

” WRITING

Once Upon a Time in the Crisis of 3016

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TYPE
INFORMATIONAL
NARRATIVE

The year was 3016, and the American population was in a state of panic. Computers all across the country were experiencing spontaneous combustion.

Technology experts suspected that the problem was related to the computer’s batteries, but they could not determine the solution. The whole world seemed to be bursting into flames, and everyone was feeling very desperate.

Two twelve-year-old kids, Harry and Larry, were discussing the problem on the way home from school. As they turned to take a shortcut on the way down the alley, they were surprised to encounter a gangster dude. He didn’t look threatening, just lost in thought.

As Harry and Larry approached him, they saw he was holding something tiny outstretched in his hand. The two kids wondered what it could be.

Harry pulled out his phone and took a picture.

Suddenly, the gangster dude became aware of their

presence. Frightened, Harry and Larry ran away.

When Harry got home, he pulled out his phone and took a closer look at the photo. It looked like the gangster dude was holding a teeny-tiny TARDIS, just like on Doctor Who. He couldn't wait to tell Larry.

The next day after school, Harry and Larry returned to the alley to investigate. The gangster dude was gone, but the tiny TARDIS was still there.

Harry decided to take another picture. This time, he zoomed into the image to set up his shot. Oddly, as he magnified the image on his phone, the actual TARDIS also increased in size. Harry took a picture. Then, excited by the possibilities, he zoomed in with his phone again. Again, the actual TARDIS grew.

Harry kept repeating this process until the TARDIS was large enough to hold five people. Harry and Larry couldn't believe it.

Larry was known for his sense of adventure. "Let's take a look inside the TARDIS," he said to Harry.

"Uh, I don't think so," Harry replied. Harry was the more cautious of the two.

Larry relented, although he doesn't usually give up so easily.

With their investigation complete, the two friends returned home for the evening. All

night long, Larry thought of nothing but the TARDIS. It would be so amazing, he kept telling himself. Finally, he couldn't take it any longer. He needed to get into that TARDIS.

Larry jumped out of the bed and quietly crept down the stairs. He knew it was hard to get out the front door because it was very creaky. The old door was so difficult to close, but somehow he managed it. He was out. He got his bike from the garage and flew out into the night.

Larry made it to the alley in record time. He climbed off his bike and leaned it against one of the old buildings. He took a deep breath and bravely walked into the TARDIS.

He went straight to the control panel to check it out. There were three dials all in a row, with a green start button right beside them. Above the dials, there were two LCD screens. One showed the date—April 15, 3016—and the other showed a world map.

Larry couldn't resist the urge to start fiddling with the controls. As he turned the first dial, the month on the LCD screen changed. He tried the second and third dials, and the day and the year changed as well. Could this really be a time machine? he wondered.

Cautiously, he pressed the start button. It felt squishy in that way that filled him with anticipation.

Unfortunately, just moments later, the machine made a high-pitched beeping noise.

The computerized voice announced, “Please select your destination.”

The LCD screen with the world map started flashing. Larry looked around, but he couldn’t see any controls for the screen. He wondered if there had been a globe or something under the control panel, but he couldn’t find one. He was so close to working this machine, but he just couldn’t find the last piece of the puzzle. Filled with frustration, Larry got back on his bike and rode home.

The next morning, he couldn’t wait to tell Harry about his discovery. Right after breakfast, he raced out the door and ran to school.

Harry was approaching the main entrance as Larry looked up, giving them a moment to talk before the bell rang. Larry filled Harry in on all the details from the night before. Harry could hardly believe his ears. He was so excited that he could barely concentrate on his schoolwork that day.

The two boys made plans to return to the alley after school. Harry couldn’t wait. Time travel was just an inch away.

At the end of the day, the two friends met up and walked to the alley together. There it was—the TARDIS.

The pair eagerly went inside. Larry already knew what to expect of course, but Harry gasped in amazement to see it with his own eyes. It took him a minute to catch his

breath.

Larry, on the other hand, immediately started fiddling with the dials. Suddenly, he experienced a stroke of genius. What if he could go back in time and ask Steve Jobs for help in solving the spontaneous combustion problem? Larry entered the date: January 19, 2000.

Just as he was considering how to program the location, Harry came over. “Oh, look!” he said, “it’s a touch screen map!”

Larry couldn’t believe the answer was right in front of him all along. He selected Cupertino, California on the map and they were ready to go.

“Wanna do the honors?” asked Larry.

“Sure,” replied Harry. He pressed down on the start button and the machine flew into the air. Harry screamed in terror, but Larry just squealed, “Whee!”

Then the ride ended, and the TARDIS was silent and still.

Larry stepped out of the TARDIS and was followed, a minute later, by a very shaken up Harry. To their surprise, Steve Jobs was waiting calmly.

“Good evening,” he said.

The two friends stared in awe.

“Hi, we’re the people from the future!” said both Harry and Larry.

“Jinx!” said Harry.

They told Steve the story of how they encountered the TARDIS. Of all the places and times they could visit, they chose the headquarters of Apple in the year 2000.

Harry and Larry were both computer buffs. They had studied the history of computers in America. They knew that one of the first personal computers was the Apple Lisa.

They had read that batteries in the Lisa only held a charge for a few hours. They had also read that the batteries often broke and leaked acid over the circuit boards.

They knew Steve Jobs and his team had fixed the problem with Apple’s newer computers, and hoped he might be able to help them with their problems of 3016.

“Our computers are bursting into flames,” explained Harry.

“Hmm, does anyone know why?” asked Steve.

“Yes and no,” answered Larry.

“Scientists think it’s the batteries, but they’re not sure,” said Harry.

Steve appeared lost in thought for a while. Then he responded confidently.

“I have an idea,” said Steve. “Why don’t you meet at my lab? Here are the directions, it’s just one building over.”

With that, Steve handed them a printout and hurried off.

After Steve left, Harry and Larry had a moment of silence. They couldn’t believe they were actually in the presence of such greatness, and that Steve had actually agreed to help them. They practically giggled as they walked to Steve’s lab.

When they got there, Steve explained his idea. He agreed that the spontaneous combustion was the result of the faulty batteries. Somehow, the battery acid was becoming so hot that it was bursting into flames.

Steve had been working on the idea for years that he thought might come in handy.

What if they attached a high powered fan, along with a small radiator, to the battery?

Wouldn’t that be a cool way to keep the battery cool?

“Genius,” declared Harry and Larry.

The three worked together for hours and hours on the new design. Finally, they got a new adapter and tested the invention in Steve’s computer. It worked!

Next, they made a machine to reproduce their battery, the supercooler. A day later, the

machine was ready. They loaded the machine into the TARDIS. Steve Jobs said goodbye to his new friends and set the dial in the TARDIS to 3016.

When Harry and Larry returned home, the word of supercoolers spread quickly. First, they applied for a patent on their invention. Next, they put their machine into production and manufactured millions of the supercooler. All of the major computer manufacturers turned to Harry and Larry to purchase this critical component.

Larry and Harry made a ton of money in their business. But, even more importantly, computers never burst into flames again.