

## Erasing Some Minor Things

It was August 29<sup>th</sup>, 2079, his fingers twitched incessantly. He stared at the clock in frustration. Time was stretching out at an unbearably slow pace, or at least his perception of it. He had an important meeting today, a meeting that, given poetic inclinations, could be described as a meeting with fate. For it was in that meeting that everything had changed.

Zephyr smirked as he thought of the grammar of that sentence. He vaguely recalled reading a passage in the Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy that talked about how absurd grammar became when time travel was involved.

It was odd that he thought about the Hitchhiker's Guide today, though it was appropriate, considering the events of today had come from wanting to know the answer to the ultimate question about life, the universe, and everything.

All he had wanted was a more concrete answer than forty-two. He had merely wanted to solve the debate of free will versus determinism. In order to find the truth of the universe he had set up a simple experiment: using a time machine he had built, his past self from twenty years ago would come to the future that was today. And he the future Zephyr would give himself a comprehensive file of events that had happened in the future. His past self would then try to change the future, and afterwards he would publish his findings about the nature of casualty and reap the rewards.

If he manages to change the future, it indicates that not everything is predetermined and therefore free will does exist. However if he fails to change the future then it would indicate that predestination holds the truth.

Thinking back on it, he never did complete the experiment: he never found the answer. It was too late now: not that he no longer cared about the answer, but rather that he did not care enough to take the risk of returning to that place. His body shivered remembering the horrors of it: even death would be preferable. Zephyr had no desire for any further encounter with the Inter-temporal Enforcement Agency. It was because of them that Zephyr's life had been ruined.

In their paranoia they had outlawed time travelling and designated it a crime against of the universe. The reasoning behind it was that time travelling went against the laws of the universe, and as such there might be a possibility that through something similar to the grandfather paradox the universe gets destroyed. They had no proof of this conjecture, but nonetheless, they had no intention of verifying its deadly claims.

Zephyr's personal opinion was that they were cowards devoid of curiosity. He was convinced it was a crime to let go of such a golden opportunity even if there was a slight chance that the universe gets destroyed. If they thought about it objectively it wouldn't matter in the grand scheme of things as they would all no longer exist, and thus would be incapable of lamenting the sudden cessation of their being.

Zephyr's thoughts were interrupted by a knock on the door. His guest had arrived. He felt tempted to lock the door instead of opening it: he had no desire to meet with himself. Nevertheless he opened the door, and in came Zephyr. Zephyr acknowledged his guest with a long sigh. The two Zephyrs shook hands and stared at each other; one young, vibrant and happy, the other older weary and sorrowful. The younger one spoke, "Forty-two, it is good to see you. I trust you have all the necessary information."

"Zephyr, can you please not call me that."

"Why not? Have you forgotten? Do you have the information? You're supposed to call me Lue, not Zephyr."

"I have not forgotten, Zephyr, that when I time travelled I had decided to distinguish between my past and future self by calling the future-self Forty-two; as today I am exactly 42 years and 42 days old, and I was supposed to call you, my past self, Lue, as an acronym of life, the universe and everything. I remember Zephyr, it is merely that I am not interested in the jokes of the past. Today I stand here to tell you to give up on your time travelling."

"What? How can you say something like that to me, Forty-two. If you remember our contract, then you must also remember how important it is. Why would you tell me to stop?"

"Lue, time travelling ruined my life- no, to be more precise, it will ruin your life: it was the worst decision any Zephyr Stainglass has ever, and will ever make, and I merely want to stop you from making a horrible

decision which I'll be forced to live through”

“You speak blasphemy! The reason why I time travelled was to prove that the future could be changed. For you to tell me not to travel must mean you have found proof that the future has already been determined.”

“No, I never did find out the answer.”

“What? You don't know the answer, yet you tell me to give up. That's BS! If you won't give the information then I will just get it myself.”

“So you're just going to leave then, without bothering to listen to the advice of your own self? Don't you think you should trust my judgement? Since if you can't trust my judgement then you certainly can't trust your own. If you haven't realized it yet, we kind of are the same person!”

“Well then, tell me; tell me why I can't travel through time, and for reason's sake don't say because I told you to.”

“I can't!” Zephyr shouted, his body trembling as he tried to warn him about the Inter-temporal Enforcement Agency. However the mere thought of them gave him convulsions.

“You expect me to be satisfied with such a flimsy explanation!”

“I am you! Can't you trust me?”

“No, I can't, considering you have abandoned the search for the truth: the thing you once chose to devote your life to. I can't trust you as you have betrayed yourself.”

“Fine then, if you want to make your life a living hell go ahead!” He violently handed his younger self the information that he desired.

As he stared at the existence he hated most in all the entire universe, all the anger, all the regret Zephyr had kept inside of himself boiled over. It would have been better if he had died. The thought struck him as if he had been electrocuted. “Why” he asked himself “shouldn't he die? It's not like his future would ever amount to anything.” He knew his past self's future; he had suffered through it. The solution to his problems was so simple.

If he killed his past self he could settle the debate of free will versus determinism: if he died just then he wouldn't have had to suffer. It wasn't too late; he could erase his past.

With his resolve, he took a pair of scissors that was lying on his desk and cut the jugular of his past, erasing him once and for all. He found irony in the shocked expression on its face; it seemed it hadn't been expecting it. It's not like Zephyr could blame him, no sane man would ever attempt to successfully commit suicide and live.

For the first time in his life, Zephyr Stainglass felt free, free of the idea that he was merely a cog in a grand machine of of divine design, free of the chains of the past, he was free of everything. He stood triumphant at his suicide: he had killed his weak, earthly self and transcended to something greater.

Zephyr's moment of elation existed for all eternity, as his actions had indeed resulted in what the Inter-temporal Enforcement Agency had always feared and tried to prevent. What Zephyr did created such a paradox that the universe could not sustain its existence. It was on the forty-second day of Zephyr Stainglass' forty-second year that he found confirmation of free will, erased his past and with it, one other minor thing.