

"THE RABBIT GOES INTO THE HOLE"

By

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CAST

STEVE

JEFF

COMMENTATOR

MOTORBIKE RIDER

THIRSTY JOSH

PROFESSOR SNIT

BUSKER

STORE CLERK

CHRISTIAN #1

CHRISTIAN #2

DUDE

COP

EMCEE

PARAMEDIC #1

PARAMEDIC #2

SCENE

FADE IN:

EXT. STILL SHOT OF RUINED FUTURISTIC CITY

FADE TO:

EXT. STREET NIGHT

A HAND is nailing a POSTER to a pole.. In the pulsing glare of a distant light, we read "DANGER! PLAGUE LIZARDS! TAKE SHELTER!"

The HAND seizes up. It drops the hammer and sinks out of view.

VOICE (O.C.)

(screams)

SOUND (O.C.)

(Disgusting slurping and gagging)

The camera pans down to a CORPSE at the foot of the pole. The CORPSE is covered in gross green slime. It has clearly just finished nailing up the poster before succumbing to plague lizards.

PAN TO:

The HAMMER lying on the ground. Another HAND picks up the HAMMER.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET NIGHT

A glass-fronted metal box sits on a pole. Behind the glass sits THE DEVICE. It is a brightly colored toy gadget with plastic lights and a large yellow wheel. A sign reads IN CASE OF PARADOX, BREAK GLASS

SLOW MOTION

The hand holding the HAMMER swings and breaks the glass. A pair of hands reaches into the box and grabs the DEVICE.

CUT TO:

CLOSE UP: DEVICE

The hands give the wheel a vigorous twist.

FX: SWIRLING TIME-VORTEX over which the TITLE and CREDITS (if desired) are shown.

SCENE

EXT. STREET DAY

State Street in MADISON, WISCONSIN. We are just around the corner from STATE STREET BRATS. The BUCKY STATUE and the COW are visible. It's a Fall day, and young people in light jackets and Badgers swag amble past.

THIRSTY JOSH ambles up to the BUCKY statue and leans on it. He's dressed in ratty clothes and wears a scuzzy broad-brimmed hat. He appears fairly drunk.

THIRSTY JOSH

(slightly slurred and spaced out)

A fine October day on Madison Wisconsin's State Street, the trendy commercial boulevard that splits this hick metropolis in twain, man! And Thirsty Josh feels the generosity just radiating off these youthful Urban Outfitters shoppers. Mr. Badger, it is a dead certainty that one - yes one! - of these soft cheeked Gen Z's will be coughing up a dollar for the benediction of Thirsty Josh, man. A beautiful USA dollar bill with which Thirsty Josh shall purchase his morning hooch! A chintzy thin glass bottle, with beaded bubbles winking at the brim! And the delightful corrosive juice shall quench the fire that burns eternal in Thirsty Josh's esophagus. Who? Who shall gift Thirsty Josh with the currency he craves?

Special FX swirlies begin fading in.

Whoa, man! Thirsty Josh feels a disturbance in the fabric of time itself! Could the strands of cause and effect be fraying this very minute! Could Fate and Destiny be going topsy turvy! I better scoot!

THIRSTY JOSH staggers off camera.

There is a gigantic BLUE FLASH that no one seems to notice. When it clears, two people are standing where there was no

one standing a moment ago. They are JEFF and STEVE, two youngish women. Superficially, they could pass for anyone else on State Street - tourists or college students. They are dressed slightly strangely, but not so outrageously as to make anyone stare. Both wear swimsuits, and large foil-covered sun hats. JEFF is noticeably taller than STEVE. JEFF is rangy, profane, punchy. STEVE is nerdy and slightly uptight. The women bend their knees as though they've just jumped from a height.

JEFF

(shivering)

Shit, the past is cold!

STEVE

(shading her eyes and squinting at the sun)

It's 1966. Climate change must not have happened yet.

JEFF

It's gotta be 80 degrees. How do folks keep from freezing?

PULL BACK TO REVEAL:

THE COMMENTATOR stands a short distance from the pair, his back to them. He's wearing a dark suit, and smoking a cigarette.

COMMENTATOR

(Rod Serling voice and mannerisms)

Despite what our historically-challenged friends think, the year is 2025. The place: Madison, Wisconsin, United States of America.

JEFF

Not this know-it-all again.

COMMENTATOR

(gesturing behind him)

Meet Jeff and Steve, two young women ... from the future! Refugees from a dark time to come, when plague lizards stalk the earth.

JEFF

It's not that bad where we're from.

STEVE

Those plague lizards suck, though.

COMMENTATOR

These women have come to correct a crime. A crime so heinous that it has altered the very nature of Time itself. They come to the distant past of 2025 in pursuit of the perpetrators of that crime. And the criminals they are chasing...

STEVE AND JEFF

(Waving hands dramatically)

Woooooooooooo!

STEVE

The big reveal, folks!

COMMENTATOR

The perpetrators whom Jeff and Steve pursue ... are their own future selves.

JEFF AND STEVE

(cross talk)

Bingo. Now you know.

There it is.

COMMENTATOR

For reasons that Steve and Jeff do not know, their future selves have come back in time thirty minutes ahead of them..

JEFF

Of course they're ahead of us! They're our future selves, assbot!

STEVE

Do you know what your future self is going to do? Or why?

JEFF

Oh my Josh. Does anyone?

They give the COMMENTATOR a peculiar gesture that is probably the future equivalent of the middle finger. They walk off camera.

COMMENTATOR

Steve and Jeff have been sent here to prevent their future selves from altering history. But what did the future versions of Jeff and Steve do in this long-ago era that has changed their own timeline so disastrously? And what was their motive? Why come here, to this dark age of poverty and desperation?

THIRSTY JOSH sidles up to COMMENTATOR.

THIRSTY JOSH

Hey, man, you got a dollar for poor ole Thirsty Josh?

COMMENTATOR

What do you need a dollar for?

THIRSTY JOSH

I wanna invest in mutual funds.

COMMENTATOR

I don't carry cash, sorry.

THIRSTY JOSH

(raises his hands in benediction)

Lord! Drive the demons from this selfish taxpayer!

SCENE

EXT STREET DAY

CUT TO:

JEFF AND STEVE walking southwest along State Street towards camera. They are just passing Raising Cane's Chicken Fingers.

STEVE

All I know is that we were doing fine in our own time...

JEFF

Driving our hovercars...

STEVE

Getting waited on by robots..

STEVE

...and suddenly "FLOPPABAM!" there's plague lizards everywhere.

JEFF

And society's all collapsed and shit.

STEVE

And that Time Police guy in the mask tells us our future selves have illegally -

JEFF

(exaggerated, hand quotes)

Illeeeegally!

STEVE

Illegally gone back and changed our timeline.

JEFF

And somehow it's our fault...

STEVE

Will be our fault...

JEFF

Will be our fault. And if we don't stop them - stop US - from boning up the future...

STEVE

The cop said the human race could end! Millions will die!

JEFF

And we sure as shit don't wanna get blamed for that!

(looks around)

How the hell are we supposed to find our future selves? Where are we supposed to look?

Behind JEFF and STEVE, another JEFF and STEVE walk by. These two are in flowing hippie robes and flowered headbands.

The camera follows HIPPIE JEFF and HIPPIE STEVE

HIPPIE JEFF

We could rob banks! You've seen old pictures! They come out with giant bags of money!

HIPPIE STEVE

I think those pictures were from movies? Wait, what if we learn to eat fire? I read that people use to do that when they joined the cirkooss! People would pay us for that!

JEFF

I don't think I like how fire tastes. Gotta be a another way.

The camera leaves the hippie versions of the girls and goes back to the original JEFF and STEVE.

STEVE

Maybe we could ask someone?

JEFF

(exasperated)

Yeah, let's just flag down a - who do they have in the past - a knight? We'll ask a passing knight "My Lord, hast thou seen two criminal versions of us? About an hour older maybe? They were about to fuck up Time?"

STEVE

Oh, you hate asking directions.

JEFF

We're just going to have to catch up to those joshholes all by ourselves. Tackle them or something. Yell at them. "Why the fuck are you changing Time? Don't you know about plague lizards?"

JEFF

Let's just remember RULE NUMBER ONE about time travel!

TOGETHER

NO PARADOXES!

STEVE

We've got to be super careful not to get stuck in any paradoxes. No endless loops. No giving birth to our parents. No inventing any musical genres.

JEFF

If I see a paradox, I promise I will kick its ass.

SCENE

THIRSTY JOSH staggering past PARTHENON GYROS

THIRSTY JOSH

Man, this day is bumming me out, a serious bummer, because it is already eleven o'clock in the morning, as I have been informed by the clock over the bank, man, it is eleven o'clock in the morning and Thirsty Josh does not yet have a dollar. Thirsty Josh has not yet convinced the yokels of this dyspeptic hamlet of Madison, Wisconsin, to lend him the trifling sum of a single currency unit, to wit, a dollar bill. And without that dollar bill, man, Thirsty Josh cannot avail himself of the cooling waters that will slake his godawful, unstoppable, neverending thirst, man. The cooling waters! That is to say Mad Dog, that is to say Cisco! Thunderbird!

(continues listing cheap liquors with gusto)

Boone's Farm! 1941 Craft Vodka! Mickey's Wide Mouth Malt Liquor in the green bottle shaped like a little green glass barrel! Old Granddad! Fireball whiskey in the mini bottles! Seagrams in the mini bottles! UV Blue Vodka! Dr. McGillicuddie's now that's what Thirsty Josh needs! The good Doctor M, he'll cure my scaly elbows, my brain hairs, my purple skunk farts! Oh yeah, man, come sweet booze, come to Thirsty Josh! Cool this barkin' leather throat-hole of mine!

CUT TO:

JEFF and STEVE walking southeast. A MOTORBIKE RIDER pulls up. He wears leathers and a helmet.

MOTORBIKE RIDER

Hey are you girls supermodels or something?

JEFF

Shut up, you.. knight. Art thou actually a knight?

STEVE

He's got a helmet.

MOTORBIKE RIDER

Why you idiots wearing swimsuits? It's fucking October!

MOTORBIKE RIDER rides off camera.

MOTORBIKE RIDER (O.C.)

Tourists!

STEVE

(looking down at herself)

He's right. We look out of place in these clothes.

JEFF

And I'm freezing. We better get some outfits that are right for 1966.

STEVE

2025.

JEFF

Whatever, nerdbot. We need some poor people clothes.
Rags or something. Nobody notices poor people.

STEVE

(pointing up)

Heyyy, check the sign!

CUT TO:

RAGSTOCK SIGN

JEFF

"Ragstock!" Hell yes. Gotta be a clothing dump for
peasants or something. I bet all the stuff in there's
free.

STEVE

Why would it be free?

JEFF

Cause it's full of lice and plague and shit. Come on.

STEVE makes a face and follows Jeff inside

(beat)

FUTURE JEFF and FUTURE STEVE, wearing fringed cowboy
shirts, ten gallon hats, and boots, come hastening by.

FUTURE JEFF

That Ragstock place again! Shit, we're going in
circles. Forty bars on this street, and not one's
called Badonkadonk.

FUTURE STEVE

We better ask directions.

FUTURE JEFF

I hate asking directions. I feel stupid.

They notice a BUSKER in a stocking cap, banging on a
guitar.

BUSKER

(sings tunelessly)

Polka dot mangos
 From outer space
 Going split splat
 All over the place
 I got space mango
 All over my face
 And I forgot my spoon!

FUTURE STEVE

Hey, thou again! Got another thing to ask. We're looking for a tavern called Badonkadonk! Where they hold a dance contest for ancient cowherds?

BUSKER

You mean the honky-tonk?

FUTURE STEVE

Badonkadonk!

BUSKER

Yeah, Badonkadonk. The honky-tonk bar. That's on East Wash. Down the end of State Street here, go left on the Square, it's down about two blocks!

EXITS

FUTURE JEFF

(to FUTURE STEVE)

I did not understand a word of that.

FUTURE STEVE

Easy. We go look for something square shaped, and then for something that needs to be washed, and then for something that looks like a block.

FUTURE JEFF

We better go. Things have gotten more fucked than a drunk Martian on a pleasure barge.

FUTURE STEVE

I swear, if we get through this, I am never doing time travel again!

FUTURE JEFF and FUTURE STEVE run off-camera

CUT TO:

PROFESSOR ELEANOR SNIT poking her head around a corner. She is a crazed woman with Einsteinian white hair and a lab coat.

PROF. SNIT

Did those two say "Time Travel?"

CUT TO:

JEFF and STEVE exiting Ragstock wearing flowing 60s hippie garb.

JEFF

She said we had a what?

STEVE

A "store credit"

JEFF

Like someone left money there for us to buy this stuff?

STEVE

Who would do that? Who even knows we're here?

JEFF

Who do you think, dummy? Us! Ourselves! Our future selves!

STEVE

They must have been here just a little while ago!

JEFF

What are these dumb clothes anyway? I told that innkeeper that we wanted to go to Woodstock and she gave me these weird-ass bedsheets

STEVE

I told you, this is 2025. Woodstock was 100 years ago. Look around, do you see anyone else dressed like curtains?

JEFF

(fumbling with robe)

Where's the autozip?

STEVE

I think you have to tie it. (holds up sash). With this. See?

JEFF

Tie? Like a knot?

STEVE

You don't know how to tie a knot?

JEFF

I always had the robot do it.

STEVE

I'll show you. Like my thirdmom taught me. OK watch.
(kneels in front of JEFF, demonstrates tying a knot)

The rabbit goes into the hole. It goes around the tree....

JEFF

The tree is inside the hole? How big is that rabbit hole?

STEVE

The biggest of all time. OK, so it goes into the hole, around the tree, and comes out of the hole. See?

JEFF

It's still in the hole.

STEVE

No, it came out.

JEFF

The front part of it did, but the rest of it is still down there. Poor rabbit, it only thinks it's out.

STEVE

The rabbit doesn't matter. The point is to tie everything together. You're good to go.

(stands up)

JEFF

I think rabbits matter. Poor rabbit. Just a pawn in our game.

STEVE

Wait a minute. There's something in the pocket of this dress. It's an envelope!

JEFF

Wow!

STEVE

Yeah.

JEFF

What's in it?

STEVE

Money. Five bucks.

JEFF

OK! Finally some good luck!

STEVE

And a stick. Oh, it's a pen, probably. And a note. Oh god.

JEFF

Who's the note for?

STEVE

It's addressed to "You Idiots."

JEFF

Someone prolly wrote it for some idiots then.

STEVE

(waves the note)

It's in your handwriting.

JEFF

(grabs note)

Lemme see. (reads) That's not my writing. Is it?

STEVE

You always write your S's backwards. See? And you misspelled.. everything.

JEFF

It IS my writing! And under "Idiots" it says ... oh my god. "Go back."

STEVE

And then it says "Be kind!"

JEFF

Future-You must have wrote that. I wouldn't have. SO super not helpful. Does it say anything that makes sense?

STEVE

No - looks like the ink stick was running out, but it also says... "Don't drink"

JEFF

Don't drink? Like, alcohol? Or don't drink anything?

STEVE

Doesn't say.

JEFF

Typical us. Can't explain shit, even to ourselves.

STEVE

Idiots. Go back. Be kind. Don't drink. So... here's what I think. "Go Back" means we turn around. Back towards that plaza there. "Be kind" means don't make anyone angry. Peasants in the past started riots and stuff. We have to be careful.

JEFF

If I get thirsty, I'm joshdarn well going to drink something.

THIRSTY JOSH enters.

THIRSTY JOSH

Heyyyy, you gals got a dollar?

JEFF

Hover off!

STEVE

Wait a sec, Jeffie, our note says "Be kind."

JEFF

Yeah but not be kind to ... whatever this is.

THIRSTY JOSH

It's for my sick Puerto-Rican great grandmother. She has small B-cell lymphoma.

JEFF

(hands Thirsty Josh the five dollars)

Here you go. Find a tavern somewhere, good sir.

THIRSTY JOSH exits

STEVE

Jeff! I don't think he should be drinking alcohol!

JEFF

Why not? He smells like alcohol. He's probably used to it!

STEVE

You gave away the five bucks that we gave ourselves! We were supposed to use that!

JEFF

Who's to say we didn't use it? Maybe I did a good deed! Did you think about that?

STEVE

I don't think he was supposed to get it.

CUT TO:

SCENE

THIRSTY JOSH exiting Badger Liquors

THIRSTY JOSH

Man, that place is expensive! Only one hooch that was under five bucks. What did I get here?

CUT TO:

LABEL reads "Sacramento Schnapps. Sea Salt & Vinegar Flavor"

CUT TO:

THIRSTY JOSH looking disgusted

THIRSTY JOSH

Sea salt and vinegar? What kind of juice are these college kids drinkin' these days?

(considers)

What the hell. I'm thirsty as shit.

(Guzzles bottle)

Jesus! That shit tastes like Old Granddad and roach spray!

(gags)

Oh my sweet rusty Jesus. Toad-tits and tarpaper! I feel like I chugged carburetor cleaner!

(falls to his knees, choking)

I gotta get something to wash that down!

JOSH re-enters store. A moment passes. The door opens and the STORE CLERK tosses THIRSTY JOSH out by his collar.

STORE CLERK

Get outta here Thirsty Josh. I'm not handing out free soda!

THIRSTY JOSH

Have mercy! I'm dying of thirst!

STOREKEEPER

Yeah, you're always dying of thirst. You're in here ten times a day, you lush.

(closes door)

THIRSTY JOSH

(gasping)

Blessed are the juice-jockeys! For they shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters.

(beat)

That means I need a damn soda! And quick!

CUT TO:

SCENE

THIRSTY JOSH

SCENE

JEFF and STEVE resting on a park bench. The COMMENTATOR stands close to the camera with his back to them.

COMMENTATOR

Jeff and Steve. To the 21st century eye, they look like two ordinary young women. But they come from a future where archaic concepts of "man" and "woman" have undergone much change.

(exits)

JEFF

Oh my Josh, will you listen to that duffbutt?

STEVE

He's right, the past was all about either/or. You were one thing or you were another thing. Boy or girl. Catholicist or Protestor. Beatles fan or taylorswift. Folks used to have wars and shit over it.

JEFF

Oh yeah? I never paid attention to my history bot.

STEVE

Or anything else.

JEFF

Schoolbots were boring. What can I say?

STEVE

Now you're dating Erko. Dumbest droob in the stratosphere.

JEFF

Erko's built, though. And they've got a big old donkus.

STEVE

Oh, you like dicks? I'm not into 'em.

JEFF

Your Max doesn't have a dick?

STEVE

Nope. Smooth down there as an egg's bottom. Suits us both just fine.

JEFF

I had a dick for a while. A porkmeister 3000.

STEVE

You had a dick? When?

JEFF

Back when we were thinking we'd go to Ganymede, work that ice park. Remember? I got it sewed on cause Erko wanted to try it.

STEVE

What happened? Why'd you get rid of it?

JEFF

Erko liked it. But it wasn't comfortable for me. Rubbed against my jetpants. Drove me bonks, if you want to know. I dunno how anyone goes around with those things.

STEVE

I can't believe you walked around with a dick on! You never told me!

JEFF

Because you're so judgemental! I'd have told you after a while if I'd stuck with it. But if you knew I'd got one put on, then taken it off, you'd yell at me for never sticking with shit.

STEVE

I do yell at you. Because you never stick with shit. School, job, any plans we make. You get bored, and you sabotage everything.

JEFF

I don't mean to.

STEVE

Ganymede would have been fun, is all I'm saying. You blew it, to shack up with Erko.

CHRISTIAN #1

(sitting to JEFF's left on the park bench)

Excuse me! Can I have a minute of your time?

STEVE

Time! Oh my Josh! Jeff, we've gotta go. Our future selves could be bungling up Time right now! We have to catch them!

JEFF

Sizzle down, laser brain. If our future selves are anything like us, they're taking a load off too.

CHRISTIAN #2

(sitting to Steve's right)

We just want to talk to you for a minute.

STEVE

I knew the past was full of dangerous types! Are you guys "meggers?" "Terrorizers?" "Beatlemaniacs?"

CHRISTIAN #1

(pulling out a pamphlet)

We just want to know if you've heard the good news about Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

JEFF

Christians! I've heard about those!

STEVE

Weren't those all outlawed years ago!

CHRISTIAN #2

(indignantly)

Liberals and perverts would like to think so!

C#1

We're just trying to save you innocent females from this godless, Satanic world.

C#2

Protect you before you sully the precious maidenhead that God gave you.

JEFF

Hover off, duffknuckles. Go blow a Martian.

CHRISTIAN #2

We forgive you for your anger. It is spoken in ignorance.

CHRISTIAN #1

The Bible teaches us patience, forbearance. To turn the other cheek.

STEVE

Jesus was a fake. Nobody cares about him where we're from. People realized what a delusion the whole Jesus scam was, like, over 200 years ago.

JEFF

Our Bible teaches us to kick you in the nutbuckets if you don't get off our bench.

CHRISTIAN #1

(jumping to his feet)

Hey, fuck you, okay? We're just trying to spread the good news!

JEFF, STEVE, and CHRISTIAN #2 stand up and jab fingers in each other's faces.

JEFF

Fuck you!

CHRISTIAN #1

No, fuck you! All we wanted to do was talk to you!

CHRISTIAN #2

About the good news! What's wrong with you stupid-heads, you don't like good news?

STEVE

Good news? Like we should, what, let Jesus into our hearts?

CHRISTIAN #2

(nearly in tears)

Jesus wouldn't want to be in your heart. Because... because I'll bet it's dark in there! And cold!

(bursts out crying)

JEFF

(sympathetically)

Oh, hey...

STEVE

No need to cry. We're just a little tense. And my friend's being kind of an assbot.

CHRISTIAN #1

Aw, We didn't mean to get so sore at you. It's just that people have been dicks to us all day.

C#2

It's just so hard! They send us out to talk about Jesus but nobody wants to talk about Jesus!

C#1

Plus we keep getting hit up for money by that homeless guy.

STEVE

S'ok. We're kinda having a hard time ourselves. What with all the knights and minstrels saying things to us.

CHRISTIAN #2

Hey... You girls wanna get high?

STEVE

Like you mean, drink marijuana?

CHRISTIAN #1

I don't know about drinking it. I thought we could go back to the church and smoke a doob. You know, smooth things over.

JEFF and STEVE look at each other. They shrug.

JEFF

Sure, let's go!

CUT TO:

SCENE

EXT. CHURCH DAY

Pres House Church on Library Mall. JEFF, STEVE, and the CHRISTIANS go in the door.

SCENE_x

THIRSTY JOSH on hands and knees.

THIRSTY JOSH

Man, this

CUT TO:

SCENE

BUSKER singing dreadfully off-key

BUSKER

I wear
Green underwear
It's because
I wipe my nose down there
And there's a rumor
Going around
About why
My hair is brown.
Oh yeah

Oh yeah

THIRSTY JOSH staggers up to him.

THIRSTY JOSH

(coughing and gagging)

Listen man, I need a buck. Like, I really need it.

BUSKER

Last time you asked for money, you said you wanted it for war orphans in Canada.

THIRSTY JOSH

I know, I know, but listen...

BUSKER

And the time before that, you needed cab fare to meet the Trinidadian ambassador at the airport...

THIRSTY JOSH

Yeah, yeah, but...

BUSKER

..to prevent a war between Trinidad and Sweden.

THIRSTY JOE

Honestly, man, it's because I'll die if I don't get a soda.

BUSKER

Nice try, Thirsty Josh. Look, here's a quarter. There's a soda machine in the basement of the church on Library Mall.

THIRSTY JOSH

Thank you , thank (coughs) Bless you, Sir, and the Lord who is good, and this whole kind world that saves Thirsty Josh at the moment of his doom.

(starts to stagger away, then turns around)

Does that machine have Pepsi?

BUSKER

So beggars are choosers now? If I remember right, all that machine has is...

CUT TO:

SCENE

INT. - CHURCH BASEMENT

CLOSE UP of front window of soda machine. There is one can of soda inside. Camera is tight-focused on the can of MR.PIBB.

Camera pulls back to reveal JEFF, STEVE and the two CHRISTIANS sitting on couches. There are Jesus portraits on the walls, and a couple of insipid inspirational posters. The four of them are passing an enormous joint around, and blowing clouds of smoke.

JEFF

Smoking this stuff is WAY better than mixing it with cranberry juice!

C#1

(blowing smoke)

So you girls are really from the future? That's insane!

JEFF

It's the past that's insane. I can't believe this place. Rag houses, and money-askers, and gas carriages. Just like a history sexo-tainment.

C#2

So in the future, are people all converted to the Word of Jesus?

JEFF

(laughs)

No, that stuff went away years before we were born.

C#1

No religion? That's depressing.

STEVE

We didn't say that. Religion's everywhere.

JEFF

Drives me crazy.

STEVE

It's just no one believes in Jesus. Belief in the Messiah Josh took over a long time ago. Temples of Josh. Shamans of Josh. Separation of Josh and State.

JEFF

Joshoween. Joshmas.

C#2

Who's Josh?

STEVE and JEFF look at each other and laugh

STEVE

I keep forgetting, we're like in olden times here. You guys haven't read the Big Black Book.

JEFF

I haven't either.

STEVE

The Big Black Book is like our Bible. It talks about how Josh was this dude who was poor. Like so poor, he couldn't afford anything to drink.

JEFF

(relighting the joint)

I never paid attention to the Priestbots.

C#1

That's another thing. How come you both have guys' names?

STEVE

Guys? Oh, right. In the future, we don't bother with that medieval shit. We're all just humans, you know.

C#1

You don't care who's a guy and who's a girl?

STEVE

Nah. Doesn't matter a comet's butt.

C#2

Who raises a family then?

JEFF

When a kid gets born, we usually hand him over to be raised by cinematographers. They're generally considered the best people.

C#2

If there's no sexes how do you know who to... you know.. (whispers) get with?

JEFF

You mean fuck?

CHRISTIAN #1

(chokes on joint in surprise)

STEVE

(shrugs)

You fuck whoever you want, I guess? No one really cares.

C#1

That's good, cause Lou here's gay as a fur coat.

C#2

(cheerfully)

It's true. Don't tell the Reverend, though. Talk to us about this Josh person.

C#1

(laughs)

Yeah, fire away. Who knows, maybe we'll convert!
Spread the Word of Josh!

STEVE

Oh, OK, so according to the Big Black Book, back in the old days, this guy Josh was poor and couldn't afford anything to drink. And he was perishing of thirst caused by the Bitter Hooch.

JEFF

Speaking of thirst, fuck, this smokweed is making me feel like I swallowed socks.

STEVE

And the Kind Singer gave Josh a coin of silver.

JEFF

(Spots the soda machine)

Anyone got a shilling? I really could use a can of whatever that is behind that glass.

STEVE

And the Kind Singer guided Josh to where the Healing Syrup lay.

(in a farcical preacher voice)

Yea, there were but 12 ounces of Healing Syrup, and God hid them in a deep place for Josh. And Josh inserted his silver coin in a monument, and the Syrup tumbled down...

C#2

Gushed out, you mean?

STEVE

No, I'm pretty sure the Book says "tumbled down."

JEFF

(standing in front of soda machine)

Seriously, humans. I really need a fucking drink right now.

C#1

(leaning back and talking to JEFF)

Oh, you don't need to put money in that thing. Just give it a whack on the side.

(to STEVE)

Go on.

STEVE

Well, that's it, I guess. Josh drinks the Healing Syrup and he's so grateful to be saved, he blesses the whole world. And starts a religion, and I guess we all still follow it. It kinda shaped our world, that's what the history bots tell us. Not me so much, though. And Jeffie here doesn't give a fuck for all that church stuff. Jeff wouldn't care if Josh died of thirst. Jeff'd probably drink the Healing Syrup right in front of the guy.

JEFF gives the soda machine a mighty whack. The MR. PIBB tumbles into the bottom. She fumbles with the can.

C#2

Here, lemme help you.

(opens can, hands it to JEFF)

JEFF guzzles the Mr. Pibb.

CUT TO:

Footage of storm clouds rolling in fast motion. Old-time footage of devils climbing out of the ground.

CUT TO:

JEFF wiping her mouth with the back of her hand.

JEFF

Whoa. That tasted like cherry-flavored ass. And I feel...weird.

STEVE

Me too. Like something shifted under my feet. Guys,
thank you for the weed party but we gotta go. I think
things are going wrong in a big way.

CUT TO:

SCENE

EXT. - CHURCH DOORS - DAY

JEFF, STEVE, and the two CHRISTIANS emerge from the church
and exit left. THIRSTY JOSH enters from the right

THIRSTY JOSH

(rasping)

I got to get that soda, man. I feel the hairy balls of
Death riiidin' up my chest. On a collision course with
my mouth hole! I don't want Death's balls in my
mouthbox, man. Soda, now!

THIRSTY JOSH goes into the church.

CUT TO:

SCENE

INT. - CHURCH BASEMENT

THIRSTY JOSH enters, holding his quarter. He approaches the
soda machine. He peers into the depths. His face goes from
hopeful to despairing.

CUT TO:

The empty and dented Mr. Pibb can lying on the carpet.

CLOSE UP: THIRSTY JOSH'S FACE

THIRSTY JOSH falls to his knees. He holds up the empty can
with both hands. He raises his hands and looks to the sky.

THIRSTY JOSH

Gone! Gone! The last motherfucking Mr. Pibb! Shit!
Shitshitshit!

(bangs on glass)

Fuck you, world! You couldn't even let me have this!
One lousy fox-fucking possum-balls-gargling shit-ass

can of fucking Mr. Pibb soda! Even that's too good for Thirsty Josh. Fine, then. Fuck this world! Oh, I was ready to thank God and the world and the generous human spirit for saving me from thirst. I would have done something... something good, man! Brought good tidings to all humans. Made the world better. But now? After you couldn't spare me one Mr. Pibb - one can of the worst fucking soda on the planet? Fuck the world. Fuck the human race. Thirsty Josh says burn in hell, all of you! All...

THIRSTY JOSH coughs and gags. He curls up and collapses on the church carpet.

FADE TO BLACK

SCENE

EXT. - STREET - DAY

JEFF and STEVE fast-walking down State Street. They stop by their original arrival point at STATE STREET BRATS.

STEVE

Weird, weird, weird!

JEFF

What is happening? I think I got poisoned by that assfruit sodapop!

STEVE

Then how come I feel sick, too? It couldn't have poisoned both of us!

Camera pulls back to reveal the COMMENTATOR, facing the camera with his back to JEFF and STEVE

COMMENTATOR

Jeff and Steve. Two travelers from the future. And under their feet, they feel that future in turmoil. The strands of causality shift. The threads of fate are tangled. And the long path of Destiny is turned topsy-turvy, tumbling and twisting like a -

JEFF

Shut UP, you butt-faced Uranus!

STEVE

Josh, what a bag of old smelly wind that guy is.

(holds her hands to her head)

Jeffie, I know we agreed - no paradoxes! - but I gotta tell you, if a paradox feels like anything, I'll bet you anything it feels like this!

JEFF

But how? We didn't murder anyone who could be our ancestor! Didn't have sex with any great-grandpas!

BUSKER

(calls from the sidewalk)

Hey, you girls change clothes again?

JEFF

Again? What does he mean "again?"

STEVE

Jeff! He must have seen our future selves!

JEFF stops mid-stride. She turns on one foot, and marches over to the BUSKER. She grabs him by the shirt collar with both hands and puts her face right in his.

JEFF

Sir, we are NOT in the mood for stray hints about what other versions of ourselves might be doing. Now you tell me, right now, in clear Earthspeak, with none of your fancy Shakespeare talk...

(jabs fingers in his chest)

...what you're talking about, when you saw what you think you saw, and where we, meaning the we who isn't us, might have been going.

BUSKER

(weakly)

Uh, so I'm supposed to tell you where you - not you but a you that isn't you - where the you that isn't

you was going if it wasn't the place where the you
that is you is going.

JEFF

Yes. Exactly. That's not so hard, is it?

BUSKER

All's I know is, you and your friend - or a different
you and a different friend..

STEVE

Good..

BUSKER

...were wearing cowgirl outfits..

JEFF

What are girlcow outfits?

BUSKER

Uh, big white hats. Jackets with, you know, fringes.
Tall fancy boots.

JEFF

Uh-huh. When? And where to?

BUSKER

About twenty minutes ago maybe? You guys... I mean the
other you guys... were going up State Street, and then
you went back down State Street. You passed me twice.
You said you were sorry you yelled at me. Then you
headed down to the Capitol... That's all I know. I
swear.

JEFF

OK, thanks.

BUSKER

(straightens clothes)

People grabbing my jacket all day. First Thirsty Josh,
now you.

STEVE

Who did you say grabbed your jacket?

BUSKER

Thirsty Josh. The homeless dude who hangs out here.
You gave him five bucks, remember?

JEFF and STEVE look thunderstruck. STEVE opens her mouth but only squeaking noises come out. She takes a couple of steps back. JEFF appears to go weak in the knees.

BUSKER

If you're not gonna buy a CD, lemme go, K? I got some nickels to hustle.

Walks off strumming and singing tunelessly.

JEFF

Shitshitshitshit

STEVE

Assuming that's THE Thirsty Josh he's talking about...
It might be a different one?

JEFF

Of course it's the same one. We're in fucking history, don't you remember? There's only one Thirsty Josh just like there's only ever been one, I dunno, John Adams.

STEVE

Oh my Josh. This is huge. Wait, lemme think.

JEFF

OK, so hang on. So the prophet of our entire fucking world religion is around here. And we met him, and didn't even recognize him.

(thinks)

But so what? It's not like we did anything to him. Not like we killed him or anything. Shit, we gave him money! If anything, we did a good deed.

STEVE

Jeffie...

JEFF

What?

STEVE

The soda. The "Mr. Pink" that you drank up.

JEFF

"Mr. Pibb." I'll never forget it. Tasted horrible.

STEVE

Jeffie, what if that wasn't just any old can of medieval soda?

JEFF

What are you saying?

STEVE

I think... I think that can was meant for Thirsty Josh.

JEFF's mental wheels spin. Her face turns to disbelief, then exasperation

JEFF

You're off your brain. The Big Black Book says Thirsty Josh was in the desert or some shit. And some kinda syrup came outta some kinda rock.

STEVE

Old books change things around, Jeff. Remember it says the syrup "tumbled down?" Well that can of Mr. Pibb tumbled down. Out of the machine! Don't you get it? That was the Healing Syrup! In the can!

JEFF

(rationalizing frantically)

OK, OK, lemme think. No, it's stupid. Look, even if that smelly guy was Thirsty Josh, he wasn't even there! I didn't take anything from him. All I did was drink some Joshawful ass-tasting old shitwater.

STEVE

It was the last can, Jeffie. The last one in the machine. Suppose, just suppose...

JEFF

... he comes along, to that basement, like right now.

STEVE

And wants a drink.

JEFF

Yeah, but could it kill him?

STEVE

It doesn't matter. We've changed history! The Big Black Book is all about the revelation of Josh when he drinks! And that leads to the disciples of Josh, the teachings of Josh, the Peaceful Josh Era! Without that, there's no Book, there's no Church, and our world looks completely different!

JEFF

Overrun with plague lizards. Oh fuck.

STEVE

OK, so we boned up the past. OK. We can fix this.

JEFF

Fix it how? I drank the last can, Stevie!

STEVE

We get...another can. That's it! All we have to do is get more Mr. Pibb! We find a Mr. Pibb Store. We buy another can. We put it back in the machine! Josh will come along. The Healing Syrup will be there. It'll all be fixed!

JEFF

(relived to the point of tears)

You're a genius. Stevie, you are so so smart! I'm so happy you paid attention to the schoolbots.

STEVE

Just one problem. Everything in these middle ages costs money. And we gave our only money to Thirsty Josh.

JEFF

Maybe he can buy his own Mr. Pibb?

STEVE

I think he was pretty bent on getting alcohol with it. That's why he needs the Healing Syrup. To wash away the taste.

JEFF

We can figure this out. How do people get money in the Middle Ages?

STEVE

Prostitution?

JEFF

Yeah, you first, genius. No, there's gotta be all kinds of ways. Airplane stunts. Exploiting the workers. Bribery. What about bribery?

STEVE

Who are we going to get to bribe us? Do you even know what that word means?

JEFF

Like, one of us marries a rich person. Becomes their bribe.

STEVE

No wonder you drove that schoolbot to self-destruct.

JEFF and STEVE walk off camera.

CUT TO:

PROF. SNIT poking her head around a poster kiosk.

PROF. SNIT

Yes! They are definitely time travelers! I must catch up to them - before they accidentally destroy the universe!

SCENE

EXT. STREET DAY

The original JEFF and STEVE fade into view in the same spot as before.

JEFF

(shivering)

Shit, the past is cold!

STEVE

(shading her eyes and squinting at the sun)

It's 1966. Climate change must not have happened yet.

JEFF

It's gotta be 80 degrees. How do folks keep from freezing?

CUT TO:

JEFF and STEVE from the back, still engaged in their original conversation. Our current JEFF and STEVE (in hippie garb) walk right past them without either pair noticing. The camera follows our current hippie-garb JEFF and STEVE as they leave the other pair behind.

JEFF

We could rob banks! You've seen old pictures! They come out with giant bags of money!

STEVE

I think those pictures were from movies? Wait, what if we learn to eat fire? I read that people use to do that when they joined the circuit! People would pay us for that!

JEFF

I don't think I like how fire tastes. Got to be another way.

(coming to a halt, spotting something on a kiosk)

Heyyyyyyy!

STEVE

What's that say? "Earn money by exploiting workers."

JEFF

It says - Dancing for Dollars! We can dance, right?

STEVE

Someone'll pay us to dance?

JEFF

It's a contest!

CUT TO:

Poster advertising line dance context

JEFF (O.C.)

"Scoot your boots and slap your chaps this Saturday..."
Saturday, is that like a holiday? "...this Saturday at
Madison's biggest, wildest country-fried dance
extravaganza. Wear your Westernest duds, and get ready
to boogie to music by Billy Ray, Dolly, Brooks &
Dunne, and all your favorite country superstars. \$20
cash prize to the audience favorite!" Stevie, 20
shillings! That oughtta be enough to get at least two
Mr. Pibb cans, right?"

STEVE

Three, probably!

JEFF

"Saturday, 6 PM, at Badonkadonk. 200 E. Washington."
Problem solved! We go to this dance thing, and win! We
go to the Pibb Shoppe and get Pibb. We put it back in
the machine. We save the future.

STEVE

Yes, just a few problems.

JEFF

(indignant gesture)

STEVE

We don't have any Westernest duds, whatever those are. We don't have money to buy "duds" or anything else. And we don't know how to dance. At all. So we're definitely not going to win any contest.

JEFF

Stevie, I never like to say this.

STEVE

What?

JEFF

You're a real wet balloon sometimes. A squeaky negot. Look, we do one thing at a time. We figure it out. Sometimes problems solve themselves. Sometimes, you know, sometimes everything just works out.

STEVE

Are you from the future? Or a different planet? When have things ever "just worked out?"

JEFF

One thing at a time, my friend. First - the "duds." That's clothes, you know.

STEVE

Oh, now you're a history expert.

JEFF

We go where we got these duds, last time. To Ragstock!

STEVE

And buy duds with what money?

JEFF

(insouciantly)

We didn't need it last time.

STEVE

How often do you think people are going to leave us
"store credits"?

CUT TO:

JEFF and STEVE leaving Ragstock in large white Stetson
hats, fringed jackets, and cowboy boots.

JEFF

Whaddya know, another "store credit!" Someone likes
us!

(reaches into pocket, pulls out paper)

And another note!

(reads)

"Go left!" OK, we have got to get better at note-
writing.

STEVE

This is getting weird.

JEFF

"This" is getting weird? We came from the future
fleeing plague lizards. We might have accidentally
killed the messiah. And now we're cow-humans? I'm
ready for any flavor of weird after all that.

(looks around)

Let's find that dance contest!

STEVE

I know you don't like it when I think of problems...

JEFF

Spit it out, human.

STEVE

When we do catch up with our future selves, how are we
going to tell them from us?

JEFF

(not in the mood for obscurity)

Ehhh?

STEVE

I mean, we're in cowhuman duds. They're in cowhuman duds. We look like us. They look like us. If we're trying to stop villainous future versions of ourselves from killing the Messiah, they'll be able to fool us pretty easily.

JEFF

Usually I'm the one slow on the uptake. Steve, bud, you better hold on to something.

STEVE

What?

JEFF

Haven't you figured it out? We were looking for our future selves, wearing cowhuman duds. Well, we're farther down our own timeline now.

STEVE

So?

JEFF

Don't you get it? Look at us! In cowhuman duds! WE are now our future selves! And two past versions of ourselves are probably right behind us. Trying to keep US from killing the Messiah.

STEVE

(wailing)

But we're not Messiah-killers! We're trying to stop Messiah-killers!

JEFF

Own it, murderbot! We drank Thirsty Josh's Healing Syrup. WE'RE the Messiah killers! We might as well be holding the bloody knife!

STEVE

(sinks to the ground and sits)

You were right about that rabbit. It comes out of the hole. But it's also in the hole. And wrapped around behind. And all tangled - ohhh, Jeffie, this is really bad.

JEFF

Well, my motto is "Never look back!"

STEVE

Since when?

JEFF

Next step is to find that dance bar. "Badonkadonk." I'll bet it's right near here.

CUT TO:

SCENE

EXT. CHURCH DAY

Paramedics emerge from the church carrying Thirsty Josh on a stretcher.

COMMENTATOR

(wearing fedora hat that says PRESS)

Local homeless man Joshua Davidson has been found unconscious in the basement of Pres House church on Library Mall. Paramedics say the man was severely dehydrated, and was found next to an empty soda machine. Next, at eleven, Are Young People Drinking Too Much Sugary Soda And Leaving None For The Homeless? WKOW's Amber Noggle reports.

CUT TO:

SCENE

EXT. - RAGSTOCK - DAY

JEFF and STEVE run up.

JEFF

That Ragstock place again! Shit, we're going in circles. Forty bars on this street, and not one's called Badonkadonk.

STEVE

We better ask directions.

JEFF

I hate asking directions. I feel stupid.

STEVE

(waves at BUSKER)

Hey, thou again! Got another thing to ask.

JEFF

Sorry we yelled at you! But we're looking for a tavern called Badonkadonk! Where they hold a dance contest for ancient cowherds?

BUSKER

You mean the honky-tonk?

STEVE

Badonkadonk!

BUSKER

Yeah, Badonkadonk. The honky-tonk bar. That's on East Wash. Down the end of State Street here, go left on the Square, it's down about two blocks!

EXITS

JEFF

(to STEVE)

I did not understand anything he just said.

STEVE

(staggers)

What's that feeling you get when your future and your past become your past and your future? Déjà vu, that's it. I am feeling a wicked wave of déjà vu?

JEFF

They have a word just for that? No wonder I try not to learn words.

STEVE

I have this feeling... it's like I heard what he said, a long time ago, in a dream. And in the dream I couldn't understand it. But now this street looks strangely familiar to me.

JEFF

We've been up and down it, what, 10 times?

STEVE

I feel like I've been up and down it literally a million times. Like I could find this Badonkadonk with my eyes shut.

JEFF

Me too. Which is weird. Because I've never been there before.

STEVE

But you have. We have. Our future selves have been there.

JEFF

But that's our future selves.

STEVE

But we're them now.

JEFF

My head's hurting with all this.

STEVE

My feet are hurting with all this walking. Not a pair of hoverskates anywhere. And that bar is far away!

JEFF

When in Rome... get yourself a Roman transport device!

STEVE

A gas carriage? Jeffie, those are dangerous! And we don't know how to operate one!

JEFF

Everything's simpler in the past. So it's gotta be simpler than telling a hoverskate where to go.

STEVE

You didn't listen to logicbots either. Anyway, we don't have a gas carriage, so...

JEFF

We'll borrow one. From that guy.

CUT TO:

DUDE getting out of a beat-up older vehicle. He wears a tatty backpack.

CUT TO:

JEFF waving.

STEVE

How are you going to get him to give us his carriage?

JEFF

I'll seduce him!

STEVE

What?

JEFF

We're in a rush. No time to ask him to be my bribe. I'll drive him mad with ardor, then take his carriage key.

STEVE

First, that's crazy. Second, things are different in the past. They have different morals and stuff. You're going to cause a ruckus.

JEFF

(to DUDE)

Hey!

DUDE

Um, hi?

JEFF

Wanna fuck?

DUDE

(taken aback)

What?

JEFF

Right here. Take your jetsuit off. Let's go. We're in a hurry.

(begins untying sash)

DUDE

(takes step back)

Who are you?

JEFF

I'm Jeff. And I don't have all day. Come on.

(steps towards DUDE)

DUDE

They told me Madison was full of freaks! I never shoulda left Mt. Horeb!

DUDE drops his backpack and runs off, frightened.

STEVE

That was... awful. I'm frankly embarrassed. I don't know what to say.

JEFF

(rummaging through backpack)

Say I'm a genius!

(holds up car keys)

He dropped his carriage key!

STEVE

Forget it. I'm not going near that thing.

CUT TO:

STEVE and JEFF in front seat of car. JEFF is behind the wheel.

JEFF

OK, so I saw a sexotainment about this history stuff. This is the hover disc. That's the combustion frondle. These pedals are for the weapon shooter and the invisibility smoke.

STEVE

You are going to get us killed.

JEFF

There's the key hole. This one doesn't fit... nah.. aha!

CAR roars to life.

STEVE

(eyes closed)

If we live through this, I swear I will devote my life to preaching the Word of Josh.

CUT TO:

SCENE

EXT. ROAD DAY

We see the CAR going from O.C. left to O.C.right, and back again. The CAR swerves in large S's along the road. It reenters frame driving backwards. It reenters jerking along in short bursts. It reenters going way too fast (sped-up camera can be used)

JEFF and STEVE (O.C.)

(screaming)

CUT TO:

Front seat of CAR in motion.

STEVE

Watch out! Schoolkids!

JEFF

(jerking the wheel)

Missed 'em. No problem.

STEVE

Ouch! Wish you'd missed that mailbox.

(covers eyes, uncovers them)

Aren't these carriages supposed to go on roads? This isn't a road, Jeffie!

JEFF

(grimly trying to control car)

You're a walking panic siren.

STEVE

Oh my josh! An ocean! We're heading right for it!

JEFF

Relax, I think it's just a lake.

STEVE

I don't care how much water we drown in! Stop this thing!

JEFF

(flicking the turn signal)

The stop lever isn't working!

JEFF and STEVE scream and cover their eyes

SMASH TO BLACK

SCENE

EXT. BEACH DAY

JEFF and STEVE crawl up the beach away from the water. Their cowboy suits are soaking wet.

STEVE

That.. could not have gone any worse.

JEFF

Uh-oh. Hello, worse.

JEFF and STEVE are on hands and knees in front of a pair of feet. They look up. CAMERA pans up to reveal a COP looking sternly down at them.

SCENE

INT. POLICE STATION.

JEFF and STEVE sit sheepishly across a desk from the COP. His desk is piled with papers. An ancient computer, an empty donut box, and a TELEPHONE clutter the surface.

COP

OK, so no one else was in the vehicle. No one was killed or hurt. That's good.

STEVE

Can we go, then? We have to do some cowhuman dancing.

COP

Yeah, the rest of this story of yours... I don't think anyone's going to believe my report. (looks at paper). You say you came from the United Places of ... Canamerica? Is that a country? What is that?

JEFF

There aren't any countries. Countries went away a thousand years ago.

COP

(to STEVE)

Is your friend crazy?

STEVE

Totally. It was more like 200 years ago.

COP

(with agonized patience)

Then you say you were running away from .. giant lizards?

JEFF and STEVE

No!

COP

Because that would sound crazy.

STEVE

We came back in time to get away from giant lizards.

COP

Right. Then you say you killed someone. Killed a homeless person. Now, you can imagine I'm pretty concerned about this. Because that is homicide, and that is illegal. Would you care to elaborate? How exactly did you kill this individual?

JEFF

I drank the last can of Mr. Pibb.

COP

You ..what? Can of what?

STEVE

Look, primitive constable person. It's very simple. We came back in time. Because we thought our future selves were going to kill the Messiah.

COP

Kill the Messiah. Uh huh. And did these.. future selves.. kill this individual?

JEFF

Well, it's funny actually. Because as it turns out, we killed the Messiah. Because we became our future selves. You know, because time passes and shit.

COP

And you killed this Messiah by (looks down) drinking a can of soda.

JEFF

I didn't mean to. But I was thirsty. I didn't know it was such an important can of soda.

COP

(leaning back)

Ladies, here's the deal. We haven't had any reports of homicides, and given the lulubell nature of your testimony, I'm going on a hunch that your "murder" is about as likely as your time-traveling and the rest of it.

STEVE

Wonderful! So we can go?

COP

Not so fast! There is the little matter of vehicular theft. (looks down) A 97 Nissan Ventra belonging to a Mr. Dwayne Fincher.

(lowers report)

That's the car you chose to steal?

(looks down)

Then there are the reckless driving charges, the emotional trauma inflicted on the students outside Lil Tots Day Care, and the destruction of property, viz, the sinking of the aforementioned stolen vehicle in Lake Monona.

(sets report down emphatically)

It's good you didn't kill anybody. But you two are in a lot of trouble.

The PHONE on the desk rings.

COP

(answering phone)

What? For these two? That was quick...Ok then.

(to JEFF and STEVE)

Seems your grandma came in and bailed you out. You're free to go.

JEFF

Which grandma? I've got three and Steve here has five.

COP

Go! Before I call the loony bin and have you involuntarily committed!

SCENE

EXT POLICE STATION DAY

STEVE

You paid our constabulary ransom? But why? Why do you care if we go to jail!

PROF. SNIT

Allow me to introduce myself. I am Professor Eleanor Snit of the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Temporal Physics department.

STEVE

Temporal physics? You mean like time travel?

JEFF

Sheesh, we learn that in kindergarten. Not that I learn things.

PROF. SNIT

I have been trying to find you. Because time travel is very dangerous!

JEFF

Well, prepare to pee yourself in surprise, Learned Scholar. Time travel's not dangerous at all. Because we've already done it!

PROF. SNIT

You'd better come to my office!

SCENE

INT. OFFICE.

An atrociously messy university office. The desk is piled high with books, coffee cups, papers, pizza boxes. A WHITEBOARD on the wall is covered in squiggles and equations. At the end of a string of figures, an arrow swoops down to a depiction of an explosion and the word BOOM!

PROF. SNIT

If you ladies have been trying time travel, I have some bad news for you! I assume you've come from a future timeline?

STEVE

That's right! And we're here to fix this timeline, so our own timeline can get straightened out!

JEFF

Get rid of the plague lizards and stuff.

PROF. SNIT

(shakes head sadly)

It'll never work.

JEFF

(moves papers off a chair and sprawls in it)

Excuse me? Have you ever tried it? I think we're doing a great job!

PROF. SNIT

My equations prove it. You cannot change the future by going back in time!

STEVE

But we did change it! And now we've come to undo the change we made!

PROF. SNIT

Tell me, this future that you came from. Did it suddenly go all wodgy one day! Hazy, smoky, perhaps overrun by some sort of grotesque insectoid life forms?

JEFF

COMPLETELY wrong. Lizards, not bugs.

PROF. SNIT

(erasing a number and replacing it with another)

Ah, yes of course. Forgot to carry the two. Lizards then. Yes, it's as I thought. You see, you ladies haven't made your timeline into a different timeline. You've untied your own timeline completely!

STEVE

(becoming afraid)

What? What do you mean "untied?"

PROF. SNIT

Once the time traveler goes into the past and makes a change - any change at all! - her own future ceases to exist! Her own timeline is placed in a state of permanent limbo!

STEVE

(stricken)

Limbo? Permanently bending backwards under a pole while music plays?

PROF. SNIT

(ominously)

Limbo like the waiting room of Hell. Nothing can happen, because nothing has happened.

(points to squiggles)

Meanwhile, the Time Traveler has no future to go back to. She's doomed to keep poncing around doing the same thing over and over in the past.

JEFF

That's stupid. How can the future not be there? We.. I mean, this time traveler person ... just came from there! We .. they.. saw it with our own eyes!

PROF. SNIT

The state of observational uncertainty undoes a given timeline's very existence. Like Schroedinger's cat, which is neither alive nor dead..

JEFF

(scoffs)

All cats are dead, they went extinct in 2155!

PROF. SNIT

The cat, in this famous thought-experiment, is subject to the laws of the quantum world. He exists in a state of superposition. He's both alive and dead until someone observes him. So too, the events affected by this time-traveler neither happen - because in the future he was born into, they didn't happen. But also, they don't not happen - because the traveler actually comes back and makes them happen.

JEFF

(thinks, is struck by idea)

OK, smart lady... what about this?

STEVE

Oh stop, Jeff, you're just getting everything muddled.

JEFF

No, I'm onto something. Madam Wizard, what about the Time Traveler? They... she.. got born, right? So if the future is thrown into this weird nothing status, how did the time traveler get born?

STEVE

Oh, that's actually pretty good! Yeah, how'd they get born?

PROF. SNIT

Aha! Great question! As you can see from this very long string of numbers, the time traveler ends up in a very strange state. Her future timeline ends with her coming into the past. The quantum circle of the event-matrix keeps sending versions of her backwards in time. More and more of her arrive, in an endless procession! Eventually, all the 3-dimensional space in the universe fills up with versions of the time traveler! And the Universe acquires so much mass that it collapses in on itself! And creates.. a second Big Bang!

(points to explosion on board)

Boom!

STEVE

So more and more Jeffs and Steves are going to keep coming back?

PROF. SNIT

Yes!

STEVE

Are we the first to get here? No, wait, we can't be. Because that minstrel guy saw our future selves.

JEFF

And our future selves wrote us a note.

PROF. SNIT

Oh, it's possible there are millions of you here already. Going through the same motions, ending up in the same place.

STEVE

Now that can't be true. If there were millions of us here, we'd have seen them! This town would be crowded with versions of ourselves.

PROF. SNIT

(paces back and forth and thinks)

Hmm.. so where would they go? No! Yes! Aha!

(scrawls figures on the board)

A temporal Bag of Holding! Of course!

JEFF

We go into a bag? Now you're getting just plain weird.

PROF. SNIT

Spacetime is baggy, you know. Put too much of something in it, and it stretches, it bulges! There must be a place - some critical pocket of local space - where all the versions of you ladies are ending up.

STEVE

Omijosh! Jeffie! The rural dancing bar! Badonkadonk!

JEFF

Do you think...

STEVE

That's got to be it! That's where we've been trying to get to this whole time! That's where our future selves - and the past selves coming after us - will be - were - all going!

PROF. SNIT

You ladies must - must! - find a way to fix this! Otherwise, the Universe may explode!

STEVE

(wails)

But how can we succeed, if we've already failed a million times?

PROF. SNIT

I believe that you two maintain a psychic connection with your millions of future selves. Somehow, the experience of your collective futures may leak backwards! And give you some vital piece of knowledge that will allow you to break the cycle!

STEVE

What knowledge? Knowledge of time? Knowledge of all that math stuff?

PROF. SNIT

All I know is that you will know it when it pops into your heads. You must use your backwards-leaking future knowledge! You will only get one chance!

(solemnly addresses JEFF and STEVE)

You must find a way!

SCENE

EXT. STREET DAY

JEFF and STEVE climb out of a Union Cab.

STEVE

Cabs! I didn't know about those. Way safer than trying to drive a gas carriage ourselves!

JEFF

I feel like that Academic Wizard lady coulda done more for us than pay for our cab.

STEVE

We're right where we need to be, though. Look!

CUT TO:

A SIGN that reads BADONKADONK - MADISON'S HAPPENIN' HONKY TONK BAR & GRILLE

JEFF

It looks familiar.

STEVE

It does. But it shouldn't.

JEFF

Stevie, I'm getting that feeling. What did you call it? Like the ground's dropping out from under me.

STEVE

Deja vu. It's ancient French for "already seen it"

JEFF

How can we have already seen this?

STEVE

Because like Sir Wizard said, we've come here before. Or will have come here before. Or... oh, my stomach.

It's like the rabbit in the hole, on your sash. It's out of the hole. But also in the hole. But also looped around back and coming round to eat itself. How many rabbits, Jeff? Have gone down how many holes?

JEFF

I don't like this at all. And that bar, it's giving me the jeebitties.

STEVE

Me too. I mean, think about it. If we've gone into that bar a million times already...

(the horror of realization passes over her face)

...oh my everloving Josh, Jeffie --- how many versions of ourself will we find in there?

The camera pulls back to reveal the COMMENTATOR, smoking and looking smug.

COMMENTATOR

And so the cycle continues. Two women...or four women... or twelve, or a million. The rabbit hole ends on an infinite stage, populated by millions of iterations of Jeff and Steve.

JEFF

That sucks! We have to end this. Didn't we say "No Paradoxes?"

COMMENTATOR

How cute. You say that every time, you know.

JEFF

Fuck you in the time hole, man. We're outta here. Come on, Steve.

COMMENTATOR

I think not.

JEFF tries to push past the COMMENTATOR. He casually holds up a hand, and JEFF finds herself unable to move.

STEVE

Who are you?

The Commentator's face darkens. Wisps of smoke rise around him. His air has become distinctly menacing.

COMMENTATOR

I am the Commentator. I tell the story. I move the plot along. And I tie things up in a neat bow. Both ends of the rabbit, as it were.

JEFF

Oh shit.

COMMENTATOR

There's nowhere to run, little rabbits. Except into your hole. Into the honkytonk with you! With all the other rabbits. Millions of you. Millions of you -- boot-scootin! Dosie-do-ing! Promenading left! Promenading right! Till you fill up the entire Universe! And it ends!

STEVE

I know you now. You're the cop who told us to chase ourselves back in time.

COMMENTATOR

I did. Have done so. So many times. And every time -- off you scurry.

STEVE

And our future lies in ruins. Plague lizards everywhere.

COMMENTATOR

I like it that way. Now go! Go join the party! Go ye, into honky tonk hell!

STEVE

Jeff, let's not do this. Let's make this the one time it doesn't happen this way.

JEFF

How do we stop it? We can't get past this guy. Like that rabbit, he's got us tied up good.

STEVE

There's only one way. We have to break the cycle.

COMMENTATOR

There's no way. I'm sorry.

JEFF

(to COMMENTATOR)

Yeah, you sound worried, bud. Makes me think there is a way.

STEVE

Think, Jeff. The Wizard Scholar said we've got knowledge that's leaked into us from our million other selves who came before.

JEFF

I don't feel any knowledge. I usually don't know anything.

STEVE

There's something about this that doesn't add up. Jeff, our future selves go into that bar. But they never come out with the twenty shillings to buy the Mr. Pibb. Why is that?

JEFF

They get the twenty shillings if they win the contest.

STEVE

So if they're not coming out, it's because..

JEFF

(shrugs)

Because they're not winning. Because we suck at dancing. So what? We know we can't dance. Don't know how we ever expected to win that contest in the first place.

STEVE

What if... what if it's not knowledge that's leaked into us, after a million tries? What if it's skills?

JEFF

Skills? Like killing a dude with one punch?

STEVE

Like dancing! Jeff, move your legs. Like that, yes.

JEFF

Whoa! They really feel like they know what to do!

STEVE

Now step. Now kick. Now two-step. Now dosie-do.

JEFF

(watching her legs do skilled dance moves)

Holy shitskies! It's like they already know how to rural-dance!

STEVE

That's how we'll break the cycle! Jeffie, we are going to be the first Jeff and Steve to actually win that dance competition!

SCENE

INT. BAR

A trick FX shot (cheesy and not necessarily convincing) of hundreds of Jeffs and Steves sitting at tables. The scene swirls and shifts.

CLOSE UP:

Our own JEFF and STEVE looking nauseated.

JEFF

Stevie! There's so many of us!

CUT TO:

The EMCEE jumps up on stage. He holds up a piece of paper.

EMCEE

And now, everyone welcome our [takes a deep breath] million and forty-fourth contestants! These gals are also name Jeff and Steve, just like the first million and forty-three. And just like everyone else, they're going to perform a two-step to "The Time Travel Blues!"

EXIT EMCEE

JEFF and STEVE hop up on the stage. Their outfits sparkle. They give each other a look that says "Let's do this."

MUSIC starts - the "Time Travel Blues" JEFF and STEVE perform a fancy two-step to a song that goes like this:

My baby traveled back in time, and things got complex
She became my mom, now I'm livin like Oedipus Rex
I fathered myself and now I'm also my dad
I give myself a whuppin every time I act bad

I got the Time Travel Blues I'm confused, things are
all turned around
The past and the present and the future are all upside
down
Abraham Lincoln drives a Lincoln through Lincoln
Nebrask
Cavemen in spacesuits, buddy, I just don't wanna ask.

I got the Time Travel Blues, read tomorrow's news
yesterday
Predicting the future but the future has already
changed
Julius Caesar's at Caesar's in Las Vegas tonight
Watching' Muhammad Ali and Muhammad getting ready to
fight

SOLO

AUDIENCE of Jeffs and Steves clapping along

CUT TO:

JEFF and STEVE dance

CUT TO:

I went back a million years, the dinosaur mysteries to solve
 Stepped on a bug and the human race never evolved
 I saw the Big Bang, it was more like a sad little
 "pop"
 Saw the end of Time, saw the entire universe stop.

I got the Time Travel Blues, on a cruise to the back
 of nowhere
 The future's erased but my baby don't even care
 Vikings in Texas and the Hittites in Pittsburg PA
 Dolphins got legs, and the whole human races is
 enslaved

I got the Time Travel Blues, paid my dues to the
 masters of Fate
 Cause and Effect are untied, events don't correlate
 The history books are erased, there's no start and no
 end
 I'm on a wild wild ride, heading out past Infinity's
 end.
 I'm on a wild wild ride, heading out past Infinity's
 end.

The COMMENTATOR leaps up onto the stage. He's wearing a
 white cowboy hat and a buckskin vest.

COMMENTATOR

Bravo, bravo! Whoop-ee-tay-yaya yay, humans! It gives
 me great pleasure to award you the 20 dollar prize!

JEFF

I thought you were the bad guy in all this.

COMMENTATOR

I'm a lot of things. I fill a lot of roles. This is a
 low-budget universe we're in. I must inform you that
 the prize you've won is a lot bigger than this measly
 twenty bucks.

Blue crackles start to ripple around JEFF and STEVE

STEVE

I feel weird

JEFF

You look weird

STEVE

YOU look weird.

COMMENTATOR

The prize you win, humans - is the power to set the future right once again.

(to camera, in Rod Serling mode)

A pocket reality. A Messiah trapped in a state of not being alive, not being dead. But things have begun to settle out. The strings of Time untangle, the Future begins to reassert itself. Only a few tasks remain to be accomplished, before everything is good again.

STEVE

Then we'd better get crackin'!

STEVE and JEFF crackle-fade from view

JEFF (O.C.)

THIS is the way to travel! Wow!

SCENE

EXT. STREET DAY

JEFF and STEVE crackle into view

STEVE

First things first.

JEFF

First things first -- that's how Time is supposed to happen!

What'd we win, twenty dollars? We'll put nineteen on store credit in here.

STEVE

Write our past selves a note, why don't you?

JEFF

This ink stick's almost out of ink. There! Addressed to "You idiots"

STEVE

We sure were idiots!

JEFF and STEVE enter Ragstock. A quick wipe, and they emerge.

STEVE

How much is left?

JEFF

One shilling. I mean dollar.

STEVE

Enough for...

JEFF

Say no more! We need to find a Mr. Pibb Shoppe.

STEVE points.

CUT TO:

TRIANGLE MARKET bathed in bright sunshine.

CUT TO:

STEVE and JEFF enter Triangle Market. A quick WIPE and they emerge, holding...

CUT TO:

A can of MR. PIBB soda, held reverently in JEFF's hands.

CUT TO:

JEFF and STEVE crackle-fading from view.

CUT TO:

SCENE

EXT.. LIBRARY MALL DAY

The doors of Pres House Presbyterian Church on Library Mall. Two PARAMEDICS carry un unconscious THIRSTY JOSH on a stretcher.

PARAMEDIC #1

They said he's some homeless guy..

PARAMEDIC #2

"Unhoused," that's what they call it now.

PARAMEDIC #1

Yeah, he don't have a house either. Guess he crawled into the church basement there and about died.

PARAMEDIC #2

Did you find a pulse?

PARAMEDIC #1

Nah, but these guys pretty much pickle themselves in booze. Bet he'll stay preserved at least till we get him to St. Mary's.

STEVE and JEFF crackle-fade into view. JEFF holds the can of MR. PIBB aloft.

JEFF

Thirsty Josh! We have come from the Future to save you!

STEVE

Although we did accidentally kill you also.

JEFF

Are you thirsty, Thirsty Josh?

THIRSTY JOSH sits up with difficulty. He hacks and wheezes. He stretched out his hand for the Healing Syrup.

CUT TO:

CLOSE UP of the can, beaded with cooling drops. In SLO-MO, THIRSTY JOSH's hand embraces the can.

CUT TO:

PARAMEDIC #1

Hey, that's not an approved medication.

Angelic choirs echo as THIRSTY JOSH downs the can of soda greedily.

THIRSTY JOSH

OH MY GOD that is GOOD! The BEST TASTING CHERRY-ASS CARB CLEANER I have EVER had! FUCK! YES! AHHHHH! I'm saved! Thank the LORD, man! And the Earth and the Trees, man, and yeah even the cursed HUMAN RACE! Thirsty Josh was nigh unto death. But he lives! hallelujah!

THIRSTY JOSH leaps from the stretcher. He holds both hands aloft and spread in a gesture of benediction.

THIRSTY JOSH

I am off to spread the Word of Salvation!

PARAMEDIC #1

Not so fast. We've got to get you to St. Mary's for observation.

THIRSTY JOSH

Good sir, might I trouble you for a dollar. I need it to cure my ailing Roosmalen's Dwarf Marmoset who suffers from alopecia.

PARAMEDIC #2

Get out of here!

FADE OUT

FADE IN

SCENE

EXT. STREET DAY

Aerial shot of CHRISTIAN #1 and CHRISTIAN #2, waving pamphlets

CHRISTIAN #1

Hear the Word of Josh! Salvation or your money back!

CHRISTIAN #2

He who was dying is saved! For he found syrup in the wilderness!

CHRISTIAN #1

Forget the Word of Jesus! Hear the Word of Thirsty Josh!

FADE TO:

AERIAL DRONE shot of State Street, getting farther away.

SCENE

STILL SHOT OF:

RUINED CITY that slowly morphes into SHINING FUTURISTIC METROPOLIS

COMMENTATOR (O.C.)

And so Time is put right once more. Jeff Bilkowicz and Steven Huang have succeeded in untangling the knot they'd put in the timeline. And a bright future is restored - a future clean and bright and free of plague lizards.

(chuckles)

Well... almost free of them.

CUT TO:

INT. - WHITE ROOM. JEFF lounging on a SILVER BEANBAG. She wears her futuristic gear again

STEVE (OC)

We're back!

JEFF

Yup, back to hovercars and sex parties and servant bots. Back to a world where plague lizards are all gone!

S (OC)

Except one!

JEFF

Yeah! Why'd they give it to us to take care of?

STEVE enters, also wearing sunglasses

STEVE

It's our community service, for vandalizing Time! And, speaking of... it's your turn to feed Pus-paws!

JEFF wrestles a giant bag labeled LIZARD CHOW. She drags it off camera as we hear a GROWL...

END