

Read the stories below then answer the questions that follow.

The Big Time

Have you ever worried about your memory, because it doesn't seem to be bringing you exactly the same picture of the past from one day to the next? Have you ever been afraid that your personality was changing because of forces beyond your knowledge or control? Have you ever felt sure that sudden death was about to jump you from nowhere? Have you ever been scared of Ghosts - not the storybook kind, but the billions of beings who were once so real and strong it's hard to believe they'll just sleep harmlessly forever? Have you ever wondered about those things you may call devils or Demons - spirits able to range through all time and space, through the hot hearts of stars and the cold skeleton of space between the galaxies? Have you ever thought that the whole universe might be a crazy, mixed-up dream? If you have, you've had hints of the Change War.

How I got recruited into the Change War, how it's conducted, what the two sides are, why you don't consciously know about it, what I really think about it - you'll learn in due course.

The place outside the cosmos where I and my pals do our nursing job I simply call the Place. A lot of my nursing consists of amusing and humanising Soldiers fresh back from raids into time. In fact, my normal title is Entertainer and I've got my silly side, as you'll find out.

My pals are two other gals and three guys from quite an assortment of times and places. We're a pretty good team, and with Sid bossing, we run a pretty good Recuperation Station, though we have our family troubles. But most of our troubles come slamming into the Place with the beat-up Soldiers, who've generally just been going through hell and want to raise some of their own. As a matter of fact, it was three newly arrived Soldiers who started this thing I'm going to tell you about, this thing that showed me so much about myself and everything.

When it started, I had been on the Big Time for a thousand sleeps and two thousand nightmares, and working in the Place for five hundred-one thousand. This two-nightmares routine every time you lay down your dizzy little head is rough, but you pretend to get used to it because being on the Big Time is supposed to be worth it.

The Place is midway in size and atmosphere between a large nightclub where the Entertainers sleep in and a small Zeppelin hangar decorated for a party, though a Zeppelin is one thing we haven't had yet. You go out of the Place, but not often if you have any sense and if you are an Entertainer like me, into the cold light of a morning filled with anything from the earlier dinosaurs to the later spacemen, who look strangely similar except for size.

Answer the questions below by choosing the letter of the correct answer.

1 What is the Change War, and why is it hidden from conscious knowledge?

- A) The Change War is a conflict involving time travellers, and it is hidden to protect the timeline.
- B) The Change War is a fictional story, and there is no actual conflict.
- C) The Change War is a battle between two sides of the universe, and it is hidden for safety.
- D) The Change War is a war between different dimensions, and it is hidden for secrecy.

2 What is the primary role of the narrator, and what is their title in the Place?

- A) The narrator's role is a time traveller, and their title is Soldier.
- B) The narrator's role is a historian, and their title is Historian.
- C) The narrator's role is an entertainer, and their title is Entertainer.
- D) The narrator's role is a spy, and their title is Spy.

3 Who are the narrator's pals, and what is their common job in the Place?

- A) The pals are other Soldiers, and they are responsible for time raids.
- B) The pals are historians, and they document historical events.
- C) The pals are entertainers, and they amuse Soldiers fresh from time raids.
- D) The pals are supervisors, and they manage the Recuperation Station.

4 What is the nature of the troubles faced by the narrator and their pals in the Place?

- A) The troubles involve conflicts with enemy time travellers.
- B) The troubles stem from disagreements within the team.
- C) The troubles arise from the arrival of injured Soldiers.
- D) The troubles are related to maintaining secrecy about the Place.

5 What do Soldiers typically experience before arriving at the Place, and why do they come to the Place?

- A) Soldiers experience peaceful sleep, and they come for rest and relaxation.
- B) Soldiers experience nightmares, and they come for medical treatment.
- C) Soldiers experience time travel, and they come for training.
- D) Soldiers experience intense battles, and they come for debriefing.

6 How long has the narrator been on the Big Time, and what is the significance of the two-nightmares routine?

- A) The narrator has been on the Big Time for a thousand nights, and the routine helps them adapt to time travel.
- B) The narrator has been on the Big Time for a thousand sleeps and two thousand nightmares, and the routine is challenging.
- C) The narrator has been on the Big Time for five hundred-one thousand sleeps, and the routine is relaxing.
- D) The narrator has been on the Big Time for two thousand sleeps, and the routine is exciting.

7 Describe the setting of the Place in terms of size and atmosphere, and why do Entertainers rarely go outside?

- A) The Place is a massive hangar, and Entertainers rarely go outside due to fear.
- B) The Place is a small nightclub, and Entertainers rarely go outside due to harsh conditions.
- C) The Place is a mix between a nightclub and a Zeppelin hangar, and Entertainers rarely go outside to avoid disturbances.
- D) The Place is a large nightclub, and Entertainers rarely go outside to maintain secrecy.

8 What is the range of beings or entities encountered outside the Place, and what is similar about some of them despite the vast differences in time?

- A) Beings outside range from dinosaurs to spacemen, and some share physical appearances regardless of time.
- B) Beings outside range from primitive creatures to advanced aliens, and they all communicate telepathically.
- C) Beings outside range from mythical creatures to time travellers, and they all possess time-travelling abilities.
- D) Beings outside range from humans to extraterrestrial beings, and they are all hostile towards Entertainers.

Ship of Shadows

Sleepday's dreams had begun good, with Spar having Crown's three girls at once. But Sleepday night he had been half-wakened by the distant grinding of Hold Three's big chewer. Then werewolves and vampires had attacked him, solid shadows diving in from all six corners, while witches and their familiars tittered in the black shadowy background. Somehow he had been protected by the cat, familiar of a slim witch whose bared teeth had been an ivory blur in the larger silver blur of her wild hair. Spar pressed his rubbery gums together. The cat had been the last of the supernatural creatures to fade. Then had come the beautiful vision of the ship.

His hangover hit him suddenly and mercilessly. Sweat shook off him until he must be surrounded by a cloud of it. Without warning his gut reversed. His free hand found a floating waste tube in time to press its small trumpet to his face. He could hear his acrid vomit gurgling away, urged by a light suction.

His gut reversed again, quick as the flap of a safety hatch when a gale blows up in the corridors. He thrust the waste tube inside the leg of his short, loose slopsuit and caught the dark stuff, almost as watery and quite as explosive as his vomit. Then he had the burning urge to make water.

Afterwards, feeling blessedly weak, Spar curled up in the equally blessed dark and prepared to snooze until Keeper woke him.

"Ssot!" hissed the cat. "Sleep no more! Seeee! shsh sharply!"

In his left shoulder, through the worn fabric of his slopsuit, Spar could feel four sets of prickles, like the touch of small thorn clusters in the Gardens of Apollo or Diana. He froze.

"Sspar," the cat hissed more softly, quitting to prickle. "I wish you all best. Most assuredly."

Spar warily reached his right hand across his chest, touched short fur softer than Suzy's, and stroked gingerly.

The cat hissed very softly, almost purring, "Sturdy Sspar! See far! See you forever! foresee!"

Spar felt a surge of irritation at this constant talk of seeing - bad manners in the cat! - followed by an irrational surge of hope about his eyes. He decided that this was no witch cat left over from his dream, but a stray which had wormed its way through a wind tube into the Bat Rack, setting off his dream. There were quite a few animal strays in these days of the witch panic and the depopulation

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of the Ship, or at least of Hold Three.

Answer the questions below by choosing the letter of the correct answer.

9 What were Sleepday's initial dreams about on Sleepday night, and how did they turn into a nightmarish experience?

- A) Sleepday dreamt of sailing on a beautiful ship, but it turned into a vampire attack.
- B) Sleepday dreamt of a witch's cat protecting him, but it turned into a hangover.
- C) Sleepday dreamt of being attacked by supernatural creatures, but it started with happy companions.
- D) Sleepday dreamt of a ship and woke up feeling blessed and refreshed.

10 What saved Sleepday from the supernatural creatures that attacked him in his dream?

- A) His quick thinking and defensive skills.
- B) The sudden appearance of daylight.
- C) The protective presence of the cat.
- D) The intervention of witches and familiars.

11 Describe Sleepday's physical condition when he woke up from his dream.

- A) He felt weak and sweaty and his stomach unsettled.
- B) He was completely refreshed and full of energy.
- C) He had a mild headache but felt otherwise fine.
- D) He was unable to move and in severe pain.

12 What does the cat urge Sleepday to do when it hisses, "See! See shsh sharply!"?

- A) Go back to sleep and continue dreaming.
- B) Wake up and pay attention to something.
- C) Ignore its hissing and continue snoozing.
- D) Leave the Bat Rack and explore the Ship.

13 What sensation does Spar feel in his left shoulder, and what causes this sensation?

- A) He feels a gentle touch, caused by a friendly crew member.
- B) He feels a cold breeze, caused by an open window.
- C) He feels prickles, similar to small thorns, caused by the cat.
- D) He feels a sharp pain, caused by his dream.

14 What does the cat communicate to Spar, and why does Spar feel irritation and hope during their interaction?

- A) The cat speaks of danger, and Spar is irritated by its constant talk of seeing.
- B) The cat speaks of dreams, and Spar hopes to return to his dream world.
- C) The cat warns Spar about a witch, and Spar hopes for guidance about his eyes.
- D) The cat tells Spar to go back to sleep, and Spar feels irritated at its bad manners.

15 What is the significance of animal strays in this context, and why does Spar assume that the cat is not a witch's cat?

- A) Animal strays are regarded as good omens, and Spar assumes the cat is a witch's cat because of its appearance.
- B) Animal strays are common due to depopulation, and Spar assumes the cat is a witch's cat based on its behaviour.
- C) Animal strays are considered dangerous, and Spar assumes the cat is a witch's cat due to its strange powers.
- D) Animal strays are valuable in this society, and Spar assumes the cat is a witch's cat because of its presence in his dream.

16 What event or situation is responsible for the depopulation of the Ship, as mentioned in the text?

- A) A mass exodus of people leaving the Ship.
- B) A witch panic leading to the disappearance of residents.
- C) A natural disaster causing a decrease in the Ship's population.
- D) A shortage of resources causing people to abandon the Ship.

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer

After dinner all the gang turned out to hunt for turtle eggs on the bar. They went about poking sticks into the sand, and when they found a soft place they went down on their knees and dug with their hands. Sometimes they would take fifty or sixty eggs out of one hole. They were perfectly round white things a trifle smaller than an English walnut. They had a famous fried-egg feast that night, and another on Friday morning. After breakfast they went whooping and prancing out on the bar, and chased each other round and round, shedding clothes as they went, until they were naked, and then continued the frolic far away up the shoal water of the bar, against the stiff current, which latter tripped their legs from under them from time to time and greatly increased the fun. And now and then they stopped in a group and splashed water in each other's faces with their palms, gradually approaching each other, with averted faces to avoid the strangling sprays, and finally gripping and struggling till the best man ducked his neighbour, and then they all went under in a tangle of white legs and arms and came up blowing, sputtering, laughing, and gasping for breath at one and the same time. When they were well exhausted, they would run out and sprawl on the dry, hot sand, and lie there and cover themselves up with it, and by and by break for the water again and go through the original performance once more. Finally it occurred to them that their naked skin represented flesh-coloured "tights" very fairly; so they drew a ring in the sand and had a circus—with three clowns in it, for none would yield this proudest post to his neighbour.

Next they got their marbles and played "knucks" and "ringtaw" and "keeps" till that amusement grew stale. Then Joe and Huck had another swim, but Tom would not venture, because he found that in kicking off his trousers he had kicked his string of rattlesnake rattles off his ankle, and he wondered how he had escaped cramp so long without the protection of this mysterious charm. He did not venture again until he had found it, and by that time the other boys were tired and ready to rest. They gradually wandered apart, dropped into the "dumps," and fell to gazing longingly across the wide river to where the village lay drowsing in the sun. Tom found himself writing "BECKY" in the sand with his big toe; he scratched it out, and was angry with himself for his weakness. But he wrote it again, nevertheless; he could not help it. He erased it once more and then took himself out of temptation by driving the other boys together and joining them. But Joe's spirits had gone down

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almost beyond resurrection. He was so homesick that he could hardly endure the misery of it. The tears lay very near the surface. Huck was melancholy, too. Tom was downhearted, but tried hard not to show it. He had a secret which he was not ready to tell, yet, but if this mutinous depression was not broken up soon, he would have to bring it out. He said, with a great show of cheerfulness: "I bet there's been pirates on this island before, boys. We'll explore it again. They've hid treasures here somewhere. How'd you feel to light on a rotten chest full of gold and silver—hey?" But it roused only faint enthusiasm, which faded out, with no reply. Tom tried one or two other seductions; but they failed, too. It was discouraging work. Joe sat poking up the sand with a stick and looking very gloomy. Finally he said: "Oh, boys, let's give it up. I want to go home. It's so lonesome."

Answer the questions below by choosing the letter of the correct answer.

17 What does the activity of hunting for turtle eggs suggest about the boys' lifestyle?

- A) They are experienced survivalists.
- B) They are mainly interested in academic pursuits.
- C) They are adventurous and enjoy simple pleasures.
- D) They are focused on commercial gain.

18 What is the significance of Tom not venturing into the water the second time?

- A) He is afraid of water.
- B) He doesn't enjoy swimming as much as the others.
- C) He realises he has lost his rattlesnake rattles.
- D) He feels it's not safe without adult supervision.

19 What does Tom's act of writing and erasing "BECKY" in the sand indicate?

- A) He is bored.
- B) He is in conflict with his feelings for Becky.
- C) He wants the other boys to see it.
- D) He is practising his writing skills.

20 Why does Tom suggest exploring for hidden pirate treasure?

- A) He is fascinated by pirates.
- B) He genuinely believes there is treasure on the island.
- C) He wants to uplift the spirits of his friends.
- D) He wants to change the subject from going home.

21 What can be inferred about Joe's emotional state by the end of the passage?

- A) He is excited for another adventure.
- B) He is extremely homesick.
- C) He is still enthusiastic but tired.
- D) He wants to take charge of the group.

22 What does Tom's 'secret' likely relate to?

- A) A hidden treasure map he found.
- B) His plan to become a pirate.
- C) His feelings for Becky.
- D) His homesickness.

23 What does the reaction of the boys to Tom's idea about pirate treasure indicate?

- A) They are sceptical of Tom's imagination.
- B) They are too excited to respond.
- C) They are preoccupied with their own concerns.
- D) They don't believe in the existence of treasure.

24 What can be inferred about Tom's relationship with the other boys?

- A) He feels superior to them.
- B) He relies on them for emotional support.
- C) He feels a sense of responsibility for their mood.
- D) He is indifferent to their feelings.

The Mysterious Stranger

The Stranger had seen everything, he had been everywhere, he knew everything, and he forgot nothing. What another must study, he learned at a glance; there were no difficulties for him. And he made things live before you when he told about them. He saw the world made; he saw Adam created; he saw Samson surge against the pillars and bring the temple down in ruins about him; he saw Caesar's death; he told of the daily life in heaven; he had seen the damned writhing in the red waves of hell; and he made us see all these things, and it was as if we were on the spot and looking at them with our own eyes. And we felt them, too, but there was no sign that they were anything to him beyond mere entertainment. Those visions of hell, those poor babes and women and girls and lads and men shrieking and supplicating in anguish—why, we could hardly bear it, but he was as bland about it as if it had been so many imitation rats in an artificial fire.

And always when he was talking about men and women here on the earth and their doings—even their grandest and sublimest—we were secretly ashamed, for his manner showed that to him they and their doings were of paltry poor consequence; often you would think he was talking about flies, if you didn't know. Once he even said, in so many words, that our people down here were quite interesting to him, notwithstanding they were so dull and ignorant and trivial and conceited, and so diseased and rickety, and such a shabby, poor, worthless lot all around. He said it in a quite matter-of-course way and without bitterness, just as a person might talk about bricks or manure or any other thing that was of no consequence and hadn't feelings. I could see he meant no offence, but in my thoughts I set it down as not very good manners.

"Manners!" he said. "Why, it is merely the truth, and truth is good manners; manners are a fiction. The castle is done. Do you like it?"

Any one would have been obliged to like it. It was lovely to look at, it was so shapely and fine, and so cunningly perfect in all its particulars, even to the little flags waving from the turrets. Satan said we must put the artillery in place now, and station the halberdiers and display the cavalry. Our men

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and horses were a spectacle to see, they were so little like what they were intended for; for, of course, we had no art in making such things. Satan said they were the worst he had seen; and when he touched them and made them alive, it was just ridiculous the way they acted, on account of their legs not being of uniform lengths. They reeled and sprawled around as if they were drunk, and endangered everybody's lives around them, and finally fell over and lay helpless and kicking. It made us all laugh, though it was a shameful thing to see. The guns were charged with dirt, to fire a salute, but they were so crooked and so badly made that they all burst when they went off, and killed some of the gunners and crippled the others. Satan said we would have a storm now, and an earthquake, if we liked, but we must stand off a piece, out of danger. We wanted to call the people away, too, but he said never mind them; they were of no consequence, and we could make more, some time or other, if we needed them.

A small storm-cloud began to settle down black over the castle, and the miniature lightning and thunder began to play, and the ground to quiver, and the wind to pipe and wheeze, and the rain to fall, and all the people flocked into the castle for shelter. The cloud settled down blacker and blacker, and one could see the castle only dimly through it; the lightning blazed out flash upon flash and pierced the castle and set it on fire, and the flames shone out red and fierce through the cloud, and the people came flying out, shrieking, but Satan brushed them back, paying no attention to our begging and crying and imploring; and in the midst of the howling of the wind and volleying of the thunder the magazine blew up, the earthquake rent the ground wide, and the castle's wreck and ruin tumbled into the chasm, which swallowed it from sight, and closed upon it, with all that innocent life, not one of the five hundred poor creatures escaping. Our hearts were broken; we could not keep from crying.

Answer the questions below by choosing the letter of the correct answer.

25 How does the Stranger view humanity based on his actions and statements?

- A) With great reverence and respect
- B) As amusing but inconsequential beings
- C) As inherently evil and deserving of punishment
- D) With indifference, as if they were experimental subjects

26 What is suggested by the Stranger's ability to recreate historical and supernatural events?

- A) He is a master storyteller.
- B) He has lived through these events.
- C) He has divine or supernatural powers.
- D) He is a historian.

27 What does the Stranger's comment about "truth is good manners; manners are a fiction" imply about his moral compass?

- A) He values honesty above all.
- B) He is socially inept.
- C) He has a different understanding of human morality.
- D) He is sarcastic and doesn't mean what he says.

28 Why does the author describe the miniaturised people and soldiers as "ridiculous" and "shameful to see"?

- A) To show the Stranger's imperfect creation.
- B) To offer comic relief in the story.
- C) To demean human attempts at artistry.
- D) To draw attention to the Stranger's insensitivity.

29 What does the Stranger's disregard for human life imply about his character?

- A) He is empathetic but powerless.
- B) He is cruel and malevolent.
- C) He is detached and indifferent.
- D) He is ignorant of the value of life.

30 Why are the characters "crying" and "imploring" at the end of the passage?

- A) They are upset about the destruction of the castle.
- B) They are grieving for the loss of innocent life.
- C) They are afraid for their own lives.
- D) They feel guilty for participating in the Stranger's game.

31 How does the Stranger's treatment of the miniature people mirror his general outlook on humanity?

- A) It shows that he finds humans comical.
- B) It reflects his deep respect for human life.
- C) It reveals his view of humans as expendable and inconsequential.
- D) It shows that he enjoys causing pain and suffering.

32 What can be inferred about the Stranger's motivations for creating these calamities?

- A) He wants to teach a moral lesson.
- B) He is interested in the human reaction to suffering.
- C) He takes pleasure in causing destruction.
- D) He is conducting these acts out for scientific studies.

