it more seamless. Overall, I'd give it a 3.5 out of 5 stars.

I had a lot of fun reading this book. Pure Cold War Alt-Timeline Sci-Fi enjoyment for Baby Boomers and those who long to be. There are several references to history from our time transposed into the alt-timeline experience as well as references that related to the story but will also be a wink, a nod, and a smirk to Boomers giving those of duck and cover kids a different understanding of the story than for those born later on. I enjoyed the concept of an alternative timeline rather than an alternative universe. It make more sense to me. The meaning behind universe is all inclusive so how can there be alternative universes? Right? But, alternative timelines could be unlimited in one single, all encompassing universe. Sometimes I had to stop and try to get it straight in my brain where and when the story was taking place at that moment. I almost stopped reading the book early on because it was really dragging but, once the story picked up I really enjoyed it. The graphic novel

premise was successfully carried out through the entire novel even though there are no graphics. It was fun imagining the images and what they may have looked like as drawn by the author/artist in this story. A cool book that was a lot of fun to read!

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