

The Time Traveler

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A Frank Carver Mystery

It was early Monday morning. I was sitting at my desk, drinking a cup of coffee, and thinking that it was great that nobody had been murdered recently. The last murder in Norfolk County occurred almost a month ago. It was a domestic dispute. A woman got really pissed off at her husband for buying a new car without discussing it with her first, so she shot him. Not once, but six times. Her trial starts next week. This is my third week in a row with nothing to do.

My name is Frank Carver. I'm a lieutenant in the Norfolk County police department, and the only homicide detective. My wife, Jill, is the county medical examiner. That means we work together on all the murders or unusual deaths that occur here. Fortunately, murders and unusual deaths occur infrequently, so I often find myself waiting for something to happen. Today was one of those days.

My phone rang. When I answered it, the desk sergeant said, "There is somebody here to see you. He wants to report a murder that hasn't happened yet."

"Is this some kind of bad joke?"

"No, he's very serious about this. Talk to him; you have nothing else to do anyway."

"You're right. I'll be there in a minute."

I hung up the phone and walked to the reception area. There was a guy standing next to the sergeant's desk. He appeared to be in his early forties. He was tall, had short black hair, and was in terrific shape. I walked up to him and said, "Good morning. I'm Lieutenant Carver. How can I help you?"

The man appeared to be very nervous. He stammered when he said, "There's going to be a murder next week, unless you can stop it. I know how silly that sounds, and believe me when I tell you, I really didn't want

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to report this, but if there is any way to prevent the murder, I have to try it.”

“Okay, let’s go to one of our interrogation rooms and you can tell me all about it. Follow me.”

He followed me to an interrogation room. I closed the door and sat across from him. Then I said, “Tell me about the murder.”

“I think I should give you some background information first. My name is Marvin Feldman. I moved here about three months ago after I accepted an offer to teach physics at the university. I bought an old house near downtown on Maple Street. I asked the previous owners to clear out the house so I would have room for my stuff. However, after I moved in I went down into the basement and found an old isolation chamber.”

I thought I knew what an “isolation chamber” is, but since I wasn’t sure, I asked, “What’s an isolation chamber?”

“This one is a metal box about seven feet long, four feet wide, and six feet high. There is a door that extends down about three feet from the top on one of the narrow sides. The chamber is designed to be filled with two feet of salt water. There’s a heater built into it to warm the water to body temperature. You enter through the door, lay down on your back, and because of the salt content you float in the water. Once inside, you’re completely isolated from any outside disturbances.”

“What happens when you are inside?”

“It’s very relaxing. Your mind begins to wander and then you begin to dream.”

“What do you dream about?”

“That’s where this gets really interesting. The first few times I tried it, the dreams made no sense. I really can’t remember them. Then I had a dream I couldn’t forget. I suddenly found myself in a battle near Atlanta during the civil war. It was September 18, 1863. In the dream my

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name was Rufus Springer, I was a sergeant in the Union Army, and was leading a group of five other men near Chickamauga Creek. We were trying to prevent the Confederates from crossing Reed's Bridge. Suddenly I felt a severe pain in my chest. I looked down and discovered I'd been shot, my shirt was soaked with blood. I was unable to breathe. Then everything went black and I woke up."

"Is it unusual for you to have realistic dreams?"

"Up till that time I'd never had a dream as realistic as that one. But I knew nothing about Civil War history. Until I had that dream I had never heard of Chickamauga Creek or Reed's Bridge. I checked and discovered there was a battle at Chickamauga Creek that day and there was fighting at Reed's Bridge."

"Have you had other realistic dreams besides that one?"

"Yes, I've had several just as realistic. There was one I think you may find particularly interesting. Does the name Joshua Brewster mean anything to you?"

I was very surprised to hear him say that name. Just prior to his death Joshua Brewster hired an assassin to kill the people he felt were responsible for his first wife's death. "Yes, it's a name I am very familiar with," I responded.

"I dreamed I was Joshua Brewster on the last day of his life. Just before I died I wrote a letter to Chief Mitchell explaining my involvement in the death of three of the five people I thought were responsible for the death of someone named Melissa. Does that sound familiar?"

"Yes, and nobody except the Chief and I were aware of that letter. Did you write anything else that night?"

"Yes, I wrote a note. I'm not sure I remember it exactly. I think it said, 'There will be three deaths in the next thirty days. Each of the victims will be wealthy, and

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their deaths will occur under unusual circumstances.’ or something similar.”

“I believe that is exactly what the note said. There is no way you could have known that because the text of the note was never released to the press.”

“Additionally, that incident occurred long before I moved here.”

“Okay, so you appear to have factual dreams about the past. But apparently you also have dreams about the future. Am I correct?”

“Yes, and that’s why I’m here. First, I wanted to tell you that a few weeks ago I dreamed about the winning lottery numbers. I didn’t want to win the jackpot and have to endure the publicity, so I only bet five of the numbers. I won fifty thousand dollars.”

“That’s pretty impressive, congratulations.” I hesitated for a moment and said, “So, tell me about the murder.”

“I had this dream several times. The murder will take place a week from today. I was walking up the hill on Birch Street. Near the top of the hill, on the north side of the street, there is an old two story house with dark brown siding and a large front porch. Standing next to the front door of the house is a man wearing a black leather jacket. I’m not sure what he’s doing, but suddenly a red pickup truck appears on the street. It slows down as it approaches the house. The passenger window opens. I see an arm come out of the truck holding a large pistol. The gun fires three times and the man on the porch falls down. Then I wake up.”

“Do you know the address of the house?”

“No, but I’m sure I would recognize it. To be honest, I’ve been afraid to go to Birch Street and look for the house.”

“Would you feel more comfortable if we go to Birch Street and look for the house together?”