

**Ann and Aaron Look on as Freud on his Deathbed  
Turns the Pages of Balzac's *La Peau de Chagrin***

*A Play in Two Scenes*

*If you are to judge a man, you must know his secret thoughts, sorrows,  
and feelings; to know merely the outward events of a man's life would  
only serve to make a chronological table—a fool's notion of history.*

—Honoré De Balzac

*CAST of CHARACTERS*

Rabbi Aaron Handel                  Sixty, looks like Sigmund Freud, beard and all.

Ann Handel                              Rabbi Handel's wife, about the same age,  
attractive.

SETTING

The book-lined library-study of Rabbi Handel in Louisville, KY. On the mantle above the fireplace there is a large Menorah and also a 14-inch or so bronze-colored figurine of Michelangelo's *Moses*.

TIME

About 8:30 P.M., Wednesday, April 15, 2014—the 3rd day of Passover.

***SCENE I***

ANN

“Convinced”? Then you have no actual evidence that he had read the book before?

(Raising the translation, *The Wild Ass's Skin*.)

AARON

Right! Just the correspondences.

ANN

“Correspondences”?

AARON

Ann, he chose the book to relive his life.

ANN

To call up memories?

THE UNKNOWN FREUD: FIVE PLAYS . . .

AARON

Right! To stimulate or arouse recollections. Significant ones, as you'll see. . . . Several pages into the book the main character, Raphael, a profoundly depressed 26-year-old intending to throw himself in the Seine that evening, enters a dusty antique shop where "statues seemed alive," and whose mysterious elderly owner has "the look of one of those Jewish types who serve artists as models for Moses." Ann, anything about Freud—his biography—come to you?

ANN

I draw a blank.

AARON

This ought to help. Among the shop's works of art there was an unspecified "magnificent" statue by Michelangelo—

ANN

Michelangelo's *Moses*?

AARON

Right! Freud's trials before the statue.

ANN

"Trials"?

AARON

Trials, ordeals. . . . Ann, now please read. Just my underlining.  
(Hands her *The New York Review of Books*.)

ANN

*The New York Review of Books*?

AARON

It just came. The quote is from a memoir by Diane Johnson, who co-wrote *The Shining* with Stanley Kubrick. Please read, you'll understand.

ANN (SHE Reads)

Kubrick was concerned that the movie be scary, but what makes something scary? We sought the answer in the works of Freud, especially in his essay on the uncanny . . . for why things frighten us, and about what things are frightening, for instance the sudden animation of an inanimate figure. Dark is scary. Eyes can be scary.

Aaron, where is this heading?

ANN & AARON LOOK ON AS FREUD ON HIS DEATHBED . . .

AARON

For now, to this from Freud's 1914 essay "The Moses of Michelangelo," which he insisted be published anonymously. As I read, please keep in mind that the setting for *The Shining* is a deserted hotel . . .

(HE reads with emphases:)

. . . No piece of statuary has ever made a stronger impression on me  
. . . How often have I mounted the steep steps from the unlovely  
Corso Cavour to the *lonely* piazza where the *deserted* church  
stands, and have tried to support the *angry scorn of the hero's glance!*  
Sometimes I have crept cautiously out of the half-*gloom* of the  
interior as though I myself belonged to the mob *upon whom his eye  
is turned* . . .

ANN (Re-reads NYR:)

Dark is scary. Eyes can be scary—  
For his paper on the uncanny Freud drew on his experience before  
Michelangelo's *Moses*?—

AARON

Right! The gloomy, deserted Church of St. Peter in Chains was a fitting setting for that glowering stone image to become Moses. Now, for six months starting in October 1885, when he was 29, just three years older than Raphael who is Balzac's main character, Freud was in Paris, the setting of the novel. He's there on a grant to study with the renowned neurologist, Charcot.

ANN

The book brought back his stay in Paris? Okay.

AARON

Now Raphael had fallen hard for a young courtesan, a certain Foedora, the belle of Paris. In time, however, he realizes that instead of that "unapproachable" narcissist that he actually loves another, his landlady's beautiful young daughter. Pauline worshipped him, voluntarily did all sorts of chores for this impoverished scholar then existing on practically nothing—and who, while boarding there, to quote Raphael, "had laid commands upon myself to see only a sister in Pauline . . ." "See only a *sister* in Pauline . . ." Ann, sound familiar?

ANN

Freud and Martha's younger sister, Minna?—

AARON

Whom Freud called "*Schwester*."

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ANN

Another apparent correspondence? Okay.

AARON

As he is about to leave the dusty, dimly lit shop to head for the Seine, Raphael cries, “And now for death!” Spotting an opening, the ancient shop owner clasps Raphael’s “wrists in a grip like a vice,” directing Raphael’s attention to an ass’s skin, claiming that this magic skin marked with the “Seal of Solomon” grants its possessor any wish, but there is a catch, a big one—with each fulfilled wish not only does this magic skin shrink but so does one’s life. And, Ann, what has Raphael to lose? He’s penniless and his dream of becoming renowned by “opening up new paths in science,” it is clear, would never be realized—

ANN

“Opening up new paths in science.”—Another identification with Raphael. Okay.

AARON

The year before leaving for Paris, Freud writes Martha, then his fiancée, that he has destroyed his “notes, letters, treatises,” etc. And his reason? To elude his biographers! Quote: “Each one of them will be right in his opinion of ‘The Development of the Hero,’ and I am already looking forward to seeing them go astray.”

ANN

Freud’s early dreams of glory returned. I already got that!

AARON

Dreams of glory which persisted. Now, having plugged along, denied himself for three years, with nothing to show for it, and about to commit suicide anyway, Raphael enters into a compact with that thin old “specter with green eyes—eyes with quiet malevolence.” And thanks to that “oriental leather talisman with terrible powers” he becomes wealthy, obscenely so—and in short order, he and Pauline marry. And in no time, this otherwise indestructible skin is, as you can imagine, reduced considerably. Raphael, now fearful for his life, not only banishes Pauline from their bed but also from their magnificent house—even orders his servant, Jonathan, to make sure she never enters.

ANN

To keep from being aroused?

AARON

No Pauline; no lusting her—

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ANN

Just a living death. Some choice! . . . Wait! Aaron, after finishing it, Freud, you say, told Dr. Shur that the novel, because it deals with “shrinking and starvation,” was an appropriate book for him to have read.

AARON

Right!

ANN

So, supposing Freud’s relationship with Minna was, as you claim, actually evoked—then “starvation” pertains more to his yearning for—his hungering after—his “*Schwester*” Minna than to his difficulty eating due to his oral cancer—

AARON

For which he had undergone 33 operations since 1923. That, Ann, is exactly how I see it.

ANN

There’s a new novel about Minna being his mistress—

AARON

I know. That’s garbage!—

ANN

“Garbage”? Maybe you don’t wish to believe it.

AARON

Ann, I’ll say it again, garbage . . . Still, somewhere along the way, Freud’s passion for Martha was transferred on to Minna, who was four years younger, and more intellectual—

ANN

At least it stayed in the family.

AARON (Shakes his head.)

Around 1895 or 1896, Minna, whose former fiancé died of tuberculosis about ten years earlier, moved in with Freud and Martha, and became a permanent member of the household, that is to say, not only at Berggasse 19, but, also, after the family emigrated to London—that was in June 1938, after the invasion of Austria. . . . By giving him courage to persevere during “the years of struggle,” as Freud called them—well before he became FREUD—when he desperately needed it, Minna, without her knowing it, had helped him prepare the ground—

ANN

For his Promised Land?

THE UNKNOWN FREUD: FIVE PLAYS . . .

AARON

You remembered?

ANN

A secular world where anti-Semitism is unknown.

AARON

Right! An enlightened world in which the seed of Abraham can move freely across frontiers.

ANN

And he actually believed he could pull it off?

AARON

Let's say that he hoped against hope. Now, unlike Theodor Herzl, Freud doesn't broadcast his Promised Land. You see, Ann, secrecy is essential. His creation, psychoanalysis, must not be seen, like Herzl's Zionist movement, as a Jewish National Affair. And, Ann, a sexual scandal—especially with his wife's sister—would jeopardize the realization of his Promised Land, wouldn't it?—

ANN

Let alone what it would do to Martha and their six little ones . . .

AARON

Freud had firsthand knowledge of contraceptive failure—the birth of his last child, Anna. Regardless, he couldn't have lived with himself.

ANN

So, to be clear, according to you, Freud, like Raphael, was torn—but in his case, it was between his love, his passionate love, for Minna and his mission, his redemptive mission?

AARON

Right!

ANN

What a cruel predicament.

AARON

In the movie about Freud and Jung, you remember Jung's lover, his patient Sabina Spielrein?

ANN

Who stabbed him with a letter opener? How can I forget?!

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AARON

In 1914, Freud penned this to Spielrein, then twenty-eight, who was still longing for Jung. (HE reads:)

. . . Warm your life's intentions with your inner fire instead of burning yourself up with it. Nothing is stronger than controlled and sublimated passion. You can achieve nothing while you are at loggerheads with yourself.

ANN

And Freud, you believe, took his own advice?

AARON

To the letter. Ann, all his energies went into making his Promised Land a reality. Whatever passion he might have had for Minna went there.

ANN

Aaron, assuming you have pegged Freud correctly, why did it fall to him to deliver us from anti-Semitism? To avenge the thug's knocking Jakob's new *shtreimel* into the mud and ordering him off the pavement?

AARON

Hearing his grey-haired papa on one of their Sunday walks around the Ringstrasse relate that horror when Jakob was a young man—well, it was nothing if not traumatic, especially Jakob's not taking up for himself, but meekly going into the gutter and picking up his muddy *Shabbat* hat—

ANN

It's as though God Himself had died.

AARON

You could say that. Still, that fateful walk when Sigismund was ten or twelve wasn't determinative. Nor was the miserable Dreyfus Affair or his having grown up in Vienna, Europe's most anti-Semitic city.

ANN

Well, what then?

AARON

A dreadful return of the repressed. Let me explain. After Jakob passed away—that was in October, 1896—Freud, feeling uprooted—began his systematic self-analysis, mainly by studying his dreams. Soon after, some time in 1897, he discovers that he is a Cain—

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ANN

“A Cain”?

AARON

A brother-killer. This is from Freud’s letter to Wilhelm Fliess, a nose and throat specialist in Berlin, then his best friend—it was written on October 3rd.

(HE reads:)

. . . I welcomed my one-year-younger brother (who died within a few months) with ill wishes and real infantile jealousy, and . . . his death left the germ of guilt in me.

Ann, Freud couldn’t shake his belief that he had killed his baby brother, Julius—

ANN

With his hateful wishes? As brilliant as he was, and whose god was reason, he actually believed this?

AARON

Yes, against his better judgment.

ANN

How old was he ?

AARON

At the time? Sigismund was twenty-three months old.

ANN

One more apparent correspondence, a dreadful correspondence. Death follows desire.

AARON

Throughout his life Freud had migraines and suffered from periodic depressions. His unconscious guilt had to have played a role.

ANN

“Unconscious guilt”?

AARON

An oppressive sense of guilt below the threshold of consciousness. Take, for instance, Freud’s and Martha’s first home, an apartment in a building commissioned by Emperor Franz Joseph. It was built on the site where a theatre had burned down. Over 400 died. The rent went to support the orphans, most, if not all, Jewish—

ANN

Freud’s rent, an atonement for killing Julius—this is what you believe?

AARON

Right! An unconscious atonement. Well, after the return or surfacing of his



having played Cain to Julius's Abel, Freud, oppressed by his sense of guilt, secretly resolves to redeem himself by delivering other Juliuses, and Sarahs, from anti-Semitism.—

ANN

This is your reading?

AARON

Right! And that very year, 1897, this haunted Cain not only comes up with the Oedipus complex but also a dazzling derivative: the God-idea stems from the Father complex. That is to say, God the Father is a mere projection out on to the universe of the oedipal boy's idealized perception of his own father. With this godsend—or God-send—Freud would cut the ground out from under religion, and, thereby, deliver, for once and for all, the seed of Abraham: no God; no Law, no Judaism, no Christianity, no miserable anti-Semitism.

ANN

Root and branch. Okay.

AARON

Now, Freud keeps God's humble beginnings under wraps, that is, until he'd gain major recognition. You see, first he must be seen as a scientist of the first order.

ANN

An essential precondition. Okay.

AARON

Ann, in his last major assault on religion, *Moses and Monotheism*—it was completed in late 1938—Freud, at long last, reveals his explanation for anti-Semitism.

ANN

Which is?

AARON

In essence, here it is ...The good Christian, not having the moral courage to acknowledge his hatred for his religion which obliges him to renounce his aggressive tendencies and illicit sexual desires, displaces this unconscious hatred onto the ones responsible for his misery, the ones who handed him his chains, the Jews. That is to say, the Apostles—all Jews—had enchained him.

ANN

And because Christianity and that scourge go hand in hand—are inextricable—Judaism must be sacrificed?

AARON

To Freud, there is no alternative. Now, before setting others free from their religious chains, he intends to set himself free from the Law. But how? . . .

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Well, Ann? . . .

(As HE glances at the figurine of *Moses* . . .)

ANN

Michelangelo's *Moses*?! Hm! A fitting prop.

AARON

Except a mere prop it isn't. You see, Ann, in the same way that for Roman Catholics the Host is a symbol, that magnificent statue in the gloomy Church of St. Peter in Chains is, for Freud, a symbol.

ANN

The statue is Moses?

AARON

Right! Ann, whenever Freud "crept cautiously out of the half-gloom of the interior," psychical reality was in play—that is to say, the imposing Tablet-bearing Moses stationed in his dark Roman chamber was, for Freud, Yahweh's Messenger. In other words, the world's greatest representation of that great man of our people was Freud's totem.

ANN

His, his "totem"?

AARON

His personal totem, that is to say, Moses himself or his shade.

ANN

Aaron, that's crazy!

AARON

Mortals, according to Freud, are not made to keep secrets, and, Ann, the father of psychoanalysis was he not a mortal? In his personal copy of *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*—the 1904 edition—Freud, for his eyes only, jotted quote, "My own superstition has its roots in suppressed ambition, immortality." "*Immortality*"! Well, were he to become the new Moses, both as liberator of his besieged nation and as the new moral educator of humanity, would he then not be immortal?

ANN

Moses is dead, long live the new Moses, Sigmund Freud—Such megalomaniac—

AARON

Whose *one* Law would be . . . would be?... Hint—an *enlightened* world—

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ANN

“Know Thyself!”

AARON

You got it! . . . My mind is slipping. Ann, where were we?

ANN

With Freud on Mt. Sinai—or was it Mt. Olympus?

AARON

(Shakes his head; reads from *The Wild Ass's Skin*, with emphases:)

. . . and [Raphael] beheld Moses and the Hebrews and the desert . . .  
(Now quotes the Torah, Exodus 34:30; 33:)

And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him . . . And *till* Moses had done speaking with them, he put a veil on his face.

Of course, Ann, in his gloomy chamber, Yahweh's Messenger has no veil covering his terrible adiance.

ANN

“No veil covering his terrible radiance.” Aaron, you've really lost it!

AARON

For his 35th birthday, May 6, 1891, Jakob gave Freud a re-bound volume of the family Bible as, quote, “a reminder of love from your father, who loves you with everlasting love.”—Ann, that's a partial translation of Jakob's Hebrew dedication. Now, the frontispiece of this Bible, *The German-Hebrew Philippon's Bible*, is an illustration of Moses with rays of light shooting up from both sides of his forehead. Imagine that lithograph's effect on Sigismund when he first saw it as a seven-year-old.

(Leafing through *The Wild Ass's Skin*.)

—Ah! Ann, tell me that when Freud came across this that it didn't call up his experience in that dark Church before *Moses/Moses* with his awful radiance.

(HE reads:)

. . . only about the size of a fox's skin, the wild ass's skin seemed to fill the *deep shadows of the place with such brilliant rays* that it looked like a small comet.

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ANN

Aaron, you seek, you find. A real Kabbalist—

AARON

Ann, at the seminary this “Kabbalist” was exhorted to return to the texts. Well, Ann, in that famous paragraph from his essay on Michelangelo’s *Moses*, the German word “*Blick*” denotes the glance of Moses—as in, “I tried to support the angry scorn of the hero’s glance!”

ANN

Okay?

AARON

Now in this German-English dictionary, please look up *Blick* with “ck.”

ANN (Looking at the worn book.)

*Cassell’s*, 1906?

AARON

Goodwill.

ANN (Shakes her head.)

*Blick*—“Touches of Light.”

AARON

Now how about the verb form?

ANN

*Blicken*—“to glance, to look; to appear shining; to shine.”  
(SHE looks at Aaron.)

AARON (Retrieving *Cassell’s*)

Chance coincidence that for the statue’s glance Freud chooses a word that can allude to the *mana*, that shining or terrible supernatural power, the radiance of Moses? Now, Ann, look at *anblitzen* (Pointing at word) which stems from the same root—

ANN

Aaron, you already made your point.

AARON

Humor me.

ANN (Reluctantly takes *Cassell’s*)

*Anblitzen*—“to cast a furious look upon, to dart a look upon; to throw a ray on.”

Impressive. (SHE is about to hand him *Cassell’s*)

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AARON (Refusing *Cassell's*)

From *Blick*, Ann, let's now turn to the word that's translated as "support," as in Freud's trying "to support *the angry scorn of the hero's glance*."—

ANN

Aaron!

AARON

After this we're through with *Cassell's*. Ann, I promise.

(Writes on a yellow legal page "*Standhalten*: support"; hands it to Ann.)

ANN (Reads *Cassell's*)

*Standhalten*—'To withstand; to resist; to hold one's own; to stand firm'

AARON

Just so! Freud aims to *Halt!* (mimes a soldier halting!), *stand* defiantly before *Moses/Moses* and not be budged; he'd take anything that he throws his way, the potentially fatal radiance included.

ANN (Returning *Cassell's* to Aaron)

Aaron, I shouldn't encourage you, but there seems to be one other, er, correspondence.

AARON

And that is?

ANN

Freud's mother believed that he was destined to become a great man.

AARON

And never let him forget it.

ANN

And, Aaron, just what made Amalia believe in her *goldener Sigi's* great destiny?

AARON

The caul—his having been born in a caul on his head.

(AARON leafs through *The Interpretation of Dreams*.)

Ah!

At the time of my birth an old peasant-woman had prophesied to my proud mother that with her firstborn child she had brought a great man into the world . . .

ANN

On the one hand, Raphael's magic hide, and, on the other, Freud's prophetic caul. A kind of a symmetry, wouldn't you say?

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AARON

Not bad. Not bad at all. Hm! The ass's skin was engraved with the "Seal of Solomon." Ann, Freud was born Sigismund Schlomo after Jakob's father—Which raises the question, Did this Solomon then see the caul—?

ANN

As his seal of authority? Aaron, that's a stretch.

AARON

Is it? After all, this Schlomo or Solomon was name-sensitive.

ANN

Aaron, how hard would it be to get permission to look at the book?

AARON

For Freud's jottings or underlinings?

ANN

Worth a try.

AARON

Klein would vouch for us. Even so, I doubt that The Sigmund Freud Archives would give us permission. . . . Now, as for the totem business, it can be traced back to *goldener* Sigi's other mother, that is to say, if bread can be Jesus, what's to keep stone, marble, from being Moses? Ann, bear with me. Amalia was just 22 when Julius died, and the month before his death, her brother, also named Julius, had died. And with Jakob, a struggling textile merchant trying to keep the family afloat financially and with Amalia, again pregnant, and suffering a double grief, his faithful nanny—in all but name—became his mother—

ANN

Filling the maternal void—

AARON

Giving her the opportunity to instill a Catholic sensibility. Accordingly, she took him to Mass regularly, transforming her lost, precocious Jewish charge into a good little Catholic—or tried to.

ANN

"Give us a child."

AARON

Right. Even though dismissed when Freud was two-and-a-half—for stealing, even his toys—it was long enough for her to have left, ever so lovingly, her mark. Not that his instructress in the faith had him baptized—though come to

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think of it, since she had a free hand, she very well may have. At any rate, in addition to his Jewish sensibility, Freud possessed a Roman Catholic sensibility, of which he was fully aware by the time he resolves to eradicate anti-Semitism. That he eventually summoned courage to enter the Eternal City is a wonder. You see, Ann—

ANN

Again, this all-important visit, when was this?

AARON

In September, 1901. He was 45 and believed that he had just six years left to live—

ANN

That he'd die at 51?

AARON

In his eyes, he was in a race against time. It's in his Dream Book, quote: “. . . my fear of 51 years being the limit of my life”. . . Now, during those four years, not only was Freud readying himself for his dreaded face-off with *Moses/Moses*—and who really can be prepared for Moses?—he also was readying himself for—

ANN

The awakening or re-awakening in the Seat of Catholicism of his ‘Catholic head’.

AARON

“Catholic head.” That's one way of describing it. And the anticipated stirring up of his suppressed Roman Catholic sensibility, why should that prospect trouble him? Ann? . . . Hint. What was he all about?

ANN

Ultimately? Redemption . . . *Self-redemption!*

AARON

And, were his broken through Roman Catholic tendencies to prevail, overwhelm his resistance, he'd then—

ANN

Acknowledge Christ—

AARON

Which, Ann, is both a fear and a wish—a suppressed wish.

ANN

Making the Seat of Catholicism potentially his road to Damascus—

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AARON

More so, since in addition to redemption, conversion to Catholicism holds out for this haunted Cain the promise of reuniting with baby Julius in Paradise. Which brings us back to Raphael and the ancient antiquities dealer whom even his “plump-faced young shopman with red hair” claims not to “know what he is.” Ann, please—

ANN (Reads;)

“You wish to see Raphael’s portrait of Jesus Christ, *monsieur?*” . . .  
The sympathy and love, and the gentle serenity in the divine face, exerted an instant sway over the younger spectator—

AARON

Thanks. Now compare this—it’s from Freud’s letter to Martha dated December 20, 1883. He had just visited Dresden’s Zwinger Museum—Incidentally, Dresden plates were in the antique shop.

(HE reads:)

But the picture that really captivated me was the “Maundy Money,” by Titian . . .

Ann, this Titian painting, it’s actually titled *The Tribute Money*—

ANN

“Maundy Money” is a slip of the pen?

AARON

Right! It’s not a simple case of misremembering. Repression was at work, as you’ll see. I’m continuing:

(HE resumes reading:)

This head of Christ, my darling, is the only one that enables even people like ourselves to imagine that such a person did exist. Indeed, it seemed that I was compelled to believe in the eminence of this man because the figure is so convincingly presented. And nothing divine about it, just a noble countenance, far from beautiful yet full of seriousness, intensity, profound thought, and deep inner compassion; if these qualities do not exist in this picture, then there is no such thing as physiognomy. I would love to have gone away with it, but there were too many people about . . . So I went away with a full heart.

ANN

Okay, Freud, like Balzac’s protagonist, was moved by an Italian Renaissance master’s Christ. But, Aaron, Freud states, quote, there’s “nothing divine” about Titian’s Christ.



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AARON

“I went away with a full”—that is, Ann, a heavy—“heart.” Doesn’t this suggest that when he misnamed the painting that Freud’s suppressed Catholic sensibilities were stirred up but repressed?

ANN

Suggests, yes. Indicates, no.

AARON

Ann, this is from a follow-up letter written four days after his first visit to Notre Dame on a Sunday in November:

(HE reads:)

My first impression on entering was a sensation I have never had before: “This is a church” . . . I have never seen anything so movingly serious and somber . . .

“Movingly ” Ann, “movingly”! And in a subsequent letter he writes of “coming out of of Notre Dame . . .with an entirely new idea of *perfection*.” No, Ann, that faithful Czech nanny who had taken Sigismund to Mass in the Notre Dame of his Moravian birthplace—Freiberg’s the Church of the Nativity of *Our Lady*—had prepared him well, too well—

ANN

For converting?

AARON

For Christianity.

ANN

Aaron, you realize, don’t you? that you have yet to make your case.

AARON

Ann, there’s a good reason that analysts emphasize the importance of early childhood.

ANN

The plastic stage of development. Okay?

AARON (HE writes on a yellow pad.)

“The plastic stage,” when each one of us is essentially shaped. . . . Now, Ann, please begin again with “The sympathy...”

ANN

Aaron, is this necessary?

AARON

To make my case, yes.

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ANN (Reads:)

The sympathy and love, and the gentle serenity in the divine face, exerted an instant sway over the younger spectator. Some influence falling from heaven bade cease the burning torment that consumed the marrow of his bones. The head of the Saviour of mankind seemed to issue from among the shadows. . . . An aureole of light shone out brightly from his hair—

AARON

Thanks. Now, in the Eternal City were Freud—a haunted Cain suffering from “burning torment that consumed the marrow of his bones”—to prevail over the temptation to acknowledge Christ as his savior he’d exorcise his “Catholic head”—or so he believes. And, in this regard, he expects that his greatest test or trial would be in the Sistine Chapel with its powerful works of religious art—especially, Ann, before another masterpiece, this one also by Michelangelo—the huge, over 2,100 square foot incense-blackened *Last Judgment* on the Chapel’s altar wall.

ANN

Speculation upon speculation.

AARON

Now, Ann, if there is one quality that Michelangelo’s Christ lacks, it is Sympathy; Justice, he has plenty of. It’s not for nothing that George Brandes characterizes Michelangelo’s depiction of Jesus spurning the damned as, quote, “Christ as Jove, hurling thunderbolts.”

ANN

The evidence! Aaron, the evidence!

AARON

I’m getting to it. In September 1897, several weeks after making his resolve, Freud travels to Orvieto—it’s about 80 miles north of Rome—where in its Cathedral, the Duomo, he gets to see for the first time, Signorelli’s *Last Judgment*.

ANN

To steel himself for Michelangelo’s Doomsday?

AARON

Right! Not only is Signorelli’s *Last Judgment* the immediate precursor to Michelangelo’s *Last Judgment*, but, more importantly, it informed Michelangelo’s *Last Judgment*.—Ann, Listen to this from Brandes whom Freud valued. It’s from his Michelangelo biography:

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(HE finds the passage:)

As for the nudity of the figures, the dead rising from the ground and Charon and his ferry, Luca Signorelli pointed the way.

ANN

All very interesting, But let's just back up. From Balzac's novel Freud's mind travels back in time over forty years to Orvieto in 1897? And just how do you know this?

AARON.

In the dusty showroom where the pact was made there was an Etruscan vase. And on that visit Freud came across, quote, (reads from *The Interpretation of Dreams*:) "an excavated Etruscan grave near Orvieto." You see, Ann, Etruscans had settled in that region well before the Romans or there was even a town named Orvieto—

ANN

Aaron, that's pretty thin.

AARON

Thin or not, the visit was critical! . . .

ANN

And so it simply had to have been called up.

AARON

You be the judge. In September 1898, or twelve months after visiting Orvieto, Freud writes Fliess of his recent failure to, quote, "find the name of the renowned painter who did the *Last Judgment* in Orvieto, the greatest I have seen so far." Ann, "so far"!

ANN

Okay, in Freud's mind there is a connection between the two *Last Judgments*.

AARON

"[T]he greatest I have seen" "so far"! Don't you see?, Freud intends to take his stand before Michelangelo's *Last Judgment*.

ANN

And this is your mighty evidence?

AARON

Not quite. Continuing, Freud relates that though he recalled Signorelli's first name, Luca, he failed to recall his last name, and that instead the surnames of two other Renaissance painters, Botticelli and Boltraffio, came to him. He goes on to observe: "It is clear why Botticelli had moved into the foreground; only *Signor* was repressed." And "*Signor*," my dear, means "Lord."

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ANN

But, Aaron, just how does Freud, *himself*, account for his failure to recall Signorelli's last name?

AARON

Essentially, it is this. During the lapse he was repressing the recent suicide of a patient, news of which he had learned about on this trip. Or, as Freud writes:

(HE reads:)

. . . I forgot *the one thing against my will* while I wanted to forget *the other thing intentionally*.

Freud had learned of the tragedy in Trafoi, which, he notes, is similar to “traffio”—as in *Boltraffio*. But, Ann, once again, Freud is holding back. You see, Freud is afraid that like his patient who had taken his life that he, too, may be suffering from an “incurable sexual problem”—in his case, his emotional or libidinal ties to Jakob. That is to say, Freud suffers from an unresolved Father complex. But in the Eternal City were he to heal himself, surmount his Father complex—become his own person—then, no longer submissive to Will of the Father—be the Father Jakob Freud, Moses, or Yahweh—he could get on with his messianic mission.

ANN

A potentially *suicidal* mission. Remember the *mana*!

AARON.

Ann, that's terrible.

ANN

So is the fatal *mana*.

AARON

Laugh, but you're right. Recall Yahweh cautioning Moses on Mt. Sinai, “Thou canst not see my face. For there shall no man see me and live.” . . .

ANN

Like Balzac's Raphael, Freud fears for his life. One more correspondence. Okay.

AARON

Now, let's turn to “Bo,” as in Botticelli and Boltraffio. Ann, what comes to you?

ANN

“Bo”? Well, Buddha, he got his illumination under the Bo tree.

AARON

I'm talking about Judaism and I get Buddhism! . . . Ann, how about our Tree of Life?, specifically the Torah portion covering the first Passover, that is, the section Bo which was an integral component of Freud's beloved Hebrew and Scriptures instructor Professor Hammerschlag's curricula at the *Sperl-gymnasium*—and which of course begins:

And the Lord said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh: for I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his servants, that I might show these my signs before him.

With clear "signs," Bo or Exodus 10:1 to 13 reveals both Yahweh's terrible Justice, especially that dreadful last plague, the death of the firstborn son—and His Mercy, our deliverance from Egyptian bondage—

ANN

Setting the stage for the revelation of the Law at Mt. Sinai. Okay.

AARON

Ann, in "Bo," as Freud knows only too well, Yahweh commands the Israelites:

. . . all the firstborn of man among thy children shalt thou redeem.

ANN

Let's see! Having spared the firstborn of the Israelites when He killed the firstborn of the Egyptians, Yahweh makes a claim on Freud's firstborn son. And only by being pious—by not transgressing—could this Israelite redeem his firstborn son.

AARON

Right! Yahweh must be obeyed—or else!

ANN

During the Signorelli lapse, the Torah portion Bo, then, was called up?

AARON

Right! Evoked, but repressed.

ANN

Repressed? Because Bo is so threatening?

AARON

Right—too threatening for him to become conscious of.

THE UNKNOWN FREUD: FIVE PLAYS . . .

ANN

Aaron, again, this is what *you* infer. But, how does Freud, himself, *actually* account for the substitute names beginning with Bo?"

AARON

He doesn't.

ANN

He doesn't?! His words, please.

AARON

All right, give me a second. (looks it up; reads:)

The repetition of the sound 'Bo' in the two substitutive names might have led a novice to suppose that it belonged to the missing name as well, but I took great care to steer clear of that expectation.

Ha! You better believe he steered "clear of that expectation"!—The expectation of trouble! . . . Ann, you've just cued me in. . . . Please read this. It's from the first edition of *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Freud has yet to enter the city of his dreams.

ANN (Reads:)

For a long time to come, no doubt, I shall have to continue to satisfy that longing in my dreams; for at the season of the year when it is possible for me to travel, residence in Rome must be avoided for reasons of health.

Okay?

AARON

Ostensibly, Freud, here, is alluding to his fear of contracting malaria in Rome, but, Ann, "reasons of health" may it not be, in addition, and more importantly, a veiled allusion to Freud's fear of the last and most horrific of the Bo plagues, the death the firstborn son?

ANN

Already Freud is responsible, he feels, for the death of one child, baby Julius. And yet he would stay on this potentially catastrophic path, one for which not only Martin but all his other little ones "unto the third and fourth generation" would pay for their papa's rebellion?

AARON

That's the question isn't it?!—But, Ann, for Freud, not for us. . . . Now, the day after arriving in Orvieto, he makes a twelve mile side-trip to the little town of Bolsena where, during one particular mass, drops of blood seeped from the Communion Wafer.

ANN

This alleged bloody miracle, when was this?

AARON (Looks it up)

In 1263, The Orvieto Cathedral was built in memory of the Miracle. For the faithful, the blood-stained chalice-cloth is *the* treasure of the Duomo. Today, *the Santo Corporale* is on open display daily but wasn't so when Freud visited Orvieto. The chalice-cloth was then stored—as it had been for centuries—in a silver-gilt and enamel reliquary depicting the miracle. And, Ann, here is where Raphael, the Renaissance master, again enters the picture. You see, about 250 years after the alleged incident, Raphael—he was a favorite of Freud's—portrays the miracle in *The Mass of Bolsena*. Commenting on this mural in the Papal Palace, Vasari, a contemporary of Raphael, makes the following observation in his *Lives of the Painters*, which, as part of his preparation, Freud may very well have read. At any rate, Ann, according to Ernest Jones, in the 1890's Freud in his correspondence referred to Vasari's *Lives*.

(Reads with emphases:)

One sees the priest, as he says Mass, flushing with shame as he realizes that through his disbelief in the doctrine of transubstantiation he has made the Host on the corporale turn to blood. *With terror in his eyes, distraught and dumbfounded* in the presence of the congregation, *he hardly knows what to do*; and in the movements of his hands *one can almost see the fear and trembling* to be expected in such circumstances.

Ann, on the fresco's right side, anachronistically taking in this extraordinary 13th century scene, is the figure of Pope Julius the Second, but for whom, since he had commissioned Michelangelo to create the statue, there would have been no *Moses/Moses* for Freud, with "fear and trembling," to stand defiantly before. . . . As for the Miracle's blood-stained relic, Freud, more than likely, did not get to see it—

ANN

Wait just one minute! Wouldn't he have made it a point to visit Orvieto when this evidence for transubstantiation is **actually** displayed?

AARON

Right! For no other reason than to test himself: "Like that young doubting Bohemian priest would I become a believer, that is, in my case would I, overwhelmed by the sight of the chalice-cloth, acknowledge, on the spot, that God is not a mere wish-fulfillment stemming from a longing for the father but that He actually exists—and that He is Jesus Christ 'whose blood . . . cleanseth us

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from all sin'?" "All sin," Ann, even brother-murder—In one of the galleries there was quote, "a sleeping child modeled in wax—"

ANN

Mingled among how many other depicted specimens, hundreds? Aaron, you realize, don't you, that just now you've all but confessed that you've erected a house of cards?

AARON

I believe that he was misled by his guidebook.

ANN

Freud "misled by his guide book"?

AARON

*Baedeker's Italy From The Alps To Naples.*

(Hands Ann the 1909 English translation)

ANN

"Louis Ochs, Louisville, KY." Goodwill?

AARON

Locust Grove book sale. Freud consulted it the year before, when he visited Florence in 1896. Just the underlining, please.

ANN (Reads:)

behind the altar is a reliquary of 1337 containing the blood-stained chalice-cloth or *corporale* connected with the Miracle of Bolsena, shown on great festivals only.

AARON

Thanks. Freud arrived in Orvieto on September 8 or the Feast Day of The Birth of Mary—

ANN

A festival in honor of the birth of Jesus' mother.—An apparently suitable Holy Day for the *corporale* to be on open display. Okay?

AARON

That's what one would have thought—including, I suspect, Freud. Well, he got to Orvieto that evening, but even if he had arrived there earlier that day he still wouldn't have had a chance to view it, that is, unless he bribed the sacristan. You see, the *Corporale* was then shown on two Holy Days only: Easter Sunday and the Holy Day instituted in memory of the miracle, namely, Corpus Christi, aka The Feast of the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament –



ANN & AARON LOOK ON AS FREUD ON HIS DEATHBED . . .

ANN

“This is my body . . . this is my blood . . .”

AARON

And, here is where—no pun intended—Freud’s “Maundy Money” slip enters the picture. You see, Ann, Maundy pertains to Jesus washing the feet of his disciples on the occasion of the Last Supper, which, of course, is when Christ established the Eucharistic ceremony.

ANN

So much, then, for there being “nothing divine” about Titian’s Christ!—

AARON

In the Zwinger museum, right! . . . Well, Ann, have I made my case that Freud, well before the surfacing in 1897 of his having ‘murdered’ baby Julius, had viewed, albeit unconsciously, conversion—being cleansed by the blood of Christ—as his possible ticket to redemption?

ANN

I don’t know about psychoanalysts, but to me you’ve made your case. Still, Aaron, you seem to have blinded yourself.

AARON

Blinded myself?

ANN

To the elfin in the gloomy showroom.

AARON

Elphin?

ANN

The malevolent green-eyed elfin . . . If Freud’s ‘Roman Catholic head’ believes in the Last Judgment, then it must also believe that Lucifer—as in Luca—exists. And, Aaron, what’s to keep Freud from entering, like Raphael, into a Faustian pact with that tempter? What’s he to lose? His inner torment?

AARON

But sell his soul for what?

ANN

Freud, as you say, is in a race against time. Well, how about—?

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AARON

Time to prepare the ground! . . .

(Leafing through Freud's 1898 essay on the Signorelli lapse.)

Ann, listen to this:

. . . I was able to conjure up the pictures with greater sensory vividness than is usual with me. I saw before my eyes with especial sharpness [Signorelli's] self-portrait—with a serious face and folded hands—which he has put in a corner of one of the pictures, next to the portrait of his predecessor in the work, Fra Angelico . . .

ANN

Okay?

AARON

Well, in this particular fresco of Signorelli's *Last Judgment* cycle in Orvieto, the Devil counsels the Antichrist, whispering in his left ear. According to Paul Vitz, Signorelli's bearded Antichrist resembles Freud, but I don't see it.

ANN

What do you think, did he or didn't he?—

AARON

Make a Faustian pact? Though he may have been tempted, I doubt it.

ANN

Or, you'd like not to think so. To tell the truth, Aaron, neither would I, neither would I.

(Heads for computer; types "Signorelli Antichrist.")

AARON

Ann, e-mail can wait!

ANN (Finds the fresco)

I also don't see a resemblance between Freud and Signorelli's Antichrist.

AARON

The question, though, is, Did Freud?

ANN

So, Aaron, are we now ready to head for the Eternal City, circa September 1901?

AARON

But first one more preparation. On August 8th, three weeks before boarding the train for Rome, Freud, who doesn't particularly care for music, sets out for Salzburg to attend a performance of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, which he had seen before—

ANN

Ah! The banquet scene!

AARON

Right! The fateful encounter between Don Juan and the marble statue of the *Commandatore*, the father-figure he had killed—

ANN

One more stone come to life.

AARON

Because he had shaped us by giving us the Law, Moses, according to Freud, is *the* ancestor—the father—of each and every Jew. And since he intends, by destroying the Law, to kill Moses, it is reasonable to assume that Freud identifies with that father-killer, Don Juan.

ANN

Okay, I get the picture—On the one hand, Freud and *Moses* /Moses, and, on the other, Don Juan and the *Commandatore*/Commandatore –

AARON

Right! ... Refusing to repent of his sins, Don Juan wrests his hand free from the *Commandatore*'s "icy clasp," thereby sealing his fate—

ANN

The "icy clasp"—much like the antiquarian's clasping Raphael's "wrists in a grip like a vice"—

AARON

Right! (Making liberal use of a libretto translation:)  
Smoke and flames rise and begin to envelop the sinner, while the *Commandatore*, moving away, announces, "Ah! there is no more time." Then from below a chorus of demons summons Don Juan to Hell where "worse is in store for you ." Terrified, he cries, "*Ah! che inferno, che terror!*"—and sinks to Hell, uttering one final scream, "Ah!"

ANN

What comes to me is that solitary anguished soul in *The Scream* covering his ears.

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AARON

Ann, picture, if you can, Freud as he tries to contain himself.

ANN

It may be a dress rehearsal—but what a rehearsal!

AARON

Ann, you'll agree, to steel Freud for both Michelangelo's *Moses* and his *Last Judgment* a more fitting scene than this gripping climax would be difficult, if not impossible, to find.

ANN

Aaron, the punishment of Korah and his cohorts is structurally similar—uncannily so.

AARON (Reads from Numbers 16:31–35:)

And it came to pass, as [Moses] had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that *was* under them. And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that *appertained* unto Korah, and all *their* goods. They, and all that *appertained* to them, went down alive into the pit; and the earth closed upon them and they perished from among the congregation. . . . And all Israel that *were* round about them fled at the cry of them . . . . And there came out a fire from the LORD . . . .

ANN

Conceivably, then, during the Signorelli lapse, Korah's revolt against Moses in Sinai was called up.

AARON

“Conceivably”?! How could it not have been? Especially since in *The Punishment of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram*—it's in the Sistine Chapel—the substitute painter Botticelli clearly depicts rays of light shooting up from both sides of Moses' forehead.

ANN (Googling “Botticelli Korah”)

But, Aaron, Freud hadn't yet been to the Sistine Chapel.

AARON

And, Freud, with his self-acknowledged obsessive personality, he wouldn't have pored over images of the murals surrounding *The Last Judgment*?!

ANN (Studying the computer image)

Especially, Aaron, (Gestures for him to look at the image; HE does.)

ANN & AARON LOOK ON AS FREUD ON HIS DEATHBED ...

the bottom left corner of *The Punishment of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram* where Moses raises his right arm in judgment, tilts his head with its destructive radiance in the direction of Korah *et al*—

AARON

And the ground gives way, and Korah and his band of rebellious Israelites sink into the fiery pit—

ANN

Alive, just like Don Juan.

AARON

As you say, “structurally similar—uncannily so.”

ANN

*Nu*, Aaron, on to Rome already?!

AARON

Right! Next station, the Eternal City.

END of SCENE 1

THE UNKNOWN FREUD: FIVE PLAYS . . .

**SCENE 2**

AARON

Summoning courage, Freud finally enters Rome on September 2nd—bringing Alexander along, just in case.—

ANN

Just in case?

AARON

Freud has a train phobia, but I think he is afraid he'd come unglued, possibly have a psychotic break, or even a fatal heart attack. Remember, he already had signs of a heart condition.

ANN

But, Alexander, he doesn't know what his ambitious older brother was about?

AARON

Right! He is in the dark. Well, on the fourth day, Thursday, September 5th, Freud stands before *Moses/Moses*. At the time he still holds to the cathartic method of therapy. Ann, please read—it's from an 1896 paper, "The Aetiology of Hysteria." (Hands it to her)

ANN (Reads:)

. . . [we] lead the patient's attention back from his symptom to the scene in which and through which that symptom arose; and having thus located the scene, we remove the symptom by bringing about, during the reproduction of the traumatic scene, a subsequent correction of the psychical course of events which took place at the time.

Okay?

AARON

In other words, when a patient in the relative safety of his analyst's office relives a traumatic experience, there is a purging of the emotions that sustain the neurotic symptom which arose from that event.

ANN

The symptom is then purged, washed away? Okay.

AARON

At any rate, that's what's supposed to happen. Now, Freud's major neurotic symptom, as he sees it, is submission to the Will of the Father, right!?

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ANN

Ah! So, in addition to being the biblical Moses or his ghost, the statue is also a stand-in for Jakob.

AARON

Exactly. There'd be uprushes of his feelings and attitudes pertaining to Jakob—especially the patricidal rage and the terror while awaiting the dreaded retribution, Jakob's castrating him—

ANN

Just as Freud dreads Yahweh's retribution—

AARON

Right! His Visitations. But for now let's just stay with Freud and Jakob.

ANN

Okay?

AARON

As his oedipal emotions and feelings get stirred up and surface, Freud's got to recognize them for what they are, especially the return of his castration anxiety, which, Ann, caused little Sigi to abandon his impious ambition to kill Jakob in order to bed Amalia.

ANN

Aaron, let's see if I have it. If successful, that is, if he is able to withstand, not get overwhelmed by, by this dreaded "return of the repressed," Freud then resolves his, his Father complex—

AARON

That's the premise.—He'd have set himself free from the Father, again, whether he be Jakob Freud, Moses, or Jehovah—

ANN

And he could then get on with his ambition—

AARON

Now, Ann, when the Torah was translated into Greek, the Hebrew for "rays of light" was mistranslated as horns, and in the fourth century, St. Jerome carried this error over to the Latin version of the Scriptures, the Vulgate—

ANN

So that's why Michelangelo gave *Moses* horns. Okay—



AARON

That crown of horns, it had to have called up both the *mana* and the dreaded castration.

ANN

And Freud wasn't overwhelmed? He didn't lose it?

AARON

Not only did Freud not 'lose it,' but because he didn't, he was transformed into an exceptional being with all the qualities of Moses, his *mana* included—

ANN

Aaron, you expect me to believe that?

AARON

Ann, Freud believed it—his superstitious side did. Returning to Vienna, Freud writes Fliess that Rome was, quote, a “high point.” Ann, actually, it was a turning point—for both Freud and psychoanalysis. You see, in no time not only do disciples gather round this former forty-five-year-old Jew boy from the miserable streets of Vienna, but, transference, which Freud had seen as a nuisance—as something to be gotten out of the way—becomes the key instrument of analysis. The first mention of its crucial significance is here in Freud's 1905 Postscript to *Fragments of a Case of Hysteria*. . . .

(HE reads:)

. . . it is only after the transference has been resolved that a patient arrives at a sense of conviction of the validity of the connections which have been constructed during the analysis.

ANN

Does he say what alerted him?—

AARON

To transference's great significance? Never. Not in this Postscript, not ever. Nor for that matter does the father of psychoanalysis reveal when, in order to isolate the transference, and, thereby, make the analysand aware of just what is repressed, he had come up with the so-called analytic incognito.

(Reads from Freud's 1912 paper on technique, “Recommendations to Physicians Practising Psycho-Analysis”)

The doctor should be opaque to his patients and, like a mirror, show them nothing but what is shown to him.

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ANN

In other words, the analyst is to be like a statue—

AARON

You got it! Freud modeled himself after his mute, stone-faced co-therapist.

ANN

So, had Freud not gathered courage and faced *Moses*, analysis wouldn't have moved beyond catharsis?—

AARON

To transference? I doubt it. Which raises a related question: But for its 5-foot, seven-inch autocratic leader “who,” to quote Jones, “could on occasion create a formidable impression with a stern and somewhat scowling glance,”

(Pointing to scowling glance of the *Moses* figurine.)

would there today be a psychoanalytic movement, let alone one that's international in scope? Well?!

ANN

Aaron, you realize, we haven't covered Michelangelo's *Last Judgment*.

AARON

As far as I know, Freud never gave an account of his experience. But from this, which he had written Fliess upon his return, it's clear that Freud had resisted, prevailed over, his aroused or 'broken through' Roman Catholic tendencies.

(AARON hands Ann *The Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess*.)

Please, just the underlining.

ANN

(Reads from letter of September 19, 1901:)

Dear Wilhelm;

I should write to you about Rome now....I found it difficult to tolerate the lie concerning man's redemption, which raises its head to high heaven—for I could not cast off the thought of my own misery and all the other misery that I know of.

“[A]ll the other misery....” Anti-Semitism?

AARON

Right! The “misery of the Jews” or *Judennot*, as Herzl called that scourge in *The Jewish State*. Ann, now let's move ahead six years, to September 1907. At the fatal age of 51, Freud re-enters Rome, having the day before detained at Orvieto, where on this, his third visit, he's alone—

ANN & AARON LOOK ON AS FREUD ON HIS DEATHBED . . .

ANN

Where are you head—? . . .

AARON

Alone with Signorelli's *Last Judgment*.—

ANN

Ah! His “Catholic head,” it, then, hadn't been rooted out, extirpated?

AARON

Think about it! Try as we may, could we at our very core, really turn into unbelievers, atheists?! It's an impossibility, isn't it? Well, this self-professed “out and out unbeliever” remains stuck with both of his religious heads, one of which promises this haunted Cain not only redemption, but also Julius reuniting with him.

ANN

But Julius, he died unbaptized. And, as I understand—

AARON

Who knows? To comfort him, his instructress in the faith may have told her sad Jewish charge that baby Julius would welcome him to Paradise, that they'd be reunited . . .

(Getting *Letters of Sigmund Freud*, he opens it to Freud's Sept 21, 1907 letter to his wife, Martha, from Rome; *Yom Kippur* fell three days earlier, on the 18<sup>th</sup>.)

But back to Rome. It's a day or so after *Yom Kippur*. Freud visits, descends into Christian and Jewish catacombs. His guide, however, forgets to bring her exit key—and, Freud, “the only visitor,” can't get out.

ANN

He's locked in?

AARON

Until nightfall.

ANN

That's unreal!

AARON (Now Recites from memory:)

And the earth opened her mouth...they went down alive  
into the pit, and the earth closed upon them.

To quote Freud: “It is cold, dark, and not very pleasant down there.”

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(Handing the book to ANN, HE points:)

Here, where he writes about the Menorah.

ANN (Reads:)

In the Jewish catacombs the inscriptions are Greek, the candelabrum—I think it's called Menorah—can be seen on many tablets. "I think it's called Menorah."?! (Disbelief!)

AARON

Don't you see?! Freud knew that somewhere down the line his letters to Martha will be pored over—

ANN

But why conceal his knowledge of Judaism?

AARON

His creation, psychoanalysis, must be recognized as a science, an objective discipline, one that anyone, Jew or Gentile, could have created.

ANN

It was dismissed as a Jewish science, wasn't it?

AARON

Which would mean, of course, that it's not a science at all. That's why, before their final break in 1913, Freud had pinned his hopes on Carl Jung, the magnetic son of a Swiss pastor. . . . But let's move on from 1907 to 1908—

ANN

A year-by-year account? Aaron, I've still papers to grade.

AARON

Ann, this is too important to pass over. On the night of April 15, 1908, that is, on the fiftieth anniversary of Julius' death, the six-year-old Psychological Wednesday Society—on Freud's carried motion—is re-named the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society—

ANN

In this way, he dedicates to the memory of baby Julius the psychoanalytic movement?

AARON

Secretly so—a movement which, if all goes according to plan, would purchase this Cain's redemption. But, again, first he must receive a major recognition. And that won't come until—

ANN & AARON LOOK ON AS FREUD ON HIS DEATHBED . . .

ANN

But he already had gotten it with his masterpiece, *The Interpretation of Dreams*.

AARON

In the first six years less than four hundred were sold. No, Ann, his first actual significant recognition comes in September 1909, with his series of five lecture on psychoanalysis at Clark University on the 20th anniversary of its founding. . . . Well, according to Jung, while sailing on the *George Washington* to America, he and Freud analyzed one another's dreams, and when Jung asked Freud for "personal associations" to a particular dream of a series of dreams, all involving him, Martha, and Minna, Freud, quote, "looked at me with bitterness and said, 'I could tell you more, but I cannot risk my authority.'" According to Jung, Freud's "placing personal authority over truth" foreshadowed their eventual breakup.

ANN

And the dream?

AARON

It seems to be lost. Jung never revealed it, as far as I know. But consider—At long last, Freud is receiving a major recognition, and so—

ANN

Okay?

AARON

Don't you see? It's on the horizon.

ANN

What is?

AARON

Freud's Promised Land.

ANN

I can't follow—

AARON

Were Freud to open up to Jung, give him his "personal associations" he'd place at risk his, his becoming the new moral authority—

ANN

As in, "I cannot risk my authority! ?!"

AARON

You got it.

ANN

Not really.

THE UNKNOWN FREUD: FIVE PLAYS . . .

AARON

Ann, they're on the *George Washington*, and our first President, wasn't he the liberator of his besieged people? And who but Freud's beloved, his "*Schwester*" Minna, by lending him courage, has been preparing the ground with him? Moreover, the requisite recognition, isn't he, at long last, receiving it?

ANN

And these aren't *your* "personal associations"?

AARON

(Handing Ann *The Freud/Jung Letters*.)

Ann, Freud had written this to Jung eight months earlier on January 17, 1909. Earlier in the letter Freud referred to that upcoming Clark University conference. It's relevant—

(HE points:)

ANN (Reads:)

We are certainly getting ahead: if I am Moses, then you are Joshua. And will take possession of the promised land of psychiatry, which I shall only be able to glimpse from afar—

AARON

Thanks. "Promised Land of *psychiatry*." Nice touch . . .

ANN

If you say so.

AARON

Now, Ann, please visualize Freud, cigar in hand, beside his Joshua who would break down the Gentiles' walls of resistance to psychoanalysis, looking out over the Atlantic—

ANN

At the horizon.

AARON

The promising blue horizon; more so, since, having survived the fatal age of 51, he has more time to prepare the soil with Minna, who, four years later, in September 1913, will accompany him to the city of his dreams, the thirteenth day of which Freud'll write Karl Abraham, "it is pleasant to watch her feeling more at home and growing more enthusiastic about Rome every day." That was penned from Rome's Eden Hotel.

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ANN

“Eden”? An apt name?

AARON

He’ll write Jones that those seventeen days were “delicious.”

ANN

“Delicious”? And, at the Eden, he didn’t sample forbidden fruit?

AARON

Ah! Here it is. Freud’s take on Michelangelo’s portrayal of Moses. Ann, it, too, is relevant.

(Reads from *Moses and Monotheism*, begun on Christmas 1913 and completed on New Year’s Day, 1914.)

. . . [Michelangelo] has modified the theme of the broken Tables; he does not let Moses break them in his wrath, but makes him be influenced by the danger that they will be broken and makes him calm that wrath, or at any rate prevent it from becoming an act.—

ANN

Aaron, what’s this to do with—?

AARON

You’ll see. (HE continues reading, with emphases:.)

In this way [Michelangelo] has added something new and more than human to the figure of Moses so that the giant frame with its tremendous physical power becomes only a concrete expression of *the highest mental achievement that is possible in a man, that of struggling successfully against an inward passion for the sake of a cause to which he has devoted himself.*

Now, according to Jones and other analysts, this observation of Freud’s pertains to his red-hot anger towards his then rebellious ‘sons,’ Jung especially; that is to say, for the sake of his cause, psychoanalysis, Freud, by heroic self-possession, would contain his wrath. But, Ann, Freud’s observation, may it not also pertain to—?

ANN

His intense desire for Minna?

AARON

Right! For his cause, his Promised Land, Freud would heroically restrain himself, keep from following through on his red-hot desire. Even if that meant sacrificing the personal happiness of Minna as well as himself. You see, according to my reading, Freud believed, correctly or not, that she was passionately in love with him.

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ANN

And you're not projecting?

AARON (Handling the figurine of *Moses*)

I guess anything's possible. But this I am sure of: Michelangelo's rendering of *Moses*—that is, as Freud perceived that masterpiece—was internalized, taken into Freud's very being.

ANN

Making this latest comer a Moses, who, for *his* cause—*his secret* cause—restrains himself.

AARON

I couldn't have said it any better. Ann, this intimately related paper  
(HE raises "A Disturbance of Memory on the Acropolis")  
was probably written in January, 1936, four months shy of his 80th birthday.

ANN

He's nearing the end. Okay.

AARON

It deals with Freud's odd experience on the Acropolis in Athens in 1904—

ANN

1904? Aaron! Remember, I've still papers to grade.

AARON

I'll try to be quick. According to Jones, this incident took place on the morning of September 4, 1904, which was just one day shy of the third anniversary of the first time he "*mounted the steep steps*" leading to the gloomy Church of St. Peter in Chains. And, Ann, given that Freud was date-sensitive, it's not a great leap to suppose that Balzac's novel also called up this strange experience on top of the Acropolis.

ANN

Okay, but what's this to do—?

AARON

Only this. It shows, as you'll see, that to the very end, Freud continued to fear Yahweh. Here's Freud:

(HE reads from "A Disturbance of Memory on the Acropolis":)

When, finally, on the afternoon of our arrival I stood on the Acropolis and cast my eyes upon the landscape, a surprising thought suddenly entered my mind: "So all this really *does* exist, just as we learnt it at school!"



ANN

And his explanation?—

AARON

Essentially it is this. His standing on the Acropolis signified the fulfillment of a forbidden wish, the wish to excel one's father, and the derealization or his fleeting disbelief in the Acropolis kept him from acknowledging that this impious wish had been realized—

ANN

I don't under—Wait! Guilt, then, took away from his pleasure at having risen higher in the world than Jakob.

AARON

Right! Guilt. Or, as Freud writes, “what interfered with our enjoyment was a feeling of *filial piety*.” But Freud is holding back. You see, the “feeling of filial piety” sabotaging his enjoyment pertained not only to Jakob, whom he has excelled, but also to Moses whom he is bent on surpassing.

ANN

Aaron, that's too pat.

AARON

Is it? Can you think of a better scenario than Freud, for the first time standing on the heights of the Acropolis in Athens—the fountainhead of Western Civilization—to call up his enlightened Promised Land, a socially just world grounded in Reason where all freely abide his one commandment, the Delphic precept, “Know thyself.”? Well, Ann, can you?! . . . Now, consider this from *The Future of An Illusion*, the illusion, Ann, being religion.

ANN

Why am I not surprised?

AARON ( HE reads with emphases:)

I was already a man of mature years when *I stood* for the first time on the hill of the Acropolis of Athens, *between the temple ruins, looking out over the blue sea. . . .*

ANN

“The temple ruins,” The Torah?—

AARON

Judaism and Christianity.

ANN

Again, ‘Root and Branch.’ Okay.

AARON

And his enlightened secular Promised Land is now within range or on the horizon.

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ANN

“Looking out over the *blue* sea.”

AARON

You got it! Accordingly, while in his brief confusional state, Freud is in a state of exaltation.

ANN

His “enjoyment.”

AARON

Right, His joy. Needless to say, this fleeting delusion on the Acropolis is subconscious, below the threshold of consciousness—

ANN

Okay, but where in all this do you see Freud fearing Yahweh?

AARON

Fair enough. Please read; for now, skipping the German. (Hands her a typed sheet.)

ANN (Reads:)

. . . what interfered with our enjoyment was a feeling of *filial piety*. And now you will no longer wonder that the recollection of this incident [*erlebnis*, experience] on the Acropolis would have troubled me so often [*mich . . . so oft heimsucht*] since I myself have grown old and stand in need of forbearance [*nachsicht*] and can travel no more.

AARON

Ann, please hang on to the sheet. This is S.S. Prawer, a distinguished Oxford professor of German. He’s commenting favorably on Strachey’s translating “*heimsucht*” as “troubled.”

ANN

“[T]he recollection of this incident . . . on the Acropolis . . . troubled me so often.”?

AARON

Right! (HE reads:)

. . . “Heimsuchen” is the verb Luther’s Bible uses as its equivalent for God’s “visiting” the sins of the fathers on future generations, and any appropriate German dictionary will furnish plenty of examples in which “heimsuchen” has to do with “smiting”, “afflicting”, “being stricken”, and “suffering”, as well as “being favored with benefits.” . . . There is something troubling about the sudden irruption, the “Auftauchen”, of the memory image. . . .

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Ann, when writing the essay, Freud in all likelihood suspects that Yahweh's visitations have already begun. And with a vengeance! On January 25, 1920, Freud's middle daughter, his beautiful "Sunday child," Sophie Halberstadt, died at the age of twenty-six from influenza. Two and one-half years later, and just two months after undergoing the first of thirty-three surgical procedures for his mouth and jaw cancer, Freud's favorite grandson, Sophie's four-and-a-half-year-old son Heinele, died from a type of tuberculosis. That was on June 19, 1923.

ANN

And all in less than three years—

AARON

In March 1928, almost five years after his beloved Heinele's death, Freud will write the following to Jones, who had just lost his daughter, an exceptionally brilliant little girl.

ANN (Reads letter of March 11, 1918:)

. . . Only when . . . little Heinele died did I become weary of life for good. He . . . was of superior intelligence and indescribable spiritual grace, and repeatedly said that he would die soon! How do these children come to know those things?

"How do these children *come to know* those things?"!

AARON

On the *Shabbos* three days before Heinele's death, Jews all over the world recited the designated *parashah* or weekly Torah portion, verses from Numbers 16—

ANN

The dreadful Korah episode! Did Freud know?

AARON

Given his obsessional nature, it's a good bet that he did.

ANN

And yet he stays on his potentially calamitous path?

AARON

Ann, he *must* deliver *der Kinder*!

ANN

He's, then, trapped.

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AARON

Right! Trapped, imprisoned in a sealed-off world of his own. . . Now, according to Freud, the Acropolis incident has been returning to him, quote, “During the last few years,” He doesn’t mention it, but during those years, Ann, he had been laboring over *Moses and Monotheism*, about which he’ll write Charles Singer, a professor of the history of science. Ann, Please read—at the time it’s at the printer’s. We’re about through.

(Hands her *The Letters of Sigmund Freud*, edited by his son Ernst.)

The third paragraph, “It can be . . .” To the very end, please.

ANN

(Reads from letter of October 31, 1938.)

It can be called an attack on religion only in so far as any scientific investigation of religious belief presupposes disbelief. Neither in my private life nor in my writings have I ever made a secret of my being an out-and-out unbeliever—

(ANN and AARON give each other a knowing look: “an out-and-out unbeliever”—Right! )

(ANN resumes reading:)

Anyone considering the book from this point of view will have to admit it is only Jewry and not Christianity which has reason to feel offended by its conclusions. For only a few incidental remarks which say nothing that hasn’t been said before, allude to Christianity. At most one can quote the old adage “Caught together, hanged together!”

“Caught together, hanged together!” An unguarded moment?

AARON

An uncharacteristically unguarded moment . . . Well, we now come full circle to Freud on his deathbed as he reads the final scene of this, Balzac’s novel dealing with “death and starvation.”

(Raising the book.)

First, the context. Having “cajoled Jonathan,” Pauline surprises Raphael in their bedroom, where he opens up about the magic skin, and she takes what remains of the accursed talisman; as Raphael’s desire for her intensified, she, quote, “felt a light movement in her hand, and the skin contracted. She did not stop to think; she fled into the next room, and locked the door.”

(HE reads:)

“Pauline!, Pauline!,” cried the dying man, as he rushed after her: “I love you, adore you. I want you. Pauline! I must curse you if

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you will not open the door for me. I wish to die in your arms!”—  
Ann, at the time Minna may have been confined to her room, as she was  
in ill-health and, suffering from glaucoma, her eyesight was failing.

(Resumes reading:)

With unnatural strength, the last effort of ebbing life, he broke down  
the door, and saw her writhing upon a sofa. She had vainly tried to  
pierce her heart, and now thought to find a rapid death by then stran-  
gling herself with her shawl. “If I die, he will live,” she said, trying  
to tighten the knot she had made. . . . [A]s her exceeding beauty  
met Raphael’s intoxicating eyes, his delirium grew. He sprang  
towards her like a bird of prey, tore away the shawl, and tried to take  
her in his arms. The dying man sought for words to express the wish  
that was consuming his strength; but no sounds would come except  
the choking death-rattle in his chest. Each breath he drew sounded  
hollower than the last, and seemed to come from his very entrails.  
At the last moment, no longer able to utter a sound, he set his teeth  
into Pauline’s breast.—

ANN

What must have passed through Freud, I can’t imagine.

AARON

I’m coming to the very end. Okay?

(ANN nods.)

(AARON resumes reading:)

Jonathan appeared, terrified by the cries he had heard, and tried to  
tear away the dead body from the grasp of the girl who was couch-  
ing in a corner. “What do you want?” she asked, “He is mine. I have  
killed him. Did I not foresee how it would be?”

ANN

How sad, how very sad.

AARON

The day after finishing the novel, Freud, wasting away, tells Dr. Schur that  
the time had come, quote : “You promised... not to forsake me when my time  
comes. Now, it’s nothing but torture and makes no sense any more.”

ANN

“Makes no sense any more”? Does he feel, then, that it had been all in vain?”

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AARON

I suspect that deep down he was still hoping against hope. Well, that day, Thursday, September 21st, Schur begins to administer the first of three injections of the fatal morphine, hours apart, and Freud passes away two days later, Saturday the 23rd, at 3 A.M. That fateful *Shabbos*, Ann, was the Tenth of Tishri.

ANN

*Yom Kippur*?! The Day of Atonement?

AARON

Right! The day we received the Law—

ANN

And which your hero had resolved to destroy.

AARON

Ann, Freud's Promised Land where all can move freely across frontiers, develop their talents, and satisfy their needs, is that not more humane than that increasingly bitter reality, the Promised Land of that other would-be Moses of the Berggasse, Herzl?

ANN

Correction: Freud's improbable Promised Land.  
(The sound of distant thunder. )

AARON

(Turning pages of *Sigmund Freud: His Life in Pictures and Words*, edited by Ernest Freud *et al.*—)

Defiant to the very end, Freud has himself cremated. This is the funerary urn, a gift from Marie Bonaparte.

[ANN and AARON examine the large, double-page photo of the ancient Greek urn. As lights in the room flicker, the two figures gracing the ancient vessel—an elegant woman with a dish of overflowing offerings and a seated garlanded male with a staff in his left hand and a large goblet in his right—begin to move, the woman gliding, her tiara radiant. . . . Neither Ann nor Aaron say a word. Later, they will explain away what they had witnessed that Passover evening: it was just an uncanny effect due to the darkness, the isolation, and the silence . . . Still, the experience continues to haunt them. Do they share this with one another? You'll have to ask them.]

**END of PLAY**