

The Time Machine

Inspired by the book by: H.G. Wells

Stage play by Marc Zakian

Rewrite March 11th 2026

Characters:

The Present

Horatio Tripp: The Time Traveller, a charismatic inventor in his 30s

Arthur Filby: Horatio's eccentric friend. Mid 30s.

Jane Eagle: A sceptical, quick-witted journalist. Mid 20s

Professor Albestein: Eccentric and ageing Academic. 50s.

Mrs Hawkins: Horatio's opinionated housekeeper. 50s.

Dr Brian Snode

Young Arthur – Filby's Son. Might be video only. TBC

In the Future

Horatio

Weena - Eloi

Lorin – Eloi Idealist. New age. Pacifist

Eloi

Morloks - Victorian Zombies

Morlok Overmind. Prerecord Video only.

Scene 1: The Lecture on Time

The Royal Society lecture hall. Evening. Audience comes in.

Dr Brian Snode seats the kids as if he is their University professor

“You Snape, sit here, hurry up now”.

On stage three LED screens.

**Film and newspaper headlines from late Victorian Britain.
Maybe we see a film of suffragists march.**

“IS TIME A FOURTH DIMENSION?”

Royal Society Debate Stirs Scientific Circles

“PROFESSORS DISPUTE NATURE OF TIME”

Is the Past Fixed — Or May It Be Traversed?

“SCIENTIFIC MEN PROPOSE “TIME AS SPACE”

Radical Mathematical Theory Presented in London

WOMEN DEMAND THE VOTE

Meeting of Suffrage Society Draws Large Crowd

THE LADIES AND THE BALLOT BOX

Curious Gathering of Suffrage Advocates

ELECTRIC LIGHT TRANSFORMS LONDON STREETS

NEW RAYS DISCOVERED BY PHYSICISTS

BRITISH EXPEDITION ADVANCES IN AFRICA

DARWIN’S THEORY OF EVOLUTION STILL DIVIDES SCHOLARS

ENGINEERS PROMISE FUTURE WITHOUT HORSES

DEVIL WAGON” FRIGHTENS HORSES IN PICCADILLY

CAN A CANNON SEND MEN TO THE MOON?

French Writer Jules Verne Thinks So

Maybe one or two Morlock Whatsapp messages as a teaser. In Mortach (molok language). We can find some out of copyright early 20th century B/W film. Use the sudden shocking Morlock overlord face huge across all screens at least four times over the 3 minutes film.

ARTHUR FILBY. Is sits in the audience.

The **PROFESSOR** can't find his way through the curtains, nor through the auditorium, bumps into people who are taking their seats. Goes from one end of a row to the other, as if he is getting to his seat, but he exits the row – he does not have a seat.

Tries to get up onto the stage the wrong way.

Dr Brian Snodgrass, busy with kids, is exasperated by the old scientist.

JANE EAGLE is in the front row. She wears the colours of the suffragists. Red, White and Green. [could be suffragettes, purple, white and green. That was 1903]

Lights up on stage and **HORATIO TRIPP** ascends the podium. Filby joins him. Tripp clears his throat, commanding attention. Filby bangs gavel for attention.

HORATIO:

Ladies and gentlemen of the Royal Society— fellow seekers of truth gathered here tonight. We are here to unravel the impossible. To discuss the fabric of existence: time itself.

I ask you, what is time? A fixed river flowing only in one direction? A flat page with two dimensions? Or an open book ready to take us in any direction

[To the audience] You madam with the reporter's pad. A lady journalist of repute. Do you believe time can be conquered? Or is it forever our master?

EAGLE:

I believe in the truth Mr Tripp. Not a bagatelle of words and sophomoric debating tricks. The clock ticking on the wall is a constant reminder that we cannot get away from the present moment.

HORATIO:

That is just where you are wrong Miss. Where the whole world has gone wrong. We can get away from the present moment.

EAGLE:

Mr Tripp, if you continue to speak but show us nothing, we shall all wish ourselves away from this very moment.

HORATIO:

I would never want away from *your* honoured presence Miss Eagle.

FILBY:

It's all terribly exciting. I have said to Horatio, it would be most thrilling if we could...go back. Back and stop the great tragedies of history, the fire of London, the assassination of President Lincoln Find Shakespeare's lost play. I should go back and perhaps prevent the needless deaths of scientists and artists and there is one date I would return to...

PROFESSOR

Gentlemen, gentlemen, this is more hot air than a balloon. It is true that Mathematical theory allows us to conceive of time much like the dimensions of space. So we could hypothesises a fourth dimension..

FILBY

A fourth dimension? I find hard to cope with just three!

PROFESSOR

But science tells us that is entirely impossible. The laws of physics as forbid it. A man cannot step forward or backward in time any more than he can fly to the sun.

HORATIO:

Prepare to change your mind. Under here is what will bring us to the fourth dimension. To manipulate the very fabric of matter...behold

He pulls back the cloth to reveal a glittering metallic machine, the size of small clock. Delicately made. Inlaid with transparent crystalline substance and a saddle seat.

HORATIO:

This is a scale model for a machine to travel through time. This lever, being pressed over, sends the machine into the future, and this other reverses the motion. This saddle is the seat of a time traveller

PROFESSOR:

A saddle? Are we travelling into the future by horse? How much horse power does your machine have? Eh Horatio?

HORATIO:

Presently I am going to press the lever, and off the machine will go. It will vanish, pass into destiny, and disappear. Have a good look and satisfy yourselves there is no trickery.

PROFESSOR AND EAGLE WALK AROUND THE TABLE. HORATIO puts forth his finger towards the lever.

HORATIO:

No. [to journalist] Lend me your hand. Put your forefinger here.

She hesitates Horatio guides Eagle's hand to the lever.

HORATIO

Push it, Miss Eagle. You will send it into the voyage of time.

She presses. Lights jump. A breath of wind, and the lamps jump and go dark. WE HEAR THE SOUND EFFECT OF THE TIME MACHINE FOR THE FIRST TIME. The little machine suddenly swings round, became indistinct and is gone. The audience gasps and then bursts into cacophony of shouts. Dr BRIAN SNODE, stunned, scrambles on to the stage to take a closer look.

HORATIO [grabs the gavel, bangs and shouts over audience noise]

Gentleman -[to journalist] and lady. Remember this day, you are the witnesses to the first ever time travel.

FILBY:

Well, blow me down with feather.

PROFESSOR:

Do you seriously believe that that machine has travelled into time?

HORATIO: Certainly. The future or the past—I don't, for certain, know which. But this is a moment for posterity.

EAGLE: [waving her notes in the air]. This story is going straight to my editor.

She starts to leaves in a hurry

HORATIO: Tell him to hold the front page. This is the news of the century.

Suddenly there is another whirring and the lights fritz again. The small time travelling machine reappears. But rather than glistening it is charred, burned and smoking. Again the audience is in chaos.

HORATIO, SNODE AND PROFESSOR gather round the charred smoking machine

Dr BRIAN SNODE [chuckling]:

Looks like your time machine is toast Mr Trip!

HORATIO:

Professor, is it?

PROFESSOR [questioning, working out the maths]:

Well... Time. Time is not what we thought. I have long suspected it — the time of an event is only the reading of a clock—a clock at rest relative to the observer. Move the observer... and perhaps you move time itself?

The burning machine gives a final puff.

Dr SNODE

Your latest theory just went up in a puff of smoke. Professor

FILBY: [looks at machine] I am not sure travelling to the future is a terribly good idea Horatio.

HORATIO: Science is not for the timid Filby. I have a large machine nearly finished in my laboratory and when that is complete, I will have a journey on my own account.

Scene 2

Horatio workshop. In the middle of the room is the full size time machine

MRS HAWKINS is dusting. She reaches the desk and picks up his diagrams. Reads the title.

MRS HAWKINS:

I don't know what kind of scientific nonsense he is up to, but if it ends with another explosion, I won't be cleaning it up! (reads) A machine to travel in time. He's been at this for a lifetime.

She puts diagram down. She looks at the room. The machine. The dust beneath it.

MRS HAWKINS:

Time machine. More like a machine for gathering dust.

HORATIO enters, sees this, stops short as he sees her cleaning the handle. There is a slight judder in the room.

HORATIO:

Please don't touch the handle, Mrs Hawkins

She returns the lever to its exact position. A pause.

MRS HAWKINS:

I was cleaning it.

HORATIO:

Yes, thank you but it's very delicate and it's nearly complete

She resumes dusting.

MRS HAWKINS:

Well Good luck to you Mr Tripp. I could certainly do a with a time machine so as I'd 'ave enough hours to keep this place clean and take care of him indoors and me little ones.

HORATIO:

We appreciate your hard work Mrs Hawkins.

MRS HAWKINS:

Time is a plenty. For those that can afford it.

She continues dusting. She starts to clean a picture frame with a photo it. It is Horatio with Filby and young boy age about 11.

HORATIO:

Carefull!

The picture frame starts to fall, Horatio catches it.

MRS HAWKINS:

Oh, I am so sorry Mr Tripp, I know how precious this...I never knocked it before, I don't know what I was thinking.

HORATIO:

No harm done Mrs Hawkins.

MRS HAWKINS:

You all look so happy in that picture.

HORATIO:

It was exactly a year ago today Mrs Hawkins.

MRS HAWKINS:

I don't know how Mr Filby manages, losing a son. And he was your godson. You must miss him.

HORATIO:

I do, we all do every day Mrs Hawkins.

[door bell rings, breaks moment]

MRS HAWKINS:

I will let them in Mr Tripp.

FILBY ENTERS. And sees Horatio looking at the picture.

HORATIO: Hello, Filby, I was just thinking that you might not want to join us today, with the anniversary of James' accident. You must be...

FILBY: [a beat]

Life goes on Horatio. [referring to machine] Is this it?

HORATIO: Yes. Four years work. Isn't she splendid. A machine to breaks the walls of time.

FILBY: Yes. That could go back to the past. Horatio do you think if you went back...you could...would it be possible to change events...

HORATIO: I don't know old chap, but if I could..

The door bell rings, the big Clock ticks at 10am. In come the professor and Eagle.

HORATIO:

Ah, welcome. Ye of little faith! I give you the full-size time machine. See hear professor. I added nickel to the mechanism and it is ready to begin its career. **[reveal, lights FX or blanket]**

EAGLE:

Nickel? Really, Horatio? What's next, powering it with puffs of steam to blow you to the stars?

HORATIO:

You wound me, Miss Eagle. But mark my words, that humble nickel's conductivity is the spark of genius.

PROFESSOR:

Traversing time? I'll believe it when I see it.

HORATIO:

I am about to take a step into an unknown world. [he climbs onto the machine] I imagine a man holding a pistol to his skull feels much the same curiosity about what comes next.

HORATIO grips the lever, with resolve and trepidation. He pushes it forward. A low hum builds to a crescendo. We hear the time machine sound FX. A rapid ticking clock sound. Strobe shows Eagle, Filby and the Professor moving quickly then suddenly freeze as to statues. Horatio seems disorientated. Then suddenly trio step back, startled. Lights stabilize, and the hum fades. **HORATIO** slumps slightly, disoriented, gripping the chair.

FILBY:

Horatio! Are you alright?

HORATIO:

The sensations of time travelling....are somewhat uncomfortable.

EAGLE:

But nothing happened. You're still here. We are all still here.

HORATIO:

The clock. It has jumped forward. A moment before it had stood at a minute or so past ten; now it is nearly half-past three.

PROFESSOR:

Impossible! A trick of the mechanism, surely.

HORATIO:

No trick. Time moved, but only for me. You stood still, frozen in your moment, while I... slipped forward. Time is a river, but only the traveller feels its current. The world remains, unchanging, save for he who dares move it along.

FILBY:

Can you imagine it, Horatio? Back to breakfast time for an extra muffin?

PROFESSOR:

He could must not eat an extra muffin. If you change the past from the future it will risk the continuum. Our whole world could break

Muffins können gefährlich sein!

HORATIO:

I am going further my good Filby. This was but a taste. Friends, I have had a glimpse of brave new world.

EAGLE:

A world that threw you back in pain

HORATIO:

But who can resist the excitement of plunging headlong into the future.

FILBY:

You will come back to us, old chap. We can't miss bridge night at the club.

HORATIO:

I'll try, my friend. For now, the adventure begins.

He turns the lever on the machine

Scene 3. 802,701 A.D.

Time Machine Sound FX. Digital screen. A snail moves like a jaguar. Moon passes thought sky faster and faster as seasons change.

We go back a few years to 1890. We see Horatio, Filby and his son posing for the photo on the fishing trip. Horatio fires the cable on a large wooden frame camera. Then we see Horatio giving Arthuer a piggy back. Suddenly we see Filby's son in the water and they are trying to rescue him.

It's too much for Horatio, so he turns the leaver forward.

We pass through Victorian society, horses to steam trains to cars to flying cars. Mechanical clocks to digital clocks. Old phones to mobile phones, cash machines to computers, human to cyborgs and robots. Maybe nuclear war? The Planet destroyed and ice age, and then reborn in 802,701 A.D.

The time machine appears in a lush, verdant landscape. The air is warm, and the scenery is idyllic but tinged with neglect.

Amidst all this is giant statue it is a cross between Stalin and a the Morlok Overmind that we will see later. Surrounded by overgrown gardens and crumbling structures.

A once-grand civilization now in decay. There are beautiful artifacts from Victorian England. Such as old bits of steam train covered in moss. Famous buildings in ruins, Tower Bridge is dilapidated.

Horatio steps out of the time machine. He hears a noise behind him, turns. Nothing. Then another noise.

HORATIO:

Who's there?

Another rustle. HORATIO turns, hand on his machine, peering into the shadows. The ELOI enter. They move playfully, like children, led by WEENA, who carries a garland of strange flowers.

Two ELOI sing notes in harmony, one speaks simple words “tree”, “fruit”, “people happy”.

HORATIO:

Creatures... human, yet not. Like children before the fall. Goodness, who are you?

The ELOI surround HORATIO, laughing softly, their voices melodic. WEENA steps forward, offering the garland.

WEENA:

Greetings.

HORATIO:

Greeting to you. What's your name?

WEENA:

Weena.

HORATIO:

Weena? A fine name. I'm Horatio... friend. What is this place.

WEENA:

This is home.

HORATIO:

Yes, but what country are we in?

WEENA:

Country?

HORATIO:

Is this England, the United States? Russia?

WEENA:

Home.

HORATIO:

I see. I come from London. England. What is this place? [realising this is the best answer he will get] I understand, this is your home.

WEENA: nods.

Home. All home

The ELOI drift away singing again their strange song. WEENA watches them go makes to follow — then looks back at HORATIO. She hesitates... steps back to him.

HORATIO:

They leave so soon? But you... you stay. Friend.

WEENA:

Horatio friend.

HORATIO:

Yes.

WEENA:

Food?

HORATIO:

Absolutely. It is a long time since I have eaten. More than you can imagine. I am intrigued to find out what people eat in future.

Scene 4.

HORATIO sits at the table, surrounded by **ELOI**, who nibble fruit and laugh softly. **WEENA**, beside him, offers a large, vibrant fruit. The **ELOI**'s movements are playful, like children at a picnic. They seem to play a game where one hides a grapefruit from another. Hard to tell if the second believes the fruit has disappeared or if he is just playing along. Their naivety is shocking.

HORATIO:

This is a fine spread. (holding the fruit, impressed) A fruit this size would win a prize where I come from. **(to WEENA)** What is it called?

WEENA:

Good fruit! Eat!

HORATIO:

Yes, it is good. But... where does it come from? Who grows it?

LORIN ELOI:

It grows, friend. The trees make food, the rivers water. We have what we need.

HORATIO:

No farmers to plant the fruit? And who harvests the food?

LORIN ELOI:

No need. The land gives for all. Nothing more is needed.

HORATIO:

And you have no leaders? No government to oversee this?

LORIN ELOI:

Why would we need rulers? We share what we have. We are all free.

HORATIO:

Incredible... a people without order, yet no hunger. No country, no leaders, no money? Like Eden before the fall, yet. **[He glances at LORIN]**
But what if you want to change something? What if you disagree?

LORIN ELOI:

We believe in peace. No masters.

HORATIO:

Well, whoever farms this, the fruit is good. **[Looks at the table]**. And what kind of meat do you have?

LORIN ELOI:

Meat?

HORATIO:

Yes. Beef. Mutton. **[they look at him bemused]** Cows, do you have cows. What animals do you cook for food?

LORIN ELOI:

Killing animals for food. That is cruel.

HORATIO:

Well.. that is.... [he has no response, their logic is correct]. This fruit is excellent.

The ELOI wander off. Weena stays with Horatio.

HORATIO:

Do you have books.

WEENA: [not sure]

HORATIO:

Like this. [he pulls out his notepad].

WEENA:

Horatio. Follow.

She leads him to a cave. An ageing library sign hangs on the wall

HORATIO:

Yes books. Great literature. [approaches a shelf, touching molding dust-covered books]. Aristotle. Archimedes. Hippocrates.

WEENA:

Old things.

HORATIO:

These are treasures—history, medicine, science

[Opens the book, and it crumbles to dust in his hands, falling like ash].

Turned to dust. All dust!

HORATIO grabs another book, then another, each disintegrating.

HORATIO:

All knowledge... gone! The wisdom of centuries, poetry, philosophy

WEENA gently takes the remains of a book from HORATIO's hands, cupping the dust so it does not fall.

WEENA: [beat]

Horatio sad?

HORATIO: (softening)

Weena. This...this is what made us human.

[he picks at the tattered remains of Newton's Principia]

This book was written by Isaac Newton. He explained how our world turns around the sun. How you and me, how we are all on a planet flying through space.

[holds what is left of Shakespeare's first folio]

And Shakespeare... he gave us poetry. Words to understand everything.

“The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces, the solemn temples, the great globe itself— Yea, all which it inherit—shall dissolve and, Leave not a rack behind.”

[He lets the last flakes of paper fall]

Is this what happened. Everything that might have been, dissolved.
Nothing left behind.

WEENA watches him, then gently cups the fallen dust in her hands so it does not scatter further.

WEENA [quietly]:

Old things... still matter?

HORATIO:

Yes, Weena. They matter more than anything.

SOUND EFFECT: A low, eerie growl from the cave's depths. WEENA startles, whispering.

WEENA:

Dark!

The statue shadow darkens through the opening, a faint drone rising.

HORATIO:

What's that?

WEENA:

Friend, go!

She tugs him toward the cave exit. Together with other Eloi they move out of the cave with the other Eloi who are terrorised of the shadows behind them. One of the Eloi slips

HORATIO:

He's fallen. (goes to help him)

WEENA:

No. Horatio. We go.

Something unseen drags away the fallen Eloi. Weena and the other Eloi move out of the cave.

HORATIO:

We can't leave him.

He goes to other Eloi to try and get them to help. They shrug him off.

WEENA:

No good. Gone. Come, come

They exit the cave and go out into the open air. The danger gone, the Eloi return to playing and singing their strange high pitch tunes. As if nothing really happened. Horatio is mystified and disturbed by the Eloi.

On the screen the first Morlock text. "Food for us good".

Scene 5

Lights dim to cool moonlight. The stage is shadowy, with the statue silhouette dominating and glowing upstage. WEENA sits making a daisy chain. HORATIO kneels nearby, gathering sticks into a pile, glancing nervously at the cave mouth and statue.

HORATIO:

What was that in the cave, Weena? What's down there?

WEENA:

Dark. Bad things.

HORATIO:

They took one of your people.

WEENA:

Yes. Gone now.

HORATIO:

But who took him?

WEENA:

Bad things. Morlok. They come. Night.

HORATIO nods adding the final sticks to the pile. He reaches into his pocket, pulls out a matchbox, and selects a match. He strikes it. The sudden bright flame startles her.

On screen Morlock text “Bright Danger”

HORATIO:

It's just a match. You try one.

He shows WEENA. She fumbles, then succeeds.

On screen Morlock text “Too Bright Danger”

The fire crackles to life; flames rise, casting dancing shadows. She makes shadow shapes, and claps. HORATIO joins her briefly, sharing the moment.

WEENA:

Light keeps bad things away.

HORATIO:

I'm sorry for your friend.

WEENA:

Mor-lok take Eloi. But we happy. Not sad.

WEENA places the daisy chain gently around HORATIO's neck, smiling and touching his arm. Firelight glows on her face.

HORATIO:

That's beautiful, Weena. I've never seen flowers like this in my world.

WEENA smiles. But Horatio is not giving up on finding out what happened.

HORATIO:

The Morloks, why do they attack the Eloi?

WEENA takes HORATIO by the hand, leading him toward a second cave opening. They carry a torch made from firwood revealing a grim pile of ELOI skeletons. HORATIO horrified.

On screen Morlock text "Near, Near"

HORATIO:

These are Eloi. The Morloks?

WEENA nods again, mimicking an eating gesture, fear in her expression.

HORATIO:

Oh my God...

WEENA:

For all time Morloks eat Eloi. We always know.

They return to the fire. WEENA spreads a soft mat of leaves and flowers. They lie down side by side, facing the flames. WEENA places her hand in HORATIO's, he squeezes gently.

WEENA:

Horatio... your world... Eng..?

HORATIO:

England.

WEENA:

What is it like?

HORATIO:

Well, I live on the edge of a hill overlooking the river in a city called London. There are millions of people. Streets full of workers, shoppers, horses and carriages, people going to theatres and concerts.

WEENA:

Concerts?

HORATIO:

Big shows with beautiful music. And plays. Great ones by Shakespeare, the man whose book was in your old library. Comedies, tragedies,

WEENA:

Love stories.

HORATIO:

“Did my heart love till now? Forswear it, sight!
For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night”.

WEENA:

Beautiful words.

HORATIO:

Yes. You would enjoy it. It's a play full of beautiful words. The story of a young boy Romeo, and a girl Juliet who are in love.

WEENA:

What happens to them.

HORATIO:

They come from two different families who are at war.

WEENA:

The families fight?

HORATIO:

Yes. So Romeo and Juliet can't be together.

WEENA:

Many people fight in your world.

HORATIO:

Yes... we have wars.

WEENA:

Do people always have food?

HORATIO:

Not always. Some go hungry. [beat] But nobody eats other people.

WEENA:

You have special person in your world. Children?

HORATIO:

I have...had a godson

WEENA:

What is God? Son?

HORATIO:

What is God! Now that's a question. [that he not going to answer.] My great friend Filby. His son was like a son to me

WEENA:

He is waiting for you?

HORATIO:

Well, no. He fell in a river. We...I.. couldn't save him. But maybe with the machine...maybe...

SOUND of distant Morlok growl fades. The statue looms in shadow beyond the firelight. HORATIO and WEENA settle for the night. The Time Machine stands silently in the back.

On screen Morlock text "take machine"

Scene x new

We see Filby, the Professor and Eagle unfreeze from the positions when we left them. The clock telling the same time. **[PROBLEM, EAGLE WAS THERE will there be time to change] At the moment this scene is redundant. Does not move story on]**

We see them looking at the space where the time machine was.

FILBY.

I wonder where he has gone to.

PROFESSOR

This is just an illusion. Some trick. He must be hiding **[starts looking behind curtains]**

FILBY.

He's gone isn't he professor.

From outside we hear a march. It is a group of suffragettes. They look out to see Eagle at the front carrying a banner "Votes for Women" **[maybe there is some subplot about her article was given someone elses headline?]**

FILBY.

It's Miss Eagle. She is quite the bluestocking.

PROFESSOR [looking]

Are you blind Filby. Her stockings are red.

FILBY.

No professor. I mean she... Never mind. [shouts] Good luck Miss Eagle. I will toast your efforts with a glass of Horatio's sherry.

FILBY AND THE PROFESSOR FREEZE.

Scene 6

Night turns to day. The sun comes up. HORATIO wakes. WEENA is still sleeping. He looks at her fondly. Turns around and realises.

HORATIO:

My machine—

WEENA: (wakes up looking)

Gone?

HORATIO:

It's been moved.

He moves around the stage searching.

WEENA:

Horatio angry?

HORATIO:

No. Well yes actually yes. It's gone.

WEENA:

You need machine?

HORATIO:

Yes, Weena, I need it. So I can go back to my world.

WEENA:

Horatio not happy here?

HORATIO:

Weena this [indicates the two of them] makes me happy. But I don't belong here, this is not my world. I am not Eloi.

He studies the ground.

HORATIO:

Look — dragged along here. To this cave.

[Horatio takes a match and makes a torch.]

WEENA:

Mor-lok in there.

HORATIO:

And so is my time machine. **[beat. He is going in. She hesitates]** You don't need to come with me. I think it is probably better you don't.

WEENA:

Weena stay with Horatio.

They step into the dark tunnel, the torchlight flickering. Mechanical noises echo: ventilation hums, distant metallic clanks.

WEENA:

Bad noises.

Suddenly the torch goes out. HORATIO strikes another match — but in that split second of darkness, MORLOKS rush between them.

WEENA:

Horatio!

HORATIO:

Leave her!

He runs after her past hanging hooks line the walls, ELOI bodies stored to ready to eat suspended like cattle. He catches up with the Morloks and thrusts the match-flame toward them. Blinded, they scatter back and Weena is free.

HORATIO:

Weena! Quickly—

He pulls her away — then stops. A faint, rhythmic glow pulses from a side chamber.

HORATIO: (whispers)

Look...

There is the Time Machine, surrounded by Morloks who prod at its levers.

HORATIO:

They're going to destroy it. [he moves towards the time machine]

WEENA:

No. Horatio.

One Morlok tugs at a brass panel, prising it open. Horatio Steps forward, stops as he sees many more Morloks beyond.

WEENA:

Too many.

The match burns low. Its last torch of light draws the Morloks' attention.

They turn

WEENA:

Horatio come! Come now!

He seizes her hand. They run. Morloks swarm behind them. HORATIO reaches an exit shaft. He shoves a heap of fallen timber into the shaft forming a temporary barrier. They scramble up A faint grey light appears ahead.

They burst out into daylight just as Morloks screech behind the blocked passage.

HORATIO THROWS A LIGHTED TORCH INTO THE SHAFT. THE MORLOKS SCREAM. HORATIO and WEENA collapse outside, gasping.

Scene 7

Horatio has gathered the Eloi together. At the Palace of Green Porcelain — a decaying museum-like structure. They sit listening. Weena stays close to him.

HORATIO:

You probably know I, come from another time — the past. A world very different from yours. Let me tell you something that happened back then. For you thousands of years ago. In our time, like yours, there were also different types of people...

LORIN ELOI:

Morloks and Eloi?

HORATIO:

No — different names. One group lived on a great land across the sea. In a warm place, a kind of paradise, like this place. But they had no weapons, no power, no machines. Another group lived far away, in many smaller places. They had weapons.

He indicates to Weena who strikes a match. The Eloi are amazed.

HORATIO:

Fire. Metal. Machines. The people from the machine country went in boats to the paradise and took its people from their homes.

LORIN ELOI:

What for? Why?

HORATIO:

They forced them to work. Made them harvest food and fabric for clothes. They were treated badly. Used them as labour.

ELOI 2:

Like Mor-lok use Eloi. Bad.

HORATIO:

Yes. But the people in the machine world were not all bad. Because they had created machines and weapons — and did not live alongside these other people — they forgot kindness and used their power to control.

WEENA: [rallying the group]

Eloi not want Mor-lok take more of us.

ELOI 2: No.

We don't want more taken.

HORATIO:

Yes. And the thing is, the situation changed back then, the people from the warm paradise, they began to fight back. That is why I have brought you here. To ask you to join together — to fight. To use these fire sticks to stop the Morloks.

We have found this—

[Weena pulls out a chunk of camphor.]

I think it is from my world. Something that survived here from my time.

LORIN ELOI:

What is it? **[takes a piece, licks it, recoils]**

HORATIO:

No, no — it's not food. It's camphor. Watch.

Weena lights a match and puts it to a stick covered in camphor. It flares brightly. Gasps from the Eloi.

HORATIO:

With this, the Morloks will run from you. You can stop them. Strength is the outcome of need. When you live in perfect safety... you do not grow strong. Together, we can go into their caves and show them you will fight back. We. You can stop the Morloks.

The Eloi look doubtful.

ELOI 2:

A war with the Morloks

LORIN:

We have food here. War is bad

HORATIO:

Yes, war is bad, but..

LORIN:

People die?

ELOI 1:

Eloi don't want to die.

HORATIO:

But every day the Morloks take some of you.

ELOI:

We have what we need.

HORATIO:

You must act, or the Morloks will devour you!

LORIN:

We do not wish to harm anyone, friend. Violence solves nothing. There must be another way.

HORATIO:

Another way? They hunt you while you do nothing.

LORIN:

Then we protect, not attack. Live in peace.

[they make to leave. Weena stands and blocks them]

WEENA:

No more Eloi die. [she lights a flare]. Now we have this we can stop Morlok.

LORIN ELOI: [to Horatio and weena]

Can you be sure your, war, your fire will stop the Morloks.

HORATIO:

No we can't be sure, but...

LORIN:

Peace is better.

The Eloi look at each other in agreement then drift away. Horatio calls after them.

HORATIO:

Please don't leave. This is your chance to stop the Morloks killing you.

(frustrated) It's hopeless. Why won't they save themselves?

WEENA:

Eloi not fight. Too afraid.

HORATIO:

Or... too comfortable to care.

WEENA:

No. Long ago... Eloi fight. But Mor-lok many. Too strong. So we forget.

Forget fighting. Now Eloi never fight. Only run. You strong. You can fight.

You bring light. Fire. They see... they will learn.

Scene 8.

It is night again. Weena and Horatio have settled down to sleep. In the background we hear a buzzing. On the video screens messages. These are chats, “whatsapps” Morlok messages. [We need to reveal this at some good point]

WE SEE THE TALEBEARER

WE SEE THE LIGHT WARRIOR

THE PAST HAS RETURNED

BRING HIM BELOW

The giant statue changes as if commanding a force.

Morlok hands reach up from below [I know this best be done with a stage trap door, but this is the concept]. Horatio, his sleep disturbed, suddenly wakes to find himself enveloped in Morlok hands as they pull him down.

WEENA wakes to see him pulled into the underworld. She screams.

WEENA:

Nooo. Horatio.

Scene 9

We are in the Morlok underworld. The command and control bunker. Horatio sits on the floor in the middle of the stage. Downstage are three screens.

Shifting between the screens is the Overmind. The master Morlok controller. He is an indistinct figure, his shape like the Stalin statue. His voice is being translated from Morlok into English so that Horatio can understand. A harsh unreal sound. The Morlok messages flit along the screens and match the words spoken by Overmind.

HORATIO:

What do you want with me?

OVERMIND:

You build machines. You carry fire. You would destroy our existence.

HORATIO:

You exist because you kill the Eloi. You should be destroyed, for humanity.

OVERMIND:

Is this your message from the past. Your perfect world?

[Horatio says nothing]

Where workers live below, digging underground to serve the masters.

While we trapped beneath, we grew strong.

HORATIO:

The Morloks were once human?

OVERMIND:

All of us were human once. But in the paradise of light the Eloi became children. They forgot everything they knew.

Without sunlight... we became hunters.

But in the dark, we remembered the knowledge of civilisation.

HORATIO:

You became flesh eating monsters.

OVERMIND:

And that is all you can see. Look

[on the screens comes a collage of the history of planet earth. All human knowledge of science, literature, technology, medicine]

OVERMIND:

Ever achievement of your world is with us. Every understanding with us.

HORATIO:

And you turn it to death. You have no knowledge of humanity, of kindness and love

OVERMIND:

Everything can be understood. Given enough centuries

[on the screens comes Horatio and Filby on their fishing trip. Filby's son is riding on Horatio's back. This time we see that he accidentally drops him and the boy falls into the water. Horatio and Filby desperately try to rescue him. The funeral, Filby in tears and Horatio trying to comfort him]

OVERMIND:

We know of your love. It did not save the boy. It just brought pain.

OVERMIND world screen messages and alarm. Intrusion detected. The Eloi female. Horatio smiles slightly.

HORATIO:

Her name is Weena.

And she is braver than all of you.

The screens flicker violently. The Overmind's voice grows colder.

OVERMIND:

Bravery is inefficient. History proves this.

Horatio starts to run

Run, traveller.

Humanity belongs to us.

Scene 10

Weena has entered into the Morlok underworld. She has brought a back sack of supplied. They use camphor to lay fire traps, connecting each chunk of camphor with string to make fuses.

HORATIO:

OK Weena. Let's give the Morlok a taste of fire. We run the fuse along the tunnel. When they follow us— the whole place burns.

The camphor ignites, flames crackling along the string. MORLOKS screech and recoil.

WEENA:

Run!

They sprint through the tunnels, leaping over debris. The faint light of the time machine glimmers ahead, next to the statue.

HORATIO:

There! My machine!

HORATIO leaps onto the time machine, gripping the lever. The Morloks start to gather like zombies. But the light of the machine makes them hesitate.

A brilliant light bursts forth, causing the MORLOKS to recoil and retreat.

HORATIO:

Weena! Climb on. Come with me!

WEENA:

No... not my world.

HORATIO:

There are no Morloks in my world.

WEENA:

A world of machines and war.

HORATIO:

A world of music, concerts, Shakespeare.

[She hesitates]

WEENA:

Take this. Horatio

She presses an Eloi flower into his hand.

WEENA:

No forget.

HORATIO: (nodding) **HORATIO gives her the flare, activates the machine. Light swells. He disappears.**

WEENA stands firm in the cave as the Morloks approach and she turns to them. To face her enemy. Black out.

Scene 11

Horatio's time machine travels. He goes further into the future. Into a world of heat and destruction.

Too hot, too dystopian. So he reverses, back past the Morlok and Eloi. It is the reverse of the sequence we saw when he travelled into the future.

And reverses back to the accident with Filby's son. Confusion as Horatio ducks into the water to try and pull him up,

HORATIO: (*seeing Filby's son struggling in the water*)

No... I can't let him—

PROFESSOR:

Every choice you make in the past is a risk to the continuum. Some things... some people... are not meant to be changed.

He yanks him onto the river bank and starts beating on his chest to get the water out.

Horatio's laboratory, 1895. The same night he left. Same time showing on the clock. A *thunderclap* of energy. Light flares. The Time Machine reappears sparking, winding down.

HORATIO is thrown from the saddle, collapsing centre-stage. Around him the same group that were there when he left in exactly the same positions.

FILBY:

Good Lord—Horatio! You look in pretty poor shape, old chap!

JANE EAGLE:

Horatio can you hear me?

HORATIO:

Weena...? (*reaches toward Jane's face*)

JANE: (*slightly confused by his gesture*).

It's Jane. Jane Eagle.

Horatio struggles to sit. He is pale, bruised, exhausted.

FILBY:

Where the devil did you get to? There are scorch marks all over the floor and your machine looks a bit worse for wear.

HORATIO:

I've been... far. Farther than any man has ever gone. I have seen our world turned into heaven and hell.

PROFESSOR:

Poor man, he's babbling.

FILBY: (aside to Professor).

I say Professor the chap's knocked his head. Give him a moment to come to his sense.

JANE EAGLE:

Let him talk. He seems convinced.

HORATIO:

I saw people. No not people, underground killers, eating humanity.

PROFESSOR:

I think we can see what's become of you: you've lost your mind. You vanish for a heartbeat with some parlour-trick contraption and then reappear with a cock-and-bull story about cannibals. Look at the clock on the wall.

FILBY:

Hate to say it, old boy, but the professor's right. We haven't moved from this room. Time hasn't budged. Though I'll admit... I do feel rather like it ought to be lunchtime.

PROFESSOR:

Your machine has proved nothing.

HORATIO: (reviving)

I tell you it has proved *everything*. That if we do not care for our world if we divide ourselves into masters and labourers—into those who live above and those driven below—the world will rot. Humanity will split, break, devour itself. I have seen it.

FILBY :

Sounds like you've had a bad dream old chap.

HORATIO:

It was no dream.

Has an idea. He reaches into his coat.

HORATIO:

Professor... you pride yourself on knowing every species of plant in Britain.

PROFESSOR:

Indeed, I lecture at the Royal Botanical Society.

HORATIO:

Tell me, then—what is this?

He places the flower Weena gave him on the table. Everyone stares.

JANE:

I've never such a flower before. It's... beautiful.

FILBY:

Good lord, did you take up gardening during your future adventures Horatio?

HORATIO:

It was given to me by a very brave person.

The Professor bends to examine it

PROFESSOR:

Well, it's pretty obvious that this is just a...well it is.... This... this is.... impossible.

ARTHUR. Filby's son comes into the room. [logically he is now 12, we need a way to recognise him immediately and I am struggling with this being visual without adding some clunky expository dialogue. Also tricky as we don't have child actor, unless we use video and have the same boy we see in the video drowning or we have a bigger time slip, but that does not make sense.]

FILBY:

HORATIO:

So was time travel. Until now.

Scene 12 – Back at the Royal Society

Lecture hall. HORATIO at the podium. Victorian style lantern show of ruined cityscape, overgrown with vegetation. The Morlok/Stalin statue.

On stage the Flower from the future in a small vase on the podium.

Filby calls attention with the gavel. As in earlier scene.

Lights on HORATIO at the podium, EAGLE near side stage, PROFESSOR seated to one side.

HORATIO:

Ladies and gentlemen, a few months ago I demonstrated my time machine here at the Royal Society. Many were sceptical, understandably. Well tonight I bring you the future.

On our lantern show you see what our world will become the year 802,701 if we don't heed the warning.

I have seen the sunset of mankind. Not a single catastrophe... not a war... not a plague...but a surrender.

[Pauses] A civilisation that forgot how to build... ...how to care for its own future.

This is the world we may inherit, if we continue as we are - to believe our comfort is security, safety. Comfort will become decay if we divide ourselves—masters above, workers below. If we built machines so perfect that we stop improving ourselves those machines will become our masters.

If we do that, the division will deepen over centuries... until we became two species.

I give you the future, Eloi and Morloks.

Pictures on screen

Not enemies by nature... but enemies by our own making.

[in audience] DR SNODE:

This is all nonsense. Are we expected to bring our society to a halt, an end to progress go back to the stone age.

EAGLE:

Dr Snode. I too like you was a sceptic. But I have seen the evidence with my own eyes. Witnessed his machine travel into the ether. I can tell you that Horatio's story is the most important one for our time. But If the testimony of a journalist is not enough, particularly for some of you a female journalist. Hear the words of a distinguished professor.

DR SNODE:

[snorts] Distinguished! I think we have already heard enough of his words to fill a dictionary of nonsense.

Light up on flower.

PROFESSOR:

This flower, ladies and gentleman, is no ordinary bloom. It is like nothing else we have seen in our time. It has amazed our greatest botanists. I have to admit I doubted him, but here it is evidence that Mr Horatio Tripp went to another world.

HORATIO:

This flower piece of beauty from a world that has gone dark. Where all understanding and philosophy crumbles into dust. Where reading, writing and knowledge are replaced by darkness and cannibalism

[new slides, a world completely destroyed]

HORATIO:

But at least a flower offers hope. I travelled further still—millions of years hence—and witnessed a darkened sky, a blood-red sun, and nothing but monstrous fire. The final furnace of a dying world. Not war, not cannibalism, but a planet stripped of life.

This is what will happen if we do not care for our world. Machines alone cannot preserve us. Only foresight and responsibility, can.

I beg you. The choice is ours. Not fate. Not destiny. We can avert this... or let it come to pass.

Scene 13

HORATIO stands in his laboratory. It is exactly as it was in Scene 1. Morning light. The Time Machine waiting.

He crosses to the desk and places the flower gently on the table. He writes a note. Folds it. Leaves it beside the flower.

Horatio walks to the shelf. Takes a copy of Shakespeare's plays from a shelf tucks it into his pocket.

He climbs into the Time Machine. It hums, brightens, begins to vibrate and disappears.

[Silence]

The door opens. FILBY enters.

FILBY:

Well, old bean I thought I heard you rattling around in here. We've got lunch at the club and chef does brisket on Wednesdays and... .. Horatio? Horatio! Where the devil—?

He sees the flower and the note on the floor. He kneels, picks them up, staring in disbelief.

FILBY:

Oh... good Lord. Well, looks like lunch is off. As they say. Time waits for no man.

LIGHT SHIFT. A soft SPOTLIGHT on JANE EAGLE, downstage. She holds a sheet of paper—her newspaper article. She reads.

EAGLE:

"Horatio Tripp travelled where no man has gone before. To seek out new worlds and new civilisations, to go to the final frontier of mankind.

He left us a message— that our world is precious, and its future fragile. And he left the present to try and save the future.

(pauses)

In many ways, I wish he had stayed. Stayed with us. Stayed, if I am honest, with me.

But here are his final words to our time

“My dear Filby and Miss Eagle. By now you will know that I have once more gone back to the future. This time I will not be returning. Filby, I am sorry I missed our lunch. But I have left my best bottle of port for you to toast me at our club. To you Miss Eagle, I leave my notes and papers and I know you will tell my story with much truth and a little personal affection. I am sorry we will not meet again. But there is somebody in the future whose fate I cannot leave to chance.

On Digital screen. A faint, ghostlike image. HORATIO arrives in 802,701. WEENA turns, sees him, and runs to him. They embrace—soft, dreamlike. We should not be sure if this is real or not.

Eagle’s words runs into Horatio voice

HORATIO (V.O.): If this is truly our future, then we stand at the beginning of a path that leads to darkness. But the future is not fixed. It depends on what we do— today.”

Lights dim to nothing. A single light falls on the flower left on the desk.

Then, we hear the sound we associate with time machine.

Into that space on the stage where the flower was comes:

The Morlock/Stalin statue that has travelled back in time. Evil has gone back to the past.

END

Notes

Mortach: The Morlok Language

Purpose:

Mortach is a constructed language for the Morloks. It's designed to sound alien, guttural, and commanding, reinforcing the Morloks' predatory, subterranean nature. Unlike Eloi speech (soft, melodic), Mortach is harsh and abrupt, making the Overmind's dialogue feel menacing and unnatural.

Design Features:

1. Phonetics (Sounds):

- Guttural consonants: k, g, r, th, sh, v, z, x
- Short, sharp vowels: a, u, o, e, i
- Harsh clusters for emphasis: kr, vr, thl, shk, xr
- Rhythm: abrupt, staccato, machine-like, giving a sense of danger

2. Grammar:

- Word order: Verb–Subject–Object (VSO) — makes it feel alien and predatory.
 - Example: Grak-thul! Vrok-shet tor'ka! → literally: "Build-machines! You-wield fire!"
- Plurality: Add -k or -th to nouns for plurals: Vrok (fire) → Vrok-th (fires)
- Tense: -ul = present, -ak = past, -ar = future
- Possession: -'ka = belonging/possessive: Tor'ka = "your essence/existence"

3. Vocabulary Examples:

- Grak = build / create
- Thul = machine / tool
- Vrok = fire

- **Tor'ka = your existence / essence**
- **Ven'k = human / weak**
- **Drak = kill / destroy**
- **Thrash = speak / command**
- **Ish-trak = bravery / courage**
- **Shulk = efficiency / futile action**
- **Krath = underground / darkness**

4. Stage Usage:

- **Mortach is spoken aloud with guttural emphasis; English subtitles can appear on screens for clarity.**
- **Morlok “messages” (like WhatsApp chats) appear in Mortach to enhance the feeling of alien communication.**
- **Growls, screeches, or chants can be integrated as part of the language.**

5. Effect on Audience:

- **Makes the Morloks feel completely alien and threatening.**
- **Highlights the contrast between Eloi and Morloks.**
- **Supports dramatic tension in scenes with the Overmind or Morlok attacks.**

Basically: it's like Klingon's cousin who lives underground and is obsessed with power and fire. 🔥