

WHILE THE EVIL DAYS COME NOT

My daughter, go thou to Aunt Mary's house on the quiet Tall Oak cul-de-sac, three winding blocks past the Kroger, in the town you no doubt have some memories of from when you were a girl. She will not allow boys over nor stand for much noise. But I will be glad to know that, under her tutelage, you are learning things that you learned not while you were here: how to sew at a sewing machine, how a becoming lady ought dress for Sunday's church services, and, at the root, how to dismount from your unwise youth, and grow into a more respectable way of living. Give yourself to Aunt Mary, and she will grow you, as she has grown so many potted whelps into that which is sturdy and upright.

Do not go down the hill in her back yard, and set foot on the trail that is in the woods there, through some stinking bushes and buckthorn, for this trail is a trail of dire wickedness. Go not downhill further, upon the trail, past the grotesque wood statues that are there of women unclothed, and if you should find yourself among pines, turn face immediately and go back uphill to Aunt Mary's, for all the way down there among spiked pines and grotesque statues lives an evil woman. The evil woman lures with gifts: carved wooden trinkets, eclectic garments, home baked sweet things. But there in her company, you would find, as she would tell all too gladly to all visitors, that in spite of her years, she has not a man to make herself whole with, nor has she ever, nor does her heart even seek a man. She is a worser kind of evil than we are often taught of, a practitioner of a self-righteous

thing worse than even atheism or adultery. Never allow her dogs to lick your hand, nor with your hand ever feed her donkeys: for these animals are the object of her corruption, they are the vessels in which she has stored all within herself that ought have been for a man to have taken. The animals about her are stained with her evil and must be touched not by a good hand, lest some unwashed evil ever spread.

Do not let her tell you of her worship, for she worships strange and false gods. Learn not any evil magic she claims to know, for magic she does practice, and evil it is. You have a mind which, while not free from error, still has vast parts that are uncorrupted, free from any thoughts impure: soil not that which has remained pure of your mind. For once one is as far gone as this evil woman, so unthinkably perverse as to put in the place of a man the red staff of a dog instead, and the braying of donkeys in place of a man's guidance, seldom do any come back, for they have convinced themselves that they have found a bigger truth, a different path that had been kept from them, and now they think themselves smarter than their fathers and all those that came before them.

The evil woman teacheth not how to live in the church's ways, such that you may be found by a good husband who will always be seated beside you on Sunday mornings and across from you at the breakfast table. The evil woman instead deals in dancing around fires at night and sharing plates with hounds. The evil woman howls with wolves. The evil woman ventures the least she can into good society, turning a cold shoulder to the convenience and polite exchange of needed goods at shops, she instead useth much from the very ground and says that this is good enough for her, she instead tradeth parcels with other hidden practitioners of wickedness elsewhere. The evil woman walks about with her dogs and her donkeys, and if she has not spoken a word to another upright soul from sunup to sundown, she considers it not a day that was wasted. If there were a dire quarrel between a man and one of her dogs, she would stab with a dagger the man, and give her hound extra portions that night. She has sworn oaths to debase herself to beasts and to soil and to nothing more. She shareth her bed with that which should sleepeth outside.

Do not let her justify these things to you, for she has practiced how to make all of these things sound sweet.

You will do what is right, I know.