

Antipodean SF

What Time Can Do -- by Stephanie Allen



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"You're talking about a time machine?" Dr. Lexington stared at the bracelet. "The metal's platinum, but what's the gem?"

Gary grinned, taking it from her. "Colored glass. The world sees it as a piece of cheap jewelry."

Dr. Lexington furrowed her brow. "Something from a child, yes, but..."

"Let me explain." Gary gently placed his fingers over the top half of the gem. He twisted quickly and lifted. The topaz-colored glass opened on a tiny hinge exposing minute controls resembling a single computer chip.

Dr. Lexington looked on skeptically. "How does it work?"

Gary took a small metal pointer from the top half of the gem. "You need this to use the device. The notches catch the control holes."

Gary put the bracelet on his wrist. He twisted the pointer between his fingers, manipulating the control holes.

Dr. Lexington squinted. "There's a little screen in there!"

"Yes. What does it say?"

"Today's date." Dr. Lexington furrowed her brow. "Two hours ago."

"Perfect!" Gary stood, pulling Dr. Lexington to his side as he clicked the final slot.

Dr. Lexington's eyes blurred. She could feel her body, but only in fragments. Her mind clouded over. It was brief, a second at most, and they rematerialized.

Dr. Lexington shook her head, grabbing for a chair to steady herself. Gary took her arm instead.

Dr. Lexington pulled away. "Where are we?"

"Not where, Danni, when!" Gary smiled devilishly.

They were still in her office. She walked to the door, and watched herself through the glass. She was greeting Gary as she had two hours before.

Dr. Lexington jumped back. "They're...we're coming."

Gary nodded. "OK, I'll take you back now."

Dr. Lexington took Gary's arm. He twisted the pointer lodged in a control hole. She closed her eyes, prepared for her disassembly.

They rematerialized. Dr. Lexington sat down and sighed. "What does this all mean?"

Gary sat next to her silently.

"The device...we don't have that kind of technology, do we?"

"No. The data chips are microscopic. I'd guess we're a decade away from such instrumentation."

"How? Who?"

"Oh, I invented it. Rather, I will. I found it with a note from my future self."

"Why not in person?"

"It's not possible, thankfully. That would obliterate the time-line. This device is only an observation tool. My future self invented another device that could leave objects, like the bracelet."

"Isn't that nearly as dangerous?"

"Certainly. He built it to fulfill his history. Then, he said he's going to destroy it."

Dr. Lexington shook her head. "Where do I come in?"

"Danni, this is the opportunity of your life time! I need a historian. Not any historian, but one who has understood and documented how inaccurate history really is."

"You want a her-storian."

"More than that! I intend to create a team that will defy human bias. We're going to rewrite history!"

"Defy human bias? That's some pretty big shoes to fill."


"With your help, they'll be the best."

"First, I'd like to do some exploring of my own."

Gary grinned. "I thought you might."

"So, where do we begin?"

Gary smiled. "Not where, Danni, when?" 

Stephanie Allen  says of her name that it is "the mysteriously derived pen name for Mrs. Stephanie Crist. Stephanie, of course, is my first name. Allen is, well, my maiden name, and this is the best way I could think of clinging to the first eighteen years of my life. Could there be a better way than fiction? My husband, Mark, and I are already expecting our first child. What a story that'll be!" (I look forward to that one Stephanie -- ed) You can reach Stephanie at the following address:

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Stephanie adds: "my newest favorite site is www.tor.com. You can find lots of interesting web pages by and for great sci-fi and fantasy authors linked up there. Someday, I hope to see my name proudly displayed as one of their authors. Alas, I have to finish writing the book first! So, I better go get busy..."



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