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### **Sample MonkeyNotes**

**Note: this sample contains only excerpts and does not represent the full contents of the booknote. This will give you an idea of the format and content.**

# *The Time Machine*

by

**H. G. Wells**

**1895**



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**Note** - H. G. Wells is British and uses two "L's" in the spelling of Traveller. The American spelling is with one "L", but since the traveller is a key part of the novel, we have left that spelling alone and kept it in the original format. While many of the other words have been "Americanized", the spelling of "The Time Traveller and "travelling" with 2 "L's" have been retained in their original British format.

## KEY LITERARY ELEMENTS

### SETTING

There is but one physical setting for the entire story, but three temporal settings are used over the course of the novel. The book begins in late 19<sup>th</sup> century London, specifically, in the Time Traveller's home in Richmond, a borough on the Thames River, on the outskirts of London. The dining room, smoking room, and laboratory are the only rooms seen and are not fully described, as they are only the setting for the.....

### CHARACTER LIST

#### Major Characters

**The Time Traveller** - a well-read and intelligent man of science. He is versed in the theories of his day, and very clearly a Darwinist, like Wells himself, and his thoughts echo much of Wells's own theories about the Britain of his time. He is a man of observation, and muses quite a bit about his .....

**The Narrator, Hillyer** - one of the three men present at both dinners. The narrator is the.....

**Eloi** - peaceful but weak and lethargic people who populate the surface of the earth in the year 802701. Small in stature, and delicate featured, the Eloi play all day, feast on fruit in great halls, and sleep in a.....

**Morlocks** - aggressive, predatory, ape-like "people" who live beneath the earth's surface in the year 802701. The Morlocks are the descendants of the working class of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and continue.....

**Weena** - Eloi who the Time Traveller saves from drowning. She becomes a special friend of.....

#### Minor Characters

**The Medical Man** - one of the three men present at both dinners. He considers the Time Traveller's theories and stories, treats the subject seriously at first, but challenges him and remains extremely .....

**The Psychologist** - one of the three men present at both gatherings, who thinks time traveling would.....

**The Editor** - present at the second meeting only. He is the editor of a well-known (but unnamed) daily paper. Outspoken, he remains skeptical of the Time Traveller's story, making jokes about the .....

**The Journalist** - present at the second dinner only. He unsuccessfully tries to amuse the .....

**Provincial Mayor** - present at the first meeting only. He is not very intelligent, nor a man .....

**Filby** - present at the first meeting only. He is described as "an argumentative person .....

**A very young man** - present at the first meeting only. He participates in the discussion .....

**Man with a beard** - present at the second meeting only. He is quiet and shy, and unknown.....

## CONFLICT

**Protagonist** - The Time Traveller is the protagonist of the story, and remains the focal character of the narrative, even when he is not narrating the story himself. His journey into the.....

**Antagonist** - On one hand, the main antagonists in the story are the Morlocks. These predatory creatures prey on the helpless Eloi, and on more than one occasion attack the Time Traveller, almost preventing.....

**Climax** - The climax in the story comes in the forest, when the Time Traveller builds a fire to provide protection from the Morlocks. This starts the enormous forest fire, during which Weena is.....

**Outcome** - The outcome, like many science fiction stories, is that the hero makes a narrow escape, as the Time Traveller leaves the Morlocks and the Eloi behind. He leaves with the knowledge of the.....

## SHORT PLOT/CHAPTER SUMMARY (Synopsis)

The novel begins with the Time Traveller explaining his theories about the fourth dimension to a group of friends and associates gathered at his home for a weekly dinner. Most of the men present follow his explanations, agree in theory to most of his observations, but quickly become skeptical when the Time Traveller moves from speaking of the nature of time to the possibility of moving within it. Their disbelief only increases when the Time Traveller offers to supply evidence to support his theories, bringing a small model into the smoking room. Made of metal, ivory and quartz, the machine, as the Time Traveller explains, is a replica of a full sized machine that he has built in his laboratory, and on which he plans to explore time.

With his guests watching, he demonstrates the use of the machine, pushing a lever, which causes the model to disappear, into the future, the Time Traveller claims. Most of the men are initially disturbed by the presentation, not quite sure what to think, but most come to believe that the Time Traveller has been playing a trick on them, and easily dismiss his assertion that he plans to explore time within the next week.

The following Thursday, another group of men gather at the Time Traveller's house, and find that the host is not at home, but has left a note asking them to start without him. They do so, entertaining .....

## THEMES

### Major Themes

The Time Machine has two major themes. The first, that capitalism is dangerous, and harmful to the workers, is evident from the connection, made outright by the Time Traveller, between the Morlocks and late 19<sup>th</sup> century laborers and the Eloi and the London aristocracy. Though the aristocrats may be in control at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as long as their power rests on the mistreatment of other human beings, and .....

### Minor Themes

On a more cheerful note, a minor theme can be found in what Wells seems to be saying about human emotion: one of the only things that will survive throughout time is sympathy and emotion, as seen.....

## MOOD

The mood is serious, but not entirely dark or pessimistic, and is often lightened by jokes the.....

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION - BIOGRAPHY

Much of H. G. Wells's social consciousness most likely resulted from his childhood and early adult life. Born in Bromley, Kent on September 21, 1866, Wells was the son of a shopkeeper and former domestic servant. In 1880, his father's store had financial difficulties, forcing Wells's mother to get a job on a nearby estate, and Wells to become the apprentice to a draper, like his brothers before him. As an avid reader since boyhood—a

result of an accident in which he broke his hip—and not keen on the idea of working as a draper for the rest of his life, Wells hated the job, and managed to secure a post for himself as a teacher/pupil at the Midhurst Grammar School in 1883. Soon after, he began attending the Normal School of Science in London.

There he learned biology with T.H. Huxley, perhaps feeding the interest which would manifest itself in his science fiction novels. In 1887, he left the school without a degree, and taught until receiving a B.Sc. in Zoology in 1890. He began his career as a writer in 1893, while working as a teacher in.....

## LITERARY / HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Though most of *The Time Machine* takes place in the future, where the London of Wells's time has been gone for a very long time, Wells's story speaks volumes about the society in which he lived and wrote. The city, in many ways, was at the center of the world, most especially in trade and industrial progress. Both goods produced in the city and those shipped from around the world, especially the colonies, circulated in the city and its harbor and out to all points, creating a great amount of wealth. New transportation allowed the.....

## CHAPTER SUMMARIES WITH NOTES

### CHAPTER 1

#### Summary

The Time Traveller, as he is called by the narrator, Hillyer (his name is used very rarely), is speaking to a group of friends and associates gathered in his home for a regular Thursday dinner. The narrator is present (as he usually is, as he is a particular friend of the Time Traveller) along with a group of half a dozen men, mostly referred to by their professions, including the Provincial Mayor, the Medical Man and the Psychologist. At this particular meeting, the Time Traveller is expressing his ideas about the often overlooked fourth dimension—time—and how he believes that man can travel just as easily through it as he does through space. Some of the men tentatively accept his idea of a fourth dimension, and the necessity of a new geometry to account for it, but when he posits his belief that man can travel through time, both backwards and forwards at his own will, the group reject this notion almost entirely.

In response to their skepticism, the Time Traveller brings from his laboratory a model version of a time machine for a demonstration, which provides further proof of his theory. The machine disappears, and the Time Traveller asserts that it remains within the same physical space, but disappeared because it has gone to a different time. The majority of the men are still wary of accepting the conclusion that time travel is possible, believing that the demonstration was just a trick, a slight of hand, and for further proof, the Time Traveller shows the men the full-scale version of his Time Machine, asserting that with it, he will explore time. The men continue to be incredulous, but the narrator is hesitant to reject the Time Traveller's claims outright.

#### Notes

This first chapter introduces the reader to the Time Traveler, as well as his theories. Throughout the chapter, he provides some scientific evidence to back up his claims, based on work being done in Wells's time, a device he will continue to use, as the theories of Darwin and the Fabians are clearly the basis for many of the Time Traveller's own. This provides a measure of reality for a story that would otherwise be a total fantasy, thus challenging a total dismissal of the story that Wells creates as complete fiction, placing the reader somewhat in the position of the narrator and the men at the dinner party. The reader, most likely as skeptical as the men at the party, begins to be lead to suspend their disbelief by the narrator's nascent acceptance of the possibility of time travel. This chapter also provides a description of the machine itself, which is made out of nickel, ivory, and quartz, exactly as the model had been, delicately assembled in a "glittering metal framework."

## CHAPTER 2

### Summary

The narrator continues with further description of the Time Traveller, and meditation on the previous night's engagement, explaining that part of the men's skepticism lay in the Time Traveller's reputation for being clever and somewhat tricky. Then, it is Thursday again, and another group of men gather at his house for dinner and discussion. Only three of the men from last Thursday's engagement are present, the narrator, the Doctor and the Psychologist. The men are assembled, but the Time Traveller himself is curiously absent, though apparently had expected that he would be as he left a note for them to start without him if he.....

## OVERALL ANALYSES

### CHARACTER ANALYSIS

**The Time Traveller** - The Time Traveller is a man of wit and intelligence, and thus a perfect candidate for interpreting the future for the readers. He is well versed in all the major theories of his day, from math and science to philosophy and economics. He is a member of the upper-class, as he has the money to fund his scientific pursuits, and host the weekly dinners that the narrator attends. Although he must be somewhat wealthy, he is socially conscious, as he dislikes an ostentatious show of wealth, evidenced by the fact that he does not have his servants wait on his guests at dinner. Likewise, he is cognizant of .....

**The Narrator, Hillyer** - The narrator's character serves mostly to support the Time Traveller's claims. Not much is seen of the narrator, but his faith in the Time Traveller's theories and story, demonstrate his open-mindedness, as well as his faith in the miracles of science. Since he is the means for .....

### PLOT STRUCTURE ANALYSIS

*The Time Machine* follows the pattern of many of Wells's novels, with a narrator beginning the story, creating a frame, for the other, more important story. In *The Time Machine*, the narrator is at the Time Traveller's house, and the scientific ground is being laid for the rest of the story. The narrator, Hillyer, is..... complete the novel.

### THEMES - THEME ANALYSIS

The themes found in *The Time Machine* reflect Wells's continued displeasure with the policies created by the British government of his time. His later novels would engage with the problems of his society more fully, but his consciousness of the ill effects of capitalism and the blind trust placed in unchecked industrialization clearly shape the themes of this, his very first novel. Even though the novel emphasizes the.....

### STUDY QUESTIONS

1. *The Time Machine* has a particular narrative structure, in which a narrator creates a frame for the Time Traveller's story. What effect does this structure have on the content of the story? Does it affect the way the readers consider the themes of the novel?
2. Describe the Time Traveller's role as a scientist exploring the future. Does he have any obligations or codes of conduct he should follow? Do you think he handles his situation well?.....

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