



Transformation

Dear Professor Helsinki,

It is with regret that I write this letter. Despite our best efforts, the experiment has been an unmitigated disaster. Perhaps it was the tight deadline that we set ourselves. Or maybe poor workmanship has brought the project to a crashing halt.

Doctor Harrison and Madame Guthrie stepped into the transverse time actuator pods earlier this evening. Harrison entered pod A and Guthrie pod B. They waited a while before switching over. The idea was to use the actuator to reverse time to a point where they were in the previous pods. We were only rewinding several minutes. It should have been simple.

The introduction of the young boy, Wilkins, into the laboratory went a long way to ensuring the project failed. His work has been lacklustre, at best. I knew he'd done something the moment the switch was pulled. We had observed immediate effects in our earlier work. The results were far more delayed this time.

At first, the clockwork motor appeared to be handling the extra workload. Then, I heard the gut-wrenching crunch of gears grinding. The acrid stench of oily smoke seeped into the laboratory. I panicked. I raced to the mechanism room and immediately noticed the problem. Young Wilkins had left a wrench nestled amongst the clockwork. It had become caught in the teeth of the largest cogwheel. The thing had jumped its axis. There was no time to fix it. Two of our dearest colleagues were caught somewhere in the middle of the time continuum.

It took all of my strength, but I managed to shift the tool and turn the mechanism. The charge started to build in the static electrification chamber. The Faraday cage sparked into life as expected. Despite my best efforts, it would appear that I was too slow. The actuators never reactivated. There was nothing left in either pod once the machine had completed its cycle.

I remain positive that our friends are alive and well somewhere; perhaps I would be better to say somewhen? They have been cast adrift in the timestream. They may be searching for a way to return to us



even now.

There is no saying that they have headed backwards. It is conceivable that they have shot forwards thousands of years. I can only hope that they arrive at a time when somebody has perfected my design. Maybe, they can send them back promptly.

For now, I shall continue to work alone. It is my intention to bring the project back to life as soon as possible. I will keep you informed of any future successes.

Yours Sincerely,

Doctor Jekyll

VOCABULARY FOCUS

1. Find and copy a word that means something was absolute or total.
2. Copy a phrase that tells you the project ended suddenly.
3. Write a definition for the word “acrid”.
4. Why does Doctor Jekyll say that he might be better to say “somewhen”?
5. Find and copy a synonym for “possible”.

VIPERS QUESTIONS

S

What had happened just before the machine broke?

R

Who left the wrench lying around?

R

Where was an electric charge created?

I

How does the doctor feel about the whole situation? Give evidence.

P

What do you think has happened to the other people? Where and when do you think they have emerged?