



NOTES:

UNIT: I (Prose-v)

ddd

THE FOURTH DIMENSION

-H.G Wells

SUMMARY

The narrator retold us the explanation of two difficult ideas by a man he called as the Time Traveller to an after-dinner group of people consisting of, the Time Traveller, a Psychologist, a Medical Man, a Provincial Mayor, Filby, a very young man and so on. Then, he tried to explain a new idea of time to the party.

The Time Traveller was trying to explain two difficult ideas to the party of different personalities and there was a relaxed mood of an after-dinner atmosphere. In the very beginning of the discussion in the party, the Time Traveller explained the impossibility of the general concept of the existence of a mathematical plane and a cube that's taught in schools. According to the Time Traveller, every really existing thing should have the extension in all the four dimensions as Length, Breadth, Thickness and Time or Duration. Every real thing should have its extension into time. The first three were the three planes of space and the fourth – Time or Duration. There was no difference between space and time. But, the concept of a mathematical plane had only two dimensions and a cube also has only three dimensions. So, they, according to the Time Traveller, were abstract things which had no real existence. There was an explanation of a new idea of "Time". Time was treated as an element in which one could travel as people did in the three dimensions of space, viz. Length, Breadth and Thickness.

The Time Traveller further told the party that mathematicians and philosophers were trying to bring about the possibility of representing the fourth dimension on a three dimensional solid. But, they were still trying to understand the proper perspective of the thing.

Then, the Time Traveller showed the portrait of a man at his eight years, fifteen years, seventeen years, twenty-three years, and so on. He said that all those were the three-dimensional representations of his (the man) four dimensional being. The looks/ changes of the portraits were in time dimension. Then, the Time Traveller came to the weather record/ barometer. He showed the movement of the mercury in the barometer rising and falling last night and its gradual rising that day. In this, he wanted to conclude that the movement of the barometer was in time dimension.

Then, the Medical Man asked the Time Traveller if time was the fourth dimension of space why men could not move about in time as they did in space. In this, the Time Traveller came to an explanation that when we remembered a past incident, we were absent minded at the present and our consciousness went back to the instant of its occurrence. Thus, men could jump back to the past and people were not always confined to the present moment for all the time.

Then, the Time Traveller showed them a tiny model time machine that would travel into time. He showed them two levers of the machine – one when touched would bring the driver into the future time and the other would reverse the motion. Next, he took the forefinger of the Psychologist, in order to avoid any doubt of the members of the party, and with it pressed one of the levers. The machine quickly disappeared before the eyes of the people there. The members of the party could not understand what were really happening there. The members of the party put many opinions on the disappearance of the machine and its dimensions without any proper conclusion.

Lastly, the Time Traveller took them to his laboratory and showed them a larger edition of the disappeared model time machine. The larger machine was made of nickel, ivory, rock crystal, etc. it was almost all complete except some transparent crystalline bars made of quartz. The Medical Man asked the Time Traveller if he was perfectly serious or if that was a trick – like the ghost he had showed them last Christmas. To this, the Time Traveller replied that it was a simple thing that he intended to explore time and he had never been more serious in his life. The members of the party could not come to any conclusion to the whole thing and Filby winked at the narrator indicating that they had to wait and to see.

Word-Notes:

- Para-1** : *Time Traveller* – A person whom the narrator called so; the scientist who will travel through time
 : *Consisting* – Be composed or made up of.
 : *Psychologist* – A person who studies behavioural science.
- Para-2** : *Mathematical plane* – It is a flat, two-dimensional surface.
 : *Cube* – A symmetrical three-dimensional shape.
 : *Abstract* – Existing in thought or as an idea but not having a physical or concrete existence.
 : *Dimensions* – A measurable extent of a particular kind, such as length, breadth, depth, or height.
- Para-3** : *Philosopher* – A person engaged or learned in philosophy.
 : *Perspective* – A particular attitude towards or way of regarding something; a point of view.
- Para-4** : *Portrait* – A painting, drawing or photograph.
 : *Representation* – The description or portrayal of someone or something in a particular way.
 : *Mercury* – A heavy silvery-white metal which is liquid at normal temperatures.
 : *Gradual* – Progressing slowly or by degrees.
- Para-5** : *Consciousness* – The state of being aware of.
 : *Instant* – A precise moment of time.
 : *Occurrence* – An incident or event.
 : *Confined* – Keep or restrict someone or something within certain limits.
- Para-6** : *Lever* – A bar.
 : *Reverse* – Move backwards.
- Para-7** : *Disappeared* – Vanished/ ceased to be visible.
 + : *Nickel* – A silvery white metal.
 : *Ivory* – A hard creamy-white substance composing the main part of the tusks of an elephant.
 : *Quartz* – A hard mineral consisting of silica.
 : *Perfectly serious* – Completely serious.



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