



Tiny Time Traveler Tweaks

By Jason Levine

The following story was inspired by the [Writing Prompts](#) subreddit. "[Thisnameistrashy](#)" posted the following prompt on September 22, 2019:

[There is a group of time travelers who create small changes and rely on the butterfly effect to change history. Now they need to prevent World War 3 by making a janitor lose his job. Detail how this stops World War 3.](#)

Here is my tale of time traveling tweaks.

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"So how did it go?" Tim asked me.

"Complete success," I answered. "I removed the 'wet floor' signs and the supervisor slipped and fell. He hurt his back, firing the janitor for carelessness."

"What happened then?"

"Well, the janitor went berserk. He started tossing cleaning supplies everywhere, kicking his bucket over, throwing paper towels at people. It was a huge mess."

I plucked a piece of paper towel off my shoulder. I had returned to my own time quickly and must have missed it.

"And then?" Tim asked.

"Well, security was called, of course. They showed up and escorted the janitor off the premises. Not before a security guard slipped and fell on the mess of cleaning supplies. He broke bones in his arms and legs."

"Oh?"

"That guard was going to join the army in a few weeks. Had he done so, he would have been in a platoon who guarded an important ambassador."

"The ambassador that was shot, starting World War 3?" Tim asked me.

"Exactly. Instead, the platoon was able to protect the ambassador and a peace accord was signed. World War 3 averted."

I sat back, smiling. It was a perfect time change. Clean, easy, and with no unforeseen complications.

"Except, WW3 is going on," Tim said.

"Impossible," I replied. "How?"

"Turns out that janitor went back to his home country after being fired. Once there, he was conscripted in the army. Thanks to family connections, he was assigned to protect the other side's ambassador. Unfortunately, his allegiances were with a rebel faction.

"Oh no," I said.

"Yes," Tim said. "Once, the two ambassadors had signed the peace treaty, the janitor attacked, killing both of them. That started the war right on schedule."

I slumped back in my chair and plugged my time skipper back in to charge. Time alterations certainly weren't easy. I'd have to try again. You know the old saying. Fifty seventh times the charm!