

Ditch the Dollars Sis!

She sits across from me. Her body is stiff and her lips are set into a thin line. Her face is blank but I know she's excited. I know that beneath my 'scribing' table, her hands are folded tight against her thighs, perspiring. I know that heat presses into her skin like it always does when she's on the brink of discovering something new. I know all of this because she is me.

My younger self is in many ways no different from me. I still have the same afro hair braided into a consistently rough all-back. I never got rid of the stubbornness. I still push my glasses up my nose because my hands can't find any other thing to do.

We push our glasses up at the same time, and I wonder if a part of her recognizes me. Since I can't let that happen, I fold into myself in an attempt to hide the pieces of me that might be obvious.

"So?" She gestures to the metal bowl filled with clear water on the table, "what did you see?"

When I snuck into TimePortal Co, it was difficult to decide what timeline to enter. I shifted through my memories until I came to this one. The one where I had gone to meet a fortune teller not because I wanted my fortune told but as research for a book I was writing. It did not end well. The memory regurgitates from the recess of my mind, and I shake my head. Ah! Never again.

"You're going to be very wealthy in the future but only if you invest in a particular Cryptocurrency." I answer.

She frowns. "Seriously? Crypto? I should have known you were a fake. A fortune teller wearing a hoodie." She reaches for her tote bag to leave.

"What do you want me to wear? Raffia? Madam sit down and listen to me." I reach for her over the table then draw back, remembering the *No Touching!* warning pasted on the time portal machine. I blow out a breath.

"Why should I believe you?"

"I saw other things about you. You've never had a boyfriend."

A cough escapes her, "anyone can know that."

A vein ticks on the side of my head. Lord, I forgot how annoying I was. “Listen, can I just tell you about the money thing?”

“Okay. Feel free.”

“How much do you know about cryptocurrency? Nevermind. There’s this one you must invest in. It’s called Solarcoin.”

“Solar as in solar energy?”

“Yes. In the future, the world shifts almost completely to solar energy. Not that far into the future actually.” It had taken only thirty years, and happened in line with the Paris 2050 agreement.

“And I become rich how?” She asked, drawing out her words.

“The same way people became rich through crypto. Current speculation is that it’s a high risk investment option, with high chances of your investment being devalued in the future. But!” I tap the metal bowl, almost tipping it over, “they’re wrong. I’ve seen the future with this, and the future is solar powered, amongst other things.” I shrug.

Her eyes narrow, “you seem to have a lot of financial knowledge for a fortune teller.”

I simply point at the metal bowl. “See, I know that you’re currently trying to earn and save in dollars since it’s a top currency. Good for you but here’s my advice: ditch the dollars.” Saving in dollars had worked for me but down the line, the Solarcoins took over. I had been too scared to put my money in them because of crypto volatility, and look where that led me—back to the past trying to convince my younger self to do the opposite so we can be wealthy instead of comfortable. A bonus is me quitting my 9-5. Really, I’m doing this more for her than myself. Younger me despised 9-5 jobs.

She brings up her phone and types something. I see what she’s doing through her glasses but I wait. If I push further, she might get suspicious. After minutes of scrolling, she points her phone in my face, showing me a website on Solarcoins. “So you’re saying if I invest in this now, I’ll be rich as fuck in the future?”

“That’s the goal,” I mutter.

“Huh?”

“Yes, yes. That’s what I saw in the bowl anyway. You can choose not to listen o. The 9-5 work you’ll eventually do will still pay well.”

She straightens up, a look of horror flashes across her face, “corporate work?”

I nod solemnly.

“Oh.” She makes a noise at the back of her throat, and I see the moment she begins to truly consider what I’ve been saying.

Her phone rings, she draws her hand back to look at the screen. Her knee jerks, hitting the table. “Ow! Shit! I forgot I was supposed to meet someone this evening. I’ll come back tomorrow.” She drops a paper on the table, “please help me answer these questions.” She says and dashes off before I can stop her.

I can only wait and hope she comes back. I have thirty-six hours left before my timeline draws me back into it. I read through the paper even though I already know what’s on it. I smile at my handwriting, remembering how I had carefully crafted those questions. I never wrote the book, and the fortune teller turned out to be a thief. I had gone home with an empty tote bag that day, my bank accounts were cleaned out too. The smile on my face widens as I realize none of that is going to happen now. She—I, is going to come back tomorrow because I stopped the fortune teller.

There’s a coughing sound from the other room. Standing up, taser in hand, I go there and find that the fortune teller has woken up.

She starts crying. “Sister, if it’s money you want, I have plenty.”

I hiss and taser her again.

“I bought some yesterday.” She says as she enters the room. “Not much but I think I’ll start with that first. I did more research on Solarcoin. It’s not doing very well on the stock exchange but...”

“I know what I saw. It’s going to be pretty volatile until it stabilizes. Just dump your money in it and remove your eyes. Here,” I push the paper to her, “I answered all the questions. And then some.”

She collects it and scans through, then folds the paper into her bag. She grins at me, “thank you! I’ll do the Solarcoin thing after I’m done with research for my book. Wait, that’s true, did you see anything on this book I want to write?”

“No, it is not everything I can see. Some parts of your future depend on luck, like the crypto thing. Other parts, let’s just say a lot has to be decided by you.” For a second, I feel sad because we never did write that book. We chose financial security instead. That’s why I’m here, to stop myself from making *that* mistake.

“Are you okay?” She asks me.

“Yes,” I answer, “I just remembered a client that came to me because she never got to live her dream.”

Darkness welcomes me back to TimePortal Co. My timeline brought me back earlier than I expected. I must have miscalculated.

My heart is pounding, my palms sweaty as I bring out my phone to log in to my bank app. I type in my password wrong on the first three tries. “Calm down now,” I hiss at myself. Wiping my fingers against my jeans, I try again.

The app icon fades in and out as it loads. Irritation bubbles in me. We have time machines and can travel to the past but somehow bank apps have amazingly retained their horrible service.

It loads and opens. My chest tightens. I shut my eyes as I click one icon on the app to reveal my balance. Blowing out a breath, I open my eyes. Cold washes over my body. My balance is still the same. I should have known, with my stubbornness and all.

Disappointed, I swipe the bank app away. Instead of closing, another interface pops up. A ‘Solarcoin’ logo appears and the interface prompts me to input my password. Hope blossoms. I type my normal bank app password, biting my fingernails, hoping that it works.

It does.

“Yes!” I shout then cover my mouth. I’m not ready to go to jail for trespassing. I click on my balance. Slowly, my eyes take in the number of zeroes. Slowly, my phone falls from my hand.