

Excerpt

Story 6

Henry and the Time Machine

It was Henry's turn to take the time machine home for the weekend. Looking like an antique ATV welded to a large metal sheet, it floated to a silent stop behind Henry's house.

Henry's dad opened the back door. He was the local morning news anchor, so he was home before Henry finished school. He smiled. When Henry brought the time machine home, he sometimes got an interesting story for his broadcast.

"This contraption's looking pretty battered," said Henry's dad. He walked around the machine and peered at the safety inspection label. "Hmmm. Three months ago."

Henry wasn't listening. He was thinking about the five minutes of time travel he'd earned. Tomorrow he'd be in Big Muddy and see cowboys from three hundred years ago.

"Why don't you start her up? I'd like to hear how she's running," said his dad.

Henry hopped on the machine. "Stand back, Dad," he said.

The first thing the machine did was make a huge bubble that surrounded it like a silver helium balloon. The bubble kept the past and the present from meeting each other. In the past, the bubble also made the time machine invisible.

Henry said, "Ignition."

Nothing happened.

He pushed the ignition button. Nothing.

He pushed again. The machine hummed and the bubble grew. With a shudder, the bubble cracked like a broken mirror, and then immediately went smooth again. Henry heard his dad say, "I've never seen it do that before." Then Henry heard nothing but the whoosh-swish of time travel.

He hadn't touched a thing. He was positive. But he was flying through time anyway. He looked at the time control panel, and his stomach hit his throat. Bright yellow letters spelled CRETACEOUS.

End of Excerpt