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(Illustrating "Love," by Richard Wilson)

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A certain author whose thinking and writing we esteem stated in a recent article that the possibilities of the time-travel story have now been exhausted. We violently disagree with that thesis. As editors, we've learned that the possibilities of any fictional theme are never exhausted; just when you think they are, along comes an author with a wonderfully original twist on an old idea. Here Mack Reynolds has created an entirely new approach to the ever-enticing theme of the time-traveler and what he may encounter. If Mr. Reynolds' hilarious concept of the Thirtieth Century is correct (and why shouldn't it be?) we'd better start right now revising all our ideas about time travel — and the qualifications for the job!

The Business, As Usual

by MACK REYNOLDS

"LISTEN," the time traveler said to the first pedestrian who came by, "I'm from the Twentieth Century. I've only got fifteen minutes and then I'll go back. I guess it's too much to expect you to understand me, eh?"

"Certainly, I understand you."

"Hey! You talk English fine. How come?"

"We call it Amer-English. I happen to be a student of dead languages."

"Swell! But, listen, I only got a few minutes. Let's get going."

"Get going?"

"Yeah, yeah. Look, don't you get it? I'm a time traveler. They picked me to send into the future. I'm important."

"Ummm. But you must realize that we have time travelers turning up continuously these days."

"Listen, that rocks me, but I just don't have time to go into it, see? Let's get to the point."

"Very well. What have you got?"

"What'd'ya mean, what've I got?"

The other sighed. "Don't you think you should attempt to acquire some evidence that you have been in the future? I can warn you now, the paradoxes involved in time travel prevent you from taking back any knowledge which might alter the past. On your return, your mind will be blank in regard to what happened here."

The time traveler blinked. "Oh?"

"Definitely. However, I shall be glad to make a trade with you."

"Listen, I get the feeling I came into this conversation half a dozen sentences too late. What'd'ya mean, a trade?"

"I am willing to barter something of your century for something of mine, although, frankly, there is little in your period that is of other than historical interest to us." The pedestrian's eyes held a gleam now. He cleared his throat. "However, I have here an atomic pocket knife. I hesitate to even tell you of the advantages it has over the knives of your period."

"Okay. I got only ten minutes left, but I can see you're right. I've got to get something to prove I was here."

"My knife would do it," the pedestrian nodded.

"Yeah, yeah. Listen, I'm a little confused, like. They picked me for this job the last minute — didn't want to risk any of these professor guys, see? That's the screwiest knife I ever saw, let me have it for my evidence."

"Just a moment, friend. Why should I give you my knife? What can you offer in exchange?"

"But I'm from the Twentieth Century."

"Ummm. And I'm from the Thirtieth."

The time traveler looked at him for a long moment. Finally, "Listen, pal, I don't have a lot of time. Now, for instance, my watch —"

"Ummm. And what else?"

"Well, my money, here."

"Of interest only to a numismatist."

"Listen, I *gotta* have some evidence I been in the Thirtieth Century!"

"Of course. But business is business as the proverb goes."

"I wish the hell I had a gun."

"I have no use for a gun in this age," the other said primly.

"No, but I have," the time traveler muttered. "Look, fella, my time is running out by the second. What d'ya want? You see what I got, clothes, my wallet, a little money, a key ring, a pair of shoes."

"I'm willing to trade, but your possessions are of small value. Now some art object — an original Al Capp or something."

The time traveler was plaintive. "Do I look like I'd be carrying around art objects? Listen, I'll give you everything I got but my pants for that screwy knife."

"Oh, you want to keep your pants, eh? What're you trying to do, Anglo me down? — Or does your period antedate the term?"

"Anglo . . . what? I don't get it."

"Well, I'm quite an etymologist —"

"That's too bad, but —"

"Not at all, a fascinating hobby," the pedestrian said. "Now as to the phrase *Anglo me down*. The term *Anglo* first came into popular use during the 1850-1950 period. It designated persons from the Eastern United States, English descent principally, who came into New Mexico and Arizona shortly after the area was liberated — I believe that was the term used at the time — from Mexico. The Spanish and Indians came to know the Easterners as *Anglos*."

The time traveler said desperately, "Listen, *pal*, we get further and further from —"

"Tracing back the derivation of the phrase takes us along two more side trails. It goes back to the fact that these *Anglos* became the wealthiest businessmen of the Twentieth Century. So much so that they soon dominated the world with their dollars."

"Okay, okay. I know all about that. Personally I never had enough dollars to dominate anybody, but —"

"Very well, the point is that the *Anglos* became the financial wizards of the world, the most clever dealers, the sharpest bargainers, the most competent businessmen."

The time traveler shot a quick despairing look at his watch. "Only three —"

"The third factor is one taken from still further in the past. At one time there was a racial minority, which many of the *Anglos* held in disregard, called the *Joos*. For many years the term had been used, to *Joo you down* — meaning to make the price lower. As the *Anglos* assumed their monetary dominance, the term evolved from *Joo you down* to *Anglo you down*; and thus it has come down to our own day, although neither *Anglo* nor *Joo* still exists as a separate people."

The time traveler stared at him. "And I won't be able to take the memory of this story back with me, eh? And me a guy named *Levy*." He darted another look at his watch and groaned. "Quick!" he said, "Let's make this trade; everything I got for that atomic knife!"

The deal was consummated. The citizen of the Thirtieth Century stood back, his loot in his arms, and watched as the citizen of the Twentieth, nude but with the knife grasped tightly and happily in hand, faded slowly from view.

The knife poised momentarily in empty air, then dropped to the ground as the time traveler completely disappeared.

The other stooped, retrieved it, and stuck it back in his pocket. "Even more naive than usual," he muttered. "Must have been one of the very first. I suppose they'll never reconcile themselves to the paradoxes. Obviously, you can carry things *forward* in time, since that's the natural flow of the

dimension; but you just can't carry anything, not even memory, *backward* against the current."

He resumed his journey homeward.

Marget, hands on hips, met him at the door. "Where in *hert* have you been?" she snapped.

"You mustn't swear, darling," he said. "I met another time traveler on the way home."

"You didn't —"

"Certainly, why not? If I didn't somebody else would."

"But you've already got the closet overflowing with —"

"Now Marget, don't look that way. One of these days some museum or collector —"

She grunted skeptically and turned back into the house.
