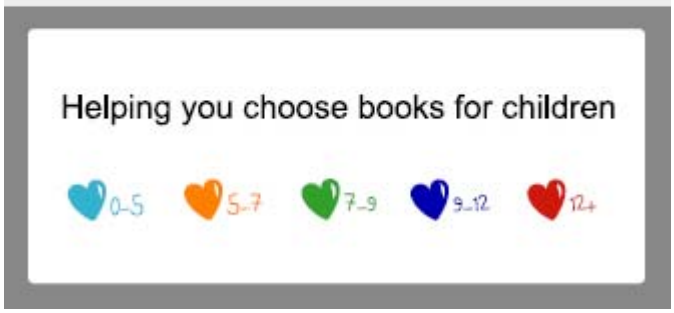
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opening extract from

The Time Machine

written by

H. G. Wells

- retold by Eric Brown

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THE CHARACTERS



The time traveller

The time traveller has built a time machine. Can he really travel into the future to learn what becomes of humankind?

Filby

An old friend of the time traveller, but will he believe the incredible story of strange worlds?





The psychologist

The psychologist enjoys his talks with his time traveller friend. Has the inventor gone completely mad this time?



The medical man

He thinks the time traveller's tale is poppycock, but what does he make of the white flowers brought back from the far future?



The very young man

The young man really wants to believe in time travel, yet this story of danger and death in the future seems just too far-fetched.

Weena

Weena falls in love with the strange man from the past. How can she warn him of the dangers he faces?





The Morlocks

The Morlocks live brutish lives far underground. What is it that they eat when they come out at night?



THE TIME MACHINE

The time traveller was explaining a very complicated matter to his friends. They sat before the blazing fire, drinking wine and listening to his words.

'You must follow me carefully,' said the time traveller. 'I shall have to explain one or two ideas that everyone takes for granted.'

'That's rather a grand claim to start with!' said Filby, an argumentative man with red hair.

'I do not mean to ask you to accept anything without reasonable ground for it,' the time traveller said.

'Then continue,' said the psychologist.

'Clearly,' said the time traveller, 'any object exists in four dimensions. It must have length, breadth, thickness – and duration.'

'Yes, I understand,' said the very young man.

‘The fourth dimension of duration,’ continued the time traveller, ‘is just another way of looking at time. Now, some philosophical people have been asking why we cannot move in time as we move in the other three dimensions.’

‘But,’ said the medical man, ‘you cannot move at all in time! You cannot get away from the present moment.’

The time traveller smiled. ‘My dear sir, that is just where you are wrong. This is the germ of my great discovery – that it is indeed possible to move along the time dimension.’

‘Surely that is against reason,’ said Filby.

The time traveller smiled. ‘Long ago,’ he said, ‘I had the vague inkling of a machine which could … ’

‘ … travel through time?!’ exclaimed the very young man.

‘Yes, and I have experimental verification.’

Filby laughed.

‘It would be useful for the historian,’ the psychologist said. ‘He might travel back in time to the Battle of Hastings!’

‘One might visit ancient Greece,’ said the very young man, ‘and then there is always the future!’

The editor leaned forward. ‘You said you had experimental verification,’ he challenged the time traveller. ‘Then let’s see it. Though it’s all humbug, of course.’

The time traveller smiled at his friends, then stood and left the room.

‘I wonder what he’s got?’ the psychologist said.

‘Some magic trick or other,’ said the medical man.

The time traveller returned.

He was carrying a glittering metallic framework, a little larger than a small clock. He placed the mechanism upon a table, then drew up a chair and sat down.

'This little affair,' said the time traveller, 'is only a model. It is the prototype for a bigger machine.'

His friends stared at the machine.

'Now this little lever,' explained the time traveller, indicating a rod of ivory, 'sends the machine gliding into the future, and this one



sends it back in time. I am going to move this lever, and off the machine will go. It will pass into future time, and disappear.'

The editor opened his mouth to speak, but changed his mind.

The time traveller moved his hand towards the lever, then suddenly turned to the psychologist. 'No. Lend me your hand.' He took the man's hand and pressed the lever forward.

Everyone saw the lever move. There was a breath of wind, and one of the candles on the mantelpiece was blown out. The little machine on the table swung around, became faint ... and vanished!





The psychologist looked under the table. The time traveller laughed.

'Look here,' said the medical man, 'do you seriously believe that the machine has travelled in time?'

'Certainly,' replied the time traveller, filling his pipe. 'I have a much bigger machine nearly finished in my laboratory. And soon I intend to travel upon it.' He looked around at his friends. 'Would you care to see the time machine itself?'