Time sliders; finding/the search for the chosen one

There are very few 10-year-old boys who spend their time visiting other eras and witnessing the most famous events and people in history. Pip was just lucky.

*A quick author’s note here: Before you get too comfortable, sat or laying on your nice, comfy bed, with your book, I feel I ought to tell you something. If you like stories which you can read without really thinking, then this one is* ***not*** *for you. This story is all about a boy who questions everything and, like a famous adventurer, is never too scared to explore the unknown. Benjy had always questioned everything in his life; why did the water rise when you got in the bath? How does Dad always know when Benjy is up to mischief even when he’s nowhere near? Why do some moments zoom by when others drag painfully (for instance when it’s nearly home time and you have plans)? As such, a story about his life and experiences are bound to make you think, question and wonder. It will also make you laugh, smile and hang onto the edge of your seat. So… time to choose. Keep reading or move on to one of the more typical `happy ever after’ books. It’s up to* *you.*

Pip was 7 when he realised that time wasn’t one long line of events which happen one after another; each in some way causing the next incident, flowing like a river or click clacking through eternity like dominoes falling in a giant, infinite pattern. To say that this realisation came as something of a shock, would be a major understatement. In one moment, he was forced to accept the fact that what he had been told, and had blindly accepted, was rubbish. Pip wouldn’t go so far as to say it was a lie, after all, his parents and teachers weren’t lying to him. They simply couldn’t imagine anything other than this linear idea because their brains were… limited: they merely couldn’t *begin* to imagine it in any other way. He had momentarily wondered if perhaps their brains were like a flower which has grown yet the petals have never opened to embrace the sun, but then circumstances, and the need to flee for his life, quickly stopped such flowery thoughts.

Pip first suspected that time was more of a spider’s web of strings crisscrossing and doubling back when he was in the car on the way to school.

*picture*

It was a cold Autumn morning, and he was feeling warm and snug sat in the car. He hadn’t realised that he was dozing off until he spotted that the old vehicles. At first he saw just one, yet within moments arrived another, until soon the road was full of the strange cars. They were noisy and some had smoke coming out of their exhausts and reminded him of the ones in photos of his Grandma when she was a kid. Confused, he turned to his sister to ask if she had noticed, but she was too busy playing on her phone. Turning back, Pip was surprised to see that just as quickly as they had appeared, the old vehicles had gone and been replaced by normal, modern ones.

He hadn’t thought about it again for weeks, not once he decided that there simply must have been some old car show on nearby (just at a weird time, as it had been a Monday morning) or that he had in fact still been asleep and dreamt the vehicles. However, a few months later, he had been sat in class, gazing blankly out of the icy window, with the constant droning sound of his teacher becoming a blur of noise in the background and he had spotted some very strangely dressed people. Pip looked around. There appeared to be some kind of fete on. He could see stalls with a tombola, lucky dip and – his favourite – a throw a wet sponge at the teacher stall. It was at this point that Pip had begun to get curious. Concerned too, as it was the middle of winter and people were dressed in short skirts, weird bell-shaped trousers and lots of flowery patterns.

70’s school fete picture

Confusion led him to swing his legs away from the table to go and have a closer look, yet no sooner had he manoeuvred the awkward furniture and returned his gaze to the window when it all vanished!

From then on, strange things had started to happen more frequently. It had taken him a while to spot the pattern but eventually he realised that the moments when the world went strange coincided with him being sleepy or daydreaming. By the tender age of 9 he had concluded that unlikely as it sounded, he must be catching a glimpse of another time in history**. Before you shout `but that doesn’t make sense! It’s far more likely that he had an overactive imagination or that he had some brain problem which made him see things which weren’t there` I must point out that his Mum had assumed this and as a result he had been to every specialist she could find. It wasn’t until he started checking what he had seen with his grandparents, references online and in books that he finally reached this conclusion**.

Being an inquisitive child, he began to watch every YouTube clip and read every webpage which referred to time travel, and eventually, he was led to conclude that rather than being a simple line, time must be more of a tapestry. Lots of intersecting threads and sometimes, when he went to sleep, or was daydreaming; staring into space, he was able to catch a glimpse of a different thread, grab onto it and briefly follow. However, it wasn’t until the grand old age of 10, today in fact, that he would realise that he wasn’t the only person who could do this…

It was a typical Tuesday in early August – by that I mean it was damp and cloudy – and as it was the summer holiday, Pip had been sat playing computer games for the last hour or so, one hand on the controller and the other occasionally reaching down to stroke his dog `Panther’. Now he was 10 his Mum would pop out to the local shop without dragging him along so he had the luxury of an entirely empty house. He was surprised then when he heard a car pull up outside and doors slamming: 1,2,3… Mum had walked so who was it? Tossing the game control down onto his bed he stood up, stretched, and walked over to his window. Parked outside of his house was a huge black car with blacked out windows, around which stood 2 men and a lady, all dressed in black. As he watched, they moved away from the car and walked towards his door.

Panicking, Pip tried to remember what he was supposed to do if someone came to the door while his mum was out. He vaguely recalled being told to peek out of the lounge window and ask to see ID, yet as these were obviously not police, postmen or anything like that what should he do?

“What have I done?” A feeling of immense dread plunged through him. Black car. Black clothes. He had watched enough cop shows to know what that meant: FBI! Well, whatever they were called in England anyway. Someone like that would know when his mum was out – he kept hearing about how even Alexa and Siri were being used by the government to find out our secrets – so they MUST be here for him!

Gulping, he stood silently, waiting to see what would happen next. Within seconds the front doorbell rang, proceeded swiftly by 3 short but firm knocks on the door. Panther’s ears pricked up. He looked at Pip and dived off of his bed and down the stairs, barking and growling as he went.

“Good boy. Calm down. It’s ok” whispered Pip, his voice quivering, having managed to follow Panther and grab hold of his collar to stop him scrabbling and scratching at the front door. There was no point pretending he wasn’t there as Panther had given them away. His only choice would be to open the door. Sliding the safety catch on, Pip hesitantly eased the door open, making sure he held Panther firmly with his other hand.

“Hello.” Trembled Pip

The trio looked cautiously around them before responding: “Are you Pip Sutton?” They queried in unison, as if they had rehearsed.

Keen not to give away any information Pip replied “Why?”

The taller man, the one with an odd moustache which somehow made him look like an old fashion gangster shifted in annoyance before answering. “We’re asking the questions here boy. Now, tell us, are you Pip Sutton?”

Pip thought swiftly. He had 2 choices; he could admit that he was and face the consequences – and based on the size of the tall guy and the enormous muscles of the shorter one this was not tempting – or he could lie.

“No. He’s out. Shall I pass on a message?”

At this point the woman pushed forward, and having given the men a strange stare, leaned forward until she was eye level with Pip and whispered “you don’t need to be scared. We just really need to speak to Pip. As soon as he gets home.” In one, swift blur of movement, the woman slipped her hand into her pocket and out again, holding a card out towards Pip.

“Remember, he needs to contact us straight away. He may be in danger and we want to help him.”

Turning she nodded for the men to follow and marched back into the car.

Pip didn’t dare look at the card until the car had driven off and all was silent around him. As his eyes dropped down, he was intrigued to see a symbol with a telephone number. No name. No business. Just a symbol.

Icon

Description automatically generatedShape

Description automatically generated with low confidenceA picture containing ax

Description automatically generatedA picture containing invertebrate, mollusk

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1. Something which incorporates some or all of these [↑](#footnote-ref-1)