

*"If you know the future,
it's easy to be a prophet."*

TIME TRAVEL FOR FUN AND PROPHET

by Terry Willey and Carol Baker

www.CineHunden.com

© Copyright 2023 Terry Willey and Carol Baker

www.Cinehunden.com

ISBN: 978-1950755011

Library of Congress Control Number: 2023919993

Certificate of Registration



This Certificate issued under the seal of the Copyright Office in accordance with title 17, United States Code, attests that registration has been made for the work identified below. The information on this certificate has been made a part of the Copyright Office records.

Kay A. Leahy
United States Register of Copyrights and Director

Registration Number
TXu 2-165-713
Effective Date of Registration:
September 30, 2019
Registration Decision Date:
November 12, 2019

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means, including information storage and retrieval systems, without written permission from the author, except in the case of a reviewer, who may quote brief passages embodied in critical articles or in a review.

Trademarked names may appear throughout this book. Rather than use a trademark symbol with every occurrence of a trademarked name, names are used in an editorial fashion, with no intention of infringement of the respective owner's trademark.

The information in this book is distributed on an "as is" basis, without warranty. Although every precaution has been taken in the preparation of this work, neither the author nor the publisher shall have any liability to any person or entity with respect to any loss or damage caused or alleged to be caused directly or indirectly by the information contained in this book.

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents either are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, events, or locales is entirely coincidental.

r23-10.31

- Table of Contents -

CHAPTER 1 - LUNCH AND THE HFM.....	5
CHAPTER 2 - PLUMBERS AND SAINTS.....	11
CHAPTER 3 - A MISSED OPPORTUNITY	13
CHAPTER 4 - BOGGED DOWN.....	15
CHAPTER 5 - READY FREDDIE	18
CHAPTER 6 - LESSONS, JUST IN TIME	24
CHAPTER 7 - DRUNK SHAKESPEARE	36
CHAPTER 8 - I SMELL COLD.....	42
CHAPTER 9 - A FOREST FOR THE TREES	51
CHAPTER 10 - A FEBRUARY 16TH SPACE LUNCH.....	65
CHAPTER 11 - LESS FUN THAN A BARREL OF MONKEYS...	74
CHAPTER 12 - DINOSAUR ATTACKS AND STUFF THAT ATTRACTS READERS.....	85
CHAPTER 13 - SPACE WITH A BANG	102
CHAPTER 14 - BOOM.....	111
CHAPTER 15 - TIME TRAVEL FOR FUN AND PROFIT	126
CHAPTER 16 - TIME TRAVEL FOR FUN AND PROPHET.....	141
CHAPTER 17 - THE APOCALYPSE OR WORLDWIDE VACATION?	153
CHAPTER 18 - A ROMANTIC INTERLUDE.....	155
CHAPTER 19 - THE SHORT CHAPTER.....	160
CHAPTER 20 - REUNITED AND IT FEELS SO WOOD.....	161
CHAPTER 21 - AMBROSE TIME.....	172

CHAPTER 22 - THE LIVING DREIDEL	177
CHAPTER 23 - PRIME TIME CRIME	187
CHAPTER 24 - CAN ENTROPY HAPPEN TO ENTROPY?.....	196
CHAPTER 25 - JURASSIC HIJINKS	203
CHAPTER 26 - A VERY DANGEROUS PICNIC.....	210
CHAPTER 27 - A WOLF IN WOLF'S CLOTHING	221
CHAPTER 28 - BUT IS IT A "GREAT" WALL?.....	234
CHAPTER 29 - EVERYTHING I NEED TO KNOW I LEARNED IN THE TIMESTREAM	240
CHAPTER 30 - DAN BAKER: SAVIOR OF THE UNIVERSE ..	242
ALSO CHAPTER 30 - (AS THEY KIND OF HAPPEN SIMULTANEOUSLY) DAN BAKER: SAVIOR OF THE FREDDIEVERSE	248
CHAPTER 31 - JACK SPICE: COMA IN A CAN	250
CHAPTER 32 - SHE WAS RIGHT, HE DIDN'T LIKE IT	255
CHAPTER 33 - GRIZZLY BARES ALL	266
CHAPTER 34 - TRUE LOVE KNOWS NO TIME.....	276
EPILOGUE - NEARLY THE END	278

- CHAPTER 1 -

Lunch and the HFM

For humanity, it was time for regression or for enlightenment.
For nations, it was time for reconciling differences or for waging war.

For the planet, it was time for insanity or for reason.

For Dan Baker, it was time for lunch.

It was lunchtime in the valley and the restaurant was humming. Not just busy, but humming, an annoying hum that was pushing Dan to an unpleasant place. The hum would have been offended by that, as they thought it was quite musical, but they were not a telepathic hum. Luckily the smell of fresh baguettes soothed him slightly, even though the baguettes were not even trying.

Dan was sitting at lunch with his best friend Ambrose. Ambrose wasn't his legal name, but that's the name he insisted everyone call him. Until he was twelve Dan knew him as Jim, but Jim thought that name was dull and so Ambrose was born. This made it easier seven years later when Ambrose came out to his parents—Jim wasn't gay, Ambrose was.

No surprise there for Dan; he figured that out when he was six. He had watched an old movie and wanted to play “Knights of the Round Table” with Jim. Jim wanted to be the beautiful princess. If Dan was Aquaboy, Jim was Aquagirl. By the time Jim became Ambrose, the only question Dan had was whether Ambrose was gay or trans.

Dan shook his earlobe. “Can you hear that?”

Time Travel for Fun and Prophet

“I swear the waiter is flirting with me.” Ambrose glanced at said waiter.

“No doubt.”

“Because I’m so hot.” Ambrose really was hot. Cary Grant hot.

“Or because he wants a big tip.”

Ambrose smiled.

Dan clarified. “A gratuity.”

“What do you know?”

“I know waitresses.” He had attempted to date quite a few that had been friendly.

“Yes, but you’re not me.”

“The hotness factor.”

“Yes, I am hot and you are not.”

Dan was not unhot—but not actually hot either. He was the kind of guy that people have a hard time identifying in a lineup. He was 30’s (32) with no observable scars or tattoos. He did, however, have a smile that made women melt—if they were close to the sun.

“I’m not saying you couldn’t be,” Ambrose said, “but you don’t take my advice.”

“I like my look.”

Ambrose gestured to the world. “You want *them* to like your look. No one is looking for a man in coveralls.”

“Unless they need their toilet fixed.”

“Yes, but if you looked good while you did it... Could you imagine how the ladies would fall for a gorgeous 30-year-old man making plumber money?”

“And alimony payments.”

“They’ll settle.”

“It’s not a romantic job.”

“The hot waiter’s looking at me.”

“He’s not that hot.”

“What do you know? You don’t have a gay bone in your body.”

“I gotta get back to work. Don’t let him break your heart.”

“Worry about *his* heart.”

Dan tossed money on the table to pay his tab. He hated leaving the quaint sidewalk café where he and Ambrose met for lunch on irregular occasions. The café had the ambiance of a Parisian bistro right in the heart of a bustling American cosmopolis. Dan knew this because Ambrose had been to Paris and told him so. One day Dan hoped to go to Europe, but probably not this decade. Maybe in the 1940s.

Dan climbed into his car and headed to his next job. He had to fix a toilet.

Typical job—broken ball cock. He hated to tell her the diagnosis as he always felt like he was sexually harassing women when he mentioned it. And he had heard every comment every man, or occasionally woman, would make.

On the other hand, it was an easy job, a cheap part, and ultimately the customer was very happy. He'd just replace it with a fill valve and avoid the language issue.

When he got to his car, he found he had gotten a text from Ambrose. "Are you okay?"

He texted back. "Why?"

"You were acting weird."

"That's just me."

"True. Oh wait, the waiter's calling. Call me tonight, bye." Ambrose hung up before Dan had a chance to respond.

Dan couldn't remember a call with Ambrose when he had a chance to say "bye."

Next up: clogged drain. Simple, but messy. The hard part was listening to the man explain why he hadn't fixed it himself. This was nearly universal. Men needing to reclaim the masculinity they had lost falling before the mighty drain.

Dan used the words, "Uh huh," here a lot. For the ones who really needed an excuse he'd explain:

"Modern drains are made with inferior metal, so they wear quickly, break easily, and clog impossibly. A homeowner just can't afford the tools to handle a job."

Just like cars. Way too complex with computers and hybrid systems. Most men can't even change their own oil.

Rationalization makes them feel better.

Time Travel for Fun and Prophet

Now he was on to his last job of the day, and of course being the last job of the day it was also the most annoying. Although to be fair, the work was only mildly annoying—the annoyance came primarily from the well-dressed brunette who had hired him.

The work involved replacing a calcitrant kitchen faucet in a rather calcitrant kitchen sink belonging to a recalcitrant hedge fund manager (HFM). He considered the sink merely calcitrant, due to his only having the urge to hit it with his wrench one time.

The HFM's expert supervision of his work was impeded by her inability to disconnect from her assistant. Her cellular umbilical cord kept her constantly in contact with the beleaguered Chuck. And since she was yelling at her assistant more than Dan, he was grateful for the distraction. From underneath the sink he could see her \$500 designer shoes pacing angrily through her perfect kitchen.

“NO! I said the Armbruster account; Hollingsworth can wait. Chuck, if you don't give me those numbers in the next ten seconds, I swear I will... Oh... Then give me the Hollingsworth numbers NOW!!” She pushed the off button of her phone with an unsatisfying deliberate tap.

She paused to breathe and placed her phone in her holster. With Chuck sufficiently abused, she would turn elsewhere. Dan readied himself.

“How much longer is this going to take? Just being here to make sure you do this job correctly has cost me at least twenty thousand this afternoon.”

“Why didn't you make Chuck do it?”

“Because Chuck doesn't know shit about plumbing.”

Dan had a hard time not laughing to himself as he had been done for twenty minutes and was deliberately wasting her time.

Dan was dark haired, average height and weight. He was pretty much average everything. You could say he had a large nose, except for the fact that he didn't. But in order to give him a distinguishing feature, we'll say it anyway.

He had a large nose.

Or not. Make up your own mind.

Dan began to slowly put away his tools.

The HFM tapped her foot. Not in the cool Fred Astaire way, but like a rabbit signaling the herd of approaching danger. “It’s about time. I should have just done it myself.”

Dan turned to wash the oil and grime, and for some reason sardine, off of his hands, which left a considerable layer of filth on the pristine white sink. Interestingly, there was no grease needed for the job, so he was forced to grab some from the can he kept for just such emergencies.

The HFM thrust a wad of bills forward. Interestingly, all of the bills in her wallet were crisp, right side up, and sorted numerically by worth and serial number, so she was forced to wad them up for just such emergencies.

Dan grunted and walked away. He grunted because he had learned if you engage certain people with actual language, they will invariably speak back and this was not ideal.

He stepped across the porch and down the steps toward the sidewalk of a nondescript upper class neighborhood of identical townhouses. Only the street numbers and colors of the BMWs were different.

As he hopped into his Toyota, Dan checked off the last box on his job sheet for the day. Being the last job, he didn’t really need to check it off, but it felt so damn good doing it. Normally he would have pulled off his tool belt before driving away, but he couldn’t risk the HFM finding some reason to stop him in her driveway.

Dan’s Toyota was a lot like Dan: it was the first new car he’d ever owned and had aged into mediocrity. When it was new, it was marginally above average. Dan had promised himself his first new car would be American made, but he wanted a car that was better than average, so that didn’t happen.

Driving home, Dan felt good. Very good. It was a beautiful September 27th at 5:27 p.m. (this will be important later). He’d had six calls, all resolved—people could go on with their lives unhampered by flood or dehydration. The reason Dan felt so

Time Travel for Fun and Prophet

good was, in fact, that he was not average in one area—he was a very good plumber.

He was listening to Procol Harum and all was right with the world—other than an odd odor of gunite.

The next thing on Dan's agenda was to think about all the things he was not good at, like spelling, making curry, and marriage. While this may not seem like the best use of one's time, it is, nevertheless, quite human.

Dan's mind went to a series of inedible meals, failed tests, and one spectacularly unsuccessful relationship. While he and Jeneane had been hopelessly in love, they were also hopelessly mismatched. Several shouting matches and a visit from the local constabulary were enough to convince the couple they would be better off living in separate cities.

At 5:32.05, as Dan was preoccupied with making his formerly high self-esteem plummet to its usual depths, he noticed something seemed to be slightly off in that he was no longer in his Toyota but rather outside of it looking in. The visual of his vehicle, driverless, beginning to slow in traffic and veer to the right, was the last thing that he saw before winking out of existence entirely.

And that's when time began to turn inside out.



- CHAPTER 2 -

Plumbers and Saints

When one enters the timestream with no vehicle for protection, as time begins to unravel, so does one. Dan began breaking down into strings of time. Later he would try to describe the experience but would find it extraordinarily difficult as his brain had been broken down into strings of time at the time. From outside of the phenomenon, one could best describe the sensation as having your body and mind shoved into a paper shredder, taken out, and then having the process repeated until the universe said *Stop*.

From inside Dan's perspective, he could best describe it as *Oooooooooooooooooo!!*

When everything finally stopped shredding, Dan found himself not on the freeway, but rolling down the side of a soft green hill. The rolling continued until it didn't.

One of the blessings of time travel is that it prepares you for whatever you may find by leaving you in something akin to shock. What would leave a normal person panicking, screaming and running for the hills, instead leaves you like listening to Led Zeppelin—a little dazed and confused.

Standing up and looking off to the distance, Dan saw trees and possibly some sheep. He was tired and felt not unlike he had spent 45 minutes in a paper shredder. He remembered being outside of his car and wondered if he'd had an accident. He checked his arms, legs, and body for wounds and found none. He checked his head a little more carefully as it was

Time Travel for Fun and Prophet

obvious there was something wrong there. But again, there was no sign of trauma.

“Perhaps I’ve hit my head so hard that I only *believe* I’m fine.”

He checked his head even more thoroughly for any sign of lumps and bumps, gashes, abrasions or any other questionable sensations. He found none.

Dan looked around to get his bearings. The green rolling hills and the deliciously breathable air left him flummoxed, as neither were part of his daily experience.

“The freeway must be over the crest of the hill,” he thought, and began to climb the slope. When he reached the crest, it was completely bereft of freeway.

“Now I know I’ve got a concussion.”

From the hilltop he could see more hills, more sheep, and what looked like a man in the distance. He shouted.

“HELLO, I’VE BEEN IN AN ACCIDENT.”

The figure, which looked to be wearing a heavy coat on a warm day, turned and headed toward him. The heavy coat made Dan question his choice of calling to the man.

“Oh great, I’ve just called to a crazy person. Of course, I’m concussed so we’ll probably get along fine. I hope he has food—I haven’t had my dinner yet.”

Dan was quite hungry. Didn’t he have a candy bar in his coveralls? He found it and wolfed it down. Funny, it made him think of kippers—and he had never really eaten or even seen kippers.

Dan heard the sound of Procol Harum and wondered if his car was nearby.

Almost immediately his world turned upside down.



- CHAPTER 3 -

A Missed Opportunity

Dan and his thoughts unraveled. When he was once again raveled, he was in a concrete structure being blasted by music, The Beatles' "I Feel Fine" to be exact. And shrieks.

Loud, feminine shrieks.

"Great, now I'm hallucinating."

Dan was not aware that visual hallucinations are much more indicative of brain damage than auditory ones, but since this was not the case the point was moot. Although with the volume of the music Dan would be happy if it was mute.

Moot/mute—know the difference.

Dan froze in his steps. He smelled hotdogs.

Looking down the concourse, Dan saw a concession stand and realized he was in a stadium. And there was food. And no one was in line.

Dan made a beeline for dinner. "Can I have two hot dogs and a coke?"

"Sure thing." The concessioner looked pleased to do something. "That'll be a buck."

"Wow. Is this a special promotion?"

The vendor put the dogs on the counter, laughing. "Sure, a Beatles dog."

Dan pulled four quarters from his pocket, which the concessioner scooped up. Dan grabbed his supper and headed to see what was going on in the stadium. Walking through the tunnel, he noticed the screaming was louder than the music.

Time Travel for Fun and Prophet

Looking down to the field from the lower level, he noticed a stage in the infield diamond and four musicians playing. They were dressed like the Beatles.

“Must be a tribute band,” he thought. “Wait, maybe this is an anniversary thing—the Beatles’ Shea Stadium concert. When was that? The sixties sometime.”

He noticed a sign: “Shea Stadium.”

“Must be it.”

Dan watched for a few minutes while eating his dogs. He made it through “Ticket to Ride” then headed to look for someplace quiet as the screaming caused a ringing in his ears and a headache. He wondered if they’d play “In an Octopus’s Garden.”

Walking through the tunnel, he popped out of existence.

Well, out of time, but he did cease to exist in 1965.



- CHAPTER 4 -

Bogged Down

Given the cacophony of where he was and his belief he was concussed, Dan's jump into time did not bother him quite as much. It still felt like going through a cheese grater, but at least the transition wasn't quite as jarring.

Between the jump's muddled acceptance effect and his own sense of denial, he had no idea what was happening. Concussion, dream, or hallucination were his best guesses.

He knew something was wrong, he was just wrong about *what* the thing was.

He felt like he was getting closer to the truth.

With each jump things seemed to make more sense.

Or maybe he was accepting the senselessness.

Dan's return to time was not much an improvement to his situation—he fell into someplace dark and rather wet.

If not for the fact that he was cold and damp, he would've preferred to take a little nap, but circumstances being what they were, he felt perhaps he should actually try to figure out what was happening.

He was spectacularly unsuccessful at that.

However, he did find that his clothing was dripping from being in the wet; his wallet and all of his credit cards and cash were at best very damp; and a few of his best wrenches were now missing and the rest were in danger of rusting.

"Best to get moving." He began trudging through the muck. A strong earthy scent swirled around him. There were gnarled trees like shadows in the dark.

Time Travel for Fun and Prophet

As his boots sloshed, the soles began to stick in the suction of his steps and, conversely, his feet began to slip inside the leather. If he hadn't been wearing work boots, normal shoes would have been lost in the mud. There are physical laws as to why something can be slippery and sticky at the same time, but mostly it's the universe's perverse sense of humor.

Dan spotted a light in the distance and it made sense to walk towards it. He knew a little bar—Henry's—that should be around here, or it would have been had he been anywhere near Pacoima. As he approached the light, several more lesser and lower lights became visible. The first light originated from the church steeple and the others from individual homes.

Besides the flickering light, all he could make out was vague shapes. He didn't spot any landmarks. There were structures but none of them were Henry's. Eventually the muck got less muckish and he was walking on dry ground, then a dirt road.

Of course when I say "road," it was more of a path with ruts in it.

Upon reaching the town, Dan struggled to recognize the houses and buildings; in fact, they did not resemble anything he had seen outside of history books. These were simple cottages, not modern homes and apartments. There was ample evidence (that Dan was trying to avoid stepping in) there would have been cows and chickens out had it been daylight.

What's more, the lights inside were not incandescent or fluorescent but candle or lantern light.

If Dan had thought he was confused when he woke up shredded and wet, he was sadly mistaken. That was less confusion and more timestream pacification. Now this, *this* was confusion. Up to now his hallucinations had taken him to places that were plausible; now he was in a place that did not exist in his time—at least that he knew about.

He looked for anything he recognized. Failing that, he looked for a building he could identify. Failing that, he looked for a building that looked inhabited. When he heard voices, he knew he was on the right track. As the voices got louder,

although he could not quite make out the words, he could make out the universal sound of drinking.

When he spotted a rustic tavern, all was right in the world. He would get directions, a beer, and perhaps a doctor, then things would return to normal. Entering the establishment, he saw this might not be the case.

The interior looked like something out of an old movie: it had wooden tables, exposed beams, and was lit by lanterns and a fireplace. The patrons, all men, were wearing simple rough-hewn clothing, and they were all staring at him.

“Can someone help me? I seem to have been in an accident and I’m a bit lost.”

The funny thing about time travel is that time travelers transported to a new era somehow absorb the language and speech patterns of the area they have traveled to or perhaps it’s just too much work for your near omniscient narrator to research language and speech patterns of ancient civilizations every time Dan changes location time.

That being said, what the bar patrons heard and what Dan actually tried to say were quite different, but they did get the message.

One of the patrons responded: “Good sir, have you been injured?”

What Dan heard was: “Are you all right, buddy? Anything broken?”

“I don’t think so, but I crashed my car and I don’t know where I am.”

“Well let’s see if we can find your wagon.”

It doesn’t always work precisely the way one would expect.

“We should take him to the doctor.” That’s what Dan heard, although the stout man actually said “apothecary.”

“We should take him to the sheriff.”

The barkeep leaned in. “Apothecary first, sheriff second.”

That choice saved Dan from spending the night in jail.

- CHAPTER 5 -

Ready Freddie

In no time Dan was hustled over to a building at the other end of the road to see the apothecary, who had been eating what Dan could only assume was mutton, as it smelled slightly lambish. Dan himself would have been quite pleased to learn that it was indeed mutton.

The patrons gathered round to listen as this was the most interesting thing that had happened to them since... well ever.

First, Dan stared at the exam room with trepidation. There were shelves filled with jars with things inside them that vaguely resembled body parts or tiny rodents of some kind. There was a cupboard filled with lots of little vials of unidentifiable powders and liquids. In the lantern light, shadows leaped over the walls like grasping fingers.

Second, Dan stared at the little grey bearded man with trepidation. The man wore baggy clothes, shabby and disheveled. He was small compared to the tavern patrons, and yet confident in his trade and ominous in his frumpiness.

“So, doctor, I’ve been...”

“Call me Freddie.”

“Freddie?”

“Yes. Frederick, actually, but that’s always seemed a bit stiff to me so how about we go with the informal. And your name is?”

“Dan. Well, Daniel, but if we’re going with the informal...”

“So, Daniel, you had a bit of an accident.”

“A bit.”

“So what happened?”

“That’s just it. I was driving along the freeway and suddenly I was someplace else and eventually I found myself here, soaking wet and lost.”

Freddie raised an eyebrow. “Well, the Moors will do that to you. You’re lucky you made it out at all.” He looked at the tavern patrons. “Gentlemen, don’t you think you should be out looking for whatever happened to Daniel’s wagon?”

The men hemmed and hawed, but slowly filed out. Dan thought they probably wouldn’t find anything. Freddie was positive they wouldn’t find anything.

“So, Dan, where are you from?”

“Pacoima.”

“Is that in the New World or the Old?”

“New World?”

“Yes, the Americas.”

“Americas? I’m from the United States.”

Freddie repressed his excitement. “Of America?”

“Uhhhh, yes?”

“What year?”

“2018?”

“I forget, do you have space travel?”

“Space travel?”

“Are you going to put a question mark after everything you say?”

“Me? You’re the one asking all the questions.” Dan was becoming peevish.

“Yes, but you’re answering my questions with questions.”

“Perhaps I’m confused.”

“Not perhaps,” Freddie said under his breath.

“Look, this is not helpful.”

“Then how about this: have you ever time jumped before?”

“Time jumped?”

“You’re doing it again.”

“Sorry.”

“So, you’ve never time jumped before?”

Time Travel for Fun and Prophet

“I don’t even know what that is.”

This particular series of fairly useless questions and answers went on for some time and has been edited to save the reader from excessive boredom. Suffice it to say that eventually Freddie came to the point.

“You, my friend, are a time jumper. You move through time with the ease of someone walking across the street.”

“If crossing the street means you feel like you’ve been ripped into pieces, swallowed, vomited, and then tossed into a bog.”

“Granted, but if the process of traveling several hundred years back in time really leaves one fluish and moist, that seems a rather small price to pay.”

“So you’re saying I traveled through time?”

“Yes.”

“Without a ship?”

“Yes.”

“On my own?”

“Well you did get some help from the universe.”

“Still.”

“Yes, yes, quite impressive.”

“Wait a minute.” His eyes narrowed. “How do you know about all this?”

“I’m one of you.”

“A plumber?”

“A time jumper. Well, I used to be.”

“So you’re not anymore?”

“I seem to have lost the knack. I was happily traveling through time and then I spent more time here than I should have and the timestream wouldn’t let me back in.”

“How long have you been here?”

“Twenty-seven years.”

His eyes widened. “Is that going to happen to me?”

“I doubt it. You probably won’t live that long.”

“Thanks for that.”

“Time jumping is supremely dangerous. Most jumpers don’t survive the first year without help.”

“Where can I get help?”

“That’s where I come in. You can take me with you.”

“Can I?”

“You can. I merely have to be in physical contact with you when you jump.”

“Physical contact?”

“Touching you.”

“Touching me—how? This isn’t some kind of medieval come-on, is it?”

“Like holding your hand. I can go with you when you jump. Show you the ropes.”

“That would be great if I knew when I was going to jump.”

“I can teach you that.”

“I had no warning.”

“You did.”

“I think this is the third time I’ve wound up somewhere without moving and I had no idea it was coming.”

“You did, you simply didn’t know what to look for. Before you jump, you may get a mild headache, ringing in the ears, an odd smell, and a brief thought of fish.”

“Thought of fish?”

“Or at least some sort of marine creature. Could be a dolphin, or maybe a platypus.”

“A platypus is not a marine creature.”

“Well it should be. They do like the water.”

“So do Labrador retrievers but they’re not marine creatures.”

“Regardless, you can learn to recognize when you’re going to jump.”

“Crap!!”

“What?”

“I walked out of a Beatles concert!”

“Who hasn’t?”

“I could have used my phone to record it!”

“That would be great. An hour of screaming.”

“Yes, but, still.” He frowned in consternation. “How long will I be here?”

Time Travel for Fun and Prophet

“Could be a day, an hour, or a few minutes. It all depends on the timestream. After you get some practice, you may learn to control when your jumps happen. That’s what I did.”

“And then you stayed too long in one place.”

“And the timestream forgot me.”

It’s a terrible thing to be forgotten by the timestream. It’s like that time when you were seven years old and your parents were supposed to pick you up after band practice but forgot and you sat for two hours waiting because the school was closed and your parents wouldn’t let you have a cell phone. And when they did finally show up, your father claimed your mother was supposed to pick you up and your mother said it was your father’s job and the eventual apology they gave you was half assed and you were never quite sure they felt bad enough that they wouldn’t do it again.

Only with the timestream, they might never pick you up at all.

In the history of the universe there have been thousands of time jumpers. Well, to be fair, the universe is infinite: there have been an infinite number of time jumpers. To make it clearer, we’ll just say that every planet gets one every hundred years. It’s probably not true, but that’s what we’ll say.

No civilization possesses any kind of time technology. The timestream does not allow for just anyone to enter; it makes the choice. This has led many to believe that the timestream is a sentient being. The timestream, however, has stated on numerous occasions that it does not believe this to be true.

Dan’s mind was filled with a thousand questions—or more specifically, 1,763 1/2—but it was getting late; he couldn’t quite formulate the final question. Freddie showed him to a room where he could sleep.

Dan did not want to seem ungrateful but believed the use of the word “room” in regards to the medium-size closet Freddie put him in was rather generous. There was a bed of sorts, but if you shut the door it was pitch black with what felt like a limited air supply. Dan turned on his cell phone for light

while he prepared for sleep. It was then that he was struck with the most fearful thought he had thought in years.

He did not have his cell phone cable... or charger.

Later, he would realize he couldn't get one for another four hundred years.