

U M B E R T O E C O

THE PRAGUE
CEMETERY

Translated from the Italian by

Richard Dixon



HOUGHTON MIFFLIN HARCOURT

Boston • New York

2011

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This book was originally published in Italian with the title *Il Cimitero di Praga*.



I dreamt about Jews every night for years and years.



They took a gluttonous and lecherous monk like Luther seriously (can you *really* marry a nun?) only because he ruined the Bible by translating it into their own language.



Jesuits are Masons dressed up as women.



“In the past it was regarded as an exclusively female phenomenon caused by disturbances in uterine function.”



“Charcot has chosen the path of hypnotism, which until recently was an occupation for charlatans like Mesmer.”



“In cases of serious tooth decay, insert a wad of cotton soaked in a four percent solution into the cavity and the pain subsides immediately.”



I can almost see Abbé Barruel, who seemed to inhabit our house, though he must have been dead for quite some time.



... almost hearing the terrible old man's footsteps on the wooden staircase, coming to get me, to drag me off to his infernal den, to feed me unleavened bread made with the blood of infant martyrs.



I was startled, I tried not to listen, but at night
I dreamt of Babette of Interlaken.



“When a priest spoke out against the republic, they dragged him into a doorway, stabbed him, gouged out his eyes and tore out his tongue.”



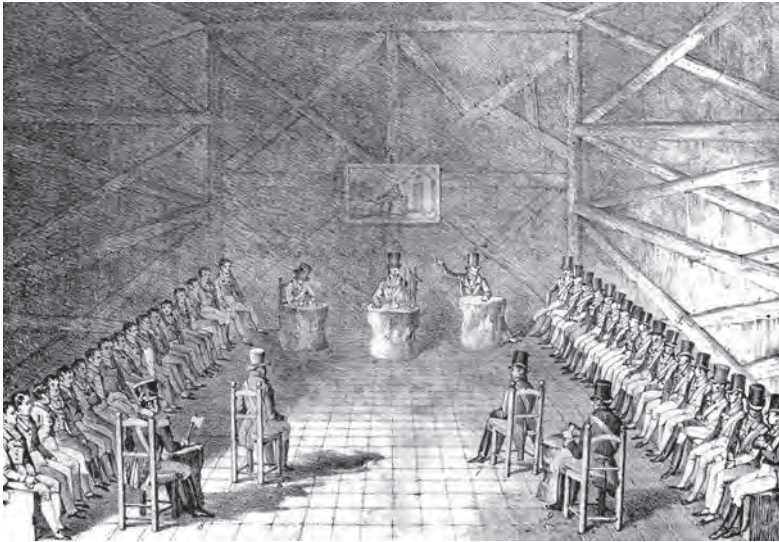
Apart from the pleasures of coffee and chocolate, what
I most enjoyed was appearing to be someone else.



“And when our Archbishop Fransoni invited the clergy of Turin to disobey these measures, he was arrested as a common criminal and sentenced to a month’s imprisonment!”



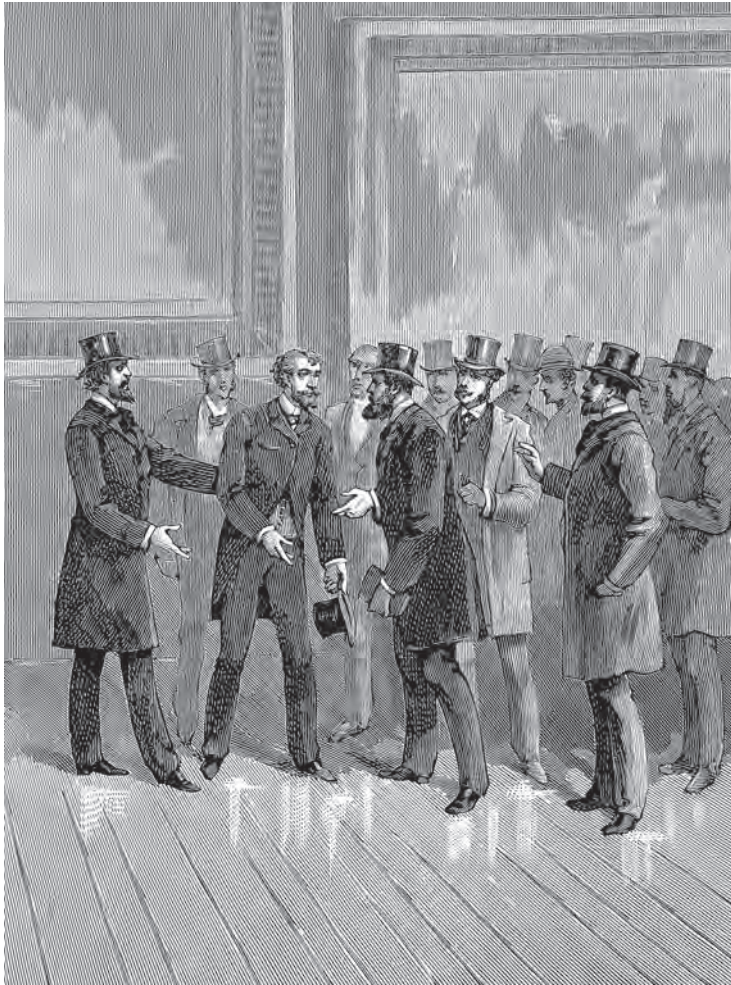
“Let it be clear, my boy,” Rebaudengo explained, all formality now gone. “What I produce are not forgeries but new copies of genuine documents that have been lost or, by simple oversight, have never been produced, and that could and should have been produced.”



“All Carbonari owe allegiance to the Alta Vendita, which has forty members, most of whom, dreadful to say, are the cream of the Roman aristocracy — plus, of course, several Jews.”



... or, there again, describing Father Beckx's devilish leer as he proclaimed the sinister designs of these enemies of humanity (and my father's ghost would rejoice from the heavens above — I mean from the depths of hell, where the Almighty probably casts Mazzinians and republicans).



“What lodge are you talking about? Freemasonry is an invention of the Jesuits!” “You’d best keep quiet — you’re a Mason and everyone knows it!”



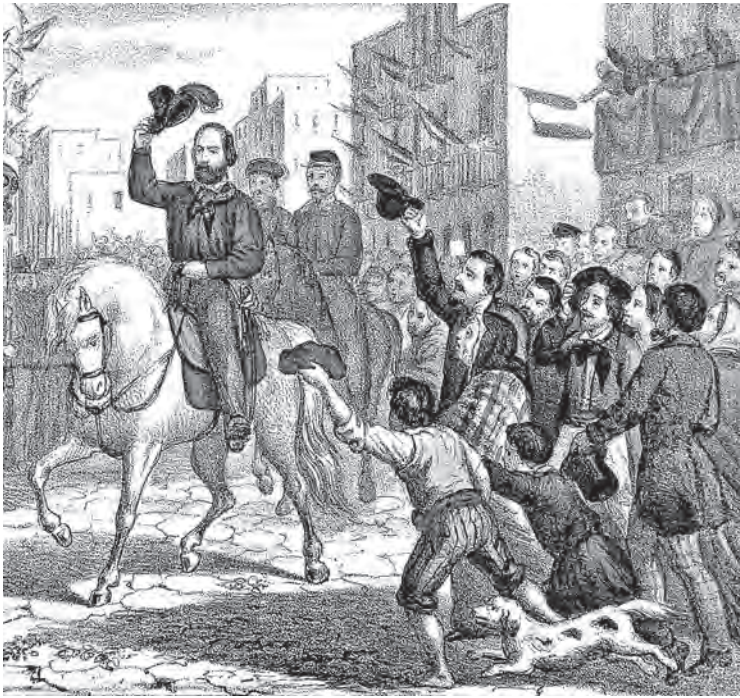
“You’ll soon be meeting the general,” said Dumas, and his face lit up with admiration at the mere mention of the man. “With his fair beard and blue eyes he seems like Jesus in Leonardo’s *Last Supper*.”



“At Ponte dell’Ammiraglio, along the road, over the arches, under the bridge and in the fields, they’re massacred by bayonets.”



In his eyes such strange appeal / It fills each mind
with splendor / That people feel the urge to
kneel / And incline their heads in prayer.



Garibaldi has entered Naples without meeting any resistance.



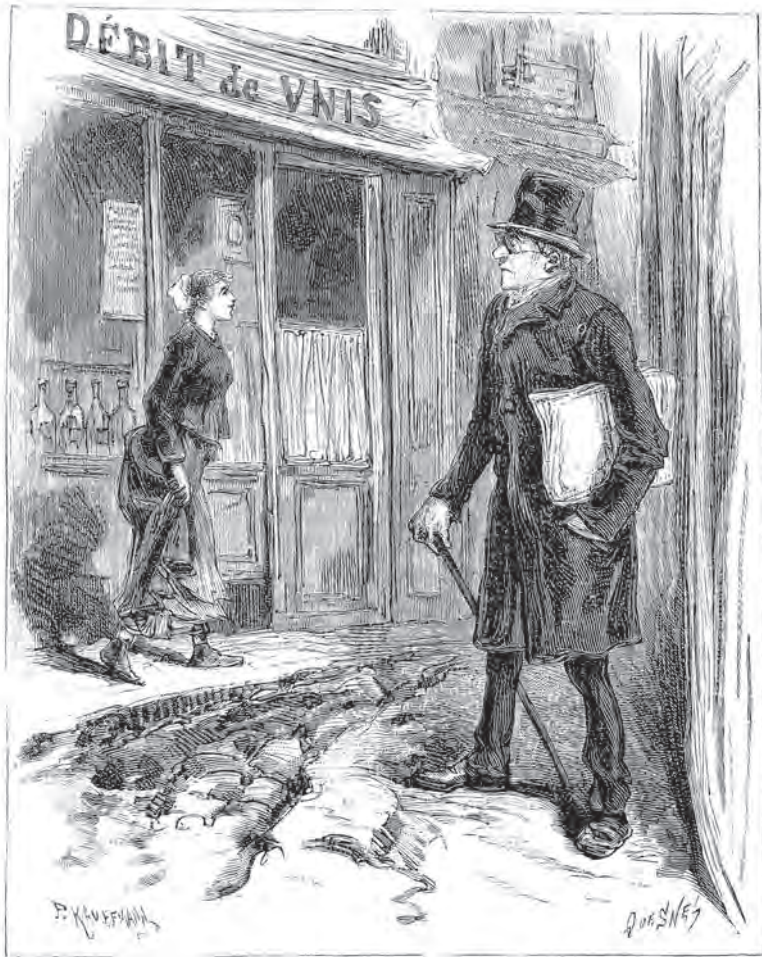
Everyone called him Bronte, and in fact it seems
he had escaped from the Bronte massacres.



He reckoned it would all be over by nine in the evening.



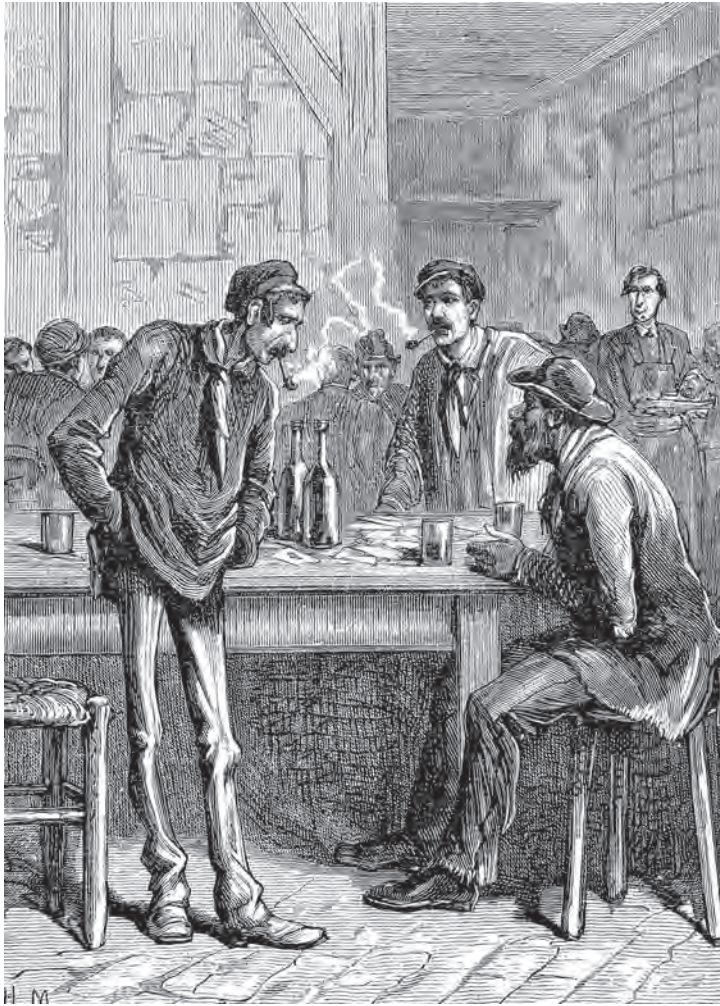
I was enthralled by the sight of so many people of all classes
walking beside me.



It is not the factory girls I gaze at in the arcade, but the *suiveurs*.



That was how Simonini identified Gaviali,
and came to meet him.



... sitting at a table with companions who seemed to share his regicidal ideas, almost all of them Italian exiles and almost all experts in explosives.



The man I met had a monkish appearance, a fine gray beard and thick bushy eyebrows with those Mephistophelean tufts at each corner.



He seemed so racked by resentment I felt tempted
to offer him a glass of his own cognac.



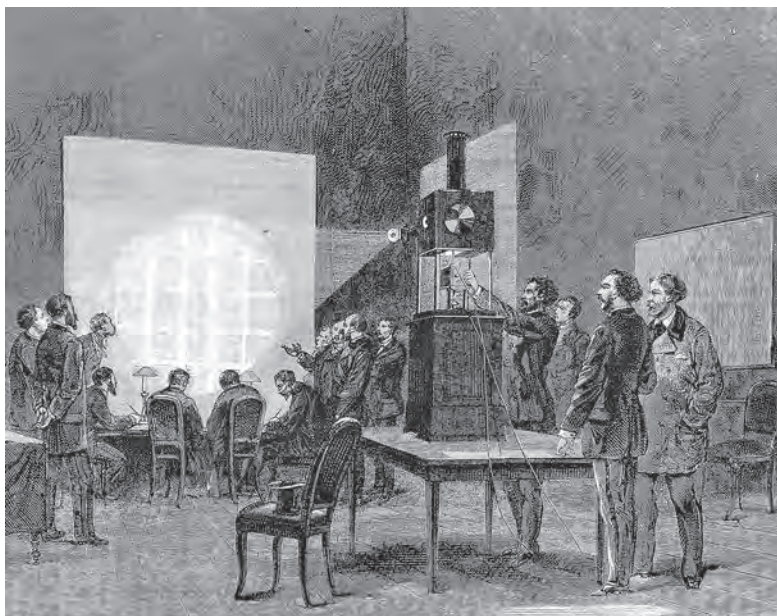
I asked for a meeting with Lagrange . . .



“Simonini,” he said, “you clearly took me for a fool.”



“You may know it is the practice in certain lodges to stab the host to seal an oath.”



“When the message arrives, the image is
enlarged by projecting it on a wall.”



By mid-September the Prussians had reached the gates of Paris, had occupied the forts that should have protected the city, and were shelling it.



A middle-aged man with an excessively normal face . . . turned and greeted me . . . “Captain Simonini, I presume. My name is Hébuterne.”



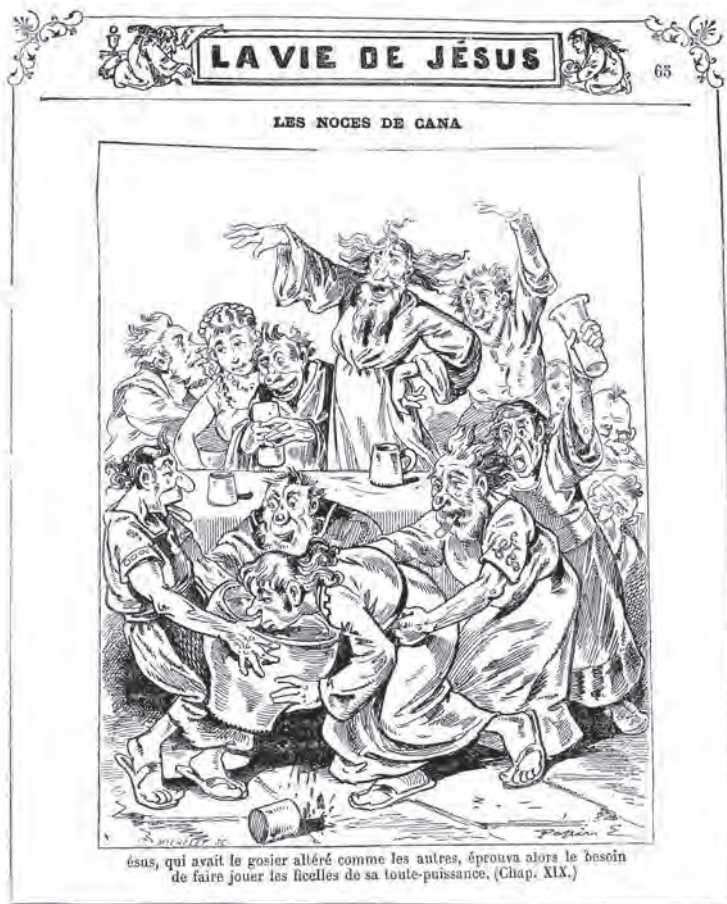
Bergamaschi added that, in order to make the rabbis' speeches more credible, it would be worth looking again at what Abbé Barruel had written, and above all the letter Simonini's grandfather had sent to him.



“A time comes when something breaks inside, and there is no more energy or will. They say you must live, but life becomes a burden that inevitably ends in suicide.”



He was dead, with a single shot to his heart.



He had produced a *Life of Jesus* told through highly irreverent illustrations (for example, depicting relations between Mary and the dove of the Holy Spirit).



He published *Les frères trois-points* (the three points being those of the thirty-third Masonic degree), *Les mystères de la Franc-Maçonnerie* (with dramatic illustrations of satanic invocations and hideous rites) . . .



At the command for him to enter the cavern, the poor fellow was shoved with great force against the screen, the paper broke, and he fell onto a mattress positioned on the other side.



Her body curved into an arc as though she were an acrobat, supporting herself on just the back of her head and her feet.



Vintras levitated when he prayed, sending
his followers into ecstasy.



... a mammoth work titled *Le diable au XIXe siècle*. It had a great sneering Lucifer on the cover, with the wings of a bat and the tail of a dragon.



We offered a more feminine picture of Diana.



But the two inner rooms admitted no vagrants. Here instead were old whores wearing cheap jewelry, fourteen-year-old tarts with a premature air of insolence, sunken eyes and the pallid mark of tuberculosis, and local rogues wearing showy rings with fake stones and *redingotes* a cut above the rags in the first room.



Le Judaïsme, voilà l'ennemi !!
Bonard Drumont

“After that it will be up to people like Drumont to
whip up public scandal.”

Le Petit Journal

Le Petit Journal
FONDÉ PAR J. L. LAFITTE
Le Supplément illustré
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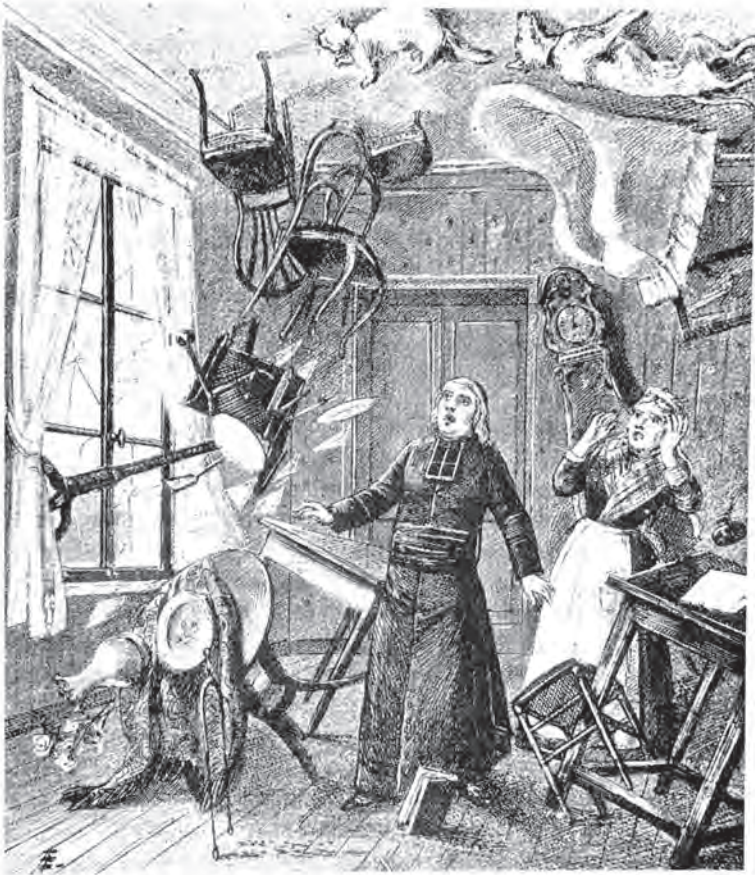


LE TRAITRE
Dégradation d'Alfred Dreyfus

A giant of a gendarme officer in a plumed helmet approached the captain, ripped off his stripes and buttons and regimental number, removed his saber and broke it over his knee, throwing the two halves to the ground in front of the traitor.



He fought with a wraith whom he held prisoner in a wardrobe and, sodden with alcohol and morphine, gave substance to the phantasms produced by his deliria.



He felt continually attacked, struck, wounded by occult fluids, javelins of an impalpable nature that Guaita and others were hurling at him, even from a great distance.



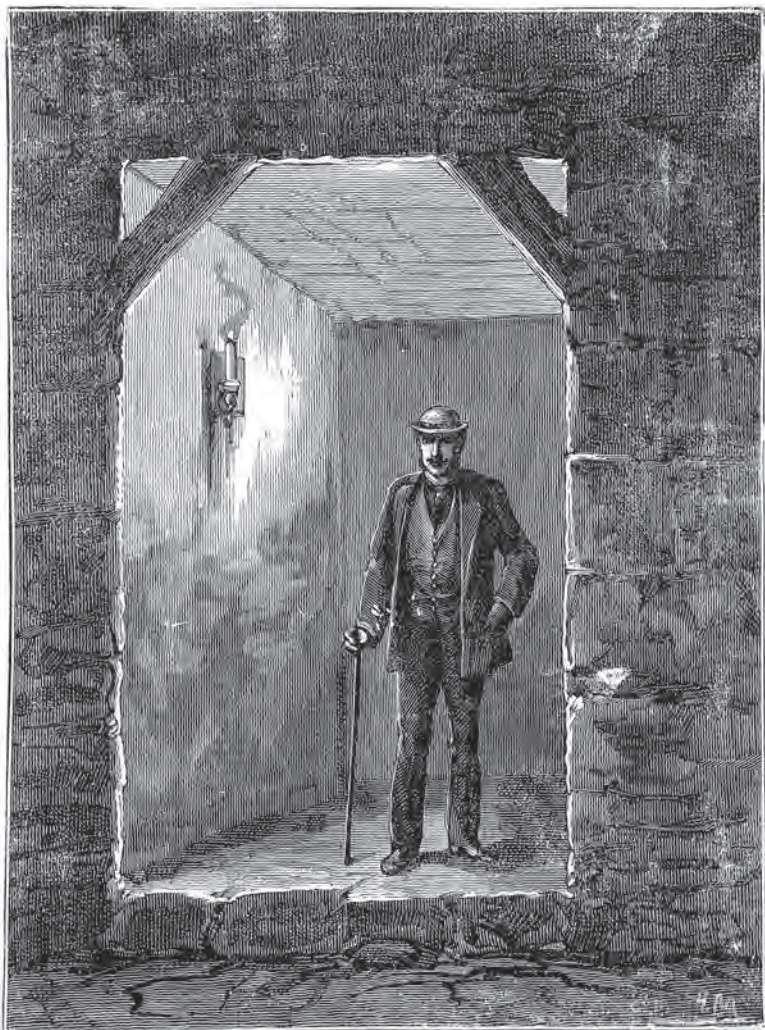
“My mother,” she murmurs vacantly, “my mother was a Jew.”



Diana, he said, was an ordinary Protestant woman, a copy typist, the representative of an American typewriter manufacturer, an intelligent, active woman of elegant simplicity, as Protestant women generally are.



I went to see Father Bergamaschi and found him tired
and much aged.



I don't need to know where the tunnel leads, or even whether it goes anywhere. All I'd have to do is place the bomb at the entrance, and that would be that.

USELESS LEARNED EXPLANATIONS

HISTORICAL

The only fictitious character in this story is the protagonist, Simone Simonini. His grandfather, Captain Simonini, is not invented, even if he is known to history only as the mysterious writer of a letter to Abbé Barruel.

All the others (except for a few incidental minor characters such as Notaio Rebaudengo and Ninuzzo) actually existed, and said and did what they are described as saying and doing in this novel. That is true not only of those characters who appear under their real names (and, though many might find this improbable, even a character like Léo Taxil actually existed), but also of figures who appear under a fictitious name, where for narrative economy I have made a single (invented) character say and do what was in fact said and done by two (historically real) characters.

But on reflection, even Simone Simonini, although in effect a collage, a character to whom events have been attributed that were actually done by others, did in some sense exist. Indeed, to be frank, he is still among us.

THE STORY AND PLOT

The Narrator is aware that, in the fairly chaotic plot sequence of the diaries reproduced here (moving back and forth, using what cineastes

call flashbacks), the reader might have difficulty in following the linear progression of events, from Simonini's birth to the end of his diaries. It is the fatal imbalance between *story* and *plot*, or even worse, as the Russian formalists (all Jewish) used to say, between *fabula* and *sjuzet*. The Narrator, to be honest, has often found it difficult finding his own way around, but feels a competent reader need not become lost in the detail and should enjoy the story just the same. However, for the benefit of the overly meticulous reader, or one who is not so quick on the uptake, here is a table that sets out the relationship between the two levels (common, in truth, to every, what they used to call "well-made," novel).

CHAPTER	PLOT	STORY
1. A Passerby on That Gray Morning	The Narrator begins to follow Simonini's diary	
2. Who Am I?	Diary 24th March 1897	
3. Chez Magny	Diary 25th March 1897 (description of meals Chez Magny 1885–1886)	
4. In My Grandfather's Day	Diary 26th March 1897	1830–1855 Childhood and adolescence in Turin to death of Simonini's grandfather
5. Simonino the Carbonaro	Diary 27th March 1897	1855–1859 Working for Notaio Rebaudengo and first contact with the secret service
6. Serving the Secret Service	Diary 28th March 1897	1860 Interview with heads of Piedmont secret service
7. With the Thousand	Diary 29th March 1897	1860 On the <i>Emma</i> with Dumas; arrival at Palermo; meeting with Nieveo; first return to Turin

8. The Ercole	Diary 30th March and 1st April 1897	1861 Disappearance of Nievo; second return to Turin and exile in Paris
9. Paris	Diary 2nd April 1897	1861 – Early years in Paris
10. Dalla Piccola Perplexed	Diary 3rd April 1897	
11. Joly	Diary 3rd April 1897, night	1865 In prison spying on Joly; trap for the Carbonari
12. A Night in Prague	Diary 4th April 1897	1865 – 1866 First version of the scene in the Prague cemetery; meetings with Brafmann and Gougenot
13. Dalla Piccola Says He Is Not Dalla Piccola	Diary 5th April 1897	
14. Biarritz	Diary 5th April 1897, late morning	1867 – 1868 Meeting Goedsche in Munich; killing of Dalla Piccola
15. Dalla Piccola Redivivus	Diary 6th and 7th April 1897	1869 Lagrange describes Boullan
16. Boullan	Diary 8th April 1897	1869 Dalla Piccola meets Boullan
17. The Days of the Commune	Diary 9th April 1897	1871 The days of the Commune
18. The Protocols	Diary 10th and 11th April 1897	1871 – 1879 Return of Father Bergamaschi; expansion of the Prague cemetery scene; killing of Joly
19. Osman Bey	Diary 11th April 1897, evening	1881 Meeting with Osman Bey
20. Russians?	Diary 12th April 1897	

THE STORY AND PLOT

21. Taxil	Diary 13th April 1897	1884 Simonini meets Taxil
22. The Devil in the Nineteenth Century	Diary 14th April 1897	1884–1896 Taxil against the Masons
23. Twelve Years Well Spent	Diary 15th and 16th April 1897	1884–1896 The same years, seen by Simonini (during this time Simonini meets the psychiatrists Chez Magny, as described in chapter 3)
24. A Night Mass	Diary 17th April 1897 (which ends at dawn, 18th April)	1896–1897 Collapse of the Taxil venture, 21st March 1897; black mass
25. Sorting Matters Out	Diary 18th and 19th April 1897	1897 Simonini understands and eliminates Dalla Piccola
26. The Final Solution	Diary 10th November 1898	1898 The final solution
27. Diary Cut Short	Diary 20th December 1898	1898 Preparation for the bomb attack

Сергѣй Нилусъ.

Великое
въ маломъ
и
антихристъ,
какъ близкая политическая возможность.

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ЗАПИСКИ ПРАВОСЛАВНАГО.

—•—•—•—
(ИЗДАНИЕ ВТОРОЕ, ИСПРАВЛЕННОЕ И ДОПОЛНЕННОЕ).

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ЦАРСКОЕ СЕЛО.
Типографія Царскосельскаго Комитета Краснаго Креста.
1905.

First edition of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, which appeared in *The Great Within the Small* by Sergei Nilus

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