

ACT I, SCENE 3

Apparently several minutes later. We hear FREUD twisting and moaning.

When the lights return we see FREUD lying covered on the couch as in Scene 2.

MISS PORTERO is seated on the armchair observing, smoking. A half-full wine glass is on the oblong table; also a game of solitaire, as well as Freud's Dream book, the Interpretation of Dreams.

FREUD

Julius wake up. It's your play. (Flips wrist as if tossing a playing card.)  
He'll visit Naples, too? You know what they say, "See Naples and die!" One day, Julius, I've got to meet your famous brother, Arthur . . . You're not preparing for surgery now. Make your play. It's only a game .

MISS PORTERO

( SHE approaches Freud.)

Sigi, who is this Julius with the playing cards? (In a whisper.)  
This is Resi.

FREUD

He is baby Julius come back to me.

MISS PORTERO

Baby Julius? Tell me more—

FREUD

Julius ...Julius ... ( HE's 'coming to') . . . Miss Portero? . .

(Seeing Janus HE gives a start.)

What time is it?

MISS PORTERO

Just past eleven.

FREUD

What?! Why didn't you wake me?! (Putting on his shoes.)

MISS PORTERO

(Placing smelling salts under his nose.)

This strong perfume didn't rouse you. Were we to bludgeon you?--

FREUD

We? Who's we?

MISS PORTERO

Why Lucina and I, of course.

(Placing the cover in the armoire.)

FREUD

I'm sopping wet.

MISS PORTERO

( From a silver case, she removes a cigarette; lights it by lifting a candle to her face.)

You cried out, "Julius."

FREUD

(He turns white as though he had seen a ghost; he's obviously agitated.)

I did ?!

(Strangled, high-pitched voice.)

Anything else?

MISS PORTERO

No, Julius was all.

FREUD

(He's distressed, but his analytical side comes to the fore.)

I must have been dreaming of Julius Caesar.

MISS PORTERO

Julius Caesar? But the cry, it arose from the ground of your very being.--

FREUD

Look, This is Rome, isn't it? Who else could it have been but Caesar?

MISS PORTERO

Yes, indeed, who else indeed? There are those who claim to have seen on the Ides of March at the Forum, where the Senate stood, the broken ghost of Caesar, his blood oozing onto his linen toga--

FREUD

Spirits, I'm afraid, suspend their activities when I am around.

MISS PORTERO

Perhaps you've not visited the right spot at the right moment.

(Swallowing a cracker like a Communion Wafer, followed by a gulp of wine.)

FREUD

Well, when that happens Miss Portero you'll be the first to know.

MISS PORTERO

And not you, impious son?

FREUD

Leave my father out of this!--

MISS PORTERO

Your papa, he will not so easily give up the ghost. . . . Despite your wishful dreams.

(Lifting Freud's Dream book.)

FREUD (Grabbing the Dream book.)

These are the dreams that trouble you? . . . my dreams of my father?  
. . . I didn't come to Rome to be played with. My things! (Looking for his things!)

MISS PORTERO (Handling the Golden Bough.)

The troubling dreams, they are not the ones of your papa Jakob. They are the ones of your papa who is as cold as stone, Michelangelo's terrible stone.

FREUD (To self:)

"As cold as . . . Michelangelo's terrible stone?" The witch knows; she broke my dreams of Rome. . . Collect yourself! I carefully concealed the statue.

MISS PORTERO

Would-be patricide, this will be the battle of your life!

(With the Golden Bough raised over her head and murder in her ice-cold eyes, she rushes at FREUD, who, terrified, raises Dream book to shield self. Suddenly, wraithlike, SHE returns to the table the Golden Bough, which HE quickly grabs, dropping the Dream book.)

FREUD

My hat and stick!

(Rushing to pull-rope, he pulls so hard it comes loose; he flings rope across room.)

FREUD (CONT'D)

Lucina can bring my things to my room. (He looks at his key.)  
Room 51. . . Ha! 51.

(He superstitiously believes he'll die at age 51; this comes out in Act II.)

MISS PORTERO (Lifts his Dreambook)

Including your Egyptian dream book?

("Egyptian" gets FREUD'S attention, almost a startle response; biting his lips he moves towards the door.)

LUCINA Enters:

(Silently, she hands FREUD his straw hat and gold-handled cane. LUCINA leaves but not before giving him a hard look. Out of sight she laughs, which startles Freud.)

( Facing an object which is cloaked by a scarlet-red canvas MISS PORTERO says:)

At the Capitoline, filial piety poisoned your pleasure. But the papa in question is not your papa Jakob. Here, wicked son, is the papa in question:

(MISS PORTERO quickly unveils a bust of Michelangelo's MOSES holding the two Tablets of the Law.)

(There is brilliant lightning and thunder.

Seeing MOSES with his lit up face, terrifies FREUD. With his Dreambook, he covers his face. Recovering, he is angry enraged at her but also disgusted with himself for not having been able to contain himself. He's about to leave.)

As I am ambitious I slay him!

(With the golden bough she stabs MOSES in his right eye, where it remains. Facing MOSES, she lifts her wine glass and toasts.--)

Moses is dead, long live the new Moses, the little pisher, Sigmund Freu--

FREUD

No! You must not utter my last name!

FREUD (Cont'd)

(Lunging at her, HE covers her mouth with his right hand; his left hand is on the back of her struggling head. She didn't anticipate this. His superstitious side is excited. Terror is Freud's basic emotion, but there is rage as well, for she is putting him and his mission at risk. There is also a trace of lust: Freud, touching her, experiences sensual pleasure. Catching himself Freud backs away. He realizes he could have seriously harmed her.)

Over four years to prepare and I come unglued like this! (To Self) . . .  
I must ask your forgiveness.

MISS PORTERO

[ Wipes wine from outfit. (She, too, had experienced lust.)]

Do not muzzle me again!

FREUD

(FREUD picks up his hat and cane, which fell in the struggle. The cane's gold handle came off. An omen? It's by the painting of Aeneas. He looks at Aeneas. He picks up the handle, holding it, the same way Aeneas' father holds the household gods. He stares at the bright handle; then at the Sphinx curtain. )

It's coming back. In the dream the handle came off . . . (To Self:) I can't still be dreaming?!

(As if his life depends on it, he struggles to replace the handle, but can't.)

MISS PORTERO (Wiping herself.)

You, the man of science; you, whose god is reason; you who lusts for fame, for glory; you, the great Sigmund Freud, still fear names. For names, carry souls. And my coupling  
(Pressing her snake bracelet together, so that the head meets the tail. Or, she could, with the thumb and forefinger of each hand, link her hands--.)

your name and the patriarch's, well, just the thought of that horrifies you, doesn't it? For Moses, then knowing where you are, would appear--

FREUD

It's got to go on! Damn!

MISS PORTERO

(Watching Freud as he tries re-attaching cane handle.)

An omen, Golden Sigi? (Still wiping herself.)

FREUD

Some Golden Bough!

[HE throws handle across the room. He then breaks cane over his knee. One

piece is longer than the other. As if knifing someone, he forcefully 'stakes' the larger piece into a planter. Then, unconsciously, he 'attaches' the smaller piece to larger piece at a 45 degree angle: Root (Moses) and Branch (Jesus).]

Root and Branch! Ha!

(Laughing uncontrollably, as if he's just realized something: a joke--a joke that's on joke that's on him. )

Jesus.

(HE flips, with disdain, the smaller piece into the fireplace: but no added blaze.)

Moses.

(HE stands tall, looks at crucifix, and, as Zeus/Jupiter would a thunderbolt, he hurls the bigger piece (Root) into the fire. There is a brilliant, crackling fireplace blaze. He's transfixed.)

It should be that easy.

(Meanwhile, to contain herself, MISS PORTERO places a red record on a hand-operated phonograph: music of that time.)

(FREUD is startled)

No! No! No! ( Rushing to the phonograph, he removes the record.)  
Music moves me too much. I have to know why I'm moved!

MISS PORTERO

(Picking up the cane handle, she points it at Aeneas.)

A recurrence of the past, no?

FREUD (Face turns white.)

A recurrence of the past? (High-pitched.) . . .

MISS PORTERO

To find a home for his uprooted and wandering nation, the hero must, with his golden bough,  
(Using the gold handle to 'light the way'.)  
go into the underworld and, there, face his papa--

FREUD (Collecting self.)

I've had it with the father ghost business!

(HE picks up his hat; then grabs the handle from her and heads for door.)

MISS PORTERO

Leave and --

FREUD

And what?! Tell the world I'm a Jewboy from Vienna?--

(His hand on the door knob--)

MISS PORTERO

Something far more damning . . .

(She goes to Pan and whispers to him while playfully fondling his horns.)

See that miserable Jewboy?

By father-murder at Rome

He, brother-murder, would atone --

FREUD

What the hell are--?

(When H looks back at her he sees his "double," who seems to have materialized out of thin air. Actually, it's Freud's reflection in a mirror. Turning pale, FREUD backs away, covering his eyes with his hat , while clutching his heart.)

My double. . . I'm about to die! (High-pitched, to self.)

MISS PORTERO

You, the great Sigmund Freud, you, who would rid the world of religious superstition, the would-be Messiah who would usher in a Golden Age grounded in reason, you are the most superstitious of all creatures, believing that names conjure ghosts and in the old fish wives' tale that each of us has a double who appears just before we die! And who knows in what else?! Some hero! Some careful preparation you have made for your baptism in Hell, that is to say, the gloomy chamber of Moses, in the Church of San Pietro in Vincoli . . . Moses and Jesus need not, it seems, lose any sleep over this the latest comer . . .

(SHE grabs the hat, which still covers his face, out of Freud's hands.)

It is safe, hero, to unveil your face. For your terrible double is but your own pitiful reflection.

FREUD

( FREUD looks at himself in the mirror. Disgusted with himself, he bites down on his lips. There's a howling wind; the terrace doors fling open; St. Peter's Dome is visible; Gregorian chants are heard, a boys' choir; he covers his ears; the mirror shatters into many pieces before

his eyes. He jumps. Collecting himself, as though drawn there, he goes to the terrace. He looks out at St. Peter's Dome.)

How proudly it rears its golden head to heaven, that lie of the salvation of mankind.

MISS PORTERO

( She's by what remains of the mirror,  
trying on the straw hat.)

In 15 years, Hannibal, with all his men and large tusked elephants, was not able to storm the city gates. And, yet you, you who are terrified of your own image, you can crush the new Romans, the Holy Roman Catholic Church!?

FREUD

It's a question of arms.

(He picks up an old clay pot which has touches of gold.)

MISS PORTERO

Then you have the arms?

( She tilts the hat with Freud's golden cane handle.)

FREUD

I have the arms.

( With his hands, he breaks the pot, as one might an egg. He looks at it and at the Dome. He pulls a shard from his left hand; applies his handkerchief to staunch the bleeding. )

MISS PORTERO

That's good.  
Well, what do you think?

(Satisfied with the way the hat looks.)  
(Referring to the way the hat looks on her.)

FREUD

I think it's time to go.  
It's been an experience—

(He grabs his hat and gold handle.)

MISS PORTERO

( SHE blocks the way; in her hand is an orange branch with oranges still attached.)

Tell me, which of us belongs in the *Manicomio*, our brilliantly lighted lunatic asylum?

FREUD

Move witch!

MISS PORTERO

Leave and I nip your line in the bud.

(Her right thumb and forefinger are  
poised to pinch an orange from the bough.)

FREUD

You threatening my kids?

( Letting go of his hat and cane handle HE grabs her by  
the shoulders. )

MISS PORTERO

Your biological children, no. Your enlightened line, yes.

FREUD

Enlightened line? Just what the hell are you talking about?

MISS PORTERO

One can be a Moses without fathering a people who will be a light unto all nations? That is  
news to this *goyische kopf*. (Lighting a cigarette.)

FREUD

If the songs you sang at La Scala are as silly as the things you say, then there is a merciful  
God after all.

(He is about to bend over to pick up his  
cane handle and hat--.)

MISS PORTERO

My singing days, they may be over, but I can still speak. And were I to mouth my silly idea  
that you intend to destroy Judaism and Christianity, there would be no receptive ground to  
scatter your seed . . . now would there? And, poof, there goes your longed-for line, your  
longed-for redemptive line.

( Pulling off two small oranges SHE  
drops them into his hat.)

(FREUD looks at the oranges. Then he  
takes the cane handle and lifts it in a  
menacing manner, as though he is about to cudgel  
her with it.)

You haven't the balls.

(She rolls the oranges across the floor.)

Now, Castrato, you may kiss the nun . . .

(Handling her beaded necklace as  
Rosary beads which now sparkle.)

('Losing it', FREUD begins to choke  
MISS PORTERO, who, biting his left hand,  
won't let go. Finally freeing his hand,  
FREUD grabs a couch pillow to smother her.)

(LUCINA's laughter off-stage brings  
Freud 'back'.)

FREUD

(FREUD looks down in horror at his homicidal hands squeezing the pillow over the face of the now barely struggling MISS PORTERO whose beads are scattered. He lets her go.)

I could have killed her!

(There is a loud peal of thunder and brilliant light. The crude crucifix lights up. FREUD looks at it; then, at his bleeding hand; then back at the crucifix and becomes frozen in his posture.)

*(A mental projection: This time on Freud's face and open hands: Christ's face on Freud's face and the bloody stigmata on Freud's hands. Mixture of rage and terror on Freud's face.)*

(For a brief moment, St. Peter's Dome is visible through the terrace doors.)

( Note: The crucifix is a crude work, and just plain wood; not painted, making the Stigmata *projection* more powerful.)

(LUCINA's laughter, again, is heard.)

END of ACT I, SCENE 3