

Hitler's Angel (A Meta Christmas Carol)

by Finnegan Flawnt

I have plans to write a Christmas story for Metazen, an online journal specialising in metafiction. I don't know exactly what I am going to write yet, but it better be good.

What's 'good', though? Children are good, and angels, and reindeer. Children aren't so good when they're bad: when they torture their little brother for example or when they grate on my last nerve, the one I really needed to make it through this day with the slush on the road and everyone driving as if they'd contracted mad cow disease. Angels aren't always good either, I guess, not that I'm an expert (which might thwart this entire enterprise of Christmas story writing), but what if, say, a guardian angel (they are a common sort of angel, not like archangels, which are more like archbishops), in an attempt to protect his liege (is that how you say it? coachee? client?) harms another person? I told Jessica Mary about that.

Jessica Mary said: "That's stupid, all the guardian angel has to do is to shield the person" - I made a mental note to ask her later how you call such a person: it isn't fair that I should be the only one in this family, who has to figure this stuff out, I mean, I do accept that women play a different part in life altogether and I wouldn't have it any other way, but there needs to be a balance, don't you think? (I wonder how you handle that with your spouse at home), and she said "I don't see how that could compromise the angel's inherent goodness."

Gosh, I hated it when Jessica Mary used words like 'inherent'. She had more degrees than I had toes left - how I lost some of my toes is another story, which would lead us far astray, to the North Pole, I

may tell it some time - and a big bundle of fancy words, too.

"But what if the angel's client is held at gun point", I said, using one of my favourite expressions, not fancy but forceful, "And in order to save him when the gangster shoots, the angel must stop the bullet from coming out of the barrel so that the revolver explodes into the face of the gangster, disfiguring him forever or even killing him. Surely an action cannot be good if it leads to maiming and death?"

"He's acted in self defense", Jessica Mary said coolly.

"But nobody attacked the angel", I said, and then, inflamed by the heat of our debate: "What about Hitler's guardian angel!?"

That made us both squirm, quite against the spirit of Christmas, because the implications of assuming Hitler had a guardian angel (and why wouldn't he have had one?), who, in mad pursuit of his master's best interest, like a ghost from a bottle, had condemned millions of others to certain death, left us stunned and perplexed. Evidently, we hadn't thought this through properly, not Jessica Mary with her affinity for florid words or me with my natural ponderousness. As we fell on the floor, still flabbergasted, I said "you're one smart woman, Jessica Mary", and she, reaching for my tackle, murmured "I love you too, Nick, you big hunk of man meat".

And now I've run out of time. Christmas is here and there's work to do. There's just too much going on and I've got too many open questions to ponder before I could put anything down, inkwise. Christmas may be a great time for you to let it all rest, and you should. My good reindeer are getting nervous already.

I suppose I won't be writing a Christmas story for Metazen after all.

