

Moments of Change

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Once upon a time, Sarah was sure that the future was real. Cleveland was Cleveland, the house was the house and school tomorrow was like school today.. The town was small and people gossiped and told stories about each other. Her mood was muted and distracted and would be that way tomorrow. Her dad was hardly ever there yesterday or today. She hoped he would meet Jamie Millman on the way to school and almost never did. School was School....fold down desk tops, ink wells always ready to spill, aging teachers looking critical. The prospect of daily religious school was like going to Mars for two hours a day, and failed attempts to get out of it. Faking a cold in the morning in the vain hope that she could stay home, it worked only once. Leaving the house always carried the promise of a better life and never kept the promise. This better life was a wispy feeling with no pictures attached. Tomorrow was like today every day.

Then, sometimes, something else happened. One day, a friend of the family asked Sarah if she would like to go to a Cleveland Indians game. Sarah was thrilled, ran home and asked her mother. She said no. Her mother was sure that world was full of poison berries and one had to be very careful about what one ate. Sarah was crushed and angry. Sill a seed had been planted. There was something wonderful out there. Maybe, there was light. Then, in a track and field event, she jumped five feet two inches high. Not the stuff of champions but more than she ever did before. Another win. A prize. A new day. Then she was accepted to Harvard College, a moon shot that would never happen, and it did. Was the future real or not was now not so clear. One day soon after that she met Jack, a radiant young man from heaven who carried the promise of every dream she never had and when he was gone the future was real again, and grim.

Years passed and jobs, companies, wars, and people came and went. Still the future was there waiting.

One day, like an alcoholic just after her last drink, Sarah knew that she was a hopeless victim of a future coming to her as it wished. She was sick of being a noodle in the changing future's soup. Her fears, hopes, reactions, imagination and reminders of the past had her by the throat. And she had no power because the future kept changing every time she looked at it. Like a crazed quantum theorist trying to measure a particle that moved when she measured it, she was left nowhere but at zero, right now.

“The future is bunk”, she said. All there ever is what I've got right now and that's all there will ever be. And the voice in her other ear said: “Okay genius, how about vision and destiny, How about planning? How about what's really there? How about the power of commitment and intention? How about those if the future keeps changing?” Then, Sarah heard a voice. Maybe it was God or let's say it was God. It said: “Listen stupid, you have to start keeping two mental books. One is for vision, intention, karma, destiny, luck and whatever else you believe gives direction to your life and work. The other set of books is for dealing with the future that comes at you while you stand here right now. Trust your ability to create. Live in the quantum universe that's here. Be responsible for now and don't make any choices before you have to. Since the future changes every time you look at it, the chances are you have most power over the next few seconds, minutes, and maybe days.”

Sarah smiled, made a list of everything she loved and started paying attention to it.

“The Future Changes Every Time You Look at It, because you looked at it, and then everything else changes too.”

■ Nicolas Cage. Next: The Movie