

Time Tunnel

James Lynn Smith

(25 min.)

Four performers unless the narrator and newscaster are done by same voice):

1. Narrator, 2. Paul, 3. Joan, 4. Newscaster

Narrator: It was about to happen. Paul had waited on it for months. The fabric of space was about to crack and he would meet her. She would step through the time warp and be his mistress, his soul mate. There were two factors at play here. One was his special psychic awareness and the other was an extremely rare natural occurrence. Collisions of black holes far out in stellar space flung waves of space-time displacement outward which could condense for a short time into vortices. He was at such a place now, right here on Earth. It was a kind of convergence point through which a being from the past could transmit to the future.

Yes, Paul could receive messages from the *other side*. In defense of being different, he acquired a sense of superiority that distanced him from others. Since he was superior, he acted that way. Now, his messages were not in words; it was impressions and urges that led him. In the last year, he had felt sensations deep in his psyche from an entity that was feminine but strong, intelligent but spirit-led, and humble yet possessing a positive self image. He used his imagination and marshaled these sensations into the image of an attractive and

confident young woman, one with all the love potential he had long desired. This was much better than any connection he had with the inferior women in his own world and time.

Paul now understood the vortex, where and when it would occur and what parts of the world would be connected by it for time transfer. He began to work on synchronizing his psychic receptions from the woman with the vortex timing. He detected distress from her and sensed roughly what time in the past this might come from. He researched world history until he knew the difficulties in her time. Oppression, executions, and war were rampant. He also knew that passing through the time vortex must link with intense emotional desire or determination.

There was no stronger desire than to escape in the moments before execution. He knew she would be in a state of extreme agitation that would thrust her into the time tunnel and, ultimately, into his arms. But he had to have a mind-melding with her and concentrate to draw her to him, or else the vortex transmission would fail. He could imagine the gratitude she would feel for being saved. He was ready. He had come to the place and time for it to happen.

He stared outward at the ocean from the veranda of the old house he had rented. Almost time, he thought. It was going to be a very special event, and he deserved it. Few could possibly appreciate what *he* was capable of.

Then he sensed an electric charge in the air. Near the horizon, the sky began to

darken. Clouds started a slow rolling, boiling motion; coming closer ... closer. Flashes of distant lightening flickered and a low, rumbling thunder followed. Soon clouds were slowly swirling about a deep sky tunnel that seemed to pull him toward it. Then he felt a strange tug about his head, neck and shoulders. Images and memories appeared before him as if being sucked out of his past and queued for transmission. Personal facets like how he dressed, how he shaved, his parents; these were all pulled out and sent onward into the vortex. Paul was receiving sensation also. He seemed to be wearing strangely different clothing. He felt as though he were in a combat stance with a steel blade in his hand. He perceived the smell of animal, like a horse and heard faint words: *Ce qui se passe? Qui est cela?** Language, connection and a melding of minds was beginning. He now sensed his own vocal experiences race before him. He relived both sane and absurd conversations. His scatterbrained, sassy-mouthed cousin arose in his mind. *Oh no. Not her in this*, he thought. He tried to block and censor her engram but felt an empty tug instead. Too late. That syntax was sent also. Next he felt dizziness and the feel of rushing headlong on a collision course.

*[Pronounced *Suh kee suh pahs?... kee ay selah?*]

He finally roused from where he had fallen unconscious on the veranda, stood up slowly and saw a swirl of clouds gently receding.

Paul: *(Turns his head about him. Later looks down and sees her.)*

It – it's over. .. Did it work? Did it fail? Ghaa! There she is, lying over there. It worked!..... She's coming around now.

Joan: (Drowsily) Mmmmm.

Paul: (Talks to himself then approaches her softly)

Her clothes are so tattered. She is diminutive but ... lovely. Who are you my dear? What is your name?

Joan: (Jumps with surprise)

Ahg! I am Joan of Arc! And *who* the *hell* are you?

Paul: Joan of wha?! ... My - my name is Paul. I am an American. We are on an island near ...

Joan: I *expected* an angel. I *get* a weirdo dressed like a freak. You get those threads off a pack-rat or what? Geez, why am I talking this way?

Paul: Well, this - this is proper dress for our time. You have been projected hundreds of years into your future.

Joan: (Mouth open in mock wonder, then eyebrows lift)

... Oh sure, just like that.

Paul: It's true. There are many strange events in the universe that very few know about. I have connected with your soul in some way for a long time. I didn't know exactly who you were, so we have a lot more to learn about each other.

Joan: Listen Jerky Jack, the last guy to use that line on me is missing an ear. ... I am married to God, and my mission is to lead God's army against iniquity. I liberated Orleans and helped drive the English from our lands. ... English... Why am I talking this way? You too. It sounds like... Anglo doggerel.

Paul: In the vortex, there was an exchange of language and syntax. It mostly went one way, and the influence of my cousin and - and her way of speech ... oh never mind.

Joan: So genius, I got it and you didn't.

Paul: What? - Listen, you must have been under a great strain. How can you sound so ... so *flippant* right now? I picked-up on *very different* thought patterns *before* the vortex.

Joan: Huh? Wait! It's all soaking in now. The whole jig. ... Oh *that* was *you!* For some time, I have felt some creepy-crawly thing inside my head. I thought it was God's test of my will. ... Oh no! No no no. Do you know what you did? You and your vortex thingy made me disappear just before they burned me to smithereens. Now they will think I really *was* a witch.... I won't be a martyr. I won't be a saint. History is changed!

Paul: Well you don't know it will be for the worse.

Joan: Oh yes I do. I've got to go back. Or else I'll have to raise God's army right here - again. It was miserable back there, but failing my orders from On High is worse.

Paul: I don't exactly know that you can go back. If so, it might be risky. Why don't you just let me put you at ease. Let me sooth those mean rope burns, they must be sore.

Joan: Touch me Bro, and I'll lay you low! ... I am God's knight, and only He will heal me. I have things to do.

Paul: (To himself and the audience) Aaaaagh! I just wanted a lover. But this is so mixed up. She has the body of a nymph, yet the soul of a saint who *speaks* like a potty-mouth. ... With her godly hang-ups, she probably takes a sword to bed with her. It would be like making love to a porcupine at best. ... How can things get so confused?

Narrator: For the next few days, Joan and Paul developed an uneasy truce, and then the boat came. Joan accompanied Paul back to the American homeland and moved into a room in his spacious apartment. His work as editor at an internet magazine allowed him flexibility. He brought Joan information in the form of daily newspapers, the National Enquirer, and magazines. He took her out on the street and pointed things out to her.

After a while, she began to assert her tastes. She hated his clothes and took some

out of his closet. She replaced them with other things from a consignment shop and insisted he put them on. Finally, he donned a too-small purple shirt with huge, white blousy pants. Paul looked in the mirror, frowning.

Paul: Now if I just had green hair, I would look like a *turnip*... I can't wear this.

Joan: Look Rumpy-dum, a turnip is better than that clown suite you wear every day. What's wrong with you people and your taste in duds anyhow?

Narrator: Despite their differences, Paul continued to acquaint Joan with modern life. He also showed how to get news on the internet and dial CNN and FOX on the TV. She intently absorbed information more quickly than anyone he had ever known. Except, of course, himself. He wondered what it all meant to her. Could she calm down and appreciate her denied soul connection with Paul? One day she looked at him solemnly.

Joan: I've come to a conclusion. This dingy dumb world of yours is full of godless people. There should be an army of righteousness marching out to squash sin and corruption. Your prophets on the street have no home and are treated like scum. People are locked up and called 'disturbed' because their busy-body families won't understand them. Criminals break into homes and the law harasses the *victims*, like they *invited* thugs to come right on in and beat them up. I've got to get out for a while.

Paul: Maybe you should consider some things before you – Where are you going? Come back!

Joan: I'm outta here! Things to do, Bubba.

Narrator: Paul expected her to come back. Days went by and he became distraught. How did she subsist? Then he found that his bank card was missing. Upon checking, he found that she made a sizeable withdrawal. He thought about calling the police with a missing person report.

Paul: (Mumbles; then gestures as if on the phone with police)

Sure. Now just how would that work?... *"Yes, sir. What is the subject's name and social security number? ... Joan of Arc? No social? Something IS missing sir, but you need a shrink to find it."* ... Aww. What is wrong with her? Why doesn't she call me? Maybe she will. She's bound to run into a snag at some point..... (Sigh) I might as well tune in the news channel to calm my nerves with some TV. I can't just sit alone here doing nothing.

Newscaster: And so the president will meet with the prime minister Tuesday.... This just in! Police confirm that several homeless people have disappeared from the streets and inmates from Saint Simon's Asylum have escaped. Similar timing has them believing the events may be related.

Paul: That is strange. Wonder what is going on? (yawns) Gee I am tired. Think I'll get a little ... shuteye.... (light snoring; two breaths)

...

Newscaster: We interrupt "Lost" to bring you this item. The police confirm that several horses have been taken from Canyon Park riding stables. It occurred under the cover of darkness. An investigation is underway.

Paul: Mmmm? Horses. Yeah, sure; let's all get uptight.... That reminds me of something. The smell of horses. The vortex. Oh my! My imagination is going crazy. I see Joan riding off with a band of human derelicts to conquer iniquity. The little nincompoop!

Narrator: Paul reaches for the remote control and punches a change in the channel in hopes of forgetting what may be happening.

Newscaster: We interrupt 'CSI Miami' to bring you this item. The Bains Historical Museum reports a theft last night of a hundred or so artifacts. Most had to do with ancient battle armor and swords. Police wonder if the recent episodes of theft and missing persons are related. Stay tuned. Now we return you to 'CSI Miami'.

Paul: That crazy girl. You'd better call me Joan! You need to listen to me.

Narrator: Paul began to scurry around, looking at magazines and newspapers she had been reading. As feared, he found there were pencil marks where articles about the Asylum and Museum appeared. He searched for other articles that she may have marked. It might give hints of where she was. He did not feel

his psychic faculty was working now. He was too distraught.

Paul: I am going to get control of myself. I am going to get control of myself. I am. I am. I'm going to watch something different. A different channel may have something humorous.

Newscaster: We interrupt 'Saturday Night Live' to bring you this item. Police have a SWAT team standoff with a threat at the corner of Halford and Vine. A large group of rioters, some on horseback, were threatening tourists in the theater district. The group has marshaled together now for an apparent faceoff with the SWAT team. It appears that antiquated armor and swords are being wielded in a threatening manner. We will keep you informed. Now back to 'Saturday Night Live'.

Paul: Joan, Joan. What are you doing? That won't work here. Call me. Get out of there!

Narrator: Finally Paul had to get sleep. He spent a fitful night, but managed to get up and do some ineffective work at his downtown office the next day. He returned home that afternoon and later ate some left-over dinner. Nervously, he took the TV remote and started to tune in to the local station. He heard a knock at the door and then a key in the lock.

Paul: Joan! How did you get here? What did the police do? ... You look very sad and disheveled.

Joan: I disbanded the army. I've got to go back through that time tunnel thing. I can't take it anymore!

Paul: What are you saying? Are you crying?

Joan: Nothing makes sense here! I can't tell the godly from the sinners. Everybody has both all mixed up in them. That theater place has big pictures and billboards of painted hussies for innocent kids to see. Dirt bags in your government steal you blind, but it's your sweet, lame-brained citizens that vote them in... Who is guilty? Who should be whacked? ... And my army will not obey God. They are spineless cowards. I did see the enemy in that swatting team, though. They are evil because they all wear black and yell into that megavoice thing.

Paul: That was the SWAT team with a megaphone. They are with the police.

Joan: Yeah. Whatever. This guy I picked out to be my lieutenant, he told me he knew the streets like the back of his hand and could lead my knights. When we saw the black swatters, I give him the best sword and told him to mount and charge.

Paul: What did he do?

Joan: He just stood there staring and wet his pants!... Oh. This is no good.

Narrator: For the next day, things were calm. Joan sat saying very little but obviously thinking about something. Paul respected her space, fearing a manic episode. Yet he gently probed.

Paul: Joan. How do you feel? What are you thinking?

Joan: How do I *feel*? What a twit! ... Oh, I'm sorry... Paul. It's just like this was all a big boo-boo. You've got to get me back to that time tunnel thing before it's gone. I've figured out how it works with feeling and mind. That and my faith can get me back.

Paul: But the execution: You don't want that. History shows they burned you twice and dumped your ashes into the river.

Joan: The execution is over by now. I won't hurt. I'll just not have the body.

Paul: But where could you *be* when you go back?

Joan: Where all saints go. I am not the body. When God wants me to have another, I will.

Narrator: Paul took her back to the island. He marveled at how she had come

to synchronize with the vortex potential. He watched the clouds darken and close in, slowly beginning the swirl about the sky tunnel. Paul felt very sad. He saw that Joan had fervor about her. Paul began to feel the electric charge in the air as the vortex formed. Then she turned to him.

Joan: Paul, we should learn from this. I have learned not to escape destiny toward anything but the arms of God. You need to learn to live in the world you have. This is where you learn your soul's lessons. ... You're all right. In a way your mind's gift is like a candle in the darkness ... Except! Except for some *attitudes* that have you hopping around with your candle flame up your own hiney! Give everybody a break and get over yourself! Mix in with people you think are common, because frankly you're the one who's a pill. Don't strain your weird little psyche, when real-life is shouting "I love you. Come out and play."

Paul: I'll miss you.

Joan: Learn how to love a girl in your *own* world and don't put expectations on somebody that can't *possibly* dig you. No offense intended. I will have to give you this, though. When you were dressed up like a turnip, ... you were really kind of cute.

Narrator: Joan turned back toward the vortex and stepped toward it. Then she vanished and assumed her rightful place in sainthood.
