

KILLING TIME

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Short Story by



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First appeared:

The Enigmatic Monster Project

<http://theenigmaticmonsterproject.com>

Online Edition

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It was madness! How could he not foresee something like this happening? He never dreamt that he would have shot himself. How many people can say that? He had completely lost track of the number of times, he came bursting through his home office door. Boom! Or was it bang? It didn't matter he shot himself.

Staring at the door, he knew it was just a matter of time before another version of himself would burst through the door. Out of the corner of his eye he saw a blue glowing orb. Reloading his gun, he gets up and walked over to the orb. Reaching out, he almost touched it but didn't dare. What was it? Where did it come from?

Just then the door slam open and he came in looking a little crazed. Each new copy of himself that came through the door looked wild haggard and dangerous. This one had dark circles under his blood shot eyes.

"Stop it! We must stop the machine!" he staggered inside the room.

"The machine is broken," he told himself.

"Not possible, I just used it."

"I'm telling you I have gone downstairs in our lab and broke it. I tore it apart."

"You did?" he looked hopeful. Then shook his head, "No, you couldn't have I just used it."

"I don't see how when I destroyed it and I don't intend on repairing it. Go look for yourself."

"Come with me."

"No, I need to stay here. There is this," he pointed to the orb that looked bright like lightening it was pulsing and it was bigger! How did it get bigger?

"What the hell is that?" his future self asked.

"I don't know. It just showed up."

"Is it getting bigger?" he stared at it wide eyed. Nodding, "yes, ... yes, I think it is."

"We can't let that happen."

"We don't know what it is or where it came from. How can I stop it?"

"It's a time rift."

"I'm sorry, it's a what?"

"You heard me, a time rift."

"No, it's not ... that's hypothetical."

His future self laughed shaking his head, "So it is time travel you idiot, but we made that happen think ... think ... okay, I'm going down to the lab to check on the machine."

"Wait!" gripping his sweaty hand on the revolver. Slowly he raised it. "I can't let you do that."

"You can't let me ... do what?" his future self demanded.

"You know ..."

His future self closed his eyes tight. "Please, tell me you've destroyed it."

"I can't."

"You have to. If you don't we all die."

Pointing the gun at his doppelganger, at his future self ... "Don't make me do this again."

His future self stared at him wide eye. "How many times have you shot me ... us?"

"You're number ...," he swallowed hard. "One-twenty-one."

"121! What are you mad? You have to be crazy!"

"Maybe but most geniuses are," he tried to reason with himself. "It's the only thing that works."

"You are crazy. We've invented so many things."

He shook his head, "No not in this timeline and I am not about to let anyone even myself from the future destroy the only thing I ever made that works. I won't let you."

"It's not an option. We have to otherwise there isn't going to be a universe to save," his future self tried to reason.

He closed his eyes tight. What if they were right? No ... no, they couldn't be. His future self laughed, and he pulled the trigger again. BANG! "I'm sorry," he told himself. "I'm sorry."

His future self slumped to the floor, shaking his head, "please, if you don't that rift is going to get bigger think of Pam and the kids."

"Pam left me, we never had kids," he kept his distance.

"Yes, we have two girls," his future self pleaded as he bled.

"I don't ..." he watched as the life faded out of the eyes that looked just like his.

Glancing over his shoulder the ball of light it got bigger. He would have to find something to hide that. Grabbing his future self by the legs, he dragged him down the hall and put him in one of the bedrooms. The bodies were stacking up. Maybe he should move his time machine out to the cottage. Now that was a plan he could get behind.

Heading back to his office, he searched his desk for his keys, just then another version of himself burst into the room.

"Stop it! We must stop the machine."

He raised his gun, leveled at the guy and pulled the trigger. His eyes found his keys lying on the bookshelf by the door.

I gotta move the machine, he thought.