THE TIME MACHINE

By TIM KELLY

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PIONEER DRAMA SERVICE, INC.
Englewood, Colorado
CAST OF CHARACTERS
(In Order Of Appearance)

MRS. WATCHETT a housekeeper
AGATHA a secretary
JESSICA Filby's sister
DR. LESTER a scientist
DR. MEADOWS a psychologist
DR. FINK a physician
FILBY the Time Traveler, an inventor
DASH a journalist
CHOSE another journalist
FIRST ELOI citizen of the Future
SECOND ELOI another
THIRD ELOI another
WEENA another
GRUNT a mutant
FIRST TAPE a memory bank
SECOND TAPE another
THIRD TAPE another
KING MORLOCK leader of the Morlocks
MORLOCK ONE a creature who lives beneath the ground
MORLOCK TWO another
MORLOCK THREE another
ANCIENT ONE a link with the past
ADDITIONAL ELOI AND MORLOCK as desired

CASTING NOTE: Many roles can be played by either male or female . . . LESTER, MEADOWS, FINK, DASH, CHOSE, ELOI, MORLOCK, TAPE, ANCIENT ON
SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT ONE
Scene One: Sitting room in the house of Filby, a scientist and inventor. The present.

Scene Two: One week later. Evening.

ACT TWO
Scene One: Land of the Eloi. In the future.

Scene Two: A path.

Scene Three: The Palace of Green Porcelain.

ACT THREE
Underground realm of the Morlocks, followed by Filby's sitting room.
THE TIME MACHINE

ACT ONE
Scene One

SETTING: Sitting room in a house belonging to FILBY (The Time Traveler), an inventor-scientist, on the outskirts of London. There is a small table with two chairs RIGHT CENTER, two chairs STAGE LEFT. UP RIGHT is an EXIT that leads into FILBY’S workshop. STAGE LEFT is an ENTRANCE from another part of the house. DOWN RIGHT leads into the kitchen. Prior to curtain we hear the loud sounds of machinery.

AT RISE: The sounds continue for a few more seconds. MRS. WATCHETT, a rather comical housekeeper, is dusting at the table. AGATHA, FILBY’S secretary, ENTERS LEFT with papers in her hand.

AGATHA: Good morning, Mrs. Watchett. (Looks UP RIGHT.) Is Mr. Filby still in the workshop?

MRS. WATCHETT: Yes, Miss. Went in last night before supper and hasn’t so much as stuck his nose outside the door.

AGATHA: (MOVES CENTER.) I hope he hasn’t forgotten there are some important callers coming to see him this morning.

MRS. WATCHETT: (Stops dusting.) What time, Miss?

AGATHA: (Checks wristwatch.) Any minute.

MRS. WATCHETT: I expect Mr. Filby’s forgotten. He’s a bit like the absent-minded professor.

AGATHA: Yes, when it comes to things like appointments and remembering holidays. However, if it has anything to do with mathematics, or science, or abstract theory, Mr. Filby is an absolute genius.

MRS. WATCHETT: If you say so, Miss. Must give one a sense of satisfaction being secretary to a genius. I don’t know anything about mathematics, or science, or abstract theory.

AGATHA: Few people do.
MRS. WATCHETT: Mr. Filby says I’m an absolute genius in the kitchen. No one can make a codfish pie like Mrs. Watchett.

AGATHA: We can’t compare a codfish pie with a scientific discovery, can we?

MRS. WATCHETT: Don’t see why not.

JESSICA: (FILBY’S sister, ENTERS DOWN RIGHT.) You’re early, aren’t you, Agatha?

AGATHA: I stayed up most of the night typing these notes for your brother. He wanted them first thing in the morning.

JESSICA: He’s having some guests.

AGATHA: I know. (Holding up papers.) That’s what these notes are all about. I have to type slowly. Your brother is such a stickler for detail and accuracy.

JESSICA: (MOVES UP RIGHT.) I suppose I should call his attention to the hour.

MRS. WATCHETT: (Alarmed.) Don’t disturb him, Miss Jessica. You know how your brother is when he’s working.

JESSICA: Indeed, I do. Like a bear with poison ivy.

MRS. WATCHETT: Won’t even allow me into his precious workshop to dust. Dust in there is deep enough to grow potatoes.

(Sound of Doorbell, LEFT.)

AGATHA: They’re here.

JESSICA: Get the door, Mrs. Watchett.

MRS. WATCHETT: Yes, Miss. (EXITS LEFT.)

JESSICA: (MOVES DOWN.) Do I know the people my brother is expecting?

AGATHA: They’re associated with the International Science Guild. Down from London.
JESSICA: I must say my brother has been behaving most odd. More than usual, I mean. His preoccupation with clocks is driving me frantic. His study of time has become an obsession. If he isn’t careful, he may suffer some form of physical or mental breakdown.

AGATHA: Not Mr. Filby. Your brother only appears distracted and peculiar because he worries about things that don’t concern the rest of us.

JESSICA: He should be more conventional. For the neighbors’ sake.

AGATHA: You don’t mean that, Jessica. If everyone was conventional, what would become of progress?

JESSICA: Progress? Last spring when he was working at his laboratory table, he blew the roof off.

AGATHA: I’m not likely to forget.

JESSICA: Nor are the neighbors. A damaged house is not my idea of progress.

(MRS. WATCHETT ENTERS LEFT with DR. MEADOWS and DR. LESTER.)

MRS. WATCHETT: (Announces.) Dr. Meadows and Dr. Lester. (MRS. WATCHETT steps UP STAGE.)

JESSICA: (CROSSES LEFT.) How do you do. I’m Miss Filby. My brother’s expecting you. Mrs. Watchett, why don’t you prepare some chocolate. I imagine our visitors could do with a cup.

LESTER: Most kind of you, Miss Filby. However, we had a rather substantial breakfast before we boarded the train.

MRS. WATCHETT: You haven’t had breakfast until you’ve tasted my codfish pie.

JESSICA: That will be all, Mrs. Watchett. I’ll call you if you’re needed.
MRS. WATCHETT: *(EXITS DOWN RIGHT.)* I’m glad I’m not the one to disturb Mr. Filby at his labors. *(She’s OUT.)*

JESSICA: *(Indicates chairs LEFT.)* Please be seated. *(THEY sit.)* You’ll have to make allowances for Mrs. Watchett. She’s the only servant my brother will allow in the house. She’s been with the family since we were children. *(Remembers AGATHA.)* Oh! How rude of me. This is Miss White, my brother’s secretary.

LESTER & MEADOWS: *(Nod.)* Miss White.

AGATHA: Mr. Filby has such a high regard for both of you.

LESTER: That’s flattering. Eh, Meadows?

MEADOWS: Quite.

AGATHA: Isn’t Dr. Fink with you?

LESTER: He stopped to buy the latest issue of The Times. He likes to keep as current as possible.

*(Sound of Doorbell, LEFT.)*

MEADOWS: That must be him.

JESSICA: I’ll attend to it. *(EXITS LEFT.)*

LESTER: I wonder, Miss White, have you any idea why Filby has summoned us down from London?

AGATHA: *(Steps CENTER.)* I imagine it has something to do with that machine he’s built.

MEADOWS: What kind of machine?

LESTER: An infernal machine, if I know Filby. Fellow’s always up to some kind of madness.

AGATHA: *(Coldly.)* My employer is not mad.

LESTER: I don’t mean to imply he is. Filby is just, uh . . . *(Searches for the right word.)* . . . uh, uh . . .

MEADOWS: I believe the word you’re reaching for is “eccentric”.

For preview only
LESTER: That’s it . . . eccentric. (Sees AGATHA, about to explode in rage, arms folded.) In a nice way, of course.

MEADOWS: (Agrees.) Of course.

(JESSICA ENTERS LEFT with DR. FINK.)

JESSICA: Your friends are in here, Dr. Fink.

LESTER: Ah, there you are, Fink. Did you get the latest edition?

FINK: (Pats newspaper under his arm.) I have it. Like to keep up with events. Up to the minute.

JESSICA: (Indicates chair at table.) Please be seated.

FINK: Thank you, Miss Filby.

JESSICA: Dr. Fink, this is my brother’s secretary.

FINK: Miss White.

AGATHA: Yes.

FINK: We’ve had some correspondence.

JESSICA: Are you all medical?

FINK: Hardly. I’m the only medical person. Meadows here is a psychologist and Lester is a scientist of some renown.

LESTER: I have respect for your brother’s tenacity and grit, Miss Filby. One of these years he might astonish us all.

AGATHA: His workshop is a factory of invention.

JESSICA: I don’t know about invention, but it certainly SMELLS like a factory. Once a week I’m fairly driven from the house because of the noise and the odor emanating from my brother’s workshop. One of these days, we’ll have the local authorities here, complaining.

LESTER: Considerable noise?

JESSICA: Machines clanging, whistles tooting, motors running, engines steaming, gears meshing. It’s all the same to him.
AGATHA: It’s music to Mr. Filby’s ears.

MEADOWS: *(Checks pocket watch.)* Don’t think me rude, but Filby is usually such a punctual chap. Does he know we’re here?

AGATHA: More-or-less.

FINK: What’s that supposed to mean?

JESSICA: He’s so preoccupied with his latest invention, he forgets easily.

AGATHA: I suppose I should try.

JESSICA: I’ll go. When my brother hears my voice, it gets a response. He invited his colleagues here, and I, for one, expect him to show some manners.

*(She starts to MOVE UP RIGHT when there is a sound of an explosion from the workshop. Stage Lights Flash. ALL react. MEADOWS leaps to his feet.)*

FINK: Merciful heavens!

LESTER: What was that?!

JESSICA: If he’s taken the roof off a second time, I shall never speak to him again.

AGATHA: He may be hurt!

FILBY: *(ENTERING, disheveled and dusty.)* Nothing to fear. A small miscalculation on my part.

JESSICA: You didn’t damage the roof?

FILBY: Only the corner. We could do with a bit of ventilation in there. Gets stuffy on occasion.

MRS. WATCHETT: *(ENTERS, excited, DOWN RIGHT.)* My codfish pie has fallen flat as a pancake. The kitchen shook like an earthquake.

JESSICA: Come along, Mrs. Watchett. We’ll consider the damage.
MRS. WATCHETT: You can chalk up one codfish pie as a casualty. (THEY’RE OUT.)

FILBY: (Steps DOWN CENTER. He’s an energetic young scientist with no time for much except research and pushing back the boundaries of the Unknown. Brushing dust from himself.) Do sit down, Meadows. Don’t allow a little explosion to put you off.

MEADOWS: (Sits.) You might have killed the lot of us.

FILBY: I might have, but I didn’t. (To AGATHA.) Do try to get all this down.

AGATHA: (Sits at table beside FINK.) Yes, sir. I have the notes you dictated yesterday.

FILBY: Make copies for my friends when you have time. Will this afternoon be too soon?

AGATHA: (Frowns.) I’ll do my best, Mr. Filby.

FILBY: Splendid. (Rubs his hands in glee.) My friends, you must follow me closely. I shall have to challenge one or two ideas that are almost universally accepted.

MEADOWS: What ideas?

FILBY: The geometry they taught you at school is founded on a misconception.

LESTER: Nonsense.

FINK: Rubbish.

FILBY: I don’t mean for you to accept anything without reasonable ground for it. Without proof.

FINK: I should think not.

FILBY: You agree any real body must have extension in four directions?

MEADOWS: Three . . . length, breadth, thickness.
FILBY: You forgot the fourth... duration.

LESTER: Duration?

FILBY: Think of it as Time. There is no difference between Time and any of the three dimensions of Space except that our consciousness moves along it. Time is only a kind of Space.

LESTER: My dear fellow, if Time is really part of Space, why can’t we move in Time as we move about in the dimension of Space?

FILBY: But we can.

LESTER: Move about in Time?

MEADOWS: Ridiculous.

LESTER: Preposterous.

FINK: Detrimental to health.

AGATHA: (Excited by the discussion.) Sir, you mean we can get away from the present moment? (ALL look at her.) I am sorry. I didn’t mean to speak out of turn.

FILBY: You have put your finger on it, Agatha. That is PRECISELY what I mean. We can escape the present.

LESTER: See here, Filby, you have gone too far this time. We can move about in all directions of Space, but we cannot move about in Time.

FINK: You promised us PROOF of an astonishing discovery. Filby, your head is filled with sawdust.

FILBY: I expected better from you, Fink. Unless I miss by bet, you have the LATEST edition of the Times.

FINK: I think the newsprint is still damp.

FILBY: You like to keep up to the minute. Imagine going one step further... into the next minute. (Silence. FILBY can tell by the expressions that he’s fighting a losing battle.) To illustrate my point. I stand here now. In the moment, in the present.
ALL: Agreed.

FILBY: I step left. *(He does.)* Now I am in THIS moment, in this present. *(Points to where he just stood.)* But that moment, when I stood there, still exists. If I could take one step back in Time I would find myself where I was but a moment ago.

LESTER: *(Smiles.)* If your theory were fact, you could also move yourself into the Future.

FILBY: Exactly! *(Points LEFT.)* There is my Future. *(Steps LEFT.)* Now my future has become my Present.

FINN: You can show Tuesday is really Wednesday by argument, but you'll never convince me.

GUESTS: Hear, hear. *(THEY laugh.)*

AGATHA: *(Excitedly.)* Some time ago, Mr. Filby had an idea for a machine.

MEADOWS: To travel through Time?

FILBY: Exactly. It was a vague inkling at first.

MEADOWS: *(Grins.)* It would be convenient for the historian. One might travel back in Time and verify the accepted account of the Battle of Hastings, for example. *(GUESTS laugh.)*

AGATHA: *(To FILBY. Stands, angrily.)* I simply cannot sit here and have you derided in this fashion.

FILBY: All in a day's work, Agatha. Fix yourself a cup of strong tea, Agatha. It will do you wonders.

AGATHA: *(Steps RIGHT. To GUESTS.)* If Mr. Filby says he can travel back and forth in Time, he can do it. *(Head high, she EXITS DOWN RIGHT.)*

LESTER: Tell us more about this "machine".

FILBY: I shall do more than that, my friends. I shall show it to you! *(FILBY hurries UP RIGHT, EXITS. ALL look amazed.)*

LESTER: He has gone crackers this time.
FINK: Needs vitamins.

MEADOWS: Sanity is a fragile thing. He's losing his grip.

LESTER: I think he's lost it. I wonder what he's got?

FILBY: (From OFFSTAGE.) Come on, Mrs. Watchett. Give it a push!

MRS. WATCHETT: (From OFFSTAGE.) I'm pushing, Mr. Filby. I'm pushing.

(FILBY ENTERS with The Time Machine. Both he and MRS. WATCHETT walk beside the contraption, pushing it DOWN RIGHT. Others stand. THEY crowd around.)

[NOTE: Consult Production Notes for suggestions on The Time Machine creation. Simply put, it's an elaborate wheelchair.]

FILBY: It took two years to make.

LESTER: (Curious.) How does this "thing" . . . what do you call it?

FILBY: The Time Machine.

LESTER: How does your Time Machine work?

FILBY: (Indicates lever.) This lever when pressed forward sends The Time Machine into the Future. Pressed back, it sends The Time Machine into the past. If one of you will step into the mechanism, I'll demonstrate.

FINK: No, thank you!

MEADOWS: Contraption might explode. We might go through the ceiling.

LESTER: We've already had one explosion this morning. That's more than enough, Filby.

FILBY: Upon this machine I intend to explore time. Is that plain? I have never been more serious in my life. Please be here next Thursday at seven. You are my guests for dinner.

MEADOWS: What will next Thursday prove?
FILBY: I shall present you with proof that I have travelled through Time.

(_GUESTS look to one another, dubious._)

LESTER: What have we to lose? At the very least, we shall have an excellent dinner. Mrs. Watchett is first-rate with roast beef and pudding.

MRS. WATCHETT: I'll make it a feast.

FINK: In that case, I don't see how we can refuse.

MEADOWS: We can take the noon train back, if we hurry.

(_FINK, MEADOWS, LEISTER MOVE LEFT._)

FILBY: Don't forget. Thursday at seven. (_THEY turn._)

FINK: We'll be here.

MEADOWS: On the dot.

LESTER: If only for the dinner and "entertainment". (_Scoffs._) The Time Machine.

(_THEY laugh, EXIT._)

FILBY: Blind fools.

MRS. WATCHETT: They don't seem to believe in this lovely toy, Mr. Filby.

FILBY: It's not a toy, Mrs. Watchett. Give people a new idea and instead of embracing its possibilities, they laugh.

MRS. WATCHETT: They laughed at Christopher Columbus. They laughed at Sir Isaac Newton. They laughed at Henry Watchett.

FILBY: Henry Watchett?

MRS. WATCHETT: My late husband.

FILBY: What did he invent?
MRS. WATCHETT: Nothing. People just laughed at him. He was sort of a comical gent. I’ll get you some breakfast. You must be famished. *(She EXITS DOWN RIGHT.)*

FILBY: They want proof, they shall have proof. *(Sits himself in the machine.)* The question is . . . to the Past, or to the Future? *(Pause.)* The Future, I think. *(He slowly pushes forward on the lever and as he does, weird, “out-of-this-world” sound effects begin to build: blip, blip, blip, bong, bong, bong, zing, zing, zing. Lights on The Time Machine start to flash . . . faster and faster. The general Stage Lighting also begins to flicker . . . faster and faster. The effects are deafening, blinding.)*

CURTAIN
ACT ONE
Scene Two

SETTING: The sitting room. Thursday.

BEFORE CURTAIN: In the darkness of the auditorium we hear a clock striking the hour of nine.

AT RISE: AGATHA is leading in two representatives of the press, CHOSE and DASH, from LEFT.

AGATHA: If you’ll come this way. Dr. Fink said he’d be joined by some members of the press.

DASH: He asked that we call after dinner. He suggested nine o’clock would be appropriate.

AGATHA: Dinner was delayed . . . (Indicates chairs LEFT.) Make yourselves comfortable. (THEY sit.)

CHOSE: Dr. Fink said your employer would give us a marvelous story.

AGATHA: If Mr. Filby were here he could speak for himself.

DASH: Mr. Filby is in residence, isn’t he?

AGATHA: (Anxious to avoid further discussion, MOVES RIGHT.) I’ll see if they’ve finished.

JESSICA: (ENTERS DOWN RIGHT.) I hope I never again have a week like this. The new cook is hopeless. She does things her own way. Won’t listen to a word I say. I shall never forgive my brother for leaving with Mrs. Watchett.

AGATHA: Dr. Fink has invited these people, Jessica. They work for the papers. Reporters.

JESSICA: Dr. Fink might have had the courtesy to inform me.

DASH: (Stands, apologetic.) We don’t wish to intrude.

JESSICA: (MOVES CENTER.) No, no, it’s not that. It’s everything. Forgive me. I’m distressed.
DASH:  *Sits again.*) You mentioned a Mrs. Watchett?

AGATHA:  She's the housekeeper.

JESSICA:  She WAS the housekeeper. If my peculiar brother wants to play games I have no objection, but when he causes the housekeeper to up and disappear, I really must protest.

CHOSE:  Where has your brother gone?

JESSICA:  Who can say? If you ask me, he's hiding someplace in the village and at the appropriate moment, he'll jump out of the woodwork and announce that he's returned.

AGATHA:  Jessica, you're not being fair to your brother.

JESSICA:  He's got you convinced he's a scientific wizard. In your eyes, he can do no wrong. *(To REPORTERS.) Imagine . . .* telling people you plan to travel through Time.

DASH:  You mean Space, don't you?

JESSICA:  I meant precisely what I said. Time.

CHOSE:  A person can't travel through Time. It's not possible.

AGATHA:  You don't know Mr. Filby.

*(FINK and MEADOWS ENTER DOWN RIGHT.)*

FINK:  A sumptuous repast, Miss Filby. You're to be congratulated on your new cook.

JESSICA:  I prefer to see Mrs. Watchett in the kitchen.

MEADOWS:  Your friends are here, Fink.

DASH:  You promised us an entertaining story.

FINK:  You shall have it. But not from me.

MEADOWS:  *(Checks watch.*) We waited dinner for Filby. He was due at seven.

AGATHA:  Something must have detained him.
FINK: Undoubtedly something in the past got hold of him. Perhaps a dinosaur. Eh, Meadows?

MEADOWS: Or a Martian of the Future. *(THEY laugh.)*

AGATHA: You have no right to jest.

FINK: Come, come, Miss White. See the humor of it.

JESSICA: I'd better see to affairs in the kitchen. Without Mrs. Watchett the whole house has gone to ruin. *(She EXITS DOWN RIGHT.)*

*(MEADOWS sits at the table. AGATHA stands RIGHT.)*

CHOSE: What is all this talk of Time?

FINK: Ask Filby. Into the past, or onto the Future. Filby has never lacked for imagination.

DASH: *(Takes out notepad and pencil.)* This could be interesting. Might do for the Sunday supplement. In with flying saucers and the like. There's always a market for that sort of whimsy.

MEADOWS: He made a machine.

CHOSE: What kind of a machine?

MEADOWS: Called it... The Time Machine.

CHOSE: That's catchy. Might have the art department whip up a drawing or two. Where is the machine?

AGATHA: Gone. Mrs. Watchett and Mr. Filby with it.

DASH: You don't actually know if Mrs. Watchett is involved with your employer's hocus-pocus.

AGATHA: I know that when you gentlemen left, I heard the machine in motion and, later, when I checked, all three were missing. The Time Machine, Mr. Filby, and Mrs. Watchett.

FINK: Tonight he was to present us with proof of his theory.

DASH: How long has Filby been missing?
AGATHA: One week exactly. There's no mystery about his whereabouts. He's out there . . . somewhere. Lost in Time.

LESTER: *(ENTERS DOWN RIGHT.)* The strawberry cake was delicious. Has our eccentric host materialized like a Christmas ghost?

FINK: Hardly.

LESTER: Perhaps we should have waited for him before we had dinner.

MEADOWS: Why let a good dinner get cold? It was Filby who set the hour.

AGATHA: *(Worried.)* What I wouldn't give to hear another explosion in his workshop.

*(ON CUE - BOOM! Sound of explosion from the workshop as in previous scene. Flashing of Stage Lights. ALL react, stand, face UP RIGHT. FILBY stumbles in, dirty, limping.)*

FILBY: Sorry if I kept you waiting. I apologize for any inconvenience.

AGATHA: Mr. Filby, you're limping.

FILBY: We can thank a Morlock cave for that.

CHOSE: Morlock? What's a Morlock?

FILBY: *(Collapses into a chair by table.)* Give me a moment to catch my breath. The centuries have taken the wind out of a man. *(Instantly DASH and CHOSE sit again, take notes.)* Who are they?

FINK: Reporters. I thought your journey should meet with some fame. *(FINK chuckles. It's obvious he, MEADOWS and LESTER think the whole matter is one great lark, a joke.)*

JESSICA: *(ENTERS DOWN RIGHT.)* I knew you were back when I heard the explosion. Why can't you come in the front door like everybody else? What have you done with Mrs. Watchett? The new cook won't do.
MRS. WATCHETT: *(ENTERS from workshop, haggard, tired, drawn and pale.)* Here I am, ma’am. I don’t mind telling you I don’t think travelling through Time is a suitable calling for a sensible English woman like myself.

AGATHA: *(Concerned.)* Sit down, Mrs. Watchett. You look exhausted.

MRS. WATCHETT: *(Sits opposite FILBY at table.)* I am exhausted. Oh, the things I’ve seen. You wouldn’t believe.

*(FINK and MEADOWS MOVE to LEFT of table.)*

LESTER: Where did you hide The Time Machine?

FILBY: I didn’t hide it. I simply put it into gear and it took off.

FINK: Where is it now?

FILBY: Back in the workshop.

MEADOWS: It wasn’t there earlier.

FILBY: Naturally. The Time Machine has only now returned.

CHOSE: You mean landed? Like a plane?

FILBY: If it makes it easier for you ... yes, like a plane.

JESSICA: *(Skeptical.)* Obviously they don’t have clothes brushes in the Future. You’re both covered with dirt.

MRS. WATCHETT: On account of them evil Morlocks. They live underground like the moles. I can’t say much for their housekeeping habits. Monkeys in cages live better.

LESTER: You two will make good copy. I can see what they’re going to say about you, Mrs. Watchett ... “Housekeeper Says She’s Seen The Future”.

DASH: My publisher will be delighted to give you a shilling a line. You’ll have to make it exciting, though. That’s what the readers like.
FILBY: I have the impression that you, like my colleagues here, believe almost nothing in regard to Time Travel.

CHOOSE: We don't know too much about it.

DASH: You must have a story to tell us.

MEADOWS: Or an argument to present.

FILBY: I can't argue with you, Meadows. I'm too tired for that, but I will tell you the story of what happened. You will supply any details I might leave out, Mrs. Watchett.

MRS. WATCHETT: It'll give me a chill remembering, but if that's what you want, Mr. Filby.

FILBY: I knew I could count on you. (To OTHERS.) You must refrain from interruptions. Most of it will sound like we're lying. So be it! It's true. Every word of it is true. (Recalls slowly.) The reporters weren't here. (Lights dim slightly and flicker to indicate "a flashback in Time" to the previous week. DASH and CHOOSE, like mechanical toys, back out of the room LEFT.) Jessica and Mrs. Watchett were in the workshop. (Walking backwards in the same mechanical fashion as the REPORTERS, JESSICA and MRS. WATCHETT ENTER the workshop.) Agatha had gone to prepare herself a cup of tea. (In mechanical fashion AGATHA backs out DOWN RIGHT.) The three of you were ready to leave. (FINK, MEADOWS and LESTER, in mechanical fashion, back LEFT, repeating the lines they uttered a week earlier.)

MEADOWS: We can take the noon train back, if we hurry.

FILBY: (Stands.) Don't forget. Thursday at seven.

(MRS. WATCHETT ENTERS from workshop guiding The Time Machine into position DOWN RIGHT, where it was at the end of the previous scene.)

FINK: We'll be here.

MEADOWS: On the dot.

LESTER: If only for the dinner and "entertainment". (Scoffs.) The Time Machine.
(THEY laugh, back off. Flicker of Lights stops.)

FILBY: Blind fools.

MRS. WATCHETT: They don't seem to believe in this lovely toy, Mr. Filby.

FILBY: It's not a toy, Mrs. Watchett. Give people a new idea and instead of embracing its possibilities, they laugh.

MRS. WATCHETT: They laughed at Christopher Columbus. They laughed at Sir Isaac Newton. They laughed at Henry Watchett.

FILBY: Henry Watchett?

MRS. WATCHETT: My late husband.

FILBY: What did he invent?

MRS. WATCHETT: Nothing. People just laughed at him. He was sort of a comical gent. I'll get you some breakfast. You must be famished. (She backs OFF, DOWN RIGHT.)

FILBY: They want proof, they shall have proof. (FILBY seats himself in the machine.) The question is . . . to the Past, or to the Future? The Future, I think.

(He slowly pushes forward on the lever and the Light and Sound Effects that ended Scene One are repeated . . . only this time the curtains do not close. A Spotlight strikes to the RIGHT of The Time Machine. FILBY gets out of the seat, steps into the limelight as he continues to narrate his incredible adventure. Background Sound Effects tone down so that his words ring out loud and clear.)

FILBY: I seemed to reel; I felt a nightmare sensation of falling. Looking 'round, I saw that The Time Machine had, somehow, got itself back into the workshop. I drew a breath and set my teeth. The workshop got hazy and went dark. I am afraid I cannot convey the peculiar sensations of time travelling. They are unpleasant . . . I saw the moon spinning swiftly through her quarters from new to full, and had a faint glimpse of circling stars . . . there was a clap of thunder in my ears as I hurled far into the Future wondering what year I was passing through . . . I heard a great hissing sound . . . I thought my head would explode . . . and, then, another terrible crack
of thunder and I realized The Time Machine was coming to an abrupt stop!

[NOTE: While FILBY narrates his journey, STAGEHANDS, dressed in black, ENTER LEFT and RIGHT and remove the table and chairs, backing OFF quickly in that strange mechanical walk. FILBY times his delivery so that he doesn’t reach the end of his speech until the stage props have been struck.]

FILBY: Suddenly, there was nothing but eternal night!

(Blackout. Sound Effects cease at once. Several moments pass. Soft, pleasant Laughter from OFF LEFT, in the dark. Slowly, Lighting Comes Up, warm and inviting colors. Sound of Flute in distance. FILBY is on the ground, several feet from The Time Machine. The crash has thrown him off.)

FILBY: (Coming to.) Ow ... ow ... ow ... (Sits up, rubs his head.) My head, my poor head. Ow ... ow ... ow ...

MRS. WATCHETT: (From behind The Time Machine.) Ow ... ow ... ow ... (She comes into view rubbing her backside.) That thing's worse than riding the underground at rush hour.

FILBY: (Amazed, he gets to his feet.) Mrs. Watchett, what are you doing here?

MRS. WATCHETT: It's my natural curiosity, sir. One of these days it'll be the death of me. When I heard your lovely machine starting its motor and I saw the lights flashing, I couldn't resist climbing on the back. I never expected anything like what happened! Moons and stars flying by. Where are we, sir?

FILBY: The Future.

MRS. WATCHETT: (Aghast, looks around.) The Future? Must say I don't think much of it. (Looks LEFT and RIGHT.) Empty sort of place. (Looks up.) I don't see any sun, but it's warm here. I don't suppose your sister is going to like this.

FILBY: Jessica is hardly likely to show up here.
MRS. WATCHETT: Don’t count on it. (She steps DOWN STAGE. Peers into auditorium as if it were part of the landscape.) Look over there, Mr. Filby. What do you make of that?

FILBY: (Looks.) Looks like the ruins of an old temple of some sort. Wait a moment. (Steps to The Time Machine, gets a knapsack, CROSSES to MRS. WATCHETT.) I always come prepared for emergencies. (Takes out a pair of binoculars, scans the distance.)

MRS. WATCHETT: I don’t like this place, Mr. Filby. Do you think we’re alone?

FILBY: We can do some exploring and find out. Those ruins would indicate some form of life.

(Sound of pleasant laughter, music of flute.)

MRS. WATCHETT: What’s that?

FILBY: (Looks LEFT and RIGHT.) It’s obvious that we are NOT alone.

(From LEFT and RIGHT come a race of people known as the Eloi. They are in their teens, healthy, attractive if passive. Their garments resemble Grecian robes. They carry garlands of flowers. [NOTE: Only four Eloi are identified... WEENA, FIRST ELOI, SECOND ELOI, THIRD ELOI. Director may add as many additional Eloi as desired.] The ELOI stare at them.)

MRS. WATCHETT: They look harmless enough.

FILBY: The flowers would seem to indicate they’re not hostile. Hello. (No response.) My name is Filby. From the Twentieth Century. Can you tell us what year this is? (Silence.)

MRS. WATCHETT: They’re not too polite, staring at us as if we just walked out of the cheese.

FILBY: I’ll try again. (Addresses ELOI.) We’re friends. We came in that machine over there. (Points.) I call it... The Time Machine. This is my housekeeper, Mrs. Watchett.

MRS. WATCHETT: (Curtsies.) Pleased to meet you, I’m sure. (Silence.) I’m getting worried, Mr. Filby. They don’t say a thing.
(All at once the ELOI laugh, MOVE to FILBY and MRS. WATCHETT draping leis of flowers around their necks.)

FILBY: You see, Mrs. Watchett . . . no need to worry. (To ELOI.) Thank you, thank you. You're very kind.

MRS. WATCHETT: They are nice, whoever they are.

(ELOI MOVE LEFT. FIRST ELOI steps to FILBY, motions.)

FIRST ELOI: Follow.

MRS. WATCHETT: They do speak!

(ELOI EXIT.)

FILBY: It's plain he wants us to follow along.

MRS. WATCHETT: Do you think it's safe?

FILBY: Time will tell.

MRS. WATCHETT: There's that word again. Time. What year do you think this is?

FILBY: Easy enough to find out . . . provided the dials are working. (MOVES to The Time Machine, studies some dial reading.)

MRS. WATCHETT: What does the dial say?

FILBY: (Pauses.) Prepare yourself for a shock, Mrs. Watchett. We are in the year . . . 802,701!

MRS. WATCHETT: (Moans.) Oh, why don't I learn to mind my own business?

CURTAIN

END OF ACT ONE

End of Script Sample
PRODUCTION NOTES

PROPERTIES

ACT ONE: Small table, four chairs.
Brought on:
- Papers, pad, pencil AGATHA
- Newspaper FINK
- Pocket watch MEADOWS
- The Time Machine FILBY and MRS. WATCHETT
- Notebook, pencil DASH and CHOSE
- Flowers ELOI

ACT TWO: Palace of the Eloi. Two tables, chairs, pillows, sundial, bowls of fruit, flowers.
Brought on:
- Knapsack with flashlight FILBY
- Wooden sign FILBY
- Club KING MORLOCK

Brought on:
- Knapsack with flashlight FILBY
- Flower WEEENA

SOUND EFFECTS
Machinery from Filby’s workshop, doorbell, explosion, out-of-this-world Time Travel effects, clock striking hour of nine, flute, bell to summon Tapes, sound of Morlock machinery.

LIGHTING EFFECTS
Time Travel dimming up and down, red flickering for Morlock under-world.

COSTUMES
The costuming, with the exception of the Eloi and the Morlock, is contemporary. Mrs. Watchett might wear a longish black dress and apron. The Morlock should resemble trolls, their hair long and/or matted, their clothes being nothing but rags and animal pelts. The Eloi clothes should be Grecian style, graceful and colorful. The Ancient One wears floor-length rags. Grunt dresses as a Morlock.
PRODUCTION NOTES (Continued)

THE TIME MACHINE
Essentially constructed from a wheelchair . . . the actual design is left up to the resources of the individual production . . . but the more "fanciful" the better; lights, dials, levers, etc. Remember, it must be capable of being wheeled in and out.

SUGGESTIONS
Do not have any "dead spots". Try and have the scenes move as swiftly as possible from one to the other. If there is any delay, make certain the wait is covered by "sound effects". The Time Travel effect would work nicely. Also, some interesting bits of staging will undoubtedly present themselves during rehearsals. If they work, employ them. The Entrance and Exit of The Tapes affords an excellent opportunity for some imaginative stage business. The Morlocks offer a chance for some creative makeup.
We hope you’ve enjoyed this script sample.

We encourage you to read the entire script before making your final decision.

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