

Chapter 6 Lost in Time

'As I stood there thinking about this too perfect success of humans, the full moon came up in the north-east. The little figures stopped moving around below me and the night began to feel cold. I decided to go down and find a place to sleep.

'I looked for the building I knew. Then my eye moved to the white sphinx on the pedestal. There were the bushes and there was the little lawn. I looked at it again. A strange doubt made me feel cold. "No," I said to myself, "that isn't the lawn."

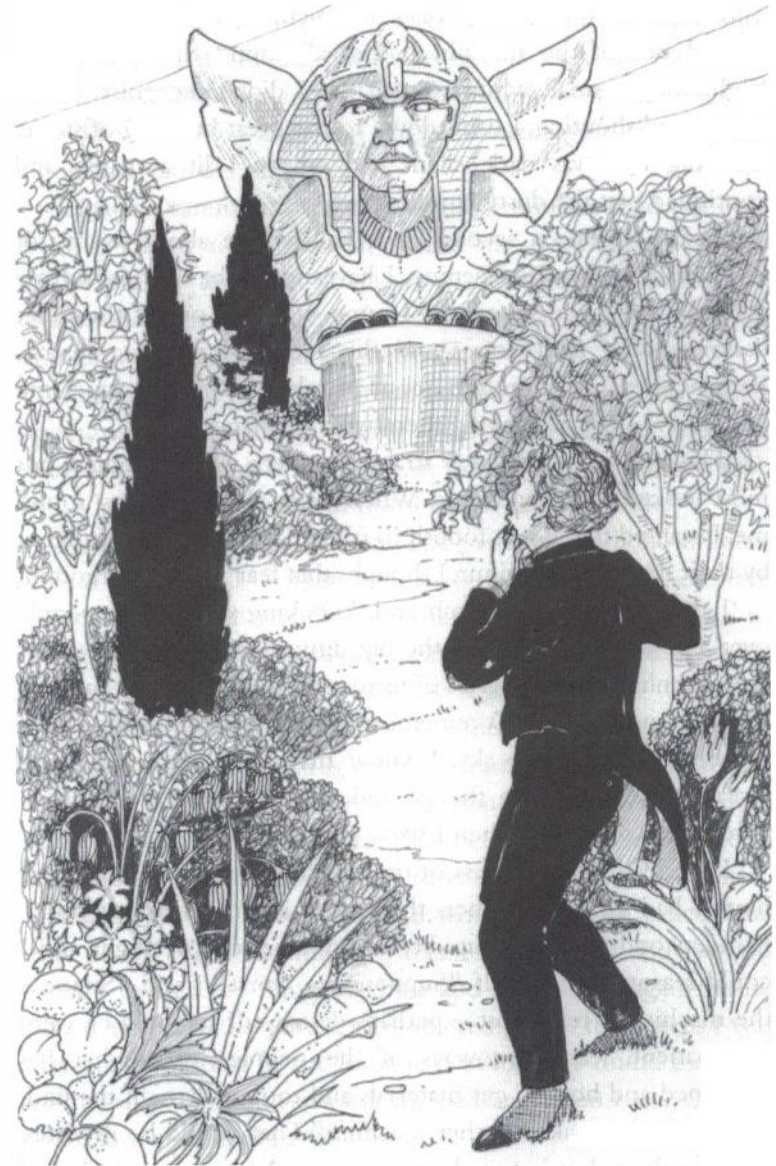
'But it *was* the lawn, because the white face of the sphinx was towards it. Can you imagine how I felt as I realised this? But you can't. The Time Machine had gone!

'At once I understood the possibility of losing my own time, of being left helpless in this strange new world. I ran with great jumps down the hillside. Once I fell and cut my face. I did nothing to stop the blood, but jumped up and continued running. All the time I was saying to myself, "They have just pushed it under the bushes out of the way."

'But I knew that I was wrong. I suppose I covered the whole distance to the small lawn, three kilometres perhaps, in ten minutes. I shouted but nobody answered. Nobody seemed to be moving in that moonlit world.

'When I reached the lawn, I found that my worst fears were true. The Time Machine was nowhere to be seen. I felt faint and cold. I ran round the lawn quickly, checking every corner, then stopped suddenly. Above me was the white sphinx. It seemed to smile with pleasure at my problems.

'It is possible that the little people had put the machine in a safe place for me, but I didn't feel that they were either strong enough or caring enough to move it. This is what worried me, the feeling of a new power that had moved the machine. But where could it be?



The Time Machine was nowhere to be seen.