

## **AI-Generated Graded Readers**

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### **About This Edition**

This book is a simplified English adaptation created for extensive reading practice. The text was generated using ChatGPT and prepared for intermediate English learners as part of an educational project.

Target reading level: CEFR A2-B1

This edition aims to support fluency development through accessible vocabulary, expanded narration, and improved readability while preserving the original story structure.

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H. G. Wells, *The Time Machine* (Simplified Edition, Adapted and Simplified by ChatGPT)

## Part 1

The Time Traveller was speaking to us after dinner. The fire burned bright, and soft electric lights shone on the silver cups and glasses. We sat in deep chairs that he himself had designed. They held our bodies so gently that it was easy to relax and listen. The room felt warm and calm, and our thoughts moved slowly and freely. The Time Traveller leaned forward and spoke with great energy. His pale face was alive with excitement, and his grey eyes shone as he explained a strange new idea.

“You must listen carefully,” he said. “I will ask you to question some things you learned at school. For example, geometry is not complete as it is usually taught.”

Filby, a red-haired man who liked to argue, laughed lightly. “That sounds like a large claim to begin with.”

“I do not ask you to believe anything without reason,” said the Time Traveller calmly. “You already accept some strange ideas. A mathematical line has no thickness. It does not truly exist in the real world. You learned that, yes?”

“That is true,” said the Psychologist.

“And a flat surface without thickness is also only an idea. It is not real.”

“Yes,” the Psychologist agreed again.

“Then think further,” the Time Traveller continued. “A cube has length, width, and height. But can a cube exist for only one instant of time?”

Filby frowned. “I do not follow you.”

“Can something exist if it has no duration? If it lasts for no time at all?”

Filby thought quietly.

“A real object,” said the Time Traveller, raising one thin finger, “must have four directions. Length. Width. Height. And duration. We forget the last one because our minds move through time in only one direction, from birth to death.”

A young man near the lamp tried to light his cigar and said, “Yes... that sounds clear.”

“What people call the Fourth Dimension,” the Time Traveller went on, smiling slightly, “is simply another way of looking at time. Time is not different from space. The only difference is that our minds move along it.”

The Provincial Mayor shook his head slowly. “I have never heard this explained so.”

“Space has three directions,” said the Time Traveller. “But thinkers have asked why there should not be another direction at a right angle to the others. Some scientists have even tried to imagine four-dimensional space.”

He showed us drawings of a man at different ages. “These pictures are only parts of one being,” he explained. “All moments of his life exist together in four dimensions.”

The Medical Man looked into the fire. “If time is only another direction,” he asked, “why can we not move through it freely?”

The Time Traveller smiled. “Are you sure we move freely in space? We move left and right, forward and back. But up and down is difficult. Gravity limits us.”

“There are balloons,” said the Medical Man.

“Yes,” replied the Time Traveller. “And one day we may also learn to move through time.”

Filby laughed. “That is against reason.”

“What reason?” asked the Time Traveller quietly.

“You can argue anything,” Filby said, “but you will not convince me.”

“Perhaps not,” the Time Traveller answered. “But my studies led me to an idea. Long ago I imagined a machine.”

“A machine to travel through time!” cried the young man.

“Yes,” said the Time Traveller. “A machine that can move in any direction in space or time.”

Filby only laughed again, but the rest of us listened closely.

“I have proof,” the Time Traveller said.

“It would help historians,” said the Psychologist. “One could see the past

directly.”

“Or visit the future,” said the young man eagerly. “One could invest money and then jump ahead to become rich.”

We all began speaking at once, half serious and half amused. The Time Traveller watched us with a quiet smile.

“At first,” he said, “even I thought it only a strange theory. But now I have experimental proof.”

“Show us the experiment,” said the Psychologist.

The Time Traveller stood up slowly. With his hands in his pockets, he walked out of the room toward his laboratory. We heard his soft steps fading along the hall.

The Psychologist looked at us. “What do you think he will bring?”

“Some clever trick,” said the Medical Man.

Before Filby could finish telling a story about a magician he once saw, the Time Traveller returned. In his hands he carried a small shining object.

It was a delicate metal frame, about the size of a small clock. Parts of it were ivory, and parts were made of clear crystal. He placed a small table near the fire and set the object upon it. A shaded lamp lit the model brightly, while candles around the room made every detail easy to see.

We gathered close. No one wished to miss anything.

“This,” said the Time Traveller, resting his elbows on the table, “is only a model. It shows my plan for a machine that travels through time.”

The Medical Man bent forward. “It is beautifully made.”

“It took two years,” said the Time Traveller.

He pointed to two small levers. “This lever sends the machine into the future. This one sends it backward. The saddle is where the traveller sits.”

He looked at each of us carefully. “Examine it closely. I do not want anyone to think this is a trick.”

We studied both the machine and the empty table. Everything appeared ordinary.

After a moment he said, “I will not touch the lever myself. Psychologist, please lend me your hand.”

He guided the Psychologist's finger to the lever.

"Now press it."

The Psychologist hesitated, then pushed.

We all saw the lever move. A faint wind passed through the room, and the lamp flame shook. One candle went out. The small machine turned blurry, as if it were spinning too fast to see. For a second it looked like a shining ghost made of metal and light.

Then it vanished.

The table stood empty.

No one spoke. We stared in silence.

At last Filby whispered, "Well... I am amazed."

The Psychologist suddenly bent down and looked under the table. The Time Traveller laughed softly and walked to the fireplace to fill his pipe.

"Do you truly believe it travelled through time?" asked the Medical Man.

"Certainly," said the Time Traveller, lighting his pipe. "And I have built a full-sized machine in my laboratory. Soon I will travel myself."

"Into the future?" asked Filby.

"Into the future or the past," he answered. "I cannot yet say which."

The Psychologist thought carefully. "If it went anywhere," he said, "it must have gone into the past."

"Why?" asked the Time Traveller.

"If it went into the future, it would still be here, moving through this same time."

"But if it went into the past," I said, "we should have seen it earlier."

"Not necessarily," said the Time Traveller. "It may move too quickly for us to see."

The Psychologist nodded eagerly. "Yes. Like a spinning wheel or a flying bullet. If it moves through time much faster than we do, we cannot see it clearly."

He passed his hand through the empty air where the model had stood.

We looked again at the bare table, unsure what to believe.

"Would you like to see the real machine?" the Time Traveller asked at last.

Taking the lamp, he led us down a long cold corridor to his laboratory. There

we saw a larger version of the same device, built of metal, crystal, and ivory. Sheets of drawings lay beside it.

“On this machine,” he said quietly, holding the lamp high, “I will explore time itself.”

None of us knew how to answer. I caught Filby’s eye, and he gave me a doubtful smile.

## Part 2

At that time none of us truly believed the Time Traveller. He was too clever, and his ideas always seemed to hide another idea behind them. When a simpler man performed a trick, we trusted him more easily. But with the Time Traveller we always suspected some secret plan. Even those who respected him felt uncertain, as if trusting him too much might make them appear foolish. So during the week that followed, although we all thought about the strange model, none of us spoke openly about time travel.

I met the Medical Man the next day, and we discussed the vanished machine. He suggested it must have been a clever illusion. He spoke especially about the candle that had gone out when the model disappeared. Yet he could not explain how the trick worked.

The following Thursday I returned again to the Time Traveller’s house at Richmond. I arrived late and found several guests already gathered. The Medical Man stood near the fire, holding a sheet of paper and checking his watch.

“Half past seven,” he said. “I suppose we must begin dinner.”

“Where is our host?” I asked.

“Delayed,” he replied. “He left this note asking us to dine without him if he was not back. He promises to explain later.”

The Editor of a well-known newspaper said, “It would be a shame to let the dinner spoil,” and the servant was called.

Only the Psychologist, the Medical Man, and I had attended the earlier dinner. The others were new guests: the Editor, a Journalist, and a quiet bearded man who

hardly spoke at all. We speculated about the Time Traveller's absence. Half joking, I mentioned time travel, and the Psychologist described the vanished model. The new guests listened with open disbelief.

As he spoke, the door opened quietly behind us. I happened to face it and saw first what entered.

"At last!" I said.

The Time Traveller stood in the doorway.

A cry escaped me at once. The Medical Man turned and shouted, "Good heavens! What has happened to you?"

He looked terrible. His coat was torn and dirty, marked with green stains. His hair was disordered and seemed almost grey with dust. His face was pale and thin, and a half-healed cut marked his chin. He stood uncertainly, blinking in the light, as though exhausted beyond measure.

Slowly he walked toward the table, limping slightly. Without speaking he reached toward the wine. The Editor quickly filled a glass and handed it to him. He drank it at once, and some life returned to his face.

"What have you been doing?" asked the Doctor.

The Time Traveller did not answer at first. "Do not mind me," he said weakly. "I am all right."

He drank another glass. Color returned faintly to his cheeks. He looked around the warm room as if rediscovering comfort after a long hardship.

"I must wash and change," he said. "Then I will explain everything. Please save me some meat. I am starving."

He turned toward the stairs. As he walked away, I noticed he wore only torn, blood-stained socks on his feet. The door closed behind him.

For a moment we sat silent.

"Remarkable behavior," said the Editor thoughtfully, already forming a newspaper headline.

"What is the meaning of this?" asked the Journalist. "Some kind of adventure?"

I met the Psychologist's eyes. We both thought of the Time Machine.

Dinner resumed, though conversation remained uneasy. The Editor joked

loudly, and the Journalist laughed, but neither believed the story of time travel. They suggested he had invented an elaborate trick.

At last the Time Traveller returned. He now wore clean evening clothes, though his face still showed deep exhaustion.

The Editor laughed. "They say you have travelled into next week. Tell us what happens there!"

The Time Traveller sat down calmly. "Where is my meat?" he asked. "It is wonderful to eat again."

"First the story!" cried the Editor.

"No," said the Time Traveller firmly. "I will speak after I eat."

He began eating with great hunger, like a man who had gone long without food. The rest of us watched him closely.

I asked quietly, "Have you truly travelled through time?"

He nodded while chewing. "Yes."

The Editor declared he would pay for every word of the story. The Time Traveller ignored him and continued eating. The atmosphere remained tense. No one knew whether to laugh or believe.

At last he pushed away his plate and looked at us.

"I must apologize," he said. "I was starving. I have had an extraordinary experience." He lit a cigar and leaned back. "Come into the smoking room. The story is too long for the dinner table."

We followed him into the next room and sat around him. Only a small lamp lit his face, leaving the rest of us partly in shadow.

"You know about the machine?" he asked me, naming the new guests.

"They think it is only a paradox," said the Editor.

"I will not argue tonight," said the Time Traveller quietly. "I will simply tell you what happened. Most of it will sound impossible. Still, it is true. I began my experiment at four o'clock this afternoon. Since then I have lived eight days—days unlike any a human has known."

He paused and looked at us carefully. "No interruptions. I must tell it in my own way."

We all agreed.

He settled into his chair and began.

“Last Thursday I explained the principles of the machine,” he said. “The larger machine stood unfinished in my laboratory. On Friday I nearly completed it, but one metal bar was too short and had to be remade. This morning at last it was ready.

“At ten o’clock I sat upon the saddle. I held the starting lever in one hand and the stopping lever in the other. I felt the same strange wonder a man must feel before pulling a trigger at his own head. Then I pressed the lever.”

He took a breath before continuing.

“I felt a sudden dizziness, like falling in a nightmare. The laboratory remained around me. For a moment I thought nothing had happened. Then I looked at the clock. It had leapt forward hours in an instant.”

We leaned closer as he spoke.

“I pressed the lever further. The laboratory grew dim. A woman entered the room and crossed it like a flash of light. Night fell instantly, then day returned. Day and night followed each other faster and faster. The sun rushed across the sky. My ears filled with a strange rushing sound.”

His voice grew stronger as he remembered.

“The sensation was terrible. It felt like falling endlessly. Days passed like seconds. Buildings appeared and vanished. Trees grew and faded like mist. Snow flashed across the earth and melted again. I was moving through years each minute.”

He described the sky turning deep blue, the sun becoming a line of fire, and the world changing beneath him.

“At first I thought only of speed,” he said. “Then fear came. What would humanity become in the distant future? What strange world awaited me?”

He hesitated before continuing.

“There was danger in stopping. If I stopped inside solid matter, the result might destroy me completely. But my nerves failed. The motion shook me terribly. In impatience and fear, I pulled the stopping lever.”

He closed his eyes briefly.

“The machine overturned. I was thrown into the air. There was a sound like thunder. When I recovered, I sat on soft grass beside the fallen machine. A storm of hail fell around me.”

He described rising slowly and seeing a vast white statue shaped like a winged creature beyond bushes.

“The world was strange and silent,” he said softly. “I wondered what humanity had become. Had people grown cruel? Had they changed beyond recognition?”

The storm cleared, and sunlight revealed great buildings shining in the distance.

“I felt terribly alone,” he said. “Yet curiosity returned. Then I saw movement.”

He leaned forward slightly.

“Figures appeared—small human figures running toward me.”

The Time Traveller paused, and we waited breathlessly for what came next.

### Part 3

“One of them came toward me along a narrow path,” the Time Traveller continued. “He was a small being, no more than four feet tall, dressed in a soft purple garment tied at the waist. His legs were bare, and his feet were covered with light sandals. His head was uncovered, and I noticed at once how warm the air felt around us.”

The creature moved with grace, yet there was something fragile about him. His face was beautiful but delicate, almost too delicate, like that of a person weakened by long illness. When he reached me, he smiled openly and laughed with clear delight. There was no fear in him at all.

“That absence of fear surprised me deeply,” said the Time Traveller. “He spoke to the others behind him in a musical language I could not understand. Soon more of these people gathered around me, perhaps eight or ten in all. One stepped forward and addressed me.”

The Time Traveller shook his head slowly as he remembered. “I realized my voice must sound harsh to them, so I pointed to my ears and shook my head to

show I did not understand. One of them gently touched my hand. Others reached toward my shoulders and arms, feeling me carefully as if to make sure I was real.”

Their touch was soft and curious, never threatening. They behaved like friendly children examining a new toy. Although they surrounded him closely, the Time Traveller felt no danger. They appeared too weak to harm anyone.

“Then,” he said, “I suddenly remembered a risk. While they examined the Time Machine, I quickly removed the small control levers and placed them in my pocket. Without them, no one could move the machine.”

Turning back to the people, he studied their faces more carefully. Their hair curled neatly and ended sharply at the neck. None had facial hair. Their ears were small, their mouths narrow with red lips, and their chins delicate. Their large eyes were gentle but strangely lacking deep curiosity.

“They smiled and spoke among themselves,” he said. “But they made no real effort to communicate. So I began instead.”

He pointed to himself and then to the machine. Trying to explain time, he pointed toward the sun. At once a small figure followed his gesture and made a sound like thunder.

“That shocked me,” the Time Traveller admitted. “For he seemed to believe I had come from the sun during a storm. At that moment I realized something troubling. These people were not advanced beings as I had expected. Their understanding was like that of young children.”

Disappointment filled him. He had imagined a future humanity far wiser than his own age. Instead, he found innocence without depth.

Still, they welcomed him warmly. One placed a chain of strange flowers around his neck. Others laughed happily and covered him with blossoms until he was nearly hidden beneath them. Their joy was simple and sincere.

Soon they led him past the great white statue toward an enormous grey building. As he walked among them, he could not help laughing quietly at the difference between his expectations and reality.

The building was vast. A huge doorway opened into a hall filled with soft light. Inside stood long stone tables covered with piles of fruit. Cushions lay scattered

on the floor, and the people sat upon them casually.

“They invited me to sit,” he said. “Without ceremony they began eating fruit with their hands, throwing the remains into openings in the tables. I joined them gladly, for I was both hungry and thirsty.”

He looked around carefully while eating. The hall appeared rich yet strangely worn. Colored glass windows were broken, and dust lay thick upon hanging curtains. One marble table near him was cracked.

“The place showed signs of great age and neglect,” he explained. “Though beautiful, it was not cared for.”

Hundreds of the small people watched him while they ate. All wore similar soft clothing. There seemed to be no difference in rank or occupation among them.

Fruit formed their entire diet. No animals appeared anywhere. Later he learned that horses, cattle, dogs, and other creatures had long disappeared. The fruits themselves were pleasant and nourishing, and one kind became his favorite.

After eating, he attempted to learn their language. Holding up fruit, he made questioning sounds and gestures. At first they laughed endlessly at his attempts, but eventually one repeated a word, and others followed.

“Slowly,” he said, “I learned simple names and sounds. But they tired quickly of teaching me. They were gentle but lazy, easily distracted like children.”

He soon noticed another strange trait: their lack of lasting interest. They gathered eagerly around him at first, then wandered away moments later in search of amusement.

After the meal he left the building and walked into the evening sunlight. The world outside felt peaceful and silent. A wide valley stretched before him, filled with gardens and scattered palace-like structures.

He decided to climb a distant hill to gain a better view. As he walked, he searched for clues explaining the strange mixture of beauty and decay he saw everywhere. Ruined structures lay among flourishing plants. There were no small houses, no farms, no signs of work or industry.

“Communism,” he thought at the time, believing humanity had reached complete social equality.

Another realization followed. All the people looked nearly identical. Their clothing, bodies, and movements showed almost no difference between male and female.

“At first,” he explained, “I thought this was the natural result of perfect safety. Where danger disappears, strength and competition lose their purpose.”

He imagined that population had stabilized and families no longer needed strict roles. The differences between men and women had faded over long ages of peace.

Reaching the hilltop, he found a metal seat shaped with animal heads at its arms. Sitting there, he watched the sunset over the future Earth.

The river shone like silver below. Great buildings stood among endless gardens. No fences or fields divided the land. The entire world seemed one vast park.

As darkness fell, he formed a theory.

Humanity, he believed, had conquered nature completely. Disease, hunger, and war had vanished. Life had become safe and easy. Without struggle, strength and intelligence were no longer necessary. Over countless generations people had grown gentle, beautiful—and weak.

“Strength comes from need,” he told us. “Security rewards weakness. Humanity had reached perfect comfort, and energy had faded into play and pleasure.”

Art, beauty, and ease remained, but ambition and effort had disappeared. Even their buildings, he believed, were the last expressions of a once powerful race before it settled into peaceful decline.

He watched the quiet world beneath the rising moon and felt certain he understood it.

“I thought I had solved the mystery,” he said softly. “I believed I knew the destiny of mankind.”

He paused, his expression darkening.

“But I was terribly wrong.”

That night, as the moon rose higher, he decided to return to the place where he had left the Time Machine.

He walked down the hill toward the white statue. The lawn came into view,

pale under moonlight.

Then doubt struck him.

Something was wrong.

He looked again carefully.

The lawn was empty.

The Time Machine was gone.

“At that instant,” he said, his voice tightening, “fear seized me completely. The thought struck me like a blow. I might be trapped forever in that distant age.”

He ran down the slope in panic, falling once and cutting his face but rising immediately to continue. All the time he tried to convince himself the machine had only been moved nearby.

Yet deep inside he already knew the truth.

Reaching the lawn, he found nothing. No mark remained among the bushes. Above him the white statue seemed to smile coldly in the moonlight.

Despair overwhelmed him. He searched wildly, running through bushes until his hands bled. At last he rushed into the great building, shouting and waking the sleeping people, demanding to know where his machine was.

They stared at him in fear and confusion, unable to understand.

Realizing his anger frightened them, he fled again into the night, wandering among ruins and shadows. Exhausted and hopeless, he finally collapsed near the statue and fell asleep in misery.

When morning came, birds hopped nearby, and sunlight returned.

Slowly memory returned to him—and with it the terrible truth that he was alone, lost in the far future, without his only means of returning home.

#### Part 4

“When I woke,” the Time Traveller continued, “the sunlight was bright, and the fear of the night seemed less powerful. Morning has a way of making even the worst troubles appear manageable. For a moment I lay still, listening to birds and watching the clear sky. Then memory returned fully, and I remembered the loss

of the Time Machine.”

He sat up slowly, forcing himself to think calmly.

“I told myself that panic would help nothing. The machine could not have moved through time without the control levers, which were still in my pocket. Therefore it must have been moved only through space. Someone—or something—had taken it.”

This thought gave him a small measure of hope. If it had been moved, then it must still exist nearby.

He stood and examined the lawn carefully. The grass showed marks where the heavy machine had stood, but no clear tracks revealed where it had gone. The surrounding bushes were undisturbed. The mystery deepened.

Soon several of the small people approached him again. They greeted him with smiles and soft voices, showing no understanding of his distress. Their calm happiness irritated him, yet he controlled himself and tried to question them using gestures and the few words he had learned.

He pointed to the empty space and imitated pushing and pulling motions. They laughed gently, thinking it a game. None seemed to grasp his meaning.

“Their minds,” he said, “appeared incapable of sustained attention. They could not understand danger or urgency. I realized that fear itself was almost unknown to them.”

The discovery troubled him deeply. Without fear, how could a species protect itself? Without struggle, how could intelligence survive?

Determined to investigate, he returned toward the great building. As he walked, he noticed again the strange beauty of the world. Flowers grew everywhere without order yet without weeds. The air felt warm and pleasant. Butterflies drifted slowly through the sunlight.

Yet something felt wrong beneath this peaceful surface.

Near the hill he noticed several round structures like wells covered by low roofs. Curious, he approached one. Peering inside, he saw darkness descending far below, and from its depth came a faint movement of air.

“A cold breath rose from it,” he said. “It suggested great depths beneath the

earth.”

He felt uneasy and stepped back.

Throughout the day he wandered across the landscape, observing carefully. The small people followed him for short distances, then wandered away laughing. They showed no sign of work. No tools, no machines, no signs of labor appeared anywhere.

Their lives seemed entirely devoted to play, eating fruit, and resting.

By evening he had formed a stronger theory. Humanity, he believed, had divided labor long ago until machines did all work. Over time, comfort removed every hardship. Intelligence and strength, no longer needed, slowly faded.

“They were the children of humanity,” he said. “The final result of perfect safety.”

Yet one question remained unanswered: who had taken the Time Machine?

That night he stayed near the great building, determined not to lose sight of the area again. The moon rose once more, lighting the gardens with pale silver light. The small people slept peacefully in groups upon cushions inside the hall.

Unable to rest, he walked outside again. The world seemed strangely silent. Even the wind barely moved.

Then he noticed something new.

From one of the well-like openings came a faint metallic sound. It was soft, almost hidden beneath the quiet of the night, yet unmistakable.

He approached cautiously.

A cool air flowed upward, carrying a smell unlike the sweet scents of the gardens. It was heavy and unpleasant, suggesting damp stone and darkness.

He leaned closer and listened.

For an instant he thought he saw movement far below, something pale shifting in the darkness. Startled, he stepped back quickly.

“At that moment,” he said, “a new fear entered my mind. Perhaps another race lived beneath the earth.”

The idea disturbed his earlier theory of a peaceful paradise. If the gentle surface people were weak, perhaps stronger beings existed elsewhere.

He returned to the hall and tried to sleep among the others. Their calm breathing and childlike faces contrasted sharply with his growing anxiety.

Morning came again. Determined to learn more, he began studying the wells carefully during daylight. The small people avoided them. Whenever he approached one, they showed signs of discomfort and tried to draw him away.

Their reaction confirmed his suspicion.

Something lived below.

Later that day he noticed another important detail. Many of the large buildings were partly ruined yet never repaired. Metal objects showed signs of long neglect. Though food was abundant, technology seemed forgotten.

“It was as if humanity lived among the remains of a greater past,” he said.

He wondered whether the ancestors of these gentle people had built the great structures long ago, before knowledge faded.

As evening approached, he returned once more to the lawn near the White Sphinx. Standing before the great statue, he studied its bronze base carefully. The metal door set into it now caught his attention.

It was closed.

He examined it closely and discovered no handle outside.

“A thought struck me suddenly,” he said. “What if my machine was hidden inside the pedestal?”

Excitement replaced despair. He struck the metal surface and listened. The sound echoed hollowly.

Certain now that the interior contained space, he tried to open the door. It would not move. No amount of pushing or pulling changed it.

The small people watched him curiously from a distance but made no attempt to help.

Frustration grew. If the machine lay inside, he had no way to reach it.

He resolved to wait and observe. Someone must open the door eventually.

As darkness fell again, unease returned. The peaceful world now seemed filled with hidden danger. He realized he must learn more about both the surface people and whatever lived underground.

Sitting near the silent statue under the rising moon, he felt the first true doubt about his earlier conclusions.

“The future,” he told us quietly, “was not a paradise. It was a mystery—and perhaps a trap.”

## Part 5

“I decided,” the Time Traveller continued, “that I must learn patience. Panic had already cost me one terrible night. If my machine truly lay inside the bronze pedestal beneath the White Sphinx, then whoever had placed it there must eventually return. I resolved to watch and wait.”

He remained near the statue through much of the following day. The small people wandered nearby, laughing and playing among the flowers, but none paid serious attention to the pedestal. They seemed unaware of its importance. When he questioned them using gestures, they only smiled and touched the stone surface lightly, as though it were an ordinary object.

“Their lack of curiosity troubled me more each hour,” he said. “They accepted everything without question. It was as if the habit of inquiry had vanished from humanity.”

As the sun moved across the sky, he explored the surrounding area carefully. He noticed again the round well-shafts scattered across the landscape. Now that suspicion had entered his mind, he watched them closely. Several times he felt faint currents of air rising from their depths, sometimes warm, sometimes cold.

At one opening he dropped a small stone. It fell for a long time before striking far below with a distant sound.

“Whatever lay beneath the earth,” he said, “was deep and extensive.”

The gentle people avoided these shafts. When he approached one too closely, they became uneasy and tried to guide him away, smiling nervously yet clearly distressed.

That evening he returned again to the great hall for food. Fruits lay piled as before, and the people gathered around him cheerfully. He continued learning

their language slowly. He learned simple names and sounds, though abstract ideas remained impossible to express.

One young woman among them showed particular kindness. She was small even among her people, with light hair and wide trusting eyes. She followed him often and seemed eager to help him learn words.

“Her name,” he said softly, “was Weena.”

She laughed easily and watched him with gentle curiosity. Though she understood little, she showed sympathy when he appeared troubled.

After eating, he walked again beneath the evening sky. The beauty of the world remained undeniable. Warm air carried sweet scents, and the gardens glowed under the setting sun. Yet beneath the beauty he now sensed danger.

As darkness approached, he determined to remain awake and watch the sphinx through the night.

The moon rose slowly. Shadows deepened among the bushes. The small people withdrew indoors, leaving the landscape quiet.

For a long time nothing happened.

Then, far away, he heard a faint rustling sound. It came from the direction of one of the wells. The sound resembled movement—soft, cautious movement.

He held his breath.

A shape emerged briefly from the darkness near the shaft. It moved quickly and vanished again before he could see clearly.

“I cannot describe the fear I felt,” he told us. “It was not like the fear of a known danger. It was the fear of something unknown watching from the dark.”

He waited, straining his eyes, but saw nothing more.

Later that night clouds passed over the moon, and darkness thickened. The silence pressed heavily upon him. At last exhaustion forced him to return to the hall, where he slept uneasily among the others.

The next morning he examined the ground near the well. He discovered faint marks in the soil—tracks unlike those of the small surface people. The impressions suggested narrow feet and dragging movements.

This discovery strengthened his suspicion that another race existed

underground.

“Gradually,” he said, “a terrible idea formed. Perhaps humanity had divided into two species.”

He imagined that long ago society separated into those who lived above and those who worked below the earth. Over countless generations, the division might have become permanent.

The gentle people above had grown weak through comfort. The workers below might have adapted to darkness and labor.

That day he spent more time with Weena. She followed him faithfully and showed delight in small things—a flower, a shining insect, the play of sunlight through leaves. Her innocence moved him deeply.

While walking near a riverbank, she slipped into the water. The current carried her away quickly. Without hesitation he jumped in and pulled her to safety.

The effort exhausted him, but Weena clung to him gratefully afterward, refusing to leave his side.

“From that moment,” he said, “she trusted me completely.”

Her companionship eased his loneliness in that strange age.

As evening approached again, he returned to the sphinx with renewed determination. If the underground beings existed, they must come out at night. He prepared himself to observe carefully.

Darkness fell. The moon rose once more.

Hours passed.

Then he heard it again—the soft movement near the pedestal.

This time he saw clearly.

A pale figure crept from behind the sphinx and moved toward one of the wells. Its skin appeared white and almost colorless in the moonlight. Its large eyes reflected faint light as it turned its head.

The creature moved quickly and silently before disappearing into the shaft.

The Time Traveller’s voice lowered.

“At last,” he said, “I had seen one of the beings who lived beneath the earth.”

Fear mixed with understanding. His earlier vision of a peaceful future collapsed

completely.

Humanity had not become one gentle race.

It had split into two.

Sitting beneath the silent gaze of the White Sphinx, he realized that the mystery of the future—and the fate of his Time Machine—was tied to those pale creatures of the darkness.

## Part 6

“After that night,” the Time Traveller continued, “my thoughts changed completely. I could no longer believe that the future world was a simple paradise. The gentle people above and the pale creatures below must be connected in some deeper and darker way.”

He spent the next day observing both the surface people and the strange wells more carefully. The small people, whom he later called the Eloi, lived without worry. They played, ate fruit, slept, and laughed. None showed curiosity about the past or concern for the future.

“They possessed beauty,” he said, “but not strength. They possessed kindness, but not courage.”

Weena stayed close to him constantly. She followed wherever he went, holding his hand at times like a child seeking protection. Though communication remained limited, her affection was clear.

While walking together, he noticed again how the Eloi avoided shaded places and dark openings. Even in daylight they seemed uneasy near deep shadows.

“Their fear of darkness,” he explained, “suggested long experience with danger that came only at night.”

Determined to learn more, he approached one of the wells during the afternoon when sunlight reached its edge. He lay flat and peered downward. Far below he glimpsed moving shapes and faint reflections of metal surfaces.

A cool wind rose from the shaft, carrying a smell of oil and machinery.

“That smell astonished me,” he said. “For it meant that machines still operated

somewhere beneath the earth.”

This discovery contradicted his earlier belief that technology had vanished entirely. Someone maintained the ancient mechanisms of civilization.

That evening he attempted again to open the bronze door in the pedestal of the White Sphinx. He pushed, pulled, and searched for hidden openings, but nothing moved. The door remained sealed.

Frustration grew stronger. If the underground creatures controlled the machinery of the world, they might also control access to his Time Machine.

As sunset approached, Weena grew restless. She tugged at his arm, urging him to return to the great building before darkness fell. Her fear became clear when shadows lengthened.

“I began to understand,” he said quietly, “that night belonged to the creatures below.”

Reluctantly he followed her indoors. Groups of Eloi gathered together closely as evening deepened, speaking in low voices. Their cheerful energy faded. Many lay down early to sleep, as if hoping to pass the dangerous hours quickly.

The Time Traveller resolved not to sleep. He wished to witness the night fully. When darkness settled, he slipped quietly outside.

The moon had not yet risen. The world lay in deep shadow. For a time nothing stirred. Then faint sounds came from several wells at once—metallic noises, soft scraping, and distant echoes.

Slowly pale figures emerged.

He saw several of the creatures moving across the lawn. Their bodies were thin and white, almost without color. Their large eyes reflected faint light. They moved with quick, silent motions, keeping close to darkness.

“They were human,” he said, “yet horribly changed.”

The creatures avoided open moonlight but moved confidently through shadows. One approached the great building and disappeared through a dark entrance.

The Time Traveller felt a cold fear. He realized that while the Eloi slept helplessly, these underground beings walked freely above ground.

He followed one at a distance until it vanished again into a well shaft. Gathering

courage, he approached the opening and listened.

From below came the steady rhythm of machinery—pulsing, turning, alive.

“The world above rested,” he said, “but the world below worked.”

Gradually his theory formed. Long ago, humanity had divided into two classes: the wealthy who lived in comfort above, and the workers who labored underground. Over vast ages, adaptation changed both groups physically and mentally.

The descendants of the wealthy became the Eloi—beautiful but weak.

The descendants of workers became the underground beings, whom he later named the Morlocks—strong in darkness, adapted to machines.

Yet one question remained unanswered: why did the Eloi fear the night so deeply?

The answer came soon after.

A sudden cry echoed from the building behind him—a short, terrified scream.

The Time Traveller ran toward the sound. Inside, shadows moved rapidly. Panic spread among the Eloi as small figures rushed in confusion.

He glimpsed a pale shape retreating into darkness.

Then silence returned.

The Eloi gathered together trembling, refusing to leave the lighted areas. None could explain what had happened, but their fear was unmistakable.

“In that moment,” he said slowly, “I understood the truth.”

The Morlocks were not merely workers maintaining machines.

They were hunters.

The Eloi were not masters of the world.

They were its cattle.

The realization filled him with horror. Humanity’s long struggle had ended not in harmony but in division—one race living in comfort, the other surviving through labor and darkness, feeding upon the first.

From that night onward he remained constantly alert. He carried Weena with him whenever possible, determined to protect her from the creatures of the underground.

Yet another problem pressed upon his mind more urgently than ever.

If the Morlocks controlled the underground passages, then they almost certainly possessed the Time Machine.

And if that was true, retrieving it would require entering their world below the earth.

## Part 7

“Once I understood the danger,” the Time Traveller said, “I knew I could not remain passive. If the Morlocks possessed my Time Machine, then sooner or later I must face them beneath the earth. Yet the thought filled me with dread.”

During the following day he tried to strengthen himself both in body and mind. He walked long distances, studying the land more carefully than before. The peaceful beauty of the gardens now appeared deceptive. Everywhere he noticed signs of neglect—broken statues, worn surfaces, structures slowly falling into ruin.

“The world,” he explained, “was living upon the remains of an older greatness.”

Weena remained constantly at his side. She watched him with concern whenever he seemed troubled and often brought him flowers as gifts. Though her understanding was limited, her affection comforted him.

He began planning how to recover his machine. The bronze doors of the White Sphinx could not be forced open from outside. Therefore he needed tools or weapons. Yet nowhere among the Eloi could he find anything resembling tools. They possessed no metal objects, no machinery, no signs of craft or labor.

At last he decided to explore a distant structure he had noticed earlier—a large ruin made of pale stone lying several miles away. Its broken walls suggested great age, yet parts still stood intact.

He hoped to find something useful there.

Taking Weena with him, he set out across the landscape. The journey took much of the day. Along the way he observed more wells and deep shafts, each guarded by the same uneasy silence. Whenever they passed near one, Weena clung tightly to him.

By afternoon they reached the ruin. It resembled a vast museum or palace, its roof partly collapsed and its windows broken. Plants grew through cracks in the stone, and birds nested inside.

“I later called it the Palace of Green Porcelain,” he said, “because of the strange green material used in parts of its construction.”

Inside, dust lay thick upon the floors. Long galleries stretched into darkness. Many objects had decayed beyond recognition, but fragments of the ancient world remained—broken machines, metal frames, and strange devices whose purposes he could only guess.

Exploring carefully, he searched for anything that might serve as a weapon.

At last he found a collection of wooden poles and metal bars. Most were fragile with age, but one heavy iron lever remained strong enough to use. Nearby he discovered small boxes that contained matches—dry and still usable after countless years.

“The matches,” he said, “proved more valuable than any weapon.”

Fire, he realized, might frighten the Morlocks, creatures adapted to darkness.

He also found pieces of cloth, which he tied together to form a bundle. Weena watched his work with interest, occasionally helping by carrying small items.

As evening approached, he decided to return before nightfall. The journey back proved difficult. Weena grew tired quickly, and he carried her part of the way.

Darkness fell faster than he expected. Shadows thickened among the trees, and distant rustling sounds began to rise from the earth.

Soon he sensed movement around them.

Pale shapes appeared between the trunks of trees—Morlocks watching silently.

Fear surged through him, but he struck a match and held the flame high. The sudden light caused the creatures to retreat at once.

Encouraged, he lit a small torch using the cloth bundle. Firelight pushed back the darkness, and the Morlocks kept their distance, circling cautiously beyond the glow.

“They feared fire deeply,” he said. “It was my only protection.”

The forest through which they passed became dense and confusing. Strange

plants blocked their path, and the ground rose and fell unevenly. Several times he heard the Morlocks approaching closely, only to withdraw when he waved the burning torch.

At last exhaustion overcame Weena. She fell asleep in his arms while he struggled forward through the dark woods.

The night grew colder. Wind moved through the branches, and sparks from the torch drifted into dry leaves.

Suddenly flames began spreading across the forest floor.

At first he did not notice. Then smoke filled the air, and fire raced rapidly among the trees.

“The forest burned with terrifying speed,” he said. “The dry vegetation ignited everywhere at once.”

The Morlocks shrieked in panic as fire surrounded them. Their pale forms ran wildly through the smoke. The Time Traveller himself barely escaped, carrying Weena away from the advancing flames.

Heat and confusion overwhelmed him. The roaring fire lit the sky red, and burning branches fell around him. At last, exhausted, he collapsed upon open ground beyond the forest.

When morning came, the fire had died. Ash covered the land, and silence returned.

He woke weak and disoriented.

At once he realized something terrible.

Weena was gone.

He searched desperately among the burned remains, calling her name, but found no sign of her. Whether she had been lost in the chaos or taken by the Morlocks, he could not discover.

“Her loss,” he said quietly, “was the saddest moment of my journey.”

Grief weighed heavily upon him, yet he forced himself onward. The destruction of the forest had revealed clearer paths across the land. With renewed determination he returned toward the White Sphinx.

By afternoon he reached the statue again.

This time he noticed something different.

The bronze doors stood slightly open.

A dark gap revealed the interior beyond.

“At last,” he said, leaning forward as he spoke, “the Morlocks had opened the way to my Time Machine.”

## Part 8

“When I saw the doors open,” the Time Traveller said, “I knew at once that it was a trap. The Morlocks had never shown themselves openly before. Now the entrance stood invitingly wide, as though waiting for me. Still, I had no choice. My Time Machine lay inside, and without it I was lost forever.”

He approached slowly, gripping the iron bar in one hand and a bundle of matches in the other. The great bronze doors were heavy and green with age, their surfaces worn by countless years. Beyond them stretched darkness broken only by faint reflections from metal surfaces within.

He paused at the threshold, listening.

No sound came from inside.

“The silence was worse than noise,” he said. “It felt deliberate.”

Gathering his courage, he stepped forward.

Inside the pedestal lay a large chamber built of smooth stone and metal. The air felt cool and dry. Faint shafts of daylight entered through narrow openings high above, revealing shapes scattered across the floor.

And there, at the center of the chamber, stood the Time Machine.

It appeared untouched, though slightly shifted from its original position. Relief flooded through him at the sight.

Yet something was wrong.

The machine faced inward, positioned carefully as if arranged. Around the walls he glimpsed dark openings leading deeper underground.

“They expected me,” he realized.

He moved cautiously toward the machine, watching every shadow. The

chamber remained still. Step by step he advanced until he reached the saddle.

Quickly he replaced the control levers from his pocket into their proper positions. His hands trembled slightly as he worked.

Just as he finished, he heard movement.

Pale figures emerged silently from the openings around the chamber. Dozens of Morlocks crept forward, their large eyes fixed upon him. They moved without sound, surrounding him gradually.

Fear surged through him, but he struck a match at once. The sudden flame caused several creatures to recoil. He waved the fire toward them, shouting loudly.

“The light held them back,” he said. “But only for a moment.”

The Morlocks began circling closer, testing his defense. Some advanced from behind, forcing him to climb quickly onto the machine’s saddle.

With shaking hands he prepared to start the mechanism.

One creature leapt forward, grasping at the machine. Others followed, their pale hands reaching toward him. He lit another match and thrust it downward, driving them back briefly.

Knowing he could not delay, he seized the starting lever.

“I remember thinking only one thing,” he told us. “Forward—anywhere, so long as I escaped.”

He pulled the lever.

Instantly the chamber blurred. The Morlocks froze like statues as time accelerated. Darkness and light began flickering rapidly. The underground chamber dissolved into motion, then vanished entirely.

He felt again the dreadful sensation of falling through time. The world raced past him faster than before. Buildings rose and collapsed in moments. The sun swept across the sky in blazing arcs.

Years passed like seconds.

He continued far into the future, driven partly by fear and partly by curiosity. The earth changed steadily beneath him. Vegetation grew strange and enormous. The sky deepened in color.

Eventually he slowed the machine.

The motion eased. Day and night separated again.

He stopped.

The world he entered was silent beyond imagination.

A red sun hung low in the sky, larger and dimmer than before. The air felt cold. Strange plants clung to the ground, and the sea stretched nearby, slow and heavy beneath a darkening sky.

No sign of humanity remained.

“I had travelled to the end of life upon Earth,” he said softly.

Along the shore he saw crab-like creatures moving slowly across the sand. The waves rolled sluggishly, as though the planet itself had grown tired. Above him the sky held few stars.

He watched as darkness advanced and the temperature fell further. Fear touched him again—not of creatures now, but of loneliness and final extinction.

“The future was not progress without end,” he said. “It was decline.”

Unwilling to remain in that dying age, he started the machine once more and travelled backward through time. The red sun shrank, the sky brightened, and familiar forms returned gradually.

At last he stopped again—this time in his own laboratory.

The room appeared exactly as he had left it.

The machine stood worn and damaged, one bar cracked and a rail bent from his violent escape. Outside, evening light shone through the windows.

He climbed down slowly, exhausted beyond words.

“From my point of view,” he said, “eight days had passed. For you, only a few hours.”

He looked around at us quietly.

“That,” he concluded, “is how I returned.”

## Part 9

The Time Traveller paused after these words and looked slowly around the room. For a moment none of us spoke. The fire burned quietly, and the small lamp

cast steady light upon his tired face. His clothes were clean now, yet the marks of strain remained in his eyes.

“You must understand,” he continued gently, “that I tell this exactly as it happened. I know how strange it sounds. Yet every moment of it is real to me.”

The Editor shifted in his chair and laughed uneasily. “It is an excellent story,” he said. “Very imaginative.”

The Time Traveller did not argue. He simply smiled faintly and lit another cigar.

“You do not believe me,” he said calmly. “That is natural.”

The Medical Man leaned forward. “Your machine,” he asked, “is it still in the laboratory?”

“Yes,” replied the Time Traveller. “You may see it whenever you wish.”

We sat silently for a while. Each of us seemed uncertain how to respond. The tale had been told with such detail and seriousness that laughter felt inappropriate, yet belief seemed equally difficult.

At last the Editor stood. “Well,” he said, forcing cheerfulness into his voice, “whether true or not, it has been a most entertaining evening.”

One by one the guests prepared to leave. The Journalist whispered jokes to hide his discomfort. The Silent Man said nothing at all. The Psychologist appeared thoughtful but unconvinced.

As we moved toward the door, the Time Traveller spoke again.

“If you return tomorrow morning,” he said to me, “I will show you further proof.”

I agreed, though I was uncertain what I expected to find.

That night I walked home deeply troubled. The story remained vivid in my mind—the strange people, the underground creatures, the dying Earth beneath a red sun. Yet reason insisted that such things could not be true.

The next morning I returned earlier than planned.

A servant answered the door and told me the Time Traveller was in his laboratory. I went there at once.

The machine stood exactly where he had described it. It showed clear signs of damage: a cracked ivory bar and a bent metal rail. Dust and scratches covered

parts of its surface as though it had endured great hardship.

The Time Traveller himself stood beside it, preparing equipment for another journey. He looked excited and impatient, very different from the exhausted man of the previous night.

“You came,” he said happily. “Good. I intend to travel again.”

“Again?” I asked in surprise.

“Yes,” he replied. “There is much more to learn. I wish to return with better preparation.”

On a nearby table lay a small camera, notebooks, and several instruments. He also packed food carefully into a bag.

“Will you not rest first?” I asked.

He shook his head. “Rest can wait. Opportunity cannot.”

His confidence made me uneasy. The dangers he had described seemed too great to risk again.

“At least allow someone to accompany you,” I suggested.

He smiled. “No. The risk must be mine alone.”

He climbed onto the saddle and checked the levers carefully. Sunlight entered the laboratory windows, shining upon the polished metal of the machine.

For a moment he hesitated, looking back at me.

“If I do not return,” he said lightly, “remember what I told you.”

Before I could reply, he pulled the lever.

The machine trembled, grew faint before my eyes, and vanished exactly as the small model had done days before.

I stood alone in the silent laboratory.

Minutes passed. Then hours.

He did not return.

I waited until evening, hoping to hear his footsteps or see the machine reappear. Nothing happened. At last I left the house, uncertain whether I had witnessed genius or madness.

Days passed, and still the Time Traveller did not come back.

The machine never returned either.

Yet sometimes, when I remember his worn face and quiet certainty, I wonder whether he continues his journey somewhere beyond our reach—travelling endlessly through the vast ages of time.