



H.P.B.

THE
SPHINX
OF THE
XIXTH
CENTURY

BY PEKKA ERVAST

“H. P. B.”

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Four episodes from the life of
THE SPHINX OF THE SIXTH CENTURY

BY
PEKKA ERVAST

Authorised Translation



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TO

MRS. HILDA PILHLAJAMÄKI,

WHOSE INCOMPARABLE ART, WHEN THE PLAY WAS GIVEN FOR THE FIRST TIME AT A RUUSU-RISTI MATINÉE AT THE NATIONAL THEATRE, HELSINGFORS, EASTER 1931, BROUGHT H. P. B. LIFELIKE BEFORE OUR EYES AND TOUCHED OUR HEARTS, WHEN WE SAW THE SACRIFICING HEROISM OF THAT GREAT SOUL,

This series of episodes is dedicated by

THE AUTHOR.

CHARACTERS

H. P. B.

MORYA

COUNTESS WACHTMEISTER

MR. MEAD

A SERVANT

A NURSE

CHAIRMAN OF THE BROTHERHOOD OF THE SHADOW

AMERICAN BROTHER OF THE SHADOW

ENGLISH BROTHER OF THE SHADOW

GERMAN BROTHER OF THE SHADOW

FRENCH BROTHER OF THE SHADOW

AUSTRIAN BROTHER OF THE SHADOW

RUSSIAN BROTHER OF THE SHADOW

EGYPTIAN BROTHER OF THE SHADOW

SCENES

SCENE I. LONDON, 1851.

SCENE II. PARIS, 1873.

SCENE III. WÜRZBURG, 1886.

SCENE IV. LONDON, 1891.

SCENE I

LONDON, 1851

SCENE I

LONDON, 1851

Hyde Park, London, on the 12th of August, 1851. Late in the evening. Moonshine. In the foreground a road of a park leading across the stage. In the centre a bench. In the rear, behind an iron fence, the street and the city of London. Passers-by are seen in the street on foot and in carriages.

H. P. B. (*a young woman of twenty years, dressed according to the fashion of the day, hurries in from the left, half timid, half excited*). I hope I am not late? . . . What is the time? (*looks at her watch on a chain*). Five to, and I have not heard Big Ben strike half-past ten yet (*sits down to wait*). Unless I am mistaken concerning the place. But no, I am not, for I saw this very place so clearly in my mind, when He whispered to me, in passing: "At half-past ten at the north-east corner of Hyde Park." I could not err as to His words and meaning (*gets up restlessly*). But in truth He did not say anything at all, only gazed upon me and moved His lips. Did He indeed move His lips? But His voice spoke distinctly in my heart! . . . No, I have not erred (*sits again down to wait*). For if I have, the powers of darkness were afloat! But why should not the noble prince speak to me? Is He not known to me since childhood, though to-day I saw Him for the first time in the royal procession. Is He not the hero of my dreams! How many times Thou hast come to me in my dreams — and in the day too, though invisible to others. And is it not Thou who hast saved me from the danger of death, when my fierce horse threw

me to the ground — why wouldst Thou betray me now, when I saw Thee in Thy living self? Have I not always called Thee my Lord and Saviour! As a child I thought Thou wert Jesus, and even my nurse, my good, dear Matrjona, believed with certainty that the Saviour had delivered me. . . . When I told her about it, she crossed her hands, blessed me and exclaimed: "Ah, sertzé majó, ah, Ljenushka majá, Jesus Christ Himself is safeguarding you!" And now I see to-day, to my great astonishment, that Jesus Christ of my dreams and my Saviour in dangers is a living man, an Indian prince, more stately, more beautiful, greater than ever I fancied. Our ikons and images of Jesus become pale as dreams compared with His living reality. . . . (*looks around*). But why does He not come? How ridiculous it would be if I were here on a fool's errand! . . . If that alien prince were not He — and if He existed only in my fancy. . . .

(In the distance the clock of St. Paul's Cathedral strikes the half hour.)

MORYA (*in the light garment of an Indian raja comes softly from the right*). No, my child, no, he is standing before you in his living self.

H. P. B. (*exclaiming*). Oh, Thou. . . . Thou, my Lord and my Master! (*casts herself on her knees before Morya*).

MORYA. Not so, my child — my chela of the remote past — calm yourself and arise! (*bends down to H. P. B. and assists her*). Let us take a seat on this bench and discuss matters quietly! (*leads H. P. B., who is almost staggering, to the bench, seating himself beside her*).

H. P. B. (*doubtful, recovering*). And it is all true then?

MORYA. Everything.

H. P. B. And it is no longer only a dream?

MORYA. No, it is not. You have but just left your father and guests, who are eagerly awaiting you.

H. P. B. Oh, never mind them, if all else is true.

MORYA. Did I not tell you already: everything is true.

You have seen me scores of times during your life, though I have not appeared before you in the flesh. This is the first time. And it is indeed a fact.

H. P. B. (*slowly*). Who art Thou then?

MORYA (*smiling*). I am an estate owner in India and my tenants call me Gulab Sahib.

H. P. B. But how is it to be understood that Thou, that you ———

MORYA. What do you mean, my child?

H. P. B. That you are an estate owner in India and — and yet you have appeared in my dreams and visions?

MORYA. Is there anything strange about that?

H. P. B. You are not, then, Jesus?

MORYA. Not at all, but he is my friend.

H. P. B. (*suddenly cries out*). Who are you then?

MORYA (*calming her*). My dear child, what a passionate Russian temperament you have! Why do you ask the same thing twice?

H. P. B. Because you are not an Indian estate owner — or if you are, it is like a mask. You are something else. You always were something else to me. Who are you then?

MORYA. Call me Thou and thou wilt hear thy soul's voice!

H. P. B. Oh! (*drawing back and gazing upon Morya*). Thou . . . Thou (*throwing herself on her knees*). Thou art my Saviour and the hero of my dreams.

MORYA (*gently smiling*). The hero of thy dreams, be it so . . . but not thy Saviour in a Western, superstitious sense. I am thy friend, thy best friend, my child. Calm thyself and listen to what I have to tell thee.

H. P. B. Tell me only how I am to call Thee?

MORYA. For thee, my chela, I am Morya, if thou dost long to call me by name. But above all I am thy friend.

H. P. B. Tell me one more thing, how hast Thou been able to save me from dangers, if Thou hast always dwelt in India?

MORYA. This thou wilt understand in due time. But know that this visible, physical body is not the only body of man. Thou hast seen phantoms of the dead, thou who art sensitive by nature. Where did they get their phantom body form if they had not had a germ of it during their lifetime? I who studied these things can use that finer body already now, though I live on the physical plane.

H. P. B. (*exalted*). I understand, Morya, and now I believe. (*Sitting down on the bench.*) Excuse me for trifling away Thy time; speak to me, my friend and my teacher, Thy daughter is listening.

MORYA (*after a moment of deep meditation*). Thou art a gifted pianist, my daughter. Hast thou ever thought of thy future? Art thou not going to become an artist, who will reap money and honour on her wanderings? (*Turning to H. P. B. and addressing her kindly*). Thou hast appeared publicly already and hast given concerts in Paris as well as in other places. Thy future perhaps is decided already?

H. P. B. My future! As a public artist! I hate nothing so much as appearing publicly. And yet. . . if I really could play. But I can never become a great musician. I feel it. I know it. That is my tragedy.

MORYA. But *if* thou couldst become a master, then thou willingly wouldst become a public pianist, wouldst thou not?

H. P. B. (*after a moment's thought*). No! For money's and honour's sake I should do nothing. I loathe the honours of this shallow world. I only meant I love music and I should like to be as brilliant in music as possible — and then perhaps I would appear sometimes . . . not for the honour . . . but . . . how shall I say? I should want to raise people from the commonplace. . . . Oh Thou, my great Friend, who hast followed me since my childhood, Thou knowest these things perhaps better than I! Thou knowest that my soul burns with an unquenchable thirst. Sometimes I think I am doomed to damnation. Why was I born with this fever

In my veins? Why can I not be satisfied with anything, why can I not be happy with anything? The world is like a lunatic asylum, the whole of life is loathsome to me. I do not feel at home anywhere. Indeed, I have relatives, I have a fatherland. I love them, and still it seems to me as though my real home were somewhere else. . . . Tell me, is it where Thou art, Friend?

MORYA (*smiles quietly*).

H. P. B. Truly, I am stupid. . . . But Thou knowest the fire in my veins. I long to *understand*. I want to understand what life is. Why was I born? Oh, with all my might I should like to help others, if only I understood it myself! I think we are all wandering in vast darkness and ignorance.

MORYA. Knowledge is attainable to man, if he is willing to pay the price.

H. P. B. (*rapturously*). And what is the price?

MORYA. The first is: pain and suffering.

H. P. B. (*scornfully*). Pain and suffering? . . . But all of life is filled with pain and suffering. . . . Who would not be ready to pay that price — if thereby he would know the truth?

MORYA. And the second is: sacrifice for humanity. The truth is necessary only for those who wish to serve humanity and work for its happiness.

H. P. B. But it is the only life which is not empty and meaningless.

MORYA. Thou, my child, wouldst thou be ready to pay this price?

H. P. B. With all my mind and with all my heart. Tell me, friend and teacher, what am I to do?

MORYA. Art thou ready to renounce everything?

H. P. B. The burden of the present ignorance and pain? Yes!

MORYA. Art thou ready to give up thy father and relations, all that is dear to thee?

H. P. B. But I already gave up my relatives and home after marrying old General Blavatsky. I fled from him before becoming his wife in the way he wanted me to. Can I give up anything else?

MORYA. The companionship of thy father, with whom thou art at present travelling. And thy art, thy future, for thou must know, my dear Helena, that thou couldst be a brilliant musician.

H. P. B. Is it really so? . . . No, after all, I am ready to give up everything, for what is the career of an artist compared with the knowledge of a sage and being able to help others!

MORYA. People care very little for knowing the truth. Remember history. Here in the Occident they have always crucified or burnt or tortured those who were possessed of even the least *knowledge*. People always listen to artists and are grateful to them. They too are helpers. As you said, they make the world forget its own sorrows and miseries. Therefore the world honours artists and bears them aloft. But ungrateful is the work of the sages.

H. P. B. But is not the work of the sages necessary to mankind? I have once read about the great Eastern Buddha, who claimed to know everything, urging people to follow the path shown by him. Have not millions and millions been helped by his knowledge?

MORYA. Yes, they have, but he lived in the East. The Western peoples are obstinate, hard and ungrateful. They follow the example of the Jews, who crucified Christ, who also called himself the path, the truth and the life.

H. P. B. It is true, we are utterly stupid and heartless here in Europe.

MORYA. Not so much as individuals, but the masses are. Together the Western people are ready to commit cruel and evil deeds, which would never be perpetrated by individuals as individuals. Hence individuals ought to be enlightened, so that they might stop doing evil in groups. Our wise

shaberoners are full of compassion and wish to give aid to the West, because, continuing in this course, humanity is doomed to perish at least in the Occident.

H. P. B. Doomed to perish? Then it must be helped.

MORYA (*makes a gesture with his hands*). Yes, my child, look there and thou shalt see what fate is awaiting Europe!

H. P. B. (*staring and seeing a vision*). What do I see: (*horrified*). Fire, fire everywhere, fire in the air, fire upon the earth, fire in the earth. What does it mean? Thousands, millions of people destroying each other, throwing fiery balls, shooting with cannons and guns, flying in the air! Have people become mad? Is the world out of its senses? How is such killing possible? I see a bomb exploding and hundreds of people are flying in the air in pieces, mutilated. Look there, houses are falling, whole towns are being destroyed. They are shooting from the churches, and the churches are being shot to pieces. Is nothing, then, holy any longer? Stop, stop! This is too horrible. . . . (*Morya makes gestures with his hands.*) Ah, now everything has vanished! Did I dream, or what did I see? It seemed so very true. . . .

MORYA. It was not a dream, but a vision of the future. This fate is awaiting Europe, unless we can prevent it.

H. P. B. Can such horrors be repulsed?

MORYA. I trust so. Most of the Brothers doubt it, but I long to try. It cannot be prevented in any other way than by enlightening people. If human minds can be changed, so that they do not wish to commit atrocities, then . . . perhaps then. . . . And I should like to help. But for that I myself need a helper, a Western soul, who would be ready to sacrifice himself for the truth. My eyes have fallen upon thee, Helena. Wouldst thou like to become that helper?

H. P. B. I . . . I . . . oh, my Friend, how canst Thou think of me. . . . What am I to be worthy of such a task?

MORYA. Wilt thou do it?

H. P. B. Oh, my Lord, Thou knowest that I do not want anything else! It would mean my happiness and bliss, if only I could serve Thee.

MORYA. Then the matter is settled. But as thou thyself said, thou art not yet ready, not yet capable of it. First thou must pay one half the price. With indescribable efforts, pain and suffering thou must first prepare, school and educate thyself. It takes years, perhaps decades. Art thou ready for such a schooling, which is not to be found in the West? It is not a question of learning a difficult language or of solving difficult mathematical problems, but of the awakening of the possibilities of thy own soul and spirit, of the reconstruction of thy entire human being.

H. P. B. Thy words, my Teacher, fill me with unspeakable happiness and peace. Now I know, what I have been seeking for years and years: just this very opportunity to become Thy pupil — for am I not allowed to become so?

MORYA (*smiling*). Yes, thou mayst, my dear, for thou art so already.

H. P. B. Oh, how can I ever return Thy goodness?

MORYA. I do not ask for other reward than thy service for truth and humanity.

H. P. B. Yes, yes . . . with Thy help! For even if I know everything, what am I able to do without Thee?

MORYA. Speak not thus, Helena. Man must stand on his own feet. Even thou must work upon thy own responsibility and according to thy best understanding, though I shall help thee in truth. I am going to help thee with greater intensity and more closely than any of us can yet foresee. For finally the responsibility is mine. . . .

H. P. B. Oh, tell me, my Friend and Teacher, what then am I to do?

MORYA. Thou art first to speak with thy father, for it is important that thou hast his consent. Then thou art to

travel to India and Tibet and elsewhere. Further particulars I shall give thee in due time.

H. P. B. Ah, my father will give his consent. He is so good. He always took sides with me, though he did not always understand me.

MORYA. Good, the matter is then finally settled. (*Rising.*) Be blessed, my child, and may the resolution of this moment be of help and happiness to the great orphan, humanity. Farewell, Helena! Later on thou shalt hear from me. Now I shall leave thee. Wait a moment and then depart. At home they are impatiently awaiting thee. Peace be with thee. (*Exits to the left.*)

H. P. B. (*has fallen on her knees. A moment's silence.*) God's heavenly power! All is true, all is true. I have come to the beginning of the path. Away with darkness, away with doubt and vain anguish. . . . This birthday of mine is my life's first day. The initial day of my new life. Wonderful . . . wonderful indeed! (*Arises awestruck with a glowing look and leaves softly to the left.*)

CURTAIN.

SCENE II

PARIS, 1873

SCENE II

PARIS, 1873

A solemn underground crypt in Paris, 1873. In the centre of the background a door from which stone steps lead down to the floor. Inside the door stand two guards in armour with long hillebards in their hands. To the left the chair and table of the Chairman, to the right the chairs of the other brethren. The crypt is illuminated by a lamp, hanging from the ceiling. When the curtain rises the brethren come down the steps from the open door in a row, whispering something to the guards as they pass. All are wrapped in monks' robes from head to foot, with half-masks covering their faces, on the breast a miniature flag of their native country. The brethren seat themselves. One of them is H. P. B., who wears the Egyptian flag as her symbol. The Chairman wears the Italian flag as his symbol.

CHAIRMAN (*knocking with the gavel six times on the table*). Brethren, I welcome you from the different parts of the Occident, from Europe, Africa, and America. You understand that I have not called you here without reason in the midst of the working season. We gather regularly once in five years, and two years would still have passed had I not, because of unforeseen circumstances, considered it inevitable to call you together before the fixed time. Guards, are all the seventeen brethren present?

ONE OF THE GUARDS. Yes, they are.

CHAIRMAN. Shut the door then and keep guard! (*Guards exit, shutting the door*). The atmosphere must be made stronger, the cave must be filled with magnetic vibration as usual. Frater Gallicus may perform the task!

(The French brother rises, bows to the Chairman, and steps to the altar, standing in the background to the left. There he lights the censer, turns round, and taking a couple of steps forward, stops and swings the censer, from which incense arises.)

CHAIRMAN. Fratres; incantemus! *(All arise, reciting with emphasis under the direction of the Chairman — unisono, recitando, senza melodia):* Gloria in aeternis luci rationis augustissimae, quae genus speras humanum ad maturitatem perventurum nec antea oriere.

(During the recitation the crypt suddenly becomes light, but grows dusk again. Silence. The brethren sit down. The thurifer returns after replacing the censer on the altar.)

CHAIRMAN. Brethren and fellow-workers in our mighty federation. I feel anxiety for the situation of the world. We have the power, and there would be no need for us to be alarmed for aught, but I have called you together to this special consultation, for I am somehow feeling that the destiny which we have prepared for the closing event of this century — especially for Europe — is threatened by mysterious danger. It seems as though the great war among all peoples would not yet gain a footing upon this earth. I have my knowledge and forebodings from which direction the danger is threatening, and I have read wonderful things in the stars. But what say you, brethren? Have you not made any observations? Is not the horizon darkening likewise in your eyes? I cannot ask for a due report, but . . .

BRETHREN *(approving murmur)*.

CHAIRMAN. YOU may speak alternately. . . . Ah, Frater Americanus wishes to say something.

AMERICAN BROTHER *(Rises and bows)*. Hail to you, Revered Master and Brethren. We in the United States stand in the same place on the whole as in my last report. Still I wish to emphasize that a great many such souls have been born and are still being born, who suffer from a spirit-

ual form of “emancipation illness.” Emerson is dead, but the “free-thought movement” is spreading with almost lightning speed. If they had real knowledge they would become dangerous to the advancement of mankind, which must go slowly according to the orders of nature and our will. There are thousands of them, and if their thought is destined to spread men will begin to believe in the power of thought, but fortunately there is a tyrant in this free country of ours before whom all bow, as you well know. This tyrant is gold, and as long as gold has power there is nothing to be feared. Thanks to it, my helpers and I have arranged that the powers of thought will be directed toward the acquiring of gold, to the pursuit of happiness and the attainment of success as my countrymen sophistically call it, wishing to improve upon it. As long as people maintain the balance of natural selfishness there are great obstacles in the path of our work — our work which aims at the advancement of the history of mankind during millions of years.

CHAIRMAN. Splendid, Frater Americane, for although the powerful hand which would join together those numerous small associations could lead them to fight against us, there is no cause for fear, you see, as long as gold preserves its spell. Increase, then, the power of gold more and more.

AMERICAN BROTHER. That we are doing, greatly honoured master. In dancing round the calf people loose their human obstinacy and become stupefied like unto beasts. . . . Then there is with us in America the ever increasing spiritualistic movement, out of which could have arisen a great danger, if it had been led into right, or rather wrong, channels — but as things are now, it has only developed into a mighty suggestion which makes people believe that life after death is arranged on similar principles of welfare and happiness as is this visible life. It is quite in vogue to converse with the deceased in my dear country. . . . With regard to this movement, however, I confess that if a prophet of Truth were to arise who would show the truth

behind all the spiritualistic falsehoods, then the harmonious advancement of our great work would indeed be endangered. I do not wish to arouse in you a spirit of disquietude, brethren, but as our highly honoured Master has said, there is a burning odour of evil omens in the air.

CHAIRMAN. I see . . . Frater Anglicanus has the floor.

ENGLISH BROTHER. I think, however, that the fears of our American Brother are uncalled for as far as spiritualism is concerned. The infection has spread itself from America to Europe, and as long as it kept to a mere dancing of tables it was of no importance and was regarded as an ordinary social game. But now when spirits have begun to materialize and write on walls with a handless pencil, even here belief in the so-called spirit-world is gaining ground. Still, so long as the belief remains spiritualistic, it is nothing else but refined, transcendental materialism! And materialism is our faithful servant, for when scientific research threatened to disturb our authority with its freedom, materialism was a splendid invention from which we got the aid we hoped for.

CHAIRMAN. YOU are right, Frater Anglicane, and in Bacon's country people have learned to become so practical that they do not comprehend things after death unless they may touch them by hand. But are there no philosophers?

ENGLISH BROTHER. People do not care for the philosophers, revered Master.

CHAIRMAN. YOU speak the truth. There is but one country in the world where philosophers are truly appreciated — I mean Germany. . . . What say you, Frater Germane?

GERMAN BROTHER. Master and brethren, the philosophers themselves never take themselves seriously — no more in Germany than in other countries. Schopenhauer made much ado about the nothingness of life, but still more about a well-cooked dinner. Philosophy and earnestness hand in hand — that is Eastern original sin. We Europeans

are the more superficial in practice, the more profound we are in our dreams. We may safely laugh up our sleeves, brethren. (*Laughter.*)

CHAIRMAN. Frater Germanus is known for his humour, thus being an exception to his countrymen. Do you not then perceive anything dubious in the horoscope of the present moment?

GERMAN BROTHER. Indeed not, my Master. Is not materialism in its theoretical form a German child? Why should I fear? After the last war the devil thirsting for gold and power has gained a footing in the consciousness of the German people. You will see what strength it will still reach. And what have we to complain of then? No ideals will prevent Germany from rising to the heights of pride, and other countries from envying her with all their hearts. We are in no danger as long as Germany and France remain rivals — and I hardly err if I say that France is burning with the lust of vengeance.

CHAIRMAN. Your speech is consoling, Frater Germane. It is indeed true that we have those two seething kettles, France and Germany. But France has grown weary of the terrible bleeding, is it not so, Frater Gallice?

FRENCH BROTHER. True, my Master and brethren, but vengeance is in the air. Even to my mind the future does not seem as dreary as one would suppose judging from the words of the Master. France is a country full of vitality. It will soon save milliards for itself, and then the red cock of war will crow. I am almost convinced that all will happen in accordance with our great plan. Before the end of the last decade of this century France is going to fall upon Germany and soon the whole of Europe will be aflame. Who will be able to resist us?

CHAIRMAN. I am not so sure of these matters. I am going to tell you my reasons shortly. But what does Frater Austro-Hungaricus say?

AUSTRIAN BROTHER. Honoured Master and Brethren, I am absolutely of the Master's opinion. To me the situation

is serious. We have seen in the course of history what great power lies in personality. If a strong individual arises in a country and is in possession of stupid, idealistic views and — what is more important — lives according to them, he will always gain an enormous influence over his contemporaries. This thought is troubling me day and night, for by chance I have come across the horoscope of a boy, born in a little Hungarian village. This horoscope is very remarkable. Without doubt this child is destined to grow into a man who will fight against us with great spiritual and psychic powers, and — I should like to say — will raise Christ to the high place that we have been able — with much trouble — to deprive him of by the aid of the churches.

CHAIRMAN. What is the name of the child? Tell it to us in this magnetized atmosphere of ours, and I shall say how much truth there is in your fear, Frater Austro-Hungarice.

AUSTRIAN BROTHER. The name of the boy is Rudolf Steiner.

CHAIRMAN (*thinking a moment*). A vigorous name, but not so dangerous as you fear, Frater. He is going to work much, but we have in our hands a good old means. Hear me, Frater Austro-Hungarice, and you too may keep this advice in mind, Frater Germane; when this man appears upon the stage of public life take care that he and his first brethren quarrel among themselves. You probably cannot influence him, but you may influence those students and workers about him. When wiser and stronger because of it, he will gather the faithful around himself and his time will be devoted to teaching them. This will be simple for you to accomplish, for it is an ancient method to destroy too dangerous a life-work. I am not worried at all on this matter, the name hides no strength invincible.

AUSTRIAN BROTHER. Master, you unburden me of my load. I shall not forget your advice.

CHAIRMAN. Aha . . . Frater Russicus about to speak.

RUSSIAN BROTHER. Master and Brethren, I am anxious

for the same reason as my Austrian brother. I am not thinking of a new-born babe, but of a man, already in his fifties, who has become world-famed. He is the well-known author, Leo Tolstoy, who has suddenly turned religious. . . . Not a believer in the old-established sense of the word, favourably disposed towards us, but after having been a materialist, sceptic, atheist for a long while, he has suddenly found Christ.

CHAIRMAN. Christ? . . . What do you mean, Frater Russice?

RUSSIAN BROTHER. I mean Christus Mysticus, whom such fanatics find in themselves, dormant in their own spirit; of course I do not mean the harmless saviour of the Church.

CHAIRMAN. Christus Mysticus? The secret of the Kosmos, which it is not lawful to reveal to man. Do you say that Leo Tolstoy has found it?

RUSSIAN BROTHER. I tell you that. I myself called on him to establish the truth. Christ has been born in him.

CHAIRMAN. Has he been chosen a member of that Brotherhood which aims at the acceleration of the spiritual improvement of mankind and still does not understand that suffering is the only teacher of man?

RUSSIAN BROTHER. I do not know.

CHAIRMAN. Did you not see the star? The crown?

RUSSIAN BROTHER (*ashamed*). Nay.

CHAIRMAN. Does the third eye not operate in you?

RUSSIAN BROTHER (*still ashamed*). Very irregularly.

CHAIRMAN. HOW do you know, then, that Christ has been born in him?

RUSSIAN BROTHER. I talked with him. I asked questions and drew my conclusions.

CHAIRMAN. TOO weak a foundation. Improve your third eye, Frater. At our next meeting I shall demand a report from you.

RUSSIAN BROTHER (*bows and sits down*).

CHAIRMAN (*meditating*). Leo Tolstoy . . . Leo Tolstoy

. . . after all, the matter does not seem to be of so great an importance as I had feared. . . . The channel to the mystery of Kosmos lies open before him, but his eye has not yet opened. His knowledge is restricted to the visible world and his inward feelings. He reasons; verily, he is a philosopher, he is a sceptic with regard to the supernatural. Indeed, he will go far in his moral consciousness, but he is unable to prove his theses so that they have an effect upon the masses. There is no danger, for men do not care for morals clothed in more than Sunday garments which they display to their neighbours. . . . It is good, we can calmly brush aside even Leo Tolstoy. But I shall give you some advice, Frater Russice, both advice and obligating task simultaneously. Leo Tolstoy is famous and his voice is audible. Do you and your helpers take care that he and his doctrines become misinterpreted in Russia. The doctrine of the mystic Christ is a dangerous one when rightly understood, but still more misleading to the happiness of men when understood wrongly. In other words, misconception is the only right conception from our point of view — the only right one, suitable to man for the present. Therefore take heed that the doctrines of Leo Tolstoy be turned topsy-turvy — at least after his death if not before . . . You shall see that great benefit to us will rise therefrom. . . . Let us turn to other things. Has anyone anything else to report? (*Silence.*) If not, I shall console you, in passing, with regard to Italy. There I have my watchtower. All is peaceful in Italy. But there is a totally different thing that troubles me. And now I am coming to why I have called you here together. Like unto the brethren in the East, even I pay great attention to personalities. But none of you has mentioned the person I am thinking of and who also was born in Russia.

BRETHREN (*show surprise and curiosity*).

CHAIRMAN. Yes, Fratres omnes, the horoscope of this person arouses my greatest concern, for it shows this person

to be in close connection with the Brotherhood which does not accept our methods of helping humanity. And still more — it reveals that the coming years, perhaps the year '75, will be enormously critical of our work. I do not exaggerate. The person in question has a lion nature, being in possession of uncommon strength and rare capabilities, and furthermore there are others, still more powerful, behind her.

ALL THE BRETHREN (*uneasily*). Who may it be, who may it be?

CHAIRMAN. The name of this person does not yet mean anything, for it is still unknown. But take note of it. It will have a fateful sound in our ears.

ALL THE BRETHREN. The name, the name!

CHAIRMAN. The name is Helena Petrovna Blavatsky.

(*Silence. To the lips of the brethren comes a contemptuous mutter, the one word — Woman! The Russian brother murmurs: Helena Petrovna Blavatskaja, I have never heard the name.*)

CHAIRMAN. YOU are struck with amazement when I reveal unto you an unknown name, but I have accurate information as to it. She is so dangerous a person that I have called you together not only for consultation, but actually to consider proper precautionary measures. I do not know what she is going to accomplish in the world, but she herself is an imminent danger as a source of power and knowledge.

ONE OF THE BRETHREN. Can she not be made harmless? Death is never far from any man.

CHAIRMAN (*abruptly*). No. Death will not reach her till those who are behind her give their consent to it.

ONE OF THE BRETHREN. Is she a supernatural being?

CHAIRMAN. NO, but strongly guarded. We can do nothing by force. We cannot touch her body.

AMERICAN BROTHER. But her soul?

CHAIRMAN. Indeed, I too have thought of that. If I only knew a weak point in her soul! But I cannot get hold

of her, however closely I try to ascertain her. She is awe-inspiring. (*Silence. A shocked and frightened mutter.*)

CHAIRMAN. Ah — Frater Aegyptius is raising his hand.

EGYPTIAN BROTHER (H. P. B.). Master and Brethren, the above-mentioned person is indeed dreadful, though there is nothing to be feared in herself. She is an ordinary human being, perhaps as you yourself said, somewhat cleverer than people usually are, but there are many weak points in her soul that may be struck at. However, I do not believe that you can do anything to her, for she is protected by an impenetrable armour. This armour is her great and unconquerable love for humanity and its suffering souls.

CHAIRMAN. DO you know her, Frater Aegyptie?

H. P. B. I do indeed. Do you wish me to tell you more about her?

CHAIRMAN. Yes, in truth.

H. P. B. She is a woman in her body, but her courage is that of a man. I almost believe that she would not fear even you, mighty and famous brethren, who appear here in the humble robes of the monks. Indeed, I would stake anything upon it that were she aware of this meeting she would even venture to join it.

(*Scornful mutters from the brethren.*)

CHAIRMAN. Leave off your jokes, Frater. No one can enter here, as the place is unknown, none was aware of our meeting except you, the brethren concerned, and the door remains closed to all unless the password is known. Let us return to the matter in hand. Tell us what you know, but speak not in the second person as though you yourself would not belong to us.

H. P. B. The person in question, as you said, is to be feared only in virtue of the fact that her heart is so great in love towards the weak. In her “Weltanschauung” she is utterly at variance with the rules of this brilliant Brotherhood. She knows that suffering has an educating power, but she does not believe in suffering as such. Her “wel-

tanschauung” is bright; she longs for suffering, injustice and cruelty to become lessened, to be allayed and removed from this world as much as possible. Totally different views from the dreary philosophy of this Brotherhood which claims to serve humanity, but loves nothing but its own future dreams, which it calls perfection.

CHAIRMAN. Nonsense. We have heard that idealistic hairsplitting till we are thoroughly sick of it. Haven't you, Frater Aegyptice, something more personal to tell us about Helena Blavatsky? Do you not know what she intends to do?

H. P. B. That I do not know, but she intends of course to show her love for humanity by her life and her deeds. And let us remember what qualification she is starting from — she believes in man.

CHAIRMAN. What do you mean by that?

H. P. B. I mean she believes in man born of God. She repulses all outward saviours, because she believes in the very same Christus Mysticus of whom there was talk a moment ago.

CHAIRMAN. Do you think she will teach it publicly to mankind?

H. P. B. I am sure of it. She thinks it to be her purpose in life to bring the real Christ back to the world — Christ to the West, Amitâbha Buddha to the East. And if she is capable of that she will have performed a wonderful task for humanity. Who would not be in her place?

CHAIRMAN. What are you saying?

H. P. B. I say that that being would be enviable indeed who could bring back faith to man — faith in goodness, faith in justice, faith in truth.

CHAIRMAN. Frater, your words sound heretical. Whence do you come?

H. P. B. From Egypt.

CHAIRMAN. And have you learnt that shallow wisdom of yours in Egypt? How are matters, then, in Egypt?

H. P. B. All is well in Egypt, and I have not learnt my wisdom, which you venture to call shallow, in Egypt only, but out in the wide world.

CHAIRMAN. Ah! It is then your own wisdom also. I thought you were telling us about Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, but it is your own wisdom too? Do you not know that in expressing such opinions you brand yourself as an apostate?

H. P. B. May man not think freely?

CHAIRMAN (*scornfully*). Man . . . but not a sage who counts himself in our ranks. (*Doubtfully*.) I ask you once more, whence do you come?

H. P. B. From Egypt.

CHAIRMAN. From which place?

H. P. B. From Luxor.

CHAIRMAN (*astonished*). From Luxor? Whom, then, do you represent?

H. P. B. No one. I have come here on my own responsibility.

CHAIRMAN. What is this? And your lodge? What is it and what are its greetings to us?

H. P. B. The lodge I belong to does not send greetings.

CHAIRMAN. Ah . . . This is getting interesting. What lodge do you belong to?

H. P. B. Do you wish me to tell?

CHAIRMAN. Yes, verily. I await your answer.

H. P. B. I belong to Ellora lodge of the Brotherhood of Luxor, whose master is Serapis Bey.

(*Clamour, shouting: "Betrayed. We are betrayed" from the brethren, who have shown their consternation with gestures throughout the discussion.*)

CHAIRMAN. Calm yourselves, brethren. A betrayal has evidently been perpetrated, but we never leave a betrayal unavenged. (*The brethren are silent.*) I ask you who have dared to assume the name "Frater Aegyptius" — who are you?

H. P. B. I am an Egyptian brother, as I belong to an Egyptian lodge to which you have not the honour to belong.

CHAIRMAN. Bold words indeed. . . . But now (*rising, in a thundering voice*), tell me, you bold traitor, who are you?

H. P. B. A traitor you are yourself, you, Peter Bassano, who in the outward world, in bourgeois society, act as head of the Order of Jesuits, though you have deceived your Master inwardly and joined the dismal ranks of the Brotherhood of the Shadow.

(*Once more cries of alarm.*)

CHAIRMAN (*recovering from his embarrassment*). So you know me, do you? Then you know also that my hand is long in revenge? And your crime is unutterable. (*Thundering.*) Step forth and show who you are.

H. P. B. (*hesitating, but when the brethren lay hands on her, she pushes them aside*). Off with your hands, let me be free, and of my own will I shall step forth. (*Moves from her place into the middle of the room. Addressing the Chairman.*) Here I am, Peter Bassano, I am not afraid of you. What do you wish of me?

CHAIRMAN (*calm*). Reveal unto me who you are!

H. P. B. I thought you would have guessed it long ago. (*Tearing the mask off her face and discarding her monk's robes.*) I am Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, for whom you have searched so long a time.

CHAIRMAN. Aha! I guessed it. At last! (*Excitedly.*) And in your very own person.

(*The brethren have rushed up, drawing their daggers, and approach H. P. B. threateningly.*)

CHAIRMAN. Brethren, we have won the victory. She has brought her soul to us herself. You were too bold, Helena Blavatsky. You jumped without thinking into the jaws of the lion.

H. P. B. Daniel too was once in the lion's den, but nothing happened to him.

CHAIRMAN. But you will not escape as easily, I swear it.

H. P. B. If you are lions, kill me. I will find a new body.

CHAIRMAN. It is not a question of killing. You heard it just recently from my own lips. A punishment of a totally different kind awaits you — a punishment, brethren, which at the same time will avert the danger that has threatened our great work — imprisonment awaits you, Helena, not a bodily one, but a psychic one. I wish to drive out the devil from you, Helena! . . . Brethren, hasten, the gag!

(All happens very quickly. The mouth of H. P. B. is gagged in spite of her resistance. Likewise her hands and feet are bound. The expression of anger gradually fades from her face and in its place come extreme curiosity, and finally horror throughout the next scene.)

CHAIRMAN. The square, brethren, and the daggers! Then the magic circle!

(H. P. B. in the centre of the circle, four brethren placing themselves at the four corners of a large square, turning to H. P. B. and pointing their daggers towards her. Immediately after the twelve brethren form a circle within the square around H. P. B., fall on their knees and bow down.)

CHAIRMAN *(arises and strikes six times with his hammer in the same rhythm as before)*. I call unto ye, ye mighty powers of the dusk, who keep the progress of humanity in its right and natural channel, come ye and help me in this vast undertaking. Ye are the right and just rulers of this globe, and before ye ye see an apostate — an apostate, I say, who, believing in her own futile and useless powers, intends to reveal to humanity a secret that it is not yet permitted to reveal. The work of thousands of years would be undone, if she should succeed therein. Ye see, mighty powers, what danger threatens the predestined fate of mankind. Be ye helpful to me now, in my proposal to bind her soul, so that she will not be able to do her venturesome work. Fratres

incantemus! (*All the brethren recite the following magic verses under the leadership of the Chairman.*)

Oh, brightest reason,
We thank thee with great joy!
Strongest fire of intellect,
We worship, adoring Thee,
Never hurrying on,
But full of wisdom, Thou
Waitest Thy own time.

Humanity cannot yet
Bear the light of day.
Dangers lie menacing it,
If it knoweth too much!
Long will its ripening last,
Suffering only and pain
Will slowly develop it.
Noble Master of Dusk,
Listen to us, we pray.
Thou ruler and lord of this star!
— Extinguish the light premature
Within this arrogant soul,
Too bold and too proud.

— Banish this threatening danger!
Cast her far off to the dusk,
Turning her torch into darkness!
Lay thy commandments upon her:
Thy words let her follow,
Thy servant always be!

(By the end of this incantation H. P. B. has calmed herself, she has apparently gathered her spiritual powers, turning her face upwards in prayer.)

CHAIRMAN (*continuing in a singing voice in which all the brethren join*). In nomine lucis rationis augustissimae, semper sperantis, semper expectantis, fiat nox, fiat nox, fiat nox!

(The light grows dim. Total darkness.)

CHAIRMAN. Fratres, justitia facta est.

(Six knocks in the proper order are heard at the door.)

CHAIRMAN (*surprised*). Who is there?

(*The door opens. Morya enters, dressed in a white robe, a turban on his head, and is immediately enveloped in a bright light.*)

MORYA. Helena, my child, my sister-brother, I heard thy cry of distress and I hurried to see what was the matter. (*Looks round.*) What is this? Ah, a meeting of the Brethren of the Shadow. And thou, Helena, here! What do I see? Thou art bound! Evil deeds are being done here. What have you tried to do to my chela? Ah, there you are, Peter Bassano, an old friend of mine, obstinately keeping to your dreary philosophy, though many times you have realized that our way is the highest and finally the only one.

CHAIRMAN (*recovering with difficulty*). I acknowledge your greatness, Master, but your wisdom I do not understand. It is not true that I have ever recognized any other saviour of mankind than suffering.

MORYA. AS you wish. Let us say then that you have realized it in your conscience. . . . But what did you intend to do to my chela?

CHAIRMAN. I did not know she was your chela. But what is done . . . is done.

MORYA. What then is done?

CHAIRMAN. Her soul is imprisoned.

MORYA. I see. You have captured her soul in accordance with all secret knowledge? I have come at the right moment then. But why is her body tied up? . . . Ah, I understand! She was not to be allowed to move or to speak during your magic tricks. But now after the performance is over, she is bodily free again. Release her, Peter Bassano, — you yourself!

(*With reluctance, but obeying the orders of Morya, the Chairman descends from his platform and goes towards H. P. B., loosening her bands. H. P. B. exclaims with relief and runs instantly up the steps to Morya.*)

H. P. B. Oh, my Father, my Friend, forgive me my horrible mistake! I thought it your will that I should come to this meeting. The Egyptian representative of this abominable brotherhood became suddenly ill in Cairo, and I obtained the necessary information from him. Serapis did not say anything, but Tuitit thought that my visit here would be to some advantage.

(The brethren, having risen from their kneeling position, stare at H. P. B. and Morya in amazement.)

MORYA. You are not hurt?

H. P. B. By the powers of darkness and with such incantations! I admit I was frightened, for I saw that a great rabble was gathering here from all directions. But when I began to bless them and called upon you for help — what then could they do to me?

CHAIRMAN. Thus has my work been in vain, has the whole meeting been in vain?

H. P. B. In vain, in vain, my Brother of the Shadow, for now I shall know how to be on my guard.

CHAIRMAN. DO not be too sure, Helena Blavatsky. You have got a new adversary in me. I shall not let you out of my sight again. When you will have the least idea of it, my punishment will await you.

H. P. B. You are large-mouthed, Peter Bassano, but what are your deeds?

MORYA. Don't, Helena. Thy adversary is not to be despised. You have won the battle now, my child, but will it be likewise in future? Peter Bassano, let us make an agreement, let her be in peace for ten years, so that she may get at least a start. She has done nothing as yet.

CHAIRMAN. *(gloomy but flattered)*. Let it be so. You may work in peace for ten years as far as I am concerned. But remember then I shall do my best that the fruit of your work may change from roses into thorns.

MORYA. I thank you, Brother of the Shadow. . . . But I notice, Helena, that even I must have a better supervision

over you. I must bind you closer to me. Come, let us retire. Your work will now begin. For the first I am going to send you to America. . . . Farewell, brethren, and may your dreary philosophy of life become brighter and more brotherly.

(All the brethren fall to their knees. Morya raises his hand and exits through the door with H. P. B. Dusk prevails again and the curtain drops.)

SCENE III

WÜRZBURG, 1886

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Würzburg, January of the year 1886. A winter's day. A fairly large dining-room in H. P. Blavatsky's home. Windows at the rear. Doors to left and right. In the centre the dining-table, which the servant is laying, when the curtain rises.

COUNTESS WACHTMEISTER (*enters from door on right and lays a parcel that she has brought with her on the table*). It's rather cold out-doors to-day. It is best to heat the room so that Madame's rheumatism will not grow worse. ... By the way, has Madame been asking for me while I was in town, Louise?

SERVANT. No, Countess. Madame has been shut up in her working-room since breakfast.

COUNTESS. Since 9 o'clock . . . and it is 1 o'clock now. Well, this is nothing more than her usual programme, though while I am at home Madame often keeps the door of her working-room open, so that we sometimes can exchange a word with each other. But perhaps she remarked that I went out at 10 o'clock this morning. . . . But now it is time for lunch and we must call Madame in.

SERVANT. Yes, there is no one so diligent as Madame. She is almost killing herself with uninterrupted work. . . . Why, I should become mad if I had to sit writing like that from morning till night.

COUNTESS (*goes to the left*). I believe it; I believe that many would "become mad" as you say, Louise. But Madame

is no ordinary human being. She has a great mission in life. It is a great honour to be allowed to serve her.

SERVANT. And I love her, my lady. . . . She is so good . . . and at the same time I am a little afraid . . . (*approaches the Countess*).

COUNTESS. Afraid, Louise? Of what and why?

SERVANT. I do not know, my lady. Sometimes it is as though the house were haunted. I have seen and heard such wonderful things from Madame's table-clock. Your Grace, tell me, please, do you think the devil has something to do with Madame? Indeed, I do not believe in the devil. . . . But Madame is not on bad terms with God, is she?

COUNTESS. How can you even think of such a thing, Louise? Madame has got her life's mission from God, has she not?

SERVANT. Yes . . . so I think too . . . but those voices and lights in the clock. . . .

COUNTESS. They are natural phenomena. But forget them. . . . Is the table ready?

SERVANT. Yes, my lady.

COUNTESS (*during the previous conversation she opens her parcel, takes a book from it, lays it on the mirror-table, arranges her hair and approaches the dining-table*). Let us ring the bell so that Madame may come. (*Takes the bell that is on the dining-table and rings.*) . . . Are there any letters for me?

SERVANT. NO, my lady. Madame received some letters and a parcel.

COUNTESS. Did you bring them to her, Louise?

SERVANT. Yes, Countess, and it was the only time when Madame's door was opened.

COUNTESS. Perhaps Madame did not hear the bell. (*Rings again.*) Or if she has something important to write, she forgets the whole world. . . .

SERVANT. I hear Madame moving. She will be coming to lunch, I am sure.

COUNTESS. YOU may go, Louise. I shall serve Madame myself.

(The servant exits. The door to the left opens, and H. P. B. is seen on the threshold, gloomy as a thundercloud. She has an open pamphlet in her hand.)

COUNTESS. There you are, H. P. B., do come and have lunch.

H. P. B. Lunch! I! . . . Madame Blavatsky ought to die and her name fade into oblivion.

COUNTESS *(alarmed)*. What are you saying? What has happened? Who has made you sad?

H. P. B. *(bitterly)*. Verily! Who has made me sad? . . . I am doomed to death. . . . A person without honour. . . . An abused woman. . . . Woman . . . woman . . . poor, helpless creature. Ah, why am I not a man, that I might strike back as I am struck at. . . . But I want to be a man . . . I shall be avenged. . . . I will show the world that one cannot be insulted thus. . . . We have justice in the world, have we not. . . . I shall bring these scoundrels before the court. . . . They must answer for the consequences. . . .

COUNTESS. But what has happened, H. P. B.?

H. P. B. Look at this! This damned pamphlet, this trash from the rubbish-heap. . . .

COUNTESS *(approaches H. P. B. and takes the book from her hands)*. What is this? Ah, the report of the Society for Psychical Research. . . . Who has sent you this?

H. P. B. Never mind — enemy or friend. But look, Countess. . . . “Examination into the alleged occult phenomena of Madame Blavatsky.” *Alleged!* Read it, Countess, read it and see who I am!

COUNTESS. I have read it already — and burnt it.

H. P. B. You have read it and not spoken a word to me!

COUNTESS. Why should I have troubled you with it? . . . Come and have your lunch and do not mind that miserable, worthless production. *(H. P. B. approaches the*

table with heavy steps and sits down.) H. P. B., your friends — the Theosophists will pay no attention to it.

H. P. B. Many have already handed in their resignation; you do not know the world, Countess, if you think that such a vile deed would not have evil consequences. . . . I have received many letters — even from “friends,” in which they inform me that they do not wish to be affiliated with such a false society and its founder. . . . You remember the resolution in that cursed book: “Madame Blavatsky is thus one of the greatest religious charlatans that have appeared for centuries” . . . And what for, I ask? Because of those occult phenomena, the memory of which I now curse. . . . Oh, those phenomena. . . .

COUNTESS. But haven’t you told me yourself that you were half, perhaps entirely, obliged to produce them? You were surrounded by friends and they demanded them.

H. P. B. Yes, in very truth. I performed them to amuse and instruct my friends. . . . “Materialize this, Madame Blavatsky, duplicate that, let the astral bells ring, read this unopened letter, etc.” — so they went on, and I always yielded to it in my heedless weakness. Oh, my dear! This, then, is the Karma of the Theosophical Society and I am its scapegoat! . . . If the matter concerned only myself I could bear it. But what will become of the theosophical work, if the names of the Masters are thus dragged into the dust!

COUNTESS. YOU need not worry about that, H. P. B. The report particularly states that the Masters are ghosts, invented by yourself and made out of balloons and muslin. . . . The Society for Psychical Research will not upset the belief of the world, for the world has believed in nothing. . . .

H. P. B. The world, the world . . . but what about the Theosophists! I work for the Theosophists above all. I write my books for them . . . *Isis Unveiled* will no longer suffice. The Master wishes *The Secret Doctrine*, which I am

writing at the present, to become an interpretation of the knowledge and wisdom of the ages. . . . But of what use is my work now? No one will rely on me any longer, no one will listen to my words, no one will read my books. . . . I am rejected by all . . . a wreck, fit to be sunk to the bottom of the sea. . . .

COUNTESS. Oh, H. P. B., do not exaggerate. Truly you have many friends, who understand the greatness of your work. The Theosophical Society has existed for ten years, has it not? Colonel Olcott is its faithful president. Judge in America is your trusted representative. Well, then. . . .

H. P. B. Don't . . . friends are like rats who leave the sinking ship.

COUNTESS. H. P. B., I at least do not reject you.

H. P. B. And why not? Madame Blavatsky is a fallen celebrity. Soon the very street arabs will point at me with their fingers. You are a woman of society, a marchioness by birth, married to a count, you have spent your life in European Courts — what have you to do with an adventuress and recreant such as I?

COUNTESS. DO not forget, H. P. B., that by birth you are a countess yourself, belonging to the highest aristocracy of Russia. I almost think as far as rank is concerned that you are much nobler than I, because you are related to the Russian imperial family. So let us leave that aside. I am your friend because I know and trust you, H. P. B.

H. P. B. Speak not words that you will regret. Remember that I am a traitor. I have invented the Masters. I have performed hundreds of false phenomena.

COUNTESS. Perhaps in the mind of the writer of that unhappy report, but not in any sensible person's. Not at least in my mind, for I know that you possess mysterious faculties, H. P. B. I know the Masters do exist.

H. P. B. Countess, Countess, are you responsible for your words? Read this cursed report over again. It proves that I am a charlatan, does it not?

COUNTESS. Let it prove so to whom it will. To me it does not.

H. P. B. You surprise me, Countess. Would it not be wisest for you to leave me and return to the world, before it is too late?

COUNTESS. Are you out of your senses, H. P. B.? Do you not realize that I really know that you are a first-class clairvoyante; will you not remember that I know that the Masters actually exist?

H. P. B. What do you know? It would be pleasant to hear.

COUNTESS. Now, H. P. B., calm yourself. Don't you remember how dramatic my arrival at your home was?

H. P. B. I remember how at first in my letter to you I refused to let you come as you had asked, and then I telegraphed at the last moment that you should. Was there anything supernatural in that? I feared you would not be happy in these narrow surroundings, but then I changed my mind.

COUNTESS. And why? Because the Master told you to.

H. P. B. Quite so, but the Master, as you know, is only a ghost invented by me, existing only in my imagination.

COUNTESS. I did not mean that. Another person may doubt it, but I believe in it. But do you not remember what else happened in connection with my arrival?

H. P. B. No, tell me.

COUNTESS. We had not exchanged many words before you suddenly exclaimed: "Countess Wachtmeister, the Master says that you have a book for me." I was greatly alarmed, for I had no book. "Yes," you assured me, "the Master says that you have a book about Kabbala and Tarot, and He insists that He asked you to bring it to me!" Then I became still more alarmed, for in truth I had no book, only a notebook, written by hand, which was given me by a friend, filled with notes about Tarot and Kabbala. And what is still more wonderful — at home in Sweden,

before departing, I locked up some treasures and was just putting this notebook into my drawer, when I heard a voice saying: "Take this book with you, you will have need of it on the journey!" You remember this little episode, H. P. B., do you not? This very thing would be enough for me to prove that with regard to you everything is as it ought to be and that the Masters do exist! And have I not had proofs of it constantly during my stay here? I have been living for months with you, H. P. B., and I am not so stupid and simple, but that I should have noticed it if there had been the least bit of fraud about you. And remember, H. P. B., I am so proud that I should have left you the very moment had I doubted you in the slightest degree.

H. P. B. Forgive me. Constance, your heart is noble. (*Gives her hand to the Countess, who takes it and, bowing down, kisses H. P. B. on the forehead.*) But what shall become of me? And what will become of the Theosophical Society? All seems so hopeless. . . . Oh, if the Master would let me die now. . . .

COUNTESS. Speak not thus. H. P. B., *The Secret Doctrine* is only in its beginning, is it not so?

H. P. B. Yes, only in its beginning. . . . But of what use is it to write it? . . . Oh, those phenomena, those phenomena. . . . That I should have exposed my Achilles' heel to my enemies . . . and my enemies are powerful. You do not know them, Countess, and I am not allowed to speak about them. . . . But I know them and I know their ways . . . ten years, nay . . . twelve have already elapsed. I have been expecting this for two years, ever since the rumours and slanders began. . . . Ah me!

COUNTESS. But we have totally forgotten about lunch. (*Busies herself at the table.*)

H. P. B. Thank you so much, my dear Countess, but I cannot eat.

COUNTESS. But a cup of tea, H. P. B., will refresh you.

H. P. B. Well, pour me a cup of tea then. (*The Countess serves the tea. At this moment the servant knocks at the door and enters.*)

SERVANT. Here is a letter, just brought by the postman.

H. P. B. A new Job's message. See what it is, Countess. (*The Countess takes the letter, the servant exits.*)

COUNTESS. Hardly a Job's message, H. P. B. This is from Russia.

H. P. B. (*eagerly.*) Give it here. (*Takes the letter, opens and reads it. Her face brightens.*)

COUNTESS. Good news, I suppose, H. P. B. . . . But you are forgetting your tea.

H. P. B. Yes, Countess, remarkable news. . . . They deserve a cup of tea. (*Takes her cup and drinks.*) Katkov writes from the *Novoje Vremja* offering me a thousand gold roubles a month if I will regularly contribute articles and stories for him. And he says particularly that I may even write about theosophy.

COUNTESS. Why, H. P. B., that is a splendid offer.

H. P. B. Isn't it? For once I should get rid of these perpetual financial worries. At last I should have money enough so that I need not be dependent upon the little that the *Theosophist* brings in and the contributions of friends. . . . Oh, Countess, this letter came at the right moment . . . a thousand roubles are four thousand francs a month. All my worries would disappear . . . and a few hours would be enough to write the articles.

COUNTESS. Yes, and there will be enough time over for writing *The Secret Doctrine*, H. P. B.

H. P. B. *The Secret Doctrine*. . . . (*Lost in meditation.*) Countess, I am a doomed soul. There is no peace for me, no stone whereon to rest my weary head. If I write *The Secret Doctrine* I cannot accept Katkov's offer. Those vibrations and whirls, to which I am subjected when writing *The Secret Doctrine*, are so strong that I cannot stand anything else. I will not break them. I must be utterly

concentrated. While I write *The Secret Doctrine* I am not able to do anything else. You have seen yourself how I must exert all my strength. Sometimes I must write a page over and over again till the Master approves. . . . No, Countess, the devil take all aircastles and dreams if I am to write *The Secret Doctrine*.

COUNTESS. Is it really so? Is no compromise possible?

H. P. B. None at all. (*Lost in meditation.*)

COUNTESS (*makes another cup of tea for H. P. B. and for herself*). Now, H. P. B., do take another cup of tea.

H. P. B. (*mechanically takes the cup which the Countess hands her. After a moment her face brightens again*). Listen, Countess, the Master has settled the matter. He says that I must refuse Katkov's offer and go on with the writing of *The Secret Doctrine*, but He promises to be of greater help to me than before and to keep an eye upon my enemies. He says that I need not be so greatly upset; things are going to turn out well, He says.

COUNTESS. I believe so too, H. P. B. You will see that many, many will become still more fervent Theosophists when they hear how terribly that person is accused and oppressed who has led them to the light. Have the spiritual benefactors of mankind ever been received with gratitude? They have been tortured, burnt and crucified!

H. P. B. And in our time, Countess, slander is a terrible weapon. (*Takes her tea.*)

COUNTESS. Will you not take some food after all, H. P. B.? I think you ought to eat something and have a rest.

H. P. B. (*sets down her empty cup*). Ah, Countess, the Wandering Jew does not rest. I cannot eat, but I must work. The whole forenoon has been lost because of that cursed report. . . . My mind is still strongly agitated. The thoughts of my enemies sting like wasps through my whole body. . . . My body feels weary, but I shall go on with my work. *The Secret Doctrine* means tremendous labour. Where shall I get strength and time for writing it

if the Master will not help me? But He will help, so I shall go on. (*Rises.*) Au revoir, Countess. (*Moves slowly towards the door.*)

COUNTESS (*gazes after her, to herself*): Martyr, martyr. . . . When will dawn the day when humanity shall recognize its benefactors?

CURTAIN.

SCENE IV

LONDON, 1891

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London, May 8th, 1891, H. P. B.'s working-room. In the background a broad window. Before it, sideways, stands a large writing-table, beside which there is an armchair for visitors. Other pieces of furniture, a bookcase, etc. A door to the left leading to H. P. B.'s bedroom, to the right in the background a door into the front-room. The sun is shining in from the window, through which are seen trees in a garden.

When the curtain rises merry voices are heard from the bedroom. Soon H. P. B. appears at the door, supported by Countess Wachtmeister. H. P. B. is weak. She walks with difficulty, but makes an effort to be gay. When she comes to the writing-table, H. P. B. leans her hands on it.

COUNTESS (*turning back to the door*). And now, Nurse, Madame's chair. (*Immediately a nurse, carrying a large armchair with a high back, appears.*) Wait a moment, it is very heavy. (*Hurries to help her, and with united effort the chair is carried to the table and placed with its back to the window.*) Now then, H. P. B., will you be seated here? (*Helps her to seat herself.*) The doctor refuses to let you work as yet, H. P. B., so we will not turn the chair to the desk.

H. P. B. That is right, my dear, I shall not write.

(Meanwhile the nurse has brought cushions, which they place for H. P. B.'s support and comfort on the chair; they place a large foot-cushion under her feet and a small table and cards with which H. P. B. is wont to play solitaire. When this is being done there are words and exclamations by Countess Wachtmeister and the nurse.)

COUNTESS. You will want your game of solitaire, H. P. B., for the doctor has not refused that?

H. P. B. (*looking pleased*). Certainly, my dear Constance. What would become of me, the old fortune-teller, without my beloved cards?

COUNTESS. You look much better to-day, H. P. B. You have no fever any longer, your influenza has undoubtedly been overcome. Yesterday, when Dr. Mennell saw you sitting here in your working-room, he was so pleased and said: "It is evident that your strength is returning." And what will he say to-day, when he sees you so vigorous?

H. P. B. He tries his best, the dear Dr. Mennell. But how is our second influenza patient? Have you heard anything, Constance?

NURSE. I hear that she is much better.

H. P. B. Ah, that makes me happy. . . . And listen, Constance, now you must absolutely go and take a rest yourself. You have been awake day and night. You must not make yourself ill.

COUNTESS. Very well then, I think I shall go and take a little rest. But, first I must drop in at the publishers'. And now, H. P. B., your medicine! Isn't it time for it now?

NURSE (*who meanwhile has prepared the dose in the bedroom, comes from the door*). Yes, Countess, here is Madame's medicine.

COUNTESS. Give it to me, Nurse. I will see that Madame takes it! Here, H. P. B. (*Passes the wine-glass to H. P. B., who empties it.*)

H. P. B. It is really refreshing. I wonder what magic elixir it may be. It is almost like fire in my veins.

COUNTESS. It is a prescription by Dr. Miller, a friend of Dr. Mennell's.

H. P. B. Is it, my dear? How good it tastes! I am quite all right now ... so you may go in peace, Constance.

COUNTESS. What about some tobacco, H. P. B.? Wouldn't you like a cigarette?

H. P. B. Oh, my friend, for ten days now I have had no desire for one! Don't bother. I have no wish for it yet.

COUNTESS. It is only because the doctor said that it would be a sign of complete recovery. . . .

H. P. B. (*interested*). Really? Well then, my dear! We won't disappoint the doctor. . . . Bring the smoking things here.

(*Countess W. brings the tobacco-pouch and other things for rolling cigarettes and places them on the writing-table.*)

H. P. B. Now then, my dear. Thank you — and au revoir.

COUNTESS. Au revoir, H. P. B., and a happy au revoir! The nurse, I suppose, will sit in the front-room? (*The latter gives a nod in answer, and both exit through the back door in a merry mood.*)

H. P. B. (*left alone*). Now then! Shall I smoke to please the good doctor? (*Looks sadly at the tobacco things.*) I should not want to yet. . . . What if I should play solitaire first? (*Takes the cards and begins to lay them out on the table. In meditation.*) They do not wish, all those dear people, that I should leave them now. . . . Now, when I am so old and helpless, even these stiff, cold Englishmen understand me, now they have a feeling how great and holy this theosophical cause is. . . .

Well, it is much to your credit, Annie. When you joined our band two years ago, you startled the world. . . . And yet. I must leave you. I feel in this old, decrepit body of mine that I cannot fight against death any longer. It comes. . . . And it is welcome. I have tried to work, but the world is so dark and my enemies are so strong. Since the armistice, granted by Peter Bassano, has come to an end, I have been like a haunted creature. Ever since I have been ill. If the Master had not saved me from death over and over again, I should not be sitting here. . . . *The Secret Doctrine* at least is written, and that will be enough to work on for a whole century to come, as the Master has

said. (*Shuts her eyes. A moment's silence. Suddenly, as though awakening from sleep.*) Constance . . . Countess, where are you? Countess Wachtmeister!

NURSE (*enters through the front door, which is always ajar*). Did Madame call me? Do you wish me to fetch Countess Wachtmeister?

H. P. B. No, no, I beg your pardon, my dear nurse. The Countess is resting or busy with the publisher, she must not be disturbed. I was only speaking to myself. . . . (*The nurse exits, but returns immediately.*)

NURSE. Madame, Mr. Mead asks if you will please receive him for a moment.

H. P. B. (*cheerfully*). I shall be glad to see Mr. Mead. (*The nurse exits and Mr. Mead enters.*)

MR. MEAD. Forgive me, H. P. B., for disturbing you, but the Countess said in passing that you are quite well again.

H. P. B. So I am, my boy.

MEAD. Ah, I am happy indeed to hear it! (*They shake hands warmly.*) Your hand, H. P. B., is warm and firm, as it ought to be.

H. P. B. Sit down, please, George!

MEAD (*takes a seat in the armchair*). As your private secretary, H. P. B., I must sit down, I suppose, when you tell me to, though I feel to-day as if I ought to stand straight in front of you like a soldier before his general.

H. P. B. Well, my boy, what has caused this military mood?

MEAD. Nothing, H. P. B., except joy and thankfulness towards you.

H. P. B. Have you come here to talk nonsense?

MEAD. NO, but let me for once forget that I belong to the cold-blooded and dignified English race. Perhaps it is nonsense, as you say, but anyway it is sincere, it is the nonsense of a child. Listen, H. P. B. We have just got a letter from America, and I could not help coming and telling you about it.

H. P. B. Ah, news from Boston? Has Annie written?

MEAD. This letter comes from Archibald, and of course it is more suitable coming from him, as Annie would have concealed the fact that she has had a brilliant success.

H. P. B. Tell me about it, George — there is no speaker like Annie!

MEAD. That is true indeed, H. P. B. But the culmination of her success was when, at the annual meeting of the Theosophists in Boston, she read aloud the address written by you to the American section. Hundreds of members who had hastened to listen to her could not get into the hall, for it had been announced that a greeting written by you was to be read aloud. You remember the telegram which was sent straight from the Congress about the end of last month? It was so full of praise of you that tears came into your eyes, though you laughed at the same time. The rest of us did not know whether the telegram was to be taken officially or whether it really interpreted the feelings at the Congress. Now, H. P. B., Archibald Keightley writes about the course of events in his letter and particularly adds that after hearing your address the members were filled with enthusiasm. They applauded wildly, they wept, they cried. Some of them declared that not for centuries has there existed upon earth such a benefactor as you; others, that they loved you as their spiritual mother; others again said that they were willing to die for your ideal. The flag of Theosophy never fluttered so high as at the Boston Congress. All these words of praise came straight and spontaneously from the very heart of all those present.

H. P. B. Ah, George, my boy ... it is all to the credit of Judge. He is a man in the right place, please remember that.

MEAD. You are truly great, H. P. B., for though your heart rejoices, you never take thanks for yourself. . . .

H. P. B. What are you saying? I am glad of the success of Theosophy, but it is not to my credit at all! On the

contrary, I have brought shame upon the holy cause, but the Masters, the Masters have averted the evil, and it is all to their credit, that though my name has been dragged into the dust, that of Theosophy shines like pure gold from the melting-pot. They are the only ones entitled to thanks for everything.

MEAD (*with bowed head*). Yes . . . the Masters . . . I believe in their existence, as you, H. P. B., claim it to be so, for I believe in you . . . but I should like to experience myself, just once, that They exist.

H. P. B. My dear George, every person has his special task in life. If your Master deems it necessary for your life's work that He reveal Himself to you, He will do so, you may be sure. But if He deems in His wisdom that it would disturb you more than it would benefit you, you may be as sure that He will not reveal Himself. He knows best. And you, my boy, you must be happy, for is not your mission as a Theosophist clear? You are an expert in Greek and Latin, you are a learned man, George. The research of the first Christian centuries is your special field. This work is of great value. Do that work as a Theosophist, *i.e.* in the spirit of truth, without any prejudices, and you will prepare one stone, perhaps the corner-stone, for the Temple of the future, where the religion of Humanity will come to unite all nations and all races in the worship of the same common God. . . . Remember, my dear boy, that your motto ought to be always: "Truth, pure scientific truth, above everything."

MEAD (*whose look has brightened while H. P. B. speaks*). Oh, H. P. B., you are intelligent, you are great, you understand all. Please do not deny it. . . . Always when you speak, you make a voice sound in me. You speak aright, you speak the truth. And I must thank you for my life's work. Through your help did I find it — without you I should never have found it. The Theosophical cause I shall serve faithfully, always . . . in accordance with my abilities. You said

so rightly: "If it is necessary, I may be allowed to experience something — if not, I am satisfied with what I have already experienced." For is not the greatest experience for men of our time that they have been permitted to become acquainted with you? . . . I do not flatter you, H. P. B. Once for all I speak from the very depths of my heart. You are the most wonderful being upon earth, you are my spiritual mother. May I not for once kiss your hand, H. P. B.? Will you not for once bless your pupil, blind and stupid, but full of gratitude and longing for devoted service? (*Falls to his knees, takes H. P. B.'s left hand and kisses it. Touched, H. P. B. lays her right hand upon Mead's head and moves her lips, looking tenderly upon him.*)

H. P. B. (*withdraws her hand*). Now, my boy, go in peace.

MEAD (*exits slowly, deeply moved; to himself*). What is it in her that touches me so deeply to-day? . . . No harsh words, no reproaches, no scorn. . . . H. P. B. mild, moved. . . . Woe to us, is the end approaching?

H. P. B. (*alone*). Wonderful days, these last ones. . . . People are declaring their love. . . . (*Sinks into meditation, with bowed head and closed eyes.*)

MORYA (*comes softly in from the door of the bedroom, robed in a white garment, with a turban on his head. He takes a seat in the armchair without H. P. B. observing him. After a moment*): Peace be unto thee, Helena.

H. P. B. (*springs to her feet with a rapt expression on her face*). Master . . . and I did not see Thee coming.

MORYA. I did not want to disturb your heart, Helena. It has had so little joy from people's love.

H. P. B. Thou knowest then. . . . But, of course, Thou knowest all.

MORYA. At least with regard to thee, my child.

H. P. B. It is long since Thou didst come to me. . . . So much happiness on the same day!

MORYA. In truth, I have come to thee to put an important question to thee.

H. P. B. Command me, Master. Thou needs not ask me. Thou knowest that I am ready for all that Thou wishest. I already feel my strength returning and that I can work much as Thou dost demand.

MORYA. Thou, most faithful of my disciples, be blessed now and always. . . . But I have not come to lay a new burden on thy shoulders, Helena. Thou hast done as much as it is possible to demand of man. Twice thou hast chosen a painful life of work, though thou hadst deserved rest, and I permitted thee to remain in a world which badly needed thy help, though it did not realize its own longing. Now it is for the third time, Helena. Now I no longer put a choice before thee. I know what thou wouldst choose; thou wouldst ask for new pain, new suffering, new efforts. But this time I shall choose for thee. Now when thy theosophical work is about to bring forth fruit, now when men's love begins to surround thee, I come to ask thee: "Art thou ready to come home?"

H. P. B. (*radiant with joy*). Home? To Thee, my Friend, my Master?

MORYA. Yes, home to me.

H. P. B. And Thou dost ask me that! Thou knowest that it is the only human and selfish hope that has kept me up during all these years of effort! Home . . . oh, my Master, take me with thee at once!

MORYA. I shall do so, at once.

H. P. B. My day's work is done then? Art Thou sure, Morya, that all is performed?

MORYA. All has been done that can be done for this generation. Thou hast performed thy work well, Helena. I too thank thee, my child.

H. P. B. (*weeping with joy*). Oh, my Master, oh my Master!

MORYA (*arises, takes H. P. B.'s right hand in his and lays his left on her hand*). Rest, my child. In a moment I shall send Death to fetch thee — and then we shall see each other again.

Peace be unto thee meanwhile! (*Exits slowly through the bedroom door.*)

H. P. B. (*follows him with her eyes, her face radiant with joy. She then shuts her eyes and falls asleep.*)

THE CURTAIN FALLS

