

STRANGERS IN THE FUTURE

by Brent Holland

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STRANGERS IN THE FUTURE

A Dramatic One Act

by Brent Holland

SYNOPSIS: Barrett went to sleep as a 37-year-old professional educator and woke up in his 18 year old body on a typical school day of his senior year. What has happened, and why is it that all the people he loved so dearly in high school aren't involved in his adult life?

DURATION: 35 minutes.

TIME: 19 years in the past/ The present.

SETTING: Lewis' office/ Barrett's bedroom/ Biscuit Shack/ Barrett's house/ Cafeteria/ Hospital.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(3 female, 2 male, 3 flexible)

BARRETT (m).....	A high school senior, who believes he is from the future. (180 lines)
LEWIS (m/f)	A psychologist at a free walk-in clinic. (87 lines)
MADDY (f)	Barrett's high school and college girlfriend. (32 lines)
MOM (f).....	Barrett's mother. A hardworking, caring mom. (24 lines)
JOEY (m).....	Barrett's high school best friend. Charismatic and likeable. (32 lines)
TRISTAN (m/f)	Another of Barrett's high school friends. Outgoing. (22 lines)
MICHELLE (f)	Another of Barrett's high school inner circle. The voice of reason. (10 lines)
KELLY (m/f)	Barrett's younger sibling who idolizes him. (11 lines)

AUTHOR'S NOTE: Hasn't everyone dreamed of being able to go back in time, with all your current experiences, and spend time as a younger version of yourself?

COSTUMING: Costumes should be contemporary teenage attire, apart from Mom, who is dressed like an adult, and Dr. Lewis, who should be dressed in business casual until he dons a white medical jacket for the final scene.

SET: Dr. Lewis is on stage listening throughout. The scenes being portrayed can be done with little to no set. The following locations are included as suggestions:

LEWIS' OFFICE – A desk and two chairs

BARRETT'S BEDROOM – A bed

BISCUIT SHACK – A table and chairs

BARRETT'S HOUSE – A couch

CAFETERIA – Cafeteria table

HOSPITAL – A hospital bed

PROPS – A cell phone, pen and paper

SOUND EFFECTS: A heartbeat that eventually flatlines.

AT START: *When the lights come up, BARRETT is talking to LEWIS, a mental health psychologist at a walk-in clinic. They are mid-conversation.*

LEWIS: So, you believe you are from the future?

BARRETT: No... not exactly.

LEWIS: I don't think I'm following you...

BARRETT: Yesterday I was 37 years old. I went to work...

LEWIS: In 2043... [Substitute 19 years ahead of your own year.]

BARRETT: Right.

LEWIS: And then you just woke up here? As an 18 year old... you did say you were eighteen, right?

BARRETT: If this is March 21st, 2024 [substitute your own year] then I just turned eighteen a couple of weeks ago.

LEWIS: So, you were born in 2006?

BARRETT: Yes.

LEWIS: And yesterday, in 2043, you were how old?

BARRETT: I'm thirty-seven years old. I have a master's degree from U.Va. in education, and I have been teaching middle school since graduating in 2031. I have a dog...

LEWIS: Are you married? Any kids?

BARRETT: No. I'm single.

LEWIS: I see.

BARRETT: I know I sound crazy.

LEWIS: I wasn't going to say that.

BARRETT: But you're obviously thinking it. I would be thinking it if I were you.

LEWIS: *(Laughing.)* In my line of work, it's best not to let the intrusive thoughts win.

BARRETT: I can imagine.

LEWIS: So, when you woke up... here... what did you do?

BARRETT: Other than freak out?

LEWIS: Yes, other than that.

BARRETT: Well, after waking up in a bed I didn't fall asleep in, I... well... I realized I was in my mom's house, but that didn't make sense.

The scene shifts. BARRETT Crosses the stage as Barrett's MOM enters.

MOM: You're going to be late!

BARRETT is on the edge of his bed, looking bewildered.

BARRETT: Mom?

MOM: Were you expecting someone else?

BARRETT: This is a dream...

MOM: You wish! Weekend's over, and you have a test in Calculus.

BARRETT stands up and looks at MOM closely.

MOM: Can I help you with something?

BARRETT hugs her.

MOM: Uh, are you ok?

BARRETT: I love you, Mom. I've missed you.

MOM: What are you talking about?

BARRETT: I'm going to wake up soon, and I just wanted to tell you that.

A beat passes.

MOM: You still have to go to school.

BARRETT: *(Thinking he will wake up.)* Ok, Mom.

MOM: *(Still being hugged.)* This is getting awkward.

BARRETT: *(Letting go.)* Right.

MOM: Do you have to work today?

BARRETT: What?

MOM: Do you have to work today?

BARRETT: I don't know.

MOM: *(Looking concerned.)* Are you ok?

BARRETT: *(A bit emotional.)* Yeah... I'm good. I'm good, Mom.

MOM: You didn't hit your head again, did you?

BARRETT: Hit my head?

MOM: Skating.

BARRETT: No. I'm fine. I promise. I uh... just had a dream where you died. I'm just glad to see you're ok.

MOM: I hate those dreams. (*Hugs him again.*) So what happened to me?

BARRETT: What?

MOM: In the dream, what happened to me?

BARRETT: It was a car crash.

MOM: Sounds gruesome.

BARRETT: You were so young.

MOM: What?

BARRETT: Nothing.

MOM: Well, I have to get to work. Kelly asked for Baked Ziti tonight, so if you're off, dinner's at six.

BARRETT: Gotcha. (*A beat.*) I love you mom.

MOM: Love you too, kiddo.

MOM exits and BARRETT is alone with DR. LEWIS.

LEWIS: So, you got up and came here?

BARRETT: I got up and picked up my phone... (*Showing him the phone.*) This ancient thing that I haven't seen in years... and I looked for someone I could talk to that wouldn't...

LEWIS: Have you committed?

BARRETT: Or arrested.

LEWIS: So, you came here?

BARRETT: Well, first I went to my church... or my mom's church. I was going to talk to the pastor, but he wasn't in, and then I was hungry, and I had money in my wallet so I went to Biscuit Shack... that place closed years ago and I figured, if I was going crazy, I could at least hit the Biscuit Shack.

MADDY is sitting at a table in the Biscuit Shack as BARRETT enters.

MADDY: (*Jumping up.*) You're late, McFly.

Crosses and kisses BARRETT.

BARRETT: (*Totally taken aback.*) Maddy!

MADDY: In the flesh! I was beginning to think you had forgotten about me.

BARRETT: Never.

A beat as BARRETT is staring at MADDY.

MADDY: I didn't get done with that paper until almost one this morning, and I'm beat. If I look like death, just pretend I'm pretty.

BARRETT: I don't have to pretend.

MADDY: Save the buttering up for the biscuits.

BARRETT laughs.

MADDY: Did you study for calculus?

BARRETT: Not that I remember.

MADDY: That's an evasive answer. My guess is that you were playing Super Fight online.

BARRETT: No, I just crashed.

MADDY: Well, that's why you DON'T look like death this morning.

BARRETT: I'm so glad you're here.

MADDY: You knew I was going to be here.

BARRETT: Well, yeah... I mean.

MADDY: Well, we only have twenty minutes. If we're going to get something, we should probably do that.

BARRETT: Oh, yeah. Right.

Lights fade on that scene and MADDY exits.

LEWIS: So, you're in high school?

BARRETT: If this is March of 2024, then I'm a senior.

LEWIS: At Anderson?

BARRETT: No, Northside.

LEWIS: Gotcha. So, in 2043, you're a teacher?

BARRETT: Yeah. It's my 12th year.

LEWIS: What's the last thing you remember in 2043?

BARRETT: I remember going to bed.

LEWIS: Nothing else?

BARRETT: No...

LEWIS: Ok.

BARRETT: I don't blame you for not believing me.

LEWIS: I never said that.

BARRETT: Then I'll say it for you. It's fine.

LEWIS: So, are you and Maddy still a thing in 2043?

BARRETT: No. I messed that up a long time ago.

LEWIS: Well, that's sort of weird that you would run into her at the Biscuit Shack.

BARRETT: Not really, we used to eat there all the time, and we were together from our junior year in high school until after we graduated college.

LEWIS: Interesting. So, after the biscuit shack, did you go to school?

JOEY, MICHELLE and TRISTEN enter.

JOEY: *(To BARRETT, jokingly.)* You totally suck!

BARRETT: Me?

JOEY: Duh. If I'm talking about someone who sucks, I'm obviously talking about you.

TRISTAN: The king of suck.

BARRETT: Gotcha. So, why do I suck this morning? Be specific.

JOEY: Probably genetics.

MICHELLE: Hard to ding him because of genetics.

JOEY: You suck for a lot of reasons, but mainly because I saw your car at Biscuit Shack, and I don't see any extra biscuits for your poor, desolate friends.

TRISTAN: Dude, you live at that place.

BARRETT: I like biscuits.

MICHELLE: I think that's why Maddy likes him so much. She eats there as much as he does.

TRISTAN: Has to be something.

BARRETT: *(Getting back to form.)* It's these fierce good looks, compadre.

JOEY: He obviously has a head injury.

BARRETT: Dude, you don't even know.

JOEY: What?

BARRETT: Nothing. Never mind.

JOEY: The whole thing is a mystery to me. She's not dating you for the money, because you're always broke. It's not your car... that's just vanilla.

BARRETT: Vanilla? My car isn't vanilla!

JOEY: Totally vanilla.

BARRETT: Michelle?

MICHELLE: Fat free vanilla.

BARRETT: It's a Honda Civic!

JOEY: And it's silver. Totally invisible on the highway.

TRISTAN: I don't know how many times I've waived at people thinking they were you because of your vanilla car.

MICHELLE: So, if it's not the car? Then what?

TRISTAN: Maybe he pays her. That would answer a lot of my questions.

BARRETT: So, you're saying that Maddy's an escort?

TRISTAN: More like a paid friend.

BARRETT: What's the difference?

MICHELLE: You really need us to explain the difference to you?

JOEY: Please don't. It's too early for that. So, seriously, no extra biscuits?

BARRETT: Sorry, I totally spaced on that.

JOEY: The sadness is real.

TRISTAN: I may starve.

MICHELLE: You moochers know where Biscuit Shack is, don't you?

JOEY: It's not the same when I have to pay for it myself.

TRISTAN: Exactly. Free biscuits taste better.

JOEY: And are better for you.

BARRETT: (*Laughing.*) I've really missed this.

JOEY: Missed what?

BARRETT: (*Realizing what he said.*) I've really missed being given grief for not feeding my impoverished friends. It's been... what? 24 hours since the last time?

TRISTAN: Yesterday was Sunday. It's easily been 72 hours since we last reminded you of your obligation to feed us.

JOEY: Not to change topics, but did any of you study for Calc test?

TRISTAN: We have a test in Calc?

JOEY: That's one vote for "no." I won't be cheating off you today. How about you, Hermano?

BARRETT: You don't want to cheat off me either.

JOEY: No biscuits, no studying... That's two strikes. One more and I won't be your friend anymore today.

BARRETT: That would be unbearable.

JOEY: You've got an A in that class anyways. Just remember not to keep your paper covered.

BARRETT: That's a seriously bad idea for this one.

MICHELLE: I studied, but if I catch any of you cheating off me, I'm going to squeal and scream and point at you until you stop.

JOEY: Go ahead and get yourself committed.

TRISTAN: That test isn't until third block, so we have lunch to take a look at the material.

The scene fades as BARRETT interacts with LEWIS again. MICHELLE, JOEY and TRISTAN exit.

BARRETT: I was glad he mentioned that I had calculus third block. I was a bit hazy on that. I knew what I had in the morning, but I wasn't sure about 2nd and 3rd.

LEWIS: I see.

BARRETT: I've really missed those three. Joey was the best friend I've ever had, and Tristan and Michelle were great too.

LEWIS: Are you still friends with them?

BARRETT: Not really.

LEWIS: Why not?

BARRETT: Well, it's not like we aren't friends at all, it's just that... I dunno... we kind of lost contact. I talk to Joe a couple of times a year, but haven't heard from Tris or Shell in years. Joey says they're both doing great... I know he gets together with them still.

LEWIS: But not you?

BARRETT: I got busy after college and put some other stuff in the front for too long.

LEWIS: Such as?

BARRETT: I was the party type through college. That didn't sit well with Michelle at all. Joey and Tris went along, but eventually they just weren't into the people and things I was into. I made new friends and just kind of went my own way.

LEWIS: That happens.

BARRETT: But now I just kind of hate it. None of the friends I made in college were worth anything, and most of my work friends have families. I kind of miss having a group.

LEWIS: You don't have a group in the future?

BARRETT: Every time you say "in the future" I feel like you are saying "in your imagination".

LEWIS: That's not my intent.

BARRETT: It's real.

LEWIS: What is?

BARRETT: My life is 2043.

LEWIS: How do you think you ended up back here then?

BARRETT: I have no idea.

A beat.

LEWIS: How did you do on the math test?

BARRETT: I didn't get to study at all during lunch.

TRISTAN, JOEY, MICHELLE and MADDY are sitting at a table as BARRETT walks up.

MADDY: Did you forget where the lunchroom was?

BARRETT: What? No! I had to use the bathroom.

TRISTAN: The Biscuit Shack does that to me too. I swear they lace those things in Ex-Lax.

JOEY: Totally worth it, though. Every time I go there, it turns my bowels inside out, but if I die on the toilet, I'll die happy.

MICHELLE: That's another one for the quote book. "If I die on the toilet, I'll die happy," a commentary on life by Joey Erickson.

JOEY: Here! Here!

MADDY: Weird. That place totally doesn't do that to me at all.

JOEY: You must have a cast iron colon.

MADDY: Ew.

JOEY: Just saying.

TRISTAN: Dude! I forgot to tell you!

BARRETT: Tell me what?

TRISTAN: Super Fight 3!

BARRETT: The video game?

TRISTAN: No, the burrito special at Taco Champ.

BARRETT: What?

TRISTAN: Of course, the video game!

BARRETT: What about it?

TRISTAN: You are sooooo dead.

BARRETT: How so?

JOEY: We figured out how to beat the Manfish's special attack!

BARRETT: I remember this.

JOEY: Remember what?

BARRETT: All you have to do is step back when I hit the button.

TRISTAN: You already knew?!

JOEY: You degenerate turd! You told us it was unbeatable! You lied to us.

BARRETT: I thought it was!

MADDY: Wait! You know how to block the Manfish's super move? Barrett's been beating me lifeless with the stupid character for months!

BARRETT: I'm just really good at the game!

JOEY: Only because of that move! Without the unblockable special, you're trash.

BARRETT: Yeah, right.

TRISTAN: So, we were doing some training yesterday... we were on a mission, really... trying to figure it out, and I went to do the move... now, we had tried about a thousand things at this point, but I went to do the move, and Joe flinched and just moved back. He didn't hit ANY buttons except back and my move totally missed.

MADDY: That's it?

TRISTAN: The waterfall hits right in front of you and does no damage at all.

MADDY: (To BARRETT.) Are they telling the truth?

BARRETT: Sadly, yes.

JOEY: And you knew all along!

BARRETT: I plead the 5th.

MICHELLE: You should have seen them when they figured it out. It was a moment.

JOEY: Epic.

TRISTAN: Totally epic.

JOEY: So, you up for playing this afternoon?

MADDY: He would love to, but he's busy.

BARRETT: I am?

MADDY: (*Smiling.*) If you know what's good for you, you are.

BARRETT: Right. Sorry guys, I'm busy.

MADDY: (*Suspicious.*) You didn't forget, did you?

BARRETT: Forget what?

MADDY: (*Thinking he's joking.*) Very funny.

MICHELLE: (*Standing up.*) Well, we have a test to study for. Let's hit the library.

JOEY: (*Also getting up.*) This is going to suck.

TRISTAN: Big time.

JOEY: Come on, time to hit the books.

BARRETT: You guys go ahead. I'll catch up in a bit.

The scene freezes as JOEY, TRISTAN and MICHELLE exit.

LEWIS: So, I take it, you failed the calculus test.

BARRETT: Oh, I failed the hell out of that. I haven't done calculus in years.

LEWIS: And you didn't think studying would help?

BARRETT: It would have totally helped. But I just...

LEWIS: Just what?

MADDY comes back to life.

MADDY: You should really go with them.

BARRETT: I know, but I'd rather... (*Honestly.*) spend time with you.

MADDY: You're going to see me all night!

BARRETT: I know... I just would rather be here. You know?

MADDY: Are you alright?

BARRETT: Yeah. I promise.

MADDY: I mean, I'm totally into the fact that you are looking at me like a puppy right now, but I just want to make sure that everything's ok.

BARRETT: (*Upbeat.*) Everything's great. I'm great. Seriously. Just talk to me. About anything.

Lights fade on that scene. MADDY exits.

BARRETT: (*To LEWIS.*) It was a really, really great lunch.

LEWIS: How so?

BARRETT: It's like being in the happiest moment of your life and knowing it. I didn't know it the first time, but now.... What do you think is wrong with me?

LEWIS: What?

BARRETT: You don't really think I'm from the future, and I don't blame you a bit for that. I just appreciate you talking to me. Am I keeping you from other appointments?

LEWIS: Not at all. The clinic was pretty slow today, and I don't have anything left after you.

BARRETT: Oh, Good. So, what do you think is wrong with me?

LEWIS: I don't know, Barrett. I have a couple of thoughts, but I want to hear more before I share what I'm thinking.

BARRETT: Am I going crazy?

LEWIS: Undecided. So, what happened this afternoon?

BARRETT: Right. Well, I have early release, so after I failed the living crap out of that calculus test, I went to pick up my little sister from school and took her back home.

KELLY enters.

KELLY: So, where are you off to now?

BARRETT: I'm meeting Maddy at 6, but I need to go somewhere.

KELLY: Where?

BARRETT: I'm going to swing by Calvary and see if Kenny's available.

MOM enters.

MOM: What are you going to talk to the pastor about?

BARRETT hugs MOM again.

MOM: Ok... Hi, Barrett.

BARRETT: (*Hugging her.*) I love you, Mom.

MOM: I love you too, Barrett. Are you sure you aren't sick?

BARRETT: I'm not sick!

MOM: Well, I know the pastor is usually tied up until 3 on Mondays.

BARRETT: I have some time then. (*To KELLY.*) Want to play Super Fight?

KELLY: Really?

BARRETT: Yeah, I've got time. Let's play.

KELLY: (*Dubious.*) You're offering to play Super Fight? With me?

KELLY looks at MOM.

MOM: (*As she exits.*) He says he's not sick.

BARRETT: If you don't want to play, that's fine.

KELLY: Of course I want to play! I'm going to destroy you!

BARRETT: We'll see about that!

KELLY: No playing the Manfish!

BARRETT: Did you know that you can block the Manfish's super move by just pressing the back button?

KELLY: No way!

BARRETT: Seriously!

KELLY: I don't believe you.

BARRETT: I'm serious!

KELLY: Really? (*Dubious.*) Why are you telling me this?

BARRETT: Because I just found out!

KELLY: And you're just volunteering this totally important bit of information out of the kindness of your heart?

BARRETT: Uh... Yeah?

KELLY: I'll believe it when I see it.

BARRETT: I'll let you try it on me in the first fight just to show you!

Lights fade on that scene. KELLY exits.

BARRETT: We had a really good time.

LEWIS: So, about your family?

BARRETT: What about them?

LEWIS: Is it just your mom and sister?

BARRETT: Yeah, my dad lives in Wisconsin, but I don't see much of him.

LEWIS: Your relationship with them is good, then? Like, later on?

BARRETT: Mom died when I was 23.

LEWIS: Oh.

BARRETT: Yeah. Car crash. Killed instantly coming home from work.
Some kid on their phone while driving.

LEWIS: I guess that explains why you were so...

BARRETT: Clingy?

LEWIS: As good a word as any.

BARRETT: I dream about her a lot. That's what I thought this was at first. But then it kept going.

LEWIS: I get that. So, how about your sister?

BARRETT: That's complicated. She lives in Phoenix. She was a lot younger than me, and Mom was always pushing me to spend more time with her. But when I went to college, I was just always so busy.

LEWIS: So, you're not close?

BARRETT: Not anymore. She has two kids that I've never met. It's just one of those things... you don't mean to drift apart, but you do, and then she got married and moved to Arizona. Once Mom died, there was no reason for her to come home. Just add it to the list of things I messed up and wish I could change.

LEWIS: You seem to have a lot of regrets.

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