

My Son, My Self,

I will not live to see you born. The doctors say I have a month, at best. There are some things I want to tell you before I go.

I have given this letter, sealed, to your mother, to give to you on your 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. You must never reveal the contents to her, as you will understand when you read it.

You will be born on December 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1970, at 4:13 PM, in St. Vincent's hospital, in Philadelphia. Here is how I know this.

I never knew my father. My mother raised me, with help of a loving governess who taught me to speak fluent German. I grew up, went to college, went to work for the CIA. My mother died when I was 25.

One day my CIA Director called me in. "We have an assignment for you, strictly voluntary. For decades we have been working on time travel, and we have developed a rudimentary capability. We want to send someone to Germany in the year 1940 to kill a man named Hans Schlegel."

"Who is Hans Schlegel? And why me?"

"The second, first. You speak German, you have no family. You will not be coming back.

"Now, Schlegel. A physicist of no particular distinction. He convinced Speer and Hitler that an atomic bomb was possible. Speer and Hitler recruited a reluctant Heisenberg. You know the rest of the story."

I did indeed. Unable to make headway against Britain and the US, in 1943 Germany dropped atomic bombs on London, New York, and Washington. Bombs eventually followed on Paris, Moscow, Leningrad, and Stalingrad. At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Germany ruled from Britain to the Urals. The US was a third-rate semi-vassal state to Germany, but unoccupied.

"Why not go back further, and kill Schlegel as a child?"

"We can't go back further than 1940. We don't know why."

I was given a day to think it over. I went back and said yes.

The CIA sent me to 1940, and I killed Schlegel. I won't go into the details.

Of course, Britain and the US eventually won the war, defeating Germany and Japan. The cities survive today, not radioactive. This is the world in which you live.

The CIA had given me an identity, and a large sum of money. I made that money grow, and I became quite wealthy.

In 1965, I met Cymbele. I thought, ***This is my Mother***. Of course, I loved her.

But there was a problem.

She loved me.

Too much.

We married.

When Cymbele became pregnant, I wondered how I would deal with being my own father. The cancer has solved that problem.

The loop is closed. I saw pictures of my own father, from that other time, other life. It was not me. I am not my own son. Where did I come from? I do not know. An enigma.

You will not have to go back to 1940. There is no Schlegel, no German bomb.

So, grow, live, and love. Take care of your mother for as long as you have her. And remember what you have given the world, in another life.

Your Father, Your Self.