

STARK'S TIME

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Author Note

'Stark's Time' operates under the assumption that the time traveler possesses the ability, machine-aided or otherwise, to travel backwards through time into the past, and then back again to the point from which they initially left. The ability to travel to the future is unnecessary, though appreciated.

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Abstract

Stark’s Theory of Time Travel, or simply ‘Stark’s Time’, is one of many interpretations of the vast-spread ideal of time travel, though with the intention and emphasis on a system of standardization in order to minimize arbitrary author interaction as much as possible. This will hopefully encourage more modern examples of ‘death of the author’ and allow readers to more thoughtfully discuss the topics at hand by logically extrapolating the laws for themselves.

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STARK’S TIME

As follows is the ‘ruleset’ of this hypothetical system, so to speak. The boundaries and terms are clearly defined with referral in mind, as well as to educate those uninitiated as to how ‘Stark’s Time’ works.

[INSTANCES]

‘Instances’ refers to each section of time that each of us exists within and are not defined by a definite numerical value or time period. They are entirely relative constructs and are used however the speaker sees fit. They may be referred to by the symbol below, or with ‘|’.



One instance of time.

Instances of time are used to differentiate between the ‘then’ and the ‘now. For example, one could live within a single instance of time for any number of years without any time travel taking place, but the moment the future or past self is referred to, it is within a separate instance of time.



*The blue instance refers to the **future**, the black the **present**, and the red the **past**.*

Pondering this for any amount of time, one will immediately understand that there are **an infinite number of instances** stretching into the future and the past. This is important to understand, and one of the key laws of ‘Stark’s Time’.



Many instances.

[THE GRANDFATHER PARADOX]

The Grandfather paradox is a common temporal paradox long thought inherent to all temporal systems; it states that any action deliberately altering the past cannot possibly take place, since whenever the past is altered the changing action is contradicted. ‘Stark’s Time’ solves this problem; it does not seek to change the past, rather to fulfill it.

[SCENARIO ONE: THE PRESENT].

A dimly lit room. Your hands are secured together behind your back with the same rope that binds you to your chair. You can feel a gun barrel on the back of your head, know you have only seconds before your life ends.

You hear a shot, but it isn’t for you. The barrel slumps down with the corpse holding it, and you are untied by your future self.

‘How does that work?’ you cry. ‘Surely I cannot save myself if I am shot!’

Here is where the trick is, and it is the first learning curve of the system. You will not and **cannot** be killed unless you will it – you were never in danger to begin with. Your future self saves you every time, not because you were in any danger but because they were saved by *their* future self, and they need to finish the temporal loop. Similarly, after being saved, you will travel back a few minutes and save your past self.

What this setting unfortunately leads to is the fact that the traveler cannot go back in time to do anything that they have not seen their future self do, or that does not already happen. The upside to this is that they will do what they want to regardless.

Those uneducated in the intricacies and nuances of ‘Stark’s Time’ may initially be under the impression that the event of the time traveler being saved or not is a completely chance event, decided randomly by the powers that be. This is a reasonable assumption as, in their eyes, there are an equal number of timelines where the person dies as they are saved. However, it is untrue because of two things: the ‘first instance’, and ‘intent’.

[THE FIRST INSTANCE]

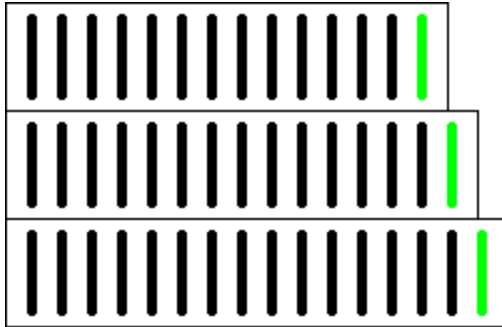
Before discussing this, it must be understood that **the first instance does not exist**. There is no first instance, it is a mere hypothetical tool used to explain intent.

With that being said, we are pretending that, for the sake of this explanation, each and every instance of time, at one point, had a ‘first instance’, henceforth denoted by **green**.



The ‘first instance’.

The first instance is the point at which an instance has no instance ahead of it – it is the furthest point in time as of being the first instance.



The hypothetical formation of first instances, with the future to the right.

Due to the first instance having no future instance ahead of it, any traveler finding themselves within the first instance is free to travel to the past however and whenever they choose – there is no loop for them to complete or ignore, so they do not create a paradox. This idea is rather useless by itself, but it is a necessary concept to understand going forward in order to discuss intent.

[INTENT]

Let’s go back to our first scenario, flipped.

[SCENARIO ONE: THE PAST].

You zap back a couple instances. Your past self is there, tied to a chair, hands behind their back. A man has a gun pointed at your past head.

You have no temporal requirement to fulfill, no loop to tie up by saving yourself, as you came from the first instance – you don’t have a future self to mirror. Despite this, though, you still save yourself, because, duh, right? Of course you don’t want yourself to die, no matter the reason.

I would like to reiterate that first instances, under these laws, do not exist due to the aforementioned Grandfather’s paradox, and the infinite nature of time instances. That choice to

save yourself, though, is undeniably what you *would* do given the option. So, although you do not decide what your future self does and thus what you finish, it’s what you would decide regardless. This unconscious choice is referred to as ‘intent’.

[LENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS]

The power offered to the traveler under the ‘Stark’s Time’ system allows for creative hypotheticals, discussions, and variations due to how open ended it is. The scenario described above is a simple matter of life and death as it is easier to understand the concept of first instances and intents within such an intrinsically binary and urgent context. Due to the concept of intent, the traveler may use their abilities in whichever way they please without limit; possibilities are listed below:

- **Future self brings fabricated object granting other powers, then passed on to past self**
- **Future self relaying future-future self relaying future-future-future self relaying...
... self’s knowledge/artefact from many instances ahead.**

There are known limits to those wielding ‘Stark’s Time’, though the faults are not intrinsic to the system itself, rather, flaws in the traveler themselves – for example, a hero soon to turn villain may be reluctant to mirror their future self’s actions.

[CONCLUSION]

Thus concludes the explanation of ‘Stark’s Time’, a system dealing in temporal manipulation drawing inference from rational thought and logic in order to pioneer a standardized methodology.

References

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