

R&REWIND

Rewind: Temporal Tales

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The dragon's massive wing smashed into Robert's shield and sent it flying. He watched as it clattered against the far cave wall, which is why he was too slow to react to the muscular tail as it whipped around and broke his neck. With a jolt he woke-up in the straw; he was back in that stinking stable wearing his filthy peasant clothes. Again. *sigh* It was going to be that kind of day.

Introduction

You've seen the show or read the book, the protagonist, usually someone with limited skill or knowledge, is gifted or cursed with re-living a point in their life over and over. Now, it is your turn to stand in those boots, explore the future, probably regret it, and try something different. Solve the mystery, win the day, or die trying... again.

Rewind: Temporal Tales is a frame work and light role playing game for solo or single player game play. Yes, just one player. The complexity of time travel stories gets really tricky when you have a group. Additionally, our inspiration from books and movies almost always focuses on a single character. There will be other people present, but they are usually not part of the time travel mechanic. The gift or curse of rewinding is yours alone.

In a single player game, one person assumes the role of the character and the other person is the game master.

The GM plays the roles of everyone else the player encounters and helps to set up scenes and resolve conflicts. In a solo game, the player assumes both roles and uses assorted tools and tables to introduce some randomness and challenge into the story.

Time travel is fantasy, rewinding is even more so. Not only does the player's character travel backwards in time, they somehow retain their memories. It's a mystery to be solved, but probably not with science. That doesn't mean that there are no rules. Rewinding usually has a triggering event and may have several; death, sleep, a fixed amount of time, or an at-will ability to rewind.

Stories about time travel, even ones that specifically involve temporal loops can cover a lot ground. They can be stories set in the past, present, or future (or all three!) Just about any genre or setting can be played as well. Are you a ghost re-living that fateful day? Cursed, you always return to that wizard's pentagram. Maybe you never make it past high noon in that dusty town. Or, you have to learn how to escape the Bermuda Triangle.

To answer those questions you need to do a little brain storming. If you have not grabbed pencil and paper or your favorite app, now would be a good time.



Five Questions: Who, What, Where, Why, When

The five questions will help set up the story we want to tell. You can use them to provide inspiration and rationale for the scenes that the protagonist encounters.

Who can be nearly any person - real or imaginary. In general, our protagonist is not one of the movers and shakers of the world. They have something to learn, goals to reach, and wrongs to right. You can imagine this as the Hero's Journey from humble beginnings to great prowess. There have been soldiers, housewives, journalists, ghosts, and children cast in this role before. Who will you choose?

What is the goal? Rescue the princess, win the war, become a better person, or solve your own murder are all options that I have seen done. It's also possible you don't know what that goal may be and you have to discover it during play. More often than not, time loop tales have one or more mysteries going on. The protagonist is frequently caught up in the schemes of others and must figure out where they stand.

Where does the main part of the story take place? You could have a full story inside of a single apartment building or it might be a globe spanning adventure. Genre will also influence this. In most time loop stories, there is a single place where the character keeps returning to. This is usually before a turning point in their life, or where they got caught up in all this temporal chaos, or perhaps the day begins when they wake up.

Why is your character looping through time? This isn't always a known thing at the beginning. (Ground hog wish magic, anyone?) It could be a twisted wish, the results of a scientific experiment gone wrong, perhaps it

is a character's super power. Optionally, time travel may not even exist within the story. In the movie, *Next*, Cris Johnson (Nicolas Cage) uses precognition to see possible future events. You could also model a video game where there are save points and your character's life is inside of a computer game or simulation. Maybe their perception can actually break the fourth wall.

When goes hand in hand with the **Where** for the most part. But, it also can define some past or future event that is pivotal to the story; twenty four hours before a nuclear war, right after a fateful lab experiment, or maybe the day you died (for the first time.)

Some examples:

Who: Grace "Lucky" Strickland

What: Get out of the time loop she's stuck in

Where: A cruise ship in the Bermuda Triangle

Why: The Bermuda Triangle

When: Modern Day

Who: Gordon Moss

What: Stop Earth from getting destroyed

Where: Nellis AFB, Las Vegas, Area 51

Why: Temporal rip in the fabric of space/time

When: 1960's America

Who: Robert 'Rob' Fletcher

What: Kill the dragon and save the princess

Where: Fantasy Europe

Why: That damned wizard and his cursed ring

When: Ye olde times

Creating a Character

To begin play, you need a character. You need to do a little note taking since these facts will be referenced during the story. When creating a character, our protagonist is going to be made up of several parts:

- Name: Name, nickname, alias, and/or model number.
- Details: A quick line or two about your character's look, gender, height, weight, tattoos, etc.
- History: Your job (if you have one), education, and something about where you grew up.
- Skills: These are things that you are competent at and can be expected to perform well even under stressful situations.
- Mastery: These are skills that you are really good at and set you apart from your peers.
- Stuff: Equipment and gear that you start with at the beginning of a time loop. Stuff comes and goes and is usually tracked as part of the time line since you can't keep it.
- Rewind: You start with zero of these points and earn them through playing the game.

A note about skills and mastery, most people have everyday skills and knowledge that they can employ in non-stressful situations. Skills are those things that are above and beyond that. It's the difference between driving to work and taking an advanced driving course required by bodyguards and police officers. Mastery is an even higher level of skill and knowledge usually backed

with some experience. If you are skilled, you do not take a penalty to your dice roll. If you have mastery in a skill, you get a bonus to the roll.

How many skills and mastery items should your starting character have? Well, it depends on the story. If you're just a kid, you might have some skill like Agility, but no mastery. A professional might have a single mastery. Want several skills or an extra mastery at the start? Consider taken a disadvantage for your character such as old, wounded, hunted, suffering from amnesia, etc.

Sample characters:

Name: Grace "Lucky" Strickland
Details: Grace is in pretty good shape, she still runs at the gym, she keeps her red hair short
History: Communications major and news reporter
Skills: Library research, talking to people
Mastery: none
Stuff: Stylish clothes, wireless professional microphone, can of mace in her purse, smart phone

Name: Major Gordon "Blackjack" Moss
Details: Gordon has been flying a desk for too long and probably fills out his old flight suit in unflattering ways. His black hair is always closely cropped and his nose and teeth are slightly crooked.

History: USAF Officer with a Meteorology degree
Skills: Piloting, bluffing
Mastery: casino games
Stuff: USAF dress uniform, keys to a Ford Fairlane Skyliner, leather wallet with \$18

Resolving Action

You might have noticed that there are no detailed numbers present like you might see in other role playing games. That's intentional. Rewind uses a system of advantages and disadvantages that affect a single roll of the dice. If the outcome is not in doubt or there is no risk or time pressure, the action succeeds automatically. You don't have to roll dice to cross the street, well unless there are gun toting motorcycle ninjas. That's what the next section is for.

Any time the outcome of an action is in doubt, you can roll two regular six sided dice, add the results of the dice together plus any advantages/disadvantages, and check the Time Table (because "What-Happens-This-Time?" table is a bit of a mouthful.)

Time Table

3 or less	No, and (something terrible/annoying)
4-5	No
6	No, but
7	Delayed
8	Yes, but
9-10	Yes
11 or more	Yes, and (something great/special)

Disadvantages subtract from the total of the dice while advantages add to the total. These stack and can cancel each other out. A maximum of -3 or +3 can be applied to any single throw of the dice. For example, being unskilled is a -1. Having mastery is a +1. (And by default, being skilled is no penalty.) Conditions such as darkness or rain can cause a disadvantage. You can also have an advantage such as preparedness or surprise on an opponent. A character's history might give them an advantage, if their knowledge would be really helpful.

Let's walk through the seven possible results. In our example, Robert is throwing a dagger at a fleeing bandit after a failed ambush.

- | | |
|----------|--|
| No, and | You failed to hit your target and your favorite dagger goes 'ploomp' in the swamp, never to be seen again. |
| No | A simple failure, the dagger does not connect with the target. |
| No, but | You failed to kill the bandit, but maybe your hit knocked him off balance and he fell. |
| Delayed | Trees and brush get in the way of a clean shot. This isn't failure unless timing is an issue. For example, the bandit is getting on a horse. Crossing swords would be a delay. |
| Yes, but | You succeed, but at cost. Perhaps the bandit yelled out before he died. |
| Yes | A solid success, you achieved your stated goals without a problem. |
| Yes, and | Not only does the bandit fall, he accidentally reveals the name of the bandit boss, "Red Hand Sam will avenge me! Arrgh..." |

The Time Table is designed to be casual in its details. The results are there to guide the story forward. Time travel does offer the benefit of 20/20 hindsight (or is that foresight?) When you revisit a decision point, if you do not change your actions, you can follow the same path. However, you can use your fore-knowledge to create advantages such as having the right tool, information, or perhaps just being warned in advance of an ambush.

Time Lines

For our time traveling heroes and heroines, time is like a tree that branches at significant points. You'll need a pack of index cards or an app that does note cards.

The first step is to create your zero card. Write a zero in the upper corner and a one in the lower corner. Now write down your **Where** and **When** info inside the card. Each card represents a way point in the time lines. As part of your character's history you might know exactly what you need to do. At other times, you'll have to discover that through play. It's possible that your character may not know at the beginning of the story that rewinding even exists.

Explore your future through role play either with a game master or via an oracle (a table of random story elements or images ala tarot cards or story dice) until you reach a decision point. This is something more important than "wheat or white toast"; things like trying to breaking up a fight, running across a busy street to stop a blind man, or defending yourself from a bandit attack. Pull out a new index card, write down the new card number in the upper corner and the next card number in the lower corner, and add details about this point in time. If you survive the encounter, role-play to the next decision point, chaining the cards together.

Dead ends or just plain dead

Wait, if you survive? Yeah, getting killed a lot is a theme that happens in most time looping tales. Not always, you could get stuck in a dead end and then loop back.

How do you know when you fail? Sometimes it just feels right for the current events. The character makes some

bad decisions and BAM! they get ran over by a truck. Other times the stakes are life and death and the character makes a bad roll on the Time Table. Eventually, everyone fails. Even if you succeed at your goals on the first pass through the story, you can bet that there's probably some nasty surprise/plot twist waiting for you at the end. After all, this is a game about time loops. Mark the last card with a black dot and give the player a Rewind Point.

Start back at the zero card. If you make the same decisions, walk on down the chain of cards until you get to a point where you want to change the future (or is that the past?) For example, if you're on card 2 and you want to try something different and create a new branch, pull out a new index card (let's say it is card 7) on card 2, write a 7 next to the 3. Now card 2 can branch to card 3 or card 7. On card 7, write down the number and the details of the new encounter. If you survive/succeed, connect that to card 8 and so on.

Another example, in card 3 Robert leaves town to rescue the Princess in Peril. He promptly runs into and gets slaughtered by bandits (-2 to the roll for being ambushed and unarmed.) Black dot, end of the line and the player gets a Rewind Point. So, the second time around, the player decides to branch off of card 2 before leaving town. In card 4, he manages to sneak into the blacksmith's shop and steal a sword. When Robert goes to leave town (card 5 in the current time line), the player describes how Robert uses his knowledge to create an advantage that counters the ambush and even turns the tables on them. Does the sword give him an advantage? Probably not, the first time around Robert was unarmed and at a disadvantage. Having a sword cancels that out. He's on par and not better off than they are.

While duplicate events like the bandit ambush can happen, they are treated as separate cards since time lines fork and do not flow back together. Primarily this is to keep the time lines neat and tidy, but it is also because the events are slightly different. The character has new knowledge, may have prepared in advance, or has better equipment and allies.

Character Advancement

So, you're collecting these Rewind Points. But, what are they and what can you do with them. Rewind Points represent the character's ability to learn. Sometimes this is a fast lesson, other times it is because they failed at the same loop a dozen times (even if we only play through it once.) The character can permanently learn from their mistakes and improve on their skills. For two points you can go from unskilled to skilled. Or, you take a something skilled to mastery for two more points. Going from unskilled to mastery would take a total of four Rewind Points. What's to prevent you character from making lots of dumb moves and collecting the Rewind Points? Remember the black dot on the card? Each card can only reward one Rewind Point. You can fail all you want on a given obstacle, but the valuable lesson is only learned once. It's still possible to 'game' the system and go crazy with making a lot of cards and failing, if that's the story you want to tell.

One thing Rewind Points can't do is change your physical self. It's still your body time and time again. Reflexes, agility, knowledge, even magical powers are possible depending on the setting. Strength training? Useless.

Can you learn from positive experiences? Maybe, remember the "Yes, and" result on the Time Table? You could say that one of the 'and' possibilities is that you

learned something critical about the situation and earned a Rewind Point. This is usually something major like the true nature of the enemy, critical limitations on your ability to rewind, or maybe finding out that you're not the only time traveler around. It shouldn't happen every time you get a great result. Punching a goon in the jaw is not going to reveal the secrets of the universe. Also, remember to put a black dot on that card.

For example, Grace sneaks around to listen to some shady characters. She gets a result of "Yes, and" and realizes that she's trapped in the middle of some kind of alien invasion from another dimension. She knows that if she doesn't stop them, they'll take over the Earth and destroy her time line (and all of humanity in it.) That's a pretty major plot point and worth a Rewind Point.

World Building

So, we have a character that can do stuff, a card map that they can use to explore the future, but where does all that card info come from? Card zero is based on our starting questions. Each card after that should be part of a (theoretically) logical progression.

If you're playing lone wolf and you have a game master across the table from the player, you can collaboratively build the world and your encounters together. The GM's job will be to challenge the character and reveal their idea of what's going on in the story. The amount of preparation that the GM needs to do is a matter of style. Some GM's will create a lot of notes, plot points, non-player characters to interact with, maybe even craft some maps. Other GM's like to play it by ear, do zero prep, and improvise as they go along. Either style or somewhere in between is fine.

Collaboration means that it is perfectly 'fair' for the GM to share narrative control with the player and lets them create some of the scenes and actions. After all, the purpose of playing is to create fun stories together or on your own.

Tricks and Tools

If the GM is stuck for ideas or if you're playing Rewind as a solo game, there are a number of tools that you can use to fuel your imagination. The first one is the Time Table itself. Ask a question, figure out if there are any advantages or disadvantages, and roll the dice.

As an example, Blackjack Moss is trying to break into the armory. The first question that comes to mind, "Is the door guarded?" Remember, a Yes result would be bad for the character, so any advantages for the enemy would make it worse. Let's assume that we have previously established that the enemy are professionals and the base is at high alert, not good for the Major. Rolling a 9 with +2 gets us an 11 or "Yes, and". So, not only is the door guarded but it is worse, perhaps there's a guard dog as well and it is looking right at Blackjack.

While consulting the Time Table is quick and easy, we still needed to come up with some details out of thin air. Oracles and random image tools can help with that. The idea of Oracles is not something new. The first ones go all the way back to the dawn of role playing games, only then they were called wandering monster tables.

Most oracles consist of evocative phrases that are open to a number of interpretations, like fortune cookies or your daily horoscope. One big advantage to oracles is that they can be easily customized and updated. An oracle for a Lovecraft inspired setting is going to be different from one for space opera or a slasher flick.

Another favorite source for inspiration is the use of random images. This can be something like random pictures fetched via Google or other sites, custom props like Rory's Story Cubes or Plot Twist cards, online tools like my own Zero Dice, or the tarot cards. My favorite deck is the Osho Zen Tarot, a non-traditional set with many colorful and emotion themed cards.

Here a few random generators that I made:

http://www.tangent-zero.com/zero_dice/zero_dice.htm
http://www.tangent-zero.com/zero_tarot/zero_tarot.htm

To use the previous example with Major Moss trying to break into the armory, we'll roll three Story Cubes to give us some details to play with. On the roll we get icons for a turtle, a dog, and some Z's. Let's call that a "Yes, the door is guarded. There's a guard in one of those rounded helmets that looks like a turtle shell. But, he's leaning against the door and obviously sleeping. The real guard is the German Shepard at his feet."

Here are a few themed Oracles using playing cards. To use them, just pull a card from the deck. For example, The Family is an organized crime themed oracle.

Drawing the Five of Hearts is a prompt for bring in the victims of this powerful gang. Interestingly, it is a heart so the victim may not be an intentional target. Perhaps it is a lieutenant's wife who is feeling neglected and comes to your character for some advice or (dangerous ground here) companionship.

In a Dragon's Eye:

- | | |
|----------|--|
| Hearts | - true love and unending hate |
| Clubs | - it's a rough place with tough people |
| Diamonds | - greed and serfdom |
| Spades | - royalty, magic, and power |
-
- | | |
|-------|--|
| Ace | - the King's Sheriff shows up |
| Two | - it's easy to get lost, perhaps intentionally |
| Three | - three's company or a witness |
| Four | - what's going on in the square? |
| Five | - the system is built on a serf's back |
| Six | - there's more taking than giving going on |
| Seven | - it's an honest offer |
| Eight | - the Church has its own agenda |
| Nine | - might doesn't always mean right |
| Ten | - anything nice is guarded or hidden |
| Jack | - it's one of the King's men |
| Queen | - the Queen has her own agents |
| King | - big trouble comes to town whether it is mailed or scaled |

Notes: _____

The Family:

- | | |
|----------|------------------------|
| Hearts | - romance and duty |
| Clubs | - gang violence/police |
| Diamonds | - greed and business |
| Spades | - betrayal/dirty deeds |
-
- | | |
|-------|-----------------------------|
| Ace | - the FBI gets involved |
| Two | - two people in private |
| Three | - it looks like a drug deal |
| Four | - revenge but why? |
| Five | - victims of crime |
| Six | - they fell off a truck |
| Seven | - it seems legitimate |
| Eight | - a secret deal |
| Nine | - that's a lot of thugs |
| Ten | - there's a really nice car |
| Jack | - a 'loyal' Lieutenant |
| Queen | - she's always trouble |
| King | - It's the Boss! |

Notes: _____

Cyber Jack of Hearts:

- | | |
|----------|----------------------|
| Hearts | - love and emo stuff |
| Clubs | - social activities |
| Diamonds | - corporate scheming |
| Spades | - cyberspace/cyborgs |
-
- | | |
|-------|-----------------------------|
| Ace | - a foreign power |
| Two | - a contact has some info |
| Three | - it looks like a stand off |
| Four | - looking for payback |
| Five | - infrastructure collapses |
| Six | - everyone has needs |
| Seven | - right time - right place |
| Eight | - things get crazy fast |
| Nine | - that's a lot of muscle |
| Ten | - it's all ones and zeroes |
| Jack | - jacked/hacked/broken |
| Queen | - music makes a play |
| King | - the Corporation acts |

Just another War Story:

- | | |
|----------|--------------------------|
| Hearts | - morale and loyalty |
| Clubs | - mission time |
| Diamonds | - logistics/black market |
| Spades | - it's a shit detail |
-
- | | |
|-------|----------------------------|
| Ace | - HQ gets involved |
| Two | - crap, LT has an idea |
| Three | - who's got your back? |
| Four | - war victims |
| Five | - an inspection or drill |
| Six | - military intelligence |
| Seven | - you catch a lucky break |
| Eight | - it's a full on assault |
| Nine | - ambush/surprise |
| Ten | - that's some nice gear... |
| Jack | - unexpected support |
| Queen | - it's a 'rescue' mission |
| King | - Officer on deck! |

Notes: _____

Notes: _____

A Generic Oracle Template:

Hearts	- emotional theme
Clubs	- obstacle theme
Diamonds	- object theme
Spades	- adversary theme
Ace	- authority
Two	- meetings
Three	- personal dynamics
Four	- motives
Five	- repercussions
Six	- acquisitions
Seven	- luck
Eight	- bad luck/chaos
Nine	- threat
Ten	- treasure
Jack	- agents/antagonists
Queen	- complications
King	- major opposition/plot element

Wrapping Things Up

Winning and losing; at the heart of every role playing game, the play is the thing, enjoy the journey. Rewind is a little different in that in the course of play you might lose your ability to rewind. [For example, this happens to the characters in *Edge of Tomorrow*.] If that happens, the character plays out that time line they are on and death is very permanent – make it a good one.

So, I didn't say how long it takes to play this game. That's intentional. Two players that are in the groove can tell a complete story in a single session. A solo player doing a bit here or there can stretch this out over weeks or even months depending on the pace they

choose. The use of index cards allows the player to 'save' the state of the game and come back to it later on. For example, it might form part of a weekly game that lasts several sessions.

Want to expand the single player experience? Have the Rewind trigger be a fixed point in time. For example, every 24 hours then all the players Rewind no matter what they were doing. If you died before the timer ended, your character would now show back up at the zero point. Oh, bring a lot more index cards. :-)

Inspiration

A few time loop movies: Groundhog Day, Timecop, Christmas Every Day, Camp Slaughter (also known as Camp Daze), Christmas Do-Over, Salvage, The Last Day of Summer, Timecrimes, Repeaters, 12 Dates of Christmas, Source Code, Mine Games, About Time, Edge of Tomorrow, Project Almanac, I Do! I Do! I Do!

Disclaimers and other stuff

Any reference to real or fictional people is accidental. That also applies to people that may exist in the future. Also, no challenges are intended or implied on anyone's rights. Relax. We'll get it right on the next time line.

Credits

Big thanks to everyone that provided ideas and feedback. A double gold star goes to Simon (aussiesim) for his proof reader comments and special thanks to Zylo, Noble Bear, and John Reiher who spent time brainstorming all kinds of stuff with me. Add in a friendly tip of the hat to Kira Magrann for inspiring me to expand the oracles.

Rewind: Temporal Tales – Solo Play Example

The Situation:

Who: Professor Ted A. Pigeon
What: Stop a nuclear bomb
Where: West Coast University
Why: Quantum entanglement
When: Modern day

The Character:

Name: Doctor Theodore "Ted" Pigeon, PHD

Details: Dr. Pigeon is a middle aged professor of average build and quick wit. His sandy hair is always a little messed up and he habitually keeps pushing up his glasses.

History: Ted grew up in South Dakota and graduated from MIT as physics major. After spending time at CERN and in the private sector, he took a teaching job at WCU.

Skills: Hiking and teaching.

Mastery: Mathematics.

Stuff: Hiking boots, casual clothes, a lab coat, his favorite slide ruler, and keys to the lab and his off-campus apartment.

West Coast Terror Oracle:

Hearts	- can't save them all
Clubs	- it's a terrorist plot
Diamonds	- if you only have the right tool
Spades	- they don't believe you
Ace	- Homeland Security
Two	- you interrupt a private meeting
Three	- crowded streets and buildings
Four	- a motive reveals itself
Five	- they actively block you
Six	- that's exactly what I need
Seven	- first responders actually responding
Eight	- panic ensues
Nine	- of course, they pull out guns
Ten	- a vital clue just out of reach
Jack	- covert operators intervene
Queen	- quantum instability
King	- enemies revealed

Time Table:

3 or less	No, and (something terrible/annoying)
4-5	No
6	No, but
7	Delayed
8	Yes, but
9-10	Yes
11 or more	Yes, and (something great/special)

[Comments in brackets are game related notes to explain what's going on in the story that follows.]

The Story:

Professor Pigeon is working late Thursday night in the high energy lab at West Coast University. He's checking on the configuration of an experiment designed to induce quantum entanglement in target objects. He powers down the equipment so he can safely make an adjustment. As his hand is in the containment cage, there's a bright flash behind him. The device spontaneously powers up and there's an electric blue-glow inside the cage. As his vision clears, he pulls out his hand of the cage and gives his fingers an experimental wiggle to confirm that everything is still connected and working properly. Peering out the window, the campus at night looks exactly the same. No sign of what caused the flash. No sign that anyone else noticed anything unusual.

"What the hell was that?"

[Unfortunately, Ted was caught in the electro-magnetic pulse of a nuclear detonation. The surge of energy activated the quantum entangler. Since there was no twin Ted to entangle with in the present, the unusual forces involved looked for the next closest match who was Ted from 24 hours ago performing tests on the same device and in the exact same position.

Using the Time Table to answer a question, does Dr. Ted notice anything is different? Like that he's wearing yesterday's clothes. Rolling 2d6 for a five, No. We'll also create our zero card right here.]

0 Dr. Pigeon's lab at WCU – Wednesday Evening
"What the hell was that?"

1

The Professor shakes his head and goes about his tests, records the results, and heads home for some sleep. "I must be more tired than I thought." In the morning he gets up and goes about his normal routine.

[In Ted's mind, it is Friday morning. He hasn't connected that it actually Thursday morning, again. Let's pull a card for the Oracle, five of Spades. They don't believe you/they actively block you.]

Dr. Ted is sitting in the teacher's lounge reading a scientific journal when Mrs. Pettigrue, one of the university's administrators storms in. "Why are you not teaching your class?" Ted blinks, "It's Friday. I get caught up on academia on Fridays." Pettigrue huffs and starts gathering his belongings, "It's Thursday and you're late for your own class... Professor."

1 WCU Teacher's Lounge
Mrs. Pettigrue, paragon of punctuality
2

[Where did Mrs. Pettigrue come from? We created this non-player character based on the 'facts' presented by the card about someone that is a non-believer and actively has other plans for Professor Pigeon.]

Pettigrue hustles Ted off to a nearby class room. He's expecting the room to be empty, but sure enough it is filled with his regular students. Some of which actually bother to put away their cell phones when he enters.

The rest of the day is one déjà vu moment after another. Dr. Ted wonders if he should see a medical professional. Thursday night in the lab, he powers down the test rig. Just as he's about to reach in and make an adjustment,

he instead turns and faces the window in time to see the detonation of a nuke before it obliterates everything.

2 Dr. Pigeon's lab – Thursday Evening
Well, that didn't end well.

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[Getting nuked ended Ted's first loop. Because he's already entangled, he doesn't need to have his hand inside of the containment cage again. Start back at card zero. Gain a Rewind Point.]

The professor pulls his hand out of the containment cage even though he knows he did not stick it inside a few seconds ago. He absently rubs his thumb against his fingertips as he turns to look out the window on the quiet night time campus scene. He walks over to one of the computers and checks the date. It's Wednesday. The notes that he took yesterday (also Wednesday?) are not there, like they never existed to begin with.

Dr. Ted leaves the lab and in a bit of a daze wanders in the general direction where he saw the blast.

[If you don't know where to go with a scene, feel free to ask a question and consult the Time Table, or pull a playing card from the deck and look it up on the Oracle, or choose your favorite random image/word generator for inspiration. Let's pull a card, four of Hearts. Can't save them all/a motive reveals itself.]

Dr. Ted walks inside the Student Union. There are still a fair number kids here relaxing, socializing, and living life oblivious to the doom that waits for them. Mounted to one of the walls is a TV mumbling out 24 hour news. No one is paying attention to it when a reporter begins

talking about a recently released video of a terrorist group threatening to bring the wrath of Allah down on the decadent West. Highlighted in the background of the video is the West Coast Tower! The video was probably shot right here in the city. Pigeon shudders and then shouts out, "You're all dead!" Most of the students just ignore the loon in the lab coat. A few make jokes at his expense, nobody takes him seriously.

3 Student Union – Wednesday Evening

"You're all dead!"

4

[It's possible that this may become a decision point in the future if the doctor wants to save these students. Why create a student union? It seems like a logical place on campus that would be open on a Wednesday night. Because there was nothing to create a rewind, no point was given. Update card zero to indicate a new branching card.]

0 Dr. Pigeon's lab – Wednesday Evening

"What the hell was that?"

1, 3

Dr. Ted scoffs at the students and heads out. "I need a drink." It doesn't take him long to find an off-campus bar called The Velvet Monkey. "Scotch, and leave the bottle."

[Where did that come from? That's role playing. The player (me in this case) decided that Ted was a bit uneven and confused. The Velvet Monkey just sounded fun. Does anyone stop him while he's getting his drunk on? Roll 2d6, seven - delayed. And 2d6, six - no, but.] Ted gets thoroughly polluted. The staff and patrons

seem to respect his space. At some point in the night, a business card appears next to his glass, he's not sure how it got there. With bleary eyes he can make out - Freda Morgan, WCU Mental Health Services. He chuckles and sticks the card in his shirt pocket. The doctor has no memory of making it home to his apartment and passing out.

4 The Velvet Monkey – Wednesday Evening
Drowning his troubles.

5

[While this isn't a rewind event, this feels like a good place for a card. I can see coming back to this point and trying to change 'history' later.]

Ugh, it's late morning and some angry Scot is making a painful racket in his head and he doesn't even want to think what crawled into his mouth and died on his tongue. It takes Ted a while to get his head on straight and get cleaned up. When he makes it out to the kitchen, he sees a missed call and message on his phone. The doctor punches a few buttons and is rewarded with sharp words from Mrs. Pettigru who is wondering where the hell he is. Ted flinches and sets the phone back in its cradle. It's already late morning. "Thursday..." he mumbles to himself.

[The purpose of that scene was to have some fun with Ted's poor choice last night and to firmly establish Mrs. Pettigru as a potential foil in the future. Let's pull a card, ten of Diamonds. If you only have the right tool/a vital clue just out of reach.]

Blinking in the bright sunlight, Dr. Ted pulls out the business card from last night and checks out the address. He's never had a need to visit MHS before. Maybe Freda can shed some light on his memory problem and hallucinations. Unfortunately, he was too hung-over/distracted to notice the delivery truck that he walked right in front of.

5 Outside Ted's apartment – Thursday Morning
Look both ways next time.

•

[This was a good point for a fatal accident (they happen a lot in time looping tales.) Dr. Ted has gained a goal of sorts and the card implies that Freda can actually help in some way. While a fatal accident is a serious setback, for our character it's a lesson to be learned. Start back at card zero. Gain a Rewind Point.]

The professor pulls his hand out of the containment cage even though he knows he did not stick it inside a few seconds ago. He absently rubs his thumb against his fingertips.

[This is just the tip of the iceberg for Ted's Tale. It can go in many directions as you explore his story and decide what he can and can't do to stop the bomb.]

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