

CHAPTER ONE:

THE MAGICIAN

“That’s quite an illusion you’ve conjured up, Professor Williams,” The man said.

“Oh, it’s much more than that,” Williams replied. “I got the idea when I had two mirrors facing each other, and I could see myself as far as I could see. What if, I thought to myself, all these reflections were actual visions of myself in alternate realities?”

“Every child thinks that,” the man countered.

“But how many children could create the machine to actually do that?”

“Is it real, or is it merely a trick?”

“Why don’t you try it?” Williams suggested.

The man sat down in the chair, and Williams placed a bowl-shaped object on the man’s head. The bowl was connected to a machine that began to whirr.

“This looks ridiculous,” the man said. “It reminds me of a Looney Tunes episode where a mad scientist was going to give Bugs Bunny the brain of a chicken!”

Williams ignored the comment. He had heard it all before. “Think of a time in your life when you made a decision that now you may be sorry you made.”

The man closed his eyes. The machine processed the thought, and the multiple images of the man between the two mirrors found the appropriate image. When he opened his eyes, He was a young man of twenty-two.

He was lying in bed. Next to him was his first love. He remembered this day. It was the day he broke up with her and decided to move to another city. It was just before she woke up, and he planned to leave.

Lori woke up and saw him looking at her. “Is everything alright, Bob?” she asked.

He smiled at her. She always looked at him with those blue eyes full of love. He never appreciated that, but now, after remembering how his life had turned out, the sight melted his heart. He leaned over and kissed her. “I love you.”

Lori smiled. “I know that you were thinking about moving.”

“I don’t want to,” he said. “I want to stay with you.”

He was happy. They got married, and he got a job. They had kids. Over some time, his life settled into the typical sequence of events that happened in life.

He seldom thought about the life that he had left behind. He came home, and she was cooking dinner, and he walked up behind her, wrapped his arms around her waist, and kissed her neck. Her long, beautiful hair had been cut short long ago, and her body had changed. She was irritated. "I had a bad day today."

"I'm sorry," he said. "What can I do?"

"I'm just depressed. I love you, but sometimes I think of the life I wanted when we were younger. I had plans to travel and wanted to have a career. Now I'm older and have nothing to show. Don't get me wrong, I love the kids, and I guess you too."

"Are you sorry we got married?"

"Remember that morning when we were in bed, and I thought you were going to leave?"

"Yes."

“I wish you would have gone. I was too young to settle down. I lived your dream, and now, I don’t have a dream. I’m resentful, I shouldn’t be, but I am.”

“If we could go back and change that, would you?” Bob asked.

“Honestly,” Lori said. “Yes.”

The room faded. Bob was back in the room with Professor Williams. He had tears running down his face. The life he had wanted turned out to be not the life Lori wanted.

“Do you want to know what happened to Lori after you left in the original timeline?”

Bob nodded. On the display screen, he saw a beautiful middle-aged woman working in her studio. She did get married and had a son. That happened after she had established her own identity and lived her dream. The child’s name was Bob. He also found out that she was widowed. A phone call and a date were made.

