

Oslo, the City of Free Love

In the gentlemen's group, Munch, Vigeland, Tranmael and Scharffenberg. Fallize (Johannes Olav, the catholic bishop in Norway) starts preaching ferociously. The site is ambiguous, very possibly it would be the street right in front of a church, and the priest enters the scene framed by the main door of the church, a good site could be the Oslo katolske bispedømme, the street being then Akersveien .

FALLIZE: Plague!! Plague!! Plague!! Every time plague appeared in history it was to strike down the enemies of God. Ponder this well, my friends, and *FALL* on your knees. If today the plague is among us, that is because the hour has struck for you! The good people need have no fear. But the evildoer, the sinner, has good cause to tremble. This calamity, the flu, was not willed by God. But too long this world of ours has been making friends with evil, too long has it counted on the divine mercy, on God's forgiveness. Repentance was enough, you thought, eh? nothing was forbidden!! How easy and convenient for you, *la Bohème*, you bunch of degenerates, anarchists, feminists, abortionists, onanists, communists, and psychiatrists, yes you psychiatrists too, who pretend to know the soul!:

SCHARFFENBERG: What the hell ...

FALLIZE: Yes you, bunch of outlaws, you thought "*sin as much as you want, when the day comes, just repent in good time, and all will be good*". HAH!! For a long while God gazed down on this Oslo city with compassion; but He cannot wait any longer for you to change your sinful ways, and now He has turned His face away from us. And so, we walk in darkness, in the thick darkness of this plague !!!
Remember and behold! In the time of King Umberto, Italy was swept by plague too. The living hardly managed to bury the dead. And now, like then, the dead will surpass in number the living. And you will be embraced by the dead!!

VIGELAND - (*sotovoce*) I think he has seen your paintings again, Munch ...

FALLIZE - So here and now, your sinful life finally stops. Children of men! the fatal hunt is up in our streets today. See him there, that angel of the pestilence, shining like Evil's very self! He is hovering above your roofs with his great spear in his right hand, poised to strike, while his left hand is stretched toward one or other of your houses.

MUNCH - Now I think he has seen your sculptures, Vigeland.

FALLIZE (*continues, untroubled*): Maybe at this very moment his finger is pointing to your door, and even now the plague is entering your home and settling down in your bedroom to await your return!! Go home now! and sin no more!

MUNCH, VIGELAND - Fallize ...

FALLIZE - Silence!! Now you are learning your lesson, the lesson that was learned by Cain and his offspring, by the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, by Job and Pharaoh, by all your prostitutes, Mary Magdalene, Jezebel, Rahab, Lilith!!

MUCH, VIGELAND, SCHARFFENBERG - Fallize!

FALLIZE - Silence sodomites!! you know what I'm talking about!

(they continue talking, we hear the speech of the priest on the background)

"Maybe at this very moment his finger is pointing to your door, the red spear crashing on its panels, and even now the plague is entering your home and settling down in your bedroom to await your return. Patient and watchful, ineluctable as the order of the scheme of things, it bides its time. No earthly power, nay, not even, mark me well, the vaunted might of human science can avail you to avert that hand once it is stretched toward you. And winnowed like corn on the blood-stained threshing-floor of suffering, you will be cast away with the chaff, the will of God in action, unfailingly transforming evil into good. And once again today it is leading us through the dark valley of fears and groans towards the holy silence, the wellspring of all life. This, my friends, is the vast consolation I would hold out to you, so that you will carry away with you not only words of wrath, but a message, too, of comfort for your hearts"

MUNCH, VIGELAND, SCHARFFENBERG - Sodomites?? Now this Jesuit is going too far
MARTIN TRANMAEL - What does that mean, sodomite?

MUNCH - A native of Sodoma, I'd assume.

TRANMAEL - Well he's got his information wrong. Melhus! I was born in Melhus.

SCHARFFENBERG - Come on, Martin, you know what he means. He means anal sex, a practice very popular in Sodoma.

TRANMAEL - How vulgar. Those practices belong to the hypocritical double morals of the bourgeoisie. I have no time for such nonsense - I have to build a revolution.

SCHARFFENBERG - Do not forget the women, in your revolution.

TRANMAEL - I wish I could! Rachel would not let me. But you know my ideal revolutionary hero is always a man.

MUNCH - Of course is a man! (*chuckling*) As Harry used to say: Even the smartest of women always think with their sexual organs. Mary Magdalene, Jezebel, Rahab, Lilith!! Do we gentlemen want a sexual revolution?

FALLIZE (*earnestly*) - Silence, Munch, you have much to be silent about: remember 1905!

MUNCH - (*really furious*) 1905, what is this about what do you mean by 1905! I demand an explanation!! You catholic Jesuit, papal minion!! Get your Luxemburgish ass out of here and stop speaking about what you don't understand! Go! Go!

VIGELAND, interested, to the others: What is this story of 1905?

SCHARFFENBERG, TRANMAEL: We better get Edvard out of the way of the priest's flaming sword, or he will lose another finger!

They hold back an angry Munch and all four fasten their pace away from the screaming anger of the preacher who is left saying:

FALLIZE: You feminists! you communists! you sexual degenerates!! you idol worshippers!! you people of your time!!!

VIGELAND, insisting: So can someone explain to me the 1905 reference?

MUNCH roars incomprehensibly, pushed further away by Martin Tranmael. SCHARFFENBERG and VIGELAND are left alone a few steps behind.

SCHARFFENBERG : So Vigeland I can imagine that you are rather puzzled about this sodomite accusation.

VIGELAND: I am a man of the world. I was young when we all attended *Zum schwarzen Ferkel* in Berlin, and I can tell there you found men from Sodoma and women from Lesbos. But what I want to know, what happened in 1905 that makes Munch go bonkers?

SCHARFFENBERG: As these things go, it is far from clear. Do you know Ludvig Karsten, the painter?

VIGELAND: Yes, Munch painted his portrait in 1905, big hat, similar to the painting of count Harry Kessler, one year later.

SCHARFFENBERG: I see that you have studied your Munch. And yes, Harry and Ludvig may have had more in common than a big hat. Ludwig is a great colorist and a handsome man. Him and Munch were very close. Then there was a fight ...

MUNCH: What on earth are you talking about, Scharff? There was no fight. It was a contest. I said I could shoot a cigarette off his mouth. He challenged me to do so. He stood there, smiling, the cigarette dangling from his mouth. He was brave and beautiful, as if he was immortal. As for me, it was madness. And I went mad.

(he covers his face in desperation, then walks away)

VIGELAND: Munch! wait! wait!

SCHARFFENBERG: Let him go, let him go. Maybe we should all go. Good day, gentlemen.

Noise of city. Tranmael and Vigeland walk away. We're left with SCHARFFENBERG thoughts, thinking aloud:

Ah, fragile masculinity, always so entertaining to watch. Even Vigeland, who sees himself as an archetype of virility, has his peccadilloes and ... well ... he is a voyeur. A lot of action with the stone but keeping human flesh at a distance. Handy in a pandemic. Of course Freudian latent homosexuality is a concept I might disagree with, since it implies that something has to be awoken, when in fact is always there. Yes, I am convinced, homosexuality is a potentiality

in all human beings under certain developmental conditions. And if you press me further, entering into the realm of personal opinion, it is the right option for any civilized male ... or female! But Munch is an interesting case ... there is some unresolved question there with his mother, who died when he was just five. No loving female can fill that void, and this, combined with the brutality of his father, the nefarious influence of Hans Jaeger, and his panic at emancipated women, make the perfect tormented genius cocktail! And friends, that is so fascinating to watch, as a psychiatrist and writer. *Folie et génie!* No, Vigeland is not mad, but then Vigeland is not a genius either. And Tranmael ... he is a genius as well, only he was born in the wrong social class ... there are not a lot of geniuses in the working class, nor in the female class! So instead of going mad he turned out a bolshevik. All these things to blame our mothers for! And Fallize. What to think of Fallize. We could probably call him Queen Bee! The Flaming Sword he's been threatening us with is an obvious phallic symbol, as the passion of Munch for shooting his own fingers and the cigarette in the lovely mouth of ... lovely Ludvig, is clearly a substitute for castration. Because you know how the saying goes, abstinence is good, but castration is better (chuckles). And then, The Plague. Munch thinks he had the flu. I think this was just another attempt to make his mother proud. He probably didn't. But this worries me, this worries me a great deal. You know, the problem with Plague, is that you don't believe it is happening until it is too late. Everyone wants to go on with their lives as before. They want to go on making plans, projecting into the future. As before. Until they are forced to accept that there is no future. The Plague cancels the future. Munch and Oslo! *La bohème!* The city of free love! *They* thought they were free! but no one is free when there is Plague.