

TEMPUS FUGIT

By Greg Atkins

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SYNOPSIS: Gary wants to propose, until his girlfriend—from the future—arrives to stop him in *Tempus Fugit*.

SETTING: An apartment living room & kitchen.

TIME: Present.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(2 females, 1 male)

GARY (m)Mid 20's, boyfriend to Cynthia. (73 lines)

CYNTHIA (f).....Mid 20's, girlfriend to Gary. (35 lines)

FUTURE CYNTHIA (f)Mid 20's. (47 lines)

TEMPUS FUGIT is part of the Full-Length work

NINE-TENTHS by Greg Atkins.

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TEMPUS FUGIT

AT START: *A one-bedroom apartment. The living room and kitchen. A sofa, coffee table, recliner, etc. The kitchen area has a stove, refrigerator, sink, etc. It is clean and tidy. Right Center is the front door, a window over the sink, a window over the sofa. Stage Left is a door to the bathroom and the door to the bedroom. [NOTE: The setting can also be very simple: a couch, bar cart with beer, sparkling wine and glasses, a living room table and a blanket. The front door, bathroom door and bedroom door can be simple curtained entrances and exits.]*

GARY, a friendly looking millennial geek, is sitting on the couch in an Overwatch t-shirt and sports coat. On the coffee table are candles and a small vase of flowers. There is a bottle of California sparkling wine and two mismatched wine glasses. It looks like someone is preparing for a romantic evening. 60's music plays and he fidgets with a ring box. Suddenly a bright orange light blasts through the windows, followed by a loud crack.

GARY: What the hell?

As he looks out the window, the front door flies open and there stands FUTURE CYNTHIA in a silver leotard with a rainbow lightning bolt on the front and sporting a shimmering golden midi-cape. She has that cute nerd look and you can just tell that she's the smartest person in any room.

FUTURE CYNTHIA: Am I too late?

GARY: Wow, cool outfit, babe.

FUTURE CYNTHIA: *(Whispering.)* Is she here?

GARY: What?

FUTURE CYNTHIA: Gary, focus. Is. She. Here.

GARY: Who?

FUTURE CYNTHIA: Me.

GARY: Cynthia?

FUTURE CYNTHIA: *(Noticing. Relieved.)* Oh, my god. You still have the ring.

GARY: What ring? *(Puts the ring box behind his back.)*

FUTURE CYNTHIA: *(Sighs loudly and holds out her hand.)* Gimmie.

GARY: *(Shows her the ring box.)* Oh, this? It's just... *(FUTURE CYNTHIA grabs the ring box out of his hand.)* Hey!

FUTURE CYNTHIA: Look, I don't have much time to explain, but you can't ask me to marry you. *(Goes around blowing out the candles, grabs the remote and turns off the music.)*

GARY: How do you know I was going...?

FUTURE CYNTHIA: *(Grabs the wine and glasses.)* Listen, Gary... *(Noticing the glasses.)* I can't believe we still have these. *(Takes them to the kitchen, putting the wine in the fridge and the glasses in the cupboard. She sets the ring box on the counter.)* Listen, Gary, my boss doesn't know I'm using the TimeSlider and if he does, I'm fired. *(Looks at GARY.)* Are you paying attention?

GARY: This is very cool cosplay.

FUTURE CYNTHIA: This isn't cosplay. This is me. Cynthia. I am from twenty years in the future.

GARY: Really? You don't look that much different.

FUTURE CYNTHIA: Why do you think I put on Oil of Olay every night?

GARY: *(Confused.)* I never really...

FUTURE CYNTHIA: *(Goes and sits with GARY, taking his hands.)* Gary, listen. This is important. I'm going to walk through the front door in just a minute. I'm going to totally ignore all the great romantic stuff you've done and go get a beer. You'll be sitting here all sweet and geeky and I'm going to tell you I was offered a job at Tempus...

GARY: Tempus? Really? That's great!

FUTURE CYNTHIA: And that's exactly what you'll say and then I'll realize something is up and you'll propose and I'll say yes and we'll drink that bottle of wine and then we'll make love right here on the couch and... *(Getting upset at herself and standing up.)* I won't be paying any attention to you because I'll just keep looking at the ring over and over and wondering if maybe a princess cut is a bit much... and, oh, god, was I already that selfish lover that I said I'd never be? Anyway, the point is, I've come back to tell you to not ask me to marry you.

GARY: Because you're a selfish lover?

FUTURE CYNTHIA: No! You're not hearing what I'm saying.

GARY: Is that what women wear in the future?

FUTURE CYNTHIA: What? This? No! Today was dress as your favorite superhero day at work.

GARY: *(To himself.)* A job at Tempus? Wow. *(To FUTURE CYNTHIA.)* Way to go, babe.

FUTURE CYNTHIA: *(Happily.)* Thanks. We finally got health insurance! And dental!

GARY: Sweet. So, who are you supposed to be?

FUTURE CYNTHIA: Mercurial. You haven't heard of her yet. She's new to the Marvel canon and she is epic!

GARY: What are her powers?

FUTURE CYNTHIA: Well, she has the ability to... NO! It doesn't matter! *(Going to GARY.)* Look, Gary, you can't propose to me!

GARY: Why?

FUTURE CYNTHIA: Just... if you ever loved me. *(Pleading.)* Please don't ask me to marry you.

GARY: *(Playing along.)* Is it because it'll set a series of events in motion that will spark a nuclear holocaust? Will our love usher in the demise of mankind as we know it? Will our children become tyrannical warlords that bring universes to their knees?

FUTURE CYNTHIA: *(Sadly.)* No, Gary, it's just that we have a really shitty marriage.

GARY: Oh.

SFX: slam of a car door and the beep of a car alarm.

CYNTHIA and FUTURE CYNTHIA: *(Said together.)* I'm here!

GARY: You're here!

FUTURE CYNTHIA: I can't see me. If I do... *(Puts her hands together, then makes an explosion with them.)* boom! At least I think that's what happens.

GARY: Quick, get in the bathroom. First door.

FUTURE CYNTHIA: I know where my own bathroom is!

GARY: Right.

FUTURE CYNTHIA goes into the bathroom, but catches her cape in the door as it closes. GARY notices and crosses to the door, trying to pull/push the cape back in, but it won't budge. He does business with the cape until the front door opens and in walks CYNTHIA wearing a Hello Kitty backpack. CYNTHIA wears a simple, but cute dress and low heels.

CYNTHIA: *(Throwing her backpack on the floor, flipping her shoes off and heading to the fridge.)* You will not believe the day I've had! Highs and lows, peaks and valleys, but ultimately... victory! Hi, babe.

GARY: Hi.

CYNTHIA: *(With her head in the fridge.)* Did you drink the last Amstel Light?

GARY: Nope!

CYNTHIA: *(FUTURE CYNTHIA'S cape zips into the bathroom, as CYNTHIA'S head comes out of the fridge, looking at GARY.)* Sparkling wine? Did we win the lottery? *(With a British accent.)* Are we now members of the Royal Family?

GARY: *(Sits on the couch.)* It was on sale and I thought it'd be nice.

CYNTHIA: Great, because we have something to celebrate. *(Opens the cupboard blocking her view of GARY and takes out two glasses.)*

GARY: *(Smiling.)* We may have a lot to celebrate. *(The bathroom door opens and an Oil of Olay bottle flies out and hits GARY.)* Ow!

CYNTHIA: *(Misunderstanding his meaning.)* Owwww is right! *(Catwalk strutting toward him.)* It's your lady comin' at you with... *(Looking at the bottle.)* a sparkling wine that legally cannot be called champagne in the United States to tell you.... *(Sits.)* What are you doing with my Oil of Olay?

GARY: I... ah....

CYNTHIA: Do not gross me out. Not with my precious Oil of Olay. And anyway your chances of getting lucky are very high tonight. *(Handing GARY the wine bottle.)* Can you open this... or are your hands all greasy?

GARY: *(Holding up the lotion bottle.)* I... uh... never opened this. *(Puts the lotion on the table and opens the wine.)* I'll open this.

CYNTHIA: So! A peak; Dr. Rogers said my new concepts of the Inherent Paradoxes of Time were dead on. A valley; Morrison said he would not send my paper on Non-Linear Constructs of Time to the Journal of Physics, because, in his words, "Time, my dear, does not slide." He's an ass. And he's wrong. *(Immediately shifting gears.)* You know what?

GARY: Nope, I don't know anything.

CYNTHIA: Let's go out to dinner!

GARY: *(Surprised.)* Okay.

CYNTHIA: I want Italian. Carbs stuffed with carbs with carb sauce.

GARY: Dominico's?

CYNTHIA: Yes! They have breadsticks. I'm gonna take a shower.
(Runs off to the bedroom.)

GARY: Wait! The victory? You said ultimately you were victorious.

CYNTHIA: *(Offstage. From the bedroom.)* Oh, yeah. Hang on... I have to get out of this dumb ass dress.

The bathroom door opens and FUTURE CYNTHIA comes out.

FUTURE CYNTHIA: *(Whispering.)* Am I always like that?

GARY: Like what?

FUTURE CYNTHIA: Just come in the front door and start talking?

GARY: Um, yeah.

FUTURE CYNTHIA: What a bitch. I didn't even ask you about your day, did I? Do I ever kiss you when I come home?

GARY: That's not really something you do.

FUTURE CYNTHIA: I thought you didn't do it. *(Spots the shoes that present CYNTHIA kicked off. She crosses and picks one up.)* Oh, my god, I loved those shoes! I knew I should have gotten two pair. And what was I thinking with that Hello Kitty bag? No wonder Morrison thought I was an idiot.

SFX: large thud from the bedroom offstage.

CYNTHIA: *(Offstage.)* OW! Damn it, Gary!

GARY: Hide! *(FUTURE CYNTHIA throws herself behind the sofa still holding the shoe. Calling off...)* What happened, babe?

CYNTHIA: *(Offstage.)* Ow, ow, ow, ow, ow. I hit my knee on your dumb amplifier. Again! *(Enters in a robe, limping and holding her knee.)*
Gary, can't you take your amp and your guitar to your moms?

GARY: I guess so.

CYNTHIA: I'd appreciate it. *(Crosses to get her shoes and only finds one.)* Where's my other shoe? *(Looks around.)* Where the hell did it go? *(The shoe flies up from behind the sofa and GARY catches it.)*

GARY: Found it!

CYNTHIA: *(Reaches for it.)* Oh, thanks. *(GARY tosses it to her and it goes over her head.)* What is wrong with you?

GARY: *(At a loss to explain his throw, he shouts...)* Sports!!

CYNTHIA retrieves the shoe as FUTURE CYNTHIA crawls from the sofa to the bathroom with her cape over her head to hide her face. CYNTHIA crosses to the bathroom. GARY leaps up, stopping her from going into the bathroom.

GARY: I wouldn't go in there right now. I might give it a moment to air out.

CYNTHIA: You befouled our bathroom in the time it took to take off my dress? That's a record even for you. And I didn't hear a flush.

SFX: toilet flushes.

GARY: I gotta fix that. So, your victory?

CYNTHIA: Oh, my victory! So after Morrison denies my paper I'm thinking... we're not married, we live in this shitty apartment, *(GARY looks around at the place... it ain't so bad.)*, so what do I have to lose by quitting this job? I'm too smart for these people anyway... and suddenly my phone dings and I get an offer of a job at...

CYNTHIA and GARY: Tempus!

CYNTHIA: How did you know?

GARY: I didn't.

CYNTHIA: You just said it.

GARY: I just figured that would be an ultimate victory... and... it is! Congratulations!

CYNTHIA: I know? Right?

GARY: Tempus? Really? That's great!

CYNTHIA: The money is amazing. The projects are top secret, so I probably won't be able to talk to you about stuff, but... Tempus!

GARY: Oh, my god, babe. I am so proud of you.

CYNTHIA: *(Kisses GARY on the nose.)* Me too. *(Crosses to the bathroom door and puts her hand on the knob.)*

GARY: *(Trying to think of something to stop her.)* Ahhhh.

CYNTHIA: Yeah, I'm speechless too. *(Opens the door. Waves her hand under her nose, makes a "stinky face" and goes in.)*

GARY sits on the arm of the sofa waiting for the screaming. Then... CYNTHIA begins to sing, "Hey, Paula." GARY is confused.

CYNTHIA: *(Singing.)* "Hey! Hey! Paula... I want to marry you."

As the bathroom door closes, the front door opens and FUTURE CYNTHIA enters with some foliage and roses in her hair. SFX: the shower starts.

CYNTHIA: *(Singing.)* "Hey! Hey! Paul, I want to marry you too."

FUTURE CYNTHIA: I don't remember a rose bush under that window.

GARY: It was a housewarming gift from your mom.

FUTURE CYNTHIA: Oh, really? I don't remember that either. I miss her so much.

GARY: Miss her? Miriam died?

FUTURE CYNTHIA: Oh, yeah, she passed a couple... no! Wait! You can't know anything about the future.

GARY: But you've already told me a lot about the future.

FUTURE CYNTHIA: No I haven't.

GARY: Well, I know there is time travel!

CYNTHIA: *(Offstage. From the bathroom.)* What?

GARY: Nothing! *(Taking FUTURE CYNTHIA'S arm and sitting on the couch.)* Listen, why the hell can't I ask you to marry me? You haven't given me one good reason.

FUTURE CYNTHIA: Gary, we're just not good together.

GARY: Yes, we are. We're great together. We like all the same video games... the same superhero movies... what about Thai food? Hot level 3 in Thailand which is a hot level 5 American... who else knows that? I mean, we love 60's music and know all the words to "Hey, Paula"? Well, I know most of the words. Hell, we even hate the all same things... and everyone knows that's the secret to a happy marriage!

FUTURE CYNTHIA: Of course it is, but things... changed. All the secrecy at work meant we couldn't socialize with anyone...

GARY: That's another thing... neither of us like people!

FUTURE CYNTHIA: I get my doctorate...

GARY: Congratulations!

FUTURE CYNTHIA: Thanks. *(Realizes she gave away more of the future.)* Damn it! Anyway, it doesn't matter. If my theory is correct, time slides and adjusts to whatever stupid things we do to it.

GARY: Cool theory.

FUTURE CYNTHIA: It's just a theory. I could be wrong and we've just changed the future and unleashed a horde of super aliens on the earth.

GARY: Also a cool theory.

SFX: the shower stops and the sound of the shower curtain being pulled back.

CYNTHIA: Gary?

FUTURE CYNTHIA: *(Panicked.)* What do we do?

GARY: I don't know! *(Wraps his arms around her and flops down on the sofa on top of her.)*

CYNTHIA: *(Enters in her robe and drying her hair with a towel oblivious of the couple and with her face obscured with the towel.)*
Gary, naptime's over. *(Exits to the bedroom.)*

GARY and FUTURE CYNTHIA sit up. GARY enjoyed the moment.

FUTURE CYNTHIA: Really? You're in love with... *(Pointing to the bedroom.)* that woman?

GARY: Why shouldn't I be? Now? Twenty years from now?

SFX: blow dryer.

FUTURE CYNTHIA: *(She has to say it.)* Because I cheat on you, Gary! I am an asshole cheater! I have an affair with a Swiss researcher that worked on the Large Hadron Collider.

GARY: *(He doesn't know what to say.)* That's... impressive.

FUTURE CYNTHIA: *(Excited.)* Yeah, right? He had total access. *(GARY looks at FUTURE CYNTHIA. Realizing.)* To the particle accelerator!

GARY: Is there something I could have done?

FUTURE CYNTHIA: No! Stop that! You were great! Through the whole thing! And before... all twenty years. You are just a big LOVE and I suck like a black hole through a straw.

GARY: Strange analogy.

FUTURE CYNTHIA: It's going to be the breakthrough concept, just wait. *(Catching herself.)* Damn it!

GARY: It's gonna be okay. *(SFX: the blow dryer clicks off. GARY looks toward the bedroom.)* Oh, boy.

FUTURE CYNTHIA: Oh, oh, I gotta go. *(Stands.)* I'm already fee... fee... feeling the slippage. It's pulling me back. *(Crosses to the front door and opens it.)*

GARY: *(Stands.)* Wait! *(Crosses to FUTURE CYNTHIA.)* Were we happy?

FUTURE CYNTHIA: What?

GARY: Those 20 years? Were we happy?

FUTURE CYNTHIA: The usual ups and downs. Mostly ups, but the downs are d-d-down. We have kids.

GARY: *(Shouting.)* We what?!

FUTURE CYNTHIA: *(Looking toward the bedroom.)* Shhhhhh!

GARY: Boys or girls?

FUTURE CYNTHIA: *(Smiles.)* You'll find out. *(Then catches herself.)* Or maybe we won't. *(This stops her.)* Wow.

GARY: At least tell me if they become tyrannical warlords. It'll make my decision easier.

FUTURE CYNTHIA: *(Feeling the effects of the slippage.)* D-d-don't do it, Gary. For both our sakes. Marriage isn't for us... but I do love you. *(Gives him a kiss.)* See ya, in the future.

FUTURE CYNTHIA exits as GARY closes and then leans against the door. He is crying. A bright orange light floods through the windows, followed by a loud crack.

CYNTHIA: *(Entering in a cute dress and putting on her shoes.)*

Someone at the door?

GARY: Yeah, Scientologist.

CYNTHIA: They must have been convincing to make you tear up.

GARY: They had me at aliens in a volcano. Ready to go?

CYNTHIA: Yes. *(Crossing to GARY.)* It'll be nice to go out, just you and me, in the middle of the week. *(GARY opens the door and CYNTHIA stands exactly in the same position as FUTURE CYNTHIA did.)* Have I told you how much I love you lately?

GARY: Yes. *(A pause.)* No.

CYNTHIA: Play your cards right and you may hear it a lot over time.

(Gives GARY a kiss. They exit and close the door. A moment.)

CYNTHIA: *(Offstage.)* Now what?

GARY: *(Offstage.)* Forgot my keys.

GARY enters and looks around. He spots the ring box on the counter, grabs it and exits. Blackout.

THE END