

Chapter I

Introduction

The Time Traveler was speaking with a group of dinner guests in his home in Richmond, England. He was clearly excited. The guests had just had dinner and were sitting together by the fireplace.

“You must listen to me carefully,” said the Time Traveler. “Some of the things I’m about to say will go against everything you were taught. For example, the math that’s taught in school is all wrong.”

“What in the world are you talking about?” asked George Filby, a professor and the Time Traveler’s closest friend.

“It will make sense soon. Now, I’m sure we can all agree that a line drawn on a page is one-dimensional. In a way, it does not exist at all in our three-dimensional world.”

“That’s all correct so far,” said John Manning, a psychologist.





“Now what about a rectangle drawn on a page?” asked the Time Traveler. “It has both length and width and is two dimensional. It doesn’t exist in our three-dimensional world either. What about a cube? We can measure its length, width, and thickness. A cube is three-dimensional. So it must exist in our world, correct?”

“Of course a cube exists in our world,” said Oswald Perry, a doctor.

“Most people think that,” exclaimed the Time Traveler. “This is what we teach in school—but wait a moment. Are there more than just three dimensions?”

“I don’t understand,” said Filby.

“Let me give you an example,” said the Time Traveler, holding up a painting and pointing to it. “Here is a portrait of a man at different times in his life. You see him here when he was eight years old. Here he is when he was fifteen. Here he is when he was seventeen, and here he is when he was twenty-three, and so on. Now, how many dimensions does this portrait have?”

“The painting clearly has three dimensions,” declared Filby impatiently. “Where are you going with all of this?”

“You’re wrong, my friend.”

“Wait a minute,” said Manning. “I think I understand now. You’re talking about time.”

“Exactly! This is the very thing that no one has ever





taught in our math classes. Time is the fourth dimension!”

“My dear sir,” said Perry, “there’s a reason why this is not taught in schools. Length, width, and thickness are measurements of objects we can hold or touch. We can also use length, width, and thickness to measure the areas around us, such as this room. Furthermore, we move around in this space. We can go up and down stairs. We can move back and forth in this room. We can go right and left—but we can’t move back and forth in time.”

“That’s where you’re wrong. That’s where the whole world has gone wrong. I’ve been experimenting for years, and I can now tell you that time travel is possible,” said the Time Traveler. “I’ve built a machine that allows this very thing—travel back and forth in time.”

“Impossible,” cried Filby.

“Ridiculous,” declared Manning.

“Absurd,” added Perry.

“No, my friends, not impossible at all. And I’m prepared to prove this to you now.” The Time Traveler smiled around at the men. Then, still smiling faintly, and with his hands deep in his pockets, he walked slowly out of the room and down the hall to his laboratory.

“I wonder what he’s going to get?” the psychologist wondered.

“Some magic trick or other,” said the doctor.



Chapter 2

The Machine

The Time Traveler returned holding a metallic object in his hand. It was the size of a small clock, and it looked very delicate. There was ivory in it, and some transparent bits of crystal. He placed the object on a table in front of the fireplace, pulled up a chair, and sat down. The only other thing on the table was a small lamp which lit the small object. All of the men gathered closely around the Time Traveler to watch.

The Time Traveler looked at the men and then back to the object on the table.

“Well?” said the psychologist.

“This is only a model. It’s my plan for a machine to travel through time. You will notice that it looks strange and that there’s an odd twinkling above this bar.” He pointed to the part with his finger. “Also, here is one little white lever, and here is another.”

The doctor got up out of his chair and looked care-





fully at the object. "It's beautifully made," he said.

"It took two years to make," said the Time Traveler. "Now, listen carefully. Pulling this lever sends the machine into the future, and this other one reverses the motion. I'm going to press the lever, and off the machine will go. It will disappear—pass into the future and disappear. Have a good look at the thing. Look at the table, too, so you can be sure that this is no trick. I don't want to waste this model, and then be told I'm a fraud." No one said a word. The psychologist seemed about to speak but then changed his mind.

The Time Traveler moved to press the lever. "No," he said suddenly. "Give me your hand." And turning to the psychologist, he took his hand and told him to put out a finger. The psychologist himself pressed the lever and sent the model Time Machine on its voyage. There was a breath of wind, and the candles flickered. One of the candles on the mantel was blown out, and the little machine suddenly swung round, became almost transparent, and it was gone—disappeared! Everyone was silent for a minute. Then Filby swore under his breath.

The Time Traveler laughed. "Well?"

The men all stared at each other. "Look here," said the doctor, "do you seriously believe that that machine has traveled through time?"

"Certainly," said the Time Traveler, bending over to stir coals in the fireplace. He turned to look at the psy-





chologist's face. The psychologist tried to light a cigar with shaking hands. "In addition, I have a big machine nearly finished in the laboratory, and when that's finished, I plan to travel through time myself."

"You mean to say that that machine has traveled into the future?" said Filby.

"Into the future or the past—I don't know for certain which. It hasn't traveled through space, only time. This is why you noticed it becoming nearly transparent before it disappeared altogether."

"It all seems reasonable enough tonight," said the doctor; "but wait to see how we all feel about it tomorrow."

row."

"Would you like to see the Time Machine itself?" asked the Time Traveler.

Everyone in the room gasped in astonishment.

"You can't be serious!" cried Filby.

The Time Traveler motioned for the men to follow him, and he led the way down the long corridor to his laboratory. There in the laboratory sat a larger version of the little object which had disappeared. Parts of the Time Machine were made from nickel, or ivory, or crystal. The thing was generally complete, except for the glass-like bars which lay unfinished on the bench.

"Quartz, isn't it?" asked Filby. The Time Traveler smiled and nodded.

"Look here," said the doctor, "is this a trick—like that ghost you showed us last Christmas?"

"I plan to explore time in this machine," said the Time Traveler. "I've never been more serious in my life."



Chapter 3

The Time Traveler Returns

The following week found the doctor and Filby at the social club discussing the events at the Time Traveler's home.

"What do you make of what we saw last week?" asked Filby

"Well, our friend the scientist has always had a strange sense of humor," admitted the doctor. "I never know when to take him seriously, to be honest."

"I just can't think how he made that model disappear."

"I've seen similar tricks at magic shows. But I can't explain it myself, not entirely."

"I'm sure we'll find out more at dinner this Thursday," said Filby. "Will you be attending?"

"I plan to, yes. See you there."

On Thursday a group of men gathered again at the Time Traveler's home. Filby arrived late to find a Mr.

Clark, an editor of a well-known newspaper, and a Mr. Blank, a writer. Neither men had been present at the Time Traveler's home the week before. The doctor was standing by the fire with a sheet of paper in one hand and his watch in the other. The Time Traveler himself was nowhere to be seen.

"It's half-past seven now," said the doctor. "I suppose we'd better have dinner?"

"Where is our host?" asked Filby.

"He's running late and asked me in this note to have us all start dinner at seven if he's not back. He says he'll explain when he comes."

The doctor rang the dinner bell, and the men all seated themselves around a large dinner table.

"I wonder what could be keeping him," said the editor.

"Probably busy traveling through time," joked Filby.

"What on earth do you mean?" asked the writer.

"Oh, last week he showed us an ingenious trick with a strange little device. He claimed the object traveled through time."

Filby was interrupted by the door from the corridor opening slowly and without noise. "At last!" he cried as the Time Traveler entered the dining room.

"Good heavens, man, what's the matter?" cried the doctor. All the men at the table turned toward the door.

The Time Traveler was a mess. His hair seemed



somehow greyer—either with dust and dirt, or because its color had actually faded. His face was very pale; his chin had a half-healed cut on it; he looked as though he had been suffering. For a moment he hesitated in the doorway, as if dazzled by the light. Then he entered the room, walking with a limp. We stared at him in silence, expecting him to speak.

He didn't say a word and sat down at the table as if he were in pain. He made a motion for someone to pour him a drink. The editor filled a glass of wine and pushed



it toward him. He drank it quickly, and it seemed to do him good: he looked around the table, and the ghost of his old smile flickered across his face.

“What on earth have you been up to, man?” said the doctor.

The Time Traveler didn't seem to hear. “Don't let me disturb you,” he said, with a shaky voice. “I'm alright.” He stopped, held out his glass for more wine, and downed it in one gulp. “That's good,” he said. His eyes grew brighter, and a faint color came into his cheeks. “I'm going to wash and dress, and then I'll come down and explain things.... Save me some of that mutton. I'm starving.”

“Are you alright?” asked the editor.

“I feel a bit... strange,” said the Time Traveler. “But I'll be alright in a minute.”

He put down his glass and walked out of the room toward the staircase. Filby noticed he was injured. He saw his feet as he padded out and noticed he had nothing on them but a pair of beaten up, blood-stained socks. An urge to follow his friend and try to help him came over Filby, but then he remembered how the Time Traveler hated for anyone to make a fuss over him.

“Why does he look like that?” asked the writer. “Has he been pretending to be a beggar in the street?”

“I don't know, but I have a feeling it has something to do with this Time Machine,” said Filby. He finished

telling the men about what they had witnessed the week before in the Time Traveler's laboratory.

"You call him the Time Traveler!" exclaimed Clark. "Did you see the layer of dust he was covered in?"

"Do they not have cleaning supplies in the future?" cried the editor, and all the men laughed.

The Time Traveler came back into the dining room as the laughter died down. He was dressed in ordinary evening clothes and still looked utterly exhausted.

"I say," said the editor hilariously, "these chaps here say you have been traveling into the middle of next week! Tell us all about it, will you?"

The Time Traveler sat down at the table without a word. He smiled quietly. "Where's my dinner?"

"Give us the story!" cried the editor.

"I won't say a word," said the Time Traveler, "until I get some food in my stomach."

"Have you been time traveling?" blurted out Filby.

"Yes," said the Time Traveler, with his mouth full, nodding his head.

"I'd pay handsomely for the exclusive story," said the editor.

The rest of the dinner was uncomfortable. The Time Traveler stuffed his face with as much food as his stomach could handle. Then he pushed his plate away and looked around at everyone. "I suppose I must apologize," he said. "I was simply starving. I've had an

amazing time." He reached out his hand for a cigar and cut the end. "But come into the smoking room. It's too long a story to tell over dinner plates." And he led the way into the next room. "I'll tell you the story of what has happened to me if you like, but you must not interrupt me. Most of it will sound like lies. So be it! It's true all the same—every word of it. I was in my laboratory at four o'clock this evening. Then I was gone for eight days. Although it was not eight days for you gentlemen. I lived such days as no human being ever lived before! I'm nearly worn out, but I won't sleep until I've told you everything. But no interruptions! Agreed?"

"Agreed," said the editor, and the rest of the men echoed, "Agreed." And with that, the Time Traveler began his story, recorded here in his own words.





Chapter 4

Time Traveling

I spent the last few days putting the finishing touches on the Time Machine. It was at ten o'clock today that I turned my machine on for the first time. I gave it a last tap, tried all the screws again, put one more drop of oil on the quartz rod, and sat in the saddle. I suppose I felt like a man committing suicide. I took hold of the levers, the one to start the machine going and the one to stop it. I pulled back the first one and engaged the second one almost immediately afterward. I felt a great dizziness and the nightmarish sensation of falling. Looking around, I saw the laboratory exactly as it had been before.

"Did anything happen?" I asked myself. The room looked exactly the same. It didn't seem that I had gone anywhere. Then I noticed the clock. As I've said, it was ten o'clock before I pulled the levers. Now the clock read three-thirty!

