

Short Story: A Matter Of Time.

The Prime Minister of Israel is given an opportunity to change the events of the past. He's also warned against attempting the obvious.

David Gold, the Prime Minister of Israel, looked across his desk at the small group of men and women, and tapped the file on his desk.

"You realise, of course, that if anyone else had written this I'd have them bundled out in straitjackets?"

Dr. Ravits, the Government's Chief Scientific Advisor, nodded and leaned forward.

"As would I, David. If I hadn't seen the evidence itself. But that is the real deal."

He pointed at the file.

Gold put his hand on the file.

"I'm a lawyer, as you know. A pretty good one, some would say. But I'm not a scientist, so let me outline in layman's terms what I think you have told me, and you can confirm my understanding."

The prime minister stood up from his seat, put his hands in his pockets, and proceeded to stroll around the large office with its view of the Ben-Gurion Complex.

"Defence Research has developed a way of sending a person back in time to a specific period in time, and then bringing them back."

"Not just a person. We can hold a portal open for up to 17 minutes so far, and bring whatever we want through."

"People," the PM asked.

"People. Tanks. A nuclear weapon."

Ravits knew the last one was provocative. The other scientists had balked when he had pointed this out, but he was committed to his job. The prime minister had to know everything.

"Yes, I saw that. But I'm not sure about the..."

He stepped back to his desk to see the handwritten notes he'd made.

"Timeline paradox."

"Yes. If you go back in time, kill your grandfather, then how were you born to go back in time? Also if we change one aspect of history, what other things do we change?"

"If a butterfly flaps his wings..."

"Pretty much," the scientist confirmed.

"Doesn't that make this thing too dangerous? Not knowing what direction history takes if we change something?"

"That's where SoothSayer comes in, prime minister," the younger female scientist, Professor Damon, spoke up.

"This is the supercomputer that runs millions of simulations and can tell us what will happen if a butterfly does indeed flap its wings."

"It's billions of simulations, prime minister, based on variables created by our finest historians. It will give us a high probability of what will happen."

The prime minister smiled.

"Ah yes, probability. Just the word a politician loves hearing. Alright then: what did it say?"

The professor frowned.

"I'm sorry prime minister?"

"When you asked it the question?"

"The question?"

"The question!"

Ravits cleared his throat.

"It said that Stalin conquers all of Europe and Israel never comes into being."

The prime minister waved his hand in the air, and looked out the window.

"So we send someone back in time to stop him becoming Chancellor, it stops the Holocaust but erases Israel, and most of us in this room, from history."

"That's pretty much it."

"So we spend three billion Shekels on a device that we can never actually use?"

Sipowicz, the head of Mossad, raised a hand.

"If I may; we've run a number of scenarios through SoothSayer and there is an option worth considering. See, we're looking at this with the objective of killing him. Now, what if we had another option. We don't kill him. We replace him."

Gold gestured at him to continue.

"We are forever balancing the genocide on one hand and it being the catalyst that creates this nation. What if we have both? What if we replace him in the 1930s with an exact copy who then subtly changes Reich policy. Who doesn't exterminate our people but instead moves them all to Palestine. We get our state without the gas chambers."

"And a Nazi-dominated Europe."

"No, we get our agent to carry on with everything else as before, invade Poland, Russia, declare war on the United States, all as before. But with millions of European Jews evacuated to here."

"We could create a double?"

"The right agent could be identified, trained, have plastic surgery, would probably have to be a native German speaker and would need massive historical briefing, but it is possible. Drop him in before the Nuremberg Laws in 1935, and then extract him once the war is up and running."

"And the real....?"

"We can control exactly where the portal is, so we can put our man in Adolf's bedroom in the middle of the night. Snatch him, and put our man in."

Ravits stood up, removing his glasses.

"Snatch him? You mean, bring Adolf Hitler here? Hitler? To Israel?"

"There's a look on a face one would like to see," the PM said.

Professor Damon shook her head.

"No, leaving our man in place for too long will magnify changes in the historical timeline. Hitler made hundreds of decisions every week, all with consequences. Once we have prevented the Shoah, and war has been started, we should return him. Without him knowing he's been gone."

Ravits struggled to contain himself.

"But that's six years later. Anything could go wrong in that period, and won't he find it strange to wake up and find he's slept through six years?"

"We can deal with that. Drugs, brainwashing where we will brief him as to what happened. When he wakes up he'll feel strange, out of sorts, perhaps think he is having a stroke. But nothing will be unusual to him. He'll have memories of decisions he's made," Sipowicz said.

Gold looked at the Professor.

"We seem to be entering a lot of variables here."

The historian nodded.

“We are, and every one increases the risk of sending history in a direction we do not predict. The question is whether we see that as more or less desirable than preventing the death camps, founding some form of Israel and almost certainly removing all of us in this room from history. I mean, a minor change in historical circumstances changes the circumstances of our procreation. Literally billions of people will not be born.”

“Sugarcoat it for us, why don’t you professor,” the PM said.

Gold sat back in his seat.

“Well, this is all a decision for later. Today you want me to authorise the first six hundred million Shekels to build the human capacity prototype?”

Ravits nodded.

He took out a gold and onyx antique pen.

“This belonged to my great grandfather. Treblinka.”

He looked at it.

“We’ll never know what event will trigger the change, will we?” he said, and signed the authorisation form.

She then put the pen down and slid the document over to the President of the United Republic of Palestine-Israel, who also signed the document. Vice-President Davina Gold smiled as she remembered her great grandmother giving her that pen on her deathbed, and then peacefully passing away as the smell of oranges blowing through their Jaffa farmhouse window.

The End.

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