

Tim Does Not Hesitate

Tim was running through the forest, trying to escape from the dreaded Brexit monster. It had all begun about three or four years ago and during that time, if Tim had learnt one lesson, it was “he who hesitates is lost” or rather, “the one who hesitates is lost”; for he had seen it applied to both men and women.

It had begun in the time of King David. The wily fox, Farrago, roamed the land, mesmerizing people with his artful grin so they believed any lie his glib voice uttered. Foxy Farrago became friendly with the wicked demon, Zenna Fobia. Now King David should have taken more notice of Foxy Farrago and have driven demons from his land. But he hesitated, thinking no one's going to take a fox seriously and that demons probably had a right to live there. If Zenna got out of hand, he could surely deal with her.

But it was not long before Foxy Farrago and Zenna Fobia had a child: the dreaded *Brexitus horribilis*. King David imprisoned this monster so he could use it to terrify his subjects into submission; but though he had locked the monster securely behind bars, he had not reckoned with the cunning of Foxy Farrago or the malice of Zenna Fobia. They stole the key and let their monstrous child escape. King David, lacking moral fibre, fled immediately, leaving his kingdom with no monarch.

The Countess, Tessa, stood in as regent. Fortunately the monster was still young and she managed to rein it in and get it to pasture on her own land at Castle May. She wondered what to do with it; at one point she had a fanciful notion of colouring it red, white and blue. But she got over that and after more hesitation, decided to find a foreign zoo that would take it.

Like King David before her, she failed to watch Foxy Farrago and see what he was up to; nor did she do anything about Zenna Fobia. Indeed, that demon grew more and more powerful and spread her malice far and wide.

In her negotiations with foreign zoos, Countess Tessa kept hesitating, not knowing quite what she expected of each zoo. Her courtiers began to grow weary of her wibbly-wobbly hesitation and some left her; she recruited others, but courtiers kept leaving all the time. Also Foxy Farrago and Zenna Fobia were secretly creeping in to her lands at Castle May and feeding their monstrous son. Too late, the countess found that *Brexitus horribilis* had grown extraordinarily large and she could no longer confine it to the Castle May lands.

“I give up,” she cried. “I will be regent no longer. Someone else can look after the throne and try to control the Brexit monster.”

Soon there were at least eight people squabbling among themselves as to who was best suited to be regent; and it was rumoured that at least five others, possibly more, were likely to join in with the squabbling. In the meantime the Brexit monster was roaming the land unchecked; it had caught Tim's scent and was determined to catch him as Tim had been one those who had criticized Countess Tessa's wibbly-wobbly hesitation and warned of the dangers of the Brexit monster.

So we find young Tim running through the forest with the Brexit monster not too far behind. Tim came out of the forest onto a high cliff top. There flashed through his mind the old adage “Look before you leap.” He did look. There was a sheer drop onto rocks far below. But “the one who hesitates is lost” had so impressed itself on his mind that before the monster had emerged from the forest, Tim had leapt.

He had remembered that Arthur Dent, in the *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, had found that, by swerving to miss the ground as you fell, you began to fly. Surely if the hapless Arthur Dent had managed that, he could do so too. He saw the ground approaching and swerved and, like Arthur Dent before him, found himself flying upwards; away from the rocks he flew and into the blue sky, leaving the island behind him. He hoped the Brexit monster would follow him over the cliff edge

but not have the imagination to swerve in time to avoid the rocks. But the monster did no such thing; it merely gave a loud roar, turned tail and went back into the forest, determined to further plague the island and deal with the pretenders to the throne.

Meanwhile Tim was enjoying himself flying free over the sea below him. But he wondered what he would do now. Sometime or other he would have to rest. Should he turn back to the island and hope to hide from the Brexit monster? But to spend a life of hiding and jumping off into the air to avoid the monster every so often seemed pointless to him.

Arthur Dent had found that having defied one law of nature, he could defy others. "Surely," thought Tim, "I can do so also".

Without hesitation he pierced the fabric of the spacetime continuum and found himself flying alongside a smallish pterosaur. This was interesting and he thought he would follow it and make landfall where it did. At least he would be free of the Brexit monster, Foxy Farrago, the demon Zenna Fobia, and of the other pretenders to the throne of his home island. But living in the Mesozoic period would have its other dangers; it was the age of dinosaurs. Also he would surely be lonely with no other human contact. He would rest and, if he found suitable shelter, stay there for the night before planning ahead. He found such shelter and rested.

The next morning it occurred to him that if he could pierce the spacetime continuum and fly into a different time era on earth, he could also fly into a parallel universe in his own time where no Brexit monster existed on his island. He would like to be back on his island with his Mum and Dad and but with a real king who had moral fibre and a backbone. He would waste no more time. Being lost in the Mesozoic was not a good idea; he did not want to be breakfast for a dinosaur. So climbing a tall tree he leapt into the air, swerved to miss the ground again and was up and away with, alarmingly, a rather large and nasty looking pterosaur close behind. Without hesitation, Tim pierced the spacetime fabric.

He had escaped the pterosaur, but was not where he had hoped to be. It was a strange, cold world, so he pierced the fabric again. He spent the morning experimenting with piercing the spacetime fabric, trying to work out how best to do this. In the process he encountered several odd worlds but although he came across some sentient beings, he found no sapient ones. However just as his stomach was telling him it would have been midday if he had stayed in the same time zone he had been in at breakfast time, he heard a voice speaking behind him.

"Hello," said the voice, "I'm Zokran. Who are you and where have you come from?"

"I'm Tim," said Tim, who turned round and saw a vaguely humanoid form behind him. He could not tell if it were male or female and, indeed, it was clearly not an earth creature.

"I'm not sure where I have come from," added Tim.

"Not sure?" said Zokran.

"No," said Tim, "I began this morning somewhere in the Mesozoic period on planet earth. But I got lost a bit going through the spacetime fabric."

Tim went on to explain what he had been doing that morning. He also wondered just how the creature knew English. But as he continued and Zokran asked questions, he began to realize that both were speaking different languages, but each understood the other. As he had recently broken quite a few laws of the universe, he did not find this particularly surprising.

When Tim had finished, Zokran said, "Gosh, Tim, you must be exhausted after all that; and I bet you're hungry as well. You'd better come back with me and meet my folks. You can have some lunch and rest up a while."

"Well, thanks, Zokran," replied Tim. "That's really great."

So Tim went back with his new found friend. He met Zokran's folks and they fed him well. He was not sure what he was eating, but it all tasted good. It turned out that Zokran's Dad was an

accomplished spacetime traveler. Tim discovered he was in fact more or less in the right time period for his own time, but on a planet somewhere in the region of Alpha Centauri.

“Right,” said Zokran's Dad, “let's see. These are the co-ordinates for your planet. I see that since you left, Baron Bozza has ousted the other pretenders and seized the throne.”

“Not Bozza the Bogus!” exclaimed Tim in dismay.

“I'm afraid so,” replied Zokran's Dad.

“I guess,” he continued, “You'll want to get back to Earth in a time *parallel* to the one you left in which there is a strong king and no Foxy Farrago, Zenna Fobia, Brexit monster or Baron Bozza. Am I right?”

“Spot on,” said Tim.

“OK,” said Zokran's Dad. “I think we've got it.”

Zokran's Dad explained how things worked and exactly how to find your way through spacetime. It was largely a matter of mind control.

“I think I've got it,” said Tim. “Thank you all so much.”

“Don't mention it,” said Tim's Dad. “Good luck, and come back and see us sometime.”

“I will,” cried Tim as, without hesitation, he was up and away and soon back on his own island where there was a strong king but no Foxy Farrago, Zenna Fobia, Brexitus horribilis or Baron Bozza.

“Hi, Mum and Dad,” he said excitedly, “you'll never believe where I've been.”

And he was right; they didn't.