

Time Travelers' Graveyard

written by

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FADE IN

INT. TECH COWORKING SPACE - DAY

Beneath a neon TUNATECH sign in a coworking space, SOPHIA, early 30s in business casual, confronts CHUCK, mid 20s, pudgy, wearing a video gamer shirt.

SOPHIA
(exasperated)
Chuck, the whole pitch is that our
software handles anything, anytime.

CHUCK
No one's gonna care if it's a
little off in a thousand years,
Sophia.

Sophia points to her right and Chuck turns to look. DARREN, late 20s with glasses, rubs his chin while clicking his mouse.

SOPHIA
Darren's tests should be enough.
He's really good at writing them.

CHUCK
(grins cheekily)
How about I show you what I'm good
at?

SOPHIA
Coding, yes! We need to pass his
tests, okay?

Sophia smiles expectantly. Chuck pauses, then relents.

CHUCK
Fine, okay.

Chuck shakes his head as he walks off.

SOPHIA'S DESK - LATER

Sophia, slumped in her computer chair, clicks, then waits. Her eyes widen in relief. She stands, straightens out her clothes, and looks up.

SOPHIA
*A problem with the time zone,
An hour off, I should have known,*
(MORE)

SOPHIA (CONT'D)
*That cursed daylight savings,
 Caused calendar misbehavings.*

Coworkers at nearby computers stand up and sing in unison.

COWORKERS
*All them sched'lin' quirks,
 They're a bunch of jerks,
 Find where they lurks,
 Fix 'em till they works.*

SOPHIA
*Events, multi-day enduring,
 Especially reoccurring,
 Cannot be scheduled during,
 Holidays, conflict-free ensuring.*

COWORKERS
*All them sched'lin' quirks,
 They're a bunch of jerks,
 Find where they lurks,
 Fix 'em till they works.*

SOPHIA
*Then some dates were lunar,
 If they only told me sooner,
 But now, I'm outta here!*

DARREN, late 20s, with glasses, rushes in, and sings.

DARREN
But have you tried a leap year?

Sophia's smile goes nervous. Darren switches to non-singing.

DARREN
 Sorry, Sophia, there's a failing
 test. An event every Monday and
 Wednesday, and another every 9 days
 -- only on leap years.

Sophia looks on the verge of a breakdown.

CHUCK, mid 20s, pudgy, wearing a video gamer shirt, barrels
 through the door.

CHUCK
 All the tests passed! My function
 handles everything!

SOPHIA
 What? Even leap years?

Chuck gleefully bounces.

CHUCK
Easiest bug EVER.

SOPHIA
I could kiss you.

DARREN
Nice! What was the problem?

Chuck tilts his head, thinking.

CHUCK
Something time-related...

Darren gives Sophia a look.

SOPHIA
Heh, well, at least it works,
right?

DARREN
Maybe we document it? Chuck writes
spaghetti code with extra
meatballs.

CHUCK
My code pasta your tests, four-
eyes.

SOPHIA
Anyway, we should celebrate. Who's
up for some paintball?

CHUCK
(grinning, pointing)
Oh, it's on. Y'all goin' down!

SOPHIA
Bring it, Chuck. You won't know
what hit you!

Everyone laughs as Chuck and Sophia high-five.

DARREN
(deadpan)
Can someone please shoot me now?

EXT. PAINTBALL FIELD - DAY

The sun lights up the multi-colored paint on wooden barriers in an open field. Darren crouches behind a particularly flimsy barrier in a paintball field, looking around nervously.

DARREN

C'mon guys, I just really think we
should document stuff.

Sophia and Chuck stand not far apart in the open, guns
lowered, with watchful eyes.

SOPHIA AND CHUCK

(singing together)

*We've got him now. We've found our
prey.*

DARREN

(singing)

*Just listen to what I have to
say...*

SOPHIA

We've done enough.

CHUCK

It's time to play!

DARREN

Years from now you'll rue this day!

SOPHIA

He's in my sight.

CHUCK

Let's make him pay!

DARREN

(singing)

Why does no one care?

SOPHIA AND CHUCK

(singing together)

Maybe run away?

Darren gets up and runs. Sophia and Chuck both shoot Darren,
covering him in paint. Sophia and Chuck laugh. Chuck nudges
Sophia.

CHUCK

Let's get out of here?

Sophia grins wickedly and pulls Chuck away, surprising him.
They disappear into the woods. Darren, peeking from behind a
tree, sighs in relief.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Sophia and Chuck, wearing their paintball clothes, are lying in a cozy spot in the woods, making out. They pause, and Sophia rests her head on Chuck's chest.

CHUCK

I need to get up for a sec.

Sophia sits up while Chuck walks behind a tree. The sound of urination begins.

CHUCK (O.S.)

Soph, got my phone? Need to check Discord.

SOPHIA

(rolling her eyes)

You didn't take yours either? Let's just head back.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Crickets call from the shadows of a forest trail. Sophia and Chuck are still wandering, clearly lost.

CHUCK

Why aren't we back yet?

SOPHIA

If I'd grabbed Darren instead, he'd probably have documented the way back...

They enter a moonlit clearing, shrouded in mist, with gravestones scattered throughout.

CHUCK

(chuckling)

This graveyard looks right out of D&D... wait, is that a typo?

Sophia inspects the gravestones.

SOPHIA

The birth years are all in the future...

An ominous dark figure steps into the clearing, his breath wheezing.

JAMES

Yes, we all made that sacrifice, (coughs) in our search for the creator.

CHUCK

Dude, are you roleplaying? This is a LARP, right? We will help you find the creator!

SOPHIA

Excuse me, Sir, but we're just trying to find the paintball place. Can we borrow your phone?

JAMES

"Sir". I wasn't so old when I first time-traveled, but after forty years, I've fallen ill. Soon I'll join my fellow seekers in our failure.

SOPHIA

Maybe we can help somehow? Just need to make a quick call.

CHUCK

Let the Legion of Tunatech aid you in your quest!

JAMES

Wait, Tunatech? Who are you?

CHUCK

Well, I'm Chuck and this is...

SOPHIA

Did you say you time-traveled?

JAMES

(ignoring Sophia)

Did you perhaps write a function called... ChucksFunkyFunc?

CHUCK

Yes, I did! We're out here celebrating--

SOPHIA

Chuck, stop. No one should have seen our code yet.

JAMES

Could it be? You... (coughs) you are the creator?

SOPHIA

How did you get Chuck's code?

JAMES

We're using Tunatech's accursed
scheduling software in our time
machines. We can't return to the
future!

James breaks into a catchy song about ChucksFunkyFunc.

JAMES

(singing)

*That ChucksFunkyFunc,
It looks like you were drunk,
Our time travel is sunk,
We hate you, little punk.*

*It's got lots of useless gunk,
Half the tests will flunk,
Variable names are junk,
No useful logs in Splunk.*

*READMEs and wikis all defunct,
Our guesses are debunked,
Our fixes are rethunk,
Our coders go kerplunk.*

*Your code smells like skunk,
We forget it chunk by chunk,
Keeps freezing with a clunk,
Our hopes and dreams have shrunk.*

*That ChucksFunkyFunc,
It looks like you were drunk,
Our time travel is sunk,
We hate you, little punk.*

James coughs once, and falls silent, staring Chuck down.

SOPHIA

I didn't know. I'm so sorry. I'll
fix this -- I'll rewrite Chuck's
code personally.

CHUCK

Uhh, well...

SOPHIA

Apologize!

CHUCK

Sorry dude.

INT. TECH COWORKING SPACE - NIGHT

Chuck sits, shadowy and backlit at his computer in the coworking space, alone in the late hours. He stands and sings a remorseful ballad with a scratchy voice:

CHUCK

(singing)

*I thought I was clever, just
getting by,
But now I see clearly, that was a
lie,
It's not just about making the code
run,
Documentation matters, to everyone.*

*No more cutting corners, I'll take
the blame,
Good code's more important than any
video game,
Tests for my functions, comments in
between,
Informative logging, and code will
be cleeeean.*

*And Darren, I know, I should be
more kind,
I'll try to do better, I'll keep it
in mind,
But I cannot lie, I have to
confess,
It is so fun to shoot you... I'll
try to do it less.*

FADE OUT