

Title: Too Much Time

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Summary: Fred and George Weasley find they have too much time on their hands at the 422nd Quidditch World Cup.

Timeframe: The morning of the Quidditch World Cup in Book 4

Audience: PG-13

Category: The Untold Story

Warnings: Character Death

Length: 16 pages

Too Much Time

Chapter 1 -- Finding Time

Mr Weasley was struggling to light a campfire using Muggle matches. He was just outside his and the boy's tent in the campground of the 422nd Quidditch World Cup. Fred and George were watching him with amusement. Harry, Ron and Hermione had just returned from fetching water. Hermione saw what was happening and kindly assisted Mr Weasley in getting the breakfast fire started. Ginny had just emerged from an extra hours sleep in the girl's tent.

As they waited for the fire to heat up, Mr Weasley began to comment on the people walking by on the path to the Quidditch stadium, which lay beyond the woods right behind their tents.

'That was Cuthbert Mockridge, Head of the Goblin Liaison Office ...here comes Gilbert Wimple, he's with the Committee on Experimental Charms, he's had those horns for a while now ...Hello, Arnie ...Arnold Peasegood, he's an Obliviator -- member of the Accidental Magical Reversal Squad, you know ...and that's Bode and Croaker ...they're Unspeakables ...'

'They're what?' asked Harry.

'From the Department of Mysteries, top-secret, no idea what they get up to...' replied Mr Weasley.

Fred saw something drop from underneath Bode's ridiculously large striped Muggle jumper. It landed on the path.

Fred leaned his head close to George so no one else could hear him and said, "Did you see that?"

"See what?" said George.

Fred said, "Just a minute..."

He casually drifted from the group listening to Mr Weasley babble about the passersby and edged onto the path. He pretended to bend over and tie his shoe and snatched the object Bode had dropped and pocketed it. As he got up, he was lightly bumped by a tall figure in a hooded cloak that was coming from the woods.

"Sorry," Fred said. But the figure did not reply. Instead, the man -- Fred assumed it was a man -- just stopped on the path a few steps away with his back towards him.

"All right then," Fred said, a little annoyed, as he turned and walked back to George.

"Did you see that bloke in the cloak?" whispered Fred as he reached George's side. "What a git."

"What bloke?" responded George, also whispering. "I made a point not to watch so I wouldn't draw attention to you."

"Good thinking," said Fred smiling. "Never mind about the bloke... Let's duck into the woods to check this out."

As Mr Weasley enthusiastically chattered on (holding Harry's, Hermione's, Ron's and Ginny's rapt attention) Fred and George quietly backed around the side of the tent and quickly made for the woods. When they were only a short distance inside, no more than twenty yards from the tent and the path, they were completely out of sight and sound.

"Show me what you've got," said George quietly, as he turned and faced Fred. He had an unmistakable eagerness in his voice.

Fred dug into his pocket and withdrew the object. He held it out in his hand and they both looked at it closely for the first time. It was a crystal ball slightly bigger than a large walnut. It was clear and obviously hollow. It had two narrow lines etched into the surface at right angles so they quartered the sphere. One line was red and the other was black. Inside were two miniature hourglasses that intersected at right angles. One had red sand and the other black. There was a small metal swivel at each intersection of the two lines which also seemed to be the points where the axis of the hourglass with the red sand was attached. There was a long gold chain with fine links that was attached at each end to the swivels.

“Wow,” they said simultaneously as they took it in. Then Fred said, “This was dropped by an Unspeakable from the Department of Mysteries. It’s got to be important.”

“Right,” said George. “I wonder what it is.”

“It’s a Time-Turner,” said two familiar voices coming from right in front of them.

Fred and George both jumped back in surprise and alarm. But that was nothing to the shock they felt as they stared open mouthed at two figures leaning out from either side of a large tree not three feet away. It was as if they were looking into a mirror.

Another Fred and George Weasley wearing long hooded cloaks were staring back at them and grinning broadly.

Chapter 2 -- Fred and George Squared

Cloaked Fred said cheerfully, “It puts the Marauder’s Map to shame.”

Cloaked George chimed in, “It’ll really broaden your horizons.” Then he winked.

The other Fred and George were still open mouthed -- too shocked to say anything and too stunned to run.

Cloaked Fred held up his hands sympathetically, "I know exactly what you're thinking, but I can assure you we're real. You haven't gone mad. And this is no cheap trick using Polyjuice Potion."

Cloaked George said, "Fred's right. Think about it. It's a *Time-Turner*. It lets you travel backwards and forwards in time... Imagine the possibilities..."

"We have," the cloaked pair said together.

Cloaked Fred smiled shaking his head and said, "No, *you* two have," while pointing at Fred and George. "We're here to set you on your path to greater glory."

Fred had finally managed to close his mouth. He was about to say, 'Why should we believe you?' when cloaked Fred interrupted, saying, "You were about to ask me, 'Why should we believe you?'"

Fred glanced at George, who opened his mouth to speak, when cloaked George interrupted him too, saying, "And you were about to say, 'Why don't you tell me what I'm thinking?' You're thinking about the Muggle girl you fancy who works in the card shop in Ottery St Catchpole."

George looked at Fred and nodded in amazement.

Fred said, "OK. We're convinced. Now what?"

Cloaked Fred and George both smirked and looked at each other.

It was too much. Fred said sarcastically to George, "You know, George, I never realized we were so annoying."

Cloaked Fred and George both laughed. "Now that's the spirit," said cloaked George. Then sounding serious for the first time said, "Here's the plan. You take the *Time-Turner* deeper into the woods and learn how to work it. Be careful and *take your time*..."

He paused when Fred and George rolled their eyes at the obvious pun. Then he said slowly, sounding a little irritated, "That's *no* joke... Remember... you now have all the time you'll ever need... Don't push it... Take it slow."

Cloaked Fred said, "Next, you need to remember all this because you need to come back -- and I mean back in time -- to this same spot and time and tell yourselves the same thing. Remember, we're *you* and we went through exactly what you're experiencing now."

Fred said, "This is really hard to wrap your head around," shaking his head.

George echoed him, "You said it, bro."

Cloaked George said, "You'll get used to it." And he couldn't resist adding with a grin, "It's just a matter of time."

Cloaked Fred groaned, "Please. We promised... no time jokes -- especially after you just dinged them for rolling their eyes when you were being serious."

"OK, sorry," said cloaked George. Then he continued. "While you're away learning to use the Time Turner, we take your place. We're you, after all. When you're done, you come back to this time and place -- wearing the same clothes I might add -- and become the Fred and George we are now and everything just continues like normal -- except you'll now have time itself at your disposal."

"Why can't you just tell us how to work this thing now and save us a lot of time," asked Fred.

Cloaked Fred said mischievously, "It's all about the *adventure*, isn't it? Besides, you have to follow the time loop that we, and I mean *you*, have already created. Otherwise, there would be a paradox, wouldn't there? We obviously all can't go striding back into camp and eat breakfast. Paradoxes are *not* good."

"But isn't this a paradox?" asked George.

"Sure it is," said cloaked Fred. "But we're the only ones who know about it, so it's harmless as long as you close the loop."

Cloaked George said cheerfully, "Right on, bro. Off with you two now. I don't know about you, Fred, but I'm hungry."

Without another word, cloaked Fred and George shed their cloaks and strode past Fred and George toward camp and an awaiting breakfast.

Fred and George still looked a bit unsure. Fred asked, "Should we take the cloaks?"

George shook his head, "I don't think so. That would be a paradox. We must get them somewhere else."

They looked at each other. Then they both shrugged and set off deeper into the forest, Fred still clutching the amazing little sphere.

Chapter 3 -- Bode

Fred and George had not walked more than a hundred yards into the forest when, without warning, they were each hit in the back in quick succession with jets of red light and collapsed onto the forest floor.

When they awoke, how much later they did not know, they were each bound head to foot with ropes and sitting up against a large tree. A man wearing a plain black wizard's traveling cloak was squatting facing them about six feet away. He was holding his wand in one hand and the Time-Turner dangling from its chain in the other -- slowly swinging it back and forth. He did not say anything. He just stared at them looking grim. He seemed to be trying to decide what he was going to do.

Finally, Fred said inquiringly, "Mr... Bode?"

He looked slightly surprised, but growled, "You *know* me?"

"Of you, Yes", said Fred trying to sound friendly, "My father, Arthur Weasley, just pointed you out to us a few minutes ago by our tent. I'm Fred and this is..."

"I know who you are," snapped Bode, cutting across Fred, who shrank back. "I've been cleaning up your mess for months."

"Months?" said George. "But we only just found the Time-Turner..."

"Shut up and listen!" shouted Bode angrily. He stood up. "You don't get it. We're talking about *time*. It's unfathomable. Here, now, you're all ignorant and innocent. But the two you just left -- your future selves -- have been wreaking havoc. I finally figured out who was doing it and I'm here to nip it in the bud."

“But, sir, why don’t you just go back and stop yourself from losing the Time-Turner?” asked Fred, genuinely puzzled.

“The most dangerous thing you can do in time is tamper with your *own* actions,” answered Bode with an intense look. “It can mean oblivion... even for seemingly trivial things.”

Fred and George glanced at each other with alarm. George said, “But our future selves just talked to us and told us...”

Bode nodded. “Exactly! It proves they don’t know a damn thing about what they’re doing. I’m trying to decide what to do to save your butts.”

“We’ll do anything,” said Fred.

“Too right you will,” snapped Bode.

Then he started pacing back and forth while swinging the Time-Turner and continued to talk. “For unauthorized possession of a Time-Turner, I could have you sent straight to Azkaban for life without a trial. All I’d have to do is take you to Madam Bones and you’d be finished. In extreme cases, and I think this qualifies, I’m authorized to kill. I could kill you now and just deal with your future selves.”

“But wouldn’t that...” began George.

“...create a paradox?” finished Bode. He laughed derisively. “Time travel is nothing but an *infinity* of paradoxes. There are two sets of you at this moment sharing the same time. The other two have months of memories and experiences that you’ll never have because I’ve just stopped you two. Don’t you see? I have to fix each and every paradox in the cleanup, which is impossible. So, I have to focus on the big ones.”

Fred and George looked guiltily at each other.

For the first time, Bode seemed to soften. He stopped pacing and faced them again.

“Right now, you just made an innocent mistake. If you had run after me and given the Time-Turner back to me after I dropped it, then none of this would have

happened. But it was *my* fault for not properly securing it under my Muggle clothes. I eventually realized I had a hole in my trouser pocket. I retraced my steps but couldn't find it. I told you that interacting with yourself in any way is very bad, so I couldn't follow myself closely enough to discover where I'd lost it. In any case, I first had to return to the Department of Mysteries to get another one."

"When a Time-Turner goes missing or an Unspeakable goes rogue (yes, it has happened) we have ways of detecting unauthorized changes in time -- at least the significant ones. People who are very clever could theoretically keep a low profile that we could not detect. But most time travelers quickly become arrogant with the power they have acquired and do something we can detect and fix. We can detect it because we have 'loopers.' These are Unspeakables who travel back in time both near and far and remain in isolation for months, even years at a time and then return. They observe and report any changes they see in the world before they left. It is extremely challenging and one of the greatest secrets in the wizarding world. Not even the Minister of Magic knows this."

"Why are you telling us?" asked Fred nervously, glancing at George, who nodded and swallowed.

"I'm telling you," said Bode, staring at the twins intently, "because I just don't want you to *help* me; I want you to help me because you *understand* the seriousness of what you *were* going to do and what your other selves *did* do. Do you understand?"

Fred and George both said, "Yes." And they meant it.

"Good," said Bode. "I'm going to tell you one more story to help make you understand what you're dealing with. But first..." Bode pointed his wand at Fred and George and the ropes binding them vanished.

Bode sat down on the ground and crossed his legs. Fred and George rubbed their arms and legs to get their circulation restored.

Bode began. "We didn't believe time travel was possible until 1801 -- after British Muggles defeated French Muggles in a war in Egypt. Soon after, interest in Egyptian antiquities exploded throughout Europe, including among wizards. Wizards found a small magically hidden chamber in the tomb of the ancient Pharaoh, Ramses the Great. Inside was an ancient papyrus scroll written in hieroglyphics. However, it wasn't written in ancient Egyptian. It was written in

phonetic Latin. It told the story of a wizard who had traveled back in time from Londinium. That was the name of London in Roman times. However, it was clear that he had traveled back three thousand years. That would put his departure around 1700 our time. But the world of 1700 he described was nothing like ours. He came from an entirely different history.”

Fred’s and George’s jaws dropped. “How could that be?” asked Fred.

“At first, the Ministry of Magic thought it was a translation problem. But in the end they had to admit it was correct. Then they entertained a theory of multiple time lines that somehow crossed. But we’ve never encountered one in just over one hundred years of time travel. They had to admit that history had been changed in a major way. That led to the long-term strategy for protecting our history and controlling Time-Turners. The Department of Mysteries was originally created for that purpose in 1802. We finally succeeded in creating a Time-Turner in 1895 with the help of a brilliant wizard who must remain nameless.”

“The scroll provided general instructions on how to make them. Obviously the invention had occurred independently in the other timeline. Therefore, we realized wizards outside of Ministry control might be able to make them too. Plus, you can’t keep a secret like this. Many wizards inside and outside the Ministry know they exist. The one you picked up is a hand-held unrestricted Time-Turner. It is incredibly powerful... and incredibly dangerous. There are other models which have various controls and limits built-in to protect the user. The most basic model can be given to Ministry workers -- and sometimes even to students in special cases -- to allow them to get more work done in a given time. But I’m digressing...”

“Ramses the Great ruled for nearly seventy years. He had over a hundred children from his many wives. He was one of the most powerful rulers ancient Egypt ever had and he lived well into his nineties, which for that era was extraordinary -- almost unheard of.”

Bode paused and then finished, “The scroll identified the time traveler as William Ramsey.”

Fred and George looked dumbfounded.

Bode smiled and then conjectured, “Is it a leap to suggest that Mr Ramsey was Ramses? Or is it more reasonable that he simply used his powers as a wizard to

help and guide Ramses, who took the name to project his own power. Since Ramses the Great succeeded his father, Ramses the First, I personally believe Mr Ramsey arrived earlier than we thought and Ramses the First adopted his name and made him his successor.”

“Haven’t you gone back to find out?” asked George, showing great interest.

“We’ve never been able to go back that far, and we don’t know why. It remains a mystery,” replied Bode. Then he waved his hands dismissively.

“But that is merely interesting. After a century of careful study and scholarship and some very risky trips as far back as we can go, we believe the critical change in history took place when a small obscure tribe living on the shores of the Eastern Mediterranean unexpectedly rose to prominence over their neighboring tribes and took control.”

“Do you mean the Israelites?” asked Fred, sounding incredulous.

Bode nodded. “In Mr Ramsey’s history, there was no Christianity. He thanked *Jupiter* for his Time-Turner delivering him safely to ancient Egypt, which had enthralled him since childhood.”

Fred and George both said, “Oh... my ...God!”

“Literally,” said Bode. “That’s why we protect the timeline.” He waited to let the impact of the story sink in. Then he asked, “Are you two ready to help me?”

Together, the twins said, “Yes.”

Bode smiled. “Here’s the plan...”

Chapter 4 -- The Fix Is In

Wearing a hooded cloak that Bode had conjured for him, George stood to the side of the path near to, but out of site of, the Weasleys in front of their tent. Outfitted in another cloak, Fred hid behind a tree beside the path about fifty yards into the woods.

George watched and waited. He finally saw Bode approaching with Croaker. As they passed, he saw the Time Turner fall from beneath Bode's overly large striped jumper. He waited until he saw Fred come out from the front of the tent casually moving toward the path. Then he made his move and approached Fred along the path from the woods. As Fred stood up with the Time Turner, George accidentally brushed him and stopped. He did not want Fred to see him, so he turned his back towards him.

He heard Fred say, "Sorry."

George remained silent, fearing he might have made a mistake.

But then Fred said, "All right then," sounding a little annoyed. And he turned and walked back to the front of the tent.

George breathed a sigh of relief. He stayed where he was and looked up the path into the woods.

Fred was waiting and watching. Finally he saw Bode and Croaker approaching. As they passed, he stepped onto the path about ten feet behind them and said, gesturing over his shoulder and hiding his face, "Hey, I think one of you blokes dropped something back by that last tent." They stopped, but Fred kept walking fast until he was past them. He soon veered into the woods.

"What, you didn't pick it up for us?" demanded Croaker, calling after Fred.

Fred did not say anything and kept walking.

"Stupid git..," said Croaker, irritated. "...Probably messing with us." He resumed walking.

But Bode, who was feeling his pockets, said excitedly, "Damn! I've lost my Time-Turner." Bode had already turned and broken into a run, as Croaker stopped again and started to say, "No...! We'd better..."

George saw Bode running down the path toward him. He began to walk slowly and deliberately up the path. From inside the cloak, he dropped the Time-Turner onto the path and kept walking.

Bode rushed past him. George could tell that Bode had stopped close behind and the next thing he heard was a loud sigh of relief from Bode. A second later Croaker rushed past him. As he entered the woods, he heard Croaker ask Bode, "Is it OK?" George heard Bode answer, "No damage done. That was a close one."

George continued at a fast walk and veered into the woods headed for the rendezvous point.

When he arrived, Bode and Fred were already there. George gave Bode the "thumbs up."

Bode heaved a sigh of relief and patted both Fred and George on the back. "Good job. I think everything has been put to right."

Fred said, "Our earlier selves should be coming soon. We need to get ready to give our speech. You need to get out of sight."

"That won't be necessary," said Bode casually.

"Why not?" said George. "You said we had to close the loop."

"Not this time. Before either of you arrived, your earlier selves came by and walked deeper into the woods," said Bode matter-of-factly. "The loop has already changed slightly -- as I expected it might. Your corrective actions resulted in subtle changes that caused your earlier selves to arrive at the rendezvous point a little earlier than before."

"Are you sure?" asked Fred. "Isn't that a paradox?"

"Remember what I said about paradoxes," said Bode reprovingly. Then he smiled and said, "Only one more thing for you to do."

"What's that?" asked Fred and George together.

“Walk back to your tent and continue your lives as if this never happened -- after you’ve handed me your cloaks, of course,” Bode added with a chuckle.

Fred and George handed Bode their cloaks.

“Thanks for letting us off,” said Fred earnestly. “And not killing us,” added George irreverently.

Bode winced. Then he said, “I want to thank you again. You’ve been a big help, more than you know. Before you go, I want to thank you by giving you a tip.”

“Not to play around with time,” interjected Fred. George elbowed him.

“No, I think you’ve figured that one out,” said Bode evenly. “No... a *real* tip: Ireland wins, but Krum gets the Snitch.”

Fred and George gawked at Bode. “Are you *serious*? You’re *sure*?” each said in turn.

Bode said, “It’s my job to know what happens.”

George said, “You must be *filthy rich*.” Fred elbowed him.

“No. That’s what your future selves were up to,” Bode said coolly. “It’s a violation of our honor code, and the most common reason when the rare Unspeakable goes rogue. And it *never* works; too easy to spot.”

Bode paused and then said with finality, “Enough said; *time* for you to go. Let’s just say... farewell.”

Fred and George nodded; and together said, “Farewell, Bode. And thanks.”

Then the twins waved and turned to walk back to their camp.

As soon as their backs were turned, Bode raised his wand and said, “*Oblivate*.”

Fred and George stopped. A blank look came over each of their faces, followed by a very brief smile. After a few seconds, they continued walking without looking back.

Bode had allowed them to keep one memory -- the Quidditch World Cup results. They would not know where their belief in the outcome came from, but they were sure to act on it.

Chapter 5 -- Always in Motion, the Future

Ludo Bagman disappointedly accepted a one Galleon bet from Mr Weasley for Ireland to win and asked for any other takers. As Mr Wesley started to object about children betting on the match, Fred and George stepped forward.

'We'll bet thirty-seven Galleons, fifteen Sickles, three Knuts,' said Fred, as he and George quickly pooled all their money, 'that Ireland win – but Viktor Krum gets the Snitch. Oh, and we'll throw in a fake wand.'

Bode listened from his hiding place behind the Weasleys tent. He smiled briefly; then frowned sadly, recalling what he had not told the twins.

It did not matter that he'd wiped their memories of everything that had happened regarding time travel. Before Bode had been able to fix the problem, the twins' future selves had traveled in time and tried to amass and hide a fortune. The innocent pair had also traveled briefly back in time to help Bode in the cleanup. But even their limited contact had been too much. It had generated too many paradoxes. Inevitably, some small uncorrectable elements of change in the time line still lingered.

It meant an early death for one twin and a near miss for the other. It could not be helped.

Even if the first twins had traveled in time just to observe and had made sure they were never seen, it would still have altered history in some way. You cannot avoid occupying physical space. It affects things in subtle ways that are not predictable. These effects were usually negligible, but could sometimes have major consequences.

Bode thought about the time changing incident the previous year at Hogwarts. It had generated an extended debate among the Unspeakables. But in the end, they decided to let the change stand. The good had outweighed the bad.

Before Dumbledore had acted so unwisely to set Harry Potter and Hermione Granger on a time quest to save Sirius Black, the timeline indicated that Lord Voldemort would not have returned for three more decades. Of course, traveling to the future never provided definitive results. Every time you did, the future was always a bit different. The future was only probabilistic because of the infinite variety of current possibilities. This had been proof to Bode of free will (which was comforting). You had to visit the future many, many times to get a sense of the most likely outcome.

In the future before Dumbledore's interference, Voldemort's return had been significantly delayed, but it had also been much more terrible. His reign of terror had lasted nearly twenty years and cost tens of thousands more lives. Voldemort had still been defeated and Harry Potter had proven to be the Chosen One. But Harry had perished too, along with his wife, Hermione, their four grown children and many of their grandchildren.

When the Unspeakables had sampled the future after Dumbledore's interference, they were shocked to find that Voldemort had returned within a year. Some of the Unspeakables had urged rushing in to correct the change. But cooler heads prevailed and they studied the totality of the probable changes. Yes, Voldemort returned too soon for everyone's liking; but he was defeated in only three years and with an incredibly small loss of life. In addition, Harry Potter survived. He ended up with a different wife and family, but what did that matter? The key factors appeared to be the increase in Harry's confidence from saving his godfather, Sirius Black, and then an equally intense increase in hatred for Voldemort as the result of Sirius Black's later death at the hands of the Death Eaters.

However, one other change had almost offset these great benefits. Hermione Granger foolishly loaned her Time-Turner to Sirius Black. He went on the single most audacious, obscene, hedonistic abuse of time travel the Unspeakables had ever recorded. Fortunately it was a restricted time turner for student use. Otherwise, he could have caused incredible damage. The saving factors in his favor were that after his initial debauchery, he spent the great majority of his time travel for the good of others rather than himself... *and* he returned the Time-Turner to Granger. However, the incredible number of small paradoxes he created had utterly doomed him to his early death.

Ultimately, the Unspeakables let Dumbledore's interference in time stand. He certainly, more than anyone, had known better. However, it was never mentioned again.

Of course, Bode was fully aware that by allowing the change, the Unspeakables council had doomed him as well. Voldemort's early return meant Bode was going to be murdered in less than two years. He was not allowed to do anything about it and if he tried, he would probably bring about his demise even sooner. That's the way it worked. Just like it would happen to one of the Wesley twins. He'd already forgotten which one. It was better not remembering.

In consolation for his changed fate, Bode knew he would be allowed to take a vacation time loop on a deserted island that would last as long as he wanted. He would probably do it soon, but first there was some last-minute cleanup work to do.

Bode turned away from the back of the Weasley's tent and moved into the woods where the bodies of the future Weasley twins lay under the cover of four discarded cloaks -- awaiting disposal.

Bode had been in hiding until they had finished meeting with their still innocent former selves. He had been quick. They never knew what hit them. The timing had been critical, his skills as an Unspeakable wizard tested to the limit; but he had been successful. No one at the Weasley's tent nor the innocent twins had seen or heard anything.

It was just another paradox that needed to be fixed.

Bode fingered the extra Time-Turner in his other pocket. He had retrieved it from one of the bodies. For as long as Bode had been working, the Department of Mysteries had not needed to make any new Time Turners.

They just kept turning up -- from time to time.

The End

End Notes: All text in **bold** is from Chapter Seven of [Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire](#) by JK Rowling.