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Opening extract from

Timeriders: The Eternal War

Written by

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Published by

Puffin Books

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Extract from *TimeRiders: The Eternal War* by Alex Scarrow

Sal shook her head slowly. ‘Thirty-seven items on the snack menu . . .’

‘Uhh . . . all right.’ Liam looked at Maddy. She shrugged. ‘Oka-a-y.’

‘That was a minute ago. Now,’ Sal continued, ‘there are only thirty-six.’ She looked up at them. ‘Something just vanished off the menu! Just, like, seconds ago.’

Liam looked down at the menu card he’d been studying earlier. ‘Hey . . . hang on, it’s not there any more.’

Maddy leaned over. ‘What isn’t?’

He shook his head. ‘I was going to order it . . . and . . . it’s, well, it’s gone!’

Sal had the menu memorized, almost word for word. ‘The Lincoln Burger.’

‘That’s the very one!’

‘*Beef patty*,’ she continued, her eyes closed, reciting the missing description, ‘*cheese slice covered in thick Patriot Sauce with Freedom Fries on the side.*’

‘Aye, that’s what I was going to order!’

‘Sal?’ Maddy reached out for her arm. ‘Did you just feel a time ripple?’

She nodded. ‘I uh . . . I think so. I wasn’t sure. I thought it was just me feeling sick or something. No breakfast. But then I saw the burger was gone.’

They looked at each other in silence for a moment until finally

Maddy bit her lip. ‘We should head back to the arch. Check on this.’

The other end of a minute later, the five of them were hurrying down the North American History hall, weaving their way past elbow-high clusters of noisy children, babbling with excitement, clipboards underarm as they raced from one exhibit case to another on a fact hunt.

They were near the end of a long glass display case containing mannequins wearing uniforms from the civil war when Bob’s voice boomed down the hall.

‘Attention! Maddy! STOP!’

She stopped in her tracks and looked back down the hall, along with every last child now frozen mid-hunt, silent, eyes locked on Bob’s towering form. He calmly raised an arm and pointed towards Sal, standing beside the glass case staring in at something among the mannequins in civil-war costume.

Maddy quickly made her way through the confused children and an elementary schoolteacher regarding them with a bemused expression.

‘What’s the matter, Sal?’ she said, drawing up beside her. ‘What do you see?’

Sal slowly raised her arm and pointed at the back wall of the display, between a mannequin wearing the braided and buttoned dark-blue uniform of a Union general and one wearing a similarly ornate tunic in grey. She was pointing at an oil painting hanging on the back wall.

‘And that’s changed too,’ she uttered.

Maddy looked at the face in the painting . . . the famous painting every schoolkid in America knew by sight. No longer was there that gaunt face, the dark eyes hidden beneath a thunderously brooding brow and that distinctly Mennonite beard. Instead she could see a forgettable-looking balding and portly man with a salt and pepper moustache and a rosy bulbous nose. Beneath the painting was a plaque:

President John Bell 1861–65

‘Oh my God!’ she uttered. ‘Where’s President Lincoln?’

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TimeRiders: The Etertneal War by Alex Scarrow publishes 14.7.11