

Synopsis  
**POINT HORIZON**

by David Zelenka

*Genres:* Science Fiction, Fantasy, Young Adult, Middle Reader

*Targeted demographic:* Ages 10-13

*Word Count:* 40,000

*Tagline:* Falling is easy. Getting back up takes courage of heart.

*Website:* <http://www.interactive-earth.com/pointhorizon>

*Book Trailer:* <https://youtu.be/aaHRwuGE-ko>

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**SUMMARY:**

While exploring in the canyons of Colorado, Tommy and Katie take a plunge into the unknown. Lost, they face dangerous challenges, tough decisions and extraordinary creatures as they struggle to find a way home. Will they return safely to the light of day? Readers will find adventure and a fresh exciting new way to look at the world.

The power of hope is the central theme of Point Horizon, recurring throughout the book as the extraordinary journey of two young people named Tommy and Katie unfolds. Written for middle and high school readers, the novel's essential message is to pursue a life of purpose and integrity despite the temptations to view life selfishly and without greater meaning.

Tommy and his new friend Katie find themselves racing to escape being bullied by small town gang in rural Colorado. While hiding in a limestone cavern and waiting for their pursuers to pass, they tumble headlong into a pit and their fall unexpectedly takes them to the middle of the Earth and an unknown world called the Firmament. The youth discover a world similar to ours, where the physics are somewhat reversed. In this environment, gravity holds them to the interior of a vast, spacious hollow sphere.

Tommy and Katie navigate the ecology and geography of the Firmament in the company of new friends. They come to understand that going through the "Way," a special light, is their only way home. The Way is the central feature of the interior and animates all life in the Firmament and beyond. This book is for those who want to rediscover what it means to wake up and start living again.

## MAIN CHARACTERS:

**Tommy:** When he moved out West, he left his heart behind with his Aunt Maggie in the rolling hills of Virginia. Like so many adolescent youth, Tommy is introspective and deeply self-absorbed. He no longer lives life like he did as a child. He's too caught up in himself to understand who he really is. Tommy is emerging from seventh grade as the main adventure begins.

**Katie:** Home schooled by her paleontologist father, Katie is intelligent, winsome, and slightly aloof 13 year-old. In the freedom of her youth, she lives in the moment, but is haunted by the fact that her mother left her as a young child. She must learn to forgive, be patient and persevering with her new troubled friend.

**Maggie:** Tommy's favorite and beloved Aunt Maggie is a wildlife biologist in Virginia. Her artistic and simple outlook in life was formative for Tommy and he sorely misses her after he moves. Her death impels Tommy's flight into the desert and is the beginning of this adventure.

**Psy and his gang:** Psy (whose real name is John) is the narcissistic leader of a gang of kids who spraypaint the community with their esoteric symbols in order to control the community through fear. Two of the other gang members Dreammaker (Susan) and Fate (George) are transformed through their failures and reconciliation. They become close friends of Tommy and Katie by the end of the story.

**Other characters:** Vespers (dolphin), Eli (boatwright), Johanna (weaver), Wallace (humble scientist and inventor), Kenny (simpleton), Hope (shepherd and daughter of Wallace).

## KEY IDEAS

The people Tommy and Katie meet in the Firmament represent the Platonic ideals of humanity. The people and animals they meet are essentially good as compared to what has driven them from the surface of the Earth. Throughout the book, Tommy must learn how to 'see' again. Though not explicitly explained, Tommy's selfishness is 'pursuing' him. He feasts on darkness rather than the marvelous aspects of his world. His experiences in this idyllic world help him learn how to enjoy life again.

Through Tommy's (and Katie's) internal conflicts, the reader discovers simple lessons about the artist within each of us and the impact of our creative natures: what we think and what we do is a creative process that changes us, alters our perception, and can even change our reality.

## AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY:

Dave Zelenka's skill as a naturalist, artist, educator, and writer find their roots in a deep curiosity and love for the created world. He has worked to promote stewardship of a variety of ecosystems in the United States as a multimedia contractor, seasonal park ranger, wilderness guide, teacher, and curriculum developer. His recent endeavors have been to encourage critical-thinking in education and to foster genuine interactions between students, their communities and the environment.