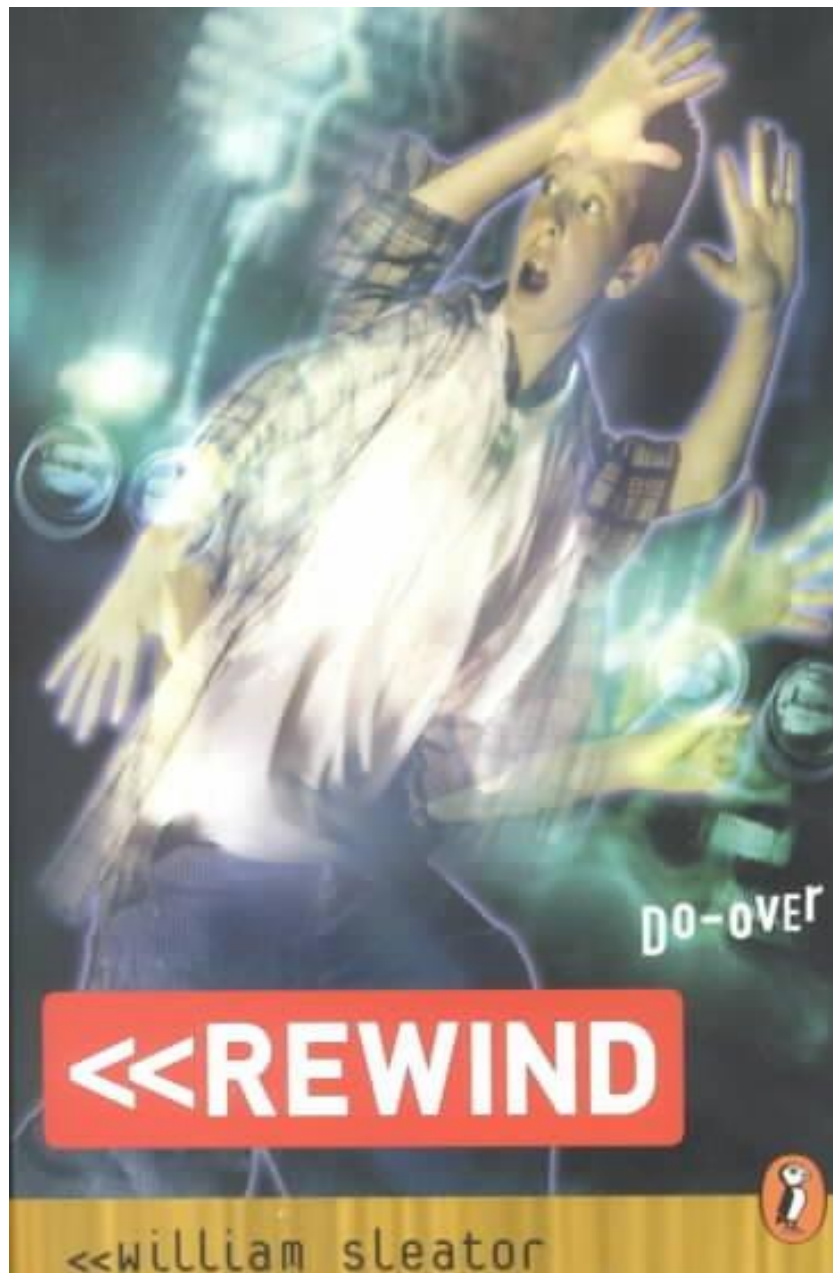


About the book...



Peter died instantly when the car struck him. He experienced a white light, and saw his funeral as if from above. Then a voice tells him that he has a chance to go back to the moment 12 hours before his death, to try to change his fate. Now he's reliving the last day of his life, and trying to alter the series of events that led him to run out into the street that night. He tries to cope better with the news that he's adopted; tries to deal with the fact that his parents are going to have a new baby; and tries once again to make his parents love him for what he is. But will he be able to go back and make things right?

-Books & Authors

About the Author...



Born in Havre de Grace, Maryland, Sleator was the eldest son of William Warner Sleator, Jr., a physiologist and professor, and Esther Sleator, a physician. He and his siblings – brothers Daniel and Tycho and sister Vicky – grew up in University City, Missouri, a predominantly Jewish suburb of St. Louis, where the family moved after the author's father was hired by the University of St. Louis. Sleator began studying the piano at the age of six, and at around the same time he wrote his first story. In high school, he continued writing poems and stories and composing music; he also learned to play the cello.

After high school, Sleator attended Harvard University, where he intended to study musical composition. However, when he found the music program too restrictive, he became an English major, continuing to write music for student plays and films. After receiving his bachelor's degree in 1967, he moved to London, England, where he studied musical composition for a year while working as a pianist at the Royal Ballet School and the Rambert School. During this period, he lived in the middle of a forest in an ancient cottage that

had once been a pest house for people with smallpox.

In 1974, Sleator began working as a rehearsal pianist for the Boston Ballet while continuing to write fiction. With the dancers, he toured the United States and Europe and wrote three ballets performed by the company.

As a writer, Sleator's works use the genres of fantasy, mystery, and science fiction to explore personal relationships and growth. Sleator incorporates current scientific theories, suspense, and the supernatural in his books, which challenge readers to take active roles in the stories while allowing them to resonate with the feelings and experiences of his characters. Writing in *English Journal*, Margaret L. Daggett opined that "Sleator succeeds with adolescents because he blends enough scientific realities with supernatural possibilities to tantalize the mind and the imagination. Readers feel refreshed after the intellectual and emotional challenges in Sleator's novels.... He sets us in a reality and helps us stretch our imaginations."

Sleator split his time between Boston, Massachusetts and a small rural village in Thailand. He died in 2011.

For more about the author visit
<http://www.cs.cmu.edu/~sleator/billy/>

Selected Writings

- [*House of Stairs*](#), Dutton (NY), 1974.
- [*The Green Futures of Tycho*](#), Dutton (NY), 1981.
- [*Interstellar Pig*](#), Dutton (NY), 1984.
- [*Singularity*](#), Dutton (NY), 1985.
- [*The Boy Who Reversed Himself*](#), Dutton (NY), 1986.
- [*Oddballs: Stories*](#), Dutton (NY), 1993.
- [*Test*](#), Dutton (NY), 2008.

Reviews

Booklist

Gr. 4-6. Peter is dead, hit by a neighbor's car. But a powerful voice tells him he has a chance to erase what has happened if he can alter the events he feels led up to the accident. Twice Peter goes back in time. First, he puts sugar in the tank of his neighbor's car, but he gets hit by the taxi behind it. The second time, he tries to change superficially so he won't be so disappointing to his adoptive parents, but he still becomes upset with them and runs blindly out of the house. It's not until he realizes that he must look into his heart to make

real changes that he comes closer to changing his fate. Sleator offers some interesting subplots about the nature of time and facing down a bully, but the story has a major problem--Peter's unlikable parents. So cold are they toward Peter that they tell him he's adopted and that they're having a baby in the same breath; it may seem to kids that Peter hasn't got much to go back to. Still, it's hard to resist a book that begins, "At my funeral, everybody said it was such a shame I had to die that way."

Publishers Weekly

Fans of Sleator's creature features (*The Boxes*; *The Beasties*) will find this tale of redemption less grotesque, but satisfying nonetheless. Eleven-year-old Peter finds out he is adopted, strives to gain glimmers of affection from his stoic, insensitive parents and gets killed by a car when he runs out of their home in a tearful rage. "Peter always acted without thinking," says his mother at his funeral. But life is not over yet; Peter is granted three chances to get it right before he is permanently dead. And in the process he learns to make friends, communicate clearly with his parents about his anxieties and follow his dream of being an artist even though his mother finds it a

"waste of time" and his father thinks he should do something more manly. Peter is likable, creative and admirable in his ability to change his behavior. Sleator playfully examines the idea of time travel and of consciously tampering with the future. When a silly conflict arises because Peter thoughtlessly predicts the future (having lived through the same days several times), its resolution is simple and emotionally truthful. Adoptees and time- travel fans alike will find fun and fulfillment in this fantasy of second, third and fourth chances. Ages 10-14.

School Library Journal

Gr 5-8 After Peter is killed in a car accident, he is told that he can go back to try and avoid his death, but he has to do more than simply not run out in front of the car that struck him. The events leading up to and causing him to run are what need to be changed. The first two times, he fails and again dies. He ultimately finds out that how he deals with his family and schoolmates has more to do with his life than just staying out of the way of a speeding vehicle. He becomes more aware of his parents and their feelings and in return they begin to

accept him for who he is and not reject him for what he isn't. Peter's character is well-rounded; he thinks in many different directions before figuring out what to change in his life. The secondary characters are more one-dimensional, particularly Peter's parents, who are viewed only from his perspective and often come across as uncaring. A story that shows readers how their behavior affects the people and events around them.

Discussion Questions

(<http://ccb.lis.illinois.edu/Projects/yalit/uden/rewind.htm>)

1. What do you think of Peter's parents at the beginning of the book? Are they really that mean or is it how Peter sees them?
2. Would things have been different if he had known all along that he was adopted?
3. During his first life, he didn't tell his friend Eloise about being adopted or having a new brother or sister. Why do you think this is and why does he decide to tell her in his later lives?
4. Peter keeps trying to please his Dad by being

someone that he is not. Who does he think he needs to be to please his Dad and is this true?

5. How does Peter grow, learn or change during his three chances? (thinking before acting, communicating, etc.).

6. What was it like reading this book? Did it read quickly or were you confused?

7. Would you want to predict the future?

8. If Peter was your best friend and he told you this story, would you believe him?

9. *"And the more realistic it is the more you believe in the magic."* What does this quote mean in this story? Can you think of other stories you have read that this applies to as well?

10. After watching the puppet show, do you think Peter expects to die no matter what changes he makes?

11. Do you think he would have had another chance had this not worked out? Why do you think he got three chances to begin with?

12. Who is talking to Peter?

Read-Alikes

Mary Downing Hahn, [*Time For Andrew: A Ghost Story*](#) (1994)

At the turn of the century, Andrew becomes ill with diphtheria and is close to dying. One night he falls through time and ends up in the 1990s where his great-great-great nephew Drew is occupying his bedroom. They agree to change places for a while so that Andrew can be treated with better medicines. Drew's not too happy portraying Andrew, who's much too fun-loving, while Andrew thinks Drew is a "pantywaist." Andrew's fear of dying keeps him from wanting to return to the early 1900s, while Drew is afraid he'll catch diphtheria if he remains back in time. They agree to switch places when Drew wins at marbles, which becomes a nightly ritual.

Dan Gutman, [*Jackie and Me*](#) (1999)

After an unfortunate incident at a Little League game that leads to a brawl, Joe is suspended indefinitely from play. An assignment for Black History Month takes his mind off his problems when he is told to write a paper about a famous African-American who made a significant

contribution. Joe immediately thinks of Jackie Robinson, the baseball player who was the first African-American to play in the major leagues, and decides to write about him. But first he wants to get hold of a Jackie Robinson baseball card and put his "special powers" to work which will send him back in time to 1947. Joe not only gets the card but travels back to meet Jackie where the harsh realities of racism become apparent to him.

A. M. Jenkins, [Repossessed](#) (2007)

Tired of being a demon torturing all those souls who ended up in Hell, "fallen angel" Kiriell swaps with Shaun just as Shaun is about to be hit by a cement truck. Sending Shaun's soul off to wherever it was going to go, Kiriell takes over Shaun's body and finds it's a little tricky walking, but oh so exciting to see color and be able to feel, smell, and taste. A few days of acting like slacker Shaun make Kiriell realize that's not how he wants to live, especially after being with all those slackers in Hell, so he sets out to correct a few things. First he's nicer to Shaun's brother Jason, then he stands up to a bully at school, and even suggests that Shaun's mother make amends with her estranged

brother. All too soon he receives an IM from his superiors who want him to return, but first he has to find that cement truck.

Vivien Vande Velde, [*Heir Apparent*](#) (2002)

While playing a total immersion virtual reality game of kings and intrigue, 14 year-old Giannine learns that demonstrators have damaged the equipment to which she is connected, and she must win the game quickly or be damaged herself. Giannine can testify to how many ways there are to die--it's about all she's been able to do since she started playing. Now all she has to do is get the magic ring, find the stolen treasure, answer the dwarf's dumb riddles, come up with a poem for the head-chopping statue, cope with the army of ghosts, outmaneuver her half brothers, and defeat the man-eating dragon. If she can do all of *that*, why, she just might save her own life!



Ann Arbor District Library