

THE TIME MACHINE May 2, 2005

(Sue is on stage next to time machine and Tom walks up, Bill and Bob are offstage)

TOM: Hey Sue what's happening?

SUE: Nothing much.

TOM: Um, what is this thing you're working on?

SUE: It's a moron detector so don't get too close or the alarm will go off.

TOM: Very funny, come on, what is it?

SUE: If I tell you, you'll make fun of it.

TOM: No I won't, I swear.

SUE: All right. *(pause)* It's a time machine.

TOM: Aw man, don't tell me you have to change your sobriety date again!

SUE: I'm not drunk, I'm serious! It's a time machine!

TOM: So you're telling me you can go back in time and bring back Socrates and Joan of Arc like in Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure?

SUE: Don't be a moron, Tom. It doesn't work that way. You can't go into the past, but I think I can bring people from the past to our time and then send them back again.

TOM: How does it work?

SUE: Well, I don't know if I can break this down into layman's terms, but I'll try. The key is an invention of mine called the flux capacitor. It's what makes time travel possible.

TOM: It must use a lot of power, huh?

SUE: 1.21 gigawatts. Anyway, I enter the name of the person or persons I want to bring here, set the date, and press a series of buttons.

TOM: Then what happens?

SUE: Well, then they appear on those platforms over there.

TOM: Why are they so far away from this part of the machine.

SUE: Two reasons: first, I'm not entirely sure the fusion reaction I use is completely safe and secondly, it's offstage and that way we didn't have to make a prop.

TOM: So have you tried it out yet?

SUE: I was just about to.

TOM: Who are you gonna bring here from the past? Marilyn Monroe? Abraham Lincoln?

SUE: No, I thought it would be great if I brought Bill Wilson and Dr. Bob here.

TOM: Cool idea! Uh... they're not gonna be all creepy and gross because they're dead are they?

SUE: Not if I set the coordinates properly. They should be just fine. I set the chronogram to 1948, enter their full names and birthdates and we're a go. Stand back a little bit. Ready? Here goes!

(pushing buttons sound, Star Trek transporter sound—Bill and Dr. Bob walk out from behind box)

SUE: It worked! It really worked!

TOM: It...it's them ! B-B-Bill and Dr. Bob. It's really them!

BILL: Say, what's the meaning of this?

TOM: I...I...

BILL: Now see here, young fellow: I think we're owed an explanation.

DR. BOB: I should say so. Where are we and how did we get here?

SUE: I guess the best way to tell you is just to...well, tell you. I built a time machine and have brought you forward in time to the present day which is the year 2005.

BILL: Omigod I must have relapsed again!

TOM: No, no, you're not drunk, Bill. It's true. See? Here's a headline from today's newspaper. (*hands him newspaper*) Note the date. By the way, my name is Tom and this is Sue.

BILL: Now see hear, this will never do! I demand you send us back at once!

SUE: Oh, we will, we will. I was just testing my time machine and wanted to pick someone who was historically and personally significant.

DR. BOB: But why us? We're just a stock broker and a proctologist who help drunks get sober!

TOM: Um, I know there are bigger issues at play here but...wait a minute: did you say you're a proctologist? *That's* what kind of doctor you are?

BILL: Yep. Smithy's patients would always say he was a real pain in the ass!

DR. BOB: (*sarcastically*) That joke gets funnier every time I hear it, Bill. So, Tom, you two know who we are?

TOM: Of course we do! You're Dr. Bob Smith and you're Bill Wilson. The co-founders of Alcoholics Anonymous!

BILL: So people in the year 2005 know who we are?

TOM: Well, people like us do! We have both “recovered from a hopeless state of mind and body.”

BILL: You’re members of the fellowship!

SUE: We sure are. I have 12 years sober and Tom has 8.

BILL: That’s great! Tell me, has AA changed much since our time?

TOM: Well, I guess that depends on what you mean by much. I mean, there are significant changes like more young people, women, and minorities, but the basic program has stayed the same.

DR. BOB: It’s hard to believe that it’s kept going for so long.

SUE: Well modern technology has helped a lot. Many AA members communicate by personal computers all over the world.

BILL: Computers? You mean there are AA members who are willing to sacrifice half of the space in their homes for computers?

SUE: Well...not exactly. You see, computers today are much smaller.

BILL: Enough about all that for a minute. It just occurred to me: being so far ahead of us in the future you possess a wealth of very useful information. Can I ask you an important question?

SUE: Sure.

BILL: Who won the World Series in 1949?

DR. BOB: Bill Wilson! I’m surprised at you!

BILL: Aw, keep your shirt on, doc. I was just joking.

TOM: Hey! You know what? I just thought of something. I don’t think we should answer certain questions because it can mess up the space time continuum or something.

SUE: What are you babbling about, Tom?

TOM: I'm not sure exactly, but I saw it on a "Star Trek" episode once. Or maybe it was "Back to the Future." There are certain things we can't reveal because it may disrupt the fabric of dimensions or cause a time fart bubble or something.

BILL: Surely you can tell us one little tidbit about the future.

SUE: Yeah, I guess it couldn't hurt.

TOM: I don't think that's a good idea. I mean, if we tell them that we have test tube babies or have cloned sheep successfully or landed men on the moon it could have drastic consequences.

DR. BOB: Cloned sheep? Men on the moon?

SUE: He's uh,... just kidding. Wait, I thought of a good tidbit we can tell you: in your future Ronald Reagan will be elected president.

DR. BOB: The actor? Come on! Who'll be Vice-President? Clark Gable?

BILL: Is James Cagney secretary of state?

TOM: It's true. Hey, Sue if you're going to tell them something about the future it's only fair that I get to do one too.

SUE: Okay, go ahead. But nothing earth-shattering.

TOM: Alright. Bill you asked about baseball; here's a future fact for you: last year, 2004 The Boston Red Sox won the World Series!

BILL: Now you're pulling my leg.

TOM: No, no! Seriously! They did!

BILL: Nice try, Tom. Why don't you beam in another sucker from the past and try to sell 'em that one?

TOM: Whatever.

SUE: I have a couple of questions which are a little more serious for you gentlemen, if you don't mind.

DR. BOB: Fire away, my dear.

SUE: Okay, I went to an archives meeting once and this guy was talking about how different the early meetings were from ours and I was wondering how accurate he was.

BILL: Specifically...?

SUE: Well, for instance he said that our habit of saying "My name is Whoever and I'm an alcoholic" and everyone saying "Hi Whoever!" was something that wasn't practiced in the earliest groups and developed much later.

BILL: Well now, that's true. As a matter of fact we rarely use the word "alcoholic: Usually we use "drunk" or "rum hound"...

DR. BOB: Or "boozer"!

BILL: Or "boozer" that's right. These terms were popular during Prohibition...um; you do know what Prohibition was?

SUE: Sure we studied it in History in 8th grade. That's when all alcohol was banned in the U.S.

BILL: Yes, but while Prohibition is what you study in history books in your time, in our time it is a fresh memory and the influence of it is still pervasive in the culture.

SUE: What about women in AA in your time?

DR. BOB: I hate to say it, but there was a feeling among some of the guys at the group in Akron, Ohio that female drunks were all...nymphomaniacs.

SUE: We call that kind of wishful thinking "13th Stepping" today.

BILL: Actually, one of the first women to stay sober in AA was the remarkable Marty Mann.

SUE: She wrote the story “Women Suffer Too” in the Big Book, right?

BILL: That’s right. She was a very influential member of the program and also founded the National Council on Alcoholism as well.

TOM: Hey, what about saying the Lord’s Prayer at the end of the meeting? Some groups these days feel it’s not appropriate.

DR. BOB: Well now that came out of the Oxford Group. Look, groups are autonomous and they can do what they want, but we just used that prayer because it was familiar and a nice way to close meetings.

BILL: Tell me; has the AA message continued to spread?

SUE: Oh yes, all over the world. AA meetings and literature are everywhere.

BILL: And the Big Book is still around?

TOM: Big time! It’s now sold 25 million copies. We even made a 4th edition about four years ago.

BILL: 25 MILLION! Incredible! I...uh, suppose the book has been rewritten a number of times since the original?

SUE: No way! In fact, when we first started talking about making a 4th edition, one of the first things the entire fellowship agreed upon was that the first 164 pages should stay as is. We just added new stories for people to relate.

BILL: Wow. So I guess that the words and phrases I used in writing it proved to be timeless.

TOM: Well...yes and no. Many people feel the language is old and outdated and some even say it’s sexist.

DR. BOB: Sexy? Someone thinks Bill's writings were sexy?

BILL: Turn up the hearing aid, Grandpa, he said sexist, not sexy. I didn't mean for the book to be sexist, I just wrote it how I talk.

TOM: Well, you'll be glad to know that although some have felt the book needed to be made gender neutral and updated the simple truth is that millions have read that book and got sober just the way it is.

BILL: That warms my heart more than I can say.

SUE: We also still use many other books like "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions", "The AA Service Manual" and "As Bill Sees It".

DR. BOB: What? "As Bill Sees It"? That's the title of an Alcoholics Anonymous book?

SUE: Yep. It used to be called "The AA Way of Life" but the General Service Conference changed the name years ago.

DR. BOB: I think that is a travesty! No member of AA's name should be the title for a book! Not even a co-founder! We are an anonymous program! Now listen, Bill, surely you can't think that it's a good idea to have a book named after you!

BILL: Don't blame me, Smithy! This is the first I've heard of this!

TOM: Um, just so you know...there's also a book called "Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers".

DR. BOB: Th-there is?...Well...ya know, that one kind of has a nice ring to it.

BILL: It figures.

SUE: Hey you know what else? They made a movie about you guys too!

DR. BOB: A movie? About us? What's it called?

SUE: "My name is Bill W."

DR. BOB: Um...if it's about *us*, why is it just called "My name is Bill W.?" Why not "*Our* names are Bill W. and Dr. Bob S.?"

BILL: Oh, stop sniveling, Bob! Tell me, who played me in the movie? Cary Grant? Jimmy Stewart?

DR. BOB: My guess is Boris Karloff. Who played me, Humphrey Bogart?

SUE: Well, actually James Woods played you Bill and James Garner portrayed you, Dr. Bob.

BILL AND DR. BOB: Never heard of 'em.

TOM: They are both fine actors and the movie was really good.

BILL: Look kids, I don't want to sound ungrateful for you showing us a bit of the future, but we have to get back. Dr. Bob and I have a fellow we're going to visit at the hospital.

SUE: We won't keep you. I guess the reason I chose to bring the two of you here with my time machine is that you have had the most influence on my life of anyone from the past.

BILL: But the two of us had never met you two before today.

SUE: Sure we have. We met you in the pages of the Big Book. We met you in the faces of people ravaged by the disease of alcoholism. We know you because we're alcoholics.

DR. BOB: I don't quite know what to say.

TOM: You don't have to say anything. You said it all when the two of you first met back in 1935. That special magic that happens when one alcoholic talks with another is what helped me to get a life. A real life where I face life just as it is without drinking. Thank you both.

(they all hug)

DR. BOB: If you really want to thank us then do three things; keep coming back, keep it simple, and pass it on!

SUE: Just one more thing before you go. AA is celebrating 70 years of saving lives this month and we'd like to do something for you.

(Tom goes offstage and returns with a cake with candles lit)

SUE: I keep an emergency cake with lit candles for just such an occasion. Bill and Dr. Bob, we want you to join us in singing Happy Birthday to AA.

ALL: Happy Birthday to you! Happy Birthday to you! Happy Birthday dear AA! Happy Birthday to you!

(Bill and Dr. Bob blow out candles)

THE END