

Timey-Wimey (Friend to Female TG)

By FoxFaceStories

A Commission for Badabada

Liam has done the impossible: he has invented a time machine. With the aid of his best friend Caleb, he is journeying into the past to test it. But when Liam accidentally changes the interactions between his friend's parents, Caleb is horrified to find his life changing to that of a woman's in the present! Now stuck as Celeste, she demands Liam go back again and fix this. But every journey back in time only makes things worse for the increasingly feminine woman . . .

Timey-Wimey

Part 1: The Device

Caleb

Caleb *shot* out of his bicycle and raced to the front door of his best friend's house. It was a big place, far richer than Caleb himself could ever hope to afford, but it was like a second home to him at this point. He rapped his knuckles upon the front door repeatedly with great excitement.

"What are you doing here?" came a cranky old voice. "You don't belong here!"

Caleb sighed, turning to the obvious source of complaint. *Mrs Downhouse*. The resident geriatric with every prejudice imaginable, from classism to racism to, seemingly, a hatred of even her own sex, given that she called any young female jogger a 'whore.' Of course, given she was in her wheelchair, she probably hated anyone that moved. And she reserved worse words for Caleb.

"It's just me as always, Mrs Downhouse," Caleb said, folding his arms. "I'm here to visit Liam. Liam Lewis. You know, the guy I'm always here to see."

"This is a friendly neighbourhood," the old crank cried from her electric wheelchair, her wiry white hair practically standing up straight from how much she clearly disapproved of a young black man in working class dress in her fine suburban neighbourhood. "You best watch yourself!"

"Is that a threat, Mrs Downhouse?"

She sneered. "You be on your best behaviour! This is a classy area, and you're dirtying it up. If you act suspicious don't be surprised if I call the police on you!"

Caleb Carter just rolled his eyes. “Sure thing, whatever.” He rapped on the door again, and this time it opened to reveal a cyborg. Or at least someone who *looked* like a cyborg due to all the headgear he was wearing. He pulled it off, revealing his blonde-haired nerdy friend.

“Caleb! You got my message?”

“Sure did, dude. Holy shit, I can’t believe you did it.”

“Is this man mean to be with you, Liam?” came the third voice, still screeching.

Liam poked his head out. “He is, Mrs Downhouse. As always.”

“You tell me if he steals anything!”

“He hasn’t yet!” he yelled, before lowering his voice to Caleb. “Let’s get inside, shall we? Before she calls the neighbourhood watch society or something.”

Caleb was relieved to enter. It was the only thing he hated about coming here, that crazy racist old bat. The young man was twenty one years old, with mixed African and Korean heritage. Personally, he didn’t even think he put up that much of an intimidating figure: he was shorter than average, in fact, and he wasn’t highly muscly or anything, just athletic enough to stay healthy. His frizzy hair was cut short and he wore what clothes he could to present himself well, but he was from a working class family, and that made it hard to ‘dress up’, so to speak, when visiting his best friend’s neighbourhood. And, of course, he wore prescription glasses.

“Sorry about all of that,” Liam said, scratching at his bright blonde hair. “She’s getting even worse lately, the old cripple. But I thought you wouldn’t mind so much if it meant seeing the big success story!”

“Damn straight,” Caleb said with a grin. “Basement?”

“Basement. It’s finished. At least, I think it is. I wouldn’t do the first test without you, buddy. I can’t, really. I need someone to stay back here just in case it doesn’t work out and we fix any bugs.”

“But you think it works, man?” Caleb asked as they descended the steps. Liam passed him a glass of water, which was appreciated after the uphill ride to the nice side of town. “Thanks, by the way.”

“No problem. I really think I’ve done it. The chronometer seems to be functioning, and the wave-length of the time-sphere seems to be able to sync and de-sync from time. I think I’ve done it, Caleb. I think I’ve invented *time travel*.”

At that, they entered the very large basement of the large house, the one Liam had managed to gain through a combination of money earned through his earlier inventions and money given to him by his wealthy parents. Caleb always had to marvel at this laboratory space; it was literally bigger than his own house. In many ways, it had been a total twist of fate that he had become friends with Liam. A chance scholarship thanks to his engineering

skills had brought him to a private school that his family never would have been able to afford otherwise, and there he had met Liam. The two had bonded over their shared love of creation, problem-solving, and, of course, a great deal of nerdery.

Of course, if one was to point at the actual 'nerd' of the pair, one would find it hard to decide. Caleb was shorter, had thick glasses, and the separated front teeth that he could never afford to get fixed. He was, however, more fit than his friend. Liam, on the other hand, had a mad scientist's wiry white-blond hair, as well as a less athletic frame, but he was of average height and was more handsome in the face. Not that he ever took advantage of it: Liam was either too busy crafting experiments in his laboratory to have time for women, or far too nervous to do so. In fact, Caleb long suspected that his friend - who was the same age as him - was actually still a virgin and too nervous to admit it. He doubted he would be a virgin much longer once he became known as the man who invented time travel, however.

"Dude, I can't believe it," Caleb said, gazing at the large sphere capable of holding a single occupant, and the large columns of machinery that surrounded it. "If this works, you're going to be famous and rich."

"*We're* going to be famous and rich," Liam corrected, putting an arm around his friend's shoulder. "You *and* me, buddy."

"Please, it's your theories and experimentation that got us this far. You're a young genius. A total savant!"

"But it was your engineering and electronics skills that solved the practical matters of achieving my vision! Don't sell yourself short."

"Ah, anyone could have done that."

"I doubt it. I highly doubt it. And besides, *you* were the one to solve them. Which means *you* get the credit."

Caleb beamed, and the pair of them took in the time machine they had spent over nearly two years constructing. It was an insane thing, really. Caleb had been only eighteen when Liam came to him with these plans, plans the young supergenius had been working on in his head since he was only fourteen years old. Now, after so much time and energy and Lewis family funds drained, the moment of truth had arrived.

"Well, damn," Caleb said. "Do we do it, then? Do we start it up? And if so, where will you travel to, dude? Ancient Roman times? You're always talking about seeing Odoacer take Rome, right? Or are you gonna see Woodstock or something? That'd be cool as hell."

Liam laughed. "Nothing so bold. But also, perhaps . . . bolder."

Caleb raised an eyebrow. "I'm listening."

"Okay, so, stop me if this sounds far too much like mad science. I was thinking of going back in time to see our Mrs Downhouse."

“The cranky racist lady who hates me twice as much because I’m a mix of *two* races she doesn’t like.”

Liam grinned. It *did* look a little mad-sciencey. “The very same. She’s been a horrible witch for years. Practically ran poor Susie Jane out of town because she accused her of being a slut. I was thinking . . . maybe I could go back in time and see where this all began. See if we can give her a little . . . nudge. Just something that might make her less unpleasant in the future.”

“I don’t know, dude. You’re the one that said messing up the timestream could have weird consequences.”

“Ah, but she hasn’t impacted *our* lives much at all! Apart from making you uncomfortable when you come round, obviously. And the timesphere and nature of this room means we’ll remember both timelines, and be able to fix anything that goes wrong.”

Caleb scratched his head. The idea of fixing a racist was appealing to him, but he didn’t have his friend’s confidence. “How about this? Why don’t you go back to something exciting first just for observation?”

“I plan to, but not first. I want to make sure everything is safe unless I get stranded. I figure if I just go back twenty years or so, I can work with technology of the day, as well as leave a marker in the forest grave as we agreed for you to dig up, read, and use to get me back.”

Caleb nodded. This was the contingency. If things went really wrong, they could always leave markers. Messages buried in the forest grave not far from Liam’s house would naturally progress forward in time, allowing the engineer running the timesphere in the present to ‘pull’ their partner back to the present.

“Fine, okay. Just . . . let’s not be stupid about this. If you see an opportunity, go for it. But otherwise just see if there’s any dirt on her, I don’t know. I’d prefer we just ran a successful test.”

“Okay, you’re right. I’m getting too ambitious for my own good. This is why you’re here, Caleb, to be my moderating influence.”

“And because I’m your friend, right.”

“Well, that’s just obvious. Also, a mad scientist needs a sidekick.”

“Sidekick!?”

“Henchmen?”

Caleb snorted. “I’ll take ‘Mad Partner’, thank you. Okay, let’s get this device ready, dude. Let’s get you travelling through *time*.”

His friend grinned, clapping his gloved hands together and laughing maniacally. All he needed was a bit of lightning to finalise the effect.

“Seriously, dude?”

“Too much?”

Liam

Liam was nervous. Sure, he'd done all the preparation work. He'd tested his theories in numerous simulations and accounted for every possibility. But the one problem he hadn't managed to overcome, the one he still hadn't told Caleb about, was whether a body could *actually* be transported through time. Theoretically, it could be. A brainwave pattern was much more likely, however, and capable of being sustained for a longer period, perhaps even indefinitely. It was the one major risk factor of his assessment. Now, standing in the timesphere, wearing his chronosuit, the various feeds plugged into his ungainly helmet, his heartbeat was starting to pulse faster from his nervousness. The young (arguably mad) super-scientist was feeling a bit sweaty, the need to run his hands through his wild white-blond hair only growing.

“Don't be nervous, Liam,” he told himself. “Everything's gonna be okay. You've done the calculations, and Caleb has done the engineering work and electronics work to perfection.”

“Everything okay?” Caleb asked, tapping on the glass.

“It's fine!” Liam said, though his thoughts were becoming a bit of a blur. “Just some last-second concerns, that's all.”

“We can pull the plug. We've all the time - ha! - in the world, right, dude?”

But Liam creased his brow. No, science was about ambition and boldness as much as it was about trial and error and patience. He'd been patient since he was fourteen. Seven long years ago. There were no more real calculations to do. Anything beyond this point was purely theoretical consideration, the kind that only *practical* work would allow for advancement upon. No, this had to be done. It had to be done *now*. Well, for as much quality as *now* could provide. Besides, he didn't want to look foolish in front of his friend. Caleb had been the most loyal sidekick (or partner) that any friend could ask for. He had followed him on this seemingly insane endeavour for years now, and Liam owed him a debt for that. *He* would take the risk, and the greater share of the glory no doubt, but he'd make sure Caleb benefited as much as possible.

Besides, as much as there were altruistic reasons to proceed, the truth was, Liam was on the cusp of something brilliant. He was going to be the greatest scientist the world had ever known. His inventions and theories and scholarships could only get him so far. It

was time to be *world-changing*. Caleb was humble, but he never had been. It was time to *show off*.

“We proceed!” he declared, his voice rising with his confidence. “Set in the date! Twenty two years ago!”

“Any particular reason?” Caleb asked.

“I don’t want to overlap with our own timestream, just in case. My calculations say it will be no major issue, but just in case. Set it to about ten months prior to your birth, Caleb. You’re slightly older.”

Caleb locked in the sequence. The timesphere began to slowly rotate, charging up. There were two spheres, really. The outer one - also transparent - built up the kinetic energy, turning over and over as it also read Liam’s constantly updating mental patterns.

“The sequence is building,” his partner said. “Fifty percent. Seventy percent. Eighty percent.”

Liam closed his eyes. He was about to make the step no one had ever made before. The kind that few could have ever imagined. He was about to become *brilliant*, in a way no one ever had. Not even his friend. God, he felt *like* a God. He was giddy in the same way his friend was nervous. Well, he’d show him not to worry! Liam would show them all! He was about to pierce the barriers of the heavens themselves!

“Ninety percent.”

Liam actually *cackled*. Finally, it was happening. Ah, but he had to say something, didn’t he? Something *historic*. Something *grand*.

“One hundred percent. Shall I proceed, Liam? Buddy? Dude?”

Liam paused just long enough for dramatic effect.

“Today, my friend, we defeat man’s oldest enemy: time itself. Initiative the sequence!”

Caleb nodded, though the tremble in his hand was obvious. He needn’t be so nervous. Liam was now certain this would work. It *had* to. It *would*. His genius would not be denied.

“Activating now,” Caleb said. He hit the button.

The timesphere whirled, speeding up, generating blue bolts of electricity and -

- and Liam was suddenly standing in a room that was not his.

He blinked.

He exhaled.

There no timesphere. That was expected.

There was also no headgear and no suit. That was . . . less expected, but only because he wasn't naked. The science got iffy on the nature of time travel transportation, but he had expected to either remain in his chronosuit or to lose all clothing entirely. Instead, he was wearing a flowing garment of some kind. He also didn't appear to be in the basement - his laboratory.

Where was he? And why did he feel so strange?

"Mental note: body feels strange and almost lumpy after time travel experience. Voice also strange. Higher, softer, almost like . . ."

He blinked again. His vision was starting to clear, and he could determine that not only was he in a room of some kind, but it was clearly not even *his house*. And further more .

. .

"This isn't even my body," he said, hearing that female voice with its strange, unfamiliar accent. He looked down for the first time, and noticed two breasts - small, but obvious - sloping outwards from his chest, the smallest hint of cleavage shown through a breezy summer dress. "I'm - I'm a woman."

"I'll say you are," came a handsome voice.

Liam turned on the spot, only to be confronted by a man he had met a number of times, but never *shirtless*. It was Brian Carter - Caleb's *father*. Only this was not a man in his late forties. This was a man in his *twenties*, and looking shockingly handsome.

"M-Mr Carter?" Liam said, still shocked at his own voice.

"Ohhh, Mr Carter," he said, smiling as he entered the room. "I rather like that. Is this your bedroom talk, honey?"

Liam turned his head, and managed to catch himself in the bedroom mirror. It was a bedroom, and the revelation occurred just as he backed up against the bed. But his gaze wasn't upon that, but his own reflection. The figure in the mirror was his best friend's *mother*, Soo-Yun Carter. She was rather pretty, not prone to expensive makeup or dresses, but her radiance shone through, Liam had always thought. She was modest and lovely, and he'd always felt she and her husband, and their son, deserved better. Now, seeing her younger in that mirror, he could see that she'd once been *beautiful*.

"I - oh God."

"Mhmm, I could do with that too," Brian said. He approached, sliding his hand up Liam's arm. The sensations were surprisingly lovely, and his body responded, as if unaffected by Liam's mind being present. "Work was fairly calm, and I've still got a lot of energy. How about you and I make that baby we've been thinking about?"

Liam's stomach dropped. "I - I have to go!" he announced, moving past Brian. He ran through the house that he now recognised as Brian's, and sure enough, there was a bicycle that the family often used in lieu of car expenses, or when the car was broken down.

Thinking quickly, he rolled up the garage door and got on the bicycle. He didn't even want to *think* about the slight jostling of his breasts at that moment, or the emptiness between his legs as he mounted the bike and began to push it out of the garage.

"Honey!" Brian called. "What are you doing? Where are you going?"

"Sorry, I'll be back!" Liam shouted, his voice still with that Korean accent. He pedalled away, his mind panicking.

"Need to set a marker," he puffed to himself. "Need to get to the forest grave and get Caleb to *get me out of here!*"

Caleb

Caleb was confused. Instead of travelling through time, his friend's body had simply . . . remained standing. He wasn't responding to any calls, and yet the measurements all said that his wave functions were stable and operating fine. He couldn't exactly interrupt the process, however, as that could lead to disaster. Instead, he tried to remain calm.

"He's a genius, you're not. Just go to the forest grave and see if he left a marker. Everything else is reading fine. He might just be *seeing* the past. That was always a possibility."

With those words he had managed to reassure himself. He packed up, checking the instruments one last time before heading out. As he did, he looked with interest at the date on the chronometer. It had altered a little even after the parameters were set. He wasn't too worried about that. Liam had warned him that the final date would get into a slight flux, potentially. Still, it was kind of amusing to him what the date ended up being:

1994.01.04.

"January fourth, huh? I'm pretty sure that's, like, almost exactly nine months before I was born."

Part 2: The First Ripple

Liam

Liam had done the best with what he could. It was a small metal container purchased from the corner store just before it closed, along with some paper and pens. It was strange being called "Mrs Carter," and even stranger to *be* her. Liam had never been particularly strong,

soo it was somewhat humiliating to find himself actually *stronger* and with more endurance while trapped inside the body of a dainty woman. Brian had tried to catch up with him, but Liam had managed to evade his 'husband', but only for so long.

"Soo-Yun! Darling! Where are you going? This isn't anywhere near our neighbourhood!"

"I - I know! I just have to take care of something fi-"

Liam went wide-eyed as he took his friend's mother's body across the road. To his astonishment, Mrs Downhouse was walking across the road. No in a wheelchair. Not even in crutches or on a scooter. Actually *walking*. It was twenty one years prior to when he'd last seen her, and he had almost failed to recognise her. She would have to be in her early fifties, but her hair was brown and curly, and her figure not slumped into burgeoning obesity as it was in his day.

"Oh my God," he said.

And that's when the car careened around the corner. It was going fast, and its lights weren't on even as it was hitting evening.

And it was heading *straight for Mrs Downhouse*.

Liam's body took over, moving faster than even his supergenius mind could.

"Watch out!" he called, running forward and leaping at the unaware woman. Mrs Downhouse turned, squealing in terror as Liam hit her full force, knocking her back onto the flat of the road in a painful manner.

Just in time for the speeding car to pass by, swerve, knocked over two mailboxes, and then continue down the road, several beer cans falling out of the window as it passed. Liam pulled himself up. His body was a little scraped, but otherwise hurt - not that it was *his* body. He didn't even want to think about the fact that he was in Caleb's mother's body.

"You - you saved me," the woman said, gasping at her. "Why would you -"

"Brian!" Liam called, sensing an opportunity for distraction. "Please take care of her! I'll be back in just a moment!"

Brian rushed to the woman's side. "I don't - how did you know this was going to happen?"

"It was just, uh, a premonition. I need to do one more thing, I'll be right back!"

Liam left his 'husband' to tend to Mrs Downhouse, who was still in a state of shock. It gave him time to run down the nearby trail path between the suburban houses and into the walking trails beyond. It took less than three minutes to find the forest grave. It was out of the way, and he had determined it would be undisturbed for quite some time. He had purchased a little spade from the corner store, and used it to quickly dig up as much as possible. He checked his watch. Thank the universe that Soo-Yun had a watch. It was 5:24pm.

January 4th, 1994, he wrote on the paper quickly. He paused for a moment, amused at his writing style. It had changed to match Soo-Yun's, no doubt a result of muscle memory. At least it was legible now. *In front of 4 Henrickson Road. Time 5:30pm.*

He buried the capsule, and began running back. He made it just in time to see Brian helping Mrs Downhouse to her feet outside 4 Henrickson road when the clock ticked to 5 up onto her feet when suddenly -

Caleb

Caleb input the time and set the retrieval coordinates for his friend's pattern into the machine. He had to hope this would work. It only made sense. Clearly something had gone wrong, but this was what the marker system was for.

"C'mon Liam, come back to me, dude. No way am I gonna be leaving you in the timestream man."

He hit the button to retrieve his friend, but even as he did, something else began to change in the room. His body felt . . . wrong. His very essence. It was like his body was all wrong, out of sync, out of *time*. He stumbled back from the console, grasping his head as a ripple through space and time careened through the room and out into the world. It was literally like looking at a raised bump, a ruler sliding under the piece of paper that was reality itself. It passed *through* him and he *yelped* in fear, jumping a little. As it collided, he nearly blacked out, falling to the ground and writhing as his body shifted and morphed and rearranged all at once.

"Oh God, what's happening!? What the f-fuck is happening to m-me!?"

The feeling left as quickly as it had arrived. Slowly, the confused man raised himself, touching his temple which still rang with a slight headache that was, thankfully, fading fast.

"What was th-a-at?"

His voice was wrong. The hair against his hand was wrong - far too long, for one. It reached to his shoulders, in fact. And was he shorter? The console was taller than it had been a moment ago. And why did his hips feel weird? And why were there two bumps on his chest? And why did his voice sound like . . . *a girl's!*?

The timesphere was ramping up, leaving Caleb to panic. Just what the hell had happened to him? He patted the area in his crotch and came up short. He was still in jeans, but they were *women's* jeans, fitting snugly around his wider hips. And there was nothing - nothing! - between his legs.

"Oh God. Fuck, fuck, fuck! How the hell did this happen? What the hell did he do!?"

He saw his reflection in several of the glass panels in the laboratory, and his appearance scared him. He was undeniably female, alright. Not a great beauty or anything, pretty much a plain Jane, but a woman nonetheless. Softer features, a smoother jawline, and the impression of two small breasts. His new figure was petite and thin, almost boyish. But . . .

“Still a girl,” he said. “How the hell could this have happened?”

The timesphere whirred, and the body within it jolted upright. Liam quickly removed his headgear and emerged from the time capsule by pulling the interior level. It opened with a hiss and he stumbled out. The man took one look at Caleb, who suddenly felt very embarrassed on the spot.

“Liam? What happened?”

“I - who are you? And where’s Caleb?”

“It’s me, you moron! It’s Caleb!” He gestured to himself. “What the hell did you do to make me turn into a *damn woman!*?”

Liam’s eyes bulged. “You too?”

It took Liam a while to explain, and it was clear that the supergenius was just as embarrassed as Caleb currently was. They were out on the porch of Liam’s house, a necessity for them both. After the rigours of actual time travel, Liam wanted to get fresh air, and Caleb felt the same to help him calm down about the fact that he was a *damn woman* all of a sudden.

“So lemme get this straight,” he said, running his hands through his unfamiliarly long hair. “The machine *does* make you travel through time, but it only takes your mind.”

“So it would seem. It’s still a success, evidently.”

“Because it can place your mind over someone else’s, for the duration that you’re there.”

“Precisely. It’s where the brainwaves go. They travel via the waveform. The marker system still works for retrieval.”

“But at the moment, the process is random, or not accounted for, because . . . you ended up as my frickin’ Mom.”

Liam nodded. “I was still able to work something out.”

Caleb glared, gesturing to his plain Jane body. “Evidently it fucking didn’t, dude! Do you hear my voice? I sound like Sally who lives next door to me. It’s all soft and sweet and shit. I’ve got *boobs* dude.”

“Trust me, I know what that’s like. Remember, I had your moth-”

“Uh-nuh, don’t even go there. But you had them for, what, a couple of hours max? I could have these itty bitty titties and my *distinct* lack of penis for life! What the hell could have led to this!?”

Caleb had to get himself back under control. He wasn’t an angry person by nature, but the new hormones in his system were not ordinary to him, and were leaving him excitable. He also just felt naturally a bit more . . . standoffish. Perhaps less servile. He couldn’t explain it.

“I’ve had a thought about that,” Liam said. “It’s the only explanation, but you won’t like it.”

“I also don’t like having a pussy. And trust me, it’s not like the movies. I’m not going to have fun playing around with it. I want my junk back.”

“Okay, well, you were born nine months after the date I ended up on. So there’s a good chance your mother got pregnant that night, or a night close to that event. By changing your mother’s behaviour and making her more erratic, I changed things just enough that you ended up being -”

“A girl,” Caleb finished. “Oh my God, you’re telling me this is a whole new timeline where I’m *meant* to be like this.”

“Check your phone. Check anything you can. I think I’m right.”

Caleb did, and he did not like what he saw. All the photos on his phone now displayed him in his female form. There was even one of him in a bikini, not that it did his flat chest any real favours. There were also various individuals on his phone that he didn’t recognise or didn’t know too well before.

“Ugh,” he said, clutching his head. Memories - new ones consistent with this timeline - forced their way in besides his old ones.

“Are you okay?”

He rubbed his temples, doubling over a little. “I’m - aghh - remembering some stuff. From the new t-timeline. Oh fuck dude, this is so weird. It’s like having double vision, but in your m-mind. I can - I can remember some of these events. Some of these people.”

He took a steady breath as the flood of memories halted. They weren’t vivid like his real memories, but they were all real enough to make him know a lot more about his new life.

“Celeste,” he said slowly. “My name isn’t Caleb in this timeline. I’m Celeste. Celeste Cora Carter. And this girl, Brooklyn, she’s a blonde girl who sits next to me in engineering class. I think she’s my best friend. And Harry, my third contact, is a guy I’m crushing on and want to date and -”

She stopped, blushing on her chocolate brown features as she realised what had just spilled out of her. She also realised that she had started thinking of herself as a woman thanks to the memories. *He* shooed those feelings and that identification away.

“You have to fix this,” he told Liam. “You just - you just have to, man.”

Liam actually gulped. The normally bold scientist was clearly feeling the heat of Caleb’s words, and he was happy to know this was the case.

“I’ll do my best. Just - I’ll need a day, okay? Can you survive a day as Celeste.”

Caleb sighed. “I guess I don’t have a choice. Jesus, I left my parents’ home as a son and I’ll be returning as a daughter.”

Part 3: The Second Ripple

Liam

The young supergenius ran his hands through his excitable hair as he tried to figure out the wonks in the timeline. Clearly, the machine had managed what he’d dreamed: he had become the first person to *ever* achieve time travel. The only problem was that the machine could only transport *minds*, not bodies, and this had resulted in him experiencing the body of his own best friend’s *mother*.

It was far too embarrassing to ever publish. This would have to stay a secret. He couldn’t undo his legacy before it had even begun with such a tantalisingly scandalous anecdote. No, he would let that lie. Except his friend was stuck in a the body of a woman, having become *Celeste* as a result of the changes to the time stream.

“There *has* to be a way to turn him back,” he muttered to himself, pacing back and forth as he waited for Caleb-Celeste to return. A day of theorising had already passed, and the only possibility he could think of was to alter the events of that night further.

“I won’t be able to get him back into his original body,” he sighed to himself. “The likelihood of having the same spermatozoa implant itself into the same egg - we’re lucky enough that the timestream ensured a continuity of consciousness at all! But if I were interrupt it further . . . well, it would be a coin flip, but I could get him a male body, one that at least looked enough like his old self to hopefully be satisfactory.”

It would have to be compensation enough, right? In the name of science, surely? He hoped his friend would see it that way, given it was Liam’s fault. He didn’t regret his testing of the machine, but did regret the embarrassing circumstances that had followed.

Thankfully, the knocking at the door relieved him of some of his worried thoughts. He bounded up stairs, the laboratory alarm having also rung, and opened it.

“Caleb, so glad - Mrs Downhouse!?”

He had to stop himself from gaping at her. The woman he had ended up saving from a car accident had changed dramatically from how he remembered her in the present. Far from being a semi-obese woman in a wheelchair, she seemed to be a trim but otherwise healthy woman in her early seventies, and with - and this was strangest of all - a genuine smile on her features.

Not a snarl.

Not a cruel smirk.

An actual friendly smile.

“Oh, Liam, I hope I’m not bothering you! I thought I’d just escort your wonderful girlfriend Celeste here to the door and give you both something to snack on!”

Liam adjusted to look past the woman, and was shocked to see Caleb - still stuck as the short, plain Celeste - standing behind Mrs Downhouse, looking even more confused than he was. The former male put on an incredulous smile.

“Mrs Downhouse was just talking about how grateful she was to my folks for saving her twenty years ago,” she said with enunciated meaning. “About how it changed her mind about everything. About *everything*.”

“Oh,” Liam said, before his eyes widened. “Oh! Yes, of course. Well, I’m so glad you approve of, uh, Celeste here.”

“Of course I approve! You two really need to get together already. This neighbourhood could really use more diversity, and frankly I love seeing the daughter of my family friends dropping. Here are some freshly baked cookies for you both to enjoy while you study. Try to enjoy each other’s company as well, dearies! Life and love is for the youth, after all!”

Liam gave his awkward thanks, and then the woman actually *hugged* Celeste/Caleb and whispered something in her ear, before she left.

“That . . . was weird,” Caleb said, pushing on through. “Seriously, this is some Twilight Zone shit, man.”

“I know. What did she whisper to you?”

Caleb exhaled. “She told me ‘*good luck. He’s a fool if he doesn’t like you back.*’ Ugh, I think in this timeline, Celeste - *me* - is actually into you.”

Liam coughed as they entered down into the laboratory. He ate a couple of cookies. They were quite good.

“What makes you, uh, think that?”

The new woman pursed her lips and placed a hand on her hip. Liam suddenly felt a little nervous. He knew, intellectually, that this woman was his friend, and was meant to be male. And it wasn’t like she was a knockout supermodel or anything. But she did have a nice

girl-next-door vibe to her, and it made him very aware that he was not good at talking to girls. Thankfully, Caleb seemed ignorant of this new dimension to their interactions . . . for now.

“Well, I read my diary for one. Yes, girl-me has a diary in this timeline. Apparently she has a damn crush on you. I *do* not feel that, and I can say safely that I *do not* have memories of it.”

“That’s . . . good. You seem to have, uh, made it through the last twenty four hours okay?”

This time Caleb raised her eyebrow. “Dude, I’m wearing a pink shirt. I nearly wore a skirt because of some damn memory that infected me for a moment. I had *stockings* on for a moment. That’s not even getting into the fact that I’ve had to pee sitting down and work around this new plumbing. Also bras. I’ve got a goddamn bra on. Not cool, dude. It’s not like I really need one with these tiny tits, but they *are* tits. And my Dad and Mom are calling me their ‘princess’, and for some reason that makes me all warm and gooey inside. And they’re acting like me heading off to your place was like a damn *date*. I had to do my hair, dude. Do you have any idea how much effort goes into a woman’s hair? Because I do now!”

He stopped to catch his breath. Liam felt a little guilty, because the first thought he had in reaction was how much of a fascinating study into gender insight this could be. But he filed that away for a mad experimentation down the line. For now, he awkwardly patted his friend on the shoulder.

Caleb raised his left eyebrow again. “Dude, what are you doing?”

“I’m, uh, comforting you?”

“I am *not* a crying girl.”

“I mean, you technically are crying, right now. Your eye ducts are producing fluid.”

Caleb wiped his eyes. “I’m not - huh? Ugh, damn it! That’s another thing, I’m way more emotional now. Still reasonable and all that jazz, but it’s like all my emotions are just . . . stronger, except for anger. I *can* be frustrated though, and I’ll continue to be so until I get my body back.”

“About that . . .”

Liam began to explain the dilemma, and it took time for Caleb/Celeste to appreciate it, though at least Mrs Downhouse’s cookies helped.

“Are you really telling me you can’t change me back to my same body?”

“It’s pretty much impossible. But I can adjust things again, hopefully land you in a male body. We can repeat that, too.”

Caleb sighed. “It’s a start. When can we get this thing prepped?”

“As soon as you’re ready.”

Liam opened his eyes, and once more was greeted to a sight he wasn't exactly excited for . . . though his body certainly was. Soo-Yun, his best friend's mother, was looking utterly spectacular upon the bed, naked and beckoning, her breasts small but begging to be touched.

"Give me a baby," she said in her soft, accented voice.

Liam was naked. He was black. He was, he knew immediately, his best friend's father. It explained why he was tall and powerfully built in a way his friend had only partly inherited, if that. Looking down, he was shocked and more than a little embarrassed to realise just *how endowed* Brian Carter truly was. He swallowed, and spoke in a voice that was far deeper than his regular one.

"Actually . . . I might just have to sort something out first," he said, scratching at his short but thick beard.

Soo-Yun looked confused. "I - okay? What is it? I thought that after yesterday with that poor woman and me getting all confused-"

"No, no, it's not that. I'm excited. You can see that. And I'm . . . intrigued. Tempted. God, this is weird to admit. I just have something to sort out first, honey. A brief delay."

Soo-Yun's confusion did not dissipate as Liam left the room, grabbing the pants, socks, and shirt that belonged to his new body as he did so.

"At least I'm not a woman this time," he muttered to himself. He tested the strength of his arm muscles as he got changed in the living room. He went to the garage, shouted out to his wife to apologise for disappearing on a brief errand, and then drove off. He put his message in the forest grave marker, this time giving himself another half hour of time to get back to the Carter residence and sit in the living room. When he returned, Soo-Yun was asleep. Waking her would be a bad idea, especially given his own shameful thoughts about how hot his friend's mother was looking, so instead he switched on the television briefly to pass the time, keeping the volume low. "Hmm . . . I'd always discounted muscular strength as utterly inferior to brain power," he mused. "It's true, and yet . . ."

He flexed again. There *was* a power to it. Had he wasted his time with purely intellectual pursuits? Certainly, Caleb was meant to decently fit, if still nerdy as he was. Perhaps he could start a regimen for them both as-

'And on the stock market, Apple continues to struggle with falling share prices. The tech company has been lacking a grand vision for some time, and investors are being warned to stay away or sell. Will the company stabilise? Unlikely!'

Liam scoffed. "Sure thing," he said. "This is the perfect time to buy. They're about to have a huge turnaround and anyone that buys even a few shares now will be worth quite a bit!"

“Is that true, husband? Is that why you needed to go out?”

Liam was a supergenius, but thinking on his feet conversationally in front of a very pretty woman in a silky covering was not his forte.

“Ah, yeah. I had to make some calls. This Apple thing is gonna take off big if we buy in a little.”

She smirked. “You and your fancies. I never took you for an investor. Still, that sounds wonderful. You know what else sounds wonderful?”

She dropped her silken covering, revealing her naked form.

“Getting back to what you promised to give me,” she said.

To Liam’s embarrassment, his dick hardened once more.

“I, uh, I mean, I guess we could . . .”

Caleb

Caleb retrieved the marker, and set the coordinates. He hit the button on the console, gazing over at his friend’s unconscious body within it, his brain patterns present but only as if sleeping.

“Please change me back, please change me back. Damn it, I do *not* want to be a chick for the rest of my life, dude. You better unscrew this up.”

And then, it came. The second ripple. This time Caleb found its source: the timesphere itself shook as if being warped in Photoshop, an uncanny wrinkle in time itself emanating and flowing outwards.

“Yes!” he proclaimed in his girlish voice. “Yes, you did it! You did - Nghhhh . . .”

The wave hit him as it passed, the change in reality passing into and through the former male. For a brief moment he could have sworn his body was returning to a familiar archetype, but the headache the effect caused once more left him falling to the ground. He clutched his temples as new memories, shards of a changed existence, flooded through him, even more powerfully than the last time. It left his reeling mind wondering just what the hell his supposedly super smart scientist friend had even changed. Images of moving houses, of a fancy new car, of his college experienced being *paid for* flooded through his mind.

“We’re r-rich, n-now?” he managed.

His body warped, rapidly altering as various curves enhanced and changed, as his height increased again, as his hair grew shorter. Even through the confusion it left Caleb grinning. He was changing back. He had to be. He was changing back and his family were no longer working class and-

And bras.

And dresses.

And learning how to apply makeup from his mother.

And being his parents' little princess. Their *Celeste*.

Of growing out of her training bras and having to get new ones. *Bigger ones*. Having boys looking at her and grinning at the affection she received. Of getting a job helping a guy who thought he was making a time machine, and getting paid to do the engineering work despite thinking he was off his rocker.

“No! N-no! Ngnhh! No! Ohhhhh . . .”

The ripple ended, and slowly Celeste rose. She clutched her head. She was Caleb. She knew she was Caleb. But she didn't *feel* like Caleb, nor like a man at all. The changes wrought upon the timeline had left the mark upon his - no, *her* - mind even deeper.

The same was true for her body, and the first sign was the distinct weight upon her chest. It was true, her hair was shorter, falling only to her chin now in a thick but loose afro. And she *was* taller, probably around five-foot-eight or five-foot-nine now - equal to most men. But the two, seemingly quite *ample* breasts upon her chest were *very* much evidence of her retaining her womanhood.

“You've got to be fucking kidding me,” she said, grasping her tits and feeling their weight. “These are C-cups. I've got C-cups!

‘ She looked around behind her. “And an ass? That's an ass! Ugh, and my legs are amazing. No wonder the boys like to -”

She clutched her head again, forcing out the new memories of the boys on her street loving to snicker and make comments about her as she passed, especially when she wore a-

“Dress,” she finished the thought out loud, pulling at the garment. “I'm wearing a fucking summer dress.”

And it was a *good* one too. Liam had dragged down a full-body mirror to the basement laboratory in order for Celeste to immediately check her changes. It made her blush a little, to think of that consideration, but her thoughts quickly turned back to her reflection. She was wearing a gorgeous yellow summer dress with a belt around her waist. It contrasted wonderfully against her dark skin, complimenting her form, which was more womanly and less girl-next-door now. It wasn't an exaggeration to say that she was now actually *pretty*. Not supermodel gorgeous or anything, but she had a nice bust and lovely hips that hinted at a more hourglass shape. And that, in Celeste's mind, made her pretty hot. Her face was more delicate, her lips no longer thin, and her something about her eyes had almost an air of mischievousness to them, adding a teasing quality. And then there was the hair!

"I . . . did not have curly Afro-hair before," she said, touching it. "God, it's so bouncy. So cute! *I'm* so cute!"

She posed a little in the mirror, enjoying the freedom and airiness that her bright summer dress gave her. She really did have lovely hips now. A pair of total babymakers! It made her want to shake them a little - only in private, sure, or with a special guy she hoped to find some day. Certainly not Liam Lewis. He was nice, if a bit attention-starved, and clearly struggled to talk to girls. Still, he was nice, and his compliments were always lovely. And maybe, in a certain light, his nerdy appearance was kind of cute. Perhaps she could ask him if he wanted to enjoy some lunch somewhere, just to keep in con-

"Wait, what in the fuck am I even thinking!?"

Celeste's heart beat a little faster. It was like . . . it was like she had slipped into another persona. A woman who was quite aware of her body's effects on men and who wanted to find a man too. And was she not Liam's best friend in this timeline? Just a coworker?

The timesphere rotated, whirring up and then slowing down until the figure within began to stir and pull off his headgear. Celeste ran forward, suddenly very aware of the weight of her chest as her two lovely dark breasts bounced. She tapped on the glass, irritated even more than before at the pale-skinned man who was suddenly gazing up at her.

"Hey, dude!" she cried, her voice somehow even more feminine and appealing than before. "You fucked up even worse!"

"I - Caleb!? You've got . . ."

Both his eyes and hers fell to the cleavage, which was being more openly displayed than intended. She covered herself up and glared at him.

"Hey! Eyes up here, dude! We need to solve this, now!"

Part 4: Third Ripple's the Charm, Right?

Caleb/Celeste

Celeste was *not* a fan of having to wait *yet another* period before Liam made another go of it. She did a check over of the machine in the aftermath - thankfully, her new self was still an engineer, though she also now had some frustrating memories of being one of the only women at university in the course, and therefore the centre of attention for some rather sexist tech bro types. She wanted to push her friend back into the timesphere straight away, but something about it didn't feel right . . . she would be pushing her employer, wouldn't she?

Such considerations were part of her new memories, but Liam was adamant on waiting for a longer period this time.

Forty Eight Hours.

This way, he said, he could come up with a better plan and do his best to adjust the machine. It also needed rest, which she knew as an engineer too. Still, it chafed at her. It was another *two whole days* as a woman. Of sitting down. Of wearing bras (bigger, more supportive, and now ultimately *necessary* ones). Of being called ‘princess.’ Of having a *freaking pussy!*

Still, she supposed it wasn’t the hardest thing in the world. Women weren’t that different from men, right? She still had two legs, two arms, two eyes, a nose, a mouth, and all that. They were just wrapped up in a prettier package, one that itself was wrapped in some prettier clothing. She could last two days, surely!

Such a viewpoint was aided by her shock when she left Liam’s house. In the driveway was not the bicycle she used to get around before, but rather a nice convertible that was, she suddenly remembered, all hers.

“My own car,” she said. “Shit, can I even drive?”

She could, and rather well, too. The sensation of having her own vehicle to drive dampened the sorrow of being stuck a little longer as a woman. And yet it still didn’t prepare her for the next surprise. While driving, her mind went into autopilot, taking her away from Liam’s suburb and closer to her own . . . which was no longer halfway across town but just one suburb over. A rather *wealthy* suburb at that. One with a two-story mini-mansion that belonged to his family.

“Holy shit,” Celeste said to herself as she pulled up in the driveway. “My family is . . . rich now.”

The ripples affecting her mind burrowed in further. Flashes of memories of what her father had told her flooded into her brain.

“Of course . . . Daddy said that he and Mom invested in Apple when it was low. Something about being inspired one night, and following through. And then it all paid off, and they sold high. We’re rich. Holy shit, the Carter family is on top!”

She entered the house, and was astonished to see her father relaxing in the living room.

“Daddy,” she said, not even realising the new way she referred to her own father. “Shouldn’t you be at work?”

“Taking the day off,” he said with a grin as he lifted his coffee to his lips. “Benefits of being the man in charge.”

“Man in charge . . .”

“And speaking of, princess, why are you home? All finished as well? I thought that supergenius Liam Lewis would’ve wanted to keep you around, eh? Eh?”

“Daddy!” she groaned. “He’s just paying me. He’s a fellow student in my engineering class. It’s not like he’s a childhood best friend or something.”

“Well, things could still happen. He’d be a lucky guy.”

“Too lucky,” she said with a smile. She realised halfway up the stairs that she’d just expressed her ‘Celeste thoughts’ out loud, *and* that her backstory with Liam had changed.

“We’re no longer highschool friends,” she said, a sense of moroseness creeping into her voice. “I guess we’re just . . . colleagues now.”

It was all the more reason to change back. The other reason was her rather girly room, the one with the posters of some rather handsome boy band members in it. She had to bite her lip as she took them in, one of the Korean pop-band members was just . . . gorgeous. It made her larger nipples stiffen, and she felt a slight moistness between her legs.

“Fuck, I’m gay now. Or is it straight? Shit, whatever it is, I’m into guys. Damn it, Liam!”

She flopped back onto her bed, still not used to the way her breasts flopped about too. On her back she had a good look at her cleavage. Confined by her bra, her breasts felt a bit restricted. Curiosity and a sort of *familiarity* stirred within the former man. She put a stopper under the door, and breathed a sigh of relief as her Daddy called out his goodbyes to her. He had to run some errands, and that gave her some time.

“I’m just, like, experimenting here. Like Liam would. Gender studies and shit. I mean, I’ve got actually college classes tomorrow, right?”

She removed her dress, followed by her bra. Her tits really were lovely, and she spent some time cupping them, fondling them. The sensitivity of her nipples was amazing, and it made her coo in an embarrassing way before she gave herself over to the feelings. Her pussy became further wet, and that was such an alien experience that she couldn’t even begin to describe it. But it did heighten her arousal, and her curiosity.

“Just one little peek at how the other side live,” she said, falling back on her now-luxurious bed. Her room was so big, and it made plenty of space for the attractive boys her new Celeste-self clearly coveted. They had such . . . muscles. Such handsome faces. She could just imagine them holding her, caressing her, squeezing her tits before lining up their . . .

“Mhmm,” she moaned as she slowly lowered her fingers down to her womanhood, teasing at the already-wet folds. “Yeahhhh. Take m-me. Ohhhhh . . .”

The pleasure only increased from there. In fact, Celeste had to ‘experiment’ several times over the next two days. And that was not the only pleasure either. While it was weird -

very weird - to have guys look at her with interest on campus, and for her to feel some measure of interest back with some of them, she actually no longer felt like a nobody. She wasn't in Liam's shadow anymore, and in fact didn't even seek him out on campus. This new life had friends, too! Celeste wasn't anything like *the* popular girl or anything, but she had a circle of friends who were quite popular, even Stephanie from the cheerleading squad, and Rochelle, the flame-haired party girl who Celeste had often thought about when she'd been Caleb. Now, instead of being interested in these women, she found herself sitting among them, chatting about studies, about news, her upcoming engineering paper, and even what party to go to on the weekend and who to take.

At one point, Liam approached, and the other girls were surprised.

"Oh, it's your work partner, Celeste! What's he doing here?"

"I'll, uh, go ask him." She moved over, suddenly very aware that she was wearing a skirt that day, though at least her shirt was fairly normal, if emphasising her bust more than she'd like. Her hair bounced as she stepped over to him, her hips swaying just a little more obviously too.

"Celeste - I mean, Caleb," Liam said. He was trying hard to speak to her. It was almost . . . cute. "I was just wondering how you were going? I didn't see you at our usual spot."

"I'm just adjusting, dude. All these new memories, and I'm friends with Stephanie Howser now. It's a lot to take in. I'm wearing a damn skirt and it's starting to feel normal. I'm just, I don't know, playing along with it. *You* told me to do this."

Liam ran his hands through his white-blond hair. "Oh, yeah of course. I just . . . is there anything I can do? I mean, did you want to have lunch?"

Celeste realised that Liam was finding it hard to look at her, and why that was the case. She also felt another personality drip into her own, just a little bit.

"I'm having lunch with my friends," she said. "You keep working on the problem, dude. I'll see you tomorrow in the workplace."

She left to go hang out with her girl buddies. It was only when Liam had left that she took in exactly what she had said.

"What did he want?" Rochelle asked. "Don't tell me that nerd wanted a date with you?"

"No, it was just . . . a work thing."

"Ah, well! He's actually pretty cute. Not my type at all, but I wouldn't blame you."

Celeste smiled. "No, he's not my type either. You know me. I like them with a bit more muscle."

"Don't we all!"

Celeste giggled along, and this time she didn't even think about what she had just said.

Liam

"I'm sure I can do it this time, or at least give you a better chance of being male," Liam said.

Celeste folded her arms beneath her breasts. She wasn't trying to emphasise them, but Liam looked anyway. "It better work this time. I am seriously starting to question my own sanity as I keep getting memories. Also, c'mon dude, my eyes are up here."

"S-sorry!"

Liam turned a bright red. He hadn't meant to. He wasn't a lech or anything. It was just . . . it was really hard not to look at Celeste. Caleb - he had to always keep in mind that she was Caleb. But she was very pretty, and her shirt was somewhat tight, revealing the shape of her. And those hips! He had never been the best with girls, but he had also never thought of himself as lustful before. He was far too scientifically minded for such base endeavours. But now, he realised, that had all been self-talk. He had actually *dreamed* of touching and smelling his friend's hair, of placing his lips on hers . . .

"Uh, well, it's not an exact science, but we should hopefully beat the fifty-fifty odds this time, I think! If you can ready the timesphere, I'll check my calculations one last time."

"And why can't I go back in time?"

"Huh?"

"You heard me," Celeste said, arching an eyebrow in her characteristic fashion. "I've been turned into a girl, then a pretty girl, all because of you. That's two failures, dude. Why not give me a spin?"

"We don't know what happens if a descendent meets their own progenitors out of sync with time. It could be disastrous."

She gestured at her body. "I literally have boobs. And a vagina. You have any idea how weird that is? Not to mention having a new voice. And my own *internal thoughts* are in a woman's voice and everything. How can we get any more disastrous?"

"Ripping the space-time continuum a new one kind of disastrous."

Celeste huffed, then set off to do her calculations.

"At least if the space-time gets ripped I'll be just a bunch of floating atoms instead of pumped full of estrogen."

Liam sympathised with his friend, then proceeded with his calculations.

"It'll work this time," he said to himself. "It has to."

Just another little delay to Caleb/Celeste's conception, and chances were good that she'd be a boy. Or at least a coin flip. He just didn't tell Celeste the *other* major consideration: he couldn't delay her conception date much longer. If he did, well, her brainwave patterns would likely not survive. The timeflow wouldn't just give her new memories, it would erase the old ones outright. He would be essentially killing her, and putting a new person in her place.

He told himself that such considerations weren't necessary. It would work this time.

Liam gasped as he was returned to his body. He fiddled with the headgear, certain of his success this time. He hadn't done anything too drastic, nor accidentally given knowledge of the future. He had, rather embarrassingly, ended up in the body of Mrs Downhouse this time. It made sense, given that she was intertwined with the lives of the Carters in the timestream because of his machinations. He hadn't loved being a woman again, let alone one in her fifties, but knocking loudly on the Carter household door to ask about a missing cat - she sure did love her cats - at least provided the perfect excuse to delay the act of conception between Soo-Yun and Brian Carter one final time. He left the marker by the forest grave afterwards, then sat and petted her 'missing' ginger cat Snookems for several minutes until he was returned to this point.

"I think it worked!" Liam proclaimed, removing the head gear at last and fiddling with the cumbersome gloves. "I know it's not the most scientific measure to go by, Caleb, but I really feel like we have a chance this time to repair the timestream as much as possible. Caleb? Caleb, where are you? Are you there?"

He had to extract himself from the timesphere. The laboratory was empty. Slowly, he exited the lab, heading upstairs into the main living room. Still, there was no one there. A chill ran down his spine, a sense of foreboding. He could hear someone pacing back and forth in the bathroom. The door was closed, but as he put hand on the handle, he could feel it was unlocked. Carefully, his heart beating rapidly, he opened it.

In the bathroom was the most astonishingly beautiful woman he had ever beheld in his life. She was facing away from him, but her reflection in the mirror allowed him to see her from multiple angles. Her body was curvaceous - wide hips, thin waist, and utterly supple legs. Her skin was flawless and without blemish, a rich golden brown to reflect her mixed heritage. This was evident in her eyes as well, which were almond-shaped, her irises dark and intelligent. Her lips were full and slightly pouty, albeit in an attractive way. Combined with her high cheekbones, her long dark hair, and perfect jawline, and she looked like a supermodel.. Such an appearance was enhanced by incredible curves. Liam found it hard

not to stare at her impressively peachy rear, especially since it was contained within a pair of tight denim shorts that absolutely emphasised her rondure backside. But then he noticed her chest reflected in the mirror, encased within a white crop top that was so tight that the individual shape of both of her big breasts could be made out, a deeply prominent curve of cleavage visible and tantalising thanks to its low cut. They were the best pair of breast the young super scientist had ever seen in real life, and the sight left his jaw hanging and his mouth almost watering. She looked like she was smuggling melons in her top: she was easily a Double-D cup if not bigger.

And she was adjusting them, frowning as she did so.

“Knew I should have chosen the pink top,” she muttered in a surprisingly sultry tone. “Though this one really shows off the girls.”

“C-Caleb?” Liam ventured, stepping forward. “Celeste?”

The figure in the bathroom turned. “Liam! What are you doing? You know better than to sneak up on a girl when she’s in the bathroom. I’ll be right down to sort out your timey wimey machine as soon as I’ve adjusted my makeup for my hot date tonighhhh . . .”

She froze, and her eyes widened even as she placed some red lipstick to her lips and effortlessly applied it. She dropped the tube after a moment’s shock, then looked down at herself. Celeste gaped as much as Liam had. With the speed of a snail riding a glacier, she raised her hands to cup her impressive test, and Liam found it very hard not to get very turned on by the sight of this. His member began to stir, particularly when his feminised friend gave a sharp intake of breath, presumably at the sensitivity of her new tits.

“What the fuck,” she whispered, before getting louder. “What the fuck. DUDE, WHAT THE FUCK!? You made me a total smokeshow? What the goddamn hell were you doing!?”

Panic surged through Liam, particularly since this was a very attractive woman talking to him in a very admonishing tone.

“I - I thought that maybe this time -”

The woman gasped, falling to her knees as she clutched her head. Her hair was almost long enough to fall to her ass, and so it spilled to the floor.

“Aghhhh, my h-head! You idiot! Dude, you’ve m-made me get even newer m-memories! I’m - ahhh - I’m a goddamn *cheerleader* now! And I date *boys*! I - shit! I don’t even b-belong here anymore.”

“You do! I just - I made a mistake again. Look, we can still fix this!”

She turned her head, glaring at him. Liam froze in response to the stare. Celeste rose and dusted herself off, somehow not even noticing the feminine and sensual way she was posing while doing so.

“Fix this! Fix this!? How do I know you haven’t been doing this *deliberately*!”

“What!? What does that even mean?”

She gestured to herself. “Dude, I’ve got fucking *Double-D*’s sticking out from my chest. I’ve got the kind of body I would have gone wild for, were I not apparently looking like an ultra hot female version of myself. I - oh God, I’ve had sex before. I know how to have sex as a woman. Nghhh . . . the memories. I remember it was good. I liked it. I like it. Oh, fuck! *This* is what you’ve done to me? I can’t even *think* of not looking good right now, do you realise that? I was falling into my memories a moment ago and putting on makeup so I could look even *hotter!*”

“That doesn’t mean I’m trying to do this,” Liam said, stepping closer.

But Celeste held up a hand, and put her other forearm protectively around her impressive bustline.

“Oh no! You’re not getting near me, *nerd*. You’ve already done enough damage. I bet if I help you go back in time again you’ll make me your personal slave bimbo. This was your plan all along, wasn’t it? Trick your dear friend into becoming his submissive big-titted girlfriend. God, these boobs are big. You *perv!* Well, this gal is getting out of here! I’m not letting you change me again! I’ll find a way back myself!”

She stormed straight past Liam, her hips strutting from side to side in an even more exaggerated manner than before. Tears formed in the corners of her eyes, but even as Liam called out to her from the front door, she simply got in her convertible and began to back out of the driveway, putting on some stylish shades.

“Please, Caleb! You’re my best friend!”

“I don’t know you!” she cried out in return. “And don’t call me that. My name is Celeste!”

She drove off, leaving Liam standing at the front door of his house, utterly confused. Something had happened to his friend. The new memories must have been starting to overwrite or negatively affect the present ones. Yes, he’d screwed up, and yes, he still planned to fix it, but something more must have been going on with Caleb/Celeste.

“My God, what have I done?” he asked himself.

“A shame she drove away!” came a familiar voice. It was, surprisingly, Mrs Downhouse, walking past. “I’m good friends of the family, maybe I can put in a good word for you. Hopefully she’ll come back.”

Liam sighed. “I hope she comes back too.”

Part 5: Bad to Worse

Celeste

The former man was utterly furious. It had been two days since her body had been even further beautified, and she was having constant headaches trying to keep up with it all, especially since her new memories kept intruding and mingling with the old ones. She had gone from Caleb, the nerdy would-be engineer, to Celeste, the nerdy girl next door. And then she had continued down the path of feminisation, becoming the pretty but skilled employee of her former friend. Now she wasn't even tied to Liam at all. She was Celeste Carter, the very attractive and confident woman studying engineering, one of the more popular girls on campus, and even a cheerleader to boot. She wore high fashion, an easy thing thanks to her killer body and her family's wealth, and she enjoyed making herself look damn good and teasing all the boys with a tasteful hint of her Double-D's and her generous backside.

It was all too much to take in. Sometimes the newest Celeste memories overrode her Caleb ones, and even when she managed to sort them apart, her earlier Celeste memories were also jumbled about in the mix, making it hard to sort through. The overall result of this was that it was actually *easier* and more headache-free to just . . . go along with her current self. The smart, sexy, confident Celeste who wore designer clothing and wore her makeup impeccably. Who knew all the right dance moves on the club floor *and* on the football field as part of her team. Who could talk Rochelle and Stephanie's respective ears off about which guys she was thinking of enticing over the course of the semester.

"This isn't me," she said to the mirror on the third morning. "I'm Celeste Carter. I mean, I'm Caleb. I'm Celeste. Ugh!"

It was getting hard to even consciously think of herself as Caleb. Worse, there was only one way to *really* calm herself down from her agitation, and that was to adjust her makeup, do up her hair, and wear a cute crop top and skirt that showed off her legs.

"All this damn hair," she murmured to herself. "I'm not even meant to have it, but it looks so cute. Stephanie is so jealous of how silky my hair is."

It was far straighter now, evidently this version of herself took a bit more from her mother's side in that department. When she strode onto campus, it swished behind her, timed in opposition to her gently swaying hips. A number of boys including Greg Erickson looked her way, and she found herself beaming back at them despite the humiliation of doing so.

"Hey, Greg," she said, letting some more sultry qualities seep into her voice. "You're looking good this morning."

"Me looking good?" he said, chuckling. "Have a look in the mirror, Celeste! You look like the bomb. Are you going to the party tonight?"

She wouldn't. She couldn't. There was no way. And yet . . .

"Of course, silly! Why wouldn't I? You know I never pass up the chance to wear a cute little black number."

“And I never pass up a chance to see you in it. You know, if you want, you could be my date.”

Celeste almost gagged. She almost *salivated*. Her male mind and her various female iterations warred against one another, trying to sort out her feelings. She had to clutch her head, groaning a little as her male pride *screamed* within her, begging her not to say yet. It would be wrong. It would be far too wrong.

“Celeste? You okay, Celeste?”

“I’m - nghh - just having a headache. It’s passing.” She gathered herself, leaning against Greg as he helped her. His muscles were wonderfully inviting, and she imagined what it would be like to be held naked against them.

“Better?” he asked.

“Mhm, much better,” she said. “I was having some weird thought, but I can’t for the life of me remember what it was.”

“Can’t have been too important then, right?”

They were on the campus green, and far behind Greg she could see Liam approaching. He’d been trying to talk to her for several days now, and she kept finding excuses not to. The difference in their social status was just too big now, as ridiculous as that seemed. So instead, she winked at Greg, loving the way his handsome face lit up in her presence.

“Exactly!” she said. She placed her hands behind her, emphasising her bust towards him in a fake show of feminine demureness that she knew only made her more attractive. “You know, you should ask me to be your date again. I might just say yes.”

“Well, will you be my date?”

She placed her forearms over his neck, pressing her bust against him in a way she *knew* was driving him crazy.

“I certainly will, Mr Erickson. So long as you tell that nerd over there to go beat it.”

A minute later, and Liam practically had to flee. Celeste watched him go, and a confusion came over her. The guy was a weird one, and from her engineering class, but didn’t she know him a bit more than that?

She gave the thoughts up when Greg returned. She had more interesting - and handsome - things on her mind.

It was only when she arrived at the party and saw that it was too late to back out that her Caleb thoughts returned. She gasped, nearly toppling over in her heels before she remembered that she knew how to walk in them. She’d *always* known how to walk in them,

just as she'd known for years how to look damn good in a tight black dress with plunging neckline and short hem that managed to pull tight against her rear.

"Oh God," she said, rubbing her temple. "What the hell am I doing?"

"Not having any regrets about having me as your date, I hope," Greg said effortlessly, his arm around her waist as they entered the frathouse. The music was blaring, the various popular figures inside all dressed up to look attractive - especially the women. Stephanie and Rochelle were already there, the former with her boyfriend and the latter with her latest fling. They waved to her.

"N-no, no regrets," Celeste said. It seemed like the right answer. But then, she was having regrets. This was all wrong. Why had she run away from Liam again? And why had she been refusing to answer his calls? She was angry at him changing her, sure, but she was acting so . . . distant! Like she hated him.

"I - I need a drink," she said, pulling her arm away from Greg. "Can you get me one?"

"Of course. What do you want?"

"Anything."

He shrugged and removed himself to fetch her something. A number of remaining guys looked her way with clear interest. She exhaled, causing her cleavage to rise and fall dramatically, which only increased the background comments behind the music.

"Check out Celeste. Man, she is one smokeshow."

"I'd sell my liver to suck on those tits just once."

"Suck on them? Man, I bet she gives the best tittyfucks."

"Greg is one lucky guy. That dress leaves nothing to the imagination. She is easily one of the top ten hottest girls on campus, I swear."

She blushed a little, feeling humiliated, complimented, and just plain awkward about these comments. She really was showing off her new bod, something she never would have done after that first timeline rewrite. But more and more the memories were washing over her; all those great times dancing at parties, of getting Flint Jacobs to flirt with her, of getting increasingly daring over the years as she realised she truly was a bombshell babe.

"It's not me, though," she said. "It's not . . . need some air."

She headed out into the yard of the frathouse where a number of others were drinking. Several were already getting tipsy, and threw some comments about her supposedly "great ass." She ignored them, trying to get her thoughts in order. It was like all the furniture in her head had come loose and was sliding all about the place, and she couldn't put it back in the places it was meant to go.

"I'm Caleb," she said to herself, like a mad mantra. "I'm Caleb. I'm Caleb. I'm a man. I'm meant to be a man. I may not know Liam in this timeline, but I *do* know him. He's my friend. A crazy mad-scientist friend, but a friend nonetheless. I just need to-"

The air changed, almost like a beat had dropped in the very air. Celeste turned, facing automatically away from the frathouse and towards Liam's suburb, some instinct drawing her attention there. A powerful ripple was extending through the air and rushing towards her like a tidal wave.

"Liam," she whispered to herself. "You used it by yourself? What have you do-"

The ripple passed through the former male, changing her once again. She clutched her body, but it did not change physically this time. Instead, her black dress became even *shorter*. It also developed a backless portion, and her neckline plunged lower. Her breasts swelled just a little further, though perhaps it was just that her dress now cupped her tits in an even more tantalising fashion. Her makeup became heavier and sluttier, and memories of another take on Celeste intruded over her.

"Ugh," she groaned, blinking for a moment. "What was I, like, just thinking about?"

She couldn't remotely remember, or why she was out here in the cold, instead of inside where all the hot, handsome guys were. She recalled thinking about Liam Lewis just briefly, and that notion made her deeply confused.

"Hey, Celeste! What are you doing out here?" a man asked her. It wasn't Greg Erickson, like she thought it would be - for reasons that escaped her - but rather Brett Kapperton, the musclebound footballer and total jock. "I thought we were gonna go inside and have some *fun*."

"Y-yeah, totally," Celeste said. "I was just out here, you know, thinking about stuff."

He smirked. "You? Thinking? About what?"

"This is gonna sound crazy, but I was thinking about Liam Lewis."

"Who's - wait, that nerd guy? Do you even have any classes with him?"

Celeste giggled, then placed a hand on her generous hip, cocking in a manner she knew would get her date's interest. "Does I look like the kinda gal who does *science* stuff, Brett? You know I'm just here for the beautician stuff. And trust me, I'm your kinda beauty tonight."

"Damn straight, babe! Let's get tipsy, then *handsy*."

She giggled again, and headed inside with Brett's hand already hovered down to clench her ass. The sensation made her moan.

What had she even been worried about?

Liam

Liam had a lot to worry about. It had taken some jerryrigging and a lot of sourced advice, and he'd even had to pay some classmates to come round under the pretense that he was

only building a device for meteorological study. But he finally had developed a way around the marker system. He simply had to pre-put the coordinates he expected to be in at a certain time and go there in the past. It carried a huge risk if things went wrong, but he was all for huge risks at this point. Building a time machine had already been a huge risk, but more than that was the fact that he had risked his closest friend's wellbeing thrice over, and each time only left him increasingly feminised and their own relationship increasingly remote. This had happened to the point where he couldn't even get in contact with Celeste anymore, or convince her to come back and try again.

And so he'd made the choice. Go back and see if he could change her past a little, *after* she was born. It was a deeper risk, as he was wading into his own timeline, but he had to find a way to steer her back to him so that they could become friends, she could become his engineer, and then in the present he could fix things up again. Which had resulted in him ending up, bizarrely, as Celeste's personal high school tutor.

His friend was still female. He was male again, thankfully, though annoyingly a teenager too, one that Celeste's parents were paying to 'help her get a leg up on mathematics.' His name was Trevor, and he had to remember that.

"So, what's the point of maths anyway?" she asked as he helped her with an equation.

"Well, maths is the language of the universal," he said. "Everything comes down to maths. Everything. If you understand maths, you can just about accomplish anything. Even be an engineer."

The fourteen-year old Celeste pouted, practically rolling her eyes back into her head.

"Ugh, that sounds so boring. Why would I want to be an engineer? Stacey says I could become a model. I'm pretty enough."

"Uh, you're only fourteen."

"So, you're only sixteen! What do you know?"

"Well, I just know that . . . uh, maths is a good way to ensure your future. Don't you want to make it big like your Dad did? He used maths."

"I guess," she replied, showing vague interest.

"See? He's good at it. If you stick with what you're good at, you'd be surprised at how much you can make."

"Do you get popular from it?"

He chuckled. "There's more to life than being popular. I mean, I'm not popular at all. Just the opposite, probably. But I do love maths, and I love making all sorts of inventions. You'd be surprised how far you could go, Cal - Celeste. There's this other young student in another school named Liam Lewis. Remember that name for me, Liam Lewis. He's a smart guy, and he's going places. I bet he could use a smart friend like you-"

“Is he cute?”

“Um, maybe? I mean, no. No! But, uh, he could use a friend, and he has these interesting ideas about time travel. How cool is that?”

It wasn't going well. He tried his hardest. He really did. But it kept falling apart. This young teenager simply didn't care about being an engineer, and his continual arguments about improving her education only seemed to turn her off the path further. It was like he had *negative* charisma or something. In the end, he'd pulled the plug . . .

. . . only to arrive back and find he'd made things so, so much worse.

Not only was Celeste Carter still unconnected to him in the timeline, but she was not even studying engineering *at all* now. She was in a beautician and dietician course, and had developed a reputation as the most popular girl on campus, *especially* because she was, to hear the guys pass the rumours around, a “total slut.” Liam would never use those words himself, but when he tried to investigate and find out about her, he could see that she was now wearing clothing that showed off even *more* of her body, and had caked on the makeup and hair product to look as available as possible. He even tried to infiltrate a beautician course lecture just to try and talk to her, only to find out that she'd skipped it! When someone made a joke about “her and Brett behind the bleachers” he *ran*, desperate to stop anything from happening.

He arrived too late, but not so late that he wasn't greeted with the horrifying sight of his friend-turned-slutty babe sucking on the footballer's hard cock and moaning as she did so. The man grunted as he came, and her eyes rolled into the back of her head. His hands were pawing at her tits as she finished, and she cooed as if it was the most natural, best feeling in the world.

That was, until she saw Liam and squealed.

“Perv! Perv! What the hell are you doing watching us, you little freak?”

Liam panicked. “I - I was trying to save you. I - Caleb, it's me, remember? Caleb, you know who you really are! I keep trying to fix this, but I keep on making it worse. You have to remember that this isn't you!”

For moment, she groaned, clutching her head. “That's . . . that's not . . . Liam, what have you done to me?”

But then the twinkle of realisation in her gaze faded away, and instead she snapped.

“Brett, what the hell are you doing? Get this gross dweeb out of here or I'll, like, never swallow your cum again!”

Liam had never run so fast in his life. Sadly, Brett still caught him. The man was a quarterback, and Liam never did have time to start that fitness regimen he'd been thinking of getting around to. He was knocked to the ground, and the hits began raining down upon his lanky form.

“Wait! Please! I’m just trying to help her!”

“Yeah? By watching us do it like a little creep? How does it feel now, weirdo?”

Another punch. Another blow. Liam cried out as his ribs *exploded* with pain. Brett kicked him in the stomach, and all oxygen was emptied from the scientist’s lungs. It left the young man gasping for air, but there was no hope of getting enough, because the kicks came again and again and again, the punches too. Liam was overwhelmed by it all, even as he felt he deserved it. But then it just.

Kept.

On.

Coming.

He couldn’t even hear Brett’s words anymore. He was bleeding. He was hurting.

I’m going to die, were his thoughts.

And then her voice rang out. “Brett, that’s enough! I said *that’s enough!*”

Brett was pulled back by Celeste, who looked horrified.

“You idiot! I said to chase him down, not kill him! Liam, are you -”

Recognition fluttered into her gaze again, before falling away once more, replaced by her current memories.

“You need to get out of here,” she said. “Please.”

Liam took the hint. This burst of compassion was from Caleb, not Celeste. He needed to get out of here fast. He stumbled, clutching his bruised ribs and dragging a leg that radiated pain, and made his way back to his car.

“You stay away from here!” Brett called out. “She’s the most popular babe on campus and you’re nothing, you little twerp!”

He wasn’t wrong. All the ego, all the mad science, all the desperation to be one of history’s greats, and what had it brought him?

“I am nothing,” Liam said, whispering to himself. “And it’s all my fault.”

He collapsed into the front seat of his car, panting and in pain. The despair followed shortly after.

Part 6: Ripples Galore

Celeste

Something really weird was going on. Celeste couldn’t put her finger on it, but her head was feeling super jumbled lately. Like, waaaaaaaay more than usual. She was trying to live her

best life. You know, being a sexy model and studying her beautician course and going to all the funnest parties, but some stuff just kept nagging at her.

For instance, just last week she could have sworn she'd been blowing Brett Kapperton behind the bleachers. It had been, like, super hot. But then, all of a sudden, it hadn't been Brett, and it hadn't been behind the bleachers either. It had been Daniel Cledge, he'd been rawdogging her, the absolute asshole! She'd told him time and time again to use the damn condoms! Taking the pill was a total nuisance and it made her boobs way too sensitive, and not in a fun way.

Maybe that would have been it, but there were other things too. Like, since when did she dye that dark red stripe through her hair? And was that a goth phase she had a few days ago? That was just, like, eww. Since when was she into collars and studs and black leather? Well, *some* black leather could be sexy, but the whole dark-skinned goth look just didn't, like, work for her at all. And this wasn't even counting her house. She had a total bimbo dumb moment when she'd driven to Edgerton St, expecting to see a double-story mini-mansion. But her Dad and Mom were waaaaay richer than that. They were out in the country, and she lived on campus at their expense, right? But then again, there were memories . . . close memories.

"I don't get it at all," she muttered to herself as she chatted with her best friend Rochelle. She was almost as big of a slut as Celeste, and the two had the funnest competitions over who could bag the hottest guys, and the biggest number of them too.

"What don't you get, Cel?" the red-head asked.

"Like, were we always friends?"

"Course we were, silly! Ever since you got busted for that fake ID the same night I did and we ended up bonding over the fact that we *still* didn't get to try some crappy washed out beer!"

Celeste nodded. The memory was there, alright. "Yeah, that makes sense. But, like, did you ever know a guy called Liam Lewis?"

Rochelle just shrugged. "Is he hot?"

"I don't think so. I think he's a bit of a nerd, maybe."

"Then I don't know him."

"He's kinda cute, I think."

"That's not hot, so I still don't know him. This is a boring conversation, let's talk about what we're going to wear to the club tonight. I'm totally thinking pink."

So was Celeste, so something would have to give. And yet she couldn't help but think it was kinda weird, to be wearing a dress. Sort of how it still felt a bit odd to have two rather ample boobs sticking out from her chest, constantly jiggling unless they were really

supportive. Hell, for some reason she had been standing up to pee lately, only to giggle, slap her forehead, turn and sit right down. It was like everything was topsy-turvy.

“Was I a cheerleader?” she asked Rochelle.

“Girl, who has time to be a cheerleader when you’re already rocking the world *off* the field?”

“Yeah, but, like, *was* I a cheerleader?”

Rochelle gave her a funny look. “Not as far as I can remember. You always thought they were silly. You wore a cheerleading costume for Halloween. The really slutty one, so you could steal Jennifer Price’s boyfriend. You know, Dental Work Jen?”

Again, the memory made sense. And yet she could have sworn . . .

Those feelings of *deja vu* - or perhaps *anti-deja vu* - continued in the following days. Sometimes she caught Liam Lewis in her gaze, seem to recognise him as important, only to dismiss him. He tried approaching her several times, but she always pushed him away.

“Get lost, I’m far too much woman for you,” she said.

It was true, but did she have to be so mean? Since when was she a stereotypical mean girl anyway? Wasn’t she just a fun, slutty party girl? Sure, there was a hierarchy, but for two days straight she was bitching and complaining and putting down Stephanie for being such a loser in a wheelchair.

“Wait, a wheelchair?” she asked herself as the woman passed by. “I thought she was . . . a dancer. What the hell?”

She looked up at her posters, trying to discern what was wrong about her dorm bedroom. The guys were all handsome, sure, but didn’t she have a thing for softie K-Pop boyband types?

“Something’s wrong,” she said, slowly pushing through the layers and layers of false memories. “Something’s, like, utterly fucked up.” She focused in a way she never had, at least not since two weeks ago, or ten years ago, or some measure of time across a number of her iterations. Iterations? What even *was that word?*

“N-no,” she stammered. “Ignore it. Focus. Something’s wrong.”

She checked her phone. There were messages again. From Liam. So many, dating back *days*. Had her mind just filtered them out? What was this creep’s issue?

“Ugh! Just go back to your timesphere, dork!”

She threw the phone across the room, but before it even bounced against the wall, a thought bubbled up inside her flighty mind.

“Time . . . sphere? He can travel through time?”

The epiphany reached her mind, the layers peeling back ever so slowly yet surely.

“Through *my* time. He’s done something. He’s at the centre of this.”

She got up, still in her pyjamas, and ran out of the dorm, uncaring for Rochelle's confusion as she passed. She reached her convertible in the parking lot, still arousing suspicion. She wasn't wearing a bra, and her silky PJ's made that obvious, being made to look a it sexy and stylish. It was . . . weird. Why would it be weird?

"He knows why," she said. "Have to find him."

She took off. She already knew where Liam lived, though how she knew, she had no idea.

Liam

The self-marker system was working, risky as it was. It had allowed Liam to work without Caleb/Celeste and go directly into the past again and again, projecting his consciousness into a variety of random bodies. Some were simply his neighbours, others were completely random (he didn't appreciate becoming a skateboarder mid-way up the pipe, though somehow the nasty fall led to him becoming a champion skater. Who knew?), and at one point he even became stuck as a child version of Celeste herself. None of it helped, and all of it made everything worse. The repeated ripples were fracturing her poor mind apart according to his analysis, effectively wiping Caleb's original memories away. It didn't even fix his aching ribs or heavily bruised ribs. Those were here to stay, since his body carried over changes from the timestream. Those were just having to heal naturally.

It was all spiralling out of control. Liam was struggling to eat, or - ironically - to keep time. He hadn't attended college other than to try and keep tabs on Celeste, and every change barely made a dent in her overall trajectory. Thanks to him, she was now known as the bimbo slut of the campus, only obsessed with showing off her body, all to the disapproval of her parents and the high approval of the college football team. She was as unbelievably gorgeous as ever - even when he accidentally turned her into a goth when he'd made her first boyfriend give a speech about understanding the true nature of things, which she'd *badly* misinterpreted - but at this point he just wanted his friend back.

"Even if you are stuck as a woman, you should be *you*," he said, running his hands through his hair, which was even more wiry than ever before. "Your intelligence. Your wit. The way you always held me back from my worst impulses."

He wiped his tears from his eyes, trying to figure it out. He had run the theories so many times, and couldn't pick out the right answers anymore. None of it made sense, and it almost made him paranoid that he too had changed due to the ripples despite his mind being insulated from the timestream, being the traveller and all.

“There must be another way, Caleb,” he said, wiping further tears away. “I’ve ruined everything. I didn’t think about the implications. I was too busy rushing to become great, I didn’t appreciate the risks, or *you*.”

He ran the numbers again. His mind was aching and sore. It was hard to get the image of Celeste sucking Brett off out of his head. Yes, she was beautiful, yes he had weird dreams about her, and yes, knowing it was his friend didn’t make it any better. But the image shamed him more than anything, how radically divorced she’d been from her original self. If only he could physically go back into the past and-

And that was it.

“No, it’s impossible,” he said, setting the idea aside. “I’ve tried physical transportation, and . . . and I gave it up after learning the brainwave issue. But . . . perhaps I gave up too early.”

He consciously set aside his regrets and summoned his inner mad scientist. He’d have to be bold. He’d had to take a risk; the biggest one yet. He might not even be able to return, but wouldn’t it be worth it if he could save Celeste and help her to be the person she was meant to be? It would have to be something!

“The power I’d need . . . it would short out the grid. I’d be stuck in the past. But theoretically, if I could convert it to mass along the timestream . . .”

He continued his study. This would be the hail Mary . . .

Liam’s heartbeat raced as he input the time coordinates. He briefly considered going much further back in time, and trying to bring about Celeste into Caleb again, but the effects upon the timestream could be utterly wild. No, far better to try and undo as much damage as possible from a more reasonable point. If successful, he could perhaps fix his mistakes when he had returned to this point . . . as a man in his late thirties.

“I ruined everything, Caleb,” he mumbled as he put on his gear and stepped into the timesphere. “But I’ll make it as right as I can. This device will probably short out the power grid when I activate it, but I’ll see you again on the long trip around. And I’ll make things as right as I can or be ripped apart across the continuum trying. I promise.”

He took one final breath, readying the switch. He hoped this would send his body back in time. He’d made what adjustments he could, but without Caleb’s engineering skill, it was a patchwork job. He’d just need to trust that it would work for a one-way trip.

“Here goes nothing,” he said.

He hit the button remotely, activating the timesphere. The outer shell whirred around faster and faster, drawing upon the increased energy. The lights glowed far brighter than

they were meant to. Consoles began to hum worryingly. Circuits began to blow. Showers of sparks exploded around the room, and still the timesphere sped up, faster and faster and faster and faster and faster and -

-and just before Liam blinked, he saw someone *crash* through the basement door and into the laboratory, her body scarcely covered by her tight pyjamas, her bosom heaving with her quickened breath, her face one of confusion and shock.

“Like, what the hell is this!?” she proclaimed. “What have you, like, done to me!?”

“I’m fixing everything, Caleb,” he called, to which she cocked her head in confusion. “You’ll see! Now get out of her before-”

The ripple surged forth, and Liam was sent hurtling back within it.

Part 7: One-Way Trip

Liam

Liam groaned as he slowly stood up. He was lying in someone’s backyard, upon the green. And he was naked.

“Ughh,” he groaned, sitting up to examine himself. It was at that point that his eyes went wide. “I’m me. It worked. I’m me. I’m actually me!”

He was indeed his usual lanky self, white-blond hair and glasses and all. There was a small singed patch in the grass where he’d ‘landed,’ but no injury to his person. He was, however, *naked*. Slowly, he stood, making sure no one had seen him. He tiptoed around, recognising that this was his neighbourhood, and surely it must be -

“Oh no.”

He had to duck to avoid being seen by Mrs Downhouse. She was watching something on television, and it shocked him to see that it was a civil rights documentary. Clearly, the car incident had awoken a latent passion for social justice that her original self had never felt.

“Sorry Mrs Downhouse,” he said, shifting to the clothesline. “I just need some of *Mr* Downhouse’s clothing. He’s still around, right?”

If the coordinates had worked, then it should have been circa 2008. Celeste - and himself - would be fourteen years old. The proper nexus for when Celeste would be undergoing times of great change and blossoming appearance, but also when her passions in life would be as-yet undecided. She would also be intelligent, hopefully more than her ‘present’ self, and thus able to be communicated with. Of course, he’d need pants first, and thankfully Mr Downhouse’s suit wasn’t *too* awkwardly fitting on him.

"I'll return them, I promise," he whispered to the Downhouse residence. "I'll be in this timeline for good, I guess."

He quickly made his way out of the neighbourhood, walking on foot to where Celeste's residence would be. It took less than half an hour to get there, during which Liam went over and over in his head how to convince her; the right words to say, the way to say them, even future knowledge that might be of some use. What he didn't expect, however, was to have to think about how to talk to her without coming across like a total creep.

"Nice one, Liam," he scolded himself as he stood on the street outside the Carter residence. "They're eating dinner as a family and you can't exactly waltz right in."

He hesitated to look in the window, catching a view of the happy family. Brian and Soo-Yun still looked young and handsome and far better off, but after a few moments of peaceful meal with their daughter, who was wearing plain clothes, things turned unexpectedly to an argument. Liam could only make out parts of it, barely even that, really. All of a sudden Celeste yelled something provocative.

"You can't tell me what to do! I don't give a shit about maths or school or any of it! I'm just gonna grow up and become a rich trophy wife and you'll see! Then I won't have to rely on you."

"That's it, Celeste, up to your room. NOW!"

She went, huffing and clearly annoyed, and then Liam lost sight of her. It sent chills down his spine. Should he have gone back earlier? His first plan was to become her teacher and wow her with knowledge so that she became interested, but it seemed . . . difficult. He wasn't a good public speaker. But now, there was this.

"Maybe I should come during the morning. I'll go find the homeless shelter and-"

And then he caught something odd in the light of the upper room. Celeste had changed into a dress that was far too showy for any fourteen year old, then thankfully put a jacket on for the cold weather. She slid open her room window and crawled dangerously out onto the first floor roof, and then climbed down the side.

"That little rascal," Liam murmured to himself, smiling. "Still so much like Caleb. He always used to sneak out. Jesus, I better stop her. That dress is not a good sign."

She dropped to the ground, then ducked just in time to avoid her parents seeing her through the front window. Liam moved to intercept her, but he didn't expect her to pick up an incredible pace. Clearly, she had places to go. But given that she was looking backward while running, and he was no gymnast, she ended up colliding straight into him. She sprawled backwards.

"Oof! Hey, watch it, mister!"

"Watch yourself, Celeste!" he replied automatically.

"How - how did you know my name? Who are you?"

She peered through the nascent darkness. Honesty, Liam had decided, was the best policy. It was just going to be hard to pull off.

"I was sent here to find you," he said, twisting the truth just a little.

"That doesn't answer my question. I've got mace in my pocket, you know."

She scowled, reaching back for a canister that Liam had good reason to suspect *definitely* wasn't there. He held up his hands anyway, trying to avoid any confrontation.

"Don't worry, I'm not going to hurt you. I would never hurt you, Celeste. You're - this is going to sound crazy, but you and I are actually good friends."

Confusion spread across her face. "Do Mom and Dad know you? Oh my God, you're not one of those annoying Mormon people are you? You're dressed like one, only their suits tend to *fit*. I'm not interested in your religious quackery."

"Far from it!" he said quickly. "And neither am I! That's how I know you can still be you. Listen, I need you to listen very carefully Celeste, and this will be pretty hard to believe, but I'm from the future. I know *you* in the future, and I've come back to fix some things."

She pushed past him, moving with the agitation of someone who was a bit worried but the slowness of someone who felt too cool to be scared.

"I can prove it!" he said hastily, hoping against hope that his friend had not changed too much. "Your father bought you a telescope when you were seven years old. He taught you how to read the constellations."

Celeste slowed, then stopped, then turned. "I was *six*, dumbass. What are you, some kid perv?"

"No, I'm - Jesus, no! Your favourite constellation was Orion. Your father said it would be your secret protector, right? He would guard any monsters from coming into the bedroom?"

Liam's breath was on a knife edge. He simply had to trust that his friend's nature wasn't too changed at this point, nor her father's. He knew he had guessed right when her brow furrowed.

"How - did Dad tell you that? It was our secret. He must have told you that."

Liam cautiously approached. "He didn't. *You* told me, when we become best friends, years from now. You also told me that you used to make a mess by pulling out all the toilet walls from the paper and using them to construct little bridges in your room, until your parents finally bought you some knockoff block toys."

"No, they got me expensive magnetic-connects."

"Oh, right. Of course. But I'm right, aren't I?"

She folded her arms, looking past Liam as if searching for the hidden camera. "Y-yeah. That doesn't prove anything."

“When you were little, your Mom saved the life of Mrs Downhouse, and then she ran off to the woods, right? Your father has been confused ever since.”

“She . . . she claims she doesn’t remember what she did.”

Liam smiled, and hoped it didn’t come across as creepy. “I can show you what she put there. It was a marker to help *me* get back to the future. My name is Liam Lewis. I’m your age in this present - I’m just a future me, from your perspective. But I screwed something up in the past, Celeste, and I need to fix it. *This* past. I destroyed someone’s future, and made it so they never became the great engineer they were meant to be. If you come with me to the forest nearby, I can show you-”

He instantly realised how he was coming across, because Celeste’s eyes went suddenly wide and she threw her hands back up.

“No way! You’re not taking me anywhere!”

“It’s not like that! There’s a forest grave hidden among the roots of an old willow tree. No one knows about it but me and you in the future. We use it to place markers. Your mother doesn’t remember because time travel has a . . . a sort of memory effect on people. I hoped she would forget, I did that to her. But she set me a marker with a date and time and place on it - the date and time and place that she saved Mrs Downhouse. This was just a few days before you were conceived. You know your Mom’s handwriting, right? You can find it, and you can see it. You can know that I was telling the truth.”

Celeste took this all in with utter confusion. She scanned left and right, trembling with a mix of shock, uncertainty, and fear. Alas, Liam could see that the last was taking priority.

“Listen, dude, I don’t know how you know these things about me, but I don’t care. I’m getting out of here, and if you try to stop me I’ll fucking mace you, got it?”

She began to back across the road, keeping her eye on him.

“I understand,” Liam said. Tears were beginning to flow from his eyes. “Please Celeste, just listen to what I’ve said. The future you - the you that’s my best friend - I love her. She’s the best person I’ve ever known, and I took her for granted, so if you’ll just try to find that marker. It’s only buried about a foot deep. Your mother will recognise the handwriting. Just put it back when you’re done, or else-”

It was *deja vu*. Perhaps it was just a coincidence, or perhaps the timestream had ensured it. Maybe Liam had screwed up the timeline so much that there was no other way to untangle it than to remove the source of all this twisted mess in the first place.

It was the only explanation that truly satisfied him for how, for the second time, he was forced to dive forward, screaming out warnings, as a car barrelled down the suburban road at a breakneck speed, right towards someone who was completely unaware. Its lights were not even on, and the car shifted as if driven by an angry drunk. It honked its horn,

perhaps a deliberate warning, but it was too late: the teenage Celeste half-turned and saw it, a silent shriek escaping her mouth.

Liam dove. He'd done this before, in Soo-Yun's body. And he knew it was the right thing to do. He wouldn't lose his friend like this. He would *die* for her in order to make up for his sins.

"CELESTE!" he called out. "CALEB!"

He dove, pushing her back even as she clutched her head.

"What did you call m-"

The car skidded to its side, catching Liam in the midsection. Pain *exploded* throughout his body, a thousand times worse than any deliverance Brett Kapperton had visited upon him. His already aching ribs seemed to *shatter*, and several other bones gave way. The worst injury by far was below his midsection, perhaps around his leg, where something gave away completely.

He smacked to the ground. The whole experience must have been only a few seconds. The car skidded into a tree, colliding heavily but non-fatally. Liam barely paid further attention to it though. His eyes were on Celeste, who was scratched and bruised but okay. The teenager looked at him and gasped.

"Oh my God! Fuck, oh fuck! Fuck, what do I do?"

Liam gave a half-smile. "It's okay, Celeste. It's - it's okay. Y-you're fine."

She moved to him. "You're bleeding! Oh my God, there's blood. Liam! It's Liam, isn't it? You said Liam Lewis? Look, you need to tell me what to do! Your leg - oh God, your leg!"

Things were closing in. There was darkness at the edge of Liam's vision. Spots. Bright spots. It was getting hard to think. That was a first for Liam. He reached out, feebly touching Celeste's arm.

"S-sorry, buddy, I keep fucking everything up. Didn't mean t-to traumatise you."

Celeste swallowed. "Help! Somebody help!"

The car doors began to open. Several lights turned on. No doubt her parents were moving to the front door, but Liam just kept his narrowing focus on her.

"It's okay. It's gonna be okay. Please, just don't give up on all the c-creative stuff. All that . . . engineering. I'm sorry I was such a shitty friend."

And then he was gone . . .

. . . back to his lab.

Liam collapsed into the timesphere, his body bleeding. Something was missing; he fell right over. It was all too dark. But someone was already opening the capsule, which was whirring down. His confused mind and failing vision struggled to take it in.

“H-how is it fixed? It was destroyed when I l-left . . .”

But already multiple people were grabbing him, attaching things to him, and pulling him away. A dark face appeared over his, the face of someone who must have been an angel.

“It’s been a while, buddy,” Celeste said, as beautiful as Liam remembered. “Just hang in there. I’m bringing you home.”

Part 8: Time to Wrap Up

Celeste

Liam’s left leg was gone from the knee. He had broken ribs, a dislocated shoulder, and a lot of internal bleeding. For a while, she had feared he wouldn’t make it. But then again, she was able to describe his injuries over the phone to the ambulance with frightening accuracy, and that was before she’d even hit the switch to put him in the room. She’d wanted to time it precisely so that her best friend and guardian angel from so long ago would reappear just seconds before the first responders arrived, and that her own medical training could bridge the gap between them. She’d seen the injuries before, after all. They’d left quite the impression upon her when she was fourteen.

And now Liam was finally waking up. He looked haggard, with quite a lot of bruising on his face. But it was a face she now remembered, and in more ways than one. In more ways than anyone *could* remember a face.

“Hey there,” she said, seated beside him. “Someone’s finally up.”

Liam struggled to look at her. “Am - am I dreaming?”

She giggled. “I hope not. You’ve been dreaming for far too long at this point, *dude*.”

At that his eyes shot open more. He struggled to sit up in his hospital bed, only to groan from the pain.

“Hey, hey!” she said. “Don’t stress yourself. You’re lucky to be alive, buddy.”

“You remember? You actually *remember*?”

Celeste didn’t even try to suppress her grin. “Just about all of it. You succeeded. Well, sort of. You had the whole big sacrifice, dude. I like to think it was me and my engineering skills that really came in clutch, to be honest. I don’t know, maybe we saved each other.”

He frowned, clearly confused. "How?"

"Are you sure you want to know now? Let me get you some water first."

She gave him some, and for a brief moment his gaze went to her chest. Yeah, her girls were still pretty damn big. He hadn't fixed *that* problem, but she didn't really consider it a problem anymore. Not at all, in fact. She'd come to rather like her impressive bust.

"Better?"

He nodded.

"Cool, now I know the dress is a little *low* around the neckline, but maybe look at my eyes when I tell the story."

The super scientist spluttered, coughing on his drink. Celeste felt guilty at his pain, but given his look of embarrassed amusement she couldn't help but giggle again.

"Hey, don't blame me for your pain this time, dude. *You're* the one that put me in this mega hot body."

"Yeah, maybe I can fi-

She put up a hand. "Don't even say that after all the shit you put me through. But I guess I can appreciate what you gave up to save me."

Liam looked down at himself at her gesture. His eyes went wide once more.

"I don't suppose my foot is lying around somewhere?"

"Yeah, in a medical bin somewhere. I'm so sorry, but they can't reattach it."

He plonked his head back and sighed. Celeste gave Liam some time to come to terms with it.

"It's better than dying," he said. "And better than I deserve. How did I get back in the present? How did you save me?"

"Well," she said, placing a comforting soft hand on his arm. "It went like this . . ."

She told the story, long-winded as it was. It did span a great deal of time from her perspective, after all. The moment when Liam's body had disappeared in a ripple of light had been a shocking one for her, especially with no trace of him remaining but for the shocked car crash survivors who proclaimed they'd *definitely* hit someone. Just days later, when she was trying to figure out if she was crazy or not, she'd managed to find the forest grave Liam had referred to. She didn't need to ask her mother about the letter inside; she knew the date that was referred to, and she also knew her mother's handwriting. It had been the strangest revelation of her life, to know that the strange man talking about time travel and knowing all these things about her *had* been real. It had been enough to change the entire trajectory of her life, in fact.

Before that night, Celeste had been on a path that only involved being popular. She was aware of her increasing beauty, the fact that her boobs started to grow in early, the way young men were looking at her. She was getting into fashion and girly things, and shifting

away from the creativity of youth. But after the bizarre experience with the time traveller, a fire was lit under her. She didn't abandon her feminine pursuits as she grew older, certainly not. In fact, she *loved* dressing up and going to clubs and talking fashion with her girlfriends, just as much as she loved to sing, to dance, and to be a total femme girl in general. But unlike the life trajectory she could have had, this was not everything, and she didn't fall prey to sleeping with everyone and anyone she could, either. Instead, she never let go of the incident with Liam Lewis, especially after meeting the man by chance in high school, and realising that not only was he real, but that he really did look like a young version of the man he'd met.

From there, everything began to fall into place. Celeste didn't just study engineering, she *mastered* it. She didn't just work to help Liam build his machine when the time was right, she *obsessed* over its theories, its operations, and various failsafes she could engineer within it. She and Liam weren't too close in this timeline, and at first she couldn't see why this figure had stated that they would be best friends in the future. The man was obsessive, and really awkward around girls. The fact that she was a total smokeshow and they both knew it only made their interactions even more stilted and strange.

But as Celeste continued to work around the timesphere, things began to change. She started to have odd premonitions and imaginings of other lifetimes. At one point she thought she was dating Brett Kapperton, who proceeded to savagely beat up Liam, only for her to realise that this never happened. One morning, she opened her closet to put on her goth gear and put the heavy black makeup around her eyes and lips, but why the hell would she want that? She even stood before the toilet and nearly tried to pee standing up, as if she were a guy. For a while, she thought she was going actually insane.

And then it all began to click together: these were alternate timelines of *her* life. Proximity to the timesphere along with the fact that she was pursuing a path closer to her original timeline was allowing her to dredge up memories of things that had never happened. It made her finally reach the ultimate epiphany: she originally wasn't a woman at all, but a *man*. A man named *Caleb*. The very same Caleb who had been Liam's best friend, before everything had gone so, so wrong. In knowing that, the rest of the puzzle all came together.

Why Liam had travelled back and interacted with her.

How he had felt he'd failed her.

Why he was willing to die for her, out of a mix of love and guilt and responsibility.

And why, in some strange way, despite being completely out of his league and so unlike him in many ways, she constantly felt like she was drawn back to him.

She explained all of this to Liam, holding his hand and letting him take in the details from his hospital bed.

"But how did you save me?" he asked.

“Oh, that was the easy part. Well, sort of the easy part. I knew from our work together that transferring a body back in time was impossible, right? And yet, somehow, you did it. You almost broke space-time with that, by the way. You’re lucky I’m top of the class in physics and engineering, so I was able to fix it.”

He winced. “Sorry. Wait, I thought I was top of the physics class?”

“Not anymore, dude. I got a lot smarter in this timeline. Anyway, I worked out a plan. I had to try and bring you back once the grid was repaired, but it took a lot of juryrigging and fixing up the timesphere. You broke it hard, man. Seriously, fireworks everywhere.”

“I wasn’t exactly planning to come back.”

She chuckled. It made her tits wobble. It was weird, she’d had them for years from her perspective, when puberty hit her *hard*, but occasionally, such as in moments like this, they almost felt new and strange and kind of exciting. The male remnant of her timeline, she theorised.

“I noticed. But I had to save you. It took me a while to realise that I always was going to save you. Something had to pull you out. So after several months of repairing the timesphere and machinery, I tapped into the grid and brought you out. You coming into my life back then was a pretty big moment for me, so I knew the exact date, time, and coordinates to put in. And, of course, I knew you’d be injured, so I also got medical training on the side and called an ambulance, and I just had to hope you’d survive. And voila, you survived. You’re here, and looking a bit rough, and I’m sorry about the leg, but you’re here.”

To her surprise, Liam’s eyes began to water with tears. So did hers. Damn female emotions, they still really got her.

“Thank you for saving me, Caleb,” he said. “Thank you for being a better friend than I deserve.”

“Hey, you tried to give your life to get me back on the right track. And it’s Celeste now.”

“Celeste,” he repeated. “I made you into this, though.”

“You had a big hand, but I still chose my own future, dude. And I remember my past now - all my pasts. I’m okay with this version of me. In fact, I think in some ways it’s the *best* version of me. And so, despite all your screwups, I guess I’ve got you to thank for it.”

She leaned over and, clearly surprising her friend, kissing him gently on the forehead.

“Now get back to sleep, smart guy. You need to rest up and recover. I’m not going anywhere.”

Liam closed his eyes slowly, and Celeste watched him gently nod off to sleep. It was funny, really, looking at him like that. As injured as he was, as lanky and nerdy as he was, there was something almost . . . handsome about him.

Food for thought, perhaps.

Liam

“Go easy on it!”

Liam rolled his eyes. “It’s fine. Hell, the improvements you made have reduce the amount of limping in the double-digit percentile.”

“Yeah, because I told you to go easy on it, dummy.”

Liam made a show of ‘going easy’ on his prosthetic, stepping forward gingerly through the lab. Celeste was by his side, her hand hovering at every moment to catch him in case he fell. He was getting more and more used to walking without a cane, but after a single stumble his best friend has *insisted* on making sure he never tried walking alone and unassisted without her present. It was as infuriating as it was deeply kind of her.

“I can’t believe it’s all just boxes now,” Celeste said. “Your entire life’s work.”

They gazed out together across the large laboratory space. It looked more like a series of funerary shrouds to a dead, mothballed project, which, in a way, it effectively was. The timesphere was dismantled, the console separated into piles of circuit boards and plastic coverings, and even the metallic generator pylons had been disassembled. Celeste looked at her hands, and Liam had to smile: they were starting to develop the calluses that Caleb’s had always had.

“I won’t lie, it’s a sobering experience, Celeste,” Liam said, voice echoing throughout the near-empty room. “But the timesphere is too dangerous. I can’t risk going back again and making things even worse, especially for you.”

She punched him playfully on the arm. “I don’t know, it all worked out in the end. I mean, look at me and tell me that I’m missing anything.”

Liam regarded her. He tried not to look too often - she was his friend, after all, and he’d done this to her - but it was hard not to be entranced by the gorgeous mixed-race woman beside him. Her breasts were full, almost straining against her tight tee, and her pants were slim and conformed well to her wide hips and lovely backside. He still occasionally stumbled when talking to her, though she no longer found it annoying at least; now she just *teased* him. She was doing it now, deliberately thrusting out her chest.

“You are the worst best friend.”

“Says the guy who gave me these tits and this ass! I can’t help if I want to show them off a little.”

“Well, at least someone is getting amusement out of it.”

“Please, like you don’t like the sight.”

He blushed red. "Well, I guess that's at least *partly* my fault too, huh?"

"Absolutely."

"I imagine, uh, that Greg Erickson will like it?"

She raised an eyebrow. "What do you mean?"

"You're dating him, aren't you?"

She chuckled. "Don't look so obviously jealous. But no, we're not together. I ended things pretty recently. There's a lot going on, and this was my true passion, here."

Something like relief hit Liam, but he was embarrassed to really examine why. He coughed and changed the subject.

"Well, with the timesphere finished, I've got a few more ideas for the future, if you're interested."

"Oh, I'm very interested, dude. What crazy mad science are we up to this time?"

He grinned, already mapping out the possibilities in his head. "Time travel is too dangerous. But *dimensional* travel, that might be worth considering, right?"

Celeste's face lit up. God, she was gorgeous. He *dreamed* of that face, and it made him realise how hopeless he was at times.

"You and I are vibing right now, dude. I was just drawing up theories about this the other day."

"We don't have to start right away of course," Liam said. "Still have to pack this up, and I know you've got that dance coming up, and you like the Friday night clubs, and-"

Two hands settled on his shoulders and spun him around. Before Liam could even think or respond, Celeste was pulling his body against hers, her breasts soft and pillowy and *wonderful*. Her lips locked with his, and she kissed him for what felt like merely seconds and yet perfect *years* at the same time. She moaned just a little, a gentle sigh that made him feel like he was the luckiest man in the world. When they parted, his expression must have radiated confusion, because she giggled in a flirtatious manner.

"Dude, I told you, *my passion is here*."

"Oh," Liam said, adjusting his glasses. "Oh!"

The End