

The Happy Noisemaker Prize For Storytelling- Busha category

Title: Time Travel

I gazed out of the window of my luxurious apartment, my thoughts filled with the extra million I had made that week. It was a remarkable achievement, one that I couldn't have accomplished without that peculiar encounter with my teenage self, a moment that had the potential to change my life forever.

Not too long ago, I found myself in a financial rut, with nothing to my name but regrets about my past decisions. I couldn't help but think about the one decision I'd always regretted—giving up on my dream of becoming a writer. It was a choice that had haunted me for years, especially when I saw the success of writers in the current market.

The desire to go back in time consumed me. I immersed myself in books about time travel, experimenting with various methods, regardless of their authenticity.

One fateful day, after tirelessly working on a time travel project, a spark ignited within the machinery, and suddenly, I found myself in an unfamiliar place. I felt both scared and thrilled at the same time.

As I navigated this strange environment, I stumbled upon a quiet road that led me to a park I had frequented as a child, now transformed into a bustling thoroughfare for cars.

It hit me suddenly, like a lightning bolt—I had successfully traveled back in time. I recalled the project's warning that that I could only stay in the past for five hours.

Without a moment to spare, I sprinted toward the house where I once lived as a child. Peeking through the window at the back, I caught a glimpse of my parents sitting across from the television. It had been years since I last saw them, as they tragically passed away in a car accident.

Tears welled up in my eyes as a rush of emotions flooded over me. It was like being in a dream that I never thought could happen.

I was taken aback as my younger self walked into the sitting room.

"Mom, Dad, I'm going to be at Kevin's," my younger self announced before he left.

He came out, and I watched him ride his bike smoothly. Kevin had been my childhood best friend, and we did literally everything together. I followed suit; he was faster, but I didn't mind, as I still knew the way.

After walking a bit, I found my younger self sitting on a chair by the road, his bike tires punctured by a nail. I approached him.

"Hey there. Need help?" I said, trying not to startle him.

He raised his head to look at me. "What can you do?"

I smiled and replied, "Anything you want me to. Mind if I join you?"

He hesitated for a moment but then gestured to the spot next to him. "Sure, take a seat."

As we sat on the iron chair beneath the shade of the oak tree, I couldn't help but feel a wave of nostalgia wash over me. This was a chance to relive a part of my youth, to reconnect with the dreams and aspirations I had once held dear.

"So," I began, "what's on your mind? What are you kids dreaming about these days?"

My teenage self looked at me, his eyes reflecting hesitation. "I want to be a writer, you know? But everyone keeps telling me it's not a sure path, that I should pursue something more stable."

I nodded, understanding his struggle all too well. "Writing is a passion, and passion is what makes life truly meaningful. Don't let anyone discourage you. Pursue your dreams, but also be open to exploring other avenues to support yourself while you do it."

He seemed encouraged by my words, and we talked about writing, creativity, and the value of not giving up. I shared stories of the challenges I had faced as a writer and how I had given up on my dream. As we worked on fixing his bicycle tires, it became a therapeutic and meaningful conversation.

As the sun began to set, I realized that my time with my teenage self was drawing to a close. I couldn't change the past, but I could leave him with a sense of purpose and the knowledge that someone believed in his dreams.

My teenage self looked at me with newfound sense of determination. "I appreciate all this advice," he said, "but why are you telling me this?"

I smiled. "You don't have to believe me. In fact, it's probably better if you don't. Just promise me one thing—promise yourself, actually. Promise that you'll take these lessons to heart and put them into practice. It may not seem like much now, but trust me, it will change your life."

My younger self nodded solemnly, a sense of seriousness in his eyes. "I promise."

Before I left, I gave him a worn notebook I had brought with me, filled with writing ideas and advice. "Keep writing," I said. "This notebook has helped me through many tough times. It's a reminder that your dreams are worth pursuing."

He accepted the notebook with gratitude, and we said our goodbyes as he rode his bicycle happily away.

In the blink of an eye, I found myself back in the present, standing in my luxurious apartment. It appears that my younger self made the right choices and never gave up on writing.

Years later, as I looked back on my life, I couldn't help but marvel at the financial success I had achieved—all thanks to that fateful encounter with my younger self.