

The repository

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The lab called it the Repository.

Time was not a river. It was a commit graph.

Mara's console showed history as hashes and arrows. Every moment a node. Every decision a branch. The past was immutable. The future was a working tree full of untracked files.

She did not travel backward. She checked out.

```
git checkout -b stop-war a1f3c9e
```

The world recompiled around her. Same initial state. Same variables. Different branch name. In this timeline Hitler was still a student. Mara changed one small file. A rejected application. She committed and returned.

```
git checkout main
```

Nothing changed. Of course not. Main was untouched. The war still existed. The scars still matched their hashes.

People kept asking why she could not fix history. She explained patiently. You never fix history. You fork it.

Each jump created divergence. Entropy grew like unmerged branches. The Repository ballooned. Infinite timelines. Infinite storage. Garbage collection impossible. Nothing was truly unused.

One day she found a branch tagged by someone else.

```
origin/hope
```

No author. No timestamp. The diff was small. Fewer deaths. Slower weapons. More pauses between commits.

Mara did not merge it. Merges caused conflicts. Merges caused paradoxes.

She rebased.

She replayed the present onto hope. One commit at a time. Carefully resolving conflicts. Choosing better defaults.

When she finished, the graph looked cleaner. Still complex. Still branching. But survivable.

She pushed.

Somewhere, someone typed their first commit message.

“Initial commit.”