

## Robert Sherman Jr. aka Charles Glass

“Time present and time past  
Are both perhaps present in time future  
And time future contained in time past.”  
-T.S. Eliot

Oh, boy. Oh, boy. This is most definitely not what you expected today to be like. Not that it's today anymore. More like a lot of yesterdays ago. Still, it's today, isn't it? I mean, you're here, when you're here, it's today. If it's you *were there*, it's yesterday. Still, today won't happen for another thirty years, and if you're lucky, today won't happen at all, so...

Oh, boy, this is confusing. Okay, let's take it nice and slow. It all started yesterday. Except yesterday today isn't the yesterday of this morning, except it's actually earlier than it was this morning, because it's... oh, boy. This is really not good.

Let's try this using fixed times. None of this today, tomorrow, yesterday stuff. On July 23rd, 1989 you were (will be?- no, let's not get into that. Let's just use the tenses as the happened... or will happen... oh, boy) you *were* working with Dr. Lawrence Bates on one of his inventions. You *had* gotten a job with him a few years prior to then; you had always been interested in science, especially physics, and Dr. Bates was always puttering around with some toy he had created. He used to work for the Ft. Lucas Rita Research Labs, but they closed down in 1986, and had saved enough money to retire and work on whatever projects caught his fancy. Like this one, the wreckage of which you're sitting in now.

He never told you what this one was. Every other project he was bouncing all over, talking about everything that went into it, all of the theory and equations. You had a lot of trouble following it, but you usually could keep up. But with this project, he never said a word about what it was. He was always grinning like the cat that had caught the canary, looking like he was about to tell you what it was all about, and then he'd stop and tell you which parts he needed you to find. It was hard to be patient about it.

Then, on July 23rd, 1989, he told you to come to his lab/warehouse an hour early. When you got there, you saw that he had cleared out half the warehouse to hold... a 1987 Ford Grand National. Big deal. You asked him what this was all about.

“Time travel!” he yelled, grinning wildly. He then spilled out all of the formulas and theories and work he had devised to make this car into a time machine. You lost him after the second sentence, he was going so fast and it was all so new to you. You just stared at him in disbelief. When he finally finished explaining how it all worked (and he might as well have been talking to the wall for all that you understood), he got into the driver's side and told you to get into the passenger side. He was going to take it for a spin.

You tooled around on the side roads until you hit I-42. As soon as you were on it, Dr. Bates hit the gas as hard as he could and the two of you flew down the road. You were passing regular traffic like it was standing still. Two police cars jumped out from behind a billboard and started chasing you. You were trying to point out to Dr. Bates as politely as possible that you two were either going to end up in jail or in the morgue when he hit the big red button on the dashboard.

A huge white light surrounded the car from all directions. When you opened your eyes, you were still on I-42, and Dr. Bates was hitting the brakes as hard as he could. "You see, Bobby, one must hit ninety miles an hour before the interphase connection can really grab hold." You just nodded quietly. Nothing seemed different. Except the police cars were no longer behind you.

Dr. Bates drove back to the warehouse while you watched everything outside. Nothing seemed different. Everything was just as it should be. Except for the police cars. Where had they gone? And then Dr. Bates passed the warehouse and parked in the alley next to it. You were surprised- why were you parking here? He then jumped out of the car and climbed up a ladder leaning against the warehouse, jumped down, and beckoned you to climb it. You climbed the ladder, and looked through the window into the warehouse.

There was Dr. Bates explaining to you exactly how his time machine worked. And there you were, confused, exasperated and bored expressions traveling across your face. You had traveled an hour back in time. You watched the early Dr. Bates and the earlier you get into the car. Jumping off the ladder, you ran to the corner of the warehouse and peeked around it- and caught a glimpse of the car, with you and Dr. Bates in it, driving off towards I-42.

Dr. Bates drove the car back into the warehouse and began explaining all of the various technical problems he had surmounted, all of the people he had notified, all of the agencies that would be down in the morning to look at it, that sort of thing. You were still sitting there, non-plussed. You had traveled through time. Dr. Bates had invented a time machine. This was real. You just sat there, ignoring Dr. Bates, amazed that you had done just what you had done. Oh, boy, was it a thrill.

You and Dr. Bates went over the car once to fine tune it (make sure traveling through time doesn't drain the oil or spoil the camshaft, that sort of thing), and you went home that night still in sort of a daze. You went up to your room, fell on the bed, and slept, dreaming of times future and times past.

You woke up July 24th, 1989, on the floor. You probably should have stopped to consider this a little longer, but your watch said it was nine o'clock and that meant you were already late for school. So you jumped up, decided the clothes you were in were neither too wrinkled nor too smelly to make that much of a difference, and ran out of the house.

You ran down Mulberry Street and took a left onto Goldwater Drive. You would have kept running, except you started noticing... differences. You couldn't really put a finger on it. Things just seemed wrong. Then you realized part of the problem.

All of the cars were Yugos.

*Oh, boy, this is not good*, you were thinking to yourself, and you realized that the streets were not going the same direction that they always did before. You looked at the nearest sign to see where you had ended up. It said that you were at the corner of Lenin Lane and Castro Court. Oh, boy. Oh, boy oh boy. Not good at all.

You started running again, running towards where the school should be if everything were right in its place. It's kind of amusing how relieved you would have been to see Edwood High. Instead, you came across The Leonid Breshnev Memorial Student Collective. That's when you panicked.

You ran wildly, any direction in which you could, hoping that you had just made a wrong turn somewhere and wandered into a movie set for a sequel to *Red Dawn* or some such, but there were still Yugos everywhere and signs advertising Coca-Commie and posters for Air Yeltsin shoes and finally you fell into an alley, your heart going a mile a minute, your lungs feeling like they were about to burst.

You had run, instinctively, to the alley next to Dr. Bates' lab/warehouse.

You reached into your pocket and pulled out your keys. By luck, or maybe this was just normality rearing its head, they fit. You slid into the warehouse. Everything was dark. But there, hidden behind the broken instruments and the gadgets that never worked, was the Grand National of Time. And then a hand grabbed your shoulder.

You yelled and turned around, looking for something big to use as a bat, when you realized that it was Dr. Bates in front of you. He looked haggard and worn, still wearing the same clothes he had the day before. Admittedly, you probably didn't look much better.

He explained what he thought had happened. From the little research he could do at the Iguanski Book Collective before he felt he would arouse suspicion, he found that Russia had begun World War III in 1979. The war had been an utter disaster for America; it seemed that the Russians knew exactly what the Americans were going to do even before it was thought of. Dr. Bates surmised that the Russians had a time machine as well, and had used it to take over the world. He said that there were rumors of a Communist spy at the Research Labs, but everyone dismissed them as rumors and no one was ever discovered selling secrets. It was obvious to him that the Communist spy had found his original sketches for the interphase mechanical drive and sent it off to Russia, and that they had finished their time machine only hours after he had finished his. He surmised that he and you remembered the normal time stream (with no World War III) because the two

of you had traveled through time on your own, thus detaching you somehow from your own time stream and allowing you to pass through different time streams without losing your memory of your original time stream. He was pretty technical upon this matter, so you really didn't understand. What you did understand was that something had to be done.

He agreed. He had only left the sketch in the Labs for a single day, the day he thought of it. It was... he paused and gave you a horrified look. June 11th, 1959. *You've got to go back and find out who the spy was, Bobby.* he said. Oh, boy. You protested. Why you? Or, at least, why you alone? Shouldn't he come back with you? He knew how this stuff worked. *No,* he said, *I'd be recognized. But no one would recognize you! Besides, it would be too tempting to change things.*

You were going to ask him what he meant by that when the doors broke down. Twelve men in Kevlar armor ran in screaming, "Freeze! Arizona Socialist Republic State Troopers! Throw down your weapons!" Dr. Bates looked at you, and bolted for the back door. The troopers all turned and began firing at him. While he was running, you jumped and slid across the hood of the car, threw open the door, and jumped in. The keys were in the ignition, thank God. You set the timer on the dashboard clock for 9:00 a.m, June 11th, 1959. You didn't look at Dr. Bates; you couldn't. You knew he was getting himself cut down so that you could make an escape. But you knew that if you succeeded, these troopers would never exist, and Dr. Bates would be alive. So you turned the key, hit the gas pedal as hard as you could, and tore out of the warehouse, troopers diving left and right to get out of the way. You were doing 40 when you hit the road in front of the warehouse. You were at 65 when you hit what used to be Tompkins Road. You hit 90 when you hit Cunningham Road. And as soon as you hit 90, you hit that big red button on the dashboard.

In retrospect, that was not an intelligent choice. Thinking back, you realize that you should have drove to I-42 before hitting the button. After all, had you been thinking rationally, I-42 had been around in 1959. Certainly, there would be a chance of hitting another car (or phasing into one), but at least you would have been on a major road. However, you were fueled on adrenaline and wondering whether the Arizona Socialist State Troopers had tanks or road blocks. So you hit the button on Cunningham Road. In 1959, Cunningham Road did not exist. What was there was a small dirt path leading through an area where they were constructing new homes, which would be torn down in the early Eighties. Therefore, you found yourself going 90 down a road ill-suited for anything but construction vehicles with large holes that would eventually become basements on either side of you. Thank God for airbags. So now you are sitting at the top of one of these holes, looking down upon the wreckage of the car below. Oh, boy. This is *not* going to be a fun day.

So let's take stock. Here it is, 9:40 a.m., June 11th, 1959. Nearly thirteen years before you are born. The car is an absolute wreck. Luckily, the time machine inside is actually safe; it is only peripherally attached, and Dr. Bates installed an airbag for it as well. He probably counted on doing a wipe-out at 90 one or two time himself. So, in order

to actually get home, you need to find a car that no one will miss, one that will actually do 90, so it'll have to be something souped up, attach the time machine to it, and then you can go home. You'll have to leave the time machine here temporarily; no better place to hide it than in the wreckage below, and it's far too big to carry.

So now you're going to have to go into San Inguon. Why did Dr. Bates look so horrified when he remember what day he... oh, boy. Oh, boy, oh, boy, oh, boy.

June 11th, 1959. Known in San Inguon as The Day Of Terror.

You don't really know what happened on that, or this, day. You heard something about an earthquake starting it all off, and nobody wants to talk about the rest of it. Something about the lizards. You're not real sure. All you know is that real bad things are going to be happening today. Really bad things. In fact, people said the only good thing to come out of today was...

Oh, boy, oh, boy, oh, boy, oh, boy, oh, boy, oh, boy, oh, boy.

Your parents finally fell in love today. After the Sock Hop. They realized that they loved each other. Oh, boy, oh, boy, oh, boy, oh, boy.

All right, keep calm. So you're about to meet your parents when they were seventeen. No big deal. Just say, "Hi! I'm Bobby Sherman, Jr. and..." Oh, boy. Got find a new name. Well, let's get up and walk to I-42 and see if you can hitchhike into town.

Okay. You need to find a car. One that can do 90. One that no one will miss... oh, boy. That Simpsons episode. The one where Homer fixes his toaster and accidentally goes back in time, steps on a bug and the future changes. You read the Bradbury story that was based on. Well, there's no way you can get through this with affecting something. After all, you have to find the Communist spy and expose him, which never happened, and you've already left a wreckage of twisted metal with electronics that won't be invented for twenty years lying in a new basement. You just need to keep out of a paradox. Make sure that the changes here don't result in an untimely death to Dr. Bates, Dad, or Mom (you're going to have to call her Mary. And him Robert. Oh, boy, will that be creepy). And make sure that after or during the Sock Hop, Mom and Dad realize their true love for one another. If they don't, you might end up not existing.

There's I-42. Okay, so everything's planned. Of course, today's the Day of Terror, so perhaps just surviving will be a challenge. But you have to survive. Not just for your sake, but for the sake of the future generations of America, who deserve to live in a free land. Oh, boy, does that sound dorky. Still, it's probably true. You'll try not to think about that too much.

Cool, a truck's stopping. Just hitch a lift into town and think up a new name. What's that say on the truck? *Charles Glass Company- makers of fine glassware since 1912.* Hmm... Charles Glass....

**Stock Quote:** "Oh, boy."

**Mannerisms:** You're a late Eighties guy stuck in the late Fifties. Be a little slow to pick up the current lingo and manner. Other than that, Charles/Bobby is a nice, average guy given to a bit too much anxiety.

**People You Know:**

**Dr. Lawrence Bates:** Your mentor. You need to find him and have him remove the plans from the Labs.

**Robert Sherman (Sr.):** He doesn't know the Sr. part yet. Dad. Has a nice real-estate business. Mr. Middle-class. Probably a boring white-bread kid.

**Marigold Jenkins:** Mom. Mrs. Prim and Proper. Has a nice little writing career on the side, but doesn't make much money off of it. You think she was going out with Dad as this point in time.

**People You Will Know:**

**Nick Kerensky:** Runs "Nick's World of Parts," the largest car-parts company in the SouthWest. Comes over to reminisce with Dad every once in a while. You never paid much attention then. Oh, boy, you wish you had.

**Mark Sturvin:** Senator Sturvin? Went to High School with Mom and Dad? Wow!

**Wendy Mitchell:** Hey! She's the anchorwoman for NewsTeam 6! Mom and Dad never told you they went to high school with her!

**Dr. Randall Rourke:** Oh, boy, he looks young. He still runs a private practice in medicine in San Inguon. Acts the same. Just looks so much younger.

**Adele Sigelski:** You've heard from older cousins that you were lucky to go to Edwood High after she retired. A strict taskmaster.

**Goals:**

**1. Prevent the wrong future from happening.** To prevent the Communist future, you need to convince Dr. Bates to remove the plans for his drive from the Labs. Of course, even that may not be enough. The spy may have already found them by the time you get to town. So you should do your best to unmask the spy. Also, don't let really bad things happen to Mom, Dad or Dr. Bates, or you'll find out the fun effects of paradox, and that's something you really don't need to experience first-hand.

**2. Get out of the past.** You'll have to find a souped-up car (capable of doing 90) and attach the time machine device to it. Attaching the device shouldn't be a problem. Then just get out onto I-42 and zoom to 90 without killing yourself, and you should end up back home at the right time.