

1. HITTING THE BUMP

So time goes forward... **PEARLY**

After the Big Bang. **ALICIA**

And backwards... **PEARLY**

After the Big Bump. **ALICIA**

The Big Bump. When's that gonna be?
(ALICIA pulls out a pen and pad and makes a few scribbles.)

ALICIA
If A is the negative exponential of B, R is the derivative of the inverse of one over minus S, and T to the cube root of Q is the quadratic differential of X over Y to the negative of Z, then the Big Bump will happen, oh, I'd say, it'd be sometime right around,....
(ALICIA looks at her watch.)

Three, two, one, *bango!*
(Lights go off. Explosions.)

The square of M-C equals one over... *eeeeee!*
(Lights go on.)

Bump you go.

PEARLY
That it?

ALICIA
The onewayness of time has now made the big U-Turn.

PEARLY
Toward what?

ALICIA
The Big Scrunch.

PEARLY
What's that?

ALICIA
The next big U-turn, when time will resume its familiar forward direction.

VIRGIL
Like another Big Bang.

PEARLY

When'll that happen?

ALICIA

Oh, in another fourteen billion years,... give or take five or ten seconds.

MAX

Nothin' feels any different.

ALICIA

You'd know it if you were in L.A. Hot new trends *always* start there, then they go to New York, Boston, Seattle, in a year or two they make it to Kansas City, but Heaven? That's the *last place* to find out about it.

PEARLY

You're telling us,... time's moving backwards, from now on?

ALICIA

Not from now *on*. From on *now*. Instead of goin' from A to Z, all the species are headin' back from Z to A.

PEARLY

And when we go backwards, say, from D to C to B to A, the consequences of each species' actions are reversed?

ALICIA

That is a fact I can authenticate, enunciate, validate, corroborate, *and* substantiate.

MAX

I think Alicia is saying that while mankind is now inhabiting the same *physical* universe,....

ALICIA

We now occupy a different *moral* universe.

2. BACKWARD SCHOOL

KRISTIE

School is the last thing I want to think about.

ALICIA

Worry not. In this new backwards universe, school is golden. You remember, don't you?

KRISTIE

Oh, yeah.

(*ALL act out the story.*)

High school starts with beach week, capped off by an all-night party.

ALICIA

Then you put on an old black gown you've been saving for years, you march up to your principal, give away your diploma.

KRISTIE

Then you march out, get rid of the gown, and go home. And take your final exams.

ALICIA

No sweat. You only have to study *after* them. Mostly on things that weren't in them.

KRISTIE

Then your teachers spend a whole year methodically removing as much as they can from your brain. And at the end of each year, you know absolutely, positively ...

ALICIA

Nothing!

KRISTIE

And every year, the exams get easier.

ALICIA

And the type in your book even goes from little to middle to big.

KRISTIE

It all ends...

ALICIA

In a sandbox. In this new universe, school just gets easier and easier.

KRISTIE

Think how little history there is.

ALICIA

Yeah, but there's a lot of future. How do you study for an AP future test?

KRISTIE

I hope the future backwards makes more sense than history forwards.

3. ENGLISH HISTORY

PEARLY

King Henry, the First of Eight, believes so deeply in marriage, he eliminates an entire religion.

MAX

The Episcopalian Church!

PEARLY

Because its members have a long, lurid history of getting divorced.

MAX

Stop that!

PEARLY

His own behavior, as a husband, is exemplary. King Henry the First of Eight has five wives, and when he meets them

MAX

They are *doomed*.

PEARLY

When he leaves them.

MAX

They are *happy*.

(OTHERS cheer.)

Because I'm the nicest of many sweet-tempered English monarchs, who bring happiness to thousands with their life-giving gallows, and...

ALICIA

Improve the world's cuisine.

MAX

It's true. Whenever the English leave a country, the food gets much better.

PEARLY

There's only one problem.

MAX

Oh?

PEARLY

Shortly after we acquired that dreadful English language from the Americans (*spit*), there was this one guy who was a total disaster. The bard of Avon. Will Shakespeare.

(VIRGIL acts out the story, as Shakespeare.)

VIRGIL

To have been or not to have been, that was the question. Romeo, Romeo, wherefore went thou, Romeo?

PEARLY

Shakespeare was a real disappointment. They tore down his Globe theatre, and sent Shakespeare into oblivion. The English people were so discouraged that they gave the seas back to Spain, and then, in the Crusades, even marched across Europe to return Jerusalem to the Moslems.

4. IF TIME RAN BACKWARDS

KRISTIE

If time ran backwards, I could undo one careless moment, control my life again, do what I want to do, be what I want to be. If I marry Joe, I want it to be because we love each other, not because of this.

(Spot off KRISTIE. Spot on VIRGIL, in his night clothes.)

VIRGIL

If time ran backwards, I could get back my mind, my eyes, my ears, my hands. I could play piano again, walk through the woods again, read to my grandchildren again, remember things again.

(Spot off VIRGIL. Spot on MAX.)

MAX

If time ran backwards... I don't want to talk about it.

(Spot off MAX. Spot on PEARLY.)

PEARLY

If time ran backwards, I could undo yesterday, embrace my husband, and forget this nightmare. I wouldn't need to remember this horrible moment for as long as I live.

(Spot off PEARLY. Spot on ALICIA.)

ALICIA

If time ran backwards, I could.... I could live again in a time when I'm not sick, and not always thinking about being sick, when I'm not always noticing people worrying about me, when the only thing that everybody's looking forward to is... *Christmas!*

5. OLD VIRGIL

PEARLY

What about you, Virgil?

VIRGIL

Oh, I'll be just as I was. No surprise there. An old man whose mind and body don't work any more. Who can't even think straight, or talk much, except in dreams.

PEARLY

Which direction do you want time to go?

VIRGIL

Forward. I had my time, and my life, a good one. Sure, I'd like to see my wife again, play piano again, teach again, even just walk and talk again. But then I think about my six grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren. Would I deny them their chance? And I think about my students. Would I take away their gifts, just to revisit mine? I think about my music. Would I take away what others have heard me do? I think about my wife. Would I want to deny her the meaning of her life? Oh yes, I want time to go forward. Absolutely.

ALICIA

You'll never get better. And any day, you could die.

VIRGIL

The certain prospect of life's end is what makes so noble the time we're granted. Without the loss of life, there would be no meaning to its discovery. Without death, there would be no purpose in birth, or in giving birth. Without death, none of the core truths of our civilization would make any sense. Without death, we would have no heroes.

ALICIA

Virgil, I don't want you to leave us.

VIRGIL

Think of me as a ship sailing over the horizon. Even though you will never again see that ship, you know the ship is out there. And the ship knows you're still here.

ALICIA

Can I pray for you?

VIRGIL

Yes. We should pray for each other. Prayer has a great and powerful purpose, but only if time goes forward.