

Multiple Choice

By

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SOPHIE, A PHYSICIST, IS WORKING ON A COMPUTER SIMULATION IN HER OFFICE. SHE TAPS AT HER LAPTOP AND WATCHES THE SCREEN INTENTLY. SHE IS DISSATISFIED WITH THE RESULTS UNTIL SOMETHING TAKES HER INTEREST. SHE TAPS A FEW TIMES AND THE RESULT LOOKS MORE PLEASING. THERE IS A FURIOUS POUNDING ON THE DOOR. SOPHIE CARRIES ON UNDETERRED. THE POUNDING CONTINUES AS SOPHIE TRIES TO CONCENTRATE.

SOPHIE: In a minute!

THE POUNDING INTENSIFIES. FRUSTRATED, SOPHIE HEADS TO THE DOOR.

SOPHIE: (CONT) Okay, okay. I'm coming! This had better be ...

SHE BARELY HAS THE DOOR OPEN WHEN SOPHIE2 RUSHES IN. SOPHIE2 LOOKS LIKE SOPHIE ONLY SLIGHTLY OLDER. SHE WEARS A LAB COAT WITH A LARGE LOGO READING "CHRONOCORP" ON IT.

SOPHIE2: I'm not too late, am I? (RUSHES TO THE LAPTOP) Where are we up to on this?

SOPHIE: Hey! This is a private area!

SOPHIE2: No. You can't have done it yet because I'm still here.

SOPHIE: Who the hell are you?

SOPHIE2: What? Who am I?

SOPHIE2 POINTS TO HER FACE THEN POINTS TO SOPHIE'S FACE AS IF THE ANSWER IS OBVIOUS. SHE REPEATS THIS MOVE A FEW TIMES. SOPHIE HAS NO IDEA. SOPHIE2 REALISES SHE MAY BE IN DANGER OF GIVING SOPHIE TOO MUCH INFORMATION.

SOPHIE2: (CONT) Oh. Good point. Who am I? (THINKS ON HER FEET) Obviously we look alike so ... I must be your cousin ... Susie. (CHANGES HER MIND) No. Maria! It's so great to finally meet.

SOPHIE: I don't have a cousin

SOPHIE2: I just found out myself. (POINTING BACK AND FORTH TO THEIR FACES AGAIN) See, we're clearly related. Cousins! That has to be it. Let's have coffee and we can compare uncles.

SOPHIE: Okay. Look, I'm right in the middle of something.

SOPHIE2: Really? The middle? So you haven't bent the tachyon beam? That's perfect.

SOPHIE: How do you know about the tachyon beam? I haven't published any of my temporal displacement research yet.

SOPHIE2: Of course you haven't. Let's go and discuss it over coffee. There's a great place just down the road. Or there will be. Or was. (TRYING AGAIN WITH A WINNING SMILE) Cousins!

SOPHIE2 POINTS BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN THEIR FACES TO SUPPORT THIS AS SHE EDGES CLOSER TO THE LAPTOP TRYING TO SEE THE SCREEN

SOPHIE: Keep away from that! I haven't saved yet.

SOPHIE2: Oh, come on. You're not even up to the quantum entanglement!

SOPHIE: The what?

SOPHIE2: (REALISING SHE'S SAID TOO MUCH) Cousins!

SOPHIE: All right. Who are you?

SOPHIE2 GOES BACK TO POINTING BETWEEN FACES

SOPHIE: (CONT) Look, I know we're not cousins. So who are you?

SOPHIE2: Ummm ... (TRIES TO COME UP WITH ALTERNATIVE BUT DECIDES TO TELL THE TRUTH) Okay. You know how you're doing research into temporal displacement ...?

SOPHIE: (GETS IT) You're me?

SOPHIE2: From the future.

SOPHIE LOOKS SOPHIE2 UP AND DOWN CAREFULLY

SOPHIE: (EXCITED) So it works!

SOPHIE2: (JOINING IN WITH THE EXCITEMENT) Yes!

THEY CLUTCH EACH OTHER AND DO AN EXCITED DANCE

SOPHIE: Oh my god! It works! And I've come back from my future to congratulate me!

SOPHIE2 BREAKS FREE OF HER

SOPHIE2: (TENTATIVELY) Weeeeelll....

SOPHIE: (HOPEFULLY) I've come back from my future to help me?

SOPHIE2: (SHAKING HER HEAD) Mmmmm-no...

SOPHIE: (ALARMED) I've come back from my future to kill me?

SOPHIE2 HADN'T THOUGHT OF THAT AND IS INTRIGUED BY THE IDEA.

SOPHIE2: (CONSIDERS IT) Ooh...

SOPHIE: I've come back from my future to stop me.

SOPHIE2: That's the one.

SOPHIE: But why?

SOPHIE2: We ... kind of sped up global warming. Sorry. Climate change.

SOPHIE: But I'm a physicist! Not a climatologist!

SOPHIE2: Yeah, but the temporal displacement enclosures used up a lot of power. Especially when Chronocorp started farming with them.

SOPHIE: Chronocorp?

SOPHIE2: (POINTS TO LOGO) The only company to fund our research. Well, the only company in the world now.

SOPHIE: And I work for them?

SOPHIE2: It's either that or scratch out a living in the Daintree dustbowl.

SOPHIE: You mean the Daintree rainfor- (REALISES) Oh. All right. Did you get here in time to stop me?

SOPHIE2 GOES OVER TO CHECK LAPTOP

SOPHIE2: (READING) Let's see ... wavelength ... Parameter ... tachyon.
Looks like I'm just in time. (GETTING HER OWN UNCONCIOUS
JOKE) Ha! Time! (SOBERS) It'll be funny later.

SOPHIE: So what do we do?

SOPHIE2: Easy. I just delete this line of code and-

SOPHIE3 RUSHES IN THROUGH THE DOOR. SHE IS IN A PRISON
JUMPSUIT.

SOPHIE3: Don't touch that keyboard!

SOPHIE2: Who are you?

SOPHIE: Another me?

SOPHIE3: (SURPRISED TO SEE SOPHIE2) There's two of me?

SOPHIE2: Well, thanks for coming and all that, but you're wasting your
time. I've got everything under control. I've already stopped her.

SOPHIE3: Then I have to stop you!

SOPHIE2: What?

SOPHIE3: One of you is about to come up with a way to harness particle
waves. And that'll be used by the military to vapourise cities.

SOPHIE: Oh my god!

SOPHIE2: I'm trying to save the environment!

SOPHIE3: Fuck the environment! I get shot tomorrow unless I stop us!

SOPHIE: But surely if you stop us, you won't exist.

SOPHIE3: It'll be just like this never happened. Which, when compared to a
potential firing squad, is a definite up-side.

SOPHIE2: But I'm not even working on particle waves. We were using
tachyon beams.

SOPHIE: I wouldn't even know how to start using particle waves.

SOPHIE3: God, were we this stupid? (POINTS TO COMPUTER SCREEN)
It's right here – you just change the quantum entanglement so it
models the shift from a light particle to a light wave

SOPHIE AND SOPHIE2 LEAN INTO THE SCREEN OVER SOPHIE3'S SHOULDERS

SOPHIE: Oh yeah. I see it now.

SOPHIE3: It revolutionised energy production and it came out of nowhere. Not even the Japanese were close until (PENNY DROPS) I've just shown you how to do it, haven't I? Goddamn temporal paradoxes.

SOPHIE2: High moral ground, back to me!

SOPHIE3: Didn't you say something about saving the environment? How'd that go?

SOPHIE2: Hey, I'm not the city killer here!

SOPHIE STEPS IN BETWEEN THEM

SOPHIE: Please! Remember we're scientists – or a scientist.

SOPHIE2: Hey – at least you make it this far. Some of us don't have a home to go to.

SOPHIE3: Some of us get killed in the morning!

SOPHIE: Surely between the three of us we can fix one of the timelines.

SOPHIE2 AND SOPHIE3 ARE SHAMED. SOPHIE2 EXTENDS HAND TO SOPHIE3

SOPHIE2: We cool?

SOPHIE3: (NODS) How could I stay mad at me?

SOPHIE: Okay. Let's get busy.

THEY MOVE BACK TO THE LAPTOP AND CLUSTER AROUND IT.

SOPHIE4 AND SOPHIE5 ENTER. SOPHIE4 IS IN A T-SHIRT AND JEANS, SOPHIE5 IS IN A UNIFORM WITH AN HOURGLASS MOTIF. SOPHIE5 EXTENDS A GUN IN FRONT OF HER.

SOPHIE5: Chronocop! Freeze!

THE OTHERS TURN TO FACE SOPHIE5 WHO IS SHOCKED TO SEE SO MANY SOPHIE'S.

SOPHIE5: (CONT) All of ... me?

SOPHIE: Now what am I supposed to have been about to do?

SOPHIE5: (INCREDULOUS) I cause the collapse?

SOPHIE4: Are you going to try and tell me these are more cousins?

SOPHIE5: Quiet! You're only here as backup.

SOPHIE4: Backup?

SOPHIE3: I think I can explain if you'd just like to put the gun down.

SOPHIE5 STARTS TO LOWER THE GUN BUT CHANGES HER MIND AND TRIES TO COVER ALL OF THEM.

SOPHIE5: This doesn't change anything. The entire space/time continuum is falling apart and the Temporal Authority traced the collapse back to this precise moment.

SOPHIE2: Hey, don't look at me. I just fucked up the environment.

SOPHIE: Do I become some kind of soldier?

SOPHIE5: You're a Chronocop. (CONFUSED) No, I'm a Chronocop,

SOPHIE2: (TO SOPHIE3) Time police.

SOPHIE3: Duh.

SOPHIE5: (TO SOPHIE) You don't become a Chronocop until the quark- (REALISES SHE NEARLY TOLD SOPHIE HER FUTURE) - uhh, nice try.

SOPHIE2: Yeah. I'd have to be pretty dumb to give myself information about the future, wouldn't I?

SOPHIE3: Just because you're me doesn't mean I can't slap me in the mouth.

SOPHIE2: Urban developer!

SOPHIE3: Tree killer!

SOPHIE5: Shut up both of me – you. I only need one of me alive to change the future.

- SOPHIE: Okay, my brain is now officially in meltdown. All I'm doing is a little harmless temporal displacement. You know, for learning. Travel. I'm not trying to ... (INDICATES VAGUELY TO THE OTHER SOPHIES)
- SOPHIE2: Wreck the biosphere.
- SOPHIE3: Produce a weapon of massive destruction.
- SOPHIE5: Create a fascist state. (TO SOPHIE4) Am I right?
- SOPHIE4: What are you talking about? Everyone's happy with the republic.
- SOPHIE5: Okay, I've had it with you. I only took you out of my timestream so if I screw up, you'll remember what happened and not do it again when you get to be me. It's all covered in Chronocop basic training. So stop giving me lip and ... (PENNY DROPS)
Republic?
- SOPHIE4: And what's a Chronocop? (UNDERSTANDS) You're not my cousin. You're from my future.
- SOPHIE3: But a future that doesn't exist anymore.
- SOPHIE2: Because you, or rather she (SOPHIE), did something to change that future to something else.

THE OTHERS NOD IN AGREEMENT.

- SOPHIE: Fine! It's my fault. I admit it. Okay? Happy? But there's still one thing I don't understand.
- SOPHIE5: ONE Thing?!
- SOPHIE: Why don't any of you remember meeting each other in your past. Now.

THE OTHER SOPHIES ARE ALL A LITTLE PERPLEXED BY THIS.

- SOPHIE4: Well, I do. I mean it's a bit hazy. And I always remembered it as some sort of family reunion but, yeah, I remember this.
- SOPHIE3: That's impossible! The only way you could remember this is if-

DAWNING REALISATION FOR ALL OF THEM.

- SOPHIE5: You're from the future that actually happens! And if that's the case, you know what we have to do to ensure none of our futures come into being.
- SOPHIE2: Hold on a minute. How do we know she's from a future we even want to live in? I mean, what's the environment like?
- SOPHIE3: Can they vapourise cities?
- SOPHIE5: Do the military rule?
- SOPHIE4: Well, we banned reality television ...
- SOPHIE2: Sold.
- SOPHIE: So, how do we do it?
- SOPHIE4: As I say, it is a little hazy. I know I was in this room with a whole pile of my cousins. There was all this confusion, and we wound up talking about experiments for some reason. Then someone mentioned how they were always losing data because they forgot to save their documents, and I thought that was funny because I do the same thing and –
- SOPHIE: (PICKING UP ON THIS THOUGHT) all I'd have to do is this.

SHE CLOSSES THE LAPTOP. LIGHTS SNAP OUT ON SOPHIE2, SOPHIE3 AND SOPHIE5 CAUSING THEM TO "DISAPPEAR". SOPHIE4 CLAPS DELIGHTEDLY.

- SOPHIE4: Yes! That's exactly what happened!
- SOPHIE: So, it's over? The future's safe? (SOPHIE4 NODS) Then that's it for me and physics. (REALISES) Wait a minute – once I closed that lid, I cancelled out all those futures.
- SOPHIE4: And not before time.
- SOPHIE: Then how can you still here? I don't invent time travel now.
- SOPHIE4: Right. You don't invent it "now". (SOPHIE IS CONFUSED) But, in two years ... well, let's talk about it over coffee. There's this great little place which may have just opened.

FADE TO BLACKOUT AS THEY WALK OFF.