

Tyrannosaurus rex vs. 21st Century Scientists:
Hell Creek makes it new!

If you think you've seen this one before, guess again. The Grazianos' time-travel-to-the-Cretaceous tale is a very fresh take on a classic idea, a solid imaginative feat, and a treat on many levels.

The story itself is a page-turner, starting off fast and never letting up, with plenty of excitement, danger, and intrigue, and two or three really breathtaking plot twists. I stayed up a long time past my bedtime to finish this one, and it held my interest right to the end.

The science is convincing, accurate (insofar as I can judge; the paleontology is supported by experts and the physics--even including the time-travel element--sounds authentic) without being dry or distractingly academic. The dinosaurs and other prehistoric goodies are alive: specific, detailed, extraordinarily available to the senses. The authors know how to evoke sublime or disturbing or subtle effects deftly, without belaboring or overwriting.

The human (and canine) characters are real, three-dimensional individuals; even the minor characters are recognizable human beings, not stereotypes. One of the book's delights is character interaction and development, something not always true of adventure science fiction and perhaps the main element contributing to Hell Creek's excellence. This is a truly moving book; as a reader, you begin to know and care about these people. From a combination of the characters' depth and their interaction with their situations (in both time periods) come the book's themes: friendship, love, trust, self-knowledge.

Finally, Hell Creek is skillfully written and meticulously edited--something a reviewer shouldn't have to mention, perhaps, except that the opposite is too often true.

This is a book for anyone who likes exciting and imaginative fiction. It's certainly good reading for adults, but I would recommend it to young readers as well.

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