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Title: This Will Take Explaining

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Glossary and Pre-reading Notes:

- Binyamin - the same name as the common English spelling of Benjamin.
- Time Phasing Machine - a fictional machine allowing people to travel through time
- Shed - an outbuilding normally used for storage
- Crate - A rugged box (usually made of wood); used for shipping
- Plank - A length of timber (wood) in a wide variety of sizes used for building and other purposes
- Flashlight - A small portable battery-powered electric lamp
- In many western countries the weekend is made up of Saturday and Sunday (sometimes Friday is included). Many people get Saturday and Sunday off from work or school.
- Slavery - A practice which is illegal in most countries where a person is owned by another

This Will Take Explaining

Last summer, my brother, Binyamin, went on a trip to Russia. After he returned, he told me a little about his trip.

It seems that the trip had something to do with his studies. He visited a research laboratory called the Institute of Time Studies. He was traveling with his physics professor who was buying some used equipment for their university. Binyamin told me he became interested in something he had seen, called a Time Phasing Machine. He didn't have time to try it out but he said, he decided to buy it and have it sent home. By the time Binyamin left for graduate school, I had completely forgotten about that conversation. A few days later, a truck arrived in front of our house with a delivery for Binyamin.

"A delivery for you," said the truck driver. "Please sign here."

"What is it?" asked my dad.

"It says here, it's a Time Phasing Machine."

"A what?" my dad asked, sounding slightly upset.

"Please just tell me where to put it," said the driver.

"How big is it?"

"It says here that it weighs just under two tons."

"We should send it over to Binyamin's dorm room," he said, looking at my mother.

I was a lot more interested in the contents than my dad was, but I kept quiet. Between my dad and the driver, they decided on a corner of the shed. If it had not been for my curiosity, the whole matter would have ended there.

The crate was about the size of a piano, and it had Russian and English writing all over it. The first few days, I just studied the crate. There was a small crack between two of the planks, and with a flashlight and a sharp eye, I could see something that looked like a giant video game. There was also a large book that I guessed was an instruction manual. Now I knew it would have been better if I had asked first, but I thought if I just removed one of the planks, I could pull out the book and at least understand what this machine was used for. Binyamin wouldn't mind, and I could always put it back.

The plank came off easily. I took the book to my room and that's where the hard work started. The book was in Russian. After a few days, I convinced one of the teachers at school to help. I thought he'd be interested in what this thing was, but his only interest seemed to be that an eight-year-old girl was interested in learning a foreign language.

I got the table of contents translated, skipped the theory of operations, and went to the explanation of the controls. It seemed pretty straightforward. There was a power switch, and a series of small rotating numbers that set the year, the month, the day, and the time on the left side of the panel. On the right, there were more switches to set the duration, and a bright yellow push button marked "start." To me, it all looked pretty simple.

The next challenge was the power. The plug was different from ours. Consulting the teacher and the manual, we found out it needed 220 volts. I befriended the science teacher and he loaned me a large transformer and some "be careful" advice.

On Friday, I arrived home from school with a much larger-than-normal book bag and was quizzed by my mother. It looked as if I were planning to do some serious studying over the weekend. I mumbled something about reading one of Binyamin's books in Russian and that seemed to put her at ease.

That night, I did all my homework. I didn't want any barriers between me and this giant video game. If I did things right, I'd have most of Saturday and Sunday to play.

On Saturday morning, I woke at dawn. I finished my chores quickly, ate breakfast, and then headed for the shed. There was no need to completely unpack the machine; I'd just remove a few more planks so that I could crawl inside.

I plugged it in, squeezed through the planks of the crate, and then sat down on the built-in bench. Not knowing what kind of noise it would make, I set the duration control for five minutes and set the date for yesterday. I took a deep breath, smiled, and then pressed the yellow button.

"Flash—bang." And then suddenly I was out of there and back in school. It was yesterday and I was in science class. I pinched myself to make sure I wasn't dreaming. I asked the boy behind me what day it was; he gave me a funny look and then told me it was Friday. I must admit I got a little scared. Maybe it would have been better if I had left the machine alone. After a few minutes passed, I heard a high-pitched noise that got louder and louder, and then with a flash and a bang, I was back in the shed.

I sat really still for a few minutes. Then, I crawled out of the crate, unplugged the machine, and walked as casually as I could back into the house. I walked past my mother and picked up the newspaper to check the date. It was dated Saturday. I struck up a conversation with my mother just to see if everything felt Okay. Then I went to my room and did some thinking. After a while, I walked back to the kitchen and asked Mom if I could phone Binyamin. She agreed, so I dialed the number and waited anxiously.

Finally, a familiar voice picked up the phone and said, "Hello."

"Binyamin, this is Hana." Then, I got right to the point and told him what had happened.

There was a long whistle, as he seemed to understand

something that I didn't. "It's a time machine," he said. "I think you can travel to any point in time that you want to visit." Then there was some conversation with his roommate and finally he started talking to me again. "Hana, don't set the duration for more than five minutes—and Hana..."

"Yes?"

"Be really careful!"

After that, the weekend turned into an adventure of cautious learning. I went backward in time and saw wars fought over small misunderstandings. I saw great ideas and messages that the world had rejected.

During lunch, both my parents asked me a lot of questions. My Dad said he'd heard some loud noises near the shed. Mom said she had come out to the shed once to look for me and I wasn't there. I said very truthfully that I must have gone out for a few minutes.

After lunch, I discovered that you could take things with you on these journeys through time. I had some cookies on my lap, and when I arrived in the 1840s, they were still with me. They tasted just like Mom's cookies always tasted—delicious.

Just before dinner, I was visiting the 1860s and I seemed to be helping some people escape from slavery. I found myself walking near a river with a tall, dark-skinned young man. He was holding my hand and we were talking about something very interesting. I completely lost track of time until suddenly I heard the high-pitched noise again.

Sensing the danger, I let go of his hand and started to run, saying, "I have to go now."

"What's wrong?" he asked.

"There just isn't time to explain," I said, running as fast as I could.

"Hana, wait," said the young man, running after me.

I ran as fast as I could, but he ran faster. Just as the noise of re-entry came, he grabbed my hand, and said, "Hana,

what's wrong? Where are you running to?"

And then there was a loud bang and a bright flash. I closed my eyes tightly, and relaxed the hand he had been holding—hoping this was all just a dream. I opened my eyes slowly, and there sitting beside me, holding my hand, was one very frightened young man staring at the machine in front of us both.

I thought about Binyamin and his advice; I thought about my teacher and friends at school; I thought about my parents in the house nearby; and most of all, I thought about the terrified young man sitting next to me and I knew that this was going to take a lot of explaining.

