

Time Travel

by Kyle Eggleston

Frank

Looking around, I don't recognize where I am. The last thing I remember is going to bed in my home. Now I'm laying in an open field in my pjs. Sitting up, I see the field is filled with snow.

It is indeed cold out and I'm freezing. I stand up and look to the sky. "Why won't you leave me alone?!" I shout to the sky. I'm mad at whoever is doing this to me. Be it God or one of his angels, I do not know.

There has to be a reason for it all. I don't know what that reason is.

What I do know is I'm cold and wet from the snow, best find someplace to dry off. I pick a direction and walk for a while. Eventually I come across a cabin.

It's a standard log cabin with four sides and a roof. Nothing out of the ordinary. I rap on the door with my fist. There's no answer. Trying the doorknob I find it unlocked, so I enter.

There's a fireplace and a small bed in the corner. I start a fire. It heats the place quite nicely. Taking off my socks, I let them dry out next to the fire. Grabbing a blanket, I try my best to warm up. That's when *she* appears.

Sam

I find myself in a rather small log cabin. Great, I've time traveled again. Man I wish I could stop doing this. If there was anyway to stop this nonsense, I would. I see a man warming himself by a fire. This place is not new to me. I often come here when I have troubled thoughts about my day.

I recognize the man but I don't think he knows me. Play it cool, I think. This is your first time meeting from his perspective. Can't be messing this up.

"Hi Frank." I say carefully almost in a whisper. "I'm Sam."

Frank looks at me obviously puzzled at how I know his name. I never knew the basis of how we met. This was as new to me as it was to him.

He looks me up and down in an attempt to assess the situation. I can't say that I blame him. I make no sudden moves towards him. I stay perfectly still.

Frank

I'm scared. Here stands this beautiful woman who knows my name but has me at a disadvantage. She has short blonde hair and blue eyes. They're friendly eyes. Eyes that mean me no harm.

"It's nice to meet you." I say quite puzzled. "How did you get in here?"

Sam looks at me for a moment before responding. I wonder if she'll tell me the truth.

"I time traveled here." She says. "This is my favorite place to come in time. Typically there's no one here."

I nod my head, I believe her. Another time traveler. Just great.

"When did you come from?" Sam asks.

I look around and find a calendar. Looking at the date I'm still in the same year. "About a month ago, you?"

Sam smiles. "Eight years from now." She says.

I sit down on the bed. Eight years? I can't even fathom traveling that far. Usually I travel a week up to a few months into the future or the past, but never anything like years.

"Oh" I say. Yeah not something I was expecting.

Sam looks at me. "I can feel myself going."

"Will I ever see you again?"

Sam nods and disappears.

I'm left alone in the cabin. I hang out in the quiet for as long as I'm permitted to stay. It doesn't take long to find myself dissolving back to my own time.

Darn, I think, lost another pair of socks.

I wake up in my bed. Was what I experienced a dream or did it really happen? I usually have such a crisis when I time travel. Especially when its during the night.

Sam

It's a chilly October afternoon. I contemplate visiting my comfy spot but find it difficult to travel. I've never had this problem before. It's something out of the twilight zone for sure.

I want to see Frank again. The same man I visited two months ago but I doubt that will happen. I have *some* control over my time jumps but not the amount I need or really want.

I concentrate really hard. Trying to think of a time Frank is. Anytime would work I suppose. But someplace I know he would be alone. Can't have someone eavesdropping on our conversations or anything like that.

Finally I lock onto something. Focusing on the time and location, I disappear.

I reemerge in Frank's bedroom. He's in college, a junior. I watch him sleep. He snores a little, it's cute. I don't want to wake him, yet I do. I'm confused as to what course of action to take.

Frank stirs. Perhaps no action is needed.

He sits up with a start. Looking at me, he smiles.

"Sam." Frank says.

"In the flesh." I respond.

Frank is grinning from ear to ear. He's more than happy to see me.

The usual question of when did you come from is asked and answered. Frank seems to frown at my response. I don't know why. Time travel is a non forgiving business.

Sitting down on the end of Frank's bed, I ask him my questions. "When was the last time you saw me?"

Frank thinks about it for a moment. "Last Tuesday." He says rather confidently. "You came from the year 2032."

Placing a hand on my knee I ponder the thought for a brief moment. 2032. "I'm glad to see I'm alive and well."

Frank nods slowly.

I stare at him. Frank is never one to hide facts from me.

"Frank, I am well ... aren't I?" My words trail off.

Frank shakes his head no. He barely gasps as emotion covers his words. "Breast Cancer." He finally manages to say.

"Oh." I say as tears run down Frank's face. I try to comfort him as best I can. It's not much I know, but it's all I've got to offer.

Changing the subject, Frank shows me his new record. Ozzy Osborne. He's rather impressed with it. We listen to a few songs before falling asleep in each others arms.

Frank

I wake up to find myself laying in the middle of a road. A car is honking at me. Standing up quickly I run to the side of the road.

People drive by flipping me off.

I try to remember what it was I was doing. Sleeping probably. But I was dressed in jeans and a t-shirt complete with shoes this time around. Thank goodness it's not just socks.

It comes back to me. I had laid down for a nap between classes. Nothing wrong with that. Except for when you time travel without knowing the why and the how.

I'd go to a doctor but they would land me in the loony bin. So that won't be happening anytime soon.

I walk to the nearest town. There's a small diner I stop at. I'm hungry. I typically am hungry when I time travel. It's kind of a curse. I don't know how else to explain it. So I call it a curse.

The sky is blue, there's not a cloud to be seen. I order the peach cobbler and a glass of milk. Sitting there, I take in my surroundings. I wonder how much time I've got before I disappear again.

"This seat taken?"

I turn to see Sam standing there. I smile and gesture for her to sit down which she does.

"You told me about this encounter." Sam says. "You've got about five minutes."

Holding her hand, I squeeze it in gratitude. In a way, she was a guardian angel. My angel.

I spend that five minutes wishing and hoping to just be frozen in this moment. Frozen in time as it were. Naturally that wasn't about to happen, but I could wish for it.

Sneaking out the back, Sam and I stand in the alleyway. That's when I hug her for the first time. As I disappear I try to take her embrace with me. I try to take Sam with me. It doesn't work of course and I find myself back in my apartment.

Sam

I watch as Frank disappears out of my grasp. I've seen and felt Frank leave a hundred times but this time was different. I can't quite explain it.

He didn't want to leave. I can't blame him. Time travel takes its toll on you. It has a way of stressing you out making you exhausted and completely draining you to the point you are over tired. I wish I could say it was something you get used to, but you just don't.

But this is life. It's how life is for us. Time travel isn't some parlor trick. It's normal life. Well normal for us. If I could have one wish granted, it would be to find a fixed moment in time and the rubber band would snap. I could finally rest.

Unfortunately that is but a dream. And I must get use to what is my reality versus that of fantasy.

Looking at my watch, I note the date and time. You never know when you'll need something like this is the future.

I turn to leave the alley but my time is up. I can feel times grasp on me. No matter how hard I fight, I can't seem to shake it. So I let go and allow time to do its thing.

Frank

It's Halloween. Hoards of kids will be coming to the door looking for candy. I'm not sure I want to participate in handing out candy this year.

Who knows if I'll even be around to hand out candy. It doesn't matter. If I time travel, then so be it.

That's when I hear a distinct thud coming from my kitchen followed by a loud "Ow!"

Standing from my chair, I run to see what all the excitement is. I see Sam has come from one of her younger years. Probably eighteen. Maybe twenty. Either way, she is here and there's nothing I can do about it. Walking up to Sam I help her get on her feet.

"There you go." I say as polite as possible.

Sam looks at me. "Frank?" She asks.

I nod slowly. She doesn't know me. Someone, possibly her future self has told her about me. Whatever the case she's here now and that's all which matters.

"Yes I'm Frank and you're in a safe place." I say trying to calm her down. "What's your favorite candy?"

Sam looks shyly at me. She's about to puke. A known trait for most time jumpers. I offer her a cup of water which she takes gratefully.

She takes a piece of candy and eats it. I nod, that's progress.

I'm about to ask what brought her to me when she disappears. There goes that plan of thought.

Something keeps us running into each other. It makes no sense to me. Someone out there is controlling all of this and I don't have a clue why.

Sam

I wake up one morning. Rolling over I can make out the silhouette of a person sitting in my room. I panic and switch on the light. I see myself sitting in a chair. Taking a deep breath I calm down.

"Why are you here?" I ask.

"It was as good of a place as any." She replies.

Not a very helpful answer I muse at the thought. I'm not fond of running into myself. I find it bothersome. Long ago I promised myself I would never divulge to me the future. It was off the table. So far I've been able to keep that promise. Besides I've been known to get information out of Frank here and there. Most of it is useless information but it's still information.

"You're hiding." I accuse.

"Am not." She counters. "Wouldn't think of it even if it was the only option given to me."

Her hair has a bright pink stripe going through it. Can't say I'm pleased with the look, but someday I will be. That's the odd thing about time travel, you really don't know what's around the corner.

She disappears before I can question her any further. A shame.

Frank

I come back to my present from another trip to the past. It was alright, I keep telling myself. Not really what I expected but trips to the past seldom are.

I wonder why I'm rubber banding through time. It doesn't make any sense to me. Yet here I am doing exactly that.

It would be nice to be able to control the where and when. The how can be left up to God for all I care. I wouldn't mind an answer in the why department either. But I think that's pushing the limit a bit.

Looking around I'm walking down main street. No one seems to have noticed or cared that I popped in out of nowhere. That's alright with me. There has been a few close calls over the years. They mostly pan out to nothing. Which is a good thing. The last thing I need is to be put in a loony bin.

I stop at a place and get some ice cream. Chocolate without sprinkles. It's a nice treat for a warm August day. Taking a step out the door, I'm gone again.

I arrive sometime in my future. At least I think it's my future. Sam is standing before me.

"There you are stranger." She says.

Taking a bite of ice cream I smile back at her. "Here I am."

She takes a step closer to me. "Ever wonder if we're the only people like this with the ability to traverse time?"

I let the ice cream melt.

That is one question I've pondered over in my mind for as long as I've known Sam. If we are the only two people who can time travel, it is quite the ability to have. I imagine the government would love to get their hands on people like us. It only makes sense for them wanting to.

"Frank what are you doing here?" Sam asks expecting me to have all the answers. I don't have all the answers or even a fracture of them.

"I don't know." I say looking around. We are in a small room. It's dark. The smell reminds me of a cleaning closet of some sort. I reach for a light, sure enough a utility closet.

"This is exciting." Sam jokes. "Everyone will want to know how we ended up in here!"

I shoot Sam a look, of course she is joking but I wonder if she tells her closest friends about our encounters. I bet she does. Who am I to judge? I'd probably tell stories to my friends if I had any. Sam is the only real friend I've got. The only one who understands and gets me.

The door opens. There stands an angry black man with a mop in his hands. "And what do the two of you think you're doin' in my utility closet? Best be clearing out before I use this on you!" He gestures to the mop. His accent is thick, I can't place it.

We quickly get out of his way.

Running down the hallway of the hospital, Sam and I look for an unlocked door or room. No need in upsetting anyone else that day.

Sam

Holding Frank's hand I disappear first. I find myself in a forest. It's not the usual forest I find myself in. The one with the cabin. It's a different forest. Something I'm not use to.

I'm scared. It's late at night. There's a full moon out.

It doesn't take long for me to vanish again. This time I end up in my bed. It's comfortable and cozy. I like it here. As I nod off to dream land I can't help but think about Frank. I wonder what he's up to, what he's doing.

Frank

I'm running. Running away from the thugs who are after me. I must have looked at them wrong or something. Anyways I'm trying to get away.

One of the men, and I use that term loosely, grabs my arm. I turn ready to deck him. I see his face, it's my friend Greg.

"Come on Frank, let's get you out of here." Greg says.

I nod. Yeah getting out of here would be a good thing. We move off to the left and duck beside an abandoned building. The mob doesn't seem to follow.

I breathe a sigh of relief.

Greg stands about six foot four inches in height. He could take on a few guys and keep on fighting.

"Man what were you thinking?" Greg says out of breath.

Pointing to the door I whisper. "They started it."

Greg nods. "They always start it, eh Frank?"

It was true, the other side always managed to start something with me. Oh well it doesn't matter, not now at least. Now I have to figure out what my next steps will be.

Have to keep moving. That's the key to time traveling. You can't rest in one place for too long. You rest and you're dead. You can't afford to be dead.

"Let's just say I stumbled upon a drug deal gone bad." I say. "Obviously I was at the wrong place at the wrong time."

"Obviously." Greg echos.

"How long will this time traveling thing go on for?" Greg asks.

I shrug, there's no real answer for it. "As long as I'm alive I guess." He gives me a look that clearly states he's not amused. I can't blame him. I'm not amused by the thought either.

"Humph" Greg says. "Well you were lucky I was around to save your behind."

"That indeed." I say.

With that, I'm gone.

Sam

I haven't seen Frank in well over a month. If I didn't know any better I'd think he was avoiding me. But that's not how time travel works.

I wonder what he's up to. What adventures he's going on and the like. I imagine Frank's off to some far off place full of adventure. He's probably having the time of his life.

Frank

I'm in the middle of a fight. I don't know these people. They picked the fight, I didn't start it. Why would I start a fight to begin with? I have no reason to start anything.

Throwing a punch I manage to deck a guy. He goes down. I duck out of the way of another incoming punch and go for his kidneys.

I don't know how much more of this I can take. Fighting hasn't been my strong point, But it has come in handy from time to time. How else am I to keep the thugs at bay? In a way I wish Sam were here. She'd figure all of this out.

As if willing Sam into existence she appears out of nowhere. This is enough to scare off the angry mob.

"Hey." Sam says. She's out of breath.

"Hey you." I say. It's great to see her.

We embrace for a moment.

"Were you in a fight?" Sam asks.

I nod "Something like that." I let go a light chuckle.

"My boy getting into trouble." Sam says.

That's when she kisses me. It's not a forced kiss but a welcomed one. One I've been waiting for a long time. I've been afraid to initiate first contact as it were.

Sam has soft supple lips. She's perfect.

I think I'm falling for her. What began as a friendship has turned into something more. I didn't expect it to happen. It just did.

"So now what?" She asks.

I shrug. "That was unexpected. I don't know."

She kisses me again. I can feel my lock on time letting go. I don't want to go but I have no choice. I vanish.

Sam

I watch Frank go. I feel lost without him. I wonder if he feels lost without me. We travel through time yet keep bumping into each other. Is it fate at work? I don't know.

Whatever the case, this is real.

I wonder how long I have until I disappear. My time is never finite or constant. There's always a variable I don't have control over. That variable is where and when I go in time.

It's more than just traveling in time, it's also traveling in space.

I start to feel myself slipping back to the time I came from. Like a rubber band I snap back to the cabin in the woods.

Sitting down, I take a few deep breaths. That travel hurt. I hold my head trying to overcome the shock. I hate when that happens. It's not my favorite mode of travel. But there's always a time when it happens.

So I suppose something can be counted on.

Looking around, it appears as though someone has stayed here recently. I can't say when for sure but someone had a fire going not too long ago. The bed has been slept in as well.

I wonder who was sleeping here. Do I need to go? As if answering my questions, an older version of myself enters the cabin.

"Oh, it's me." She says. "Good I was wondering when this day was going to happen."

I look at my older self. She appears to be in her late forties. From her perspective this meeting has already taken place. She knows how this conversation goes. She has me at a disadvantage.

"When are you from" I ask.

"About twenty years into your future." She responds.

“I see I’m still time traveling it would seem.” I say.

She nods at me. “Yes we still travel through time.” She sighs. “I wish I could say things get easier but they don’t.” Sitting down in a chair she continues. “After Frank died, I was so lost. I began drinking which affected my ability to travel.”

I gasp. Frank died? “How does Frank die?” I ask.

She doesn’t answer right away. When she does answer, her words are methodical. “You know I shouldn’t give out that information. So I won’t tell you. We made a promise to each other.”

“Fair enough.” I say. “What are you doing here?” I try to change the subject and possibly her train of thought.

“Just contemplating life.” She laughs. “You know this is our favorite place to come.”

Sam had a point. The cabin offers solace to weary travelers in need of reflection on their lives. I only wish I could believe that wholeheartedly.

There are some things I still find difficult to believe in these days. I’m sure I’ll overcome it eventually but I simply don’t know for certain how my future will unfold.

Whatever the case, the future is coming. There is no way around that or stopping it.

“What are you up to during all of this?” I ask.

Sam sighs. “We break down a lot crying. There isn’t much else we can do.” Her voice trails off as she begins to fade away. “Goodbye.”

I watch myself disappear. I envy my older self. She’s been through a lot and somehow manages to keep on moving. There’s a lot you can tell about a person’s life simply by how they live. There’s a lot of growth and potential that shines through.

It doesn’t take long before I disappear.

Frank

It’s a Saturday night. Greg and I are watching some football game on the television. Usually I have no interest in TV or football, but tonight I decide to go against the grain and watch a game with my best friend.

It’s halftime. I get up to grab more snacks. A beer calls out to me as well. I’m not much of a drinker but tonight I decide to make an exception.

Taking a sip of the beer, something feels off. I feel like I’m about to travel but I don’t go anywhere. It’s a weird sensation to say the least.

Greg stares at me like he's seen a ghost. "What just happened?" He says. "You phased in and out for a moment."

I look at the beer in my hand. "Must be the alcohol." I finally say. "Felt like I was going somewhere but I didn't." I pause for a moment and then smile. "I have got to tell Sam about this!"

As the game continues, I watch as the team I was rooting for gets pounded into the ground. At least I don't have any money riding on this game. I laugh.

Sam

I still can't believe Frank is gone. There were so many things I wanted to tell him. Now I can only hope to see him time traveling.

Was it wrong of me not to tell my younger self how Frank died? I can't help but wonder if there would have been a way to undo the chaos of his death. If only I could have warned Frank of his demise, perhaps I could have changed it all.

Let the rules be damned! Time can't always be fluid moving forward like a river. There has to be a way to warn Frank about what will happen to him. I must find a way to go back in time and fix all of this. There has got to be a way!

Frank

I'm sitting on the bank of a river. Today is fishing day. I haven't been able to catch anything of substantial size. They've all been small fry.

"You look bored." A woman says to me. I turn to see Sam sitting on a rock.

I laugh at the thought. I'm a time traveler, bored isn't even in my job description. So I think about why I'm fishing to begin with. I just need some time to think. When I need to think, I go fishing.

"I don't get bored." I say.

Sam laughs at me. "Trust me, I've seen you bored and it looks a lot like what you're doing right now." She smirks at me. I don't know what to say. I'm speechless.

I shake my head in disagreement. Whatever. Sam can believe what she wants. I continue fishing.

"Frank, I have some news. I'm not sure how you'll take it." Sam says.

I nod as though I'm listening. "Uh huh, go ahead."

“You’re going to die.” She says.

Boom there it is. I will die and Sam knows the cause of my death. Great, just great.

I pause for a moment. Sam is waiting for some kind of response. A response I’m not sure I can give..

Sam places her hands on her hips. “Aren’t you going to say something? Anything?”

Looking over at Sam I’m dumbfounded. What can I say? “So I die. Everyone dies Sam.”

Throwing her hands in the air, Sam is understandably frustrated.

“What am I supposed to say?” I ask looking for a straight forward answer.

Sam is flustered. “Something other than everyone dies!”

Setting my fishing pole down I sigh. “Okay Sam. Let’s talk. I die at some future date and time. Guessing by your age it’s in the next twenty years.”

Sam nods. “That’s correct. Do you want to know how you die?”

Standing up I pace back and forth. Do I want to know how I die. I’m not sure I do. No one should know too much about their own future. Especially when it comes down to how one dies.

“No don’t tell me.” I say. “I don’t want to know.”

Sam folds her arms across her chest.

“Fine.” She says. “I won’t say another word about it.”

I can’t believe she would want to tell me in the first place.

Sam

I can’t believe Frank doesn’t want to know how he dies. If I had been given the opportunity, I’d want to know how it all happens. It makes no sense to me. Oh well if he doesn’t want to know then he doesn’t want to know.

There’s no point in pushing the issue.

I sit back and wonder what I’m going to do with Frank. If he doesn’t want to know his own future what’s the point of being able to time travel to begin with?

He stares at me.

I stare at him back.

It doesn’t take long before one of us disappears.

Frank

I can't sleep. Somewhere out there is a version of Sam I haven't met yet. Somewhere out there is a version of me that she's yet to meet.

Traveling in time can be a bit much if you ask me. I want to be able to settle down once and for all. Put all of this time business behind me.

I don't know when or how that will happen.

Before I know it, I'm whisked to places unseen. I find myself in my own past.

"What are you doing here?" Frank says to me.

I hate running into my younger self. There's always questions I don't have the answer to. Always just one more question. I don't remember being so foolish as a younger man. But apparently I was.

Aside from the normal questions Frank wants to know if I'm seeing anyone. The answer of course is no. Time travel and relationships seldom go together.

Frank wants to know who wins the next Super Bowl. Again another answer I don't have.

Was I really this naive? Were these things really that important to me? I don't see how that can be the case. I'd like to think they weren't that upsetting to me. But whose to say for sure.

"I doubt I'll have answers to your questions Frank." I say.

He looks down at his feet. "I see."

"Hey an don't get down." I say. "There's no reason for that." I try to encourage myself. "You'll get there, trust me."

Telling yourself to trust you is never an easy concept.

"You always say that." Frank says. "And nine times out of ten it works." He admits.

"Good." I say.

Before I can say another word, I'm gone.

Sam

I look out a window to see it snowing. The tiny snowflakes are dancing in the sky. It's mid December. Christmas is just around the corner.

I can't say I'm too excited for Christmas. The excitement usually makes me time travel more frequently. I find myself unable to stay put in one place for too long. I hate it to be perfectly honest.

Looking across the street I see the neighbor boys are playing in the snow. Making snow forts, building snowmen, having snowball fights.

Good for them, I think. Why shouldn't they be out having all of that good clean fun? In a way I envy them. It would be nice to let go once in a while. The only problem is I don't know how to do that.

I wonder when I'll see Frank again. It's been almost two whole months since the last time I saw him. I wonder if he even thinks about or meetings.

Frank

Life got complicated. I'm sitting in jail for the who knows how many times and I'm wondering to myself how di I get here?

The guy in the next cell over won't quit snoring. It's starting to get on my nerves. But there's nothing I can do about any of it.

Oh that's right, I time jumped into someone's house and they caught me trying to get out. Noe one of my finest moments. A moment to remember for sure. If I could do it all over again I'd jump in front of the small house with the white picket fence. Unfortunate for me I don't have control over my time jumping.

The guard tells me to stop staring at him. I didn't realize I had been staring. Averting my eyes I look someplace else. The ceiling seems to be a good choice. I count the ceiling tiles to keep me busy.

I stop counting as a guard calls my name. They tell me I'm free to go that the charges have been dropped. What a relief. Getting out of jail I wonder where I'm meant to go. If there is someone controlling my time jumping I wish they would just pick a time and leave me there.

Sam

I'm sitting in my living room. Waiting for something to happen. Anything to happen.

It's been weeks since I last time traveled. It's an odd feeling not to go anywhere. But here I am just waiting for the inevitable. I know I'll go sooner or later. It's just a matter of time.

I wonder how Frank is doing. At that moment I vanish.

I appear in some kind of meadow. Frank is standing there in front of me. He's not wearing any clothes. His hair is full of shampoo.

It dawns on me. Frank time traveled during a shower.

This will be fun, I think. Then without warning I start laughing.

Frank looks at me annoyed. "Really?!" He says.

I stop laughing and put on a serious face. "Sorry." I say.

Taking the blanket off my shoulders I offer it to him.

"Thank you." Frank says accepting the blanket. He wraps it around his waist. "Much better."

"Shower huh?" I ask.

Frank nods. "Yeah."

I've yet to time travel naked. It's not something I look forward to. Talk about embarrassing.

I try to change the subject as eloquently as possible. "I wonder where we are." I say.

Frank shrugs. "Dunno." He says. "It's a nice day out. Let's find a river so I can wash this shampoo out of my hair."

So we set off to find a river or a lake, even a stream would help as long as it had water.

Coming to a small lake, Frank disrobes and jumps in. It must be cold because he screams so loud you could wake the dead.

Afterwards he bundles back up in the blanket and we take a walk.

We talk about current events. They don't match up. Either we have differing views of current events or I come from a future Frank hasn't experienced yet.

Taking a closer look, he does look younger than the last time I saw him. Then there was the shampoo. It didn't smell like Frank's typical brand. It smelled cheap, that's the best way to describe it.

I gather Frank comes from his college years. Definitely a time period I've yet to meet. I smile at the thought. It's nice to be able to see him this young. He has his whole future ahead of him.

Frank

I can feel time grabbing hold of me. Dropping the blanket I let out a sigh.

“Time to be going.” I say.

A second later I’m back in my shower. It’s empty. My girlfriend must have gotten tired of waiting or got spooked. The water is cold. I wonder how long I’ve been gone.

Turning off the water I grab a towel and head out into the living room. There she sits waiting for me.

“Frank.” She says. “You can’t keep disappearing like this. What if we were at dinner with my parents?” She asks. “I think it’s best if I moved on.”

She gets up to leave.

She’s right of course. There are so many variables in my time jumping. I never know when it will happen again. I feel so confused. My mind starts racing as my heart beats faster. Am I having a panic attack? I can’t tell.

I do know if I don’t get it under control I’m going to jump. I quickly get dressed just in case.

Sure enough a few moments later I time travel. I feel disconnected for a moment. Then a sensation of blacking out. In all my years of time traveling I have never blacked out before. I guess there’s a first time for everything.

Coming to, I find myself laying in a stack of books. It’s quite uncomfortable. Standing up, I see Sam looking out the window. She’s old. Not the young vibrant woman I had been running into.

“She said you would come here at this time. I’ve been waiting for you.” Sam says with a smile on her face. “Come here, let me take a good look at you.”

I do as she requests. Taking my face in her hands I see that she is blind. Before I can ask her about it, she responds.

“Car accident roughly thirty years ago.”

I frown. “I’m sorry Sam. That must have been horrible.”

She nods. “it was, but you were there each step of the way. My darling.”

I’m taken back by her words. So far she hasn’t used such affection towards me. Such an odd feeling yet it feels right.

Before I can ask any questions I disappear back to my own time.

Sam

I'm curled up on my couch trying to take a nap. It's been a long day and I am tired. Closing my eyes I drift off to sleep.

I wake up in a forest. My log cabin isn't too far away. There's a fire in the distance. I can see the smoke rising above the tree line.

Standing up I brush leaves and dirt off me. I walk towards the fire. Who in their right mind would light a fire out here? Coming along a small clearing I see Frank. I smile at the sight of him. He's older than the last time I saw him.

"Hey stranger." I say.

Frank turns around away from whatever he's cooking and smiles. "Thought you'd never get here." He pauses and takes a deep breath in. Exhaling slowly, Frank gestures to the food. "Lunch is ready."

I can't tell you exactly what it is we're eating. Frank won't tell me. It has a unique gamy taste to it. Whatever it is. It's quite delicious.

Frank smiles at me. "I take it you approve."

I nod in-between bites of food. "Yes it's delicious." I say.

It's then I notice Frank has a bit of gray in his hair. He looks handsome. I can see myself falling for him. Frank has manners and is the perfect gentleman. I can see myself growing old with him.

I wonder if he feels the same. Naturally we have to meet in the present for any of that to work and that hasn't happened yet. Not through lack of trying of course. We just haven't met officially yet. It's a real shame, it really is.

Frank

I don't have the heart to tell Sam about the car accident and the blindness she must endure. It would be too much to place on her. At least I think it would be too much. What to say really? She might take it just fine, then again she might not. For now I decide to keep quiet on the subject.

Sam has just jumped through time away from me. There's a strange connection we have. It's difficult to explain. If I can't explain it, I'm not sure anyone can.

I can feel time grabbing hold of me. I don't want to leave this place. I want to stay. But I cannot control the time stream. It will whisk me off to places unknown Take me out of my

comfort zone and out into the depths of eternity. I hate having no control over anything. It is but a mere annoyance in my existence.

So I will go where it takes me. It is quite a simple task. As I feel myself slipping I can see all of the possibilities running out there waiting to latch onto me. I do not hate it. It is but a particle of sand on a beach of all those time streams. I am but a piece of sand in an hourglass. Where I end up is anyone's guess.

Personally I wish I had control over the time journey. But I don't. It is but a resting place for a moment and then it is only a guess at that.

I breathe and then exhale and I'm gone.

Sam

I'm in the log cabin. It looks like winter has set in. I wonder what Frank is doing right now. I wonder if he would recognize me. I've grown old. I'm not too old but I can feel it in my legs and back. The silver hair doesn't help much either.

I remember back on all of the conversations which were had in this cabin. Talk about memories. I remember our last conversation like it was yesterday. Only it was a lifetime ago.

It was then I professed my love for Frank. Luckily in turn he professed the same feelings. We were both in our twenties with our whole lives ahead of us. Frank was in college and I was trying to start a business which would later fail miserably.

There's a knock at the door, it's followed by the door opening and closing. Footsteps appear next and then stop.

"You're blind!" A woman says.

I chuckle at the remark. "Yes Samantha I'm blind. Come sit down, have some tea." I pour her a cup and smile.

"Tell me how old are you dear?" I ask.

Sam blushes. "Thirty four." She says.

I smile. I remember this night quite well. I remember being shocked just like Sam is at the fact of being blind.

"I thought Frank would have been here." Sam says. There is loneliness in her voice. I understand that feeling all too well. She sighs and lets go of the frustration.

"Don't worry dear, you'll see him again soon." I say.

Sam sighs, it's not the answer she wanted to hear. Not in the least. Oh well we don't always get what we want. I chuckle at the thought.

Had I gotten my way I wouldn't be blind at the moment. Such a waste of space I feel. Time traveling without a net as it were. It didn't make sense to me. Why would God allow me to time travel when I'm blind? I can't fight off attackers or robbers. The best I can do is hope for the best.

"Might I have some more tea?" Sam asks.

I break out of my daze and pour another cup of tea for her.

"What are you doing with life my dear?" I ask with interest.

Sam is shy to say it. That's okay I muse. I remember the exact feeling she was having. It was a bit of *Déjà vu*.

We enjoy our tea and chat for a bit. We talk about life, about Frank who's go to ask Sam out on a proper date. Oh well, she's still young. There's still time. Sam is still young. I remember being that young.

She vanishes mid sentence. Whisked back to her life she had lived. Oh to be that young again.

I imagine how cold it is outside. If only I could see the snowflakes one last time before I die.

Frank

If time traveling has taught me anything it would be nothing is certain. Also always have a towel. I'm not a fan of bouncing around in time without a tether. It's frustrating. But what am I to do? What if I don't stop traveling in time? I could be an old man and still jumping through time. I don't like the thought of that.

I'm laying in bed staring at the ceiling. There's not much else I can do about it. I'm just waiting to travel again. It's inevitable that it will happen. I laugh at the thought. Most people wait to fall asleep. I wait to disappear. I've found that certain foods cause me to time travel more often. Caffeine really affects it.

As I lay there, I disappear.

Sighing, I wake up in a department store. A store manager notices me.

"Excuse me sir." He says "We're closing soon, please finalize your purchases soon."

I nod to the man and smile. "Of course."

I'm wearing yesterdays clothes. I've found that wearing clothes to bed helps when I travel. I never know when I'll travel.

Walking out of the department store I wonder why I'm here. I usually have a feeling of need when I travel. Like I'm there to help someone. Someone in need.

Looking around I see a woman, a store clerk checking people out. I wonder if I'm meant to help her. I'm reminded again of the closing hours.

I walk outside.

As I sit down on a bench, I let go a sigh.

A moment later the store clerk walks out and sits next to me on the bench.

"Hello." I say to the woman.

"Hello." She says.

The woman sighs as if the weight of the world were on her shoulders. She puts her head in her hands.

I lean over and ask. "Mind if I ask what's wrong?"

She looks up at me and frowns. "You wouldn't believe me if I told you."

I smile putting a hand on her shoulder. "Try me."

She takes a deep breath. "Okay, my boyfriend disappeared right before my eyes. I haven't seen him since."

Is it possible? Another time traveler? I ask her for a photo which she gives to me. I pocket the photo. I'll have to keep an eye out for him.

"He's a time traveler." I say. "I'll keep an eye out for him. What's your name?"

"June." She says. "How will you keep an eye out?"

"I'm also a time traveler." I admit.

At that point I fade away into time.

June screams.

Sam

I'm listening to Frank talk about another time traveler. Someone I'd never run into before. The only other traveler I know of is Frank.

"So I'm keeping an eye out for him." Frank finishes his story.

I marvel at the detail of the story. Obviously Frank added some known time travel facts to fill in the holes. But it was a fascinating story at least.

Frank looks at me expecting me to know what to do next as if I know the man. We don't even have a name to go off of. Talk about a problem. I look back at Frank unexpectedly. It feels like a race against time now. Who will disappear first?

The answer is neither of us.

A man appears in the log cabin. This has got to be Frank's runaway from his story.

"Where the hell am I now?!" The man screams.

Taking a blanket I cover the man and help him over to the couch to have a seat. He needs to calm down and know he's in a safe place.

Frank and I exchange glances.

"Hello friend, you're in a log cabin." I say. "I don't know the year but I do know it's spring outside. Um what's your name?"

He sits up and says. "My name is Gerald."

"Well Gerald your girlfriend is very worried about you." Frank says.

Gerald gets excited. "You've spoken to June?" He asks.

Frank nods. "I have."

"What's happening to me?" Gerald asks.

Reaching over, I put my hand on Gerald's leg. "You've been time traveling Gerald. From the sound of your hysteria you've been jumping around quite a bit. Is that right?"

Gerald nods a confirmation. "Yes I keep finding myself in different cities and I assume different times. It's quite nerveracking."

"I bet it is." Frank chimes in. "Time travel is not for the faint of heart." He adds.

Gerald shivers under the blanket. I get up to close the window.

"How do I make it stop?" Gerald asks.

I let go a sigh. "We don't know why it happens or how to stop it."

"If we did we would have stopped a long time ago." Frank cheerfully adds. "You can try to get back home though." Frank says. "Think about it really hard and there's a good chance you'll return to June."

Gerald closes his eyes and vanishes taking the blanket with him.

Frank

I'm sitting in my home watching television. The unthinkable has happened. Terrorists have bombed the Golden Gate Bridge. There are no survivors.

There's nothing else to do today but watch the news coverage.

Such a horrible tragedy.

Sam

I wonder what Frank is up to. Wonder if he's seen the news reports of the Golden Gate Bridge. Such a horrible thing to happen all these people dead for no reason at all. I keep watching the events over and over wondering who would have done this.

I call Frank's phone over and over but he doesn't answer.

Sam

Frank and I are back at the cabin. This is the youngest I've seen him. He must be seventeen maybe eighteen. We're having a discussion around a high school paper he has to write on why war is bad.

This is not how I planned on spending my afternoon. I give him some suggestions and watch as he writes them down. I'm hoping he doesn't write them word for word, just the ideas I give him.

After our discussion we warm ourselves by the fire. It isn't that big of a fire but one big enough to keep us quite warm.

That's when he tries to put the moves on me. I scoot away from him. "Frank we can't." I say. "I'm old enough to be your mother."

Frank laughs. "She's way older than you." He leans in for a kiss. I back away again.

"Maybe when we finally meet in real time okay?" I ask.

Frank looks defeated. "Fine, okay."

"Save me a dance." I say.

To be honest I don't know if it will ever happen. It would be nice to be able to meet Frank in real time. I won't lie, I've thought about it a lot. I've thought about all the things we'd do if we ever met in real life.

Meeting during time travel trips don't count. We would have to meet in real life. I'm determined to meet Frank one of these days, it's really only a matter of time.

Frank

I'm seated at a lunch counter next to my five year old self. People think Frank's my son. That suits me just fine.

We're eating apple pie. You can't eat a dollar a slice.

Frank has a lot of questions for me. I remember being his age and asking the same questions.

I chuckle at most of them. Frank takes them seriously of course, he's only five after all.

I try to part as much wisdom as I can to my younger self. I'm not sure how much of it will stick but I hope it's a lot. Yeah if Frank can remember these things, he'll be alright.

Finishing my apple pie I ask for the check. I pay the nice lady and then leave.

Sam

I'm sitting in a crowded subway car on my way to an interview. A fight breaks out among a few of the passengers. I wish I was anywhere but here.

As if fate is listening, I'm whisked away to parts unseen. I turn around slowly and find myself on top of a very tall mountain. Being afraid of heights does not help the matter. I can't believe this. If this is one of fates practical jokes, I'm not amused and I'm certainly not laughing.

I breathe in the air, it smells like rain. There are clouds floating by.

"Why am I here?" A voice says from behind me.

I turn around to see Gerald. The mysterious time traveler from a few days ago.

I let go a sigh. "Gerald how are you doing?"

Gerald frowns. "I was taking a nap." He says. "Next thing I know I'm here with you. You could say I'm frustrated."

I remember these early days of time traveling. They were annoying at best. There isn't a rhyme or reason to the time jumps. Whatever force is causing my time traveling must have a sense of humor about all of this. I feel for Gerald.

"You'll get the hang of it." I say.

Gerald continues to frown. “I don’t want to get the hang of it, I want to go home!” He shouts.

I vanish before I can comfort him.

Frank

I’m sitting in my apartment. I just broke up with my girlfriend. She just wasn’t understanding why I disappear from time to time. The one person that gets me is Sam.

I wonder what Sam is doing right now. Is she at the cabin? It is her favorite thinking spot. I wish I were with her right now. That’s when I vanish.

I’m laying on the floor of the cabin. Sam is standing over me.

“Ya okay?” She asks helping me to my feet.

As I stand, I feel a little queasy. “I’m not sure.” I say, I pass out.

Sam

Frank has just passed out from who knows what. I check his vitals, everything is weak. I rush around the cabin looking for a phone, a landline, anything. We’ve never had to contact the outside world before today. I don’t see anything that would be of use.

Frank stops breathing I administer CPR, but it’s too late. He’s gone.

He’s gone.

He’s gone.

I sit on the floor and begin bawling my eyes out. My best friend has died.

As if the universe wasn’t cruel enough, Frank’s body vanishes in a time stream. Back to wherever he had came from. So this is how it ends. Frank told me once that he was going to die, I figured he was just saying that we all were fragile and were going to die. No, he meant it.

I wish I could have asked my older self more about that. Then I would at least have been prepared for this terrible day.

The End