

The Scientist's Wife

by John Wentworth Chapin

Steven blurts it out: he cheated on her, broke into the lab, time-travelled back, fixed it. Technically, no cheating... they wouldn't even know he broke in at work. Now it is all fine...except his conscience: fancy dinner and confession.

"You're ridiculous. Time travel is impossible, Steven." Her lobster tail is getting cold, drawn butter congealing.

He persists. "For the sake of this \$200 meal, let's pretend it's not.... So are we good?"

Luann sighs, sucks a claw. "You think I care if it physically happened? If it temporally happened? You didn't just fantasize. You screwed her — so you cheated. Pour more Perrier Jouet, asshole."

"But it never happened! The universe has no record of it!" Steven looks triumphant: NASA-nerd triumphant, like when he beats a video game. She has no patience for it.

"Do you remember it?" Luann asks. "Did you get off?"

He nods.

"So there's record."

"But I made it so I never even met her!"

"Plus, you are a work-breaker-inner and coverer-upper."

Steven's brow furrows and he considers the diagonal weave of his napkin as it curves at a fold.

"Okay, Mister space-time engineer. You didn't meet her. You didn't boink her. But I'm a therapist... and I know you will. Or did. Or whatever."

Luann tries to enjoy her lobster. She knows her husband: he's sneaking back to the lab and this meal will never show up on the Visa bill.

Steven knows she knows: time travel is better than bulimia.