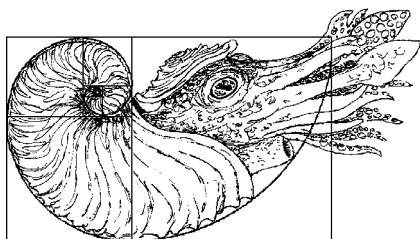


Professor P
and the
Jurassic Coast
Deleted Scenes and Outtakes



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Introduction

Welcome to the deleted scenes and outtakes from Professor P and the Jurassic Coast. I wrote the book over a period of five years, constantly revising it and altering the story. In the process a lot of great scenes got lost – some I managed to recycle, but most ended in the bin! Here are some of my favourite scenes that didn't quite make it into the book.

The Big Bang

I wrote this as a prologue to introduce Peter and explain why he was moving to the Jurassic Coast. It was meant to be humorous - with the extraordinary TV report on in the background, being completely ignored by Peter and his mother!



“An enormous explosion devastated an ancient college in the city of Cambridge this afternoon. We go over to our reporter live at the scene.”

“The historic north wing lies in ruins. At four thirty this afternoon a powerful explosion tore the building apart. With me now is a college porter who witnessed the scene.”

“I can’t believe it. It’s terrible, terrible. Who would do

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such a thing?"

"What exactly did you see?"

"I was walking through the Old Court. There was a terrible noise. I was thrown to the ground. There were stones and glass flying about everywhere and purple smoke, I couldn't breath."

"Purple smoke?"

"Ay, it was purple, smelt terrible."

"Peter, tea's ready."

"Can you bring it in here please, mum?" I said. "There's a good program on telly after the news."

"Thank goodness the explosion happened during the Easter vacation when all of the students were away. Miraculously there are believed to be no casualties."

"Peter, turn the TV down please."

"Is dad going to be late?" I asked, reaching for the remote control. "He promised he'd help me with my History project."

"I'm afraid he has to work late at the office tonight."

"Again!"

"Yes, I'm afraid so. But he did have some very exciting news."

"Do we have any ketchup?"

"No, sorry, we're out. Peter, listen, please. I've got something really important to tell you. Dad's been offered a promotion – it's a much better job and he's very pleased about it! It means we'll be able to move out of this small flat and buy our own house with a garden. You'll be able to have a decent sized bedroom at last."

This was good news indeed! My room was so small that the bed barely fitted into it. And it would be great to have a garden to play in with my friends!

"Brilliant!" I cried excitedly. "I can have Tom and Martin over. We'll build a tree house in the garden!"

"I'm afraid that won't be so easy," my mother replied in

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a quieter voice. “You see, Peter – dad’s new job isn’t in London.”

“The cause of the mysterious explosion is still unknown. The college, built in the fourteenth century...”

“Peter, did you hear what I said?”

“Yes,” I said glumly, “we’re moving again!”

We had moved every few years with my father’s job. I was just beginning to feel settled here in London. I had made some good friends at school and I really did not want to start over again.

“Where is it this time?” I asked.

“Dad’s new job is in Dorset on the south coast. We’re going to live by the sea.”

“When do we have to go?” I sighed.

“In the summer, at the end of term.”

“Oh,” I said, not feeling at all happy about this news.

“Listen, Peter,” my mum said, gently taking hold of my hand. “I know how you feel. I know it’s been really difficult for you changing schools so often. But things are going to be different now. This is the last time we’ll be moving, I promise. We’re going to settle in our new home. You’ll love being by the sea. Remember when we went on holiday to Weymouth two years ago, we had such a great time?”

“Yes,” I replied.

“Well, the place we’re moving to is only a few miles from there – it’ll be great!” she said putting her arm round me. “You’ll soon make new friends. And your old friends can come and visit in the school holidays if you like. It will be like being on holiday all the time!”

As I began to remember what a great holiday we had had, my mother continued, “And we have to move from this small flat soon. There isn’t room to swing a cat.”

“What about a dog?” I asked.

“A dog?” she said puzzled.

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“I mean, can I have a dog when we move to the new house?”

“Well, I’ll have to think about that and talk it over with your dad.”

“Please, mum,” I urged. “You know I’ve always wanted a puppy and it’ll be great at the new home, we can go exploring and play on the beach together.”

“All right, I’ll give him a call,” she said, leaving the room.

“With me is the Master of the college, Sir David Wotherington-Fotheby. Sir David, do you have any idea what caused the explosion earlier this afternoon?”

“It is too early to speculate. A full investigation is underway.”

“Well, can you comment on a report I’ve received? It seems that the explosion may have been caused by one of your science Fellows, a Professor P.”

“Professor P?” he said sharply. “What about him?”

“Apparently he was conducting experiments into a new form of energy, cold fusion.”

“Impossible! Absolutely preposterous,” Sir David exclaimed. “Cold fusion has been conclusively and repeatedly proven to be utterly impossible. I can assure you that no such research has been authorised. Even if it had been, Professor P would not have conducted such experiments in his college rooms.”

“Will you be taking any disciplinary action against Professor P, Sir David?”

“I have no further comments to make,” he replied sharply and strode off.

“Good news,” my mum said as she returned. “I’ve spoken to your dad and he says you can have a dog!”

“Brilliant!” I cried, leaping up to give her a hug.

“It has just been confirmed that Professor P has been sacked after he admitted responsibility for the accident

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which destroyed part of an historic Cambridge college earlier this afternoon. Professor P, a brilliant but unorthodox scientist was the youngest person ever to be awarded the Nobel Prize in physics. He has also made major contributions to many areas of environmental science and computing. Professor P was unavailable for comment.”

Our New House

This scene was originally the first chapter in the book. I wanted to show how excited Peter was to be moving to a new house. I finally decided to cut it because it slowed down the plot too much.

“Come on, Sparky,” I said as I leapt out of the car.

Sparky, my Labrador puppy scampered after me as I raced along the path to our new house. The house had a bright red front door with a shining golden letterbox and big sparkling windows that seemed to smile at me.

“This is fantastic!” I cried to Sparky as I looked around at the other houses on the estate. “We’re really going to live here, by the sea. Just think of all the adventures we’ll have!”

“You can open the door if you like, Peter,” my mother said, holding out the key to me as we reached the front door.

This was the big moment! I opened the door. Sparky rushed into the hall and ran around playfully. I stepped inside.

The hallway was enormous! It seemed bigger than the living room of our old flat!

“Where’s my room?” I asked excitedly.

“Come on, I’ll show you,” my father said, leading the way.

I bounded up the stairs, two steps at a time, and burst into my new bedroom. It was huge! It had a pale green carpet and cream coloured walls and smelt so fresh and clean.

I picked up Sparky and we went over to the window.

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“Look at the garden, Sparky, it’s enormous! Plenty of space for you to play in. You can bury a lot of bones in there!”

“Not in my flower beds!” my father laughed as he came over to the window.

We stood together looking out over the rest of the gardens. A small wooden fence separated ours from the ones on either side. At the bottom of the garden on the right I could see a badminton net strung up between two poles. A rusty old bike rested against the house and there was a blue plastic sandpit, half filled with sand and littered with a collection of brightly coloured buckets and spades.

Our garden sloped downward quite steeply. At the bottom was a tall wooden fence and beyond it, a wood. I could just make out a small stream flowing through the trees down towards the cliffs.

“I can see the sea!” I cried happily. “Look, mum!”

She came over to the window and we looked out to the grey cliffs in the distance. Through a gap in the cliffs I could see the sea speckled with white foaming waves.

“It’s less than half a mile away,” my father said. “It will only take ten minutes to walk to the beach from here.”

“Can I go now?” I asked excitedly.

“All right, Peter,” my mother said. “We’ll stay here – we’ve got to wait in for the removal men, but you go with Sparky. Let me give you some money so you can buy yourself a sandwich and drink for lunch.”

“And Peter,” my dad called after me as I ran out of the house, “make sure you’re back by six.”

“OK,” I replied. “Bye.”

Sparky and I raced out of the estate and sprinted down the hill towards the sea.

Caves

Initially I had Peter and Tara discover the caves on their own, before Professor P's disappearance. I wanted to convey their sense of wonder at finding a fantastic crystal cave, hidden away in the depths of the earth. Although I liked this scene I felt it slowed down the start of the main story too much. I tried putting some of the description later, when Peter and Tara arrive at the caves with Floppy, but then the emphasis needed to be on the pyramid and there was no place to describe the crystals, or Peter and Tara's sense of awe at discovering the cave.

I called to Sparky. He was having great fun running in and out of the waves and barking at the seagulls. We all ran along the pebbles towards the caves. The tide was a long way out now and I could see the cove with its long sandy beach walled on either side with great boulders. At the base of the cliff were three caves. We clambered over the rocks and jumped down onto the sand.

We went to the largest cave first. Tara took the torch out of her rucksack again, switched it on and shone it into the mouth of the cave. I felt a shiver of excitement run up my spine as we went inside. The opening was small and I had to bend my head to avoid hitting it on the narrow roof. Once inside I could hear the echoing sound of dripping water.

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“Spooky, isn’t it?” Tara whispered.

The small entrance to the cave opened out into a high roofed cavern. Drips of water fell down on our heads and splashed into puddles on the sand. We walked slowly across the uneven floor, trying to avoid stepping in the puddles. Sparky stayed close to my heels. He seemed a little unsure of this cold dark place.

As we walked further into the cave the sand disappeared and we found ourselves on a rocky ledge. We scrambled up onto its slippery uneven surface and continued deeper into the cave, which narrowed as it curved up into the cliff. Tara shone the torch onto the cave walls and roof. I noticed a dark eerie shadow with two light patches that looked like eyes.

“Tara! Over there!” I said nervously.

She shone her torch onto the shadow and we went over to investigate. I could see a dark hole in the rock.

“It’s a small tunnel!” I said in surprise.

“Come on, let’s see where it goes,” Tara said squeezing into the narrow gap.

As she disappeared into the tunnel the light began to fade. I fumbled in my pocket for my key ring torch but could not find it.

“Tara,” I shouted but there was no reply.

I crawled cautiously into the dark tunnel. My hands sank into a pile of cold wet slippery seaweed.

“Yuk!” I cried, pulling my hands out quickly.

“Peter, come quick!” Tara’s faint voice echoed down the tunnel, “You won’t believe this!”

I hurried along the tunnel as fast as I could with Sparky following closely behind. As I rounded a bend I saw the faint light from Tara’s torch ahead.

“Nearly there, Sparky” I said, quickly scrambling along the last few metres.

When I reached the end I stopped and stared in

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amazement. Tara was sitting on the smooth dry floor of another smaller cave, shining her torch onto the walls.

“Crystals!” I said breathlessly staring around the cave, “thousands and thousands of crystals.”

They covered the walls and sparkled like diamonds in the torchlight.

“Beautiful isn’t it,” Tara said in a hushed tone.

I climbed out of the tunnel and sat down next to her. Sparky came and sat at my feet and we all gazed in wonder at the most amazing sight I had ever seen.

“A crystal cave,” I said quietly, finally breaking the silence. “It’s incredible.”

I stood up and went over to look at the crystals more closely. They ran in horizontal veins along the walls. Most were clear like small pieces of glass but some were purple and others white. I reached out to touch them. They felt sharp and slightly damp.

“Peter,” Tara cried, “there are fossils over here too. I’ve never seen so many!”

I went over to her and looked at where she was pointing. I could see countless tiny fossils embedded in the rocks between the layers of crystals.

“Look!” I said. “A fossil fish.”

It was a small fossil, no bigger than my fingernail, but I could clearly see the tiny backbone and fins.

“And here’s another,” Tara said excitedly.

We continued to study the walls, looking with fascination at the crystals and at the tiny fossil creatures. But then we were suddenly plunged into darkness.

“Oh, no,” Tara cried. “My torch! The bulb must have blown!”

I had never experienced such blackness. It was so complete it felt almost solid, and pressed in against me. Strangely, I did not feel at all afraid. I felt safe, protected in this space deep inside the earth. Sparky barked. The sound

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echoed round the cave.

“Peter,” Tara said, holding tightly onto my arm. “Where’s your torch?”

“I don’t know,” I replied, “I tried to find it earlier.”

I felt through my pockets again, this time more slowly and carefully. There it was, tucked away in my back pocket. I switched it on. It gave out a very weak light but it was bright enough for us to see our way to the tunnel. Sparky jumped in first, I climbed in backwards and, holding the torch in my teeth, crawled along the tunnel into the main cave.

Outdoor Inventions

This is an early scene with Peter and Tara trying out Professor P's inventions on the beach. To make sense of the ending of the book I wanted to show how close Peter, Tara and Professor P had become, and how much fun they had together. But, again, I felt it slowed down the start of the main story so I cut it.

Tara and I ran down the hill to the beach. We jumped down the steps and had almost reached the cliffs when an enormous dog ran up to us barking loudly.

“Oh, it’s you, Sleepy!” I cried, stroking her head.

“Look!” Tara exclaimed. “Professor P’s over there!”

We ran across the pebbles as fast as we could and found Professor P sitting on a yellow blanket surrounded by boxes.

“Hello, Professor P,” I called. “How are you?”

“Oh, hello, Peter, hello, Tara, I’m very well, thank you,” he replied. “I came out to field test some of my new inventions. “This,” he added proudly, “is my new Outdoor Range.

A broad grin spread across his face, “Can I offer you a cup of tea?” He handed me an unusual looking kettle covered in silver tubes. “Would you mind filling the kettle please, Peter?”

“Where’s the water?” I asked, looking for a container.

“Over there,” he chuckled, “plenty in the sea.”

“B...but...” I stammered.

“This is my newest invention, Peter,” he said, with that

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familiar twinkle in his eyes. “It’s a solar powered filter kettle. You fill it with sea water or even dirty pond water and the kettle makes it completely pure as it boils.”

“That’s a good idea,” I said, examining the strange looking invention.

Sparky and Sleepy followed me as I ran down to the sea and filled the kettle. I left them playing happily in the water and returned with the filled kettle to Professor P. He put it in the sun a short distance away from us.

“Best not to get too close,” he cautioned and pressed the switch on the side.

“How long does it take to boil?” I asked curiously.

“On a nice hot day like this, oh, I’d say it should be ready in about an hour,” Professor P replied.

“An hour!” Tara exclaimed. “That’s a long time to wait for a cup of tea, Professor P!”

“Oh, not really,” he said with a smile, “not if you put it on an hour before you want it.”

“Well, I suppose so,” she said doubtfully.

Professor P continued cheerfully. “Did you come out for a swim? It’s a lovely day.”

“No,” I replied. “We’re going to the cliffs to look for fossils.”

“Fossils? That’s interesting...” he began and then stopped as one of his gadgets started making a loud beeping noise.

I looked on curiously as Professor P picked up a small instrument with brightly coloured wires attached to it.

“Do you want to come and look for fossils with us, Professor P?” Tara asked.

“Oh, err, thank you,” Professor P replied distractedly, “but no, I think I’d better stay here and sort out the problems with this little gadget.”

“OK, see you later then, Professor P,” we called out, as we went over towards the cliffs.

OUTDOOR INVENTIONS

An hour later Professor P called over to us, “Peter, Tara, kettle’s boiled!”

We gathered up our fossil finds and hurried over to him.

“Did the kettle work all right then, Professor P?” I asked, looking curiously at it.

“Of course, Peter, of course. Let’s have that tea now shall we?” He poured the boiling water into the teapot. “The milk is in the cool box, over there.”

He pointed to a large green box with a blue honeycombed panel on the lid.

“It’s a solar powered cool box I’ve been working on,” he explained. “Whatever the weather it always stays cool. In fact the sunnier it gets, the better it works!”

“Good idea!” Tara said, looking very impressed.

I took off the lid and looked inside. It had wires everywhere and tubes coiled into some very strange shapes. I reached into the cool box and after searching through the jungle of wires I eventually pulled out a silver flask.

“Thank you, Peter.” Professor P said, taking the cold flask. He unscrewed the top and attempted to pour the milk into the mugs.

“Hmm! Frozen solid!” he frowned. “Works a bit too well I’m afraid!”

Tara giggled.

Professor P poured some hot water from the kettle into a bowl and placed the flask in it to warm up. “Be all right in a few minutes,” he said.

While we waited for the milk to unfreeze Professor P told us about his plans for his solar powered kettle.

“I believe it could save lives,” he explained. “In many parts of the world people die through drinking dirty water.”

“How does it work, Professor P?” I asked.

“Well, the idea is very simple,” he explained. “It has two section - you fill the one at the back with seawater.

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When it boils the steam comes off and goes through a small tube to the front section. There it turns back into water – hot pure drinking water – with all the salt and dirt left behind in the first back section.”

“That’s brilliant, Professor P!” I said enthusiastically, and he smiled proudly.

The milk had unfrozen now and so Professor P poured the tea and gave us each a mug. Tara took a sip and screwed up her face. I cautiously tried the tea.

“Good?” Professor P asked.

“Well,” I hesitated, “it’s a little bit... er... salty.”

“Really?” he said in surprise, raising the mug to his lips. “Uck!” he cried. “That’s disgusting! Must be a leak between the two compartments.”

“Oh, it’s not that bad, Professor P,” Tara said politely taking another sip, “you soon get used to it.”

“Thank you, Tara,” he said, “it’s very nice of you to say that, but I’m afraid I don’t think I could.”

He put down the tea. “Would you like a packet of crisps instead?”

“Yes please,” I said eagerly. I was quite hungry and needed something to get the unpleasant taste of the tea out of my mouth.

“What flavour would you like,” he asked grinning. He opened his rucksack and took out a handful of small plastic bags. “There’s peanut butter, strawberry, chocolate...”

“Chocolate!” I exclaimed.

“Yes,” he said, “I made them with my All Flavour Crisp Making Machine. The chocolate flavour does taste rather strange but Sleepy likes them.

“Do you have any plain ones?” Tara asked.

He searched through the pile. “Yes, here you are.”

Tara took out one of the small crinkled brown crisps and tentatively put it in her mouth. She smiled in relief and reached into the packet for another.

OUTDOOR INVENTIONS

“Can I have the same, please, Professor P?” I asked.

As we ate the crisps Professor P told us about his other outdoor inventions.

“This one’s a child finder,” he explained, showing us his watch. “I’ve been testing it out with Sleepy’s help.”

She was lying with Sparky, peacefully asleep in the sun apparently none the worse for the testing.

“She’s wearing a small transmitter around her neck,” Professor P continued. “The digital readout on the watch tells you how far away she is and the pointer shows you the direction. A buzzer sounds to warn you if she goes too far away.”

“My mum would like one of those,” Tara said enthusiastically. “My little sister Rosie is always running off!”

“I’ll let you have one, as soon as the bugs are ironed out.” He frowned at Sleepy. “This one was working fine until Sleepy went into the sea and got it all wet!”

My Birthday

This scene developed out of an earlier deleted, deleted scene. I wanted a funny chapter, and I think I succeeded, but I cut it because I felt it slowed down the start of the main story.

After tea I rang Professor P and his answer machine replied.

“Good evening, Professor P Products,” it said in a rather self-important tone.

“Can I speak to Professor P please?” I asked.

“He’s extremely busy,” it said curtly. “If you’re selling double glazing or fitted kitchens...”

“I’m not. I was just...”

“Or mobile phones or holidays...”

“I want to ask Professor P if he can come to my birthday tea on Sunday,” I blurted out in frustration.

“Oh, in that case I’ll see if I can find him. I’m sure he’d like to come. I think he’s in the basement working on his...Oops...Please hold the line while I entertain you with a relaxing song.”

A very out of tune wailing noise began and a few moments later I heard Professor P’s voice, “Will you stop that racket, Answer Machine!”

“Just trying to do my job, Professor P,” it replied, rather hurt.

“Hi, Professor P, it’s Peter here,” I said cheerfully.

“Oh, hello, Peter. What can I do for you?”

“I was just wondering...It’s my birthday on Sunday. Would you like to come for tea?”

“I’d love to,” he said, obviously delighted. “What

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time?”

“About four o’clock.”

“Excellent! I’ll see you then, Peter.”

On Sunday I woke early full of excitement. It was my birthday at last! I waited restlessly in bed until seven o’clock and then finally tiptoed into my parent’s room to see if they were awake.

“Happy birthday, Peter,” my mother said sleepily as I opened the door.

My father was snoring. She nudged him and he woke with a start.

“Oh, Peter, hello, happy birthday,” he said rubbing the sleep from his eyes.

“Give us a moment, Peter,” my mother added, “and we’ll get your cards.”

I went back to my room. A few minutes later there was a knock on the door and my parents came in.

“Happy Birthday!” they chorused, giving me some cards and presents. “We’ll save your main present for later.”

“What is it?” I asked excitedly.

“It’s a secret,” my father answered mysteriously, “but I’m sure you’ll like it!”

We went downstairs into the kitchen. My mother made some pancakes and we had just finished eating when Tara knocked at the back door.

“Happy birthday, Peter,” she cried. “Not too early am I?”

“No, come in,” I replied. “Would you like a pancake?”

“Yes, please,” she said eagerly.

Tara gave me a birthday card. “I’ve got you a present too,” she said. “It’s not quite finished yet, I’ll bring it round later.”

“Thanks.”

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“Here you are, Tara,” my mother said giving her a pancake. “Come and sit down. Just help yourself to maple syrup and there’s fresh cream and strawberries too.”

After breakfast my mother, Tara and I got into the car to go to the water park.

“Isn’t dad coming too?” I asked.

“No,” my mother said and smiled knowingly “He’s got a special job to do for your birthday.”

The water park was fantastic. It had four outdoor slides and eight more indoors. Tara and I spent most of the time playing in the ‘spacebowl’ – an enormous bowl that we spun around in, before flying through the air and finally splashing into the water. After three or four fun filled hours we finally got out of the water we had a quick snack at the café before returning home.

“That was a great morning, thanks for inviting me, Peter,” Tara said as she went back to her house. “See you later, I’m just going to finish your present.”

While I was waiting for the party to begin I went up to my room and played on one of the new computer games my aunt had given me. At three o’clock exactly the doorbell rang. I ran downstairs and opened the door. Professor P was standing there, holding a large present wrapped up in silver paper with a gold bow. Sleepy ran up to the door, panting and shaking the hair out of her eyes. She was carrying two cloth rucksacks that were tied together and draped over her back like a saddle.

“Happy birthday, Peter,” Professor P said smiling.

“Thanks!” I cried excitedly, looking at the package. “You’re a bit early I’m afraid, my mum’s still making the scones.”

“Early?” he said puzzled, “I thought I was on time.”

“My fault Professor P,” his watch piped, “I told you the time was an hour later than it really was, because you’re always an hour late, so I thought you’d be on time, but you

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were on time, so you're an hour early."

"Watch," he said patiently. "I would be grateful if you would not do that again."

"Sorry, Professor P," it squeaked.

"Oh, that's all right, Watch," he sighed.

"Come in anyway," I said laughing.

Sleepy ran into the house like a whirlwind, her tail wagging madly. She met Sparky coming down the stairs and the two dogs dashed upstairs to explore.

Professor P and I went into the living room. My mother came in to introduce herself and offer Professor P a drink.

"Have you lived here long, Professor P?" she asked as she brought in the tea.

"No," he replied, "since Christmas. I used to live in Cambridge."

"We went to Cambridge for the weekend," my mother said, "years ago, before Peter was born. It's such a beautiful city, with all those old buildings."

"Yes," he replied quietly. "There were some lovely old buildings at my college."

He cleared his throat awkwardly. My father suddenly came into the living room and broke the rather embarrassing silence. He introduced himself to Professor P and they shook hands.

"I've got something to show you, Peter," my father said. He took a box out of the plastic bag he was carrying and gave it to me. It was a video camera.

"I bought it specially for today," he said proudly, "best one in the shop, digital and everything."

"Brilliant!" I cried. "A digital video camera!"

My father opened the box and took out the camera. He picked up the manual and leafed through it.

"Perhaps you could look at it later, Jeff," my mother said. "Would you mind going out to the shop? I've just run out of butter."

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“OK,” he said and my parents left the room.

“I’ve always wanted one of these,” I said, picking up the video camera.

“It’s a good make,” Professor P said, coming over to examine it.

He took the batteries out of the carrier bag and fitted them in the camera. He gave it to me and I switched it on. I pressed the red record button.

“Lights, camera, action. You’re on Professor P!” I said, pointing the camera and moving towards him. He waved at me and I swept round in a wide circle before zooming in rapidly towards him.

Suddenly Professor P cried out, “Careful, Peter, the table!”

“Ow,” I yelled as I banged into the side of the coffee table.

I tumbled and fell to the floor. The camera flew out of my hand.

Crash! It hit the coffee table, rolled over and fell to the floor with a thud.

“Oh, no!” I cried in horror. “It’s broken.”

The back had come off the camera and the batteries were strewn over the floor.

“I’m sure it will be all right.” Professor P said calmly.

We gathered the batteries and put them back into the camera. I switched it on.

“It’s not working!” I cried. “There are no lights, nothing!”

“No need to worry, Peter,” he reassured me.

“I’ve broken it,” I said, almost in tears. “My dad will be



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furious.”

“These cameras are pretty strong you know, Peter – they’re meant to take the occasional knock. It’s probably just a simple connection come loose. Should be easy to fix.”

“Can you fix it, Professor P?”

“I’ll take a look,” he said rolling up his sleeves. “Fortunately I never go anywhere without my tools. Would you mind finding Sleepy? She’s got them on her back.”

I ran upstairs looking for Sleepy but she was not there. After searching the whole house I finally found her playing in the garden with Sparky. But the tool bags were missing! I ran into the kitchen and asked my mother if she had seen them.

“Yes, they’re over there on the chair,” she said pointing. “I took them off her, poor thing, they looked so heavy.”

“Thanks, mum,” I said, feeling very relieved.

I picked up the bags and went back into the living room.

“Thank you, Peter,” he said as he took the bags.

He took a silver sphere out of his pocket and placed it on the table. Floppy popped into the air above the sphere. The little rabbit looked slightly unwell and had a few pink spots on his ears and tail.

“Hi, Floppy,” I said, slightly surprised by his appearance.

“Hello, Peter,” he sniffed.

Professor P opened the bags, took out his toolbox and found a small screwdriver. He put the camera in the centre of the table and carefully began removing the screws and placing them neatly in a saucer to one side.

“So important to be orderly and tidy when you’re working with electronics,” he said, removing one side from the camera.

“It’s very complicated!” I said as I peered inside, “How do they get so much into such a small space?”

PROFESSOR P DELETED SCENES

The doorbell rang and I went to answer it. It was Tara. She had changed into a red party dress and stood at the door, holding a box covered in white paper with painted yellow flowers on it.

“Hi, Peter,” she said smiling. “Happy birthday! Here’s your present.”

“Thanks,” I said excitedly, taking the box. It was quite heavy and I wondered what it could be.

“Hello, Tara,” my mother called out from the kitchen, “come and have a drink.”

“Professor P’s in the living room,” I whispered to Tara as we walked towards the kitchen. “Sorting out a little problem. I’ll tell you later.”

“Has one of his inventions exploded?”

“No!” I laughed. “Not yet!”

We went into the kitchen and my mother gave Tara an orange juice.

“Oh, what lovely wrapping paper,” she said when she saw Tara’s present.

“I painted it myself,” Tara said proudly. “Do you want to open it now, Peter?”

I carefully took off the wrapping paper. Inside was a pot filled with soil and wrapped tightly in a plastic bag.

“Thanks,” I said feeling rather puzzled.

“It’s a home-made sunflower growing kit,” she explained. “There’s a pot, some sunflower seeds and a little bag of gravel. If you put the gravel on the top it helps to keep the slugs away.”

“Thanks, Tara.”

“What other presents have you got?” she asked.

I told her about the presents that my family had given me and added, “Professor P brought one too but I haven’t opened it yet. Let’s go and see him, shall we?”

I opened the living room door and gasped in horror.

I could not believe what I saw.

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The video camera was in pieces. The table and floor were covered in tools, circuit boards, wires and springs. Professor P was kneeling at the coffee table, holding a soldering iron and singing loudly.

“Professor P...” I stammered. “What on earth have you done!”

“We all live in a yellow time machine, a yellow time machine,” he sang, completely unaware of our presence.

“Professor P!” I said raising my voice.

“Nearly there, Peter,” he said without looking up. “I’ll just take this out.” He removed a small component from the circuit board and promptly tossed it into the wastepaper basket.

Tara looked at me. “What’s going on?” she whispered.

I stared at her completely lost for words.

“Ah ha! Don’t need this little chip either,” Professor P mumbled and he threw another component into the wastepaper basket.

“Stop!” I burst out. “Professor P, please! What are you doing?”

“New circuit,” he said. “Work twice as well. Don’t need the old stuff. It’s all got to go. Trust me.”

“But...” I spluttered. “My dad! He’ll...”

Floppy appeared from behind the sofa. He was now covered in pink spots and did not look at all well.

“I can’t bear to look,” he said, covering his head with his ears. He disappeared behind the sofa again.

Tara was speechless. I stood motionless, frozen in shock. What would my father say when he saw the state of the camera? He would be furious! He would have been upset to find out I had dropped it. But now it was a disaster! The camera was spread out in small pieces on the floor. The guarantee would be worthless – we’d never be able to take it back to the shop and get it fixed properly.

Professor P continued to dismantle the camera, leaving

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an almost empty shell and an assortment of circuit boards and wires scattered about the wastepaper basket. He paused and leant back against the sofa.

“Can you believe it?” he grumbled. “Who designs these things? Such a waste of space!”

“But, Professor P,” I began, “I thought you were going to fix it.”

“Fix it? It would be a crime to merely fix it. I had to make some improvements.”

“What?” I asked, confused. “But my dad, he’ll be back in a few minutes.”

“Oh, it won’t take long,” he said, picking up the soldering iron. “All I’ve got to do is put in a new processing chip. Take about five minutes I expect.”

“Five hours more like,” Floppy added.

I heard the front door open and my mother call out, “Is that you, Jeff?”

Too late – my father was home!

“My dad! He’s back!” I cried in horror. “Hurry Professor P, please hurry.”

“Oh, black holes!” he exclaimed. “Put the chip in the wrong way round. Now, that’s what happens when you rush things.”

I watched impatiently as Professor P took the chip out again, turned it round and carefully soldered it back into the circuit board.

“Nearly there,” he said as he began to fit the new circuit board into the camera.

I heard the kitchen door open.

“My father’s coming!” I yelled in panic. “What are we going to do?”

“Calm down, Peter,” Professor P said. “I just need a few minutes to finish and another couple of minutes to tidy up.”

I glanced at my watch.

“I think we can keep your father busy until then,” Tara

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said. "Come on, Peter, I've got an idea."

She hurried into the hallway. I ran after her and shut the living room door firmly behind me.

"Hello, Mr Davidson," Tara said cheerfully.

"Hello, Tara. How are you?"

"Fine, thanks."

"Has Peter shown you our new video camera yet?" he asked moving towards the living room.

"Not yet," she said smiling sweetly. Then she put her hand on his arm and gently steered him towards the kitchen.

"Mr Jenkins," she continued, "I was wondering if I could ask your advice about something. I heard you're an expert gardener."

"Oh, no, not really," he replied modestly.

"Well, it's just that I gave Peter a present for his birthday," she continued.

"Yes, come and have a look, dad," I added quickly, following her lead.

"Oh," he said distractedly, glancing back at the living room door.

"It's a sunflower kit," Tara said proudly as we entered the kitchen.

She picked it up and without stopping led my father directly into the garden.

"I thought you'd know how much water to give them," she continued, "and the best place to grow them."

"Well, it's a bit late in the season to be growing sunflowers," my father said. Then seeing Tara's disappointment he continued, "But I'm sure it will be all right if we water them every day. We can put them over here by the fence where they will get the most sun."

Tara did a great job of keeping my father talking but finally he turned back towards the house. I looked nervously at my watch. Only three minutes had passed!

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“Dad, can I have a little section of the garden to put the sunflowers in, and maybe some other plants too?” I asked.

“Of course, Peter!” he answered in surprise. “I didn’t realise you were so interested in gardening.”

He eyed me suspiciously. I looked away.

“I got Peter interested,” Tara said quickly. “I love gardening. That’s why I made the sunflower kit.”

“Well, it’s been most interesting talking to you both,” he said, “But we’ll have to continue this conversation another time. Let’s go inside now and try out the new camera so it’s ready for Peter’s birthday tea.”

He marched inside and I trailed unhappily behind him.

“Nice try,” I whispered to Tara.

I smiled at her but inside I felt utter panic. All I could think about was the terrible state of the living room and the uproar that would follow when my father saw it. He opened the living room door and went inside. I hung back, waiting for the outcry, but to my complete surprise there was none.

I peered round the living room door.

Professor P was sitting on the sofa, quietly reading a magazine, and the camera was resting neatly on its box on the coffee table. There was no mess or any sign of mess. I looked at Tara, my mouth wide open in astonishment, unable to believe my eyes.

“Oh, I’m so sorry to leave you all by yourself, Professor P,” my father apologised.

“No problem. Just been reading your banking magazine, very interesting article on overdrafts.”

As my father went to pick up the video camera Professor P winked knowingly at Tara and me.

“It’s surprisingly light,” my father said balancing it in his hand. “Amazing modern technology, isn’t it?”

“I wonder how it works?” he mused.

He put it down and picked up the manual.

“You need a degree in rocket science to understand this

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thing,” he sighed. “A dozen different languages too - everything except plain English!”

He picked up the camera again and looked at all the buttons. I looked on anxiously as his finger reached out for the small red button on the side. What would happen when he switched it on? Had Professor P actually managed to fix it?

He pressed the button.

“Hello, Mr Davidson,” the camera said in a friendly voice. “How are you today?”

My father almost dropped the camera and looked at us dumbfounded. He scratched his head and turned to Professor P.

“Err,” he stammered, “did you say something, Professor P?”

“No,” a little voice squeaked, “it was me, your camera.”

My father looked at the camera, then at Professor P and then at me. He looked at the camera again then burst out laughing.

“Fantastic!” he cried. “Absolutely amazing! How do they do it? It even knows my name!”

He opened the door and called out, “Molly, come here, you have got to see this.”

My mother arrived a few minutes later and he proudly showed her the camera.

“You try it, Molly,” he said. “Just point the camera and tell it what to do.

“Tell it?” she said uncertainly.

“That’s right, just talk to it.”

She took the camera and looked through the viewfinder.

“Hello, Mrs Davidson,” the camera piped up.

“Oh,” she stammered in surprise. “Err, hello, Camera. Record please.”

“Now recording,” it said.

“Isn’t it incredible!” my father cried. “I don’t remember

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the one in the shop being nearly as good as this.”

My parents were delighted with the camera and it worked perfectly. While they were playing with it I went over to Professor P.

“Thanks,” I whispered. “It’s brilliant!”

“My pleasure,” he said smiling. “Our secret eh?”

The doorbell rang and I went to answer it.

“Happy birthday, Peter,” Mary said as I opened the door.

She gave me a present and we went into the living room. I introduced Mary to my parents and Professor P. My father once again proudly showed off his new video camera, much to Mary’s amusement, and then we all went into the dining room.

“Wow, it’s fantastic!” I cried in delight when I saw the room.

Balloons and party streamers were hanging from the ceiling. The table was laden with food - bowls of crisps, nuts, cheese dips and in the middle was an enormous home-made pizza smelling deliciously of melted cheese and sweet-corn.

“Do just help yourselves,” my mother invited us.

I piled my plate high with pizza and crisps and sat down next to Tara. Mary sat next to Professor P.

“So you’re an inventor then, Professor P?” Mary said.

I noticed that he went rather quiet and blushed slightly when she spoke to him.

“Er, yes,” he stammered.

“What sort of things do you invent?”

“Er,” he said scratching his head as if he had forgotten and he blushed again.

“Professor P has invented a self heating can,” Tara giggled.

“Really,” said Mary in surprise.

“A lot of his inventions are made from recycled things,”

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I added.

“How interesting!” she continued. “I think recycling is so important, don’t you, Professor P?”

“Absolutely,” he said nodding vigorously. “The things people throw away. The waste is terrible.”

“I’m always careful to recycle as much as I can,” she said.

“I just wish everyone did,” he added. His nervousness was gone and he enthusiastically explained his views on the importance of recycling. Mary nodded in agreement and they were soon chatting happily and easily like old friends.

After we had finished the pizza my mother brought in some jelly, ice cream and fruit.

“You haven’t opened all your presents yet, Peter,” my father reminded me as we finished the dessert.

“Oh, yes,” I said and fetched them from the hall. Mary had brought an expertly wrapped present in bright silver holographic paper.

“Oh, thanks,” I cried when I had managed to remove the sellotape.

Mary had given me the wonderful book on fossils that she had shown us in her shop. My mother came over to look at it and I showed her the page with the ichthyosaurus.

“Look, mum,” I said excitedly. “Mary’s got one of these in her shop!”

“Not a live one I hope?” my mother said jokingly and everyone laughed.

“Thank you, Mary, it’s brilliant,” I smiled.

“I thought you’d like it,” she said pleased.

The present from Professor P was about the size of a shoebox and wrapped in recycled paper. It had the words *congratulations on your wedding* printed on it. The wrapping paper came away easily and I quickly tore it off.

PROFESSOR P DELETED SCENES



Inside, was a shoebox!

I opened it.

“Er, thanks, Professor P,” I said. “It’s... it’s great.”

Tara looked inside the box and then whispered to, “What on earth is it?” I shrugged as I stared at the collection of electronic components and coloured wires. I felt rather embarrassed at not knowing what it was and wondered if it would be impolite to ask.

“It’s very,” I hesitated, trying to find a suitable word.

Tara giggled.

“Oh, how silly of me, I forgot to put the label on,” Professor P apologised. “It’s a metal detector,” he added enthusiastically. “Well, actually it’s a metal detector kit. I was going to build it for you but I thought you might have more fun building it yourself.”

“Brilliant!” I cried enthusiastically. I took out some of the components and looked at them closely. It would be great fun building the metal detector.

Tara looked at me and mouthed a word. I was puzzled. What was she trying to say? She did it again and getting no

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reaction from me, came over and whispered in my ear, “Gold!”

I nodded excitedly. Of course! We could use the metal detector to find gold on the beach.

“Thanks, Professor P! It’s just what I wanted!”

“And now, Peter,” said my father, “we’d like to give you your main present. Shut your eyes and I’ll get it.”

I closed my eyes tightly wondering what it could be. Moments later my father returned.

“Do you like it, Peter?” my mother asked.

I opened my eyes and there was a silver and black mountain bike with red stripes.



“It’s fantastic!” I cried and rushed over to it.

“It has twenty one gears,” my father said, “and I’ve fitted it with a little bicycle computer that tells you how fast you’re going.”

“Oh thank you,” I beamed. “I really, really wanted a bike. Can I try it out now?”

We went outside and I got onto the bike. It felt perfect. I set off along the road with Sparky and Sleepy running after me. When the road curved downwards I changed into top gear and sped down the hill with the wind rushing past my face. I glanced down at the bike computer. I was going at 20mph! At the bottom of the hill I stopped and the two dogs caught up with me, barking with excitement. I turned round and sped back up the hill, skidding to a halt outside the house.

“That was great!” I panted.

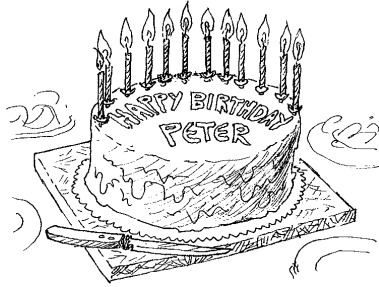
“How were the gears, Peter?” my father asked.

“Brilliant!” I replied.

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We went back into the dining room and my mother cleared away the plates. Then she returned from the kitchen with an enormous chocolate cake with the words “Happy Birthday Peter” written in red icing and around the outside twelve candles shone brightly.

Everyone sang *Happy Birthday* – much to my embarrassment and I blushed as Tara’s voice rang out clear and tunefully while my father managed almost, but not quite, to avoid hitting a single right note. My mother put the cake on the table and I leant over to blow out the candles.



“Don’t forget to make a wish!” Tara said.

I hesitated. What could I wish for, I wondered? It felt as though all my dreams had already come true. I was living by the sea in a new house with a great friend next door. I had made friends with a brilliant inventor. I had a dog – a wonderful puppy! And today on my birthday I had been given a fantastic mountain bike. I just could not think of anything more I wanted in life.

“Come on, Peter,” Tara urged, “the candles are melting!”

“OK,” I said, and then, in that moment I knew what to wish for. I blew out the candles.

Time Travelling

This scene came from a much earlier version of the book (there was even a chapter on magic in that version - I wonder if that was because I had just read Harry Potter!). I was trying to explain the Many Worlds Theory of Quantum Mechanics in a descriptive way. I liked this scene very much and was reluctant to cut it but hardly anyone who read it (children and adults alike) knew what on earth I was trying to say. Let me know if it means anything to you...

We all squeezed into the time machine, Sparky sitting on my lap and Sleepy on Tara's. I started the computer program and clicked on the *Go* button. The pyramid tubes began to glow and the time machine started to vibrate. I shivered with expectation.

"We're off!" Tara cried excitedly.

"At last we're going home!"

There was a sudden bright flash of light. A huge funnel formed below us and we fell downwards, spinning like spiders swept into a plughole. We spun faster and faster and I felt as though I was being stretched like an elastic band. I held on tightly to Sparky with one hand and gripped one of the tubes with the other.

Enclosed in the bright yellow pyramid we floated in cold dark space. As we spun and turned I noticed one of the tubes was glowing less brightly than the rest. It flickered

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momentarily and then returned to full strength. Tara must have seen the tube flicker too, because she shouted something to me. I saw her yellow lips move and her anxious expression, but no words reached me – there was no sound at all. I tried to shout a reply but again no sound came out from my mouth.

The tube flickered again and died completely. The time machine spun violently and I cried out as I lost my grip on the tube. Sparky burrowed his head into my T-shirt and put his paws over his ears.

Suddenly, all of the tubes went out and we were plunged into darkness. The only light came from the faint glow of the computer screen. I glanced at the screen and saw the message *Program error. Divide by zero encountered. Automatic steering is now off.* Underneath the message I read the date. It said *-150,000,000 years* and then quickly changed to *-150,000,001 years.*

“No!” I tried to yell. We were going the wrong way! We were going backwards in time!”

As I looked at the date, hundred of years passed and then thousands flicked by at an ever increasing rate. We watched the screen in horror as the date spun backwards, taking us further and further from home.

I looked up from the screen and noticed pinpoints of light appeared all around us. Below us was a blue-green ball, spinning rapidly with another smaller white ball whizzing round it. It looked like the Earth and the Moon.

We shot upwards and away from the big blue-green ball and saw the whole solar system before us. Nine shining planets circled the sun, the inner ones flying round so fast they looked like coloured rings. We moved away from the solar system until the planets disappeared and only the sun remained. Then, it too became lost in a sea of spiralling, swirling stars.

A message flashed onto the screen *Warning. You are*

TIME TRAVELLING

now approaching the beginning of the universe.

Thousands of pinpoints of light surrounded us. They swirled in complex and beautiful spiral patterns, all moving together towards a central point.

Stars, I thought.

All the stars in all the galaxies were coming together and I realised we were seeing the beginning of the universe. It was the big bang, being played backwards. The spirals unwound and the stars began to blink out. Now we could see to the edge of the universe, a bright burning sphere rapidly falling in on itself. The sphere shrank to the size of a football and then the size of a pea. Finally it was gone completely. The universe was no more.

I felt terrified. I started out at the blankness of space. There was absolutely nothing there. We had come back to time before the universe existed.

A message flashed up on the computer screen *If automatic control fails the time machine can be operated on manual. Use the arrow keys to move in the lower four dimensions and the shift key and arrow keys to move in the higher four dimensions.*

Tara looked at me questioningly. I reached out and pressed one of the arrow keys. The time machine spun round wildly.

Patterns of colour appeared on the screen and changed as I pressed the key. I pressed another one and the patterns vibrated and shimmered.

Suddenly I noticed something happening outside. It was getting brighter. The darkness of space had gone. A grey swirling mist surrounded us. It grew brighter and we were soon engulfed in a sea of brilliant white light. The light was intensely bright, but it did not hurt my eyes, it felt soft and comforting and filled my whole body with warmth.

A message flashed onto the screen *Warning. You are now approaching the beginning of the meta-universe!* The

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brightness increased and the light felt almost solid, as though I could reach out and touch it with my fingers. Lines began to appear in the light, tiny hairline cracks that spread outward from a central point. It was like a solid sheet of glass that had been hit and was breaking into countless tiny crystals, each a perfectly regular geometric shape. It was like a crystal honeycomb, going on forever in all directions.

Inside the crystals I could see tiny points of light and as I looked closer I realised what I was seeing. Stars! Inside each of the crystals there were galaxies of stars. Each crystal was a whole universe!

As I looked closer I could see more detail inside the crystals. Then as I stared at one of the crystal universes it seemed to become larger and I felt myself being pulled towards it. I could see everything inside it so clearly that it was almost as if I was actually inside the universe and surrounded by millions of stars. I flew towards a spiral galaxy and then felt myself drawn towards a star at its outer edges. I could see its nine planets glistening like brightly coloured jewels. I recognised the green blue planet with its large white moon.

It was the earth!

I zoomed in closer and could see the village where we lived. There on the beach was Tara, Sparky and myself, collecting fossils. I could see the scene clearly now. I was kneeling on the rocks with the hammer in my hand, about to break open a stone, and Tara was sitting on the rocks beside me with Sparky on her lap.

But nothing moved. The scene was frozen. Everything was still, even the waves in the sea, like glass.

Then suddenly my attention was pulled away from that crystal universe and drawn to another. It was as though someone was guiding me there, trying to show me something. The crystal universe I was now looking at was

TIME TRAVELLING

almost the same as the other. Everything was frozen too, but in this one my arm had moved, I had almost hit the stone now.

Again I was drawn to another crystal universe. In this one I had hit the stone and inside I could see a golden ammonite.

Once more I was drawn to another crystal universe. It was exactly the same as the last one except that this time there was no fossil inside.

“Now do you understand, Peter?” I could hear a faint voice inside my head.

Understand? I felt so confused. What was I looking at?

“Each of the crystal universes is a single frame in a movie, a snapshot in time. But there isn’t just one movie, Peter, there are an infinite number and each one is different. They show us everything that has happened, everything that will happen and everything that could happen.”

But why was everything frozen? I wondered.

“There no time in any of these universes, they are completely still. It is you who creates time, Peter. It comes from your mind. Your mind moves from one universe to the next and so makes things seem to move. You choose our own path through the universes. You make our own journey.”

The crystal universes began to fade and merge together until only a brilliant pure white light remained. I do not know how long Tara and I remained, bathed in that light, gently and softly warmed and comforted by it. The light seemed to be full of goodness, almost as if it were alive and aware of our presence.

“It’s all a dream, Peter. Everything that has happened to you, you life so far, everything you thought was real. You dreamed it all.”

I nodded. At last I understood.

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I looked up at Tara and she smiled back at me with wisdom and understanding in her eyes.

“Nothing is real except the light. We dreamed it all.”

I glance down at the computer screen and saw that another message had appeared *Final warning. You are now approaching the creation of the unified field.*

The light had now become so bright that I could see nothing else. The time machine disappeared, Tara faded away and my body was absorbed into the sea of energy. I was losing myself, becoming a tiny shrinking bubble in a sea of brilliant light.

At first I felt terrified. Nothing was real, I realised. The world that I had believed in was a dream. I was not real either, my thoughts and my feelings were all a dream too, a dream that was shortly going to be washed away in the sea of light.

“Who am I?” I wondered. “What is this thing called I?”

I knew I was going to die. I knew that the essence of myself, that which I call I, was going to be destroyed in this light. I tried to hold onto myself, to fight the waves of infinite light that swept over me.

“There is no need to be afraid,” came the gentle voice inside my mind. *“Do not try to fight it.”*

I gave up the struggle. How could a tiny bubble struggle against an infinite ocean of light? I let the bubble burst.

It is difficult to explain what happened next. No words can ever describe that experience. I did not die. I did not lose myself. I did not lose any part of myself. Rather, I became the sea of light. I became infinity. I became everything that was and is and will be and could be. There was nothing that was not me. I felt so amazing, so wonderful – words cannot express what it was like.

Then, in an instant, it was over and I was myself again, looking out through my own eyes, feeling my own body again, but forever changed by what had happened.

TIME TRAVELLING

I looked at Tara. She gazed back at me and I knew that she had experienced the same. I could see it in her eyes – they shone with the pure light of peace, goodness and knowing.

I felt Sparky moving on my lap and glanced down at him. His eyes were like Tara's too, windows into the infinite ocean of love.

We had all been changed. Forever changed.

Floppy Squared

I loved this scene! So why did I cut it? I decided, reluctantly, that it slowed down the ending of the story too much. Peter and Tara have just returned from the past, the book is nearing its close; they just want to get home... So, what are they doing, sitting in a teashop in Cambridge, going punting and being tourists? Well, why not?

We soon arrived at the teashop and sat at a table outside, overlooking a large church with a high tower. Sleepy lay contentedly at Professor P's feet and he stroked her gently.

"This is so exciting!" he said. "Time travel really is possible! It proves the Many World Interpretation of Quantum Mechanics – alternative worlds do exist. It's incredible."

"Professor P, can you explain exactly what's happened," Mary asked, "in simple terms."

"I would if it were simple," he replied.

"What's the complicated explanation then?" I asked, smiling.

He paused thoughtfully. "The real universe is much bigger than you might think!"

"Well, I thought it was pretty big," I said and Professor P smiled.

"It's much more than just big like this," he continued, holding his hands wide apart. "There are no words to describe it. What we see around us, the earth, space, stars and galaxies, they're just a tiny, tiny part of the real

FLOPPY SQUARED

universe.”

“So what else is there?” I asked.

Professor P looked at me with a twinkle in his eyes and said, “The universe contains every possibility of everything that could ever happen.”

He paused dramatically. I looked at him puzzled.

“Hmm,” he said shaking his head. “Let’s see if I can make it simple.”

Professor P took a coin out of his pocket.

“Heads or tails?” he asked, flipping the coin.

I looked at Tara. She shrugged. What did this have to do with alternative worlds? I wondered. “Heads,” I answered.

“Correct,” he said as he revealed the coin.

Professor P saw the puzzled look on our faces. He laughed and then continued, “When I tossed the coin, there were two possible outcomes, or, if you like, two alternative worlds, a head world and a tail world. When the coin was in the air the two worlds were like shadows, possibilities of what could be. When it landed you saw just one of those worlds, the head world. But the other world, the tail world still exists, you just can’t see it.”

“Why not?”

“It’s a bit like when you tune your radio into a particular station. The air is filled with radio waves but your set picks out just the station that you want. That’s the way your mind works, it focuses on just one world and ignores the rest. That’s what the Many World Interpretation of Quantum Mechanics says. I know it seems strange. I have difficulty understanding it myself. If it’s really true the consequences are amazing.”

“Like time travel?” Tara asked.

“Exactly,” Professor P nodded. “If we can re-tune our minds to a different reality then time travel is possible. The time machine sent you into a different reality, which you believed to be ‘the past’. Then it returned you here, to

PROFESSOR P DELETED SCENES

another alternative world, ‘the present’, very similar, but slightly different from the one you left.”

“So, why are you living here in Cambridge in this world and not with us by the sea, Professor P?” Tara asked.

“That’s something I’ve been wondering about too,” he replied. “Something must have happened in your world to cause me to leave the University and move away. But I can’t imagine what. I’m very happy here, I certainly don’t intend to move, at least not until I retire.”

“Do you think you can get us home, Professor P, to our own world?” I asked.

“I don’t know,” he replied thoughtfully. “It certainly won’t be easy. Finding the right world is a bit like trying to find a needle in a haystack, actually, an infinite haystack.”

“That’s what Floppy said!” I laughed.

“Floppy?” Professor P asked in surprise.

“He’s a supercomputer,” I replied. “He was another one of your inventions. Look, I brought him to show you.”

I took the small silver sphere out of my pocket and put it on the table.

“He got so excited on the way here,” Tara explained, “that he switched himself off.”

“Floppy!” I said and tapped the sphere lightly. “Wake up!”

There was a popping sound and Floppy appeared as a grey fluffy owl. He flew around in delight when he saw Professor P.

“Professor P,” he cried, his eyes lighting up. “How, how wonderful to see you again! It’s been so long. How are you? We’ve been on the most amazing adventure! And I’ve been working on the Theory of Everything for you. So much has happened. I can’t wait to tell you everything.”

“Hello, Floppy,” Professor P said smiling. “I am delighted to meet you. I would love to hear your story. But first, I’d like to show you something.”

FLOPPY SQUARED

He reached into his pocket and pulled out another identical sphere. He placed it on the table next to Floppy's and said, "Floppy, I'd like you to meet..."

With a pop another slightly larger owl appeared.

"Floppy," he said with a grin.

The two owls looked at each other, first in astonishment, and then suspiciously, obviously not sure how to respond.

"Oh, er, hello," our Floppy finally said. "I'm Superbrain 4.0, but you can call me Floppy."

"But I'm Superbrain 4.0!" the other owl said in annoyance. "And my name's Floppy too! So you'll have to call yourself something else."

"I will not!" Floppy said indignantly, puffing himself up to the size of the other owl. "You'll have to change your name!"

"Won't" the other owl said stubbornly.

"Now, Floppy," Professor P said sternly.

"Yes," both owls answered together.

"There's no need to argue," he continued. "I will call the one who has been back in time Floppy I and the other Floppy II."

"But I want to be Floppy I," said Floppy II in a rather sulky voice. Professor P looked at him intently and he went quiet.

Our Floppy looked rather pleased with himself. He turned to Professor P and said in a quite voice, "Professor P, would you like to hear my Theory of Everything now?"

"Yes," he replied, smiling. "I would like that very much."

"Well..." Floppy said, clearing his throat dramatically.

"But I've worked out the Theory of Everything too," Floppy II interrupted loudly, "and a lot of other very important things too."

"Let's hear Floppy I first, shall we?" Professor P said

PROFESSOR P DELETED SCENES

kindly. "I'm most interested in what you have to say."

Floppy I flapped his wings, coughed once and said. "I think therefore."

Professor P leant thoughtfully back in his chair and said nothing.

"I'm not absolutely sure," Floppy added timidly, obviously unnerved by Professor P's silence.

I looked at Tara and I could see she was thinking the same as me. Floppy looked so worried, we both desperately hoped that Professor P would not laugh at the poor little owl.

Finally Professor P spoke, "So this is your solution to the basic problem in quantum mechanics, i.e. that a continuous wave function collapses on observation to give a discrete result."

Floppy looked completely lost and scratched his head. The other owl looked on smugly, enjoying his discomfort.

"It is," Floppy said finally, trying to sound confident.

"That is an interesting solution," Professor P said, his eyes twinkling. "You are proposing that the observable universe arises as a result of our thoughts. Thought creates reality. *I think therefore.*"

Floppy puffed himself up and said proudly, "Yes, that's right, Professor P."

"Well done," Professor P declared. "That is an excellent answer."

Floppy was delighted by the praise. He beamed from ear to ear. I looked at Tara in astonishment. Had Floppy really come up with a sensible answer?

Floppy II was not at all pleased. He snorted loudly and flew into the air.

"Well, I have a much better solution," he cried haughtily. "The answer is," he paused dramatically, "*I therefore.* My solution is far simpler and more elegant!"

"Your answer is also good, Floppy II," Professor P

FLOPPY SQUARED

replied thoughtfully. “It shows that consciousness rather than thought is the basis of our perception of reality. Both answers are excellent.”

As we continued to talk, a crowd of people gathered around our table. They looked at the owls in amazement and took photos.

We laughed when a little boy ran up to us, pointing to the owls and said, “Look mum, they’ve got owl post!”



PROFESSOR P DELETED SCENES

“Talking owls!” a man exclaimed in amazement.

The waitress knocked into a table and almost dropped the tray that she was carrying as she stared at the owls.

“Floppy II,” Professor P continued, ignoring the onlookers, “and you too, Floppy I. There is another task I would like you both to work on.”

“Of course, Professor P, what is it?” Floppy I said.

“I can do it quicker and better than Floppy I,” Floppy II added.

“Your task is this,” Professor P looked at them seriously. “I would like you to make friends with each other.”

Both Floppys looked surprised, then horrified at the idea. Floppy II disappeared in a puff of smoke. Floppy I blinked twice and vanished too.

A girl in the crowd pointed at us in astonishment. “Did you see that?” she said, turning to her friend. “The owls, they just vanished!”

A little boy ran up to Professor P. “Are you Professor Dimbledore?” he asked excitedly.

“Sorry,” Professor P replied looking puzzled. “I’ve never heard of him I’m afraid.”

The little boy ran back to his mother and said disappointedly, “No, he’s not!”

Gradually the crowds disappeared and we were left in peace.

“Now, what were we talking about?” Professor P mused, turning towards us. “Yes, of course, Peter, Tara, you want to get back to your own world.”

“Yes,” we replied eagerly.

“Well to have any chance of that we must recover the time machine from the cliffs,” he said thoughtfully. “I’ll need to find out how it works and make the necessary repairs.”

“Can you come back with us now?” I asked.

FLOPPY SQUARED

“Yes, we can give you a lift if you like,” Mary added.

“No, thank you, Mary,” Professor P replied. “I need to get all my tools and equipment ready. I’d rather come tomorrow if that’s all right with you.”

The waitress eventually arrived with our meals, giving us a rather curiously look. During lunch Tara and I told Professor P and Mary about our adventure back in time. They listened in amazement as we described the island and all the prehistoric creatures we had seen.

When we had finished lunch Professor P asked us if we would like to spend the afternoon sightseeing. “It won’t be as exciting as fighting off dinosaurs,” he said with a smile, “but it would be fun to go punting along the backs of the colleges.”

“Good idea,” Mary said enthusiastically, “I’ve always wanted to go punting.”

“Punting?” I asked. “What’s that?”

“You’ll see,” Professor P replied with a smile.

We left the teashop and walked to the river past Kings College. When we arrived at the boatyard Professor P pointed to the punts. They were long flat-bottomed boats with seats in the middle and at the front. People stood at the back, pushing themselves forward using long poles.

Professor P climbed on board the punt first and steadied it as we all took our seats. Mary sat at the front; I sat with Sparky and Sleepy in the middle and Tara in the back. Professor P stood at the back confidently holding the punting pole and pushed off.

The river was crowded with people trying unsuccessfully to punt. Professor P effortlessly steered us through all the boats and we went under a wooden bridge.

“Well, it’s nice to be punted by an expert,” Mary said as we set off.

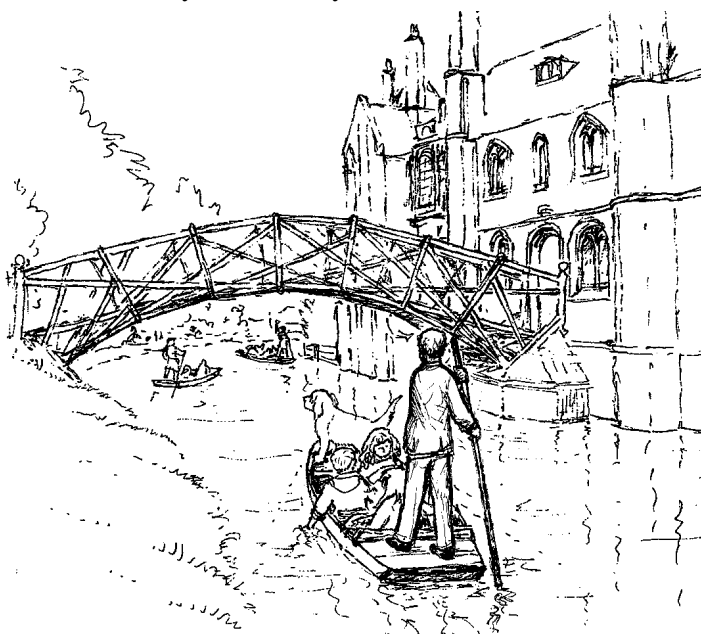
“My pleasure,” he said proudly.

As we approached a small wooden bridge Professor P

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pointed to it and said, “This is the famous Mathematical Bridge. It’s part of Queens College. It’s said that Newton built it without using any bolts. Then when some mischievous students took it apart they couldn’t get it back together again so they had to use bolts!”

“Is that really true?” Mary asked.



“No,” he chuckled, “it’s just a story for the tourists. It was built 22 years after Newton had died and it was originally bolted together.”

As we glided peacefully along the river Professor P told us about the colleges we were passing and their history.

“This one’s called Trinity College,” he said. We looked over to a large old building on our right with a wide lawn surrounded by trees to our left. “Newton’s old college. They say the apple tree outside the college gate is descended from the tree which dropped an apple on his

FLOPPY SQUARED

head, and led him discovering the theory of gravity.”

“Really?” Mary said.

“I doubt it!” Professor P chuckled.

On the way back we all had a go at punting. I could hardly lift the pole, let alone punt with it! Tara nearly fell into the river when she tried and Mary went round in circles a few times before she finally gave up. As we approached the boatyard Professor P took over and expertly guided us into the docking area.

It was late afternoon now as we walked back to the car, chatting away happily.

“Thank you for a lovely afternoon, Professor P,” Mary said as we reached her car.

She kissed him on the cheek. He turned bright red.

“Good bye Professor P,” Tara and I said together.

“Goodbye Sleepy,” I added.

“See you tomorrow,” Professor P called out as we set off for home.

Epilogue

In an earlier version of the story Peter and Tara did not try to persuade Professor P to move to the sea. So this epilogue was a way of tying up all the loose ends, and making absolutely sure he did return, ready for the next book in the series!

It was the evening of the last day of the school holidays. I was lying in the bath, relaxing and thinking about starting my new school tomorrow. I was not looking forward to it but neither was I dreading it; at least Tara would be there.

I sighed as I sank further down into the warm water. What a fantastic summer it had been! The exhibition had been a great success and people had come from long distances to see it. I remembered one comment in the visitors book, *Wonderful exhibition. I felt as if I was really there in the past.* We all had a chuckle at that! Everyone was very generous too and left a lot of money in the donations box.

Tara and I had continued to collect fossils throughout the holidays and sell them to Mary. With the money from the fossils and from the fossil guide it wasn't long before we had enough to buy our mountain bikes. We had a great time racing down the hills with Sparky running along besides us trying to keep up!

We even built a tree house in the woods at the back of the estate. I remembered sitting by the campfire, toasting our slices of bread, and reminiscing about our time on the prehistoric island.

EPILOGUE

We often e-mailed Professor P to tell him our news and he sent us many long e-mails in reply. The last one he sent said, *I often think of you and my 'home' by the sea. I'm sure Sleepy does too, she's lying at my feet right now looking up at me with sad eyes, wondering when we'll all be together again.*

Floppy e-mailed us too and said he was missing us. I missed him too. Professor P also said he would come and visit us in the Christmas holidays, so that was something to look forward to.

The bath water was growing cold now. Time to get out, I decided.

As I put on my pyjamas the doorbell rang and I heard footsteps coming up the stairs. There was a loud knocking on the door.

“Peter!”

It was Tara’s voice, shaking with emotion.

“What is it, Tara?” I asked.

“Something’s happened, Peter,” she said urgently. “Come quickly! Hurry!”

I put on my dressing gown and opened the door.

“Come downstairs!” Tara said looking pale and distraught.

“What’s going on?” I asked anxiously.

She did not answer. She raced downstairs and I followed her into the living room. She rushed over to the television set and switched it on.

“The historic north wing lies in ruins. At four thirty this afternoon a powerful explosion tore the building apart.”

“It’s Professor P’s college!” I cried. “You don’t think...Is he all right?”

“I don’t know,” she said, clutching my hand so tightly it hurt.

“We go over live to the college where a spokesman is expected to make a statement.”

PROFESSOR P DELETED SCENES



Professor P appeared in the archway at the entrance to the college. The steps below him swarmed with reporters shouting questions.

“He’s alive!” Tara yelled giving me a wild hug.

“Thank goodness!” I cried in relief.

Professor P took a sheet of paper out of his pocket. The reporters were silent. He read out loud from the paper.

“I deeply regret the irreparable damage I have caused to my college and admit full responsibility for it. After recent discussions with the Master of the college Sir David Wotherington-Fotheby I will be leaving my position with the college immediately.”

The crowd of reporters exploded, shouting questions and flashing cameras. Professor P looked pale and shocked. He tried to make his way down the steps.

“Has there been a cover up?” a reporter shouted.

“Have you discovered a new form of energy Professor P?”

EPILOGUE

“Is cold fusion a reality?”

“Professor P. Is it true your work was sabotaged?”

He put his hand up to his face to shield himself from the camera flashes.

“I have no further comment to make.”

“Professor P!” called out one insistent reporter. “What are you planning to do now?”

“I...” he looked down, obviously too distressed to speak.

Then, suddenly, he looked up at the camera and with that familiar twinkle in his eyes he smiled and said,

“I’m going home.”

Short Outtakes

Here are just a few short outtakes that got lost in the editing process.

Professor P laid the table and put two slices of bread in the toaster. It burst into life.

“Would you like a joke?” it piped.

“No, thank you,” he replied.

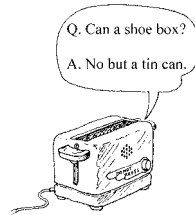
“Just the toast.”

“How do you get two large dinosaurs into a small phone box?” the toaster continued anyway.

“I don’t know,” he sighed.

“Now toaster, will you please make the toast!”

“With difficulty!” it said, roaring with laughter.



Professor P made us some peanut butter and tomato sandwiches. The tomatoes tasted good but I noticed that they were a strange pink colour.

“Hope you like the tomatoes,” said Professor P. “I grow them myself in the greenhouse. Don’t you think that it’s so boring the way that tomatoes are always red? I much prefer them different colours.”

“Brilliant!” I said. “I’ve never had pink ones before.”

SHORT OUTTAKES

“Business has been going rather slowly recently,” Professor P explained to us. “Teething problems, nothing serious.”

“Are you selling your inventions?” I asked.

“Not yet,” he replied. “That’s the problem. None of my products are ready yet. It takes a long time to get the bugs ironed out.”

Floppy turned into a pink hyena and laughed loudly.

“And even the bugs have bugs!” he quipped.

I ran after Professor P and caught up with him outside his house. He was pushing at the front door and his face was red with frustration.

“Open up, Door, will you?” he cried. “I’m in a hurry.”

“I’m sorry, Professor P,” the door piped in an apologetic voice. “I can’t let you in without the password.”

“But I don’t need a password. It’s me, Professor P.”

“Floppy reprogrammed me,” it said. “Everybody has to use a password now.”

“Floppy did what?” he cried. “Just wait till I find that little rabbit!”

“Can you tell us what the password is?” I asked the door.

“I shouldn’t really,” the door replied doubtfully. “Not without a very good reason.”

“If you don’t tell me,” Professor P said angrily, “you’re firewood! Is that a good enough reason?”

“Yes, I believe that is a very good reason,” the door said quietly, in a rather dignified manner. “The password is *Floppy Forever*.”

“*Floppy Forever*,” Professor P cried and the door burst open.

PROFESSOR P DELETED SCENES

“Oh, bugs don’t matter,” Floppy sniffed. “I’ve lived with bugs all my life and it hasn’t done me any harm.”

“Parents?” Floppy said in surprise. “Let me see,” he paused, “checking extended database for all references to ‘parents’.”

He went quiet for a few moments and then said, “No, there’s no need to worry about parents.”

“But...” Tara started.

“I have performed a thorough check, Tara,” he said in a slightly irritated tone. “Trust me. Parents are not relevant in this situation. Now you will need to take...”

“They’re amazing,” I said. “How do they know the animals really looked like that?”

“Well, palaeontologists don’t know for certain,” Mary replied. “They spend their lives studying fossils and trying to piece together the facts. It isn’t easy and sometimes they make mistakes. Big mistakes in fact! They once decided that a fossil fish called a coelacanth was a missing link in evolution – a fish that walked out of the water and became the first to dwell on land 350 million years ago. But they were soon in for a big surprise!”

“Why, what happened?” I asked.

“Well,” she laughed, “a fisherman caught one in his net. The coelacanth wasn’t extinct after all!”

SHORT OUTTAKES

“I’m going to take a look at the cave,” Professor P said.

He crouched down and disappeared into the tunnel. I waited impatiently for him to return. He finally reappeared and stood up slowly.

“Disaster,” he cried.

“What is it Professor P? What’s the matter?” I asked.

“Bumped my head on the roof of the tunnel. Very painful,” he said, rubbing his head.

“It took me years of searching before I finally stumbled on the secret of time travel. You see, time travel happens all the time.”

“It does?”

“Yes, it does,” he nodded. “Step into a phone box. Wait five minutes and step out. The phone box has transported you five minutes into the future.”

“But...” I began.

“When you understand what makes time move forwards,” he continued. “You can make it go backwards.”

“Oh, I forgot,” Tara said, going over to her rucksack. “The serviettes.”

She handed me a pink one. “Thanks,” I said, surprised.

As Tara served out the spaghetti I pulled her rucksack over towards me and looked carefully inside it.

“What are you looking for, Peter?” she asked puzzled.

“Oh, I was just wondering where you put the kitchen sink,” I replied casually.

PROFESSOR P DELETED SCENES

We went outside and Mary locked the shop door.

“I wonder how Professor P has been getting on,” I said.

“Do you want to come back to my house and find out?” she asked. “You can stay for supper if you like.”

“Thanks,” we replied.

Mary lived in a pretty little cottage with a very colourful and tidy garden. We went inside and she pushed at the living room door.

“Professor P?” she called, “are you in there? I can’t get the door open.”

“One moment,” he replied.

I heard something heavy being moved. The door opened and we went inside. Mary gasped in horror. Tara looked at me and giggled. The room was a disaster. Electronic equipment was piled high on every surface and the floor was covered in tubes, wires and electronic components. Mary’s television was lying upside down in the centre of the room with the back removed.

“My television!” Mary cried.

“Yes, I hope you didn’t mind, I needed to use it to...”

“Is it all right?” she interrupted.

“Well, it is rather old,” he replied. “But it does the job.”

“I mean, what have you done to it?”

“Just borrowed the high voltage circuitry.”

“But...” she stammered.

“Don’t worry, it will be fine,” he said. “I’ll be finished in a few minutes and I’ll put it back together then. It should work a bit better, in fact. You’ll be able to get a few extra channels.”