

The Future Sucks

Written by  
Savannah Morgan

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[madawriter@gmail.com](mailto:madawriter@gmail.com)

[www.madasawriter.com](http://www.madasawriter.com)

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Three people cluster uncomfortably close together in an overgrown field at the edge of a forest. This is nature at its rawest, with no trace of human civilisation.

JAX - as identified by the badge on her TIME TOURS TECH uniform - has her back to the view, her overdone makeup and fiery hair more suited to a nightclub than the open air.

Her clothes are solid black apart from the Fear Sphere logo. She has strange gloves sporting reflective green wires, like veins. She holds a round gelatinous glob in one hand. The glob has two glowing eyes.

She drones through a rote speech to the group in front of her. No one pays her much attention. They're too busy staring into the woods, searching for movement.

JAX

Welcome Timers to the first stop  
in the Time Tours Fear Sphere.  
Keep an eye out, we're in -

ARISTO, an angst-ridden teen, closes his eyes and flicks his fingers as if flipping through a virtual screen. He interrupts.

ARISTO

There's no signal.

JAX

Wow. Maybe that's because this  
is the Cretaceous Period. 130  
million years in the - SIMON!

Aristo doesn't take his eyes off the forest.

JAX (cont'd)

We're in Eotyrannus territory.

SIMON - Aristo's brother, 13 going on 5 and hyper as a caged puppy - is on his knees in the grass with his hands and face mashed against an invisible shield.

Simon licks it.

The air around the group ripples, as if they're trapped inside a giant bubble. Which indeed they are.

JAX (cont'd)

Don't LICK the time sphere!

Simon grins and licks it again. Jax grabs the back of his shirt, but Aristo turns and holds up his hand.

ARISTO

The nuns say "Reason is a more lasting teacher than anger."

SIMON

But then Sister Freya still hit me with a ruler.

Jax leans down and says into Simon's ear:

JAX

If you lick the shield - POP!

Everyone jumps.

JAX (cont'd)

The moisture will make it short, and we'll be dino food.

A disembodied voice SNORTS.

BOOT

Bullshit.

Meet BOOT, the Scottish, foul-mouthed brain of the ship. His voice emanates from the glob in Jax's hand.

Both boys turn to look at Melvin. He shrugs. Wasn't him. Jax holds up the glob.

JAX

Timers, meet Boot. The brain of the time sphere.

BOOT

Brain? I'm the asshole too.

The boys giggle.

JAX

Boot! Children.

BOOT

Gee, I hadn't noticed the little fu -

JAX

Engage family mode!

The glob turns angry red. Every time he tries to cuss, a spark shoots across the glob.

BOOT

Family mode? For fu - ow! f-Fungus sake Jax! This job sucks ba - butternuts!

Aristo ignores them, his attention on the forest once again. He spots something.

ARISTO

It's coming!

A shadow falls over the group. Crocodilian GROWLING is heard. The guests recoil and Melvin SHRIEKS - but it's short-lived.

Everyone straightens and stares, their eyeline on something only man-sized, if that.

ARISTO (cont'd)

I thought it would be bigger.

BOOT

That's what she said.

A SCUFFLE. GRUNTING. The dino's dying prey SCREAMS. BLOOD SPLATTERS all down the sphere right in front of Simon's face. He's thrilled.

SIMON

That was baric!

Futuristic slang for "awesome," spoken with the same enthusiasm.

Melvin covers his mouth and struggles not to vomit.

Opening title rolls: The Future Sucks!

INT. TIME TOURS LANDING ROOM - LATER

The Time Tours landing room tries (and fails) to hide its lack of budget with "mood lighting", aka darkness.

The Fear Sphere sits in the middle of a circular landing pad illuminated by rope lights.

There's a T-shirt on display with the Time Sphere, the Eotyrannus, Jack the Ripper, and the slogan: Time Tours Fear Sphere - You'll never want to come back.

The two boys watch Jax from inside the sphere. She's on the outside, aiming her glove at the blood. She flicks A finger but nothing happens. She flicks again.

JAX

Boot! Where are my nanocleaners?

BOOT

Have you checked up your - ahhh

She spots a dirty mop bucket and a squeegee.

JAX  
Fine. I'll do it myself.

BOOT  
You wouldn't!

She would. She slops the dirty water on the shield.

BOOT (cont'd)  
You c - c - c - aahhhh

Simon watches from inside the Sphere.

SIMON  
Can we go to the Titanic?

JAX  
No.

SIMON  
Why?

JAX  
Budget cuts.

SIMON  
Do you have a soulmate yet?

JAX  
No.

SIMON  
Can I be your soulmate?

JAX  
If the SoulMeter goes off.

SIMON  
Spicy!

He winks at her in what he hopes is a sexy way.

BOOT  
There's a sight to make you burn  
out your eyes.

Her BOSS approaches - mid 50s, sleazy car salesman type.  
He gestures her over. She leaves the squeegee.

BOSS  
Jaxy, baby, little change in  
plans for the orphans. The  
Ripper's offline.

JAX  
Offline? I thought Jarvis fixed  
it?

The Boss looks uncomfortable. Whatever happened to Jarvis, it's not good.

BOSS  
Ripper Shmitter. I've got something so much better. The Birmingham Basher.

JAX  
The who?

BOSS  
Birmingham Basher.  
(off her look)  
Big guy. 21st century. Wields a club. It's gonna be great.

JAX  
What about Vlad the Impaler? Or Spartacus?

BOSS  
When you got the ingots to outbid Intergalactica for Spartacus, you let me know. Until then? Bash on.

He laughs at his own pun. She doesn't.

BOSS (cont'd)  
Wormhole opens in ten minutes.

JAX  
Ten?!

BOSS  
Love that enthusiasm!

Jax races back to the Sphere.

JAX  
Boot. We shimmer in 10.

BOOT  
You want a rainbow-farting unicorn with that?

JAX  
Boys! Last chance for a bathroom break 'til the 21st century.

INT. CONNOR'S APARTMENT

The sphere materializes in the middle of a messy livingroom in a typical English house. It pulses. Jax has her gloves raised, trying to stabilise it.

The occupants sway against each other.

JAX

Sorry for the rough landing. New wormhole. Has a few kinks.

ARISTO

Where are we?

She closes her eyes, reading the brief in her mind.

INT. JAX'S MIND COMPUTER

Jax's mind computer is a black void filled with the words of the brief. A few apps sit at the bottom, including a heart with a 0 next to it.

INT. CONNOR'S APARTMENT

Jax reads her brief, eyes still shut.

JAX

Welcome Timers to Birmingham, in what was then the United Kingdom. The year is 2020. Any minute now, a man named Connor will make a meal in a "microwave". Little does he know, it will be his last. He's about to become the 10th victim of the infamous - Birmingham Basher.

Simon looks at Aristo. Who's that? Aristo shrugs. Beats me.

The front door opens slowly. In walks the BASHER - a terrifying guy dressed in a mask, wielding a wooden bat with nails in it. It clicks on the floor as he walks.

He walks slowly past the sphere. They all lean away.

JAX (cont'd)

Boot! What's this tour rated?

BOOT

It's unrated. We are the first to see it.

JAX

I'm gonna kill him!

A toilet flushes and a door SQUEAKS open. The BASHER disappears behind a curtain.

CONNOR enters, 20s, fit, shirtless. He walks right by the curtain. Everyone's dead silent. Even Simon is still. He nears the sphere.

A chirpy little noise goes off from Jax's glove. They JUMP. A classic love song starts to play.

SIMON

Is that your Soulmate Meter?! I knew it! I knew it was...

Simon follows Jax's gaze. She stares at Connor, transfixed.

SIMON (cont'd)

(crushed)

Him.

Connor locks eyes with Jax and approaches, stopping an inch away. The music increases as he nears.

ARISTO

I thought we were invisible!

Jax raises her hand to the shield.

He raises his hand to meet hers, eyes still locked... and he adjusts his hair.

Jax looks behind her. Oh. A mirror.

She flicks her glove.

INT. JAX'S MIND COMPUTER

The heart in the void pulses and opens. It reads: Match confirmed! Compatibility: 99.9494%. Name: Connor Barton. The photo was clearly the man in front of her. Status: alive.

The alive flickers to deceased. Then alive. Then deceased.

INT. CONNOR'S APARTMENT

The sphere shimmers and the boys and Jax nearly lose their balance.

BOOT

Jax, the wormhole is unstable!

Connor puts a pizza in the microwave and starts it. The Basher approaches from behind.

SIMON  
No! Behind you!

ARISTO  
Look out!

The love song plays merrily away.

Basher SWINGS - and Connor sees the reflection of the club and ducks out of the way.

CONNOR  
Who the fuck are you?!

Basher raises the club again. The sphere rolls wildly.

BOOT  
Jax! It's trying to close -  
permanently! We need to leave!

Basher swings again, nearly getting Connor. Their fight continues in the background as:

Jax turns her back to the fight, defeated.

JAX  
Take us back to the future.

SIMON  
No! The future sucks!

Simon puts his hands on the shield and licks it. And again.

Aristo sees what he's doing and dives next to him, licking it too.

JAX  
What are you doing?

SIMON  
(muffled)  
Thaving your thoul mate.

Jax is touched, but hopeless.

JAX  
Boys, not even Boot can disable the shield. That thing about saliva shorting it? I made it up.

BOOT  
Well, actually...

JAX  
What? You said that was  
bullshit!

BOOT  
I hate admitting weakness!

Connor's bleeding and wheezing. It won't be long now.

Jax jumps down next to the boys and licks furiously. The shield flashes. Darkness flashes too. Like a slow strobe light. They're there, and then not.

Jax bursts into tears, leaning her head on the shield. Connor's on his back in the middle of the living room. Basher has the bat poised in the air, ready for the final swing.

JAX  
It's not working! Boot, get us  
out of here!

The world goes black. And comes into focus again to reveal the kids, Jax, and Boot still in the middle of the living room.

SIMON  
Did it work? Are we really here?

Aristo pinches him.

SIMON (cont'd)  
Ow!

ARISTO  
Can't tell.

Basher spins around and advances on them.

JAX  
I'm going to go with yes! RUN!

The boys scatter. Basher goes after her.

JAX (cont'd)  
Boot! A little help!

BOOT  
What do you want me to do,  
lecture him to death?

Jax has an idea.

JAX  
Something like that!

She jumps on the Basher's back and hangs on, plastering Boot to the back of his head.

JAX (cont'd)  
Swear like our lives depend on it!

BOOT  
Shit.

The spark from his swearing hits Basher in the face.

BOOT (cont'd)  
You brilliant ballsy bitch! Take that you pukefaced son of a ridgebacked whorelicker, you maggotmongering pubebleacher, you vomitvellum of anal excretions!

Basher collapses, head smoking. Boot looks a little deformed, bubbles marring his gelatin surface.

JAX  
Boot! You did it!

Boot is silent. She shakes him.

JAX (cont'd)  
Boot? Boot?!

Basher starts to sit up. Connor STOMPS on his head, killing him once and for all.

He spots Jax and approaches uncertainly.

JAX (cont'd)  
I'm Jax.

CONNOR  
Connor.

He puts out his hand. She takes it and sparkles erupt from her glove.

BOOT  
Sparkles? For fu - ow!