

A tropical breeze made the palm trees wave in the wind. The sky was a perfect shade of blue. The ocean lapped at the shore, moving around particles of sand on the perfect white beaches. The Peterson weather control system was performing to perfection.

# Time Machine

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Professor Peterson was one of the great thinkers of this or any other age. He had managed to solve problems most scientists hadn't even thought of yet. He created so many useful inventions, businessmen clamored to get him his own private tropical island when he had asked for it, no questions asked. Nothing was too good for the professor. The flow of findings from the island had been constant. New discoveries, innovative technologies, inventions, solutions, postulates, and theorems flowed like water through an open sink faucet. Then one day, they simply stopped. Naturally, the world was concerned.

Professor Evanston was the second mind on the planet. He was one of the few men who understood the ideas and the depth of revelations emanating from the island. He alone had an understanding of what Peterson was going after. The only individual who consistently predicted the professor's next great discovery. Only he had a true understanding of the professor's research. So, there was little question in the minds of the world's leaders who they should send to investigate the deafening silence from the world's most useful scientific research center.

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Professor Evanston picked up the only volume on Professor Peterson's table. It was a leather-bound book the size of a folio. On the cover, stamped in oversize gold letters as the title: "Time Machine Construction." Professor Peterson stared out the window at the fine tropical Spring day while Evanston rifled through the pages.

Page after page of the manual was blank. Yet the book appeared to be dog-eared, the pages were worn, some even had the corners turned down. For all intents and purposes, it appeared to be a well-used book, yet it held not a single letter or a symbol. No illustrations, not a single drawing or schematic of any kind. He carefully checked each page. Only the last few appeared clean and unused as if the final conclusion or instructions were yet to be written.

"Interesting read," Professor Evanston said mockingly. He had been in Professor Peterson shadow his whole life. His work, a mere footnote to the great Peterson's. His only fame had come from predicting the outcome of Peterson's research, but what he had never predicted was this eventuality. The professor was going to go off the deep end. He was a little disappointed he didn't see it coming. Living alone, isolated on this remote island. In the end, he supposed, there could have been no other result.

"It was full yesterday," Peterson mumbled.

"What do you mean?" Evanston asked.

"The book." Peterson pointed at the volume Evanston had returned to the table.

"What happened to it?" Professor Evanston enquired.

"Someone erased it," the professor replied sadly.

"I can see that, but who?" Evanston wasn't in any mood to play games.

"I not really sure," lamented Peterson.

“Can you explain that?” Evanston interrogated his nemesis.

“Not really,” the old professor explained, “I was standing right here. That’s when I saw him.”

“Saw who?” Evanston demanded.

Peterson appeared despondent, but far from mad, as Evanston had imagined. “Myself. Well, at least it looked like me. He passed some kind of device over the book. It emitted rays of blue light that looked like sunbeams and made an unusual whistling sound. He looked up at me and smiled. In the end, he pointed the device at me and I saw jets of pure energy. I must have passed out. When I awoke he had vanished. When I examined the book, it appeared as you see it now.”

“What was in it?” Evanston inquired impatiently.

“I can’t remember.” The professor explained.

Evanston led the professor out of the room toward a waiting chopper. There was a Senate investigating committee and possibly a rubber room waiting for him on the mainland. Evanston left the door open and the tropical wind whipped through the room. It knocked over the book and the pages flipped in the warm breeze. The pages turned until the last page lay bare. Then, for a single second, the word “success” appeared in clear black type on the pristine white page. Then it faded away and was gone.