MRS. KLEIN. Mm hm.

PAULA. You want to pay Melitta reparation.

Pause.

You're doing so now.

Pause.

I terribly want.

MRS. KLEIN.

PAULA.

MRS. KLEIN.

The doctor is called Klein 1898-1967 was born in Berlin with a mission to extirpate all evil from...
Mrs. Klein was first staged in the Cottesloe auditorium of the National Theatre of Great Britain.

First preview was 5 August 1988; press night was 10 August 1988.

The cast was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Actor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MRS. KLEIN</td>
<td>Gillian Barge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAULA</td>
<td>Zoë Wanamaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MELITTA</td>
<td>Francesca Annis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Directed by Peter Gill
Set designed by John Gunter
Costumes by Stephen Brimson-Lewis
Music by Terry Davies

Mrs. Klein is 52. Paula and Melitta are in their early thirties.

Place: London
Time: Spring 1934

This text went to press before the opening night, and may therefore differ slightly from the text as performed.

Nicholas Wright gratefully acknowledges the use of Phyllis Grosskurth's biography Melanie Klein, published by Hodder and Stoughton, 1985.
ACT ONE

MRS. KLEIN is sorting through old papers. PAULA is listening.

MRS. KLEIN. It’s quite incredible what one keeps.

Tears up a photograph. Finds a piece of paper.

This is a poem he wrote.

Reads it.

Excuse me.

She cries. Holds her hand out. PAULA takes it. She slowly stops crying.

I think that’s it till next time. So: our coffee should be ready. You’ll have some?

PAULA. Thank you.

MRS. KLEIN. Now what’s this?

PAULA. I’ve brought you something.

It’s a cakebox.

MRS. KLEIN. But my dear you shouldn’t have spent your money. No don’t tell me.

Opens it.

Paula, this is fantastic of you. Poppy-seed cake, no reason you should believe this, was my mother’s speciality.

Gives PAULA the poem.

You can read this.

She goes out. PAULA reads. MRS. KLEIN comes back with coffee. Pours.

MRS. KLEIN. I’m in a very adequate state, all things considered. I cough a lot but then I’m smoking more. I sleep enough, not much. I have my knock-out drops if I should need them but I’m holding off so far. No dreams, which is unusual for me. Normally I’m an active, colourful dreamer. Now each night the show is cancelled. Most annoying. Milk?
PAULA. What kind of work?
MRS. KLEIN. You're not too busy?
PAULA. No.
MRS. KLEIN. Thank God, thank God. Have some more cake.
PAULA. No thank you.
MRS. KLEIN. has some more.
MRS. KLEIN. I'm famished. I've been eating scraps. Cheese on toast, sardines on toast, ridiculous. And so this morning up I got and cooked myself a hearty British breakfast. Then I looked at it. And then I gave it to the pekinese. He's not here now. He'll be living the life of Riley for the next ten days, in kennels, up by Primrose Hill. He won't be bothering you. His name is Nanki-Poo. A wandering minstrel he. You know your Gilbert and Sullivan?
PAULA. When you say he won't be bothering me -?
MRS. KLEIN. Quite so. Let me explain.

A set of keys.
These are my spare keys to the front door. My cleaning woman has her own. Keys to the rooms upstairs, my bedroom, my consulting-room, I'm putting somewhere safe, she'll tell you if you ask, but for emergencies. She says she'll water the plants. If you could watch the window-boxes. Let me see.

Her notebook.
I made a list. I felt compelled to. And this in itself is strange, because my memory's good. I woke at four o'clock this morning, wondering, 'What am I making lists for, is there perhaps some paranoiac aspect to it?' But I couldn't think it through at that hour. I've stopped the milk. I've stopped the Times, I've stopped the Daily Mail. The central heating has instructions pinned above it. Sunny is with my daughter. Sunny is the cat, the Sunbeam. Make of it what you will. Food is in the fridge, and when you leave at night please check the windows and of course the door. Now is there anything else domestic? Good.

PAULA. I'm sorry -. Do you want -?
MRS. KLEIN. If I could do my list? And questions after.

At the desk.
Letters.
These I would appreciate your posting for me.

A pin-box.
I've left some money here for odd expenses and your travel. I won't feel happy otherwise. I'll worry that you're feeling in some way imposed upon. So spend it freely. Here. Five shillings. Good, that's settled.

Another letter.
This I don't know what to do with. It arrived this morning. Marked 'To await return'. It comes from Dr. Schmideberg. I don't like it. I don't even like the envelope. It looks as though it's about to burst with hostile matter. This is what professional enemies are like. They're vampires. They're dependent. They want love. And so they nag and pester. Should I read it? Should I leave it? Should I burn it? If I burn it, can I blame the post? I'm not sure. No I can't decide.

She puts it down.
At such a time I don't deserve to be so persecuted. Next. The proofs.

PAULA. The proofs?
MRS. KLEIN. You know the system?
PAULA. If you tell me what it is you want I'll... 
MRS. KLEIN. Fine, come look.

Proofs on the desk.
You've read the book?
PAULA. Of course, I... 
MRS. KLEIN. I thought so. This will be the second German-language edition.

A book.
This is the first. There are some misprints which I've put a ring round. So you must check both. I've marked in pencil where I want revisions.

Notes.
These are they. This arrow goes back, then skip, then on, yes?

Another book.
Some revisions, though not all, are in the second English edition, here.

A dictionary.
English-German, German-English.

Manuscript.
Here's the new chapter. So you must watch the numbering.

Another manuscript.
This is the foreword. Do you type?
PAULA. Two fingers.
MRS. KLEIN. Likewise. Three copies. Carbon here. You understand?
PAULA. Yes.
MRS. KLEIN. Sure?
PAULA. Quite sure. When is the copy-date?
MRS. KLEIN. Forget the copy-date, it's weeks ago, I want them posted to Vienna first post Wednesday at the latest.
PAULA. Fine. I'll show you what I've done on Tuesday.
MRS. KLEIN. I won't be here.
PAULA. You won't? 
MRS. KLEIN. I have a funeral to attend.
PAULA. I'm sorry, yes, I see, so will you...
MRS. KLEIN. I shall be back the following weekend.
PAULA. Then you won't have seen them.
MRS. KLEIN. Plainly not.
PAULA. So if there's anything I get wrong...
MRS. KLEIN. They'll print it wrong and I'll look stupid. But I'm not expecting that to happen.
PAULA. Why?
MRS. KLEIN. Because I trust you.
PAULA. But we've never met.
MRS. KLEIN. Never sat and talked. It's very pleasant. And I'm glad you arrived a fraction late. I was with a patient, nine years old last week. So, not my youngest but my most demanding. He wouldn't stay in the consulting-room today, he felt it pressing in on him; he took against it. So we came down here. There, that's his train, his Daddy-train he calls it. He played, I played. If you'd been on time I wouldn't have let you in. Because my patients cannot be disturbed. The world must wait. I'm sure you feel the same. Now this is a Manzanilla which I'm rather proud of.

They sit and drink their sherry. Pause.

MRS. KLEIN. You have family back at home?

PAULA. I do.

MRS. KLEIN. You hear from them?

PAULA. My mother writes. My brothers.

MRS. KLEIN. Have you sisters?

PAULA. No.

MRS. KLEIN. That's not a simple 'no'.

PAULA. I had an older sister.

MRS. KLEIN. Were you close in age?

PAULA. She died before I was born.

MRS. KLEIN. So you're important to your mother.

PAULA. Yes.

MRS. KLEIN. To comfort her. Or so you see it. And you're married?

PAULA. Yes.

MRS. KLEIN. He's not an analyst?

PAULA. He's a doctor.

MRS. KLEIN. That isn't what I asked.

PAULA. He's not an analyst.

MRS. KLEIN. He doesn't approve?

PAULA. He doesn't approve.

MRS. KLEIN. And where've you put him?

PAULA. Where—?
MRS. KLEIN. He's not in England?

PAULA. No, in Zurich.

MRS. KLEIN. Ah. So did he –?

PAULA. He left Germany first. Because he had to. I stayed on.

Because there wasn't so much pressure on me.

MRS. KLEIN. Though I heard you'd been arrested.

PAULA. It wasn't serious. Just a small misunderstanding. They searched the house and took some books and dropped the charge.

Pause.

MRS. KLEIN. It frightened you.

PAULA. Yes.

MRS. KLEIN. You're Jewish.

PAULA. Yes. But it was worse for him. My husband. He was more political than I am.

MRS. KLEIN. When you say your husband was political, do you mean he isn't now or that he's no longer your husband?

PAULA. We're divorced.

MRS. KLEIN. And how do you find it?

PAULA. Lonely.

MRS. KLEIN. Likewise.

_Gives Paula her glass, marks a place on it with her finger._

MRS. KLEIN. I can manage that much more. And help yourself.

PAULA. pours sherry.

MRS. KLEIN. My son was fond of politics when he was younger. And his friends, just like in any other intellectual family. But I've never been political myself. Although I've had good cause to. I've been spat at in the street. My children too. And now I hear each week from friends at home, the windows smashed, the stars of Judah painted on the doors, the papers scattered, the maid hysterical, the children in tears. I know about it, thank you, and it won't get better. I can't stop it. You can't. Can your husband? In these terrible times we live in? And it doesn't interest me to try. That's not my style.

_She sees her sherry, drinks._

Somebody said you had a daughter.

PAULA. What?

MRS. KLEIN. Your daughter.

PAULA. I'm sorry I didn't hear you. I've a daughter, yes. She's nine. She's in Berlin. She's with some Catholic friends.

MRS. KLEIN. And will she join you?

PAULA. Soon. Except –

MRS. KLEIN. So what is your problem?

PAULA. I'll need a decent place to live.

MRS. KLEIN. Where are you now?

PAULA. In Bethnal Green.

MRS. KLEIN. I've never been there, what's it like?

PAULA. It's horrible. It's a slum.

MRS. KLEIN. And do you practise there?

PAULA. I try to.

MRS. KLEIN. It must be hard.

PAULA. It's impossible. Either my patients can't afford to pay me or they leave.

MRS. KLEIN. It's early days.

PAULA. I'm thirty-four. I don't have a proper coat. I've never lived like this.

MRS. KLEIN. You're angry.

PAULA. Yes.

MRS. KLEIN. You should apply to change your visa.

PAULA. I have.

MRS. KLEIN. Then you must ask again. I'll put a word in for you. No, don't thank me. I do little enough for you these days. Pass me that box.

_It's the box with Hans's letters in it._

I feel that Hans would like his poem to go to you.

_She gives Paula the scrap of paper._
PAULA. I can’t accept it.
MRS. KLEIN. No strings. It’s his.
PAULA. Thank you.

She takes it.

MRS. KLEIN. But there’s something on your mind.

PAULA. I don’t know why you’re doing this. Why you’re letting me help you. Isn’t there someone else who –

MRS. KLEIN. Who?

PAULA. You have your English friends.

MRS. KLEIN. I was holidaying in St. Ives last week and a very good English friend came with me. Mrs. Riviere. I like her, she’s a loyal colleague and an adequate clinician, not outstanding. We stayed a week, then motored back and stopped in Salisbury. A bed and breakfast place, no heating, didn’t like dogs and Mrs. Riviere discovered that she’d left her fox-fur back in Cornwall. This is a woman who takes a fox-fur on a walking holiday. So she rang the hotel, and suddenly it’s the manager’s wife. ‘Is that Mrs. Klein?’ ‘No, it’s her friend, I think I left my fox-fur on the terrace –’. But it’s me the woman wants to talk to. There’s been a telephone-call for me, from Budapest, a foreign lady, Mrs. Vago. ‘Yes’, I say, ‘My sister-in-law. And what was so important that she telephones?’ I’d left the number here, so – ‘Is it bad news?’ I ask. The woman says: ‘It is my duty –’. She was trying to be considerate. I say, don’t go around the houses, I’m a grown-up woman, I’m sitting down. She says, it’s about my son. He’s had a climbing accident. I’m sitting in the hallway looking at a green baize board with postcards on it. Stonchenge. I was looking at it, thinking, ‘What does that mean?’ She was talking. ‘Are you there?’ She thought I’d fainted. I said: ‘Tell me please: this accident my son had: was it fatal?’ She replied: ‘I’m sorry, Mrs. Klein, you won’t believe this but I can’t remember.’ I said, ‘Don’t worry, I believe you, but I can’t explain it to you, not right now, just tell me: have you written it down?’ She says: ‘I’ll find it’. I waited. In a state of some suspense. I heard her shuffling papers, banging drawers. Then it struck me: how, without appearing callous, would I raise the subject of my friend’s fox-fur? And I was worried about her fur because I didn’t really, absolutely think she’d sympathise. Although she did. And she was admirable. But yet I didn’t trust her. Why? Because I don’t trust any of them. Not with this. Not now. They don’t feel homelike. I want my home around me. I want the good things close and safe. I want to hear the German language. You speak German and you bring me poppy-seed cake. Also I like you.

She passes the box to PAULA.

MRS. KLEIN. Put it beneath the stairs and bring my coat and hat. And my umbrella. And my bags, no, leave them there but count them, there are two and a hatbox.

PAULA. Are you leaving now?

MRS. KLEIN. Yes now, the taxi’s due in – . Check the gloves are in the pockets.

PAULA gets her coat, etc. while MRS. KLEIN writes down a telephone number. PAULA comes back with coat, etc.

MRS. KLEIN. You can reach me at this number. Budapest is not that far, my sister-in-law speaks perfect German. As you see I wish to reassure you that I haven’t died. Now do I need to spend a penny. No.

She dresses.

I won’t suggest you see me to the station. You’d be better advised to start the work at once.

Checks in her notebook.


Doorbell rings.


Doorbell.


PAULA goes out. MRS. KLEIN finds her glasses.

Keys.

She takes a large bunch of keys out of her handbag. Locks the drinks cabinet. Finds Dr. Schmideberg’s letter: puts it in the filing cabinet. At some point the taxi driver hoots his horn. MRS. KLEIN puts the keys in the bookshelf and selects a book to hide them behind. One last look round. She goes out.

PAULA comes back. Puts on a light, draws the curtains. Sits at the desk, moves things round to find a working order. Starts work.

Music.
Time passes.

Some hours later.

PAULA is still working.

Front door heard opening and closing.

PAULA: Hello?

MELITTA comes in.

MELITTA: What the bloody hell are you doing here?

PAULA: I'm reading proofs.

MELITTA: What for?

PAULA: She asked me to.

MELITTA: When?

PAULA: This afternoon.

MELITTA: She wasn't here this afternoon.

PAULA: I saw her.

MELITTA: Here?

PAULA: Yes here.

MELITTA: Oh Jesus Christ.

PAULA: What is it?

MELITTA: Nothing.

PAULA: Would you like some coffee?

MELITTA: No, I need a drink. And you?

PAULA: I'm not thirsty.

MELITTA: Never stopped me.

Tries the drinks cupboard.

It's locked.

PAULA: Let me try it.

Does.

That's strange.

Tries again.

It is. I'm sorry.

MELITTA: Darling it's not your fault. You carry on.

PAULA: I will. Did that sound rude? She wants them done by Wednesday and it's taken me four hours to do one chapter.

Pause. MELITTA moves around the room.

MELITTA: Aren't you freezing?

PAULA: No.

MELITTA: Why don't you put the heating on?

PAULA: I tried. It didn't light and I was worried I might break it so I left it. Let me finish.

Pause. MELITTA looks over PAULA's shoulder at her work.

MELITTA: I'm in this.

PAULA: I know, I've just been doing the footnote.

MELITTA: And that's not an ashtray.

PAULA: No?

MELITTA: It's part of a coffee-set.

Replaces saucer with ashtray.

Here.

Empties stubs, moves around, stacks sherry glasses and generally tidies up.

PAULA: Are you here for something special?

MELITTA: No, I happened to be driving past and saw the light on. Someone's moved a book.

PAULA: Not me.

MELITTA: So let me get this straight, you saw her here this afternoon.

PAULA: That's right.

MELITTA: Because she should have left on Tuesday.

PAULA: No, she left as planned. I'm sure of that. Because when Walter rang me -

MELITTA: Walter rang you?

PAULA: Yes, he -

MELITTA: Why?
PAULA. He had a message. That she wanted me to call on her. She'd got my letter and she –.

MELITTA. Letter?

PAULA. Yes. I wrote a letter. Everyone else was writing to her. I assumed you wouldn't mind.

MELITTA. Why should I mind?

PAULA. I mean, I didn't think she'd mind.

MELITTA. And so the sequence was: you wrote a letter to my mother and she sent an invitation via my husband. That's what happened.

PAULA. That's what happened.

MELITTA. And?

PAULA. She asked me if I'd –

MELITTA. No not you.

PAULA. Your mother?

MELITTA. Yes my mother. How did she seem?

PAULA. She said you had the car; –

MELITTA. Did she mention me?

PAULA. She said you had the car; –

MELITTA. What else?

PAULA. I don't remember.

MELITTA. You're a liar.

PAULA. That may be. I can't discuss it, not at this time of night. I'm sorry Melitta.

She goes out. MELITTA tries to open top drawer of filing cabinet. Locked. Goes to desk, rummages round in top drawers. Finds only pins, elastic bands, etc. Moves away. PAULA comes back wearing a hat and coat.

MELITTA. You've got your coat on.

PAULA. Yes. It's late, I'll miss my Underground.

MELITTA. I'll drive you home.

PAULA. What for?

MELITTA. Oh don't you want me to?

PAULA. I'd love you to. I hate the tube. It's full of drunks and madmen. But it just so happens that through no decision of my own I live the other end of London.

MELITTA. But I've got the car.

PAULA. I'll pay for the petrol.

MELITTA. Rubbish, you can't afford it.

PAULA. Fine. Let's go.

MELITTA. Let's stay for a moment.

PAULA. Not too long. I'm tired. (Her eyes are strained.) I have to check each word. Although she's changing nothing essential. Misprints. Extra foot-notes. Foreword. Brand new chapter. (Laughs.) Quite a lot in fact but nothing essential.

MELITTA. So you're doing her secretarial work?

PAULA. Not really.

MELITTA. And her letters, will you file her letters?

PAULA. No.

MELITTA. Although they're streaming in in sackfuls, so it seems.

PAULA. They won't need filing.

MELITTA. So you'll put them where?

PAULA. In here. (Basket.) The filing cabinet's locked.

MELITTA. Well that's a bore. She asked me to collect some papers. But I don't know where the keys are.

PAULA. I don't know.

MELITTA. Well somebody must.

PAULA. The cleaning woman knows. They had an arrangement, hide them – somewhere in the house, I don't know where, it's not my business.

Pause.
Most of the house is locked. She's locked the cellar door, she's locked the rooms upstairs. It's symbolic. The house is her.

_Pause. PAULA smiles._

Let's go.

**MELITTA.** When I was briefly—fairly briefly—couple of months—or less—prevailed upon to be her private secretary—I threw a vase and hit that bit of wall behind you.

**PAULA.** I'm reading proofs. Which suits me fine. I don't like weekends at the best of times, they're lonely and depressing so I don't mind helping. But I'm not her secretary, I'm not her anything else, let's make that clear.

**MELITTA looks up a number in her address book.**

**MELITTA.** There's a fascinating paper by Ferenczi on neurotic weekends. He says that during the week our work routine soaks up aggressive feelings. Here we are.

_Finds number. Dials._

But then at weekends they let fly. You follow? That's why Sunday is the day we dread the most. Pandora's box stuffed full of nameless hatreds. And the lid not properly closed. (_To telephone:_ Oh bloody answer. Stupid savages. Hello. Oh thank you, can I speak to Mrs. P? (_To herself:_ Oh Bugger. Pow. Pow. Pow. (Into telephone:_ Mrs. Pountney. Phew. Yes this is Dr. Schmideberg speaking. S.C.H—. Doctor, that's right. No, no-one's ill, I simply—. (_To PAULA in comic cockney:_ 'Gawn to fetch 'er 'usband.' Hello. This is—No, there's nothing wrong, I have your name down here in my address-book as an avenue to Mrs. Pountney, I believe she lives on the floor above you. Yes I do, it's twenty to eleven.

**PAULA.** Melitta.

**MELITTA in fury bangs the telephone on the desk.**

**MELITTA.** I'm sorry, I dropped the phone. That's very kind, if you could have a look, that's right. Tell her it's Melitta. She knows me, yes, she very kindly cleans my mother's house for her. Tell her I'm there, I'm here, and everything's locked up and ask her where the keys are. No there isn't any need to—. (_To PAULA:_ Now he's putting his wife back on.

**PAULA.** Melitta.

**MELITTA.** What.

**PAULA.** She's gone away for the weekend.

**MELITTA.** Mrs. Pountney?

**PAULA nods.**

**MELITTA (to telephone).** One moment please. (_To PAULA:_ Has she gone far?

**PAULA.** To South—. South something.

**MELITTA.** Southport? Southsea?

**PAULA.** No, it's something anal.

**MELITTA.** Southend.

**PAULA.** That sounds right.

_Worried voice on telephone:_ 'Hello? Has somebody passed away? Hello?'

**MELITTA.** Thank you, I've just found out. Good night.

_Rings off._

Damn that woman. Damn her. God rot her to hell. Vile crone. I've begged my mother a thousand times to sack her. But she won't. She can't. She sees the cleaning-woman as her mother. Wouldn't you say?

**PAULA.** It crossed my mind, Melitta, but I didn't like to call attention to it. Can we go now?

**MELITTA.** Did she get my letter?

**PAULA.** Yes.

**MELITTA.** And did she read it?

**PAULA.** Not while I was there. She said you'd marked it to await return. No, let's be frank. She felt attacked by it. She's feeling persecuted at the moment, or she'd know you wouldn't hurt her at a time like—. But she feared you might. So she was hostile to the letter and to you. But not you, her daughter. No. To Dr. Schmideberg. She only spoke of you as Dr. Schmideberg. The daughter's good, she loves her, but the doctor's bad, it's casebook stuff. It won't last. She'll read your letter soon. In fact she probably took it with her.

**MELITTA.** Jesus Christ.

**PAULA.** What now?
MELITTA. I’m feeling sick.

PAULA. Do you want a glass of water?

MELITTA. No.

PAULA. Try putting your head between your knees.

MELITTA. I need a drink.

PAULA. Let’s see what we can do.

Goes to the drinks cabinet. Examines it. Takes out the top drawer.

I thought so.

Reaches down inside.

One can always find a way in somehow, as my professor would say.

Gets bottles and glasses out.

Whisky? There’s two kinds. Oh this is Irish. Irish Scotch, that’s rather amusing.

MELITTA. Pour it.

PAULA. Yes I am doing.

MELITTA. One for you.

PAULA. I have.

They drink.

PAULA. I bought a whisky once in a public house. In Bethnal Green. But it was such a noisy and disgusting place I couldn’t enjoy it. This is different. This is homelike.

Pause.

MELITTA. Do you have those dreams where something absolutely vital has been hidden away? In some familiar place? You search and search. But the handles keep on coming off the doors. Or empty rooms are suddenly crowded. Or the railway-ticket’s missing from your handbag, or the platform’s vanished. And you can’t admit whatever it is you’re doing. Because it’s shameful. Do you?

PAULA. Not the same but—. Yes.

MELITTA. It’s not just me then.

PAULA. They’re anxiety dreams. Everyone has them.

MELITTA. I feel I’m in one all the time.

PAULA. I dream I’ve killed a child. I told my analyst. She interpreted that I’d felt deserted by her over the Easter break. I said I doubted that was much to do with it, I’d been having this dream for thirty years. She said, ‘Ah ha, and my consulting room is number 30.’

MELITTA. Are we like that?

PAULA. I hope not. What about yours?

MELITTA. She wasn’t giving satisfaction so I sacked her.

PAULA. What went wrong?

MELITTA. I thought she was my mother. And I couldn’t work through it. Couldn’t stop thinking, ‘damn the bitch’, or ‘does she love me?’. So she thought, and I agreed, that I was stuck in the transference. I’m a sucker for transference. Can’t resist it. Do it to anyone. Dentist. Window-cleaner. Nanki Poo. So on we slogged. For years and years. And nothing changed. Except that bit by bit I realised that to all intents and purposes she was my mother. It was my mother put me on to her. She reads my mother’s books, she quotes them word for word and once a month she meets her for tea at Whiteleys. And I couldn’t bear it, darling.

PAULA. Who’ve you gone to now?

MELITTA. Never you mind.

PAULA. I’d like to change my analyst.

MELITTA. Who do you have your eye on?

PAULA. Well it’s more a question would she take me.

MELITTA spills her whisky. Composes herself. Marks a level on the glass with one finger.

MELITTA. Be a good girl and fill it up to here this time.

PAULA does. She looks at the bottle.

PAULA. It’s seven years old. She must be quite a connoisseur.

MELITTA. She is. We drove through France two years ago and just as we were getting on quite well she went in for a claret tasting competition and won first prize. They’d never had a woman champion. Now the mayor sends her a postcard every Christmas. She’s a local hero.

PAULA smiles.

It isn’t funny, being her daughter. Try it. Perhaps you have.

PAULA. I don’t know what you mean.
MELITTA. You've changed.

PAULA. How's that?

MELITTA. You're like some stubborn, slow amoeba making its gains by stealth.

PAULA goes to the pin-box and rummages for her five shillings.

Just what do you think you're doing?

PAULA. I'm getting a taxi.

MELITTA. Put that back.

PAULA. It's my expenses.

MELITTA. Well you might have told me you had taxi-money.

PAULA. I forgot.

MELITTA. Forgot. You didn't want to leave. You're burrowing in.

PAULA throws the box on the ground. It opens and the money falls out.

PAULA. I have a mother of my own. I don't need yours. If that's the undercurrent. Why do you think I'd want to hurt you? Why? You're like a sister to me. You've been kind and good and generous to me. Nobody else from home has helped me. Not till now. Until your mother, true. Who seems neurotically attached to me for some strange reason. Or some obvious reason. I can't help it. And I'm under no illusions. And I don't care tuppence for your boring little Oedipal tangles. I have other problems thank you. I've a daughter in Berlin. I have consulting-rooms in Bethnal Green.

MELITTA. Who put you there?

PAULA. Not her.

MELITTA. They all did. At the Institute. Committee level. Refugees not wanted. Not in Hampstead. Too much healthy competition. That's why they've dumped you all in these extraordinary places. And she's right behind it.

PAULA. You don't surprise me. Analysts are only human. If you threaten our professional livelihoods you'll get some very primitive responses. That was grubby of you.

MELITTA. Did she tell you how he died?

PAULA. She said a climbing accident.

MELITTA. He killed himself.

Pause.

PAULA. How do you know?

MELITTA. I rang my aunt. Auntie Jolan. Mrs. Vago. Talks for ever, cost a fortune. I could tell at once that she was hiding something. So I asked her very obliquely. Where he went that morning. What he wore. All the little details that I needed to complete the picture. She resisted. Started howling. Then she banged the phone down. But I'd got my answers. I've got good material. And I've worked it through. I've reached the only possible interpretation.

PAULA. Did he leave a note?

MELITTA. No note. That's what he was like. He used to disappear for hours. She'd shake him. 'Where've you been? I thought the cart had run you over!' He'd say: 'Nowhere.' Never let on. Though he might give her a clue. But no confessions. So he'd hardly leave a suicide-note. He wouldn't want to give her the satisfaction.

PAULA. Does your mother know?

MELITTA. Well that depends on whether or not she read my letter.

PAULA. Oh Melitta. She'll be —

MELITTA. Yes I know.

PAULA. You told her?

MELITTA. Yes!

PAULA. It's horrible.

MELITTA. Yes I know.

PAULA. How could you?

MELITTA. Well I think I must be barmy.

Another drink for both.

MELITTA. When you saw it, where was it left exactly?

PAULA. There. (The desk.) It's gone now.

MELITTA. Yes I looked.

Pause.

PAULA. I'm starving.

MELITTA. Likewise.

Pause.
PAULA. Was the letter very –?
PAULA. Oh my God.
MELITTA. Exactly.
Pause.
MELITTA. I was sitting in the Wigmore Hall tonight. And they were playing Schubert. So divine. And all that horrible hatred seeped away. I felt that I was looking at it from high up. From somewhere in the ceiling. It was like a pile of rotting clothes. Far distant. From my dizzy height of rational thinking. I felt utterly sane. So I came round here to get my letter back. It seemed so simple. Now all I can imagine is my mother in her first class Pullman, looking for some further reading, putting down her copy of the Psychoanalytic Quarterly –.
She laughs.
PAULA. No, Melitta –
MELITTA. No. Or maybe her Country Life –
PAULA. Or Vogue!
They both giggle.
MELITTA. Or Lilliput!
Both giggle hysterically.
MELITTA. She'll climb into bed –
PAULA. No, berth!
MELITTA. What?
PAULA. Berth, you know, the –.
MELITTA. Berth, that's right, she'll take her corsets off –
Both giggle furiously.
– then up she climbs and –
PAULA. – does her nightie up to her chin –
Both collapse with laughter.
MELITTA. And then she reads – she reads –
PAULA. 'You cow, you murderess –' 
MELITTA. No no no – it's worse that that –.
PAULA. 'Bitch, you killed him~!'
They slowly stop giggling. Then one of them starts giggling again, and both collapse with laughter but this time with a sense of guilt. They stop.
Pause. They share a handkerchief, wipe their eyes.
Maybe she won't believe it.
MELITTA. She's not stupid.
PAULA. No.
MELITTA. It'll kill her.
PAULA. Yes it very likely will.
MELITTA. Except she could have left it here. It could be in this room.
They gaze round the room.
PAULA. What was the book you thought I'd moved?
MELITTA. 'The Interpretation of Dreams'.
PAULA stands up.
PAULA. That seems significant.
Goes to the bookshelf. Removes the book and takes the keys out.
I thought so. Catch.
She throws them across the room. MELITTA catches them.
PAULA. Have a look.
MELITTA opens the filing cabinet.
MELITTA. You keep watch.
PAULA. Who for?
MELITTA. Parental super-egos, darling. Do it.
She unlocks the filing cabinet.
PAULA (whispers). Go on.
MELITTA opens the top drawer to its fullest extent. The cabinet topples forwards into her arms. She struggles to push it back. PAULA runs to help her.
MRS. KLEIN comes in, dressed for travel as last seen.
MRS. KLEIN. Sixpence for the tip, that’s five and thrupence. Off you go now.

PAULA goes.

MELITTA. Did you get my letter?

MRS. KLEIN. Later. What’s she doing here?

MELITTA. Working late.

MRS. KLEIN. I wish she’d go. She found the keys I notice. And the whisky. Make me a cup of tea. I need to make a note of something, personal, not unpleasant. Turn the heating on.

MELITTA goes out. MRS. KLEIN gets her notebook. Loosens her shoes. Takes hat off. MRS. KLEIN puts a record on. Slow movement, Haydn, Quartet in C, Op. 54 No. 2.

Interlude

Not very long but marks a pause longer than a usual dip in the action. MRS. KLEIN makes notes. Listens to the music, cries. Wipes her eyes, shakes her head. Makes more notes. At some point PAULA comes in with a suitcase.

MRS. KLEIN. I’m working.

PAULA puts it down quietly and goes out.

MELITTA comes in with a tray of tea-things.

End of Interlude

MELITTA. Paula’s sitting in the hall.

MRS. KLEIN. At least she’s quiet.

MELITTA. Be nice to her.

MRS. KLEIN goes to the door and calls through it.

MRS. KLEIN. Paula, we’ve got an extra cup. Come in for a moment.

PAULA does. They all sit.

MRS. KLEIN. Now who is to be mother?

MELITTA. That’s your job.

MRS. KLEIN. Do it! Paula has an Underground to catch.

MELITTA. She missed it hours ago.
MRS. KLEIN. So how's she getting home?

MELITTA. I'm driving her.

MRS. KLEIN. You can't, you're sozzled.

MELITTA. I am not!

MRS. KLEIN. I'm teasing you, my darling. Pour the tea.

MELITTA pours tea.

MRS. KLEIN. That's my girl. I've earned my rest. I am exhausted. But euphoric. Something wonderful has happened. Dover station. In the buffet, where I ate a cheese and pickle sandwich, quite disgusting, first I dozed and then I fell asleep. A wooden bench. A lucky bench because I dreamt on it.

She pauses, takes MELITTA's hand.

I know this tea, it's kitchen tea, it comes from Mrs. Pountney's caddy, it's the nicest cup of tea I've ever tasted.

I saw a mother and her son. The son had either died or was about to die. The mother was dressed in black, her collar was white. I didn't feel sad to see them. I felt slightly hostile. So: I woke. And saw the boat train just about to leave for London so I took it.

MELITTA. What about the boat?

MRS. KLEIN. The boat had left.

MELITTA. You missed it?

MRS. KLEIN. I decided not to take it.

PAULA. You resisted it?

MRS. KLEIN. Paula, look in the fridge, you'll find some nice salami.

PAULA goes.

MRS. KLEIN. I didn't like to say while she was here. It struck me just in time that I could not attend the funeral for an obvious reason.

MELITTA. What?

MRS. KLEIN. I might have met your father.

MELITTA. And?

MRS. KLEIN. He might have propositioned me.

MELITTA breaks into surprised laughter.

MRS. KLEIN. No good.
Now this, Melitta, was a learned man, a student of the Talmud, what was called a bocher, spoke in German, English, Slovak, French, he learned from some old chap who fought at the battle of Waterloo. And yet, unthinkingly, he stirred up envy in me.

PAULA (wishing another piece of salami). Could I --

MRS. KLEIN. -- have a bath, of course.

MELITTA. It won't be hot yet.

MRS. KLEIN. True, it will be cool and healthy. (To MELITTA.) Run the taps.

PAULA. I'd rather --

MRS. KLEIN. Fine, you do it yourself.

PAULA. I wonder if you'd mind if --

MRS. KLEIN. Bathtime.

Goes out, leaving MRS. KLEIN and MELITTA eating salami.

MELITTA. Did you take my --?

MRS. KLEIN. Have children.

MELITTA. Mother.

MRS. KLEIN. I'm broody. I want to be a nice warm bosom. I want to smell of cooking oil and make-up. I want enormous corseted hips for little boys to throw their arms round.

MELITTA. Did you read my letter?

MRS. KLEIN. No

MELITTA. I guessed you hadn't.

MRS. KLEIN. I'm sorry.

MELITTA. If you give it back I'll write you an up-to-date one.

MRS. KLEIN gives MELITTA the keys and indicates the filing cabinet.

MRS. KLEIN. Bottom drawer.

MELITTA. looks for her letter and finds it.

MRS. KLEIN. The middle drawer contains my dealings with the world. It is my ego drawer. The top drawer is my super-ego drawer, it's full of tax reminders, bills for the rates, all those harsh commands which come from up on high. The bottom drawer is dark and filled with menace.

MELITTA. You put my letter in your id drawer!

MRS. KLEIN. Yes, who cares. Don't stand there like an idiot, darling, sit beside me.

MELITTA. Shouldn't I make the beds up?

MRS. KLEIN. They can wait.

MELITTA. She'll need a towel.

MRS. KLEIN. She'll find one. No, I locked them up. I locked the soap up. You should have seen me more these last few days. You missed some fine old symptoms. Sit.

MELITTA does.

MRS. KLEIN. That's better.

Pause.

MRS. KLEIN. In a moment, in the fridge, you'll find some nice Gewürztraminer. It's a smoky wine, it goes with what we're eating.

MELITTA. Fine.

MRS. KLEIN (of the letter). What's in that letter?

MELITTA. Paula tells me you were hostile towards it.

MRS. KLEIN. I thought you were attacking my criminality paper. Quite absurd. I saw the address and --. Let me see it.

MELITTA hands it to her.

MRS. KLEIN. Yes, it was the way you'd underlined the 'Mrs'. MRS Klein. Like you're the learned doctor, I'm the uppity layman.

MELITTA. Show me.

MRS. KLEIN gives it to her.

MELITTA. That's a smudge.

MRS. KLEIN takes it back. Looks.

MRS. KLEIN. So who did this?

MELITTA. The postman probably.

MRS. KLEIN puts glasses on, looks harder.

MRS. KLEIN. There you are, I had a persecutory delusion. I felt my little torch of knowledge was being crapped on yet again, you'll pardon me, that's what it feels like when it happens. Though it isn't you I blame, my darling, Glover's the worst.
MRS. KLEIN. Yes, Glover's the worst.

PLAYFULLY STABS THE SALAMI. LAUGHS.

Somebody told me Edward Glover took his Easter holiday inside a cloud. Right in one. With his wife and little backward daughter, whom he loves and takes wherever he goes, despite, or possibly because of her condition. So, they went to Scotland. Up a mountain. Right to the top. Set up camp and then the mist descended. So they couldn't leave their tent. But Edward Glover stuck to plan and stayed there for a fortnight, while his wife and daughter begged for mercy. Finally, he unrolled their tent and down the slope they walked and not a quarter of a mile below are sunny fields and rippling brooks and people in their bathing costumes. The weather was fine; there was a tiny cloud up there, that's all, and in his boring daddy's dogmatism he had spent his holiday inside it.

MELITTA LAUGHS.

MRS. KLEIN. Perhaps you see less of him these days?

MELITTA. Rather more.

Pause.

MRS. KLEIN. You will attack my criminality paper.

MELITTA. Probably. Yes.

MRS. KLEIN. In the Journal?


MRS. KLEIN (Suddenly Angry). Why do you do this?

Pause.

What I write, I've learned and proved in twenty years of clinical practice. And you've seen the results.

MELITTA. I have. You're a great clinician. But Mother, you can't write rubbish and expect me not to say it's rubbish.

MRS. KLEIN. No, I don't, because I know you see the so-called rubbish, 'dreck' you called it once, the P OIS O N O U S F A C E S, aimed at you in person. I can see it, everyone else can see it. It's an embarrassment. Why exhibit your sores in public, darling?

MELITTA. Sores?

MRS. KLEIN. Yes sores, emotional sores. If I fought back you'd see some dreck all right. I could finish your career. Only I won't attack my daughter.

MELITTA (Suddenly Angry, Shouts). No, you get your little toadies to attack your daughter.

MRS. KLEIN. I don't write papers for my fellow thinkers.

MELITTA. You'll do anything to win. You'll pack committees, you'll fiddle agendas, you'll steal other people's patients.

MRS. KLEIN. When did I steal a patient? Whose damn patient?

MELITTA. Mine last month.

MRS. KLEIN. He begged for refuge. You'd confused him. You're a bad clinician.

MELITTA. Why?

MRS. KLEIN. You want the truth? Good, fine. You reassure your patients. When they cry you hug them. And you say their clouds have silver linings and you give them tips on life. What can they learn from that about themselves? All they learn is that you're nice to them, which as a matter of fact you aren't, you're bloody destructive.

Take that patient. All his life, like everyone else, like you, like me, like all the world, he has projected his infant experiences on to the people around him. But it's only now, with me, he starts to see them. Now, in that powerful, terrifying thing we call the transference. Because, unlike his wife or child or you, I am detached. So the screen as it were, is blank. And he projects and sees, on me, those images from his cradle. You obscured that screen with your emotions. You felt pity. And you felt protective. Rubbish. Dreck, dreck, dreck. If you want to be an analyst of any worth you have to trust your patients with the truth. However harsh. They're strong. They'll take it.

MELITTA GIVES HER LETTER.

MRS. KLEIN. What is it?

MELITTA. It's the truth about Hans.

GOES OUT.

End of Act One
ACT TWO

Later.

MRS. KLEIN and PAULA. PAULA is on the sofa.

MELITTA's letter, unopened. A bottle of wine.

Pause.

MRS. KLEIN. Where's Paula?

PAULA. I'm Paula. Melitta's upstairs. She's having a bath.

MRS. KLEIN. pours wine for them both.

MRS. KLEIN. I've had two great depressions in my life. One when I was an angry housewife. One in Berlin when nobody paid enough attention to me. Now number three is looming. I can see it. Like a thick black line just over my field of vision.

She opens MELITTA's letter.Glances at a page.

Should I read Melitta's letter?

PAULA. Perhaps not now.

MRS. KLEIN. Quite right.

She tears it up. Throws the bits of paper in the waste-paper-basket.

Pause.

Deep depression.

Pause.

MRS. KLEIN. So: my dream.

PAULA. Your mother and son.

MRS. KLEIN. This mother and son. And the associations ran as follows. Picnic, father, sibling envy, Battle of Waterloo. That's hopeless. Battle of —.

Pause.

Homework. I think I'm getting somewhere. Brother's homework.

Pause.

There is a nasty woman comes to mind who brought her equally nasty son to help my brother with his homework. I was twelve. It seems to me that mother and son was them.

PAULA. Why dream about them now?

MRS. KLEIN. Because I never forgot that evening. It was horrible, frightful. Everybody was upset. My mother was in tears, my brother rushed into his room and slammed the door. I could have killed them both.

PAULA. For being upset?

MRS. KLEIN. Because they —. No, not them. This woman and —.

She registers the misunderstanding.

I thought it was —.

Ponders the implications.

I'm feeling worse now. Like the ceiling's getting lower. Say something, anything.

PAULA. I have a dream in which the ceiling's getting lower.

MRS. KLEIN. Tell me, it can't be worse than what's going on up here.

PAULA. There's a small girl. But she's older than me. She's moving her dolls round the floor. She makes me feel uneasy. And the roof keeps sinking. Suddenly a little door flies open and she —.

MRS. KLEIN. Shh. She's coming down.

MELITTA comes in carrying bedclothes.

MELITTA. I've come to say good night. If we're still talking to each other.

MRS. KLEIN. We're still talking.

MELITTA. Did you open it this time?

MRS. KLEIN. Yes I did.

MELITTA. And how do you feel?

MRS. KLEIN. I feel severe depression coming on, but I'll survive it.

MELITTA. Good. I mean, that you'll survive it.

MRS. KLEIN. I'll survive it.
ELITTA. Yes?
MRS. KLEIN. Don't turn the heating off.
ELITTA. I wasn't going to. 'Night.

She goes.

AULA. That was tactless of her.

MRS. KLEIN. She'll be back.

MELITTA comes back in.

ELITTA. What about my letter?
MRS. KLEIN. It's the middle of the night for God's sake. I've been travelling. I'm depressed. I'm in mourning.

ELITTA. So am I.

MRS. KLEIN. So what do you want, to bully me about it? Give me time.

ELITTA. We'll talk about it over breakfast.

MRS. KLEIN. Maybe.

PAULA. If she doesn't want to read it then she shouldn't have to.

ELITTA. If she...

MRS. KLEIN. That was tactless.

MELITTA. But she said she had. She said –.

MRS. KLEIN. If I may clarify? I opened it and Paula told me not to read it so I tore it up. Omnipotence. I'm doing a lot of it. I was interpreting my dream just now and Paula led me to an obvious breakthrough and I wouldn't listen.

ELITTA. Tore it up?

MRS. KLEIN. I wouldn't listen! Something's being resisted.

ELITTA. Yes it is!

MRS. KLEIN. But what?

ELITTA. I'll tell you.

MRS. KLEIN. Good, you tell me. Well?

PAULA. I'll go upstairs.

MRS. KLEIN. I want you here.
MRS. KLEIN. He was well and happy. Two weeks ago he never went outside, clad in a Cossack costume which he'd put together for a party. But then somebody at work, the has from - Two whole pages of a tedious letter. But it doesn't seem to be a letter from someone else about to kill himself.

MELITTA. He was -

MRS. KLEIN. Wait, wait, wait. How do you know he only bought a single ticket?

MELITTA. The return half wasn't in his pocket.

MRS. KLEIN. How do you know?

MELITTA. Aunt Jolan searched them.

MRS. KLEIN. And you rang her up? I had seen something.

MELITTA. Can I go on?

MRS. KLEIN. I'm here, I have no patients waiting.

MELITTA. Only Paula.

MRS. KLEIN. Paula's listening. Paula's floor. (Continued.)

MELITTA. He was wearing ordinary woollen clothes, not hiking boots.

MRS. KLEIN. I hear you.

MELITTA. He'd taken nothing to read.

PAULA. This is ridiculous.

MRS. KLEIN. Let her go on. She needs a. Why?

MELITTA. He took nothing to eat.

MRS. KLEIN. So there's a restaurant on the mountain.

MELITTA. He ate breakfast there. He left a tip. He gave the owner all his change. He'd nothing left.

MRS. KLEIN. No banknotes?

MELITTA. No.

MRS. KLEIN. His wallet?

MELITTA. Empty.

PAULA. They could have robbed the bank?

MRS. KLEIN. I hadn't visualised him as a - . It might be staring if you keep your comments to yourself. (To MELITTA.) Go on.

MELITTA. They found him at the foot of the cliff, which looks back over Ruzomberok.

MRS. KLEIN. Ah.

MELITTA. Do you know it?

MRS. KLEIN. No, I - . No.

MELITTA. It's a beauty-spot. Sunday trippers stop to use the telescope. We went there often, he and I, as children. There's a river-bed below. We used to stand on the edge when Bobba wasn't looking. Trying to make our stomachs churn. He knew it well.

He'd seen it a hundred times. So why go back?

PAULA. Why not? A favourite place, why not go back? He didn't feel like climbing. That's why the shoes were wrong. No book. Was he a student?

MRS. KLEIN. He was a chemist in a paper-mill.

MELITTA. Hans went nowhere on his own without a book. That's what he was like. Except when he was fourteen, when you stopped him.

MRS. KLEIN. Stopped my son from reading books, darling that would be unique in Central Europe.

MELITTA. Mother you did.

MRS. KLEIN. I don't recall it and I don't believe it.

MELITTA. You told him the books were symptomatic of his hero-worship for his father. So he stopped.

MRS. KLEIN. He stopped himself.

MELITTA. You stopped his music lessons.

MRS. KLEIN. I did not, he stopped attending them. I went on paying for weeks since nobody told me.

MELITTA. He stopped because you told him that wanting to play the violin was a repressed masturbation fantasy.

MRS. KLEIN. It sounds extreme because you've isolated it.

MELITTA. You even stopped him being in love.

MRS. KLEIN. This is cheap.

MELITTA. He loved a boy at school. You broke them up.

MRS. KLEIN. If Hans were truly homosexual I'd have accepted it.
Although I might not like it. But he was a damn fool. And then they dug him up 300 miles beneath him.

MELITTA. Then that... he was, and you said she was a mother figure with a penis.

MRS. KLEIN. Did you see her?

MELITTA. Then that very decent Polish girl. You stopped that steam, you said she interfered with the analysis.

MRS. KLEIN. She did. That summer we were getting nowhere, then her father was transferred, she left town and we made good progress.

PAULA. Who was ‘we’?

MRS. KLEIN (to MELITTA). So, tell her.

MELITTA. My mother analysed Hans for three hundred and seventy-eight hours from the time he was thirteen to the age of seventeen and a half. She analysed us both. We were her first patients, the others up. I’m Lisa in ‘The Role of School in Lifelong Development’. Remember? How does it go? 'She has no... (too a screwdriver) shown only an average intelligence'. That was me. That’s what she wrote about me.

MRS. KLEIN (to PAULA). It seemed important to remove... downloaded.

MELITTA. But mother.

Pause.

MRS. KLEIN. Yes I know.

PAULA. She was your daughter.

MRS. KLEIN. Yes.

Pause.

MELITTA. I’d lie there trying to think up what to say to her. Trying to think of something so banal, so ordinary that she couldn’t interpret it. My history lesson. ‘What’s history about?’ she’d ask me. In her clinical voice. My mother in her clinical voice, imagine I’d say: ‘Oh, history lesson, that’s what people did in ancient times, battles and so on.’ She’d say ‘What happened in ancient times is you, the infant, seeing your father and me having sexual intercourse. That’s the battle.’ It sounds absurd. It wasn’t. That was the worst of it: she’s so damn good. I felt that shadow was part of the snap, the ‘Yes, that’s right’. And I’d be stuck with a headache.

truth about myself I couldn’t deal with. I wanted to protect her—from it, but she wouldn’t let me. Kept on squeezing it out. My poison. Kept repeating it. She used to light her cigarette, her special way, the match pushed forward so the sparks shot into my lap. That was my hatred flying back. The carved brown cabinet stood there, waiting my command to fall and crush her. Or the mat to trip her up. She spilled the ashtray. Muck on the varnished floor. My vengeful shit. All that was good, destroyed. My mother destroyed. My fault. My guilt.

MRS. KLEIN. I did good work.

MELITTA. And the results?

MRS. KLEIN. You’re not so bad. It’s Dr. Schmideberg I’m not too fond of.

MELITTA. I’m Dr. Schmideberg. Can’t you understand?

MRS. KLEIN. I’m Melanie Klein.

Pause.

Is there more about Hans?

MELITTA. Yes. Somebody saw him.

MRS. KLEIN. When he—?

MELITTA. No. Before. The Lutheran pastor in Ruzomberok. Jolan told me. They’re old friends. She trusts him.

MRS. KLEIN. Well?

MELITTA. He was waiting for a train first thing that morning. He was on the platform at the station. And he noticed Hans.

MRS. KLEIN. The railway station?

MELITTA. Yes. The pastor asked him where he was going. Hans said, to Budapest. The pastor said, good, we’ll travel together. Hans said no. He said he wanted to smoke. He seemed nervous. The pastor said, is something wrong? Hans said no. The pastor didn’t believe him.

MRS. KLEIN. Why was Hans going to Budapest?

MELITTA. To see Aunt Jolan. So he said.

MRS. KLEIN. Go on.

MELITTA. He asked the pastor to forgive him.

MRS. KLEIN. Is there more?
RS. KLEIN. A man who's ill can live in hope. Or die in peace like normal people. If you're in trouble you can leave the country, you can go to prison. There are hundreds of alternatives. Which you choose is up to the inner unconscious make-up of the individual. And that lies deep. It's formed in infancy. When Hans was an infant, what was the first pre-occupation of his ego?

AULA. The breast.

RS. KLEIN. The breast. The breast on which the child projects the warmth and goodness which he feels. The good breast.

And its opposite. When the child is angry, envious. The child's anticipation turns from love for the good-but-yet-to-come, to hate for the good which seems so miserably with its goodness. This is the breast the infant, in its primitive mind, attacks. Tramples, kicks, annihilates. Pinches, mangles, gnaws, tears apart. Deavors. Pierces. Poisons with imagined faeces. And in short, destroys by all the means which infant sadism can devise. This is the breast on to which the child projects—projects—his murderous hatred. So that the breast itself seems hateful. Vengeful. Mercilessly cruel. The bad breast. And the prototype of adult fear and dread.

You'll have some more?

Pours wine.

No wish to boss you about my dear, but you'll be very little help to your neurotic patients till you lead them by the hand back to that primitive jungle. Which is wild and strange as only a jungle can be. And immutably rich. You can do it. You've had a child. (Of MELITTA) She has problems in this area, no, she knows my feelings, I can say this.

MELITTA, unnoticed by her mother, starts to cry.

It's when the infant recognizes you that something new occurs. He starts the greatest struggle in human life. He sees his mother as a person. Whole, complete. Good and bad together. She, whom he's been torturing in his mind, is the one he loves. This is the dawn of guilt. It leads to fathomless depression. It is out of that depression he must climb in order to become a healthy adult. And it's hard. It hurts. To see what we've done to the one we love. It hurts, it hurts. (To MELITTA) Don't drink.

She removes something from MELITTA's glass with the tip of her finger.

Piece of cork. It's gone. Now you're in tears. You wanted to hurt the wicked mother. Now you find she's also the good and loving
mother. Hurt the one, you hurt them both. darling I can see and I am the same. Youcry. That's good. If I could cry like that I'd be a happy woman.

MELITTA. It isn't true. There are bad mothers. Mothers who are totally bad. You're one. We never felt you loved us. You were interested in us, that's all. But we loved you. He loved you terribly. And you could never accept his love for what it was. You always changed it. Made it yours. Everything had to be yours. Whatever we did, whatever we had, whatever we wanted. You'd make us think it wasn't really happening, or we didn't like it. Or you'd choose it for us. Anything. A dress in a shop, a train-ticket, me degree.

MRS. KLEIN. I chose your husband?
MELITTA. I was compensating.
MRS. KLEIN. Quite.
MELITTA. I was neurotically dependent on you.
MRS. KLEIN. So you made a break for freedom.
MELITTA. Yes I bloody well did.
MRS. KLEIN. What's interesting is that you choose a man my age. A mother-substitute. And what a disaster he turned out to be. A drunk, a fool. You fled from bondage into bondage. And you always will as long as you are crippled by your unresolved ambivalence towards me. So, resolve it. I can't. Nobody can but you. It's your job. Do it.

Pause.

The alternative is suicide. Either actual, as in Hans's case. Or else, symbolic, which is how you're going at present. And I can't lose any more children. Help me, darling. Forget the Institute. Forget the rows, the meetings. That's for weekdays. Tonight you are in my house. We're mother and daughter. And I'm saying, Melchior, dearest, sweetheart, what must we do to have a sensible adult, mother-and-daughter friendship?

MELITTA. You don't want one.
MRS. KLEIN. How am I stopping it? What do you want? Or don't you trust me?
MELITTA. No.
MRS. KLEIN (thoughtful). You think I can be trusted not to damage the father's penis?

MELITTA. Mother, I do promise you, it isn't a penis. It's a Sunbeam. You say you let me use it. And you nearly always do. But when you can't, I feel irrationally resentful. And I think it would remove a source of tension between us if we did what adults mostly do, have cars of our own.

MRS. KLEIN. Good, fine.

MELITTA. I'll write you a cheque.

MRS. KLEIN. Not now, not now.

MELITTA. writes a cheque.

Well, as it suits you.

MELITTA gives her the cheque.

MELITTA. Two hundred and forty-seven pounds ten shillings. That's half the cost less depreciation plus the licence.

MRS. KLEIN. Thank you.

MELITTA. As you see, I plan to stay in London.

MRS. KLEIN. That will be nice for me.

MELITTA. So you can stop persuading your eminent friends to button-hole me at the Institute and tell me how much easier I might find it if I practised in New York.

MRS. KLEIN. They don't need my persuasion. People worry about you. New York is beautiful, the people are kind, demand is high, the fees are monstrous. I know the money-racket doesn't interest you but think of Walter. So we hoped you would consider it. Which you have. You choose to stay in London. As your mother I'm delighted. As your colleague I must warn you, I shall give no quarter. If your activities are inconsistent with your membership of the Society, I shall say so, so will others, you'll be forced to resign. You'll have to become some kind of therapist nonsense, thumping cushions with your patients. This may sound harsh, but it's the truth. Let's have things open and honest between us. As I know you want.

MELITTA. There's something else.

MRS. KLEIN. What?

MELITTA. I've changed my analyst.

Pause.

MRS. KLEIN. I heard you.

Pause.

MRS. KLEIN. Just as you were getting somewhere. May I say, I think you're making a big mistake?

MELITTA. It's fine so far.

MRS. KLEIN. So far? So when did you start?

MELITTA. Three weeks ago.

MRS. KLEIN. I see. Of course I'm disappointed that you never thought to share your problem with me.

MELITTA. I discussed it with my analyst and decided not to.

MRS. KLEIN. You've rehearsed this conversation.

MELITTA. Yes.

MRS. KLEIN. I --. Yes quite right. Although it puts me in a strange position.

MELITTA. Me too.

MRS. KLEIN. What do I say to get her to take you back?

MELITTA. laughs.

Is something funny?

MELITTA. Mother, I'm not going back.

MRS. KLEIN. Why not? You've made your gesture.

MELITTA. No.

MRS. KLEIN. You're adamant.

MELITTA. Yes.

MRS. KLEIN. And who've you gone to?

MELITTA. Edward Glover.

MRS. KLEIN. throws her wine at her.

MRS. KLEIN. Drink that.

She grabs scraps of MELITTA's letter out of the waste paper basket.
EAT THESE. Eat these. I'll stuff them down your throat. PREMATURELY.

EAT. Eat.

She hits and attacks MELITTA, rubbing bits of paper into her face and hair. MELITTA doesn't resist. PAULA pulls her off. MRS. KLEIN was surprised by her actions. MELITTA sits. PAULA watches. Each of them ends up in a different part of the room from before.

PAULA (to MELITTA): Melitta?

MELITTA. Leave me alone, the pair of you.

MRS. KLEIN. Why don't we all sit quietly for a moment. Just we three.

Pause.

I say we three. Though as a matter of fact we've quite a crowd collecting. (To MELITTA:) If you end up staying with Glover - . Which I don't advise. But if you do - .

MELITTA. Mother.

MRS. KLEIN. Listen. If you do. You'll need to watch the countertransference. Remember his backward daughter. Glover sees you as the brilliant child he's always wanted.

MELITTA. I'd thought of that.

MRS. KLEIN. Of course, of course.

Pause.

And you should ask yourself who he is.

MELITTA. Glover?

MRS. KLEIN. Yes, to you. Just think about it.

MELITTA. I can tell you now. It's been a good three weeks. I see him as the father you betrayed.

MRS. KLEIN. That's your perspective. Now I'll tell you why he hates my work. He sees me as the wanton mother casting aside the wonderful father Freud.

MELITTA. He could be right.

PAULA. Melitta is my dead sister.

MRS. KLEIN. Well we all knew that. She's also you: the unloved daughter.

MELITTA. Rubbish.

MRS. KLEIN. That speaks volumes.

PAULA (to MRS. KLEIN). Who was she, when you were trying to drown her in symbolic urine?

MRS. KLEIN (with irony). Well I can't imagine.

MELITTA. When she rubbed symbolic faeces in my hair. (With irony) Yes that's a tough one.

MRS. KLEIN. Really, Paula.

Pause.

MRS. KLEIN (to MELITTA). Though as a matter of fact I loved your bobba. I don't know why I got so nasty about her. All she was, was a typical bossy Central European Jewish mother. There are worse things. I hope I see I can't amuse you.

MELITTA. Who was Hans?

MRS. KLEIN. My dream suggests as follows: that my envious triumph when my brother failed in something, just for once, was carried over into my feelings towards my son. I loved my son, but felt ambivalent towards him.

MELITTA. And you wished to harm him.

MRS. KLEIN. Wished it on some primitive level.

MELITTA. Primitive but effective.

MRS. KLEIN. So you think I killed him.

MELITTA. He killed you. He killed the you in him.

MRS. KLEIN. And why?

MELITTA. To punish it.

MRS. KLEIN. No this I can't go along with. He wished to save the me he loved from his sadistic onsloughts. So he killed them. And in doing so, killed himself. Now don't look blank, Melitta. Just because you never tried it. When did you save me from your sadistic onsloughts?

MELITTA. Mother, that's why I'm here. Hans died because he couldn't bring himself to hate you.

MRS. KLEIN. What about you, you can?

MELITTA. I can. I do.

MRS. KLEIN. Although there must be some ambivalence.
MRS. KLEIN. Leave the alarm. I'll sleep in in the morning. Please don't wake me.

PAULA is about to help her with her coat.

MRS. KLEIN. I can manage.

She goes out.

PAULA. How do you feel?

MELITTA. The same. I'd love a slotting into place, or snap or something. Get some sleep. I'll dress and go. Ssh!

PAULA. What?

MELITTA. She hasn't closed her door yet.

They listen. They hear a very slight noise.

PAULA. There.

MELITTA. No that's the bathroom.

They listen.

When will you start? With her, I mean.

PAULA. She hasn't agreed.

MELITTA. She will.

PAULA. I need her.

MELITTA. Yes.

PAULA. I need her in all kinds of ways.

MELITTA. I know. I always knew it. In my cynical soul. I knew it the moment I saw you working at that desk. I knew.

She holds up a hand to stop PAULA replying. Listens, then goes out and upstairs.

PAULA finds the telephone number MRS. KLEIN gave her before leaving. Picks up the telephone, dials the operator.

PAULA. Hello. I want — . I'm sorry, I can't speak any louder. I want to make a call to Budapest. 92435. No, personal. Mrs. Jolan Vago.

V.A. — . Yes, I'll wait.

Rings off. Picks up a book. MELITTA comes in, dressed.

MELITTA. You're up.

PAULA. You left your doorkey.
MELITTA. I gave it back.

PAULA. She left it here.

MELITTA. She always does. I always take it. But it's different now.

Pause.

Except I always say it's different now. I tell you what. I'll wait till morning. And I'll see how it feels without.

PAULA. Without the key?

MELITTA. Without my mother. If it's fine, or not too bad or can be done without recourse to razors in the bath I'll—.

PAULA. What?

MELITTA. I'll write a book. And leave my husband. Have a child and go to China. In that order. But if not: I'll grovel down from Hampstead Garden Suburb in the morning at about eleven.

PAULA. Take the key.

MELITTA. I have my pride. I think I have my pride.

She picks the key up, then puts it down.

I have my pride. You do keep looking at the phone.

PAULA. I don't. Good night.

MELITTA. Good night.

MELITTA goes out. PAULA starts making up her bed. The telephone rings. She answers quickly.

PAULA. Mrs. Vago? ( ) Hello. I hope I haven't —. ( ) I'm calling from London. I'm a friend of Mrs. Klein's. I'm —. ( ) No I know she's not. She asked me to ring and tell you that she's very sorry but she won't be coming. ( ) Physically well but —. ( ) Yes she's very distressed. ( ) I will, Mrs. Vago, there was something I wanted to —. ( ) Yes, a family friend. ( ) Berlin. ( ) It is, yes, Mrs. Vago, there's a very important question I must ask you. It's about Hans. ( ) I know she did, I —. ( ) I think you know. I think there's something which you haven't told us. And I think you ought to. ( ) She's upset already.

The alarm-clock goes off. PAULA tries to turn it off while still continuing the conversation. Can't find the switch.

( ) No it's different here. ( ) It's just an alarm-clock, go on. ( ) I knew it. ( ) Yes. ( ) I see, and tell me about the wallet. ( ) And?

She turns the alarm-clock off.

She won't she'll be relieved. You see, she thought he'd—. No, it doesn't matter. ( ) Very expensive, yes. ( ) I'm sure she will, perhaps later today, she's sleeping now. ( ) Likewise. ( ) God bless you too. Good-bye.

She rings off. Sits and thinks for a moment or two. Turns off the lights. She lies down on the sofa, covers herself with blankets, still thoughtful. Closes her eyes.

Music.

Time passes.

It is some hours later.

Cracks of daylight through the curtains.

PAULA is still asleep.

MRS. KLEIN comes in. She wears a new dress. She goes quietly and without turning lights on to the filing-cabinet.

PAULA wakes.

PAULA. What time is it?

MRS. KLEIN. It's not eleven o'clock yet. Go back to sleep.

She rummages in the filing cabinet.

PAULA. I can't.

MRS. KLEIN. So: maybe it won't disturb you if I draw the curtains.

PAULA shakes her head. MRS. KLEIN draws the curtains. Bright spring day outside.

MRS. KLEIN. In my garden I have pigeons, blackbirds, finches, swifts and robins. And I sometimes hear an owl. I find this very reassuring for a London garden. Now you'll have some coffee?

PAULA. Thank you.

MRS. KLEIN. Don't get up.

MRS. KLEIN goes out. PAULA lights a cigarette. MRS. KLEIN comes back in with coffee. Gives it to PAULA. goes back to her files.

MRS. KLEIN. I'm hunting out my criminality paper. Since I fear it's in the firing-line. Now where've you got to, naughty fellow. Here. Finds it.
So he lied: he said that he was going to Budapest, to see Aunt Jani, knowing the pastor knew her. He warned him there’d be gossip. He asked him to forgive him. But he wasn’t ashamed: he knew that what he was doing was right. The train came in. They took the bus. She put the tickets in her handbag. He didn’t bring a book or climbing boots. Why should he? They breakfasted together and he left an enormous tip; he wanted to impress her.

MRS. KLEIN. Why the mountains?

PAULA. They’d booked a room in the tourist hotel. He left his money there. She took it to Budapest and gave it back to Mrs. Vago. She said he’d gone for a walk. While she was getting dressed. Mid-afternoon. She waited. Then she went to find him, and she – . That was the first she knew. It seems he’d tried to find a path that isn’t there now. And the ground had fallen away. That’s all. That’s all.

Pause.

MRS. KLEIN. What’s interesting is that I feel intense resentment. Not of you, so much, you meant well. But this woman, who the hell was she, what’s her name?

PAULA. I don’t know.

MRS. KLEIN. A singer?

PAULA. Yes.

MRS. KLEIN. Opera? Cabaret?

PAULA. Mrs. Vago didn’t tell me.

MRS. KLEIN. Had they – ? Yes, that afternoon you say.

Pause.

I cannot adjust to this. I can’t accept it. (Angry.) What the hell are you trying to tell me, that he died by chance?

Pause. PAULA shocked and upset.

MRS. KLEIN. He never mentioned her. Not once, not once. Who are her parents?

PAULA. I didn’t ask. Where she comes from, where they met. It’s nothing to do with – .

Suddenly angry, shouts:

Don’t you see? It’s nothing to do with you, you stupid bloody woman. He was free.
MRS. KLEIN. No no. The facts remain the same—

Pause. She crumples.

Oh God, I've lost him.

She starts to cry. Cries for a long time. After a bit she holds her hand out.

Come.

PAULA holds her hand. After a bit MRS. KLEIN stops crying.

MRS. KLEIN. Real tears. So my denial is greatly weakened. Yes, I'm starting to recover.

Pause.

I said the facts remained the same. Well, certain facts. My guilt remains. So does my wish to make amends. Now my appointment book is somewhere.

She finds it. Opens it.

MRS. KLEIN. This is what you want?

PAULA. It is

MRS. KLEIN. Because you must be sure.

PAULA. I'm sure.

MRS. KLEIN looks through her appointment-book.

MRS. KLEIN. Where are we.

Looks upwards.

And the ceiling's moving upwards. I feel open. Easier. Tears, you know, are very much equated with excreta in the unconscious mind. Through tears the mourner eases tension, casts bad objects into the outside world. You know my fees?

PAULA. I do.

MRS. KLEIN. They're what's expected. You must decide to place that value on my time. And yours.

PAULA. I'll manage.

MRS. KLEIN. I can offer you Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays. At eleven a.m. Now must I put these in my book, you tell me.

PAULA. Eleven o'clock is fine.

MRS. KLEIN writes times in her book.

ULA. In fact we're late.

MRS. KLEIN. I beg your pardon?

PAULA. It's Saturday now. And look at the clock. We've lost five minutes.

MRS. KLEIN. My consulting-room is locked. And there's the stairs.

PAULA. Let's stay down here.

MRS. KLEIN. It's all too much. I'm utterly exhausted, not this morning. No.

PAULA. Please, Mrs. Klein.

MRS. KLEIN. I see. Very well. But from Monday we must be more formal.

PAULA lies on the sofa, pulls a blanket over her feet. MRS. KLEIN moves a chair into position.

MRS. KLEIN. And not the coffee please.

She removes the cup.

Pause. MRS. KLEIN sits.

MRS. KLEIN. Whenever you want.

She waits with a singular expression of alertness, her professional manner. Different from the way she's looked at any previous point in the play.

Pause.

PAULA. I'm worried about the doorbell.

MRS. KLEIN. You worry that if it rings I might abandon you.

PAULA. I know you won't. You told me yesterday. You said the world must wait.

Pause.

I know this isn't helpful, but I can't help thinking as an analyst. You feel guilty about your children.

MRS. KLEIN. Mm hm.

PAULA. You see the harm you've done.

MRS. KLEIN. Go on.

PAULA. You want to pay them reparation. But for one of them it's too late.
MRS. KLEIN. Mm hm.
PAULA. You want to pay Melitta reparation.

Pause.

You're doing so now.

Pause.

I terribly want you to reply to that.

MRS. KLEIN. You were afraid I'd left you.

PAULA. No. I felt content.

MRS. KLEIN. You felt –.

The doorbell rings. MRS. KLEIN does not react to it.

MRS. KLEIN. You feel perhaps that you've replaced Melitta as my daughter.

Doorbell.

PAULA. I have.

Doorbell.

MRS. KLEIN. Mm hm.

PAULA. I feel –.

MRS. KLEIN. I'm listening.

Doorbell.

End of Play