

"A Toaster in Space"

by

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"A TOASTER IN SPACE"

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE - NIGHT

The earth, a swirling sea of blue, turns in the night sky.

A tiny wave of electrical light flashes in the ether.

In its wake, a kitchen toaster appears.

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A quiet Italian restaurant.

SARAH, thirtysomething and beautiful, sits alone at a corner table.

THOMAS, fortysomething and nervous, enters the restaurant and walks slowly over to Sarah.

SARAH

Thomas?

THOMAS

Sarah.

SARAH

Hello.

There are tiny sparks when they shake hands.

THOMAS

Sorry, static electricity.

SARAH

That's okay. We'll tell people we felt sparks when we first met.

Thomas smiles and sits down.

THOMAS

Can I get you something to drink, a glass of Cabernet perhaps?

SARAH

Cabernet, that's my favorite.

Thomas searches the restaurant.

THOMAS  
The waiter seems to have vanished.

There is an awkward pause.

SARAH  
Have you done this before?

THOMAS  
Dated?

SARAH  
No, a blind date.

THOMAS  
Once before.

SARAH  
This is my first time.

THOMAS  
Is it hot in here?

SARAH  
I don't think so.

Thomas loosens his tie.

SARAH  
How did it work out, your last  
blind date?

THOMAS  
I fell in love.

SARAH  
Really?

THOMAS  
I'd rather not talk about it.

Thomas mops his brow with his handkerchief.

SARAH  
So, you live with your mother?

THOMAS  
Yes.

SARAH  
I think that's sweet.

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Every corner and crevice is alive with technology.

Thomas moves gracefully through his basement laboratory. He pauses over a large breaker before throwing the switch.

A massive tesla coil hums to life, vibrates, and grows in intensity.

Everything goes black.

THOMAS  
Mother!

The sound of the basement door opening and a flashlight beam cuts through the darkness.

MOTHER  
Thomas, are you down here? Thomas?

Thomas's MOTHER searches the basement for her son.

THOMAS  
Over here, Mother.

The light stops on Thomas.

MOTHER  
I just turned on the dishwasher. I think we blew a fuse.

THOMAS  
I've told you a hundred times, you can't run the dishwasher when I'm working.

MOTHER  
It's very late. You should get some sleep. You look tired.

THOMAS  
I'm fine, Mother.

MOTHER  
I need to tell you something.

THOMAS  
Right now, in the dark?

MOTHER  
I met someone today, at the grocery store. We got to talking at the seafood counter and one thing led to another and well, I told her all about you.

THOMAS  
This is a nightmare.

MOTHER  
Don't be dramatic. She seems very nice and she wants to meet you.

THOMAS  
Do I have a choice?

MOTHER  
Her name is Sarah.

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Thomas and Sarah are in the midst of dinner.

SARAH  
Your mother was teaching me the finer points of selecting shellfish. It's much more complicated than one might imagine.

THOMAS  
Yes, she is an expert on all things shellfish.

They both smile.

SARAH  
She also told me you were a scientist. I find science fascinating.

THOMAS  
My mother, exaggerates.

SARAH  
You're not a scientist?

THOMAS  
More of a mad scientist, I think.

SARAH  
Do tell.

THOMAS  
It's a hobby, an obsession.

SARAH  
And what are you obsessed with?

THOMAS  
The fourth dimension.

SARAH  
Time?

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

The homemade lab is a spaghetti of cabling and oscilloscopes.

A toaster rests atop a metallic pedestal in the middle of the basement.

A modified Feynman laser points at the toaster.

Thomas flips a switch and the tesla coil glows with current.

A second switch is flipped and the laser emits a brilliant blue light, striking the toaster.

The toaster vibrates, pulsing slowly at first, then faster and faster, until it's out of focus, fuzzy, hazy, and almost transparent.

A high pitched whine, a bright flash of light, and the toaster vanishes.

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Thomas and Sarah have finished their dinner.

Sarah is captivated.

SARAH  
Where did the toaster go?

THOMAS  
Into the future.

SARAH  
But how?

THOMAS  
I altered its time signature.

SARAH  
Its time signature?

THOMAS  
It's Quantum Mechanics, sorry. Are you sure you want to talk about this?

SARAH  
Please. I want to hear everything.

THOMAS  
Okay. Well, all matter has a time signature, it's called Harmonics. Everything resonates in waves, sound, light, even matter, at the subatomic level. Your hand, for example, is vibrating.

Thomas takes her hand in his.

THOMAS  
Mine vibrates as well. We all vibrate on the same frequency.

SARAH  
Time, the fourth dimension, is just another wave?

THOMAS  
Very good, that's right. It took Einstein many years to reach that conclusion. And we are all bound together on the same frequency, vibrating on the same time wave.

Thomas releases her hand.

THOMAS  
Now the trick is, could I vibrate the very fabric of matter? Could I change its time signature? If I sped it up, matter would move through time and into the future.

(MORE)

THOMAS (cont'd)  
Slow it down and it would travel  
into the past.

SARAH  
But how would it know when to stop  
traveling through time and  
reappear?

Thomas points to his glass.

THOMAS  
Look at the water in this glass.

Thomas strikes the glass gently with his spoon.

THOMAS  
The water ripples briefly and then  
returns to its resting state.

Thomas strikes the glass firmly with his spoon.

THOMAS  
Now the water vibrates vigorously  
and it will take a while longer  
before it stops. It's the same  
with the laser, the more power, the  
further forward or backward in  
time.

Thomas raises his glass and takes a sip.

SARAH  
So, did the toaster reappear?

THOMAS  
Yes and no. I expected it to  
reappear after a minute. I waited  
for it. I stood motionless in my  
basement for what seemed like hours  
waiting for something, for  
anything. Nothing happened.

SARAH  
And then what?

THOMAS  
I remembered Copernicus.

SARAH  
Copernicus?

THOMAS  
16th Century astronomer.

SARAH

That much I knew.

THOMAS

Sorry. Copernicus said "We are not the center of the universe". We are insignificant souls on a solitary planet hurtling through the cosmos.

SARAH

I don't understand.

THOMAS

The toaster had disappeared from time for one minute, but during that minute the earth had traveled 10,000 miles further around the sun. When the toaster reappeared in time, my basement was no longer where it was when it left. I sent the world's first toaster into space.

SARAH

If this is true...

THOMAS

It's true.

SARAH

I can't believe it.

THOMAS

Would you like to see it for yourself?

SARAH

Are you serious?

Thomas stands and offers his hand.

THOMAS

Come with me.

SARAH

Just give me a minute to catch my breath.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Sarah walks into the ladies room.

She checks the stalls, the room is empty.

She looks at herself in the mirror and adjusts the microphone hidden in her dress.

She turns on the sink and splashes water in her face.

SARAH

Just stay calm. You can do this.

She pulls a paper towel from the rack and dries off.

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Thomas and Sarah walk down the stairs.

SARAH

Is your mother awake?

THOMAS

She's dead asleep.

Sarah stops at the bottom of the stairs, in awe of Thomas's lab.

SARAH

Oh my God. This is real.

THOMAS

I would never lie to you.

Sarah walks amongst the equipment, gently touching it.

SARAH

This is the laser, and the pedestal where you placed the toaster?

THOMAS

The very same. Would you like to see a demonstration?

SARAH

Very much.

Thomas throws the breaker.

The cables come to life and the room buzzes with electrical energy.

SARAH  
I have a question.

THOMAS  
I thought you would.

SARAH  
How can you be sure the toaster reappeared? I mean you can't see a toaster in outer space.

THOMAS  
No, you can't. And, if I might add, a time machine that sends people hurtling into the far reaches of the galaxy wouldn't be very popular.

SARAH  
So what did you do?

THOMAS  
I built a homing beacon.

Thomas rests his hand on a silver orb, a red light shines from within.

Sarah looks at the glowing sphere in wonder.

THOMAS  
It's complicated, more Quantum Mechanics I'm afraid. But with the beacon on, the time signature can stay fixated in space. It can find its way home.

SARAH  
Does it work?

THOMAS  
Perfectly.

SARAH  
How do you know?

THOMAS  
I used it today. Well not today, exactly. I used it a week from today. I sent myself back in time. Back to this night.

SARAH  
You did what?

THOMAS  
You ever have deja vu? I'm having  
it now. Only last time, the last  
time you and I were here together,  
you told me that you loved me. You  
see you were my first blind date.  
You were my first love.

Sarah is frightened.

THOMAS  
However, you failed to mention who  
you worked for, or that I was only  
an assignment. I didn't find that  
out until much later.

Sarah is trembling.

THOMAS  
You broke my heart.

Thomas turns the laser toward Sarah.

SARAH  
Oh my God.

THOMAS  
I'll give you this though, it was a  
nice week while it lasted.

SARAH  
Thomas?

Thomas flicks off the homing beacon, the red light dims.

THOMAS  
Maybe we'll do it again sometime.

Thomas fires the laser.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE - NIGHT

The earth, awash in storm clouds, spins through the galaxy.  
Electric light crackles in the void of space.

Sarah appears, wide eyed, and releases a final, silent scream.

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Thomas is silent, staring at the emptiness where Sarah stood.

The basement door slowly opens.

MOTHER

Thomas, are you down here?

THOMAS

Yes, Mother.

MOTHER

Working late again?

THOMAS

Yes, Mother.

MOTHER

Well, don't stay up too late.

Mother turns to leave, stops, and turns back.

MOTHER

One more thing.

THOMAS

Yes, Mother?

MOTHER

Have you seen our toaster?

FADE OUT.