

# Investigate: Time Interlude

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Summary: Some people really should reevaluate the wisdom of traveling through time. Set in the alternate universe of the author's "Investigate" stories, serving as an interlude of sorts between Acts II and III.

Story Size: 2,872 words (16Kb as text)

Read the earlier story, "[Investate: Intergang](#)."

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H. G. Wells looked around as he entered the Daily Planet. It was always so amazing to enter another time and see things for himself. After viewing the historical records archived in the future, seeing it firsthand was much more appreciated, not to mention more accurate.

Coming down the ramp and avoiding the people rushing by him, he scanned one of the most famous interiors in history. The bullpen of the Daily Planet. Now where was Clark Kent? His desk should be over there, right?

Suddenly, his eyes fell upon the one who could only be Ms. Lane. The mother of Utopia.

He didn't see Clark Kent anywhere, but he knew that where Lois was, Clark couldn't be far behind, and so he approached her.

"Excuse me. I am H.G. Wells," he greeted, as he came up to her desk.

Unsurprisingly, she looked at him incredulously. He continued unwaveringly.

"And I've run into a spot of trouble. I've been traveling with a companion in my time machine, and we've just come back from the future. I've left him in the park, actually, but we stopped here because —"

"Sir," Lois interrupted. "I'm a little busy, so if you could get to the point? Especially since time travel isn't possible. And H.G. Wells died a long time ago."

"Please, if I could just have a moment of Mr. Kent's time then?" he asked, knowing a lost cause when he saw one.

"Mr. Kent?" she asked, bewildered.

"Why, yes, he's a reporter here, is he not?" he asked.

"Uh, no, I'm sorry you're mistaken but he's not," she answered.

"What?"

How could this be? Did he come before Superman arrived in Metropolis? But no, he walked by a few Superman emblems, so Superman did exist.

"Mr. Kent doesn't work here," she repeated.

"But ... do you know where I could find him?" he asked. He noticed a shift in her posture. She knew Clark Kent at least.

Lois frowned. "Why do you want to talk to him?"

"I believe he can help me. But maybe if I show you my companion from the future your doubts will be quelled?" he asked hopefully.

"If you really have some guy from the future, why'd you leave him in the park?" Lois asked, suspicious.

"I didn't want him to see the city. You see, the twenty-second century is a peaceful, harmonious Utopia. No violence, no crime. Without preparation, poor Tempus would be horrified by the savagery of the 1990s."

"Fine, show me," Lois said while motioning him to lead, clearly planning on rolling her eyes as soon as his back was to her. "Why did this Tempus come back with you from the future?"

"He volunteered, actually. You see, I have a sort of club of fellow inventors back in England. And I've never been quite able to convince them that my time machine was functional. So I wanted to bring Tempus back as proof."

"Why did you stop here?" Lois asked. "Why not go all the way to your little club?"

"Oh. I didn't have enough gold to go all the way in one trip, so we decided this would be a good enough moment in time to obtain some more gold to be able to go the rest of the way and then back to his time."

"Assuming you're not lying or insane, that sounds extremely short-sighted and dangerous," Lois stated flatly as they got onto the elevator.

Wells blinked, but moved on. "Miss Lane, something you might find interesting is that Utopia was founded by Superman's descendants."

"Descendants? So he... got married?" Lois asked, intrigued despite her disbelief.

"Oh, yes. And they based their whole society on the values and principles he lived by," he said as they exited the Planet and stepped onto the sidewalk.

"So who did he marry?" Lois asked.

"Oh, now, that might be giving a bit too much away," he said with a gentle smile.

She narrowed her eyes at him as they finally made it to the park.

"There she is!" Wells said proudly, motioning to his pride and joy.

His time machine, which, admittedly, looked more like a giant sophisticated watch, combined with a flying carpet on a platform with some simple wicker chairs.

“Where’s your man from the future?” Lois asked, if she was any more skeptical, she probably would have just walked away.

“Oh, no. He must’ve wanted a look around. I hope he didn’t go far.”

“Right,” she stated with heavy sarcasm.

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Tempus was thoroughly enjoying his stroll, taking everything in — from the provocative and violent imagery in the plastered ads to the flippant and expressive interactions between individuals on the street. It all was ... better than he had imagined.

Suddenly, he heard a shuffle in an alley. Curious, he entered and found a man with something he recognized as an old fashioned weapon, a gun? He was aiming it at a scared man before he turned toward Tempus, startled.

So startled he dropped the gun and ran.

Intrigued, Tempus went forward and picked up the gun.

“What just happened here ... is called a mugging?”

Tempus asked the relieved man.

“No kidding. He got everything but my watch,” the man said, still uneasy but not as scared.

“Not a very successful mugging. Let’s see if I can do better,” Tempus said, before moving forward and shoving the man into the wall. He quickly took the man’s watch.

“Excellent! I just mugged you!”

“Just please don’t kill me,” the man said, staring at the gun Tempus was holding against him.

“Very well. You were somewhat helpful,” Tempus said, before promptly turning and leaving as he tucked the gun into his silver vest that stood out boldly against his bright blue jumpsuit.

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Wells went to one of the seats and retrieved a journal, clearly ignoring Lois’ doubts, which had only grown.

Why was he looking for Clark? What was he after? Or was he simply insane? Had he escaped from one of the institutions? She really needed to look into how they were being run. No matter what she learned, it would make a good story. But where did this contraption come from? Was it a piece of ‘modern art’?

“Let me show you my problem so you can perhaps ... get word to Superman?” he asked, unrolling the journal and revealing an intricate design of the time machine.

She stilled. “I thought you said you wanted to find Mr. Kent. Now you want Superman. Which is it?” she asked, now annoyed and accusatory.

“Oh dear. I meant ... uh ...” he stuttered.

Hah! She caught him!

“What do you really want? What are you after?” she asked, thoroughly fed up.

“Fuel. I’m afraid I’m fresh out,” Wells admitted.

“What kind of fuel?” Lois asked.

“Gold. Pure twenty-four karat gold,” he said simply.

“Are you kidding me? That’s the best you can do?”

Lois asked, laughing mockingly.

“Miss Lane —”

“What do you think I’m going to do? Fork over jewelry or maybe get Superman to dig a mine? And why get Kent involved? Do I have the word ‘sucker’ stamped on my forehead? Or no, wait, maybe you think I’m galactically stupid. Or —”

“— Or maybe I really am H.G. Wells,” Wells interrupted, although he was tempted to let her rant continue. They were legendary after all.

However, a different voice cut in.

“He is,” a voice said from behind her.

Lois turned as Tempus stepped forward, wearing shades and pulling out a gun from his shiny vest.

“Tempus?” Wells asked, startled.

“Hello, Herb,” he said.

“What are you doing with that horrible weapon?” Wells asked.

“I’m taking a trip, and you’re driving. Get in,” Tempus ordered, gesturing toward the driver’s chair of the time machine.

Lois frowned as Wells slowly did as he was told.

“Don’t I know you?” Tempus asked, his eyes suddenly focusing on her.

Lois met his gaze unwaveringly.

“Wait. Lois Lane. Yes. I’ve seen the holograms,” he said, suddenly grinning. “Well, this is a special pleasure. I’m Tempus. I come from the future that you and Superman created.”

“Me and Super —” Lois started.

“A world of peace. A world without greed or crime. A world so boring you’d blow your brains out, but there are no guns. You want to know the future, Ms. Lane? No one works, no one argues; there are nine thousand channels and nothing on! Well, I’m going to do something about that,” he said, now pointing the gun at her as he climbed into the time machine next to Wells.

“Herb, set the time machine for Smallville, 1966,” Tempus stated.

Lois’ eyes widened. “Smallville?”

“There’s no fuel,” Wells pointed out.

Tempus promptly removed a handful of gold jewelry he had stashed in his vest and handed it to Wells without emotion.

“One of the many disadvantages of being from Utopia is that we have a complete lack of technological understanding. I can’t run this machine,” Tempus complained before waving the gun. “But I can run this one. Now go.”

Wells reluctantly put the gold into the receiving compartment and began adjusting the dials.

“Miss Lane, you seem like an attractive and interesting woman. I’m almost sorry I’ll be ruining your life,” Tempus said.

“What are you talking about?” Lois asked, trying to buy time.

“I’m going to kill Superman, of course,” he said.

“That won’t be easy,” she stated.

“Unless you could get ahold of him when he was a helpless little baby. Gee, if only I had a time machine,” he stated, amused as he turned toward Wells.

But before he could order Wells to activate the machine, there was a rushing noise coupled with a blur.

And suddenly, the gun was no longer in Tempus’ hand, and Tempus was no longer sitting in the time machine. Instead, he was flat on his stomach with his hands tied behind his back with Superman standing over him.

“Hm. If only, but instead you’re here ... with me. And I’m not a helpless little baby,” Superman stated before looking up at Lois.

“Oh, thank heavens!” Wells exclaimed.

“Lois, I heard most of what Aluminum Foil said, but could you tell me what’s going on?” Superman asked, glancing back at Wells, completely unamused.

“Foil is from the future and that guy is claiming to be H.G. Wells, the writer. He also claims to have built this monstrosity that can supposedly travel through time. Apparently, he went to the future, hoping to prove to his little band of merry men back at home that his time machine works by bringing a man from the future back with him. But! They were short on gold and decided to make a pit stop here to be able to go the rest of the way and then back to Foil’s future. Or at least that’s what I gathered,” Lois explained.

“Would you stop calling me Foil?” Tempus complained from the ground.

“You heard the bit about Utopia, I hope?” Lois asked, obviously not looking forward to having to rehash that bit as well.

“Just what he said, which to me is pretty much as concerning, if not more so, than the rest,” Superman stated.

“Supposedly, you and I bring about Utopia,” Lois said, deadpanned.

“Lord, I hope not,” Superman stated, to the shock of both H.G. Wells and Foil — Tempus.

Superman glanced at Tempus, frowning. “I just scanned him. He is the healthiest human being I’ve ever seen. No scar tissue, calluses, or even moles. And his clothing is made of material I’ve never seen before. I think he is from the future.”

“I was afraid you were going to say that,” Lois sighed.

“Looking at Mr. Wells, on the other hand, shows evidence of having grown up in a harsher time than ours, and his clothing is certainly of the early 1900s.”

“Remarkable,” Wells interjected, quite elated by Superman’s display of investigation and deduction. “History did not cover your problem solving skills nearly well enough.”

Superman shook his head.

“Let me get this straight. You brought someone from the future, back in time? Why? Do you know him? Do you trust him? And just to prove some buddies back at home?” Superman asked, facing Wells as Tempus turned his head to watch with astonished glee. “Seems pretty irresponsible to me.”

“Well, you see, I needed someone with in-depth knowledge of the future to — ” Wells started.

“Have you ever watched Star Trek?” Superman interrupted, growing impatient.

“Oh! Is that one of the exciting shows that helped bring about inventions of this time?” Wells asked, curious.

Lois facepalmed.

“I’ll take that as a ‘no’. I strongly advise you find the series and watch it. Time Travel is downright dangerous, and you’re just asking to erase your existence, not to mention the existence of millions of others, by messing with it!” Superman admonished before glaring down at Tempus, who gulped.

“And you. You thought going back in time to kill me as a baby was a good idea? Good Lord, do you even know your own history?! I saved the world from an asteroid back in ‘93, so guess what? If you had killed me, you would have destroyed the world and prevented your very existence! And even if the asteroid hadn’t happened, I’ve saved thousands of lives and many of those have in turn saved others, so chances are you would have prevented the rescue of at least one of your ancestors!”

Tempus’s eyes bulged, but Superman wasn’t done.

“Tempus, you complained about hundreds of channels on TV but nothing being on? Have you heard of Star Trek, Terminator, Stargate SG-1, sci-fi in general?”

“Uh, no,” Tempus answered weakly.

“How about this? I’ll put in my will, a strong urging to the world to always have Star Trek and other sci-fi shows and movies available. I’ll also emphasize the importance of education, having purpose in life, and pursuing personal happiness with common good in mind. If a society has that, they can do anything and will not produce such bored and vindictive people. So — ”

And just like that, the fabric of reality twisted, coursing through trillions of lives without any resistance. Paths of billions of worlds were instantly altered to a brighter

existence, shifting dozens of universes with ripples cascading into countless others.

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“Clark?” Mayson asked, concerned.

“Huh?” he asked, shaking his head.

“Are you alright? You just zoned out on me,” she said, shifting from behind her desk in an attempt to look at him more closely.

“Yeah, I’m sorry. I just realized something. I need to update my will. I should go do that while I’m thinking about it.”

Mayson blinked. “Oh. Alright. What made you think of that?”

“I don’t know. A feeling. Sorry, I need to go, but thanks. Something you said must have reminded me.”

“Sure, no problem,” she said, still confused as he dashed out.

Sometimes it was just better to accept things with Kent.

Clark hurried from the precinct and went into an alley before shooting over to the Superman Foundation.

His gut was never wrong, and right now every fiber of his being was screaming at him to do this. It was strange, random, and seemingly immaterial, but since he saw no harm in it, he would do it.

“Kal, is something wrong?” Mav asked, looking up as Superman entered faster than he normally did.

“Not quite, but do you know where Murray is? I need him to update my will.”

Mav blinked. “I’ll call him right now,” he said, picking up the phone.

“Thanks. It’s probably nothing, but I just got a feeling \_\_\_”

Mav’s eyes widened, and he looked at him worriedly.

“No-no, I’m not going to die any time soon, or at least I’m not planning to; it’s just something I feel I need to add as soon as possible before I forget,” he quickly assured Mav before taking a nearby notepad and jotting down the additional paragraph he wanted to add.

He handed it to Mav to scan.

Mav blinked again, this time more ... amused than anything.

“Well, nerds everywhere will certainly be happy,” Mav said.

Superman smiled. “I’m glad you approve.”

“I’ll let you know when Murray has it ready for your signature.”

“Thank you,” Kal said, before going up to his room on the third floor.

He took a deep breath, unable to shake the feeling that he had just done one of the most important things he would ever do.

Looking out the window, he didn’t notice an old man in an old fashioned suit glancing at a silver pocket watch.

“Thank you, Kal-El. You’ve just saved hundreds of worlds,” he said softly as he closed his pocket watch and quietly turned to disappear without a trace.

THE END