

Rex

Robert Gould

Eugene Epstein, Illustrator

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Any child who has ever picked up a fascination with dinosaurs probably has dreamed of finding one still living in secret somewhere. The fantasy becomes flesh, bones, and very sharp teeth for the six friends who stumble through a time/dimension portal in the woods near their neighborhood.

Using the latest in digital technology, Gould and Epstein have produced prehistoric creatures that are just as authentic in appearance as those in the blockbuster movies and recent Discovery Channel dinosaur documentary. That's important because the children and background scenes in the book are photographed rather than illustrated, and the children seem to be interacting with actual dinosaurs, not dinosaur cartoons. For example, as one child scales a tree to escape a hungry raptor, the raptor's claw appears to be tugging on the child's shoe!

A gentle plant-munching sauropod (long-neck) entices the children through the portal, but once inside the dinosaur dimension, the kids must use their courage, strength, and wits to avoid becoming snacks for one of the menacing carnivores (namely, Tyrannosaurus Rex) that always seem to be one-half step behind. Also, since no grown-up is likely to believe their tale, the kids come equipped with a video camera.

Gould is both photographer and writer for this first installment in the seven-volume Time Soldiers series. Young readers are lured into volume two by the ending, which features Tyrannosaurus following them through the portal to modern times. "Guess who's coming to dinner?" teases Gould.

This is quite a clever and engaging dinosaur tale that will thrill any young dinosaur buff and please parents who have avoided the blockbuster movies out of worry that those dinosaurs (who are depicted eating humans) might be a bit too scary.

SHARON FLESHER (September / October 2000)

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