

The Comic Book Kid

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. SUBURBAN HOUSE -- NIGHT

An average two story house. It is dark upstairs except for a flickery television glow coming from downstairs.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM -- SAME

ROMANTIC MUSIC emanates from the downstairs television.

BRIAN, a short seven-year-old boy with curly hair, CREAKS open the closet door. He shines a flashlight on an antique chest with brass latches. He unlatches the chest and opens it, revealing a treasure trove of old toys.

BABYSITTER (O.S.)
You better be in that bed! Don't
make me come up there again!

BRIAN
But I have to pee!

Brian digs through the old toys, pulling out a box labeled "HOWDY DOODY."

BRIAN
Yuck!

He tosses the box back into the chest.

BABYSITTER (O.S.)
I mean it!

BRIAN
I'm almost done!

Brian digs deeper into the chest, this time pulling out a rectangular object covered with velvet.

He removes the velvet, revealing a vintage Superman comic enclosed in a hard plastic case. The cover shows Superman flying above Metropolis in front of a bright yellow background, accompanied by the words, "64 pages of action!"

BRIAN
Cool.

INT. KITCHEN -- MOMENTS LATER

Brian tip-toes to the refrigerator and retrieves a bottle of fruit punch. He pours some into a tall plastic cup.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Brian places the cup on the floor next to the comic. Then he snaps open the Superman case and pulls the mint-condition comic out. Using the flashlight, he begins reading the comic.

Just then the phone rings, startling Brian, and causing him to spill the fruit punch all over the comic.

BRIAN

Crap!

He hastily cleans up, putting the wet comic back in the case, then in the velvet, then in the chest. He latches the chest, scampers into his room, closes his bedroom door, and dives into the lower level of his bunkbed.

INT. BRIAN'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT -- 5 YEARS LATER

Brian sits up in the top bunk, breathing heavily. Brian's friend PAUL, a twelve-year-old with braces, turns on the light, revealing a messy room filled with comics, toys, posters, and dirty clothes.

PAUL

You had the dream?

BRIAN

Yeah.

Paul grabs a comic book price guide and flips through it. The words "Cheer up homie," are written on the guide's cover, next to a bright yellow smily face. Paul finds a page with a large color picture of the Superman comic that Brian had ruined five years ago.

PAUL

How many comics do you have now?

BRIAN

Two thousand, but they're only worth five grand. What about you?

PAUL
About the same.

BRIAN
It's impossible. Superman #1's worth
almost two hundred grand in mint
condition. I'm gonna go nuts soon.

Paul looks sadly at the picture of the comic, closes the
book, and tosses it under the bed.

PAUL
We'll never save that much.

BRIAN
(sarcastically)
Thanks, I feel much better now.

PAUL
I can't believe that comic only cost
ten cents originally. Do you realize
what a messed up investment that
was?

BRIAN
I should've played with Howdy Doody.

PAUL
Huh?

BRIAN
Never mind, I don't know why you
like to sleep over a crazy person's
house anyway.

PAUL
Your Mom makes good pancakes.

BRIAN
Now I'll never fall asleep.

PAUL
Wanna play Superheroes?

BRIAN
K.

EXT. OUTER SPACE -- MOMENTS LATER

A white platform soars past planets and stars.

PAUL (O.S.)
Meet "Mr. O." He wears all black
with a white "O" on his chest.

Mr. O walks out onto the platform, flexing his muscles.

BRIAN (O.S.)
Meet "Killa Booka." He wears all
red, and he shreds rare books from a
sack he carries.

Killa Booka walks onto the white platform, takes out a rare
copy of the first folio of Shakespeare, and shreds it.

PAUL (O.S.)
That's stupid.

BRIAN (O.S.)
But the shreddings have super powers.

The shreddings twirl around and slice away at Mr. O's suit,
creating large tears.

PAUL (O.S.)
Mr. O has a ring on his finger that
can put you to sleep.

Mr. O points the ring at Killa Booka, sending a sleep ray in
his direction. Killa Booka shreds more books, scattering
the ray with the cloud of confetti.

PAUL (O.S.)
Let the fight begin.

BRIAN (O.S.)
Killa Booka takes out a first edition
of Mr. O's favorite book, "The Most
Boringest Book Ever part 1" and
prepares to shred it.

MR. O
You wouldn't, you fiend.

KILLA BOOKA
Try me, super dork.

Killa Booka prepares to shred the book, but suddenly decides to throw the book towards the edge of the platform.

MR. O

Nooooooooooooo.

Mr. O dives for the book, falling off the platform and grabbing the edge.

KILLA BOOKA

Haha I have you now.

Killa Booka lift's Mr. O's fingers up one by one until he falls off the platform and into oblivion.

PAUL (O.S.)

But Mr. O can also fly, and he flies back up and hits Mr. O with a frying pan.

INT. BRIAN'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

BRIAN

You cheated. You never said he could fly.

PAUL

He can.

BRIAN

You can't invent new powers during the fight! And what's with the frying pan?

PAUL

Fine, you win, but I let you win 'cause you're depressed.

BRIAN

Yeah right.

INT. KITCHEN -- MORNING

Brian, Paul, and DAD sit around the breakfast table while MOM fixes breakfast. Brian looks unhappy. Brian and Paul both wear pants that are way too big for them. Dad is nearly bald and Mom has a full head of curly hair.

DAD
(handing a Cheerio to
Brian)
Ok, if you can fling this into my
mouth, you don't have to go to school
next week.

Brian picks up a spoon and tries to fling the Cheerio into
Dad's wide open mouth. He misses and the Cheerio disappears
into Mom's curly hair.

BRIAN
Oops.

PAUL
I never saw that spoon before.

Brian tries to hide the spoon, but Paul grabs it. The Spoon
has a plastic relief of Mickey Mouse wearing a diaper.

BRIAN
(embarrassed)
It's my Dad's.

MOM
Why don't you tell Paul where you
got that spoon, Brian.

BRIAN
I got it at Disney World when I was
five, who cares about a spoon anyway!

DAD
I'll trade you my Goofy spoon if it
makes you feel better.

MOM
(proudly)
It's a 6-piece set.

Brian angrily pushes around the Cheerios in his bowl,
obviously upset about more than a spoon.

DAD
We're heading to a party this
afternoon in East Hampton. What are
you two up to?

PAUL
We're gonna check out the comics at
the General Store.

DAD

I'll give you twenty bucks for a pizza. Say the magic word, guys.

PAUL

Abra--

DAD

Brian?

BRIAN

(half-heartedly)

--Cadabra.

Dad snaps his fingers, but no money appears. He looks around the table for the bill.

PAUL

Here it is.

Paul fishes a twenty dollar bill out of a glass of orange juice, wrings it out, and hands it to Brian.

MOM

Don't buy junk with that.

The Cheerio falls out of her hair and skips under the table.

EXT. SPRINGS -- DAY

Brian and Paul live in a small town called Springs on the East End of Long Island. At the center of town is Parson's Pond, surrounded by a school, church, general store, and a meeting hall.

They skateboard past the pond towards the general store.

PAUL

I don't think your Dad hates you. He's a goof. He kicks.

BRIAN

He only does flying Cheerios and magic tricks when you're around.

PAUL

Maybe you really are nuts.

BRIAN
Thanks, ever consider becoming a
psychiatrist?

PAUL
Does it pay good?

INT. GENERAL STORE -- DAY

A bell rings when they enter. An old wizened man, MR. SOMERSET, stands behind the counter. He has a profusion of ear hair.

MR. SOMERSET
Hi boys!

PAUL
Hi Mr. Somerset!

MR. SOMERSET
Wanna see Old Betsy?

Mr. Somerset pulls up his sleeve, revealing a tattoo of a Hummer.

PAUL
Awesome, you got it?

MR. SOMERSET
Yep, it's parked out back. It gets
eight miles per gallon on the highway.

PAUL
Cool.

Brian doesn't smile or react, but just blankly stares at Mr. Somerset.

MR. SOMERSET
What's wrong with you? Nobody with
curly hair should be sad.

BRIAN
Nothing, I had a bad dream last night,
that's all.

Mr. Somerset's eyes widen and he stares at Brian as if in a trance.

Without blinking, he stumbles over to a file cabinet, retrieves a dusty comic enclosed in a plastic bag, and stumbles back to the counter.

MR. SOMERSET

(monotone)

Here, I've been waiting a long time to give you this.

Mr. Somerset hands the comic over to Brian, and then begins absentmindedly wiping the counter. Brian and Paul admire the comic, entitled "TimeQuest" in shiny gold letters.

The cover shows a hologram of a boy performing superhero feats as the comic is turned in the light. This hologram is different than most, as there are dozens of different images.

BRIAN

Thanks Mr. Somerset, what's this for?

MR. SOMERSET

I'm closing now, grab some Cokes and be gone with you.

PAUL

But it's the middle of the day!

MR. SOMERSET

(pointing to his ears)

Did you know that ear hair is contagious?

Mr. Somerset slams the counter with his fist, startling Paul.

PAUL

Run!

Brian and Paul run out the door while Mr. Somerset laughs.

EXT. SPRINGS -- LATER

Brian and Paul stop at a patch of grass to check out the TimeQuest comic.

PAUL

This is messed up, the cover price says "Two Purple Coins."

BRIAN

Maybe it's a new design that Mr.
Somerset is testing out on us.

Brian rips the plastic bag and pulls out the comic. He opens it, revealing a book full of blank comic panels. A sheet of thin metal falls out of the comic, landing in the grass.

PAUL

What a rip-off!

BRIAN

I bet this is another one of his
practical jokes.

Mr. Somerset speeds by in his Hummer and honks.

PAUL

The comic's blank, Mr. Hummerset!

MR. SOMERSET

I've often wondered!

The Hummer speeds away.

BRIAN

He's a kook.

PAUL

Yeah, sometimes I think he's a crusty
old wizard.

INT. BRIAN'S ROOM -- EVENING

Brian sits on the top bunk examining the TimeQuest Comic, while Paul reads an Aquaman comic on the floor.

PAUL

Your parents really trust you to
leave you alone so much.

BRIAN

My dad told me I already wrecked all
the breakable stuff that isn't
insured.

PAUL

That's cool.

BRIAN

Do your parents mind you sleeping
over so much?

PAUL

Nah. Did you ever notice that
Aquaman's gills always change size?

Brian discovers that the last page of the TimeQuest comic is filled with small text. The opposite page (the inside back cover) is filled with cartoon panels. The giant words "TimeQuest Ring Instructions" span the two-page spread.

BRIAN

Hey, check it out, the last two pages
have something!

Paul agilely climbs up to the top bunk.

IN THE COMIC:

(Note: as Brian and Paul read the instructions off screen, the cartoon panels show a boy and girl re-enacting the instructions as a visual aid.)

The first cartoon panel shows a boy and girl standing in a room. The smiling boy holds out a ring that is glowing green.

BRIAN (O.S.)

Step 1: Make sure the ring is
glowing green. After each use, the
ring will glow red and take between
one second and one week to recharge.

The next cartoon panel shows the boy with the ring on his finger. A cartoon bubble comes out of his mouth containing the words "2499 A.D."

PAUL (O.S.)

Step 2: In a clear voice, tell the
TimeQuest ring what year you want to
travel to. Be sure to specify "A.D."
or "B.C." For example, 2499 A.D.

The next panel shows the girl holding a round coin labeled "TimeQuest." The boy presses a big button on his ring labeled "TimeQuest."

BRIAN (O.S.)

Step 3: Press the TimeQuest button in the center of the ring for activation. You will now warp to the desired time period. Anybody holding a TimeQuest coin will join you on your journey.

The next comic panel shows the boy and girl standing next to two aliens. They look comically frightened, and the boy presses a smaller button on his ring labeled "Home."

PAUL (O.S.)

Step 4: Press the HOME button to return to your home time. To travel to another time, start back at step 1. You cannot travel to within one hundred years of any time you've already visited, but you can always travel home.

The next panel shows the kids back in the room where they started. A cute puppy stands between them. A red circle with a line through it obscures much of the puppy.

BRIAN (O.S.)

WARNING: One small dog exploded when a child volunteer tried to take it back in time. Remember our safety motto: "Fluffy Doesn't NEED to see the past: HE'S just a dog.

BACK TO BRIAN'S ROOM:

Brian fumbles around for the thin metal sheet which had fallen out of the comic earlier. The sheet contains four pop-out coins labeled "TimeQuest" and an ultra-thin bendable ring which now glows green.

The face of the ring has a digital display which scrolls the message "Thank you for choosing TimeQuest merchandise." It also has a button labeled "TimeQuest" and a smaller button labeled "home."

Brian pops out a TimeQuest coin and examines it. Then he pops out the perforated ring and bends the edges so it can fit around a finger.

BRIAN

Are these for real?

PAUL
 It's just a CrackerJack toy, watch.
 (grabs the ring)
 Seventy-five million B.C.!
 (presses the TimeQuest
 button)

BRIAN
 Wait!

PAUL
 See, it's just one of Mr. Somerset's
 practical--

The house disappears and the boys tumble through the air.

EXT. OCEAN -- NIGHT -- 75 MILLION YEARS AGO

The moonlight illuminates large pterodactyls soaring through the air. Brian and Paul land in the water and flail around.

PAUL
 The ring works!

BRIAN
 Where are we?

PAUL
 The ocean! Long Island wasn't around
 seventy-five million years ago!

A dark mass swims between Brian and Paul, making a DEEP GROANING NOISE.

BRIAN
 Press the home button!

The sea monster sticks its head out of the water, revealing a shadowy mass of tentacles, scaly ridges, and giant razor teeth. Brian kicks the monster when it gets too close.

BRIAN
 Get away from me!

The monster bites the left pant leg of Brian's oversized jeans and yanks them clean off.

INT. BASEMENT -- CONTINUOUS

The boys immediately appear in the basement of Brian's house in a pile of dirty laundry. They are soaked, and Brian wears boxer shorts. A bra sits on Paul's head like a bonnet, and Brian has pantyhose stuck in his wet hair.

Paul is still frantically pressing the "Home" button on the TimeQuest ring.

BRIAN

Mr. Somerset is a wizard!

PAUL

No, he's a superhero. Don't you see, the General Store is his hideout, and that beat-up Hummer is like his batmobile!

BRIAN

That must be why he had to leave so fast before!

Brian pulls the bra off of Paul's head, slowly moves it away, and drops it onto the pile of laundry.

PAUL

But he's probably retired now and just helps out depressed kids and stuff.

BRIAN

How is he helping by getting us attacked by a sea monster?

PAUL

'Cause we're going to use this ring right.

Paul carefully lifts the pantyhose out of Brian's hair with two fingers and drops it onto the pile like it's diseased.

BRIAN

What do you mean?

PAUL

We're gonna use it to get another copy of Superman #1!

Brian's face lights up as he looks at Paul, as if five years of guilt are lifted in one moment.

BRIAN
Wicked idea, you're a genius!

INT. BRIAN'S ROOM -- NEXT MORNING

Paul climbs up to the top bunk and shakes Brian until he wakes up.

BRIAN
Huh?

PAUL
Check it out. The comic filled in!

Brian hops off the bunk and kneels by the TimeQuest comic on the floor.

Where before there were blank panels, there are now intricately drawn cartoon renderings of Brian and Paul visiting the General Store, checking out the TimeQuest Comic, and warping back to dinosaur times. In one panel, Brian's eyes are open wide when the sea monster devours his jeans.

BRIAN
Look, the TimeQuest coins changed too!

Brian shows Paul a TimeQuest coin, where tiny letters now read: "Home (always allowed): 2002 A.D.; Forbidden: 74,999,900 B.C. to 75,000,100 B.C."

PAUL
The instructions said you can't travel back to within a hundred years of a time you already visited, but you can always travel home.

BRIAN
When did Superman #1 first come out?

PAUL
Check the guide.

Brian dives for the comic guide under the bed and quickly flips to the section about golden-age comics.

BRIAN
1939, lets go!

PAUL

Wait, what if we mess up? Then we can't go back. We have to plan.

BRIAN

Let's go, we'll just grab the comic and zap home.

PAUL

What if it takes longer? I have an orthodontist appointment tomorrow after school.

BRIAN

Fine, we go after your appointment.

PAUL

Deal!

INT. BRIAN'S ROOM -- LATER

After Paul goes home, Brian examines the TimeQuest comic. One more panel has filled in. Dad is standing in the den holding the crumpled Superman #1, crying. The caption reads, "Will Brian and Paul's plan work?"

INT. DEN -- MOMENTS LATER

Brian runs into the den. Dad is calmly sitting at his desk reading a newspaper. The crumpled, pink ball of Superman #1 sits inside a glass dome on a shelf.

BRIAN

What if I told you I was going to replace Superman #1?

DAD

(jumps)

You scared me!

BRIAN

I'm gonna replace it.

DAD

I told you, that doesn't matter anymore.

BRIAN
It does too.

DAD
(throwing a foam ball
at Brian)
You don't have to go to school
tomorrow if you get this in.

Brian tries to get the ball into a net on the wall, but misses.

DAD
Oh well, now that's something to
worry about.

BRIAN
Don't pretend you forgot.

DAD
Did I ever tell you about the time I
lost grandma's diamond earrings?

BRIAN
Yeah, you were trying them on, and
they fell down the drain.

DAD
(snorting)
Never mind how it happened. You
just need to forget already.

BRIAN
I'm gonna replace it, you'll see.

Brian runs out of the den, but before he runs upstairs he takes a peek back in.

Dad gets up and walks over to the dome containing the wrecked Superman #1. He lifts the dome, takes the crumpled ball out, holds it in his hands, and begins crying.

INT. SCHOOL -- MR. O'S CLASSROOM -- MORNING

A sign on the wall reads, "Beware, Mr. O's classroom."

Brian and Paul have assigned seats on opposite sides of the room.

While the real Mr. O blabbers on about how to write short stories, Brian writes a note and folds it into a little triangle.

MR. O
(droning voice)
Every story has a bunch of problems,
large or small, that keep the plot
going. They're called conflicts.
Their solutions are called
resolutions.

Brian tries to get Paul's attention across the room.

MR. O
Take a few minutes now to invent a
small conflict and resolution for a
story. Then we'll share them.

Mr. O walks up and down the aisles as Brian readies himself to toss the note. When Mr. O's back is turned, he hurls the note. It spirals erratically and hits Mr. O in the back.

Paul panics and dives at Mr. O's feet, putting the note in his mouth.

PAUL
(with a mouthful)
Nice Shoes Mifter O!

MR. O
Excellent, we have a conflict already!

Mr. O pulls the note from between Paul's teeth and unwraps it.

MR. O
(reading)
"I just thought of something. We
could get in major trouble if somebody
notices we're gone. Tell your parents
you have to sleep over to work on a
science project. Then we'll warp to
1939 after my mom and dad leave for
dinner."

Brian's face turns bright red.

MR. O

Good work Brian, that's an excellent conflict and resolution for a science fiction story. But in the future please refrain from throwing your classwork at my back!

The class laughs as Brian puts his arms on the desk and buries his head.

INT. BRIAN'S BEDROOM -- LATER

PAUL

I hope we miss school tomorrow. Who cares if anyone notices?

BRIAN

We should wear overalls or some other dorky thing. They didn't slack in 1939.

PAUL

Nah, Maybe we'll teach them something. Does your mom ever give you a problem about it.

BRIAN

No, she always says I look phat and messed up.

PAUL

That's cool, my mom told me I look like a homeless person.

BRIAN

Grab that bag of dimes on my dresser. We'll need one to buy the comic.

PAUL

K.

Brian's Mom and Dad walk in as Paul drops the heavy bag into his oversized jeans pocket.

DAD

No mischief tonight.

Paul's pants fall to the floor with a jingle, revealing Paul's bright yellow boxers.

BRIAN

Don't worry, we're working on a project for Science.

Paul smiles a mouthful of braces.

MOM

It better not involve dumping any more seaweed in the laundry pile.

Mom and Dad leave for dinner.

PAUL

Ok, bust out the overalls.

Brian and Paul put on two raggedy pair of overalls. Paul puts the comic price guide in his front pocket.

BRIAN

Here, take a TimeQuest coin. I'll take the rest just in case.

PAUL

What are you going to put Superman #1 in?

BRIAN

Behold, the ultimate protective case!
(shows off fancy case)
Its airtight, shockproof, and non-biodregadable.

Brian puts the plastic case in his front overall pocket along with some of the dimes. Then Brian and Paul climb up to the top bunk and prepare to warp.

PAUL

Check it out!
(pointing to the TimeQuest comic)

Paul and Brian look at the next few pages of the TimeQuest comic, where more of their adventures have filled in. One panel shows Paul diving at Mr. O's feet, another shows Brian's face bright red, etc. One full page has an ad which reads, "Are you ready for an uglee drax adventure?..."

BRIAN

"...Try playing Spacemaster today in the Adventure Zone, it's so deranged,
(MORE)

BRIAN (CONT'D)
 you'll think you've clyved. Sponsored
 by SkankyKandy, the makers of
 programmable gum."

PAUL
 What's that mean?

BRIAN
 Beats me. Let's warp.

PAUL
 Ok, ready, roger over and out.

Paul grabs the side of the bunk bed in anticipation.

BRIAN
 1939 A.D.!

He presses the TimeQuest button on the ring, which is firmly
 affixed to his right ring finger. A clock on the wall shows
 5:55 PM, Monday. A moment later the bed disappears.

INT. MATTIE'S ROOM -- 1939

Paul looks at Brian like a cartoon character that knows it's
 about to fall off a cliff, and then they tumble onto a girl,
 MATTIE, wearing overalls. She is short and has big brown
 eyes.

MATTIE
 (Screeching)
 Hey!

Mattie runs across the room, jumps over a pile of comics,
 and hides behind the door. The comic pile consists of golden-
 age classics like Detective Comics, Marvel Comics, Famous
 Funnies, and Donald Duck.

MATTIE
 Are you with those Martians that
 landed in New Jersey?

PAUL
 (nervously)
 We're from the future.

MATTIE
 Are you going to zap me?

BRIAN

No, we're comic collectors.

MATTIE

If you're r-r-really not Martians, p-prove it. Um, tell me who appeared in the first issue of Marvel comics.

Paul flips through the comic price guide.

PAUL

Sub Mariner, Human Torch, and Kazar the Great.

Mattie walks out from behind the door.

MATTIE

Kazar's pretty thrilling. I was just on the first page of Superman when you crashed on top of me. You wrecked my comic.

Mattie holds up a crumpled copy of Superman #1.

BRIAN

Crap.

MATTIE

You guys owe me a dime, I'm Mattie.

PAUL

Paul.

BRIAN

Brian.

MATTIE

C'mon guys, aren't you really from the circus? Can you teach me how to tumble through the air the way you did?

BRIAN

I can prove we're from the future
(elbows Paul)
Show her your braces.

Paul smiles wide.

BRIAN
Behold, in the future they have a
thing called braces.

MATTIE
So, that doesn't prove you're not
from the circus.

Paul frowns.

BRIAN
(elbows Paul)
Show off your sneakers.

Paul takes a few steps, showing off his sneakers that flicker
red when you walk.

BRIAN
Behold, in the future they have magic
sneakers.

MATTIE
So, clowns have floppy shoes that
glow in the dark.

Paul frowns.

PAUL
(sarcastically)
Nice overalls, dork.

MATTIE
Thanks, yours too.

Paul frowns.

MATTIE
Who cares, anyway? What do you guys
wanna do? I don't get many visitors.

BRIAN
What do you do for fun around here?

MATTIE
Mostly, I play games with Video.

BRIAN
Video games? But--

MATTIE
 (Shrieking)
 VIDEO!

A little one eyed dog shaped like a wrinkled squirrel runs in and clamps himself onto Paul's sneaker.

MATTIE
 Video, meet Paul and Brian. They
 just dropped in.

PAUL
 Cool, a mutant.

MATTIE
 I named him after a new invention
 that lets you send pictures through
 the air.

Paul tries to kick the GROWLING Video off, but the dog's clamped teeth cause him to flop around.

Just then MATTIE'S MOM walks in.

MATTIE'S MOM
 Oh hello, who are you?

PAUL
 (nervously, still
 hopping around)
 We're from the circus.

MATTIE
 I knew it!

MATTIE'S MOM
 The circus is ten miles away! I've
 never seen you two around here. Are
 you with those outlaws hiding in the
 back woods?

Video flies off of Paul's sneaker and lands on Marvel Comics #1, crumpling the cover.

BRIAN
 No, honest, we're with the circus.

MATTIE
(eyeing them
suspiciously)
Well, whoever you are, you're all
skin and bones. Come eat supper
with us.

INT. KITCHEN -- LATER

Mattie, Mattie's mom, Brian, and Paul sit around the table eating clams, oysters, and bread. Metal baskets filled with fruits and vegetables hang from the ceiling. Video sits on the floor near a full food bowl.

MATTIE'S MOM
I find it hard to believe that you
boys are circus freaks. What do you
really do in the circus?

BRIAN
(nervously)
I pick up after the elephants.

PAUL
I juggle.

Mattie's Mom retrieves three apples from a basket and hands them to Paul.

MATTIE'S MOM
Prove it.

Video devours his entire bowl of food in a frenzy and begins growling at Paul.

PAUL
(smiling at Video
anxiously)
It's all good.

Paul throws all three apples into the air at once. One lands in the clams, another in the oysters, and the last on his head.

MATTIE'S MOM
I was beginning to worry that you
were with those outlaws.
(MORE)

MATTIE'S MOM (CONT'D)

But no son of an outlaw would be that bad of a liar. Don't be ashamed that you pick up after the elephants too, Paul.

MATTIE

Can they stay with us, Mom?

MATTIE'S MOM

If you promise to go to school tomorrow, you can sleep on a pile of rags in the basement. The circus is no place for children.

BRIAN

(giving Paul a worried look)

Thanks, Ma'am.

INT. SCHOOLROOM -- MORNING

MR. MILLER, a stern looking teacher, calls out names for attendance even though there are only six students in the room, including Paul and Brian. Then he collects the homework and sprays them with disinfectant from an atomizer.

PAUL

(whispering to Brian)
This is stupid, let's just make a run for it.

MR. MILLER

Silence! Who are you two?

MATTIE

This is Paul and Brian. They're, uh, my cousins.

MR. MILLER

(walking over to Paul and Brian)
If you can't read or write, I'll send you down to elementary! Never seen a kid with metal teeth before, are you with those outlaws I've been hearing about?

PAUL
We're not outlaws, we're brothers.

MR. MILLER
You don't look like brothers.

BRIAN
(glaring at Paul)
He's adopted.

Soon after the lesson begins, Paul writes a note to Brian which reads, "This is stupid, let's just make a run for it." He folds it into a triangle and passes it to Brian.

Brian unfolds the note, making loud crinkling noises. Mr. Miller storms over and snatches the note away from him.

MR. MILLER
Class, eyes closed!

Mr. Miller WHACKS Brian five times on the hand with a ruler. Brian cringes each time the ruler hits his hands. Mr. Miller sprays the ruler with disinfectant from his atomizer after he's done.

EXT. SCHOOLYARD -- LATER

Brian cleans erasers during recess as punishment.

PAUL
Something bad happens every time we say we're not outlaws. Next time I'm gonna say that we ARE outlaws from the back woods.

BRIAN
Outlaws don't wear dorky overalls.

PAUL
Sorry 'bout before.

BRIAN
No problem.

Brian bangs erasers together purposely close to Paul's face, causing a yellow streak to appear on Paul's nose.

PAUL

Very funny, now can we make a run for it? Let's just get the comic from the general store and warp home.

BRIAN

We can't warp home yet because the ring is messed up from that Kryptonite-covered titanium ruler Mr. Psycho teacher has. Look.

Brian shows Paul the sputtering TimeQuest ring, which flashes a rainbow of colors.

PAUL

Great, now we're stuck!

BRIAN

I'm gonna work on it, just DON'T pass me anymore notes.

PAUL

K. Just PLEASE fix it.

INT. SCHOOLROOM -- LATER

Mr. Miller scrawls math equations on the board while Paul scrunches his nose and tries to clean the chalk off his face.

MR. MILLER

What brave volunteer wants to tell me how to multiply these two fractions?

Paul tries to withhold a sneeze.

MR. MILLER

Looks like Metal Teeth is interested. Why don't you show us how to multiply two-thirds by five-eighths.

Paul squints but says nothing. Mr. Miller walks over to him.

MR. MILLER

Well? We're all waiting.

PAUL

GraaaaaahhhhhhhhhSPLOOTCH!

Paul's sneeze sounds like an AFRICAN WILDEBEEST GIVING BIRTH. He sprays snot on Mr. Miller. Mr. Miller lunges for the atomizer on his desk and sprays himself with disinfectant, jumping around as if he is on fire.

The class laughs until Mr. Miller grabs a yardstick, waves it like a lightsaber, and storms over to Paul.

EXT. SPRINGS -- LATER

Paul, Brian, and Mattie walk towards the General Store. Paul rubs his sore hand.

BRIAN

Look on the bright side, we never have to go back there.

PAUL

How do you know, is that ring working yet? We could be stuck here!

BRIAN

(trying to hide the sputtering ring)
It's not looking too good, I guess.

MATTIE

Mr. Miller is my favorite teacher. He just needs to warm up to you.

Paul and Brian look at Mattie like she's crazy.

INT. GENERAL STORE -- MOMENTS LATER

A bell rings when the kids walk into the store. Iron coffee grinders line the shelves, and large spoons hang from the ceiling. YOUNG MR. SOMERSET is wiping the counter. He has a black mustache that curls around the sides of his nose.

MATTIE

Hi Mr. Somerset! Meet my new friends Paul and Brian.

YOUNG MR. SOMERSET

I set aside a special honey stick just for you, Mattie. Bees with brown eyes made it.

MATTIE

Thanks!

The kids walk to the back of the store. On the way Young Mr. Somerset gives Paul and Brian a suspicious glance.

BRIAN

Check it out!

The kids come upon the rack of golden-age comics. Brian slowly spins the rack without touching any comics, revealing: Jumbo Comics, More fun comics, All-American Comics, Adventure Comics. All with shiny covers and a cover price of ten cents.

PAUL

There's a million dollars worth of comics here.

Brian turns the rack one last time to reveal the shiny cover of Superman #1. The comic is in mint-condition.

BRIAN

Jackpot.

PAUL

There's only one left, let's get it fast.

BRIAN

(holding his hands up)
Gloves, please.

Paul grabs some thin gloves off a nearby shelf and puts them on Brian's hand. Mattie looks at them curiously.

BRIAN

Protective case.

Paul pulls the comic case out of Brian's front pocket and holds it ready, opening the top flap.

Brian slowly lifts Superman #1 off the rack like he's playing the children's game, Operation. He is about to slide it into the case that Paul is holding when Paul's nose begins to twitch. Another sneeze is coming.

BRIAN

Mattie, put a laundry sack over his head now!

Mattie grabs a sack from a nearby shelf and slams it over Paul's head.

PAUL
(muffled)
Grahhhhhbloooooooooooooof.

The sack puffs up momentarily, and then Mattie removes it.

MATTIE
This sack belongs in the discount section now.

BRIAN
Hang on.

Brian slides Superman #1 into the protective case, still in mint condition. However, a small hair gets stuck inside the case with the comic. Paul snaps the case shut.

PAUL
We got it, let's get outta here!

The kids run to the front counter, where Brian plunks a dime on the counter.

YOUNG MR. SOMERSET
Very mysterious, I never saw anybody treat a comic so well before.

Young Mr. Somerset takes a long, scrutinizing look at the dime.

YOUNG MR. SOMERSET
Into counterfeiting are you? This dime doesn't look right at all, and it says 1999! Are you with those outlaws hiding out near the coves?

PAUL
Yeah, we're outlaws! I'm "Paul the Kid."

Brian picks up the comic and backs away from the counter. Just then a shadowy OUTLAW walks in the front door and CLOMPS towards the counter in his big boots. He has a large scar above his lips. A hat hangs over his eyes, and a he needs a shave.

YOUNG MR. SOMERSET
What...What can I do for you, sir?

The OUTLAW grabs the sack from Mattie and hands it to Young Mr. Somerset.

OUTLAW

Fill this with food and a fresh pair of overalls, and maybe then I don't get angry.

PAUL

(whispering to Brian)
Outlaws DO wear overalls.

BRIAN

(whispering)
Shut up.

Young Mr. Somerset runs up and down the aisles, dumping provisions into the sack.

OUTLAW

Empty those pockets kids.

Mattie, Paul, and Brian empty their pockets onto the floor. Dimes splash everywhere. Paul drops the comic book price guide. Brian hangs onto Superman #1 and the extra TimeQuest coins, unwilling to drop them.

OUTLAW

(kneeling and picking up dimes)
This is my lucky day.

BRIAN

(whispering)
Hold this, Mattie.

Brian hands Mattie a TimeQuest coin and presses the Home button on the ring. The ring beeps.

TIMEQUEST RING

(chiming female voice)
Primary system failure...rerouting power to backup processor!

OUTLAW

Who said that?

Just then Young Mr. Somerset returns with the sackful of supplies and hands it to the outlaw.

OUTLAW

I'm taking these kids fer insurance.
If I hear one barking dog after me,
they got hurt. This kid with the
funny teeth is first.
(points to Paul)

On the way out of the store, the outlaw grabs a handful of honey sticks and stuffs them in his sack.

EXT. WOODS -- MOMENTS LATER

Brian, Paul, Mattie, and the outlaw walk down a trail toward the secluded coves. The outlaw hands each of the kids a honey stick.

OUTLAW

Those'll keep yer mouth shut for a
while. Doggone sugar'll rot yer
teeth, but what am I, yer mama?

PAUL

(muttering to Brian)
Is...the..ring..fixed?

BRIAN

(muttering)
Tried...still broken.

They eventually arrive at a rickety cabin deep in the woods.

INT. CABIN -- MOMENTS LATER

The floor is rotting, windows are broken, and bugs crawl everywhere. The outlaw puts each of the kids in a separate corner and binds their wrists and feet.

OUTLAW

My name's Joe, but my friends call
me Ugly Joe on accounts of my temper.

Ugly Joe sits next to Paul and takes off his hat, revealing a mostly bald head covered with the words "Welcum! Frum Jake."

UGLY JOE

(pointing to his head)

My son done that while I was sleeping.
 Jakey thinks the martians'll see my
 head first when they arrive, and he
 wants to make friends with 'em.
 That little scamp gets crazy ideas
 from his radio programs.

BRIAN

(timidly)

My dad's going bald too. I once
 drew a bulls-eye on his head with
 markers.

UGLY JOE

I ain't Bald!

Ugly Joe suddenly notices the Superman comic on the floor next to Brian. He walks over, grabs it, then returns to his place next to Paul.

UGLY JOE

Jakey read this to me. It's about
 this strong feller who come here
 from another planet. I could get an
 honest job if I had muscles like
 him, but Jakey says it's swell having
 an outlaw fer a dad.

Ugly Joe tries to pop the case open. Paul gives a wide-eyed look to Brian.

BRIAN

(holding his stomach)

Ohhhhhhh! I don't feel so well.

UGLY JOE

I told ya that candy is bad fer ya.
 Let's get ya some proper food to
 settle yer stomach.

Ugly Joe drops the still unopened comic case and reaches into his sack.

UGLY JOE

There's slime in this sack.

Ugly Joe scrapes out the remains of Paul's sneeze and tastes it.

UGLY JOE
Mmmmmmm! Honey!

He retrieved the rest with a knife and fashions a snot sandwich.

BRIAN
Uh, I'm not hungry anymore.

UGLY JOE
Bah, kids can never make up their minds.
(takes a bite)
Anyone else want some?

Mattie and Paul shake their heads back and forth as the sandwich drips.

UGLY JOE
Then I'm gonner relax a bit
(reaches for Superman
#1)

BRIAN
I'm hungry again!

Ugly Joe scrambles over to Brian and holds the sandwich to his face.

UGLY JOE
Here!

Brian reluctantly takes a bite while Paul looks at him with only the white part of his eyes.

BRIAN
(forced)
Yum!

Suddenly a dog barks in the distance. Ugly Joe jumps up and runs out to take a look.

BRIAN
I'm gonna puke!

Ugly Joe runs back in, inadvertently kicking the comic over to Brian. Brian snatches it up immediately with his awkwardly bound hands.

TIMEQUEST RING
 (female voice)
 Backup processor activated! Warping
 in five seconds!

Moments later Video runs the doorway and leaps into Mattie's lap. Then the cabin and forest disappear.

EXT. UNKNOWN TIME PERIOD -- MOMENTS LATER

The kids sit on a patch of dirt in the bright sunlight. Bushes and grass cover the landscape, and the bay is visible in the distance.

MATTIE
 Gee whiz, what happened?

The kids work on freeing themselves from their ropes.

BRIAN
 We went through another time warp.

MATTIE
 Another time warp? You mean you
 guys really are from the future?

PAUL
 We told you. Brian, what year is
 this?

BRIAN
 (rubbing ring)
 I don't know, but we're definitely
 not in Kansas anymore.

TIMEQUEST RING
 (Male voice, gruff
 Brooklyn accent)
 Backup processor failure! Destination
 unknown!

The ring sputters and flashes a rainbow of colors again.

PAUL
 The ring's busted.

MATTIE
 What! But I have to get back home!
 (MORE)

MATTIE (CONT'D)

I'm supposed to go to the World's
Fair with my dad this weekend!

Video chews through the rest of Mattie's ropes.

BRIAN

Don't worry, we'll figure something
out.

Mattie frees Brian and Paul.

Looking upset, Brian takes a peek at a TimeQuest coin, which
now reads: "Home (always allowed): 2002 A.D.; Forbidden:
74,999,900 B.C. to 75,000,100 B.C., 1839 A.D. to 2039 A.D.
Try our new sense of warmth in the Emotion Zone!"

PAUL

Let's see where we are.

They start walking in the direction of where Parson's Pond
should be.

EXT. GRASSY AREA -- LATER

PAUL

I can really go for a bacon double
cheeseburger right now.

MATTIE

I want a chocolate milkshake. My
dad is so good at making those.

BRIAN

I want a burger, milkshake, and fries.

PAUL

Oh yeah, fries too. And your mom's
pancakes.

Suddenly a SQUEALING NOISE comes from behind a nearby hill,
along with the pounding of feet. Moments later a giant sloth
runs over the hill, followed by a CAVEBOY holding a spear
and wearing an animal skin tunic. He has messy brown hair.

BOY

(ready to throw spear)
Soota! Kooma!

The sloth runs towards the kids like a runaway train, causing them to dive behind a nearby boulder. In the panic, Brian drops the Superman case. The sloth tramples past, but the caveboy slips on the hard plastic case, landing on his back.

MATTIE

That was a giant sloth! They went extinct ten thousand years ago.

PAUL

You mean we're in prehistoric Springs?

CAVEBOY

(kicking the ground
with his heels)

Hutty Foo!

The kids cautiously walk over to the downed caveboy. Brian grabs Superman #1 and hides it behind his back. The caveboy pushes himself onto his feet with his spear.

CAVEBOY

(pointing to himself)
Mai-kee, Mai-kee.

BRIAN

Hi, Mikey!

MIKEY

(waving for the kids
to follow)

Bana.

They hike the rest of the way to Parson's Pond, where a primitive village of rickety huts lines the shore. CHILDREN chase each other around, and fires spew twirling white smoke.

An OLD WOMAN holding an ivory spear greets the guests from a distance. She wears a fancy hat made out of a sloth's head.

OLD WOMAN

Mia-kee, soota?
(points to a cooking
fire)

MIKEY

(pointing to Superman
#1)
Hutty foo!

OLD WOMAN
 (raising her spear in
 the air)
 Kalu, Bana!

VILLAGERS emerge from the huts and gather behind the old woman. Mikey walks over to Brian, grabs the comic, and then runs and hands it to the old woman. The villagers murmur, and then Mikey is sent to lead Brian over to the crowd.

The villagers stare at Brian in awe. The old woman puts a hand on his shoulder.

OLD WOMAN
 Soota.
 (making an eating
 sign)
 Dinta.
 (pretending to sleep)

The old woman points to the picture of Superman #1 flying above Metropolis and jumps up with outstretched arms, causing the villagers to laugh.

OLD WOMAN
 Weni!
 (pointing to Superman)
 Weni!
 (pointing to Brian)
 Kooma!
 (pretending to stab
 something with her
 spear)

The old woman disappears into a nearby hut carrying the comic. Brian walks back over to Mattie and Paul.

PAUL
 What did she say?

BRIAN
 We're gonna eat and then we're gonna
 sleep.

MATTIE
 Yay, did you hear that Video?

BRIAN
 And in the morning, I'm going to
 fly, or she's going to kill me.

Mattie, Paul, and Video stare at Brian with wide eyes.

INT. BRIAN'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT -- FIVE YEARS AGO

Brian pretends to be asleep in his bunkbed while his parents' FOOTSTEPS climb the stairs, cross the hallway, and enter the master bedroom.

BRIAN

Please don't notice, please don't notice.

MOM (O.S.)

The closet's open.

DAD (O.S.)

What happened, there's a spill.

A few minutes later, Dad lets out a BLOOD-CURDLING SCREAM and storms into Brian's room.

INT. HUT -- PREHISTORIC SPRINGS -- NIGHT

The kids sleep on separate piles of dried grass. Brian wakes up breathing heavily and sweating.

PAUL

(whispering)

Which part did you dream about?

BRIAN

When Dad makes the dent in my door after he discovers the wrecked comic.

PAUL

Don't worry, we'll get the comic back. Psycho woman can't guard it forever.

BRIAN

Even if we do get it, how can we get home? The ring looks worse now.

PAUL

We'll get there, I'm not wearing braces when I'm forty.

BRIAN

And what about Mattie? We can't go back to 1939.

MATTIE

(waking up)

What are you whispering about?

PAUL

Uh, we were just talking about our favorite television shows.

MATTIE

They're gonna have television at the World's Fair!

A GUARD GRUNTS something unintelligible outside the entrance to the hut.

BRIAN

I mean sports, we're talking about our favorite sports.

MATTIE

Mine's baseball. I love striking all the boys out!

The guard kicks open the rickety door.

GUARD

(waving a spear)

Yama! Kooma!

The guard closes the door and leaves.

BRIAN

Did you notice that "to kill" is their favorite verb?

INT. HUT -- MORNING

Mikey runs in carrying a rock.

MIKEY

Tani! Tani!

Mikey wakes Brian up and shows off his rock.

BRIAN
(groggily)
Cool rock, sure beats Playstation.

Just then the rock splits in two and a lizard jumps out onto Brian's arm.

BRIAN
Help!

Mikey laughs and falls on his back from the prank.

GUARD
(sticking his head in
the door)
Mikey, bana, weni.

Mikey looks sad, and averts his eyes from the kids.

EXT. VILLAGE -- MOMENTS LATER

The kids emerge from the hut, where they are greeted by an armed tribe led by the old woman. The woman carries the still mint-condition comic book under her arm.

Guards flank the kids with spears as the whole group walks towards a cliff in the distance. Mikey looks at the ground and kicks rocks, obviously unhappy.

BRIAN
(handing the ring to
Paul)
Here, take this just in case.

PAUL
In case of what?

Paul slips the ring onto his right ring finger.

EXT. CLIFF -- LATER

The caravan stops on a large rock which juts out over the cliff. Large birds with webbed wings hover over animal carcasses at the bottom of the cliff.

OLD WOMAN
(pointing to Superman)
Weni!

The old woman points at Brian and then throws the comic off the cliff.

PAUL
She's serious!

OLD WOMAN
Weni!

Guards push Brian towards the edge of the rock with their spears.

MIKEY
Bana, weni kooma!

Mikey pushes his way through the crowd of onlookers and tries to push Brian away from the cliff's edge.

OLD WOMAN
Kalu, Mikey!

Villagers grab Mikey and pull him away from Brian.

BRIAN
Please, I just want to go home!

Paul presses the home button on the TimeQuest ring over and over again but nothing happens.

The old woman runs out of patience and pushes Brian off the side of the rock, but his overalls snag a sharp edge, and he dangles over the mud pit below.

The old woman hacks away at the offending overall strap with her spear.

OLD WOMAN
Weni!

The strap breaks and Brian plummets off the cliff.

BRIAN
Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!

EXT. MUD PIT -- CONTINUOUS

Brian splashes into a pool of mud, water, bones, and various slimy stuff. When he emerges, he finds himself in a prehistoric animal burial ground. Half-eaten carcasses of mastodons lie everywhere.

BRIAN
(holding his nose in
disgust)
Why couldn't Dad collect stamps?

A GROWLING startles Brian. He turns around and sees four dire wolves lurking on a flat rock ten feet away from him.

BRIAN
Good poochies, poochies want a back
scratch?

One wolf lets out a FEROCIOUS GROWL. Brian turns around and tries to run through the thick mud. He stops when he sees a mastodon looming before him. Its ripped, flabby trunk sprouts hair and large pimples.

BRIAN
A radioactive elephant?

The wolves plunge into the depths of the mud, and the mastodon THUNDERS towards the wolves. Brian is caught in the middle.

BRIAN
Think. Think. What does Kaanga do
in every issue of Jungle Comics? He
fights Saber Tooth tigers with his
bear hands.

The wolves emerge from the mud near Brian while the Mastodon casts a shadow over him after taking only a few steps.

BRIAN
Kaanga was an idiot.

Brian trudges away from all the creatures, filling his overalls with debris. The wolves pounce on the mastodon, biting off chunks of flesh. The mastodon ROARS and swings its tusks.

The mastodon finally falls on its side, causing a sound like an EARTHQUAKE. Bits of rock fall off the sides of the cliff and birds scatter.

In the splash of mud from the crash, Superman #1 flies up into the air and lands near the mastodon's motionless legs.

BRIAN

Yes!

Brian trudges back towards the mastodon as the dire wolves begin feeding. He inches his hand towards the comic, and just when he has the comic awkwardly between two fingers, one of the dire wolves notices him and lets out a MONSTROUS ROAR. Bits of flesh hang from the wolf's teeth.

BRIAN

I was just leaving.

Brian abandons the comic and makes his way to the edge of the mud pit, where Paul is holding out a long stick for him.

MATTIE

Hurry, grab it!

Brian pulls himself up, and the kids scamper behind a nearby boulder to watch the rest of the feeding frenzy. Brian tries to squeeze some of the mud out of his overalls.

MATTIE

Most of the villagers cheered when they saw that you were alive.

PAUL

(holding out ring)

Good thing you gave me this, it might have gotten broke worse.

MATTIE

Give it to me, I just remembered how Dad always fixes things.

Mattie bangs the TimeQuest ring against a rock.

PAUL

(pointing)

Look!

Another family of Dire wolves approach the kids, staring with glassy eyes. Mother wolves hold baby wolves in their mouths. Brian and Paul stand frozen in fear.

MATTIE

Ring's fixed!
(hands ring to Brian)

The ring glows a healthy green.

PAUL
Press home!

Just then Brian's remaining overall strap snaps, sending a brass button at the approaching wolves.

One of the wolves GROWLS and pounces.

Video jumps into Mattie's arms.

Brian grabs the two extra TimeQuest coins from his overalls pocket and presses the home button on the ring. The mud pit and wolves disappear.

EXT. PLAYGROUND IN SPRINGS -- 2002

Brian's overalls are missing, and he's wearing boxer shorts with orange stripes. A GIRL on the monkey bars stares at the kids, and then she starts to SCREAM.

BRIAN
Run, we're not far from home!

The kids flee the playground, led by Brian.

INT. BRIAN'S BEDROOM -- LATER

The clock on Brian's wall shows 5:58 PM, Monday. Brian, now wearing corduroys, lies on the floor next to Paul, admiring the recently filled in cartoon panels in the TimeQuest comic. They show the kids getting in trouble with Mr. Miller, getting kidnapped by outlaws, battling the prehistoric creatures, etc.

BRIAN
It's only a few minutes after we left for 1939! My mom and dad are still at dinner!

MATTIE (O.S.)
How do you work this television?

Paul turns the page of the TimeQuest comic, revealing a full-page ad for "Skanky Candy Programmable gum."

A blond-haired kid flies through space in a ship, programming the flavor of his gum with a portable keyboard.

On the next page, one lone comic panel reads...

PAUL

"...Will Mattie and Video return to 1939 to see their worried family again? Will Brian recover Superman #1 from prehistoric times and make his father happy again?..."

BRIAN

"...Find out what the future holds in the fabulous second part of our story!"

PAUL

Cool. It makes us sound like heroes.

Mattie walks in carrying a framed picture and a remote control.

MATTIE

(showing the picture)

Look, it's me!

The picture shows a faded black-and-white image of a young girl that resembles Mattie.

BRIAN

I never really looked at that picture before.

MATTIE

(showing the remote)

How do you activate this ray gun?

BRIAN

(proudly)

That's called a universal remote. It's for television!

Brian clicks the button, turning on the TV in his room. Friday the Thirteenth is on, showing Jason disemboweling a victim with a fishhook. Video barks at it.

MATTIE

Turn it off!

Mattie turns away and picks up a comic from Brian's floor.

MATTIE
Superman number four-hundred?

BRIAN
My oldest one is number two-seventy-five.

MATTIE
How come you wanted Superman #1 so badly anyway?

BRIAN
Sit down, I have a scarier horror story to tell you than anything you can see on TV.
(clicks off the television)
It all started five years ago--

INT. BRIAN'S BEDROOM -- LATER

Mattie is trying to figure out how to work the mouse on Brian's computer. Video is sitting on the keyboard.

MATTIE
The future's cool, I guess. But do you think I can go home now? On Monday nights, Mom and Dad read to me about history.

Paul and Brian exchange guilty looks.

BRIAN
I can't hide it anymore, you're stuck with us, Mattie. Watch.

Brian holds the TimeQuest ring to his face. It glows green.

BRIAN
1939 A.D.!
(presses the TimeQuest button)

TIMEQUEST RING
(female voice)
Incorrect use of the TimeQuest ring!
Syntax error at line twelve million three hundred thousand and four.
(MORE)

TIMEQUEST RING (CONT'D)
See instructions for proper usage.
Thank you for choosing TimeQuest
incorporated and have a nice day!

The ring now glows red.

MATTIE
I can't go back?

Just then FOOTSTEPS come up the main staircase.

BRIAN
(whispering to Mattie)
My parents are home. Quick, get
under the covers with Video.

Brian's mom and dad walk in. Mom glances at Brian's pants suspiciously.

MOM
I thought I heard a woman talking.

BRIAN
That was just Paul, you know how he
likes to do that.

PAUL
(chanting in a high
pitch voice)
Flight 740 is now boarding for
Paultown!

A MUFFLED BARK comes from under the covers.

MOM
Why are you wearing corduroys?

BRIAN
They're comfy.

MOM
Well, you look neat.

BRIAN
(scratching his leg)
Can Paul sleep over?

DAD
Your parents probably don't even
recognize you anymore, Paul.

MOM

How's that science project coming?

A GROWL comes from under the covers, followed by a YELP.

BRIAN

Good.

DAD

Don't stay up too late, it's a school night.

Mom and Dad leave and slam the door. Brian lifts the covers off of Mattie and Video. A pillow is stuffed in Video's mouth.

INT. BRIAN'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Brian, Mattie, and Paul study the TimeQuest comic by flashlight, trying to plan their next move.

PAUL

Look!

Suddenly, the next comic panel magically fills in with words.

BRIAN

(reading)

"Our brave heroes sit around and think. They wonder what the, ahem, FUTURE, holds for them."

MATTIE

Guys, I got it. We have to go to the future.

BRIAN

Why?

PAUL

That's it!

MATTIE

It says so right here, "what the FUTURE holds." Future is underlined.

Just then another comic panel fills in, which reads...

MATTIE

"...BUT WAIT, WHAT'S THIS?"

PAUL

What could that mean?

BRIAN

Beats me, probably something horrible,
like a monster eats me.

MATTIE

No, maybe you wreck the car.

PAUL

Or burn down the house.

MATTIE

Or burn down the car.

BRIAN

Alright, shut up.

The kids watch the comic intently for a few moments, but nothing else fills in. A red glow from the TimeQuest ring illuminates Brian's side of the room.

INT. ANTIQUES ROADSHOW SET -- DAY

An APPRAISER wearing glasses and a suit sits at a velvet table with Brian's Dad. Superman #1 sits inside of its plastic case on the table. PEOPLE carrying antiques wander by in the background.

APPRAISER

You've brought something very special
to get appraised today. Why don't
you tell us what you know about it.

DAD

Well, I inherited this comic from my
mother, Matilda. She used to collect
comics. Most were destroyed, but
luckily this one survived.

APPRAISER

And survive it did. The condition
of this comic is what collectors
call "Mint."

(MORE)

APPRAISER (CONT'D)

This condition is extremely rare for a golden-age comic such as this because comics are printed on cheap paper that yellows or crumples easily. Most people in the 30's and 40's didn't anticipate that comics would ever be worth more than the ten cents they paid for them, so they threw them in damp attics or the trash.

DAD

Not my mom.

APPRAISER

Indeed, most of the time it's the mom that's blamed for having thrown out the valuable comics or baseball cards. In this case, she's the savior. Do you mind if I look inside to assess the page whiteness?

DAD

Be my guest.

The appraiser carefully slides the comic out of the case and places it on a special padded comic rack. He opens the cover and sees a pure white page.

APPRAISER

Excellent, perfectly white. Do you have any idea of the value of this piece?

DAD

I have an old comic guide from the 70's that lists Superman #1 at eight thousand dollars.

APPRAISER

You'll be happy to know that the value has appreciated considerably since the 70's. At a properly advertised auction today, this comic could fetch one hundred and seventy five thousand dollars.

DAD

Are you joking? You're kidding, right?

APPRAISER

Not at all, sir.

Just then a football flies through the air towards the comic. Brian appears, diving for the ball. He makes the catch and smashes right into the comic, crumpling it and covering it with mud. The appraiser and Dad try to prevent the table from falling over.

MOM

(storms onto the set)

How many times have I told you not to play football at the Antiques Roadshow!

Brian slumps his head.

APPRAISER

(dusting himself off)

I'm afraid your initial assessment of eight thousand dollars is once again correct.

INT. BRIAN'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Brian wakes up sweating. The flashlight is still on. Mattie and Paul have fallen asleep on separate parts of the floor. Brian turns off the flashlight and starts crying.

INT. SCHOOL -- MR. O'S CLASSROOM -- MORNING

Mattie, Brian, and Paul sit in a group of three waiting for Mr. O's instructions. Video sits in Brian's backpack.

PAUL

Did you see the look on your mom's face when Mattie walked out the door with us?

MR. O

Ok, everyone, take out your homeworks and share them amongst your group.

PAUL

Did you do your homework?

BRIAN
Yeah, I did it while that madwoman
was hacking away at me with her spear.

MATTIE
Oooh, unprepared! You're going to
get whacked with a ruler!

BRIAN
(pulling out the
TimeQuest comic)
Never mind that, what year should we
warp to in the future?

PAUL
I say 3001, that sounds cool.

MATTIE
No, 4444. Four is my lucky number.

BRIAN
Guys, we can't just make up a number!

MR. O
(scolding)
Do you guys have a problem?

MATTIE
Yes, I'm stuck in the future because
our time-travel ring has rules, and
I have to get home to the past, except
we have to figure out what year to
warp to in the future.

MR. O
Good work! That's an interesting
conflict for a science-fiction story!

Mr. O hands Brian a candy bar. Video smells the chocolate
and begins to bark from within Brian's backpack.

VIDEO
Rowf, rowf, Frowr, Groff!

The backpack teeters back and forth on the floor while the
whole class falls silent.

Brian drops the candy bar into the backpack, where a feeding
noise erupts. The class resumes work after the bag turns
quiet again.

BRIAN

I think Video even ate my Wite-Out.

MATTIE

Look, "2499 A.D." is underlined in the instructions, just like "FUTURE" was!

Mattie points to the ring's instructions: "Step 2: In a clear voice, tell the TimeQuest ring what year you want to travel to. Be sure to specify "A.D." or "B.C." For example, 2499 A.D."

BRIAN

That's gotta be it! This comic knows everything!

PAUL

Awesome!

MATTIE

Then let's go!

BRIAN

We can't, the ring's still glowing red. Remember the rules?

INT. SCHOOL -- MR. KING'S CLASSROOM -- LATER.

The students take out their homework and place it on their desks. Mr. King puts an information packet on each desk entitled "Springs in the News."

MR. KING

Where is your homework, Brian?

BRIAN

(looking down at his
backpack)

Uh, my dog ate it.

The whole class laughs. A quiet BURPING BARK comes from the backpack, and it wobbles gently back and forth.

MR. KING

A likely story. Well, where's your textbook then?

BRIAN
(embarrassed)
My dog ate that too.

The class roars with laughter. A SNOOZING NOISE comes from the bag now.

MR. KING
Didn't you even come prepared with a pen?

BRIAN
(slumping his head)
Uh, eaten.

MR. KING
Fine, then you just volunteered to begin today's lesson. Will you be kind enough to open your packet and read the first article, from 1939, entitled "Local Girl Missing, feared dead."

Just then the ring on Brian's finger turns green. Brian stares at it momentarily, but then snaps to attention when Mr. Miller gets impatient.

BRIAN
The three hundred residents of Springs, Long Island, are deeply grieved over the disappearance of twelve-year-old Mattie Bennett. She is feared dead at the hands of a ruthless pirate, although no body has been found. One witness told us that he saw the girl socializing with two strangers wearing overalls, when all three were kidnapped by an outlaw and taken into the woods.

Mattie slumps down in her chair, embarrassed.

BRIAN
The man was later caught by a posse of Springs residents as he tried to flee by boat. He had strange writing scrawled on his head, which detectives think may have been a message from one of the children.

(MORE)

BRIAN (CONT'D)

If you have any information regarding this crime, please contact our offices immediately.

Mattie slumps further down in her chair.

Suddenly, all the packets in the room disappear in a red flash, replaced by dozens of rows of the tiny red letters "TimeQuest Change" forming the shape of each packet. The letters scroll from left to right.

In a flash, all the packets become whole again. The class looks bewildered.

Mattie slumps so far down in her chair she loses balance and falls off the seat.

EXT. SPRINGS -- AFTERNOON

Mattie, Brian, and Paul approach Brian's house after school.

BRIAN

Ok, here's the plan, I'll distract Mom, you two run to my room. We warp in ten minutes.

PAUL

(pointing to car in driveway)
Isn't that your Dad's car?

BRIAN

Uh-oh.

They pick up the pace.

INT. BRIAN'S HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

The kids burst through the door. Brian's mom sits at the kitchen table, sobbing.

BRIAN

Go to my room.

Paul and Mattie run upstairs.

BRIAN
Mom, what's wrong?

MOM
It's your father, he's sick. He's
red.

Brian notices old photographs, like the one Mattie had discovered, on the kitchen table.

BRIAN
What are these?

MOM
I keep seeing his mother, when she
was little, roaming around the house.
(hugging Brian)

Brian's eyes open wide, and then he runs for the stairs.

MOM
Don't disturb him, I've called an
ambulance just in case.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Dad lies on the bed, flickering between himself and hundreds of rows of the digital scrolling words "TimeQuest Error."

DAD
This...is...my last magic trick.

The dresser and mirror flash red and disappear. Thousands of rows of the digital letters now cover the walls and ceiling.

BRIAN
Hang on Dad, I'm gonna fix everything!

Brian runs out the door

INT. BRIAN'S ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

PAUL
Your dad's car just disappeared!

BRIAN

You're my grandmother, Mattie! We took you out of your time, so that means my dad was never born!

MATTIE

What?

BRIAN

My dad's disappearing!

Mattie looks at Brian with an open jaw.

PAUL

Let's go!

MATTIE

Video!

Video leaps into Mattie's arms.

PAUL

Take the TimeQuest comic just in case. It could tell us more.

Brian stuffs the TimeQuest comic and the extra TimeQuest coins in the pocket of his corduroys.

BRIAN

(crying to the ring)
2499 A.D.

He presses the TimeQuest button just as a SCREAMING AMBULANCE arrives outside.

INT. KELLEY'S ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

The kids appear in a steamy jungle. A blond-haired boy floats above the ground, watching an intense fight between a mutant lizard and an overgrown ape-man.

KELLEY

Hey, you're real!

He presses a button on a remote, causing the jungle to disappear, replaced by a black, spherical room.

CYBERWEB
(female voice)
Thank you for using cyberweb, have a
nice day!

BRIAN
Who are you?

Kelley runs to the opposite side of the room, trying to hide.

KELLEY
Are you aliens?

BRIAN
We're just kids from Springs.

Kelley points the remote control at Brian and presses a
button.

CYBERWEB
Subject's intentions are good.

KELLEY
Sorry I didn't trust you, but you
know, with the war and everything.

MATTIE
It's OK, I didn't trust them either.

KELLEY
An undercover alien once tried to
sell me a mop. One second I could
be mopping, and the next minute,
WHAMMO!

Kelley pretends to be hit by something and dives at Paul's
feet.

BRIAN
It's OK, we really are from Springs,
but we time-trav--

KELLEY
(to Paul's feet)
Your sneakers stink!

Kelley hops up on his feet.

KELLEY
(pointing to his
sneakers)
Look, I just got these.

Kelley walks around, showing off his sneakers that scroll the words "Kelley is great!" Whenever he takes a step.

PAUL
When did aliens come to Earth?

KELLEY
Ugh, history's boring. I just got
Castle Warrior, and you need four
people to enter the castle. C'mon!

Kelley presses another button on his remote, causing a doorway to open in the spherical room.

INT. VIRTUA POD ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Five large pods sit in an enormous spherical room, giving the impression of an egg hatching room on an alien planet. The pods are Red, Blue, Yellow, Green, and Black. They each have an opening at the top, which can be reached by stairs.

Kelley presses a button on his remote, causing the holographic words "Virtua Pod Activation" to float above the pods. The pods fill with liquid that matches the color of the pod.

KELLEY
(climbing the steps
of the blue pod)
Ready to play? Hop in!

Kelley dives into the blue pod, and seems to float in suspended animation within.

PAUL
Let's get outta here, this isn't
right.

BRIAN
(showing Paul the red
TimeQuest ring)
Can't, not glowing green.

PAUL
I'm gonna glow green if I jump in
this radioactive pod.

Paul hesitates, but climbs the steps of the green pod.

MATTIE
C'mon, maybe it'll help me get home.

Mattie climbs the stairs and tosses a reluctant Video into
the yellow pod. Then she jumps in herself.

BRIAN
Whatever.

Brian climbs the stairs of the red pod and jumps in. Paul
shrugs his shoulders and jumps into the green pod.

EXT. SPOOKY CASTLE -- CONTINUOUS

A torch sticks out a brass ring in the towering castle's
wall, illuminating an iron portcullis. A dark forest filled
with mysterious eyes abuts the castle.

Kelley wears a suit of shiny armor that is too big for his
body. A sword hangs at his side. Brian wears a cloak and a
purple wizard's hat. Mattie and Paul are nowhere in sight.

BRIAN
Where are we?

KELLEY
The game, duh. Pick up that yellow
paper in the wall.

BRIAN
Wow, this sure beats Playstation.

Brian picks up a yellow scrap of paper sticking out of the
castle wall. Stars flash over his head.

GAMEMASTER (O.S.)
(echoing male voice)
Fire Spell, level one acquired.

BRIAN
(smelling his purple
hat)
This is awesome, everything is real!

KELLEY
(tapping his sword
impatiently)
You don't play much pod do you?

A horse tramples down a path in the forest, heading towards the castle.

KELLEY
Finally, they're here!

Mattie and Paul sit on the black horse. Mattie wears a suit of black armor. Paul is a jester. A pointy hat with jingly bells sits on his head, and a wooden sword hangs at his side.

GAMEMASTER (O.S.)
Welcome, brave journeyers, to Madame Orph's castle. Find the golden key to advance to the next level. Beware, the dragon is hungry, and she does not like to be disturbed. Muahahahaha...

The portcullis CLATTERS open, releasing a pack of bats that fly off into the forest.

PAUL
(hopping off the horse)
How come you get a sword and I only get a stick?

KELLEY
I'm a class A warrior and you're a class B jester. You and the wizard stay in the back. I'll take the lead with the girl.

Mattie hops off the horse, and all four step through the portcullis.

INT. HALLWAY -- MOMENTS LATER

The kids creep down a passageway filled with cobwebs and scuttling bugs.

KELLEY
(handing Brian a torch)
Check the floor for traps.

Brian shines the torch on the floor, revealing bits of dead creatures, a few gold coins, and bones of past journeyers.

KELLEY

This way.

When they creep around a corner, a ghostly skeleton forms from scattered bones on the floor and attacks Kelley with a shiny scythe. The skeleton CACKLES, its jawbone moving up and down. Video BARKS at it.

KELLEY

Die, beast!

Kelley and Mattie swing their swords, causing the creature to crumble back into bones. Rats collect the bones and scatter.

KELLEY

(to Brian)

You could've used your fire spell,
y'know.

PAUL

(scraping his wooden
sword against the
wall)

How am I supposed to do anything
with this stick?

KELLEY

When that curly-haired kid uses magic,
you'll gain experience points, trust
me.

INT. LARGE ANTECHAMBER -- MOMENTS LATER

Pillars soar towards a ceiling that is shrouded in darkness. A BREATHING noise comes from the darkness on the far side of the room.

Kelley grabs the torch from Brian and tosses it into the center of the room, revealing a spiked tail snaking between the pillars.

KELLEY

Show yourself, fiend!

Suddenly, all doors to the antechamber slam shut with a steel CLANK.

DRAGON (O.S.)
Just where I thought I'd find you!

A dragon's head appears from the darkness and grabs Paul.

KELLEY
Use your magic! Swords are no good
against dragons!

Brian waves his hand, sending a bolt of lightning at the dragon. It scatters into sparks and disappears.

DRAGON
Only ice works against a dragon,
feeble journeyers!

A giant tail whips around, cracking pillars. The dragon swallows Paul and laughs evilly. Video whimpers and hides behind Mattie.

DRAGON
Dinner is served!

KELLEY
What are we having?

DRAGON
Chicken and broccoli.

KELLEY
(dropping his sword)
Can I have my friends over?

DRAGON
(sniffing Brian and
Mattie)
Are they safe?

KELLEY
They're OK, they're not aliens.
They just moved here or something.

INT. VIRTUA POD ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

The liquid in the virtua pods becomes clear, allowing the kids to see normal reality.

The black pod, labeled "Parental Interruption Unit," now contains KELLEY'S MOM.

The kids climb out of the pods.

MATTIE
(observing her arm)
Wow, dry.

BRIAN
(to Paul)
You're alive!

PAUL
(dazed)
Hunggh?

INT. KELLEY'S ROOM -- NIGHT

The kids float on invisible hover beds. The Cyberweb has turned the room into outer space, and the kids zoom past planets and stars.

MATTIE
Your mom sure is nice to let three
strangers sleep over.

KELLEY
She wants me to have more friends.

BRIAN
(showing Kelley the
TimeQuest ring)
We're from the year 2002.

KELLEY
Wow, I haven't been visited for a
long time! My last TimeQuest visitor
came from 99,999 A.D. to learn about
the alien war.

MATTIE
Did the aliens land in New Jersey?

KELLEY
Nope, East Hampton. Twenty years
ago they attacked Earth, but we won
and then they went into hiding.

(MORE)

KELLEY (CONT'D)

Nobody knows when they're going to
attack again.

After Kelley falls asleep, Brian, Paul, and Mattie discuss
their plan by the red glow of the TimeQuest ring.

BRIAN

(whispering)

If we go far enough into the future,
we'll be able to get another TimeQuest
ring. They haven't been invented
yet.

MATTIE

There are more of them?

PAUL

That Time traveler who visited Kelley
must be from a time after they've
been invented.

MATTIE

How did Mr. Somerset get one, then?

BRIAN

Beats me. Maybe he really does have
super powers.

PAUL

If we get Mattie another one, she'll
be able to get home.

MATTIE

Did you hear that Video, we might
get home!

Video SNORES in Mattie's arms.

PAUL

What about Superman?

BRIAN

Forget it. I can deal.

PAUL

But if we get another TimeQuest ring,
we can warp to before we warped back
to Mr. Somerset. Then we can try
again.

BRIAN

Yeah, and maybe destroy the world.
All that matters is getting Mattie
home and fixing my dad.

PAUL

But that comic is the whole reason--

BRIAN

Every time I get near Superman #1,
disaster strikes, just forget it.

Brian turns over, pretending to go to sleep, but his eyes
are wide open.

INT. BRIAN'S BEDROOM -- FIVE YEARS AGO

Brian pretends to be asleep in his bed. A dark shadow stands
over him, waving the wrecked comic.

DAD

This was my most valuable possession!
I was going to retire off this comic!
Now I'll have to work until I die!

On the way out, Dad slams the door so hard that it bounces
back open.

Brian pulls the pillow over his head and cries.

INT. KELLEY'S ROOM -- MORNING

The kids sleep in awkward positions, but floating in mid-
air. The cyberweb has positioned them close to a virtual
sun. The TimeQuest ring still glows red.

The door in the wall opens.

KELLEY'S MOM

(peeking in)
Time for school!

KELLEY

(weakly)
I don't wanna go school.

The kids fall to the floor in a heap.

KELLEY

Mom, did you have to program the
beds to do that!

Kelley grabs a yo-yo and sticks it in his pocket. Then he programs the phrase on his sneakers and the color of his clothing.

Brian looks unhappy.

PAUL

Which part did you dream about?

BRIAN

When my dad yells.

PAUL

I hate that part.

KELLEY

Let's just watch the web a bit before
we go.

He presses the button on his remote.

CYBERWEB

Sorry, time to learn.

Vocabulary words and math formulas float around the room.

KELLEY

Rats.

EXT. SPRINGS -- LATER

The kids walk towards school. The general store, church, meeting hall, and school are now shiny black rectangles. Hover cars float down the street silently. An electronic sign next to Parson's Pond reads "do not oil the ducks!"

PAUL

I can't believe I've been going to
school for almost six hundred years!

Kelley presses a button on his remote, and a door opens in the side of the school.

KELLEY

I think we're late.

INT. SCHOOL -- CONTINUOUS

Kelley covertly leads the kids towards a classroom and peeks through the glass door. A spiky-haired teacher, MRS. Q, stands in front of the class.

MRS. Q
Ok class, take attendance, and then
we'll prepare for our field trip.

The students rub their fingers over white squares on their desks.

CYBERWEB
(female voice)
Nancy, present. Billy, present.
Timmy, present--

KELLEY
I forgot about the field trip, c'mon.

While Mrs. Q programs the electronic blackboard, Kelley leads Brian, Paul, and Mattie towards the empty row of desks in the back. Mattie holds Video tightly.

After they sit down, Kelley carefully swipes his right thumb over the little white square on his desk. He holds his left index finger in front of his mouth, as if telling his thumb to be quiet.

CYBERWEB
Kelley is TARDY!

MRS. Q
(Her green eyes seem
to glow in the light)
Kelley, that's the fifth time this
month. Once more and you lose all
virtual reality privileges in the
pod lab.

KELLEY
(drooping his head)
Sorry, Mrs. Q.

Out of curiosity, Brian swipes his thumb over the little white square on his desk.

CYBERWEB
(male voice)
Intruder alert! Intruder alert!

A metallic orb descends out of a hatch near the front of the room. It WHIRS a black "eye" back and forth between Brian, Paul, Mattie, and Video.

CYBERWEB

Possible alien invasion! Intruders,
leave the classroom immediately!
You have ten seconds to comply!

MRS. Q

Class, assume defense position!

The class jumps under their desks and put their heads between their knees, while Brian, Paul, Mattie, and Video sit frozen in fear.

Mrs. Q picks up an electronic yardstick and waves it in defense.

CYBERWEB

You have failed to comply! You will
now be vaporized!

The orb flashes purple beams around the room.

KELLEY

You guys should, uh, probably go.

Brian, Paul, and Mattie run for the door, where they are snatched up by large guards wearing orange uniforms. Another guard enters the room and grabs Kelley.

CYBERWEB

(female voice)

Invasion terminated! Learning will
commence in thirty seconds!

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE -- MOMENTS LATER

The PRINCIPAL, a large man with red cheeks, sits at his desk eating candy.

He is flanked by two guards wearing orange uniforms.

PRINCIPAL

You caused a lot of trouble in class
today, student 13579.

The principal throws a round piece of candy in the air, where it explodes like a firecracker, startling the kids. Chunks of sugar land in the principal's open mouth.

KELLEY

You should've told me you were going to launch a sugar zapper! By the way, you can call me Kelley.

PRINCIPAL

Student 13579, you have violated section 946a of the Springs School Code of Expectations. Students shall not bring guests to class without first registering them in the main office. We must be careful during this time of invasion.

KELLEY

They're not aliens! C'mon, I want to go on the field trip today.

PRINCIPAL

(looking at Brian
suspiciously)

I scanned your guests into the Cyberweb. There was no record of them at all.

The principal tugs at a piece of loose skin hanging from under his neck.

KELLEY

See, that means they're not aliens!

PRINCIPAL

Hardly.

KELLEY

C'mon, be a pal.

PRINCIPAL

I suppose they're innocent enough, but I'll be keeping my eye on you. All of you!

KELLEY

(pointing)
You're good!

Kelley hops up on the principal's desk and extends his arm for a handshake. The orange guards lean over in alarm.

PRINCIPAL

Let him be.
 (unwrapping a large
 spherical piece of
 candy)
 Ultra sugar Zapper!

KELLEY

Open your mouths.

The principal presses a button on the candy and tosses it into the air. It explodes, sending orange goop all over the room. Paul, Mattie, Video, and the principal catch some of the sugar in their mouths.

A big lump of goop lands in Brian's hair and drips into a tangled mess.

EXT. SPRINGS MEETING HALL -- LATER

A large group of STUDENTS and TEACHERS gather in front of the meeting hall for entrance to an exhibit. A sign reads "Treasures of the Mud pits. A local archaeological exhibit sponsored by the Springs historical society."

Flocks of GUARDS wearing sunglasses search bags and check identification. They become suspicious when Mrs. Q and the rest of the class won't come anywhere near Brian, Paul, and Mattie.

A guard holds his hand up when Mattie, Paul, and Brian approach the entrance.

GUARD #1

Sorry, no unauthorized personnel
 allowed.

KELLEY

(whispering)
 Go around the back and wait.

Kelley disappears into the meeting hall.

EXT. BACK OF MEETING HALL -- MOMENTS LATER

The kids wait by a slick black wall.

BRIAN

When is this ring gonna glow green?

PAUL

So when we gonna warp to?

BRIAN

99,999. They'll have more TimeQuest comics for sure. Kelley said so.

MATTIE

I bet my mom and dad are so worried.

Suddenly, a door in the wall whizzes open. Kelley waves them in.

KELLEY

(playing with a yo-yo)

I can talk my way into the white house.

INT. MEETING HALL -- MOMENTS LATER

The room is crowded with PARENTS, students, teachers, and TOWNSPEOPLE. An old, wiry archaeologist, PROFESSOR HENDERSON, runs around to a bunch of exhibits covered by white sheets, peeking under each one.

KELLEY

That's Professor Henderson.

An ANNOUNCER stands up on a podium.

ANNOUNCER

Welcome, ladies and gentlemen, and students of Springs. We are very proud of the exhibits here today. They represent the efforts of dozens of archaeologists working over the past fifty years. As you may or may not know, the ancient Springs mud pits were discovered in 2449 by a young boy digging in a stream--

PAUL
(whispering to Brian)
You're flickering.

Brian flickers back and forth between himself and thousands of lines of the scrolling words "TimeQuest Error," perfectly forming his body.

Brian looks desperately at Paul.

ANNOUNCER
The first display item is an ancient
fossilized mastodon!

Professor Henderson pulls the sheet off of one of the mounds, revealing a giant skeleton with tusks stretched high in the air.

ANNOUNCER
The mastodon likely came to North
America across a land bridge formed
during the ice ages--

TIMEQUEST RING
(female voice)
Protagonist rescue algorithm
commencing!

A few nearby spectators looked at Brian, but immediately turn their attention back to the announcer. Brian's flickering slows down and he breathes a sigh of relief.

ANNOUNCER
And now, ladies and gentlemen! The
dire wolf!

Professor Henderson pulls the sheet off of another mound, revealing a huge skeleton of a dire wolf.

ANNOUNCER
Imagine coming face to face with
such a predator.

A few small children hold on to their parents in fear.

PAUL
Boring.

The TimeQuest ring flashes a series of cryptic signs and symbols as it does its work.

ANNOUNCER

And now, we can't explain this next artifact, so I'm just going to let your imagination run wild. Inside an encrustation of seashells and fossilized seaweed, we discovered this. Professor Henderson, if you will!

The professor pulls back a white sheet from one of the smaller mounds, revealing Superman #1 sitting inside of the protective case.

Brian and Paul's jaws drop. Brian flickers once.

BRIAN

Pinch me.

Mattie pinches Brian.

BRIAN

Ow, not really!

ANNOUNCER

That's right folks, a comic book. It was lost over twelve-thousand years before comic books were invented. Since we found it buried in an untouched geological deposit, there can be no mistaking it. We are dealing with some sort of supernatural force here.

CITIZEN #1

Does this mean the rumors about time travel are true?

CITIZEN #2

Hey, I've been visited!

ANNOUNCER

Neither Professor Henderson nor I know the answer to this riddle. We were given only one clue, a tiny hair stuck inside the plastic case. We carefully removed it and reconstructed a picture of its owner through DNA Fibrial Reconstructive Engineering.

(MORE)

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

We tried to re-create the facial expression that this creature might have had if it found itself stuck in the mud pits alongside these prehistoric creatures.

Paul and Brian look at each other with wide eyes.

ANNOUNCER

Professor Henderson! The final exhibit, if you will!

The professor pulls the cover off of the last exhibit, revealing a giant picture of Brian's face. His mouth is wide open under surprised eyes. Video hops out of Mattie's arms to get a closer look at the picture. The crowd stares, utterly quiet.

Just then Brian turns into the red letters briefly, then back to himself. A nearby GIRL notices, looks at the picture, then at Brian, then back at the picture. She lets out a PIERCING SCREAM.

GIRL

The aliens are back!

CITIZEN #3

They've come out of hiding! Run!

Mothers grab their children, and the screaming spreads. There is a general panic as everyone bursts for the door. Professor Henderson tries to protect the exhibits from the stampeding mob, but fails. A giant sloth collapses onto Superman #1, burying it.

BRIAN

Crap.

PAUL

Get the comic!

MATTIE

(looking around)
Video?

The only thing still standing after the crowd clears is the picture of Brian's face, which looks on in surprise.

GUARD #2
(grabbing Brian)
You're coming with me, Alien!

Another guard grabs Mattie and Paul. Kelley follows as the kids are dragged towards the door.

EXT. MEETING HALL -- LATER

Brian, Paul, and Mattie sit on the ground, bound with magnetic handcuffs.

Professor Henderson holds the TimeQuest ring and all four TimeQuest coins, examining them carefully.

PROFESSOR HENDERSON
(whining)
Why, why, why?

He hops up and down so that both feet hit the ground at the same time.

BRIAN
It was an accident, we're not aliens.

PROFESSOR HENDERSON
No, the death of the dinosaurs was
an accident. This is treachery!

The professor pulls his hair and paces back and forth.

PROFESSOR HENDERSON
I'm not getting upset. The little
birdie told me not to get upset.

GUARD #2
Shall I take them away?

PROFESSOR HENDERSON
Not yet.
(points to Brian)
This one intrigues me. He looks
exactly like the boy in that picture.

KELLEY
(playing with his yo-
yo)
C'mon, this is all a practical joke.
(MORE)

KELLEY (CONT'D)

We just dropped the comic in that mud pit for fun.

PROFESSOR HENDERSON

Are you going to stand there and tell me that you reconstructed thirteen thousand years' worth of fossilized seaweed on the outside of that plastic case, and then embedded the comic inside an ancient layer of alluvial limestone under three tons of sedimentary rock!

KELLY

(digging at the ground
with his foot)

Uh, yeah.

PROFESSOR HENDERSON

(holding out the
Timequest ring and
coins)

Then how do you explain these items?

The ring now glows GREEN.

KELLEY

We got them in a cereal box. They were a prize.

PROFESSOR HENDERSON

(holding his hands
over his ears)

Lock them away, all of them.

The guards cast shadows over the kids.

BRIAN

Wait! I'll tell you the truth! We went back in time to get a comic using that ring, but we got stuck in prehistoric Springs. We lost the comic in a swamp there.

KELLEY

(anxiously doing tricks
with his yo-yo)

Uh, see, I told ya!

PROFESSOR HENDERSON

So, the rumors are true. I was right about the ring. Guards, untie them!

Suddenly, Video howls from inside the meeting hall.

PROFESSOR HENDERSON

A prehistoric beast? You brought one back? Tell me, what? A sloth?

BRIAN

Kind of.

INT. MEETING HALL -- MOMENTS LATER

Everybody walks cautiously into the rubble of the ruined exhibit. The guards wait outside at the professor's command.

Video is in the corner, staring at a computer monitor that has folded out of the wall. He wags his tail rapidly.

The screen shows a green ALIEN KING with bulging eyes sitting on a floating throne. It wears a jeweled robe, and a ring of gold spikes surrounds its face.

ALIEN KING

My slaves, the time has come to return.

The alien presses a button on its throne with one of its six arms. A loud PINGING begins immediately, and the meeting hall begins to vibrate.

Control panels fold out of the walls, chairs rise from the floor, and large windows open up all around. A row of video screens descend from the ceiling, each one displaying an incomprehensible series of statistics and pictures.

PROFESSOR HENDERSON

The aliens!

He runs out the door, dropping the TimeQuest ring and coins on the grass outside.

PAUL

Let's get out of here!

Mattie grabs Video, and all the kids sprint for the exit. On the way, Brian's foot gets caught in the jawbone of the giant sloth, and he falls into the pile of fossils.

PAUL (O.S.)

C'mon!

Brian frees his foot from the sloth and stumbles to the door, but the Principal and Mrs. Q suddenly materialize in front of it, blocking the exit. The Principal grabs Brian and leads him further inside.

PRINCIPAL

At last the supreme commander has summoned us.

The principal tears away the loose skin hanging under his chin and discards it.

MRS. Q

(her green eyes glowing)

Yes, I have awaited the pinging beacon for years.

PRINCIPAL

I became suspicious that you were a colonist when you didn't show up in the Earthling's cyberweb. Now I'm certain. I don't know how you survived here so long without a forged identity, but all colonists must leave now to be replaced by a fresh group.

An controlled explosion goes off underneath the floor, and the whole building shakes.

BRIAN

But I am an Earthling!

Brian tries to pull himself away from the principal, but stops when more green-eyed Springs villagers appear at the door.

MRS. Q

Children forget so easily. Perhaps if we all return to our normal form, it will remind you of your homeland. Computer, remove pseudo-layer now!

A purple haze fills the room momentarily, causing all the clothes and skin of the aliens to fall off. Slimy green aliens with bulging eyes now stand around Brian, obviously concerned that he does not look like them.

The principal tries to strap Brian into a chair, but Brian struggles. The spaceship they are in begins to take off.

MRS. Q
Computer, complete the transformation!

A pink haze fills the room, causing all the aliens to hunch over and shrink. The furniture and computer devices shrink along with them. Now a pack of two-foot-high mutants surround Brian. Slime drips from their teeth, and retractable claws appear on each arm.

PRINCIPAL
(squeaky voice)
Namuh era uoy!

The principal shakes a tiny fist at Brian and kicks him futilely. Brian picks the principal up and tosses him across the room, where he lands in a pile of fossils.

PRINCIPAL
Mih teg!

Brian dives out the closing cabin door, but the pack of mutants rush him and grab onto his corduroys.

EXT. SPACESHIP -- CONTINUOUS

Brian dangles out of the spaceship, while Mattie and Paul look on helplessly from below.

When Video figures out what's happening, he jumps on Mattie's shoulders.

VIDEO
Groff! Frowf! GARRRRF!

The alien mutants whimper and let go of Brian's pants. Brian falls past the blazing engine fire and squishes into the mud next to Parson's Pond.

The spaceship soars towards the clouds. Just before it leaves the atmosphere it stops, and a mess of debris rains from the cabin door. Then the ship disappears in a bright blue flash.

Seconds later, fossils rain into the mud around the kids. Superman #1 crashes next to Brian, still in mint-condition inside of the plastic case.

BRIAN
(grabbing the comic)
Yes! And I still have my pants!

The Springs Army marches towards the pond, aiming lasers at the sky.

KELLEY
The war is back!

Brian, Paul, and Mattie find the TimeQuest ring and two of the TimeQuest coins in the grass. Brian hands out the coins and slips the ring onto his finger.

BRIAN
Bye Kelley, thanks for everything!

KELLEY
(looking around)
I lost my yo-yo.

MATTIE
Good luck in the war!

BRIAN
99,999 A.D.!

Brian presses the TimeQuest button, and the scene around them disappears.

EXT. STORMY BEACH -- MOMENTS LATER

The kids appear on a beach next to a raging ocean. Giant waves slosh back and forth in the maelstrom that is now the Atlantic Ocean. Black clouds emit hundreds of chaotic lightning bolts. Video crawls into Mattie's pant leg.

PAUL
Over here!

Paul waves the kids over to him, and three shadowy figures scramble over to a metal platform that he has discovered. Paul randomly presses some green buttons on a pole connected to the platform as a giant tidal wave forms near them.

BRIAN

Hurry!

Brian jams the Superman #1 case under his shirt. The wave curls a shadow over them, and just when it is about to crash, the platform CLANKS and descends into darkness.

INT. DARK ELEVATOR -- CONTINUOUS

MATTIE

What is this place?

PAUL

The future.

BRIAN

The far future.

PAUL

They better not have school here.

A glowing yellow circle rhythmically bounces up and down in the darkness as the platform continues to descend.

The elevator stops, and a door slides open revealing a huge cavern. Stalactites drip water onto a vast underground beach. A sign reads, "Welcome to Springs."

EXT. CAVERN -- CONTINUOUS

When the kids step out into the light, Kelley is among them, holding his yo-yo.

KELLEY

I found my yo-yo. It was under this coin that says TimeQuest.

BRIAN

Crudmuffins!

PAUL

Oh no!

MATTIE

Now you're stuck with us too!

KELLEY

Where are we?

PAUL

99,999.

BRIAN

Looks like Springs is underground now.

MATTIE

C'mon, I want to go home.

Mattie starts walking across the monstrous cavern. The other kids follow. Chattering bugs burrow through the sand and peck at their feet occasionally. Video peeks out from the bottom of Mattie's pants and tries to bite the creatures.

INT. UNDERGROUND CAVERN -- LATER

The kids stop to rest at a rock in another part of the cavern.

PAUL

Maybe we're in the wrong time.

BRIAN

Let's see.

Brian pulls the TimeQuest Comic out of his pocket and opens it. The next panel after "But wait, what's this?..." shows Brian's Dad flickering away in his bedroom. The caption reads, "Our adventurers have meddled with the space-time continuum, tragically altering the past and the future. Will our heroes prevent Brian's dad from flickering away?"

A glimpse of the following pages shows a detailed comic book rendition of the kids' adventures in the year 2499: playing Virtua Pod, getting in trouble in school, and fighting mutant aliens.

PAUL

(pointing to a button
labeled "Press me!")

Look.

BRIAN

Weird.

Brian presses the silver button that sits flush on a page near the end of the comic. It changes color and BEEPS. A hologram of a girl and boy appear. Each is holding a copy of "TimeQuest 2: *The Revenge of Physics*."

BOY

(gesticulating
enthusiastically)

Your adventure is almost over! But there's more in store from TimeQuest Incorporated.

GIRL

Are you tired of warping back to the present only to find that life has unpredictably changed? Well, TimeQuest Incorporated is proud to announce...

BOY

(showing his comic)

TimeQuest 2 will be available soon at a TimeQuest Store near you!

GIRL

New features include an undo feature to correct terrible mistakes.

BOY

A no-change option, to avoid changes altogether.

GIRL

And now you can warp to within fifty years of any previous warp time!

BOY

For the low price of only ten purple coins!

GIRL

Get your copy today!

BOY

Copyright 99,999, all rights reserved.

The boy and the girl high five each other and then vanish.

MATTIE

We warped to the right time!

Just then a boy, NATHAN, materializes next to the kids. He wears shiny clothing and thick glasses.

The kids scream and duck behind the rock.

NATHAN
(holding out a brown wrapper)
Try some programmable gum, my favorite flavor is swizzle fizz.

MATTIE
Are you a robot?

NATHAN
I'm Nathan. C'mon try it, it's deranged.

Kelley emerges from behind the rock and takes the piece of gum. Nathan types something into a cordless keyboard, and the gum changes color to purple.

KELLEY
(chewing)
It's good!

BRIAN
(taking a piece of gum)
Do you have old-fashioned flavors?

NATHAN
(holding out the keyboard)
Type whatever you want.

Brian types G-R-A-P-E into the keyboard, but before he finishes, Video emerges from Mattie's shirt and pounces on the keyboard, creating the flavor G-R-A-P-E-Q-A-Z-X.

BRIAN
(chewing)
Yuck!

PAUL
Let me try.

Just then Brian's ring BEEPS.

TIMEQUEST RING

Sorry! Backup processor insufficient
to complete protagonist rescue
algorithm!

BRIAN

Oh no!

Brian immediately starts flickering between himself and
thousands of the squirming red words, "TimeQuest Error."

NATHAN

You're flickering.

PAUL

You know about it?

NATHAN

It's the TimeQuest curse. Everybody
has a problem. That's why the company
came out with a new version, because
of all the lawsuits. I lost my
allowance this week because I made
my mom's Harglebeast flicker away.
Isn't this gum drax?

PAUL

Can you help us get more TimeQuest
comics so we can fix things?

NATHAN

Ok. But we have to hurry. Tonight
is New Year's eve, according to the
Dranex 2 calendar, and the emperor
wants to set off underground fireworks
to welcome the year 100,000. Follow
me, I can't warp all of you.

Nathan starts walking and the kids follow.

NATHAN

I had a bad dream last night that
the whole world collapsed because of
the fireworks. Most humans are
leaving Earth. My parents are waiting
for me in the Honey Way galaxy.
What year are you from?

MATTIE

1939.

2001. PAUL AND BRIAN

2499. KELLEY

NATHAN
Wow, 2499 was the year that the aliens
recolonized Earth.

KELLEY
Who won the war?

NATHAN
The aliens surrendered in 2579, and
that same year Earth opened its doors
to immigration from every peaceful
planet in the universe. I wrote an
essay on that for history class.

PAUL
School?

The kids arrive at a white circle in the sand, next to a
sign labeled "Teleportation Pad." A sleek kiosk provides
warp choices: Adventure Zone, Emotion Zone, CandyWarp Zone,
Shopping Zone, etc.

NATHAN
Get in the circle. Hang on.

Nathan presses the Shopping Zone button.

EXT. SHOPPING ZONE -- MOMENTS LATER

Crowds of alien tourists mill in and out of colorful stores
in an even larger cavern. The creatures are varied: Three
eyes surrounded by spikes, long trunks dripping slimy liquid,
bodies turned inside out, etc. Brian continues to flicker.

NATHAN
Follow me.

BRIAN
How come the whole world's underground
now?

NATHAN

The Great Orbital Shift of 77,340
forced everybody underground. The
surface is too violent now.

BOOMING VOICE (O.S.)

Twenty minutes until the
Centimillennial fireworks!

NATHAN

(peering up)

We haven't much time. This week I
deposited ten TimeQuest comics in
different time periods, hoping
somebody would come here and see
what terrible thing is going to happen
tonight. Maybe they could try to
change something. You're the only
ones that came.

The kids stop in front of a store called The TimeQuest Outlet.
A sign near the entrance reads, "TimeQuest 2: The Revenge of
Physics will be available immediately after the Centimillennial
fireworks!"

A SHOPKEEPER with a bushy uni-brow tends the display.

INT. TIMEQUEST OUTLET -- CONTINUOUS

NATHAN

We need two TimeQuest comics fast.

SHOPKEEPER

(coldly)

That'll be Four purple coins. I see
you made short work of the last ten
you bought.

NATHAN

(whispering to kids)

I forgot, I spent my last purple on
this pack of gum. And I left my
hypno-ring back in my base-zone.

MATTIE

(holding out Brian's
arm)

Please, sir, my grandson is
disappearing. I have to get back
home.

The shopkeeper stops preparing the display and calmly
retrieves a brown box from a shelf. He opens the box and
dumps out dozens of used TimeQuest comics in front of the
kids.

SHOPKEEPER

Read them if you want. They all end
the same way, with blank panels.

(picks up a few of
the comics)

See this one? These girls were having
a fabulous time in ancient Egypt
until they chipped off a piece of
the Sphinx as a souvenir. And this
one? Two brothers went back to Spain
in 1492 and gave Columbus a map.
And here, this boy showed our
ancestors how to put roller skate
wheels in a row instead of side by
side. It all seemed harmless until
they warped home and found that
everything had changed.

The shopkeeper tosses the comics back into the pile.

BRIAN

But this was an accident.

SHOPKEEPER

They all say that. I've watched
dozens of children flicker away before
my eyes while they're begging me to
fix their messes.

(grabs Brian's
TimeQuest comic and
flips through it)

Ah, yes, exciting. Snot, dire wolves,
aliens. A fine adventure, I'm
impressed.

BRIAN

So you'll give us the comics?

SHOPKEEPER

Kids don't know the meaning of responsibility these days. If I give you two comics now, you'll come back begging for four later, saying you have to save the world or something.

NATHAN

But we do have to save the world.

SHOPKEEPER

(pointing to his uni-
brow)

And I used to have two normal eyebrows! That is, until last month when some kids meddled with the past, trying to save the world. Well, the world's still here, but now I'm stuck with this hairy monstrosity! Get out of here before I sic my Harglebeast on you, and don't come back until you have the coins!

The kids run out of the store.

INT. SHOPPING ZONE -- MOMENTS LATER

They trudge through the busy mall, looking dejected. Brian's flickering has become more intense, and now the words "Terminal Timequest Error" form the shape of his body when he flickers.

BRIAN

We have to do something!

KELLEY

(pointing)

Let's go in here!

Kelley has found the Yo-Yo Emporium. Every conceivable kind of yo-yo in the universe lines the shelves inside.

INT. YO-YO EMPORIUM -- CONTINUOUS

Yo-YO FLO, a woman in a sparkling white dress, approaches the kids as they enter.

YO-YO FLO

Welcome to the Yo-Yo Emporium! We stock the finest quality yo-yo's from all regions, planets, and eras. We also carry just yos. Please, take your time, look around. My name is Yo-Yo Flo, but you can call me Yo!

PAUL

'Sup, Yo?

YO-YO FLO

(spotting Kelley's yellow yo-yo)

Is that a Spin-O-Matic Xj5000 glow-in-the-dark yo-yo from the Alien-War era?

PAUL

Yeah, do you want to buy it?

KELLEY

Hey!

YO-YO FLO

I'll give you one purple coin for it.

Just then Brian collapses, his body disappearing and reappearing even faster now.

MATTIE

Oh no!

Mattie Bends down and tries to revive Brian. She picks up Superman #1.

PAUL

(grabbing Kelley's yo-yo)

Can you make it four Purple coins? My best friend's gonna disappear.

Yo-Yo Flo takes the yo-yo, deposits it in a secret pocket in her dress, and hands Paul one purple coin.

YO-YO FLO

Sorry, but my cousin Yertle might be interested in buying some of the vintage clothing that you're wearing.

INT. YERTLE'S ANTIQUE CLOTHING STORE -- MOMENTS LATER

The kids place Brian on the floor after entering. Hundreds of styles of clothes line the shelves, labeled with the era and planet they are from. A WOMAN approaches them, wearing a dress shaped like a parachute.

WOMAN IN PARACHUTE DRESS

(staring at Brian)

Can that be a pre-alien War pair of corduroy pants?

PAUL

Yeah, you wanna buy 'em?

WOMAN IN PARACHUTE DRESS

(holding a magnifying
glass to Brian's leg)

I'll give you two purples and a green for them. They're a bit flickery, but remarkably well preserved.

PAUL

Three purple coins and I'll throw in the belt!

WOMAN IN PARACHUTE DRESS

Deal!

BOOMING VOICE (O.S.)

Five minutes until the centimillennial fireworks!

NATHAN

We have to hurry.

Paul give Brian's pants and belt to the woman and pockets three more purple coins.

INT. TIMEQUEST OUTLET -- MOMENTS LATER

The kids enter carrying Brian, who now wears Superman boxer shorts.

Paul throws four purple coins at the shopkeeper.

PAUL

Two TimeQuest comics, hurry!

SHOPKEEPER
(handing over two
comics)
Good luck, glad yer not my kids.

Video jumps out of Mattie's arm and bites the shopkeeper on the foot.

SHOPKEEPER
Ow! You stupid mutt! Hargly, here
boy!

A ferocious GROWLING NOISE comes from a back room in the store.

PAUL
Let's warp outta here!

NATHAN
Follow me! If you warp from here
you'll end up in the middle of the
ground back home.

The kids carry Brian out of the store just as the back storeroom door crashes open.

INT. CAVERN SERVICE AREA -- MOMENTS LATER

They weave through a maze of hallways off to the side of the main shopping area until they come to an elevator labeled "Surface."

A sign next to the elevator reads "Restricted area. Surface is violent. Wear hard hats."

NATHAN
In here!

They carry Brian into the elevator.

EXT. STORMY BEACH -- MOMENTS LATER

They emerge on a metal platform in the middle of Earth's eternally volatile surface. The wind howls and thunder booms all around them.

BOOMING VOICE (O.S.)
 One minute until the centimilennial
 fireworks!

PAUL
 Here, take these comics and set your
 rings.

Paul hands Mattie and Kelley the TimeQuest comics. They
 unwrap them and put the TimeQuest rings on their fingers.

MATTIE
 Open wide, Video.

Mattie puts a TimeQuest coin in Video's mouth, and he swallows
 it like a pill.

MATTIE
 Tell Brian I said good-bye. I had a
 swell time, but I miss my family.

Mattie hands Paul the Superman #1 comic she had been holding.

PAUL AND KELLEY
 Bye Mattie!

Suddenly, the first firework detonates below them, causing
 the ground around the metal platform to crumble away.

Video barks as Mattie presses a button on her ring, and then
 they both disappear.

KELLEY
 See ya! Come back if you wanna play
 Virtua Pod. I'm getting Death Fighter
 next week!

PAUL
 Bye Kelley!

Another Firework detonates below ground, causing the metal
 platform to sway back and forth. Water flows from the surface
 into the gap next the the platform.

Kelley presses a button on his TimeQuest ring and disappears.

NATHAN
 In 1970 I hypnotized your General
 Store owner to give away a TimeQuest
 comic when someone said, "I had a
 (MORE)

NATHAN (CONT'D)
bad dream last night." People who
have bad dreams want to change things,
so I'm counting on you to save our
world.

Nathan presses a button on his clothing and disappears.

Another firework detonates below the platform, causing the ground as far as the eye can see to collapse into the underground cavern. A noise like a sonic boom emerges, and a tidal wave as high as the sky forms.

PAUL
Gotta warp now, gotta warp now.

Holding Superman #1 tightly, Paul presses the home button on Brian's ring just before the wave devours the platform.

EXT. BRIAN'S YARD -- MOMENTS LATER

Paul and Brian appear in the front yard of Brian's house. The ambulance carrying Brian's mom and dad speeds away down the block. Brian no longer flickers, but he is not yet awake.

Paul laboriously pulls Brian across the lawn, up the front stoop, and into the house.

INT. BRIAN'S BEDROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Paul pours a glass of water on Brian's face, causing him to wake up.

BRIAN
Huh?

PAUL
Welcome back.

BRIAN
Is my dad ok?

PAUL
He'll go back to normal now that
Mattie's back home.

BRIAN
(sitting up)
I don't know. The comic is so
unreliable.

Just then a red flash comes from the windowsill. Brian and Paul run over and find tiny writing etched into the window frame.

PAUL
Check it out!

Brian and Paul lean over to read the tiny writing.

MATTIE (V.O.)
Dear Brian, I made it back OK. Nathan was good at getting us to the right spot. I appeared right in my front yard! I had a swell time with you on our adventure. It'll be something to tell our grandchildren about. Oops, you already know all about it. Anyway, all that danger turned me off comic collecting. I'm going to throw out all my comics and start collecting baseball cards. Bye!

PAUL
(cradling Superman #1)
I can't believe we did it!

BRIAN
Mint condition. It's exactly like the one my dad had.

Brian and Paul high five each other.

INT. DEN -- LATER

After Paul leaves, Brian sneaks over to his dad's desk carrying Superman #1. He carefully places it next to a pile of shiny paper showing baby ducks chewing pacifiers. Then he sprints out to wait for his parents to return.

INT. FOYER -- LATER

Brian sits on the stairs by the front door as a taxi pulls up outside.

BRIAN
I can't believe it, I can't believe it.

Mom and Dad walk through the door.

MOM
It was a false alarm!

DAD
The doctor said it was probably just gas.

Dad walks into the den.

MOM
I'll never give your dad my leftover stew for lunch again.

Dad runs out of the den with a smile on his face.

DAD
We celebrate this weekend! Do you want to go to Six Flags on Saturday? You can ask Paul to come.

BRIAN
Ok!

INT. BRIAN'S BEDROOM -- LATER

Brian is facing his computer talking to Paul via AOL instant messenger.

ON THE MONITOR:

COOLKAT1289
did your dad see the comic?

COMICKILLER1
yep, he wuz so happy he said we could go to Six Flags this weekend.

COOLKAT1289

that rox.

Just then Brian's mom enters the room carrying a pile of laundry.

MOM

Where are all your pants?

ON THE MONITOR:

COMICKILLER1

gtg. Mom's spazzing about the pants.

COOLKAT1289

lol. K. Later.

BACK TO BRIAN:

(Note: a montage of relevant scenes from the adventure accompanies the following soliloquy)

BRIAN (V.O.)

Mom, Paul and I had the best adventure, but I lost all my pants. We got this comic called TimeQuest at the General Store, and then we warped back to 75 million B.C., and a sea monster ate my jeans. Then we warped to 1939 to get a copy of Superman #1, and we met Mattie and her mutant one-eyed dog and got kidnapped by an outlaw and accidentally warped to prehistoric times, and I got into a fight with a mastodon and dropped the comic. Then my overalls fell off, and we warped home, and then Dad started disappearing, so we warped to the future and met Kelley. He showed us a cool video game, and then we went to school and almost got vaporized, but Kelley talked our way out of it. Then we went on a field trip and almost got kidnapped by aliens. I got Superman #1 back, though, and then we warped into the way future and met a smart kid named Nathan. He gave us programmable gum and took us to get more TimeQuest comics.

(MORE)

BRIAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Paul sold Kelley's yo-yo and my
corduroys for four purple coins, and
then we bought some comics and warped
home right before I disappeared into
oblivion.

BACK TO MOM:

MOM

Oh, that's nice.

Mom leaves the room with a blank stare on her face.

INT. BRIAN'S BEDROOM -- FRIDAY NIGHT

The kids are in their respective bunks, ready for bed.

PAUL

I can't wait to go to Six Flags
tomorrow.

BRIAN

My dad's been in a great mood all
week.

PAUL

Cool. He still hasn't said anything
about the comic?

BRIAN

No, but it's totally obvious he
doesn't hate me anymore. He even
hugged me once.

PAUL

Yuck, that's more than I wanted to
know.

BRIAN

Now I'm too excited to go to sleep.

PAUL

Let's play Superheroes.

BRIAN

K.

EXT. OUTER SPACE -- MOMENTS LATER

BRIAN (O.S.)

Meet Super Kid. He can get any adult to love him, no matter what he does. His victims fall into a helpless trance.

Super Kid walks out onto the platform. He wears a white space suit with a "K" on his chest.

PAUL (O.S.)

Meet Ultra Dad. He says mushy stuff that turns you into quivering jelly.

Ultra Dad walks out onto the platform. He's nearly bald, and his black spacesuit is covered with spikes.

BRIAN

Let the fight begin.

SUPER KID

I love you Dad!

ULTRA DAD

Come here, son, and give me a big fat ooey-gooey hug.

Ultra Dad runs after Super Kid.

SUPER KID

(runs around platform)
Ahhhhhhhhh! Help!

ULTRA DAD

Haha I have you now.

Ultra Dad hugs Super Kid, popping his spacesuit with the black spikes, releasing Super Kid's supply of oxygen. Super Kid falls to the ground.

SUPER KID

But...But...You loved me now.

ULTRA DAD

(crying)
What have I done. I can't bear to look at my son like this.

Ultra Dad kicks Super Kid off the platform, and he sails away, becoming a tiny speck in the distance.

ULTRA DAD
Out of sight, out of mind.

INT. BRIAN'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

PAUL
I win!

BRIAN
We gotta stop playing this game.

INT. DEN -- MORNING

The kids sneak over to the desk, still in their pajamas.

BRIAN
(whispering)
I just gotta look at it one more
time.

PAUL
Where is it?

BRIAN
It's gotta be around here somewhere.

Brian rummages around his dad's desk, and discovers the plastic case that held Superman #1. The case is empty.

PAUL
What's this?

Paul points to the dome that once contained the wrecked copy of Superman #1. The dome now contains a half-eaten baseball card.

MOM
I thought I heard someone scurrying
around in here.

BRIAN
Mom, why is there a baseball card
under this dome? What's going on?

MOM

Oh, you already know that story, Brian. Grandma Matilda used to collect baseball cards. She saved a special one for dad, a Honus Wagner card from 1909 in mint condition, worth a million dollars. One day...

INT. MASTER BEDROOM -- EIGHT YEARS AGO

Four-year-old Brian sits on his dad's bed. Dad carefully removes a baseball card from its plastic case.

DAD

This is my most prized possession. Your mother wants me to put it in a safe deposit box, but what fun is that?

Dad places the card on a velvet cloth, then leans over to retrieve a new plastic case from under the bed.

Brian leans over, picks up the baseball card, and places it in his mouth.

BRIAN

Honuth Wagnah, Honuth Wagnah.

Dad sits back up, notices what has happened, and lets out a SCREAM. He tries to pull the half-eaten card out of Brian's mouth, but only half of it comes out.

INT. DEN -- PRESENT DAY

PAUL

Crap.

BRIAN

I don't remember that happening!

Just then the half-eaten card in the dome flashes red, flickers briefly into the words "TimeQuest Change," then returns to the half-eaten card.

Dad enters the room, looking groggy. He stumbled over to his desk, pushes aside the empty case from Superman #1, and

picks up a present wrapped in colorful paper with little pictures of Superman all over it.

DAD

Happy Birthday, Brian! We'll set out for Six Flags after breakfast.

BRIAN

Birthday?

PAUL

(pointing to the gift)
Superman #1. Wrapping?

Brian carefully tears the Superman #1 gift wrapping off his present, and pulls out the latest edition of the Comic Book Price Guide.

DAD

I know you like comics, so I bought you that. You can thank your mom for the wrapping. I asked her to find some wrapping paper that you might like, and sure enough, she left me this reproduction of an old Superman comic. I don't know where your mom gets stuff, but she can find just about anything.

Brian's mom stares in confusion at the colorful paper covered in baby ducks that still sits on the desk.

BRIAN

Birthday?

MOM

You didn't forget your own birthday, did you?

BRIAN

(flipping through the price guide)
Thanks.

Mom and dad smile, then head upstairs to fix breakfast.

PAUL

I'm gonna be sick.

Brian flips through the price guide until he reaches the section about the golden-age comics.

A picture of Mr. Somerset accompanies one of the articles.

BRIAN

Listen to this. "The first comic starring Batman recently sold at auction for \$165,000. It was sold by Mr. Somerset of Springs, Long Island."

The picture shows Mr. Somerset holding an old yellow, comic book price guide in one hand, and a pile of comics in the other.

PAUL

Look, that's your comic book price guide, the one with the smily face on the cover!

BRIAN

(glaring at Paul)
You mean the one you dropped in 1939.

PAUL

(smiling)
Oops.

Brian paces up and down the room, looking thoughtful.

BRIAN

Things are back to normal!

PAUL

(moaning)
I know, Superman #1 is wrecked.

BRIAN

(tossing the book
aside)
Don't you see, all week I thought that my dad didn't hate me because I returned his comic.

PAUL

So?

BRIAN

He didn't give a hoot about the comic. 'Cause now the baseball card is wrecked. Don't you see, it was all in my head!

PAUL
You mean, you're not nuts anymore?

BRIAN
Nope.

PAUL
But what about Superman #1?

BRIAN
It doesn't matter anymore.

PAUL
Why not?

BRIAN
I told you.

PAUL
Huh?

BRIAN
Never mind, c'mon let's eat.

PAUL
Are we still friends.

BRIAN
Yep.

PAUL
Good, that's all I care about.

INT. GENERAL STORE -- THE NEXT DAY

Brian and Paul enter. Brian carries the TimeQuest comic.

BRIAN
Hi Mr. Somerset.

MR. SOMERSET
Wanna see Old Betsy?

BRIAN AND PAUL
Yeah!

Mr. Somerset pulls up his shirt sleeve, revealing a tattoo of a Lambourghini.

MR. SOMERSET

It's parked out back, it gets 3 miles to the gallon.

PAUL

Awesome.

BRIAN

We finished the TimeQuest comic, thanks Mr. Somerset.

MR. SOMERSET

What comic?

BRIAN

This one.

Brian shows Mr. Somerset the TimeQuest Comic. Mr. Somerset flips through it. Every last panel has filled in. The last one shows a light bulb over Brian's head when he realizes that his dad doesn't hate him.

Suddenly, the Title of the comic magically changes from "TimeQuest" to "The Comic Book Kid." The ring around Brian's finger disappears.

MR. SOMERSET

Never seen anything like it. You should put this in plastic for safekeeping. It might be worth something some day.

BRIAN

Don't you remember, "I had a bad dream last night?"

MR. SOMERSET

What dream? You boys want to go for a ride?

PAUL

Yeah!

BRIAN

But what if somebody wants to shop?

MR. SOMERSET

Oh, I think it's about time I retired. Heck, I'm rich!

(MORE)

MR. SOMERSET (CONT'D)

Anyway, after 70 years one gets a little tired of the same daily routine: Outlaws hiding out in the back woods, kids trying to buy stuff with counterfeit dimes, same old, same old.

Mr. Somerset winks at Brian and Paul, then grabs the key to the Lambourghini.

MR. SOMERSET

Grab some Cokes and let's go!

Mr. Somerset heads out the door, leaving Brian and Paul staring in amazement.

BRIAN AND PAUL

Wait up!

They run after Mr. Somerset.

The End