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*Breathe In The Light and Say Goodbye.*

How does one test such a device?

You couldn't take it with you, so you were stranded wherever you landed.

The equations all pointed to success but none of it meant anything unless I could prove it had worked.

The goal was as old as modern man; move forward in time faster than a ticking clock.

The numbers said it wouldn't work if you tried to go back in time, but forward was a distinct possibility.

Logic said that the person doing the jump would not age more than a few seconds but whatever they brought with them would probably age independently. This meant that a really long jump, say one or two hundred years, might find the 'jumper' in tatters at the landing point.

The jump was deceptively simple.

No whirring machinery or blinking lights.

No electrical storms or noxious chemicals.

All that was needed was to switch on the globe, breathe in the light and say goodbye.

At least, that was the theory.

Many great scientific breakthroughs have come about because some brave soul injected themselves with some experimental vaccine or strapped themselves inside some potentially explosive device and flicked a switch. If it worked they survived and if it didn't someone else took up the challenge and worked out where they had gone wrong.

I'm good with numbers but I'm no hero, so there was no way I was going to take the first jump.

I needed a volunteer.

I stared at my dog for the longest time but in the end I couldn't bring myself to endanger his life. After all, he had more sense than most of the people I knew.

Up until this point I had kept my work a closely guarded secret.

There were forces out there that would do drastic things to get hold of a device like mine.

I had to tell someone and because there were few people I could really trust I chose Frankie.

He was one of those rare individuals who knew how to keep his mouth shut. He didn't care much for money; he just liked to hang out, write music and drink coffee. He didn't have any family but he did have friends.

One sunny Friday afternoon at the cafe on the corner of my street I told him what I had been working on. There was always the chance that someone would overhear our conversation but if they did they would probably think that we were a couple of stoners just making shit up.

The cafe is owned by a hard working couple and I like them a lot. They seem to be happy to run this little cafe and enjoy their young family. Their expectations of life are small and beautiful.

The cafe, on the other hand, is medium sized and a little bit worn around the edges, but this only adds to its appeal. The walls are cream and the trim is green. The

counter looks like it came from an old department store.

The glass front looks out of place in a cafe.

I keep expecting to see a selection of ties instead of cakes.

The tables are a mix of whatever was in the second hand stores at the time they set the place up — the chairs are similarly random. I turned one of the chairs over one day and it had a few words chalked on the underside, ‘Tell Beryl I didn’t mean it.’

I’ve often wondered if the message was delivered.

Over the years I have frequented many cafes and it always pissed me off that the owners would build up the business and then ‘flip it’ for a quick profit.

The next owners would do the same and so it would go.

I know it’s illogical but it left me feeling betrayed.

So much so that I stopped remembering cafe owner’s names until they had been around for at least a year; I couldn’t see the point if they were just going to bugger off.

I know I sound a little crazy but there is something very personal about a place where you sit and dream and write and contemplate your life.

I don’t care who owns my local supermarket and they probably would not know me from Adam, and that’s fine by me, but a cafe — that’s something different.

Frankie and I were sitting on the old leather couch that sits in the window.

You can see the traffic going by but it is far enough away that you can’t hear it. The hill behind the highway rises steeply and about half way up there is a railway line. You can just see the trains gliding through the trees.

I’m not sure why, but I like this view best on a rainy day, and it was raining the day I told Frankie.

I was mildly surprised when he volunteered to take the first experimental jump.

He wasn’t even a little slightly amazed that I was working on time travel.

He has known me for a very long time and he knows that I’m obsessed.

Even so, I was expecting a small look of surprise; but no.

It was as though we had been working on this thing together all along.

In that moment I was reminded why I love this guy; so trusting, so full of life, so ready for an adventure.

I wanted to be sure that he understood so I went over it again and explained that I had not tested the idea on any living creature and that he would be the first, and that I could not guarantee that he would survive.

He just looked at me like I was wasting time; he wanted to get on with it.

So far I had been able to move a few inanimate objects forward in time by waving them in front of the light.

The shorter the 'wave' the shorter the time jump.

On one test I got distracted and the object I was testing has not reappeared and that was several months ago.

The slightest miscalculation and the time jump could be enormous.

Because of the density of living things it is necessary to breathe in the light so that the whole person moves evenly through time.

Just waving someone in front of the light would not have the desired effect.

In theory, if you took a deep breath you should move forward further than if you just 'sipped' the light. But, because I had only experimented with objects and they don't breathe, there was no way to accurately predict what was going to happen.

My experiments had been restricted to sending a few items, including a teddy bear, forward by about 36 hours.

Breathing in the light was always going to produce a longer journey.

There is no 'coming back'.

Whoever made the first jump would just have to wait for the rest of us to catch up

in time.

The success of this project was very important to me but I was struggling to work out a practical application for the invention. I guess that would be a challenge for others to tackle.

Our final task was to set a time for the jump, and my intention was to make it's duration as short as possible so that I could find out if it worked. I needed to know if there were there any side effects, and on a personal level, I wanted to know what it felt like.

I drove Frankie crazy for a couple of days by telling him over and over again that he had to remember absolutely everything.

He isn't much of a note taker but he did promise to try.

There was no sense putting it off any longer, so we set a date.

I've always liked Wednesdays so I picked the 14th as our launch date.

Early afternoon is Frankie's favourite time of day so we made it 2 pm.

I shouted him lunch at the Kallista Tea Rooms; it seemed only fair.

He had a steak pie and I had those delicious chips that only the Tea Rooms seems capable of making.

Frankie had a couple of things to do before the launch so I said I would meet him back at my place.

When he arrived he had two very large suitcases with him.

They were those old fashioned ones with a leather belt tied around them.

They looked to be very heavy.

We had talked about him taking a change of clothes but this seemed like overkill,

but I let it go.

I was too excited to argue.

Frankie took a parcel from his coat pocket and laid it on my kitchen table; ‘to be opened when I’m gone.’

Frankie stood in front of the light clutching the suitcases by their worn brown handles.

‘Tell me one more time.’

‘Simply breathe in the light and say goodbye’

I hit the switch and he was gone.

I just stood there.

It all seemed like a bit of an anti-climax.

My dog looked at me and I was glad I had not sent him.

I hoped Frankie was safe, and with a bit of luck I would find out soon enough.

If my calculations were correct I only had a few weeks to wait and a lot of my questions would be answered.

What does one do while waiting for time to pass?

One waits.

I made myself a cup of strong Earl Grey and stared out of the window.

The sun was filtering through the trees the way that it does at this time of year.

I resolved to be at home everyday at exactly 2 pm just in case Frankie re-appeared

earlier than expected.

Frankie's parcel was still sitting on my kitchen table as I put my cup in the sink.

The parcel was wrapped in brown paper and tied up with string — do people still wrap things in brown paper and tie them with string?

Maybe I should have worked out a way of sending Frankie back to a time when people did such things?

I undid the string and unwrapped the parcel.

I had never seen that many 100 hundred dollar bills all in one place.

The note said that there was 100 thousand dollars in the parcel — I wasn't about to stop and count it — the note concluded by saying that his suitcases contained the better part of three million dollars.

Time stopped for just a moment and it was then that I decided not to be home at 2 pm ever again.

I was a bit stunned, but the sound of my dog barking at whoever it was at my front door and the flashing blue light strobing through my front windows snapped me out of it.

I could hear someone shouting but I did not need to know what they were saying.

I grabbed my faithful dog, stuffed the money under my arm, breathed in the light and said goodbye.