



# Time Travel Troubles

By Jason Levine

On October 18th, 2017, Soyl3ntR3d posted [the following Writing Prompt](#) on Reddit:

*Time travel is real, but was quickly outlawed. You were the reason why, as your repeated efforts to repair a certain year just created more and more chaos and absurdity. This is your story.*

I decided to tell this possibly true tale of time travel gone wrong.

Image by FelixMittermeier from Pixabay

It all started innocently enough. I tried to get rid of the global plague that killed off two thirds of the human population. I grabbed a time machine and a remote gene editor and went back in time. A few genetic tweaks later and the plague was a harmless illness that hurt only a dozen people, none of them in any major way.

The problem was that I forgot the first rule of time travel. Every action has an equal temporal reaction. The loss of the plague meant that the invading aliens no longer

bypassed our world for their own safety. They invaded, enslaving humanity and killing a third of the population.

So back I went again. This time I used a gravity ray to pull an asteroid towards the Earth. With the Earth seemingly doomed, the aliens left the planet alone again.

Except I did too good a job. The asteroid collided and wiped out 90% of humanity. The remaining few huddled in underground shelters trying to survive for one more day until they were consumed by lava.

Back I went again. I used the gravity ray to move the asteroid away again, but after the aliens left. Then I landed my time machine to admire my handwork. Except my time machine must have been leaking radioactive coolant because it mutated a local insect group into giant, murderous versions of themselves.

I finally got the timeline relatively stable, even if it meant that I had to reinstate the plague at a reduced rate. By the time I was done, I expected that I'd be welcomed as a hero. I figured that my picture would go into the history books as savior of the world. After all, I prevented so many disasters. Instead, I was arrested, locked away, and time travel was totally banned. I did get my photo in the history books, but it was as the person responsible for the worst year in history. The person responsible for 2020.