

Temporal Enforcers

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A 70 year old former Nazi scientist with the assistance of a young computer genius complete a time machine to fulfill his life long ambition to change the world. However, the new time travelers discover what really keeps the universe in order.



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Dr. Zach Robertson looked at his watch like an excited child. Some people say he was still a child, but the 26 year old genius showed the adults what that child could do when he received his doctorate in quantum physics at the age of 15. Through all the lectures, studying, lab work he has spent in his short life, patience was one trait he has yet to master. The past three and half hours he has been watching 74 year old German scientist Dr. Franz Kaufmann sit at his oversized oak desk working on his numbers. Silently calculating the answers with a simple pencil and his old leather notebook, turning to a new page and doing them all over again. Millions of dollars worth of state of the art quantum computing equipment that could deliver the answer in nanoseconds and the old fashioned doctor preferred to do it himself.

The truth was Dr. Kaufmann didn't need a computer, he could do any and every calculation in his head and give the correct answer every time. Zach would throw him an equation for quantum positions at a specific moment in time and Dr. Kaufmann would sit at his desk tilt his head back, close his eyes and make an eerie humming sound. When he was finished, which could be minutes or hours, he would lean forward and give you the correct answer along with a dozen more problems new solutions for each of those and the equations for each. Genius is not a strong enough word to describe him. He came from circumstances and a time in history you Zach didn't understand. Dr. Kaufmann didn't have the luxury to rely on anything more than his mind. No computers, no calculators, no slide rules, just him and the correct answer or deal with the penalties.

Being a young intellect in 1938 Germany you had two choices. You could do the work they told you to do for the fatherland or flee and hope you survive. Dr. Kaufmann wanted to flee but he couldn't abandon his ailing mother so he was taken by the Nazis to apply his vast intellect on advanced research. 7 years he worked in secret, taken away from his friends, schoolmates, and his mother whom he never saw again. At the end of the war he fled with a few handful of other top Nazi scientists into the hands of the Allies, trading his life for his work. Only able to grab what they could carry, Dr. Kaufmann took a leather bound notebook and kept it hidden from the Americans. Every thought, formula and number went into that notebook. He used it as a reminder of where he came from and made it his prime motivation to finish what he started 60 years ago and change the world.

Every young scientist wants to change the world. Through action, knowledge or a mix of both Zach too was one of those forward thinking brilliant intellectuals. Quantum computing was his gift. Processing larger and larger numbers, faster and faster. When he was 12 years old he wrote a paper modifying Einstein's Theory of Relativity and laid out the theoretical level of quantum computing necessary to break the space-time code for controlled time travel. Laughed off by the scientific world as a fantasy of a young punk kid, when Dr. Kaufmann read his theses he was not laughing. On his 16th birthday he approached Zach Robertson on the campus of MIT and offered to fund, help to build and test his theory with one caveat, he could tell no one. Reluctant at first, Zach agreed and the past 10 years the two worked on bringing his theory on Quantum Positioning to life.

Zach stared at his watch, the minutes ticked away. *Five hours.* The anticipation finally overtook him and he broke the only rule Dr. Kaufmann ever gave to him, never interrupt him when he's writing in his notebook. "Dr. Kaufmann, the computer array next to you have already crunched the numbers billions of times over since you have been sitting there. We are ready."

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The pencil continued to move across the page as Dr. Kaufmann cleared his throat with a disciplinary tone, "My dear boy, computers are nothing more than plastic and screws, they do what they are told and nothing more. The flaw with them is they cannot feel the numbers like the human mind can."

They were too close to start another academic argument in the capabilities of quantum computing to the analytical power of the human mind. The same capabilities, plastics and screws that brought them to this day and will have to be relied upon whether he likes it or not. Suppressing every urge to respond he turned to the terminals and started to power up the machine. The hum of millions of volts flowing to the machine resonated off the walls.

Dr. Kaufmann set his pencil down, stood up and walked over handing Zach the notebook. "Dr. Robertson, if you break my thought process again I may have to start all over."

He dreaded that thought and responded humbly, "I apologize sir, I am just anxious. We have spent a tremendous amount of time on this and we are so close."

A sly grin grew across Dr. Kaufmann's face as he tapped his finger on the notebook, "Not to worry my dear boy, once you get these calculations entered, time will no longer be a variable we have to worry about."

In the center of the all concrete room stood an orb, 10 feet tall, wrapped with interweaving cables, held in place by large steel beams attached to the floor and ceiling the machine looked larger than it was. A small hatch, just big enough for someone to crawl into was the only way inside. A blue aura bled out of the interior illuminating Dr. Kaufmann as he pulled an apple from his coat pocket and placed in the center of the orb's floor closing the hatch before stepping away.

Zach, standing behind a table of keyboards and monitors called out, "Dr. Kaufmann, we have reached full power. Ready for the first trial." He began to enter the sequences, his fingers moving across the keyboard with speed and precision of a concert pianist. "I am entering target coordinates for this room, 6 feet from the machine, target time plus 2 minutes. Firing!" The low hum turned into a high screech that echoed off the walls, the blue glow turned to a blinding white light spilling through the seams of the orb's hatch filling the room. Seconds later a concussion pulse exploded off the orb knocking the two scientists back. Then silence.

Neither said a word as they adjusted their footing, they just stared at the machine, each trying to comprehend what they just did.

"Dr. Kaufmann, are you alright?" , Zach asked his old mentor in a somber tone.

The aged scientist said nothing as he stared at the data on the monitors.

Zach scanned through the recorded data and with relief he said, "I have a confirmed anchor. According to this the apple arrived intact, exactly two minutes into the future from launch." Before he could finish his thought the room exploded with a flash of blue light like a lightning bolt. A piercing electrical sound shot through the room. Sitting 6 feet from the orb was the apple.

Dr. Kaufmann quickly walked over and examined the fruit. It was sitting there in the same perfect condition as it was when he placed in the orb 2 minutes ago. "Dr. Robertson, son, the anchor is intact, yes? You have tried to explain it to me the best you can in the past, but remind me why do we need it?"

Zach was taken back by the inquiry, shocked that Dr. Kaufmann is asking him a question. He took a brief moment to soak in the rare feeling . Zach cleared his throat and began to educate the smartest man on the

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planet. " Working on the theory of infinite dimensions of space-time, once you leave the current dimension you could end up at one of infinite destinations. As soon as you arrive you have already changed the space-time continuum just by your departure from one and presence in another. This makes it quite difficult for you to return back to your original space-time location since it technically, from your point of view, it no longer exists. The orb re-calibrates your sub-atomic particlesâ quantum combination which relates to the location in space-time where you want to go. All the particles in your body are modified except one, what I call the anchor. As your body moves through space-time the anchor remains in the continuum where you left and acts as a bridge or quantum link between the two dimensions so you can return back from where you came from. The quantum array here is calculating billions of equations a second to maintain that bridge. Without the anchor you will be sent through time with no reference to get back."

Dr. Kaufmann nodded understandably.

" Right now in the orb there is a single sub-atomic particle for the apple. As the apple moves around in both space and time in this dimension we can keep a link here to bring it back. Let me show you."

Zach took a bite from the apple, juices dripped down his chin as he walked over and placed back on the lab floor. Wiping his hands dry on his lab coat, his fingers moved across the keyboard. Another flash of blue light exploded from where the apple sat. A split second later the orb was engulfed in a shower of white light. Dr. Kaufmann climbed up, opened the hatch and sitting inside was the half eaten apple.

" The anchor allows us to get back here and bring the dimension of change with us."

Over the next several hours the two temporal scientists, as they now referred to themselves as, worked diligently running calculations, sending the apple back and forth through time in preparation for Dr. Kaufmann's lifelong goal to be realized. When the 42nd test was complete, Zach's personal inside joke with the number 42 always confused Dr. Kaufmann, they were both looking down at the now brown, rotting apple. Dr. Kaufmann leaned over, " My dear boy, power up the field to maximum. I am ready to leave."

Without hesitation Zach ran over to the power circuits and one by one flipped them all on. A low rumble grew louder and louder, the generator vibrations could be felt through their bones. Dr. Kaufmann walked over to his desk and picked up his old leather notebook. Caressing his old friend he opened the book slowly ripping away the inside cover. Looking as if it were still new he removed an ID card with a much younger looking photo of him staring back at him. The ID was from his work on the top secret Uranverein, the German equivalent of the Manhattan Project. A grin began to grow across Dr. Kaufmann's face as he slid the ID card into his coat pocket and headed toward the time machine. "Zach my boy, set the coordinates for 1943 Germany. Put me outside Berlin, I don't want to end up in a wall of a building."

After entering the final sequencing Zach went over to assist Dr. Kaufmann into the machine. He called out his final instructions, " Dr. Kaufmann, once I close this latch the field around the orb's field will be at full power. I will not be able to stop the powering sequence we must go otherwise you may not survive if we try to stop it."

Dr. Kaufmann grinned, " I'm counting on it."

Zach closed the hatch. A feeling of dread came over him. *What if we are off?* All the tests, numbers, re-tests were successful. In his mind he was confident the machine would work. After all, they never had one failed test, the apple never turned into a fireball or a pile of applesauce, their machine worked. It was something else, a different sense about an unknown. This was science and with any true breakout science there are risks, now was no different. But it didn't matter, because very soon Dr. Kaufmann will be entering WWII Germany to end the war, change the world.

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and trapped? Did he plan on this all along?

Zach entered the same coordinates to where he sent Dr. Kaufmann. Thinking he can get to him before he disappears into Germany. He was about to send himself to a time and place familiar to the German scientist but completely unknown and potentially dangerous to an American from the future. All the preparations were in place and as he began to walk toward the glowing orb he stopped in his tracks and laughed out loud. Almost two days of no sleep has taken its toll. Why try to chase him down when I can stop him from going in the first place. He headed back to the control panel he changed the target from 1938 Germany to 48 hours ago a few feet from the orb.

After spending years building every part of the machine it was not apparent until now, as Zach climbed inside and closed the hatch, how claustrophobic it was. The sound of the hum grew louder louder as the system prepared to fire. The light intensity grew to almost intolerable levels, even squinting his eyes the brightness was painful. Vibrations ran through his legs, harder and harder, a sense of electricity flowed over his skin. *What was I going to say to myself? What would they say to me? Why didn't I appear before?* The paradoxical what-ifs screamed through his mind.

The high screech was louder inside his machine, vision exploding in a fireworks display of streaking whites and blues. Peeling away at the speed of light his molecules begin to change. The sensation was of both excruciating pain and complete euphoria. Through the jets of light the walls of the orb shattered away, blackness now surrounded him, everything seemed to stop. No time, no space, no body, no mind.

A single spec of white light, clearer than any he has ever seen before, appeared in the distance. Hanging in front of him for what seemed like years, suspension changed to a sense of movement. Heading toward the light, closer and closer, he tried to move a body that was in a billion pieces, nothing. The light drew closer, larger, more brilliant. It began to consume everything around him. Just as Zach thought he was about to collide with it, blackness.

The splitting headache told Zach that his body was intact. Every muscle felt like it was new, never used. An unexplored side effect of traveling perhaps, next time they will use talking apples he thought. If this is how it is, from the pain, Zach didn't think Dr. Kaufmann could take it in his feeble old body.

A faded voice echoed in his head, "Dr. Robertson"

It was too painful to open his eyes. Maybe he was hallucinating. *Did all my neurons get put back together exactly how they were?* So many questions, so much pain. He had to get up, find out where he was. Slowly he cracked open his eyes. The blaring white light has subsided for a cool yellow glow. Realizing he was sprawled out on a floor, he mustered up his strength and got to a sitting position. Expecting to be in his lab, the floor did not feel like poured concrete but more like glass. Forcing through the pain he forced open his eyes wide and all around he saw reflections of himself. In all directions, on the floor, up on the ceiling. There were no visible lights yet the room was fully lit. The entire interior was one big mirrored surface. A view of infinity in all directions.

Ignoring the pain firing through his body he shot to his feet. The disorientation of looking into the reflections of himself didn't make the headache any better. He started walking forward with his hand extended, looking for the edge. He walked some more, then a little farther, but his hand never reach the wall. His reflection looks like it's right in front, inches away, no farther than his bathroom mirror. Zach started to walk a little faster, still waiting to reach the edge of this infinity room. A sense of urgency turned into a full sprint of panic. All directions not matter how fast or far he seemed to run he never slammed into a wall, no edge, the reflections never changed positions. At full speed it appeared as if he were running in place.

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Out of breath Zach, his agonizing body forced him to stop. Hunched over he tried to fend off fear induced hyperventilation. Sweat poured down his face, pain shot through his body, fright flew through his bones. This was obviously not his lab. As he was about to take off in a another marathon sprint a booming voice filled the room.

â Dr. Robertson.â

Zach remained cautiously quiet.

The voice returned, â Dr. Robertson, if you are able, please respond.â

Respond with what and to whom? Who was this person? How did he know my name? Where the hell was he? He responded the only way an analytical scientist could, â Respond with what answer? There was no question.â

â How are you physically?â

Panic began to retake Zach, his breathing grew shallow. "Who are you! Where am I? Where is Dr. Kaufmann?"

A calmer tone responded, â Dr. Robertson, I assure you all your questions will be answered. You are alive and safe. We need to ensure your physical health is intact. How do you feel?â

Zachâ s focus returned to his head, pounding with every heartbeat. â My head feels like itâ s going to explode.â The roomâ s yellow glow began to pulsate and a fog formed around him. A thick, milky cloud appeared from nowhere and slowly rose up, swirling around his body. He tried to remain calm, knowing that running wouldnâ t get him anywhere he screamed out, "What are you doing!".

â Please remain calm, this will not harm you, try to breathe normally."

Trust was the only option. Taking deep breaths the pressure in his head began to subside, the muscles stopped spasming, his aches disappeared. Within seconds he felt better than he has had in months, he wasnâ t hungry, no more muscle pains, no longer exhausted.

â How are you feeling now Dr.?â

"I feel better." Zach held back that he has never felt this good. Reborn. Not a single ache in his body. Whatever he just was exposed to was a sign of good faith, he was still alive, but deep down he felt he couldn't trust the voice. The room's glow dimmed and the fog quickly dissipated. His rejuvenated body became clear again, reflecting back at him reminding Zach of the situation. â OK, now that my physical health is intact itâ s time for you to answer my questions."

"Remain still.â , the voice commanded. The roomâ s reflections began to twitch and bubble like boiling water. All around him appeared to melt away, pouring down like a waterfall. The once solid mirror was dripping away making the reflections look like a carnival funhouse. Faster and faster it flowed away. The reflectivity was not as clear, the mirrored material looking now like a metal mud.

The last melted drops passed by Zach's face. Watching it fall to his feet the gray liquid spread out and disappeared into the floor. Taking in his surroundings, he was stunned at the sheer immensity of his position. He was not standing in the middle of lab or any normal room but a place he could only relate to as a large sports stadium. A silver, hexagon patterned dome stretched high over his head, higher than any place he has

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been to before. Around the entire base of the dome were glowing yellow orbs, slowly pulsating, they seemed to be hundreds of yards away. Standing in the middle would make anyone feel small and insignificant.

A white line of light appeared in the floor stretching off toward the edge. Breaking through the silence the voice returned, "Please follow the path."

He started walking and for the first time in his life he had no idea what he was walking into. A lifetime of mathematics, computers, analytics was working against him. There were no answers, no plan, no goals, nothing to prepare him for what he was heading toward. It felt as if hours passed, the more he walked it didn't seem like the edge lights were getting any closer. There were no alternatives to following a white line on the floor because a voice told him to do so. Zach kept his focus on the orb's glow and kept at his quick pace. The rhythmic sounds of his steps were becoming hypnotic.

The end of the illuminated path suddenly became more brilliant. It made Zach squint as he looked toward it. He realized that it was the opening of a door. One that contained the silhouette of a figure in the doorway. Zach quickened his stride, now there was much more than an anonymous voice, a person waiting for him. He wanted to break out into a run but still cautious about who he was walking toward. The closer he got the more defined the figure became. He or she appeared to be a slender individual, maybe the bright back light was playing tricks on his perception, but the figure was the most slim frame he has ever seen. Zach thought to himself that the door didn't contain a person but something else. As this distance to the door narrowed Zach's steps slowed, fear of the unknown again retook his ability think straight. When he reached the door and the figure came into clear focus Zach came to a dead stop. Standing before him was indeed a figure, but this was no human.

Two arms, two legs, a torso and a head but this creature was well over 8 feet tall, by his estimation, the body was no thicker than his arm. A skin with the color and appearance like a shark's skin covered the entire body. There were no clothes, unless this was some sort of body suit Zach thought. The hands and feet were as long and slender as the body. He stood there staring, not know what he was looking at or even what to say. The head of the creature was magnificent, the front was a large black dome covering most of his head. At first he thought it looked like the visor to a helmet, but the more he gazed and watching the body language of the stare back from the creature he realized he was staring at an eye.

The creature took a step toward Zach its long, slender arm extended as to shake his hand, "Dr. Robertson I presume. It's a pleasure to know you are feeling better after your journey. I apologize for the discomfort. I would like to introduce myself, my name is Quarnit I am the administrator."

Zach took a step back to avoid the outreached hand, "Administrator of what?"

Quarnit withdrew his approach and replied, "I am the administrator of space and time. I always personally welcome the new arrivals, I feel it lessens the impact of their new reality."

"What do you mean new reality?"

The long, slim arm motioned down the corridor, "Dr. Robertson, please come with me. I will explain everything." The creature called Quarnit began to walk, the slender frame appeared to flow effortlessly. Every few steps he would turn around and motion for Zach to follow. With no other recourse Zach reluctantly followed.

As they traversed down the hallway Zach's analytical mind was recalculating everything about the time jump. Every setting, calculation, dial position, voltage level, looking for some anomaly to explain his current situation. Quantum combination will bypass space and time to reconfigure the subject into the past. It's such a

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simple concept Zach kept hammering into his head. *Why can't I come up with an answer that explains arriving in the middle of an arena the size of 20 city blocks?*

Quarnit stopped and turned to Zach. "Dr. Robertson, you will now receive your answers." The long fingers slid down the side of the wall, a chirping sound filled the hallway. Before Zach's eyes the seamless, smooth wall showed the outline of a doorway. The entrance slowly opened, Zach wondered what other new creatures would await him. Instead, standing before him was Dr. Kaufmann. An explosion of emotion flowed over him as he embraced him as a child would hug a beloved grandfather.

Dr. Kaufmann used all his strength not to fall over from his young partner's grip. "My dear boy, it's good to see you again. I am pleased you are alright."

Zach pulled away and looked Dr. Kaufmann in the eye and with a demanding tone, "What the hell happened? Where are we?"

Before Dr. Kaufmann could respond the creature called Quarnit began to speak behind them. "Dr. Kaufmann does not have the answers you seek, he insisted to wait for your arrival."

Zach perplexed asked, "How did you know I was coming here Dr.? I don't even know where this is."

The old Dr. had his trademark grin cross his face, "My dear boy, I knew you were not going to let this go. I had faith you were going to find out how to get to me."

"I am sorry to keep repeating myself, but I have no idea where this is. I don't know how I got here. I have no idea how we can get home."

Quantir interjected, "Gentlemen, if I may. I have all the answers you are looking for."

Zach and Dr. Kaufmann stopped their brief banter and looked at their host. Dr. Kaufmann motioned toward Quantir, "You may continue with your explanations, start with who you are and where we are."

Quantir entered the small oval room and with another swipe of his fingers the doorway sealed behind him. "I am the administrator of space and time. Here we monitor the integrity of the two and ensure that universal stability is maintained. If we detect an infraction we intercept and prevent those from occurring. Here we keep the universe together."

Zach's impatience got the better of him, "Where is here?"

"You are at the nexus of space and time. The two are fabrics, flowing in close proximity to each other but not directly connected. You can manipulate space independent of time and cheat time in space. Two rivers flowing over each other but never merging. Where you are now is the only place where space and time intersect. This is infinity. This is why I can speak your language, have knowledge of you, have answers to everything. Here there is no space, there is no time. The entire universe, all dimensions, exist here simultaneously."

Dr. Kaufmann closed his eyes and started to hum.

Quantir continued, "Here we monitor the fabrics so they do not destroy each other as they have before."

"What do you mean, before?" , Zach interjected.

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"In your terminology you know this event as the Big Bang. That moment as not the birth of the universe, that event was a catastrophic breakdown of space and time. It was a cascading failure, crushing both fabrics down to a single point, reverting them back to a neutral state. Unfortunately it destroyed everything else with it, all living species, all planets, in all dimensions. Everything except for the creatures that caused the breakdown."

Dr. Kaufmann stopped rocking and with the most forceful voice Zach has ever hear him use, "You brought us here. You interjected yourself into our project. We are not here by accident, are we?"

Quantir replied, "Correct, we brought you here."

"But why?", Dr. Kaufmann rebutted.

"You and Dr. Robertson were going to threaten the integrity of the space time fabric. Your actions were going to start a chain reaction that over time would lead to a breakdown. In order to protect that, we brought you here like all violators."

"Violators? Violators of what? What laws? How are we supposed to know?", Zach screamed.

Quantir continued, "With the knowledge of time travel there is an inherent challenge of the paradox. Overcoming that paradoxical obstacle is vital, as you know, to unlock that secret and achieve what you have. That alone you understand the dangers. Your anchor allows for dimensions to interweave, this is where the breakdown occurs. This is why you have never heard of a time traveler arriving in the past. When they try, we stop it and bring them here for the protection of the universe. You and Dr. Robertson's actions were to change and create your own version of history. Dr. Kaufmann delivering the knowledge of nuclear weaponry to the Nazis to win World War II. Dr. Robertson altering the events around the experiment."

Zach shot a look of extreme disgust toward his mentor. "Is this what you meant by changing the world? You were going to help the Nazis win?"

The old doctor responded, "I wanted to change the world, the world would have been a cleaner place if we had completed our work."

Quantir's tone drew heavy of disappointment, "Gentlemen, this is why you are here. This is where you will stay." The slender frame waved his hand opening the door and began to walk out.

Zach stepped toward, "Wait! How long do we have to stay here? How do we get back home? You can't do this!"

"Here there is no concept of time, you will never get sick here, never get hungry, never get old, everything is forever. This room is your home now. You will never return to your place of origin. The knowledge you contain is enough to bring instability to the fabrics. This is the way it has to be."

Before Quantar closed the door, sealing the two scientists in the oval room for eternity, Dr. Kaufmann called out, "Why you? What gives you the right to decide the fates of others?"

Quantar paused for a moment then turned looking back into the room containing two specimens of extraordinary genius joining millions of others locked away in the rooms, forever.

"We protect it because we were the ones that destroyed it."

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