

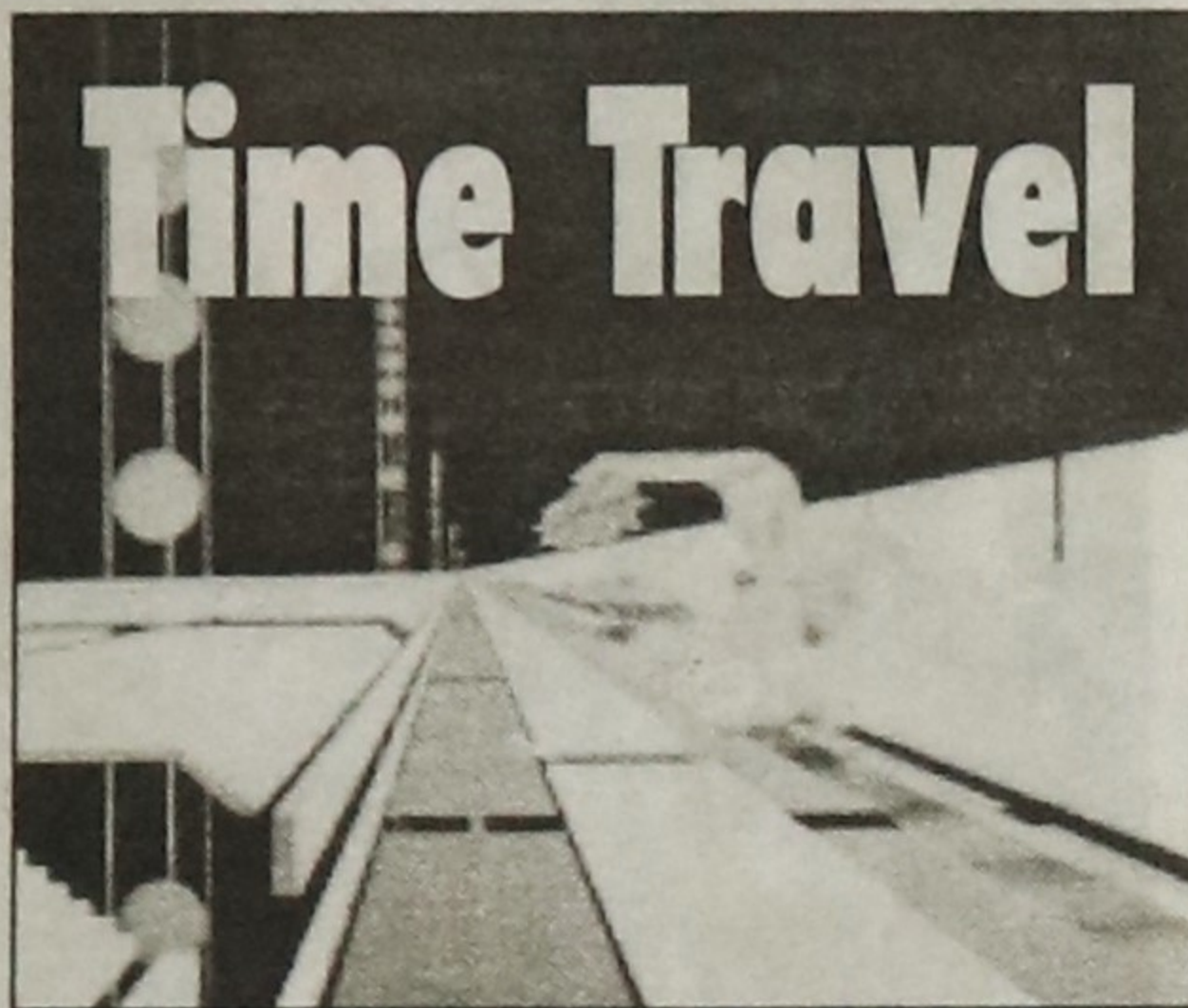
Time travel is easy: All of us do it everyday, but only in one direction. For thousands of years, scientists and philosophers have talked of time as a river that flows steadily onward year after year. But what if there was a way to swim against the flow, or to run down the bank ahead of the river? Might we be able to journey back and forth in time just as we travel through space? The idea is not as far-fetched as it sounds, and the implications for the future are intriguing. Scientists say building a time machine may be impossible. But time travel is not against physics.

There are three ways to travel in time without breaking the rules:

1. Wormholes

Since the 1930, physicists have speculated about the existence of "wormholes" in the fabric of space. Wormholes are essentially gateways between different parts of the universe and are made by linking a pair of black holes. This effectively creates a tunnel through space: A traveler entering at one end would exit the other at a different time as well as a different place.

The difficulty lies in keeping the wormhole open while the traveler makes his journey. If the opening snaps shut, he will never survive to emerge at the other end. For years, scientists believed that the transit was physically impossible. But recent research, especially by the US physicist Kip Thorne, suggests that it could be done using exotic materials capable of withstanding the immense forces involved. Even then, the time machine would be of limited use—for example, you could not return to a time before the wormhole was created. Using wormhole technology would also require a society so technologically advanced that it could master and exploit the energy within black holes. But the trip would not be impossible just very, very difficult!



2 Rotating Cylinder

Civilizations with the technology to harness black holes might be better advised to leave wormholes alone and try the time-wrap method suggested by US astronomer Frank Tipler. He has a simple recipe for a time machine: First take a piece of material 10 times the mass of Sun, squeeze it together and role it into a long, thin, super-dense cylinder—a bit like a black hole—that has passed through a spaghetti factory. Then spin the cylinder up to a few billion revolutions per minute and see what happens.

Tipler predicts that a ship following a carefully plotted spiral course around the cylinder would immediately find itself on a "Closed, time like curve." It would emerge thousands, even billions, of years from its starting point and possibly several

galaxies away.

There are problems, though. For the mathematics to work properly, Tipler's cylinder has to be infinitely long. Also, odd things happen near the ends and you need to steer well clear of them in your timeship. However, if you make the device as long as you can, and stick to paths close to the middle of the cylinder, you should survive the trip!

3. Cosmic Strings

As a variation on the rotating cylinder, some scientists have suggested using "Cosmic Strings" to construct a time machine. At the moment, these are purely theoretical objects that might possibly be left over from the creation of the universe in the Big Bang.

A black hole contains a one-dimensional singularity—an infinitely small point in the space-time continuum. A cosmic string, if such a thing existed, would be a two-dimensional singularity—an infinitely thin line that has even stranger effects on the fabric of space and time.

Although no one has actually found a cosmic string, astronomers have suggested that they may explain strange effects seen in distant galaxies. By maneuvering two cosmic close together—or possibly just one string plus a black hole—it is theoretically possible to create a whole array of "closed timelike curves." Your best bet is to fire two infinitely long cosmic strings past each other at very high speeds, then fly your ship around them in a carefully calculated figure eight. In theory, you would be able to emerge anywhere, any time!

If time machines are possible, it is likely that someone in the future will already have constructed one. After all, in the future there is time to complete even the largest engineering project! Even if humans are not up to the task, creatures from other planets may try. So why are we not overrun by visitors from the future?

"As far as Sreyaa was concerned, Valentine's Day was just like any other day. And as for Cupid.... well, that was just a silly superstition."

Sreyaa Dunnington settled in New Jersey to finish her studies and to help her mother to keep their condo and farmhouse in Englewood Cliffs in shape. Her father lives in Dhaka with her elder brother. Her mother is from the US while her father is a Bangladeshi. They got divorced a few years and have lived separately since then.

She was not a romantic. She didn't celebrate Valentine's Day and she thought long-stemmed roses were just waste of money. She was smart, logical and didn't have a romantic bone in her body.

But on this snowy Valentine's Day cupid had a surprise for her.

Sreyaa stamped her feet and almost fell on the ice. "Just what I need," she mumbled, "a broken leg to match with my broken car." She looked at her car and snorted. It had slid off the pavement now its grill nuzzled a tree. Both air bogs had blown, and she couldn't start the engine. She pulled out her phone and called the automobile club. Then she glanced into the side mirror. Not much damage to me, she thought. Her dark hair had loosened a bit from its French braid, probably when she tried to jerk the seatbelt off—but that was all. But the car...

Well she was fine, although freezing in the cold wind. She pulled the collar of her coat and waited.

Minutes later, an old wrecker with "Sam's Tow Service" painted on the door pulled up behind the car and a round bundled jumped out. Sreyaa could see a chubby red face surrounded by a funny hood, but the rest of the man was hidden beneath a down coat, boots and gloves.

"Hello, missy," said the bundle as he walked towards Sreyaa.

"What's the problem?"

"I lost control on the ice. Now it won't start."

"I'd better take it in and have look. Where were you headed?"

"Central City," Sreyaa said through chattering teeth.

"Isn't that good luck? I have a nephew who



By Laura

goes right past there on the way to the high school. I'll call him and have him give you a ride while I tow this in."

Great thought Sreyaa. A ride downtown with a teenager in a jalopy. Still, she had to get to work.

"I'd appreciate that."

"Cold?" he asked. At her nod, he said, "why don't you hop into the truck. Nice and warm." Sreyaa got in while Sam picked up a phone, dialed and waited.

"Chet? This is Uncle Sam. Have a lady who needs a ride to Central City, we're at the corner of main and fifth." He listened for five seconds, then said, "yeah, yeah, I know". After a pause, he said goodbye and hung up. Then he turned toward Sreyaa and said, "Say's he'll be here in a few minutes."

Sreyaa nodded again and held her hand out toward the heater.

"Why don't you girls dress smarter during the winter? Those short skirts and little jackets can't be very warm."

"No, they're not," she agreed, "but I didn't expect to be out of my car."

"Well I'll just get my wrecker ready while we are waiting." He maneuvered the truck behind the little car and had just bounced from the cab when a red sports car pulled up next to the wrecker.

"That's my nephew," Sam shouted.

The car definitely not what Sreyaa thought a high school would drive and, when the driver got out it was obvious he wasn't a teenager. He was tall and broad shouldered. Dark hair, blue eyes and a killer smile. Maybe twenty-three, she calculated and absolutely gorgeous. Wow! She thought. Sreyaa stepped down from the truck, and walked to the car.

"I guess you're my ride. I'm Sreyaa Dunnington."

"Well, well. Uncle Sam is improving." He opened the car door for Sreyaa, then waved at his uncle.

"I'm Chet Groves," he said as he started the car and pulled away.

"Sreyaa Dunnington." Oh dam! She'd already said that. "I really appreciate the ride."

"No problem. Where are you going?"

"Memorial hospital."

"That's right on my way. Doctor/ Nurse?"

"Doctor. Actually, veterinarian."

"At the Memorial hospital?" Chet asked, incredulously.

"My office is across the street, but it's the easiest direction to give."

"That's a relief. As much as I like tall brunettes with freckles, I don't think I'd want a veterinarian performing surgery on me."

She ignored the compliment and asked,

"What do you do at Central High school?"

"Teach special education. Kid's with behavioral disabilities." He glanced over at her. "And yes I do like it."

"Good, I like my work too."

"You know I have a Cocker Spaniel and she's been..."

"I can't diagnose without seeing the patient. Bring her in sometime and I'll check her out. Free. It's the least I can do for the ride."

"Sounds like a deal to me."

"So, you're a dog person."

"Oh, yeah. We had pets of all kinds when I was a kid. What about you?"

"Never had any pets. I guess I became a veterinarian to make up for not having them as a kid."

He laughed. "Sam fixed up my parents. They've been happily married for thirty-five years so he thinks he's the world's greatest matchmaker. Since we got our driver's license, he's tried to get my brother or to take this young woman out or meet another. For the last few years I fought him but I am glad that I did not this time." He pulled off the expressway and turned toward the hospital.

Sreyaa blushed, "so he thinks he's cupid, huh?"

"I guess so. He'd love it if something happened between you and me. He would brag that he introduced us on Valentine's Day." As he stopped at a stoplight, he turned toward Sreyaa and laughed. "I'm glad he called me instead of my brother. You should be too."

"Why is that?"

"Jimmy has Harley. Not very comfortable in this weather." He stopped in front of the animal hospital. "How are you getting home tonight?"

"I hadn't considered that. Sreyaa opened the door. "I imagine my car will take days..."

"Why don't I pick you up at six. We can go to dinner on the way back."

He smiled again, and Sreyaa felt a flutter—certainly not an arrow! Pierce her heart.

"I'd like that." She got out and watched the car pull away.

The cupid fellow does exist, she thought. He's chubby; his name is same—and she owed him a dozen roses.

Oooooo! Baby I love your way! Everyday!

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creating a glitch, but soon they found out that he's not *that* type either! Thank God, because there's no other gal around who is as generous as Moina about going out of the house everyday, crossing the *addafying* place of the guys.

Jamal and Kamal are the twin sweethearts of the locality. All they do is stick with each other in whatever they are doing. So while trying to be cool like the other guys they also have to sing songs and whistle at times to Moina the gorgeous!

The case with Yusuf is quite different. He lives at the closest distance from Moina. Just upstairs. Lucky him! Thinks the rest of the guys. To tell you guys the truth, Yusuf is the one who is actually in love with Moina. That is of course if you consider, sleeping Moina, eating moina and drinking only Coco Cola to be love! He keeps track of all the songs Moina listens everyday, every clothes and shoes she wear, every shade of nail polish she uses, the different hair clip she uses, all the perfumes she usesand so on. He really hates it when

the other guys sing stupid Hindi songs to his love. Why can't they sing better songs like-

Prothomoto Ami Tomake Chai

Dititoto Ami Tomake Chai

Trititoto Ami Tomake Chai

Shesh Porjonto Tomake Chai.....

Even though the song was actually written for Cigarettes, but who's going to know anyway!

All in all the two siblings are in one way or the other the main recreational characteristic for the opposite sex in their own surroundings. No matter how bothered Mridul is by those girls, and how taunted Moina is by the *Parar cheles* (who will become the *parato bhaals* soon after she starts going out with a mastaan) it's not that bad either. Mriduls are quite used to these behaviors and to Moinas this is only natural! And for you and us? Just sit back and enjoy!

Mokies from next door love the way Moina walks, talks (although she hardly ever talked with any of them), smiles (which they were lucky enough to witness that Moina was at her balcony with her best friend Jorina the other day), and of course the way she gives them her most humiliating but at the same time most fascinating glare. He's not sure whether he's in love with her or not but he loves to sing songs like-

Apun Bola Tu Mari Laila

Woh Boli Phektahal Sala

whenever she's out.

But dear Kuddus is not even from the same neighborhood. He comes all over from Jinjira just to catch a view of the lady herself. He was the first one to notice Moina a year back when she first moved into the neighborhood. At first it seemed that the big bro might be