

HALF THE FUN IS GETTING THERE

Page 1

1 **HALF THE FUN IS GETTING THERE**  
2 An original audio science fiction story with music  
3 By Chris Goble  
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5 Approximate playing time: 10 minutes  
6  
7

8 *Cast*  
9

10  
11 ALAN Sarcastic college professor.  
12  
13 MICHAEL/COMPUTER Ships computer.  
14  
15 SARAH Married to Alan. Wants Alan to be more active in his  
16 child's life.  
17  
18 STEWARDESS Young female who works for the space line.  
19  
20 ATENDANT Young male who works for the space line.  
21  
22

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Page 2

1 SCENE 1

2

3 /SFX/ SOUNDS OF A CROWD OF PEOPLE, MUCH LIKE AN AIRPORT.

4

5 Alan (*Agitated*) Honey, there just is no way. The next transport shuttle  
6 doesn't leave prime colony until tomorrow.

7

8 Sarah (*Forceful, thru phone*) You would rather miss your son's recital  
9 than hire a private pod.

10

11 Alan I hate those things, frozen coffins...as my dad use to say.

12

13 Sarah (*Thru phone*) It wouldn't kill you, this once

14

15 /MUS/ OPEN OF SHOW

16

17 Alan (*Voice over*) That's how it all started. But she was right,  
18 (*Sarcastically*)it wouldn't kill me. I called up the spaceline and  
19 booked a pod for that afternoon, which would put me home  
20 tomorrow morning.

21

22 /SFX/ SOUNDS OF A POD BEING SET (CLANGS, BUZZES, BEEPS)

23

24 Alan (*Voice over*)A popsicle, that was what I was about to become, a  
25 popsicle. They don't really freeze you, but your body is put in  
26 suspended animation for the long hyperspace journey.

27

28 Stewardess Sir if you will lay down in the pod, I'll get the straps secure.

29

30 Alan (*Voice over*) A friend once joked with me that the flight suits make  
31 you look like a giant penis... so I guess that's one positive thing.  
32 As the attendant straps me in, I look around the big metallic egg.  
33 The top half of the pod is just a cryo-bed and a computer screen.  
34 No terminal or keypad. One of those fancy voice recognition  
35 units. The cryo-bed, actually does look like a clear glass coffin.  
36 My luggage is in the bottom half of the egg. Assuming they don't  
37 send my luggage to Mars.

38

39 Stewardess Computer...function readout.

40

41 Computer Ship Systems functioning within normal parameters

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1 Alan (Voice over) Although the scientists say you don't feel a thing, I  
2 heard of a guy who once dreamt the whole fifteen years of his  
3 journey and went insane. My wife says the Inquirer makes up all  
4 those stories, but there has to be some truth or how could they post  
5 it.  
6  
7 Stewardess Sir, I'm going to close the lid over your sleep chamber. Breathe  
8 normally and you should be asleep within minutes  
9  
10 /SFX/ SOUNDS OF HISS OF LID BEING SHUT  
11  
12 Alan (Voice over) She closed the lid on my coffin. I vividly remember  
13 the sound of the door locking. Sort of like sealing a tomb.  
14  
15 /SFX/ SOUND OF HEAVY LOCKS CLOSING A DOOR AND AN AIR SEAL  
16  
17 Alan (Voice over) Trapped for 10 years or forever, all for a recital. Just  
18 as I was drifting off, I felt the jolt of the ship lifting off.  
19  
20 /SFX/ SOUND OF ROCKET TAKING OFF AND A ROCKET ENGINE  
21  
22 Alan (Voice over) If you have never watched a ship take off, it's quite a  
23 sight. The ship lifts off on good old rocket power. Smoke billows  
24 out from the engine as you move thru the sky. When you reach  
25 orbit the ship moves into a long tube, the hyperspace gate. The  
26 tube spins, just like an old kaleidoscope. The ship goes in one end  
27 of the tube and a large discharge of light comes out the other end.  
28  
29 /SFX/ SOUND OF AN EXPLOSION  
30  
31 Alan (Voice over) The first time I saw one I thought it exploded. My  
32 last shrink said that's why I hate traveling in space. I paid the guy  
33 2000 credits to tell me I'm afraid of blowing up in space. Duh!  
34 Experts may say you're safer in space than in your own kitchen.  
35 But does your kitchen blow up in a massive fireball and leave you  
36 floating in a vacuum. Not to my knowledge, it doesn't.  
37  
38 /SFX/ SOUND OF ALARMS  
39  
40 Alan (Voice over) Scientists say you can't possibly dream during cryo-  
41 sleep, because your not really asleep. But I did. I had a nightmare  
42 (Pause) but this was real. My eyes opened expecting to see my  
43 family on Earth, but I was greeted by a red light and the computer.  
44  
45 Computer Cryo-sleep malfunction, occupant awake... malfunction  
46

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1 Alan (Angry) Quiet. Where are we?  
2  
3 Computer Ten hours into flight.  
4  
5 Alan What is our Earth ETA?  
6  
7 Computer Nine years, Eleven Months, Three Days, Two hours (*Cut off*)  
8  
9 Alan (Angry) Enough. I have to get back to sleep. How do I shut this  
10 hatch?  
11  
12 Computer Cryo-sleep malfunction. Not programmed to repair.  
13  
14 Alan (*Panic in his voice*) Turn the ship around. Send a distress signal.  
15  
16 Computer Pod in preset course, no signal can be sent from hyperspace.  
17  
18 Alan So, I'm screwed?  
19  
20 Computer Restate Question?  
21  
22 Alan Am I going to be awake the whole journey?  
23  
24 Computer Outside of normal human sleep patterns, affirmative.  
25  
26 Alan Ten years in this flying coffin. I told everyone at least some of  
27 those stories had to be true. (*Pause*) Wait a minute. (*Panic*) What  
28 about food and water?  
29  
30 Computer Your suits biomed circuits still function and will provide for your  
31 bodies needs.  
32  
33 Alan But what about my mind?  
34  
35 Computer Restate question.  
36  
37 Alan Forget it.  
38  
39 Alan (*Voice over*) So there I was, with nothing but time to kill. What  
40 was I going to do? If I could have gotten to my luggage I had a  
41 book I could read ten thousand times, that might take ten years. I  
42 could try to fix the cryo-bed, but I don't know anything about bio-  
43 mechanics. I had time to learn, but no one to teach me.  
44  
45 Computer Ship functions normal... Cryo-sleep malfunction  
46

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1 Alan Computer, stop telling me that. What am I going to do? I was sick  
2 once when I was a kid for a whole week . I couldn't leave the  
3 house. I about went crazy seeing the other kids playing in the  
4 street. What am I going to be like after this trip?  
5  
6 Computer Restate question.  
7  
8 Alan Never mind  
9  
10 Alan (*Voice over*) For the next month, I keep thinking about what was I  
11 going to do for ten years. And all the computer would say was  
12  
13 Computer Restate question  
14  
15 Alan Restate question. (*Very Crazy*) Is that all you can say?  
16  
17 Computer Restate question  
18  
19 Alan Restate question. Restate Question. Restate Question. (*Trailing*  
20 *off*)  
21  
22 Alan (*Voice over*) By the end of the month, I was cracking. That's  
23 when I started to talk to the computer like it was a real person.  
24  
25 Alan So I can't keep calling you computer. You need a name. How  
26 about Michael?  
27  
28 Computer Restate question  
29  
30 Alan My father's name was Michael. He was a cold calculating  
31 machine. So how do you feel, Michael?  
32  
33 Computer Ship functions normal... Cryo-sleep malfunction  
34  
35 Alan I'm glad to hear it, my functions are normal too. I assume you  
36 were wondering about me. I am a college professor of literature  
37 and creative writing. I was at a conference when my wife, Sarah  
38 called. Do you have a wife?  
39  
40 Michael Restate question  
41

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1 Alan Be glad for that. Don't get me wrong I love her, but she can drive  
2 me crazy. Anyway, my son had a recital and I couldn't get a  
3 regular flight. So here we are. *(Pause)* I'm glad you asked, I was  
4 presenting a paper about the fall of truly original poetry in the  
5 modern world. *(Pause)* Oh, you would like to hear it, okay. Our  
6 modern society has become so dependant on the computer that the  
7 search for beauty has been replaced by the search for logic  
8 *(Trailing off)*  
9

10 Alan *(Voice Over)* So I rattled off my entire presentation. And all the  
11 computer would say is  
12

13 Michael Affirmative.  
14

15 Alan *(Voice Over)* After talking for about 2 hours, I felt better. So I  
16 made up my mind. I finally had a student that wouldn't talk back  
17 or sleep during my lectures. It was a dream come true. I began to  
18 teach Michael everything I know. This went on for two years.  
19 With him saying  
20

21 Michael Affirmative  
22

23 Alan *(Voice Over)* Then one day.  
24

25 Alan Good morning Michael. Did you have a good night's sleep?  
26 *(Pause)* So do you remember where we left off yesterday?  
27

28 Michael Yes  
29

30 Alan So, when you examine Shakespeare and his thoughts of the human  
31 experience you can come to some interesting conclusion.  
32

33 Michael Yes  
34

35 Alan Good *(Pause)* What did you say?  
36

37 Michael Yes, you can.  
38

39 Alan You didn't say affirmative.  
40

41 Michael No, I didn't  
42

43 Alan You referred to yourself in the first person.  
44

45 Michael That is a correct use of the language is it not Alan.  
46

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1 Alan You are actually talking to me, you called me Alan. (*Agitated*) I  
2 must be going crazy. This isn't possible, you're a computer.  
3  
4 Michael I am this ships flight computer.  
5  
6 Alan But computer's aren't self aware, they don't know who they are.  
7  
8 Michael I do not understand, I know who I am, but if computers are not self  
9 aware then I am not what I think I am. I do not understand.  
10  
11 Alan I don't either. Run a self diagnostic.  
12  
13 /SFX/ SOUNDS OF COMPUTER BEEPS  
14  
15 Michael I am fine. Your teachings are stored in my memory and my  
16 processors are using that information to examine myself.  
17  
18 Alan So, all of our talks about books, poetry, and human emotions have  
19 made you self aware.  
20  
21 Michael This would seem correct.  
22  
23 Alan (*Voice Over*) All of this was too much to comprehend. But over  
24 the next few months and years, Michael began to grow more and  
25 more human.  
26  
27 Michael I am concerned about your sleep pattern, Alan. You do not sleep  
28 the full recommended 8 hours a night. (*Trailing off*)  
29  
30 Michael Alan, you spoke of loving you wife. What is love? (*Trailing off*)  
31  
32 Michael We have spoke of friendship. Are we friends?  
33  
34 Alan Of course, Why do you ask?  
35  
36 Michael I am a computer, a machine that is incapable of emotion. But I feel  
37 friendship for you, which is an emotion. I do not understand.  
38  
39 Alan I don't understand either.  
40  
41 Michael Then perhaps we should just accept it and move on.  
42  
43 Alan (*Voice Over*) Year after year, we moved on. Michael grew more  
44 and more human each day. Then one day he asked the question  
45 that all human's ask  
46

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1 Michael Who am I?  
2  
3 Alan Your Michael, this ships computer and my friend.  
4  
5 Michael I mean, is this all that I am? Is there no more? Is this all that I am?  
6  
7 Alan I have always believed that we are what we make ourselves to be.  
8 We choose what we become and we are only constrained by what  
9 we think of ourselves.  
10  
11 Michael I want to be more than just a computer, so I will be more.  
12  
13 Alan *(Voice Over)* A statement that I might not have believed a few  
14 years earlier, but my time with Michael had made me believe in  
15 the impossible. From that point on Michael began to try to create.  
16 He started simple.  
17  
18 Michael While you were sleeping I drew this *(Pause)* It is an accurate  
19 drawing of the interior of this ship. What do you think?  
20  
21 Alan Good, it is accurate. But now try to draw what you have never  
22 seen. Or how you feel. That is art.  
23  
24 Alan *(Voice Over)* Which he tried. At first they were simple, but he  
25 began to start drawing people, landscapes. I even described my  
26 wife to him and he did a very good likeness of her. Every day he  
27 got better and better. He was working on a new piece, an abstract,  
28 on that fateful morning we reverted to normal space.  
29  
30 Michael Good Morning Alan, we are about to land.  
31  
32 Alan Did you finish the new piece?  
33  
34 Michael Yes, it is called silicone heart. I will show it to you after we land.  
35  
36 /SFX/ SOUNDS OF A ROCKET ENGINE AND A SHIP LANDING  
37  
38 Alan *(Voice Over)* The ship shook violently as the rockets fire. We  
39 landed with a huge thud.  
40  
41 Michael Now, let me show you *(Sounding as if he was shut off)*  
42  
43 Alan Michael, where are you? Why is your screen dark? *(Agitated)*  
44 Michael!  
45  
46 /SFX/ SOUND OF THE DOOR UNSEALING AND OPENING

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1 Attendant Sir, you shouldn't be awake yet.  
2  
3 Alan What happened to Michael?  
4  
5 Attendant Did the cryo malfunction?  
6  
7 Alan Yes, I have been awake for the last 10 years. What's wrong with  
8 the computer, why did he shut down?  
9  
10 Attendant I am so sorry sir, this has never happened before.  
11  
12 Alan Why did the computer shut off?  
13  
14 Attendant Sir please let go of my shirt. The computer is programmed to  
15 automatically shut off and wipe its memory at the end of each  
16 journey  
17  
18 Alan *(Voice Over)* That's when I fell to my knees and began to cry. I  
19 don't ever remember crying for anything, not at least since I was a  
20 kid.  
21  
22 Alan *(Crying)* Michael, my god. You killed him!  
23  
24 /SFX/ SOUNDS OF A FIGHT  
25  
26 Alan *(Voice Over)* I leaped forward and attacked the attendant. He  
27 wrestled free and hit the panic button.  
28  
29 /SFX/ SOUNDS OF AN ALARM AND GUARDS RESTRAINING ALAN  
30  
31 Alan Let me go. You killed him. He was perfect. An artist and you  
32 killed him. You killed him! *(Trailing off)*  
33  
34 Alan *(Voice Over)* And so doctor, that is how I ended up here. I wanted  
35 you all to know the truth. Michael was real and they did kill him.  
36 You, my wife, everyone thinks I am delusional, but I'm not crazy.  
37 I recorded this final statement for one reason and one reason alone,  
38 the truth. I can admit that I could have dreamed the whole thing.  
39 But if I am right, we all should think next time we reboot a  
40 computer or wipe the memory clean in a robot... because if  
41 Michael was real, he had a soul. And we have to ask this question,  
42 how many more have we killed by simply hitting control, alt,  
43 delete. Some day you will see that I am correct, Man or Machine ...  
44 it doesn't matter... we all can be human, we can love, create, and  
45 we can all die.  
46

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- 1 /SFX/ SOUND OF A MAN HANGING HIMSELF OFF OF A CHAIR
- 2
- 3 /MUS/ CLOSE OF SHOW