

Book IV

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I must now inform the reader of an unexpected summons from the Maestro that ~~not only~~ removed me from Alois Hitler and his family for close to eight months. ^{Indeed, it} ~~but~~ took me out of Austria altogether. I can add that this alert arrived on the ^{same} evening early in October of 1895 ^{that} ~~when~~ Alois completed his apicultural negotiations. A colony of bees installed in each of two Langstroth boxes were purchased from Der Alte, as well as a variety of

tools, ~~in company~~ ^{together} with enough sealed jars of pollen and honey to feed his newly-acquired inhabitants through the winter.

~~One~~ ^{So soon as} purchased, the goods were transported ~~on the same evening by~~
 by Alois to the Hitler home. It was to prove an exceptionally exciting trip for Adi who sat beside his father in the dray and could not sleep that night in anticipation of morning when the hive-boxes would be set up on a bench under the shade of an oak tree some twenty paces from the house.

If there is some curiosity concerning Alois' outlay, ^(Come to, how much these purchases) I have no ~~very~~
 dependable way to carry a calculation forward from the kronen of Alois' era to the present American dollar—~~there are too many anomalies.~~ Certain products are priced one hundred times higher today than a century ago; other increases are modest. I will offer one rough estimate: Alois' pension in 1895 may have been the equivalent of sixty or seventy thousand dollars a year in the present era, and so I can say that he found the new expenditures dear. What Der Alte charged him might come today to the equivalent of a thousand dollars. Alois, fully anticipating that he would pay too much, was weary, nonetheless, of dealing with the old man and so did not press beyond the small satisfaction of acquiring a few extra tools at no extra cost, ~~one of~~

~~the few times in his life when he was not ready to bargain with his characteristic determination (and ferocity) if he thought he was being cheated.~~

However, ~~I~~ ^{my} was at ~~just~~ this point that I was ordered to leave Adi and the other members of the family (as well as ^{my} numerous other clients in that area of Austria.) ^{I deputized three} Three ~~of~~ my agents ^{were deputized?} to remain and I embarked for St. Petersburg where I ^{had to come!} was ~~quickly brought~~ to focus on the needs and dimensions of a massive oncoming project. We were going to attend the Coronation of Tsar Nicholas the Second, scheduled for May of 1896 in Moscow, seven months into the future.

Off I went, then, to St. Petersburg, and on that very night. ~~How I~~
~~made the voyage is, at this point, too advanced a matter to discuss.~~

While devils are able to ~~travel in the guise of human beings, that is, we~~
~~can certainly~~ insinuate ourselves for a reasonable period into many a man or woman (even as forty-two years later, I would be occupying the mind and body of an intelligence officer named Dieter in Himmler's Special Section IV-2a) still, ^{when it comes to travel,} ~~we prefer to employ more direct and rapid~~ means. (But, of that, I will wait to speak.) For now, leave it that I was

obliged to commence
~~instructed to move by our quick track and immediately begin my~~
~~study of~~ *quickly and immediately on arrival*
 orientation into the late Nineteenth Century Russian soul, all of it—belly,

(which is)
 so much nearer to God and to the Devil than any other land above the

equator) I stayed for all of a winter in St. Petersburg prior to coming down
 to Moscow on a cold April morning *in advance of that* before the Coronation in May.

this During that period, I did receive news of Alois, Adi, Klara, and
There were even reports on
 Angela. Even reported were day-to-day variations in the temperament of

the dog, Luther, and the horses, Ulan and Graubart. In any event, none of
 that was of *great* comparable interest to the *what with our in Russia that* oncoming venture. ~~Given the over~~

~~over~~ *was just as well. Give the over*
 arching demand to satisfy the Maestro, a devil can afford ~~to do for~~

Results
 personal desires. All the same, I confess I had become a little too full of the
had been
 Hitler family's intimacies. While they were the focus of my interest in that
also been hoping
 region, I had hoped to receive more of a major assignment. Now, I had it.

Our O.O. was in the first stages of bringing off a mighty mischief. All of us
 who were working for him knew as much. ~~Even at the time, I expected that~~
~~this new engagement would come to more than any of our past efforts to~~

disrupt the morale of the D.K. and His Cudgels. I could feel a ^{major} change coming in the calculations of our leader.

Now, I will make one apology, although I will do my best not to repeat it. (Good readers do not purchase novels, after all, to put up with ^{the author's requests,} apologies.) I have to say, however, that having read the best and worst of novels for many years, which is, to remind you, part of a good devil's education, I should know by now (and do!) that not even the ^{most loyal} best of readers will stay ^{true} loyal to an author who ^{is} ready to leave his narrative and substitute ^{for} what must seem an unrelated subject. ^{Given restrictions,} For that reason, I have until now ^{any} spared the reader reference to my other cases, particularly the month I spent in London back in May of '95 when I attended the trial of Oscar Wilde and was in the courtroom on the day of his conviction for "sodomy and gross indecency"—a matter in which I played a hand with the jury's deliberations. (My instructions were to do my best to get him convicted.) It is likely that the E.O. was looking to stimulate a rabid sense of martyrdom among many of Wilde's closer associates, particularly those who were of very good family. But to this I cannot attest. Only on rare occasions will the Maestro

explain his strategies to us—we are there to satisfy his aims rather than our curiosity.)

Nonetheless, I was now harboring a conviction that ^{this about} ~~our~~ ^{Maestro had} ~~our~~ ^{forces} ~~over to Russia had~~

put the D.K. into a state of some disturbance concerning the ~~success~~

~~failure~~ of the oncoming Coronation.

For that, I ^{can only} must offer my own set of explanations. While I ~~cannot~~ ^{would not}

~~guarantee~~ ^{their dependability} that they are wholly dependable, I will say I have long suspected

that our mighty opponent, ^{antagonist} the D.K., ^{is} has become critically dissatisfied with

^{the state of} all the formal religions who claimed to be serving exclusively in His name.

(This, of course, must exclude reference to Buddhism, Confucianism,

Taoism, and any other sects or faiths ~~that are~~ not based on texts dictated—so

^{churchly} goes the claim—by God.)

No, it is the unhappy strictures and structures of the Catholics, the

Protestants, the Orthodox Jews, the Reformed Jews, the Sunnis and the

Shi'ites ^{about} for which He ^{feels} must be held responsible. Yes—that is the word—

^{(is unhappy that He} responsible. He ^{is} proved unable to control the development of these forms of

worship. Humans—many of the worst sort—^{are} were now the overlords, in most

^{such as} ~~the~~ ^{places of worship} Given the tenacity of the priests, reverends, rabbis and imams who had

attached themselves to such concentrations of power in order precisely to
(lust to) control human behavior) these religious officers of God had so installed
themselves into the mind of humankind that they have also succeeded

~~in~~eradicable. They had also succeeded in keeping God at a ^{distance} good remove.

from His humans. I was also ready to suppose
that He resented it. Was that why the D.O.s

~~In my attempt to understand why the Maestro had called in so many~~

knew

odds ^{such} had generated ~~some~~ special hopes for this occasion. ^{? what I} In response,

~~Some certainty was that the Maestro was preparing~~
~~our Maestro must consider these hopes significant since he was now~~

His expectations.
prepared to go to great lengths to thwart them.

For many centuries our O.O. has been an incisive and often most

~~effective critic of the D.K. He has certainly succeeded in convincing many that God's accumulated errors might by now be more compendious than the bulk and body of His successes. I would add that God, the Creator, having worked His way through the locks, hazards, and blind alleys of evolution, had also trapped Himself into any number of grievous misjudgments about the probable potentialities of humankind. In contrast, the O.O. had kept us sensitive enough to the D.K.'s endeavors to be able to add momentum to~~

every misdirection we can put ^(insert) into His human beings. We have ^{certainly} enlarged the sum of emotional dissatisfaction in men and women everywhere.

Thereby—so went our working assumption—we might come a little closer ~~to doubling our vital~~ ^{to deadening the vitality} to conquering what I may as well term the continuation of the species. Over

the last two thousand years, one of our more effective methods had been to encourage ^{the most} ~~immense and~~ humorless religiosity. If we have come up short now

and again—usually by encounters with luminous individuals (saints) we did succeed in warping the intelligence of ~~a good many humans~~ ^(majority of). You can ~~find fine folk everywhere~~ ^{Everywhere are fine men and women} who are locked into a mosque, a synagogue, or a

church, all clinging to the same oxymoron. Despite every other difference, they are attached to the obtuse and untenable belief that God is not only All-Good but All-Powerful. This premise—given its mind-boggling

contradiction to the perversities of existence—proves incapable of serving ^{even} ~~as a tool for~~ the mind. All-Good and All-Powerful is a concept to ^{encapsulate} ~~shape~~ ^{many of} the hopes embedded in human development by God and people alike. By ^{it} promoting exactly that concept—All-Good and All-

Powerful—we have succeeded in tormenting the best minds of mankind for century after century. All-Good and All-Powerful. Indeed! Yes, we had

looked to encourage every fundamentalist we could find, every Islamist, Born-Again, or unyielding nun—we didn't give a damn. "Come to us," became our creed, "come, all of you who are in need of rock-hard faith and anchored certainties! Be born again into total mental security, yes!" How ready they were to believe they were serving God even as they began to work for us in ways they could never conceive.

Now, the advantage we ^{had by 1895} obtained up to this point in 1895 is, I would ^{was} ~~warrant~~, a product of the D.K.'s inability to ^{decide on} anticipate (which direction ^{he would} ~~his~~ ^{like his} human creatures ^{to} would take. His strength (as the ^{Master} O.G. will be the first to acknowledge) is that He can produce a plenitude of fine forms throughout the natural world. ^{God} ~~He~~ is an Artist, and some of His Forms are dazzling, some are useful. Some are relatively successful. (The honey-bee might be one example.) Some are most improperly designed. (The dinosaur, ~~the~~ ^{like his} squid, ~~the~~ ^{to} horse-fly, and the mosquito come ^{immediately} ~~to~~ mind.)

^{But he} By the time the Lord had ^{reached} ~~come~~ to the conclusion ^{his latest} to raise primates to the level of humans, He had become much too proud of ^{even} ~~this particular~~ creative accomplishment. (He ^{even} saw the human animal as, ~~uncontestably~~, His

→ ~~At first~~ ^{At first} ~~was~~ ^{was} He felt so expansive that He even
~~last~~ ^{SA efficient} even chose to provide men and women with enough reason,

memory, and passion to ~~be able to~~ exercise free will. He encouraged them

to develop speech. ^{In the beginning, (allow)} He was prepared to permit this ~~last~~ creation to be free,

on most occasions, of Him. Just so confident was His belief in His powers

~~of Anticipation. He had no~~ ^{Anticipation. He had no} of Creation. He did not fear that ~~people~~ ^{humans} would burst the limits He had
 allowed them.

~~That~~ ^{That} His miscalculation was calamitous. It ~~was~~ ^{proved} equal to raising a hound
 who turns on its master. God's finest creation, ~~men and women, once~~ ^{Men and women, once}

endowed with free will, proved unmanageable. ~~they~~ ^{Worse! They} gave every indication

that, ~~once~~ ^{once, entirely} ~~entirely~~ ^{already} they would depose Him. (The first signs are there in

Adam and Eve.) ~~Say it plainly~~ ^{by the} ~~by now, they were soon ready to disobey~~ ^{after the}

~~Him openly~~ ^{a free and} So He gave up the heartfelt notion of engaging in a profound

~~open~~ ^{open} partnership with this highest form of His Creation. Instead, He now looked

to ~~terrify~~ ^{terrify} men and women back into some form of obedience. ~~He~~ ^{Finally, He} could not

recover from the blow to His Anticipation occasioned by the Crucifixion of
~~Jesus Christ~~ ^{return this to earlier}. He felt obliged, therefore, to go back to old early and

~~modern~~ ^{modern} ~~tyrannical judgments~~ ^{to His Personae}. He came back as Jehovah. He proceeded to terrify

humans ~~all over~~ again. "Obey Me and fear Me. I am All-Good and All-

Powerful." The message that He had wished to transmit through His Son—

"Love each other and you will share in My love" was now converted by St.

Paul and a crew of acolytes to "Fear Me, Respect Me, and I may on

occasion answer your prayers."

~~This return back to the earlier understanding that the Creator was an~~
~~oppressor~~ ^{re-treated} re-opened large territories to the Maestro. ~~I will put it simply.~~ ^{cal}

Since our purpose ~~as I comprehend it~~ ^{we look to} is to reduce the potentiality of ~~human~~
~~kind~~, we look to lower the vitality of what is, admittedly, the most

exceptional creature developed by the D.K. ^{How, then, can we not}
encourage forms of religiosity that are mindless? Warp the brains of men

and women, and human emotion will ^{become} be further corrupted. (For imbalance

^{We are often reminded that once} is the beginning of rot.) ~~Once~~ we accomplish our job well enough, we may

~~be able to~~ alter His Creation into Our System.

~~Through many an age, I believe that this has been the ongoing~~

~~intention of the Maestro~~ ^{through many an age} (and our activities have hardly been restricted to

churchgoers. We look to independent people, ^{(philosophers, entertainers,} atheists, athletes, movie stars,

and any number of highly motivated individuals who ^{are} are turning bitter at the

^{Through the Nineteenth Century this has} edges. That had worked reasonably well. Yet, now, as we approach the

20th Century, our O.O. ^{may he} ~~looked to be~~ ^{profound} contemplating a dramatic change in his procedures. Was our Maestro actually ^(preparing to) ~~ready now to~~ take the leap from his ^{his} long powerful position as God's adversary into a much less calculable ^{more adventurous} ~~advance~~ ^{stance?} ~~advance of his aims?~~ Was he now ready to move ^{for a metamorphosis} ~~from High Critic to Prime~~

Creator?

I could not conceive of what such a ^{(daring shift} ~~new strategy~~ might require of us—I had ^{become} ~~been~~ ^{so, thus new} ~~much too~~ mired in my dependable Austrian tactics. I ~~will~~ ^{my} ~~say~~ the possibility did arouse ~~uneasiness~~ ^{in me}. For who could know more about the pestilence and slovenliness of human nature than those of us who have worked through the centuries to inflame all that has been misbegotten in the calculations of God, all the ^{harsh} ~~residue~~ ^(left in His human beings) of unfocused animal rage, ~~yes~~, all the continuing excess in men and women of free-floating ill will. There had been one sum of blunders upon another, and ^{so many had been} ~~themselves yes!~~ ^{yes!} ~~themselves~~ fashioned by the D.K. in the course of ~~developing~~ ^{developing} this most advanced ^{interesting move and more heedless of Godly enthusiasm} ~~Creation!~~ And we had done our skillful best to make it worse. Given His ^{into this most advanced} ~~most advanced~~

Desire to find a high but delicate level of life that would nonetheless be able to survive through grievous and often incalculable conditions of heat, cold, flame, or even recover from catastrophic disasters, the D.K. had had to

endow man (and woman, most certainly!) with a sense of self-importance

crucial to their survival. But, once again—was it due in part to our

efforts?—His ~~sense of~~ creative balance was ^{imperfect} ~~away~~. Human self-

righteousness, so necessary to meeting the demands of survival, soon

produced envy as its first product, ^{and that} ~~The self righteous do not always look~~

~~with equanimity upon good fortune for others particularly not close~~

~~friends and acquaintances~~. Envy worked as dependably in our favor as

compound interest serves a long-term investment. ^{Of course, the} ~~The~~ D.K.'s powers to

fashion new varieties of Creation were ^{still} ~~once~~ it must again be admitted

~~more than~~ encyclopedic, but His skills as a cosmic engineer ^{never met} ~~were full of~~
^{were not free of} fault. His design of the earth's tectonic plates ^{were open to} ~~did not prevent~~ earthquake.

So, His problems, even without our presence, would not have been trivial.

Over the eons of evolution, His endless refashioning of His own works by

way of trial and error, ^(and His endless redesigning of works in progress) ~~even His readiness to live with His mistakes until~~

such time as He could correct them, ^{and} ~~most certainly~~, His outsize rages as

a younger god! ^{His} ~~frenzies as Jehovah!~~ had compounded a multitude of

^{open wounds} ~~mishaps~~ in every avenue of human history. Now, I could wonder how the

Maestro would look to refashion such a boggled Creation ^{begin} after all the work ^{where we}
we could be stumbling ~~constantly~~ over ~~we had accomplished~~ I was worried. Yes.
the dig we had ^{of lead} accomplished
through ~~your~~ work. I was worried. Yes.

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~~disorder we would have~~
 I will yet describe the effect we were to have on the Coronation of
 Tsar Nicholas the Second, but I would prefer at this point to return to the
 small events and minor adventures of the Hitler family in Hafeld ^{for} during the
 period ^{while} ~~when~~ I was away. ^{then} Only ~~after this is noted~~ (and in some detail) will I
~~attempt to~~ ^{what we did} outline the more exceptional activities we undertook in St.
 Petersburg and Moscow ~~which would culminate in May of 1896~~. ^{That a I will say now} The near
^{that the} ~~to~~ eight months ^{which} ~~that date~~ from my departure in October of 1895 until my
 return to Austria in June of 1896 turned out to be of ^{some} ~~greater~~ ^{future} ~~future~~
 importance for Adolf Hitler ^{more indeed} ~~than his~~ ^{even though} ~~quiet boyhood~~, ~~but since I had no idea~~

enough certainly to describe
 what ~~occurred~~ ~~occurred~~
 occurred during my absence.

~~at the time that this would be so, it may be wise not to ignore the events in~~
~~Hafeld at this stage, no matter how modest they seemed to me then.~~

Let me point, however, to a serious difficulty. During this ^{period} ~~absence~~,
^{an account} my perceptions of the various experiences of Alois, Klara, and the children
^{were} was passed on to me by ~~the~~ ^{the ones I had} three second-rate agents left behind to look
^{oversee} after my portion of the Province of Upper Austria. Given the import of our
mission to Russia, I had, of course, taken my best assistants ^{with me} along. ~~That left~~
^{So, it was an ascertainable loss.}
~~a problem.~~ Lesser devils are comparable to lesser humans. This is
particularly true of their insensitivity to significant detail.

While I can even keep a reasonably close notion of what is transpiring
among my clients and their ~~best~~ ^{what is given} associates when relying on the reports of
^{we by} mediocre agents, the work loses tone. ~~During my absence, I could not~~
~~allocate my best resources to thinking about Alois & Co.~~ What will,
however, save the account received is that there were a few determining
events in Adi's development, and these ^{episodes} ~~matters~~ I did study, if from a
distance. ~~Otherwise, nothing of great moment did occur until the return of~~
~~Junior, Alois Hitler, Junior. But that was not until June, by which time I,~~
~~too, had returned.~~

On the other hand, my narrative does not have to suffer ~~so~~ critically.

Mediocre agents, like mediocre human beings, are routine in their powers of

summary, but I had brought even the least of my aides up to a reasonable

level of performance even though they had ~~virtually nothing to offer when I first received~~ ^{virtually nothing to offer when I first received} level of performance. If I am not ready to explain our systems of ^{recruit} ~~recruitment~~ ^{recruiting}

recruitment in obtaining new agents, that is because such exposition would ~~bring us~~ ^{bring us} immediately into a far more sacrosanct question: How are devils

created in the first place? Is the Evil One personally on the alert for

superior humans who might be ready to work for us, or, as is more usually

the case, do they come to us as lower varieties of humans, a brood of

rejected spawn? ^{humans?} One of the ironies is that these last were often ^{had been our} ~~demoralized, or clients of ours who were, nonetheless, outraged in the hour~~ ^{clients}

~~after~~ ^{when they had been our clients, they} ~~of their death by what they perceived as a shocking down-grading of their~~ ^{demoralized, or clients of ours who were, nonetheless, outraged in the hour}

~~hopes for a good reincarnation. This was despite all they had done! They~~ ^{and they} ~~dwelt in their bitterness and opted out, simple as that. They felt that God~~ ^{but Camp to us nonetheless in a state of demoralization}

~~They felt that God~~ ^{in death} ~~had not appreciated their real merits. So, they chose us. They declared their~~ ^{They felt that God}

desire to be liberated from the wheel of human reincarnation in order to

~~serve us at a higher level.~~ ^(that is, no longer a client, but a demon) (How this arrangement was ever negotiated

between the D.K. and the E.O. is beyond my knowledge.) While I cannot

demon at least no matter how low the rank.

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declare why or when it happened, I am familiar with the results. ~~Was the~~
~~D.K. obliged, or, indeed, even willing, to trade off a fraction of His stock of~~
~~souls in ~~order~~ clamoring for reincarnation? Was this in order to obtain a~~ *to him self,*
~~u less disruptive and dissatisfied working environment for himself?~~ *?* I suspect
~~this may have been the case. I would also assume that~~ *Our* O.O., looking to
 make his way up onto a nearer plane of equality to the D.K., was, of
 necessity, ready to accept God's exudate—all these spoiled human
 possibilities. Over the centuries, over—it well may be—the millennia, the
 Maestro had to give over a large share of his resources to shaping and
 training the low-grade and highly disturbed material we did receive. It is
 analogous in difficulty to developing a symphony orchestra from applicants
 who have yet to learn to play an instrument.

I will not pursue these difficulties ~~further~~. Not at this point. I will
 only say that the agents I had left in Hafeld, the lees, so to speak, of my
 small squad, did their best to report on Alois' ongoing efforts at bee-
 keeping, but they did not always have a close enough sense of his
 difficulties, certainly not enough to satisfy my understanding.

Forewarned, forearmed. I will now present my small improvement on the summary I received of what went on with Alois, his bees, his wife, and his children from the end of 1895 until the following summer.

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In late October, if I had permitted it, my agents would have
To my complete lack of surprise, Alois had
overwhelmed me with detail ~~about Alois'~~ *any* *number* *of*
possessions,
~~purchase~~

~~As I have indicated,~~ I had no time to attend to this, and was irked.

Short of forcing a direct entrance into Alois' waking thoughts which, it may
be remembered, is rarely done with men and women who are not directly
our clients, ~~the~~ ^{my} agents had to work by way of their milk runs. In what our
Maestro
~~G.O.~~ chooses to call "the markets of sleep," most dreams of men and

women are reasonably available, open to ~~common~~^{devils} and Cudgels alike, and so their daily thoughts can be picked up (at least in superficial degree) by no more than passing through the night chamber.

We also learn a good deal through the simple expedient of listening to a family's chatter. To be sure, a plethora of superficial information now arrived, more than enough to annoy me. It was a biased portrait. My agents perceived Alois as weak and much too worried, but they lacked the insight required for dealing with men or women who possess strength, yet are ^{being} closely studied at a time of anxiety. (It is easier to comprehend those who are weaker than ourselves than to anticipate the moves and true feelings of those more powerful.) A sense of nuance is demanded, and this is precisely what these agents were lacking.

Being of no great stature themselves in their former lives, they tended to pick up all that was second-rate in Alois. I was left, therefore, with the burden of discounting improperly weighed materials. While I will give some adjustment to what I received, let me abjure the reader. We must not forget that the boy who later became ^{Adolf} Hitler emerged from a childhood with this father and mother. So, it has to be obvious that we would do well to

~~take measure of~~
ascertain Klara and Alois' real strengths and, needless to say, their
significant weaknesses. developed if second-hand

Very well. Here then is my account ~~at one remove~~ of Alois' woes
now that he ~~has insisted~~ ^{is} on becoming a bee-keeper.

His first concern (which I find comic—since he has spent his life in uniform) is that he has to remind himself constantly to put on light-colored gloves and a bee-keeper's large trapezoidal hat and veil, always of the whitest material. Since he must avoid dark coats or trousers, when that is what he usually wears, he is always concerned in these first days not to forget to change his garments before going out to the hive-boxes ~~under the oak tree~~. Deep and somber colors, he knows all too well, do irritate bees, ~~he~~ knows that by experience. On the particular occasion some years ago when he had been gravely stung while working with the little colony he then kept near Braunau, he had made the mistake of inviting an attractive woman out with him one Sunday afternoon ^{As an element in his plan of seduction,} in order to demonstrate his working ~~competence with the hive. Naturally, he was in full dress uniform. How~~
~~he thought he would demonstrate his~~ ^{There was} ~~competence with the hive. Naturally, he was in full dress uniform. How~~
~~else to accompany so good looking an acquaintance?~~ ^{That} By twilight he was stung so fiercely that the recollection still rises in one quick spurt from the

pit of his stomach. Alois' hopes of fornication were obliged to remain
 unsatisfied ^{Sunday} ~~that Friday night~~, indeed, the lady was stung, ^{as well as day} ~~no less, on the~~
^{no less than the} exposed flesh of her ample breast. Only a passing romance was lost, but ~~it~~
^{was given} ~~proved~~ a blow to his best opinion of himself. As we see, he continues to
 pay the price. Shoots of fear, bright as rockets, fire off in his stomach, ^{when}
^{he approaches the hive boxes.}

Nonetheless, Alois, in some part, remains a good peasant. He has not
 forgotten that after ^{any} ~~a small or large~~ disaster, one must stay on the alert for
 whatever value ^{can} ~~might~~ still be plucked from the misfortune ~~itself~~. His
 interesting medical theses, for example, were stimulated by the alleviation
 of his rheumatism on the following day—bee stings did seem to be good for
 his knees. When their meeting occurred, Der Alte, we remember, was ready
 to agree.

This confirmation may have been part of Alois' decision to accept Der
 Alte's opinion that imported Italian bees were superior to the Austrian
 variety. While Alois had his suspicion that Der Alte might be selling
 exactly the stock that ~~he needed~~, ^{he wished} for whatever reason, to get rid of, still, the
 telling point (to Alois' present shame) was that Italian stock was easier to
 handle. They were gentler, Der Alte assured him. And what with their

glowing rich yellow tan, not unlike the mellow hue of the best shoe leather, they were incontestably more beautiful. Alois ~~had to admit that he did~~ *did* admire the three golden segments of their bodies, each fold set off by the sharpest edging in black. Elegant! So elegant! Whereas the Austrian honey-bee was ~~hairy, and gray~~ *gray and* and did not gleam like these gilded Italians. All the same, Alois felt as if he had been disloyal ~~to Austria~~. He should have taken the "Franz Josefs," the gray-beards.

What added to his unease is that he kept wondering whether he ~~would have done better to~~ *would have done better to* ~~should have waited for the spring?~~ *had to admit* Now, he ~~would have~~ to keep his colony well-fed ~~enough~~ and warm enough not to perish in the cold, ~~and the~~ queen he had purchased would be in virtual hibernation ~~now~~. She would not be laying eggs for another four or five months. Her hive would be gathered in a cluster, waiting for the honey Alois would be obliged to feed them. To keep close watch on their condition, he would have to weigh the hive-boxes once a week (to make certain the population was not dwindling). Yes, it would be some long months for these winter bees before they could go out to forage again along with the new-born who would, he hoped, be teeming forth in the spring.

All through these months, therefore, he would have to keep taking the temperature of the air within the hive. He had even been advised to start a diary for recording the daily and weekly data. Yet, he must not open any hive. "No matter your curiosity," Der Alte had confided (as if in full command of the new apiculturalist's temptations) "you must not allow yourself to peer in, or extract any of the movable frames in order to study the combs. Why, the cold draft that could arise from raising the large lid of the box might so lower the temperature that your bees would need hours to warm the interior again. Such a chill could decimate your population. Take no chances, Herr Hitler. Up until now, from what you have told me, I expect that in the past, you have only lived with bees in June and July. Any tourist can do that. But to be the Skipper of your little people through the ice-cold air of all the winter months to come, that takes character, my friend." And then as if to enrich the assumption, he added, "My new friend."

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If Alois had stood in the dock before himself as judge, he would have found the defendant guilty. How could retirement prove so enfeebling to a strong man? He had bought the farm on impulse and now, to double such a bet, had purchased these two ~~colonies, also on impulse, these~~ bee-hives in their Langstroth boxes. Why, so suddenly, had he committed himself to apiculture over the winter? Hadn't that also been done on too quick an impulse? Der Alte had had the consummate nerve to say to him, even as Alois left, "You will soon see how much work I have saved you."

What Alois saved in work, he now spent in worry. He was still under sixty, damn it, not yet sixty by a year and more, but he felt such a sense of

inner weariness before these new responsibilities. His two populated boxes were now set under the oak tree with tarpaper underneath for warmth, and more tarpaper above, all kept in place with stones. Two populations housed in two boxes. Each day he read the temperature of the heat within each box, and did his weighing once a week. Part of the real problem was that he did not have enough work, just worries. All through the dark months while feeding his winter bees (a most tricky technique in the beginning), he would console himself with the thought that if the colonies looked to be weak when spring came, he might combine two boxes into one, and, if necessary buy more bees at that time, undertake more expense, more of Der Alte, who would be farting in his pants, no doubt, from laughing so hard at the great esteemed High Customs Officer Herr Hitler with his ten thumbs all ready to be stung by what he didn't know about bees. Already, in November, Alois was lecturing Angela and Adi, even Klara, on the need in apiculture for immaculate hygiene once warm weather arrived. No matter how warm the day, they must certainly not leave the hives open. Above all, they must never spill honey outdoors. If they did, they must mop it up instantly, for the bees could be drawn to it and might begin to fight for free honey, easy

honey, as it lay in a pool on the ground. If the puddle were deep enough, they could drown en masse.

Such were his fears, enough to harangue his family for what might or might not occur in summer. And then he would go back to worrying about the putative weaknesses of a winter colony. So much depended on what he read each night, negative or positive, on the subject of keeping a winter hive.

He engaged in a flurry of work and built one new hive box (which he certainly did not need immediately, but was proud of the skill it demanded—yes, he could have been a decent cabinetmaker!) but also had to admit it was not the equal of his Langstroths. Then he proceeded to paint the three boxes. Three colors—blue, yellow, and ultra-violet. His manuals told him what he knew already. His bees, if they ever got to flying again, would be able to recognize—yes, each one of the tens of thousands of these bees would know by the color—precisely which hive-box they belonged to.

By the color, of course. *Just as he had explained it to Klevan*

Still, he enjoyed working with his hands. Doing the carpentry, his worries eased. For a week, his chest even puffed up again with an old

truism. "Good German blood understands," said Alois to his wife, "that

blessings do not come from God, but from hard work. That idea is as safe

as a sound house." Still, it was not such a ^{great fine} fair remark. Why not ^{say} "Good

instead of good

Austrian blood?"

This concern stayed on, ^{like} like a minor sore that does not heal. ^{The} He was

^{bothered him} obsessed with a question. Did certain blood possess special virtues? Why

^{praise} should this saying speak of German blood? ^{Yes, unless} Why not Austrian? He had an

Emperor who could live with the huge, ^{and so often} idiotic problems of keeping ^{all those} the

Czechs, Hungarians, Italians, Poles, Jews, Serbs, even ~~the~~ gypsies, living

^{in peace} together (under the Hapsburg empire. Germans couldn't do that. ^{German war} Always

fighting with each other. Without Bismarck, they would still be nothing.

^{Squabblers} Petty principalities. Always squabbling. Mad King Ludwig I, ^{is following} then comes

^{by} Mad King Ludwig II, both crazy Bavarians. And ^{these} Prussians ^{were worse} all had a

All Prussians had a ramrod up their ass. Why speak of good German blood? Yet, he said to

himself, "All the same, I know what it means." ^{Yet} But what did it signify to

^{to yourself that you} declare that he knew something when ^{you} get to the fact ^{you} he didn't, not quite.

^{you} Except in some way ^{A nice enigma. He was} he most certainly did. ^{was} Was he now thinking like a

philosopher? Not so bad for a boy who was once a peasant. He was

tempted to bring up the question at the tavern in Fischlham, but didn't, after all. They were dolts. He resented the time he spent with them. By November, he had even found himself drinking there in the afternoons, a proof, if he needed it, that there was not enough work to do. For that reason, he had chosen to stay away for a week, and do all the carpentry, paint the exterior of the hive boxes, even build a framework on which to hang some netting near the hives so that the birds would stay away in the spring. He even debated whether to visit Der Alte, but recollections of the smell in the hut ^{put an end to that.} kept him away.

Before long, he was back in the tavern. Just about every day. There was one pleasure he did find there. The dolts had come to see Alois as an expert on apiculture. ~~Maybe he had a lot to learn, but he was not ready to, give that away!~~ Every bit of advice Der Alte had offered, plus whatever he had picked up of late in his reading, was now presented as his own well-acquired lore. Alois would be the first to say that honesty and modesty were excellent virtues, and should be employed where possible when dealing with superiors. An inferior mind, however, wanted—especially when drinking—to feel it was in the company of a wise man. Since he was more

available to the locals than Der Alte, he stood in as the ^{resistant} local expert on bees.

A farmer even walked over one Sunday afternoon to seek his advice on how to get started. Alois proceeded to overwhelm him with the details of feeding a hive through the winter.

"Given the cold weather, you must not open the lid of the Langstroth," he said, "so how do you get the food down to them? You must nourish your bees, and your feed mixture has to be precise. The honey has to be properly diluted, one part honey absolutely equal to one part water, and this must be honey that comes from your own stock from last summer. 4

That means you must be able to trust the man who gives you the honey for these winter feedings when you purchase his stock. Trust is essential."

Even as both were nodding their heads with something of the same reverence Klara would exhibit before a cross in church, Alois had to ask himself whether he could really trust the honey received from Der Alte. Of course, Alois could dispose of such dark possibilities by rule-of-thumb percentages. Der Alte had to be 80% trustworthy. At the least! After all, it would do his reputation no good if Alois' venture went kaput.

"But how do you feed them," asked the visitor, "if you can't open the lid?"

"Ah," said Alois, "there is a special technique. You open a very small plug that is installed at the top of the box and you lay the feeder over that. It is a special feeder! A five liter jar with a cover of the finest mesh fastened over the mouth. Expensive mesh! Into the jar, you have placed water that has been heated but not boiled, and then you stir in the sugar until it is completely dissolved, and cover the mouth of the jar with your mesh."

"I am confused," said his visitor. "You were speaking of honey and water, and now of sugar and water."

"My apologies," said Alois. "I was thinking that for a beginner like yourself, sugar could be better. Easier. Perfectly simple. Use a different ratio, however. Three parts of sugar to two of water."

Alois was beginning to feel like the fine fellow he had once been, yes, before his retirement. "The trick," he said, "is to master the technique of this special feeder. Because you not only put in the liquid nourishment, and cover the mouth of the jar, as I just told you, with the fine mesh, but you must have a small pump built into the bottle as well to create a vacuum

since you will next be holding the vessel upside-down over the bung hole above the brood that is waiting to be fed. Do you follow?" Alois could see that he didn't. *Before long, this Sunday visitor,* "The vacuum in the jar keeps the sugar-water from pouring ~~thoroughly disheartened and gave up~~ out, but the bees are able to absorb the liquid through the spaces in the ~~goodbye, he was not likely to be~~ weave of the cloth mesh. I feed over one liter of sugar-water or, in my case, ~~competition come June,~~ honey and water to them once a day. Then, after every feeding I wash the jar in boiled water. Cleanliness is an absolute demand."

All the while that my agents were giving these conversations to me, I was growing testy. Such expositions were boring. They gave little new insight into Alois. They were missing the depth of his new anxieties. *By so soon as his visitor left Alois began* the time this Sunday visitor, ~~thoroughly disheartened, had said goodbye—he felt so alone with his project that~~ was not likely to be competition come June—Alois was out in the cold ~~he began to~~ again, wondering whether disease might strike the colonies.

He spent an evening reading his books but the anxieties remained. He had dreams of living in one of his boxes, himself a bee, no more than part of a cluster living in deepest and darkest obscurity. How could these bees guide themselves in that world, so stygian, so bereft of light?

By the end, Alois had raised this dream to the level of a nightmare.

(Now I could feel more interest in what my agents were transmitting ~~to me~~)

Alois' hive multiplied in the darkness, ~~and the bees were so many that the~~
~~cluster could no longer bear its confines.~~ ^{then} The hive escaped from the box
and flew away, far away. ~~Now,~~ ^{They} they could not be found.

When spring came, would he lose his hive? ^{In the dark, he} ~~He~~ felt for Klara in the
~~dark~~, and his hand came across her belly. She was so big now, yet the new
one wasn't due until January. Would he be a giant of a fellow? ~~The new~~
~~one would make six in the houses, seven when Junior returned.~~

She came awake with his hand on her, and would have nestled into
the embrace of his arm, ^{in the middle of this darkness,} but he felt a need to discuss a worrisome matter in
^{But he had only to say} ~~the middle of this darkness.~~ ^{and} Before he had said more than a few words, she
was wide awake and unhappy.

"I hope," Alois said, "that you haven't spoken to Herr Rostenmeier."

She knew immediately what he would next suggest. Herr
Rostenmeier was the owner of the country store in Fischlham where once a
week, on Saturday, she and Angela would buy a few foodstuffs they did not
raise in their garden. Klara liked Mr. Rostenmeier, and had begun to talk to

him about the future sale of their honey. Alois had told her not to make any deals, not yet. There was always the possibility, slight, of course, that he would do business with Der Alte. She had taken pleasure in the thought that it would probably be Herr Rostenmeier, and she ^{could} ~~would~~ be the in-between, and bring a little money back to the house and hand it over to Alois. Her fingers tingled each time she thought of such a direct transaction.

But now Alois would go to Der Alte. She knew it. "I thought," she said in the darkness, even as he patted her belly, "that you didn't like that man at all, yes, I remember you said you would have to smell him."

"He will be good to consult," Alois said shortly. The tendrils of the nightmare were still with him.

"Yes, yes," said Klara, "but you told me you don't trust Der Alte. Yes?" She was close to becoming hysterical. To be torn out of an agreeable sleep for this! "Yes, you say you don't trust him, and yet you choose this Der Alte over an honest man like Herr Rostenmeier?"

"Klara, this is all because you feel embarrassed," he told her. "Maybe you had a little too much ^{conversation} ~~talk~~ with Herr Rostenmeier already. Something

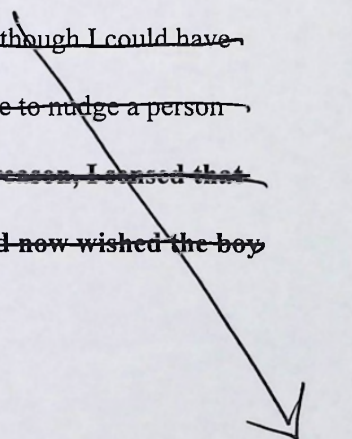
you haven't mentioned, maybe. A real commitment. Without speaking to me first."

"No," she said, "not at all. I am not embarrassed. I made no ~~commitment~~ ^{commitment} ~~she was tempted to add,~~ ^{commitment} "But this I will say, I must say, I will never understand the thinking that goes on in a person like you." ~~She had been tempted to~~ ^{However, she ~~thought~~} ~~remark, "a man like you," but knew better. (He would have ridiculed her for~~ ^{She was silent} ~~such a stupid attitude.~~ ^{remark. "A person like me?" ~~she~~} ~~too~~ ^{She would have been up half} ~~the night making guesses for that,~~ ^{the night making guesses for that,} ~~explaining those few words,~~

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No surprise,
 So Alois went back to Der Alte after all. There were just too many
 worries with these bees. He was a realist, he told himself, and so he was used to
 bad odors. After all, one had to deal (Now and again) with the devil. (My devils snickered as
 they informed me of this.)

Alois paid ^{his} a visit on the next Sunday and, once again, took Adi with
 him. on this time the boy He would hardly have been able to say why, although I could have
 told him. As I have already indicated, devils are able to nudge a person,
 even when he or she is not a client. ~~For whatever reason, I sensed that~~
~~the E.O. had changed his mind on this matter and now wished the boy~~
~~and Der Alte to be brought together again.~~



~~This time, Adi~~ paid careful attention to the route. It was but a mile
 away and so he knew he would be able to find the hut ^{again by} ~~provided he~~
 remembered ^{ing} the forks of the road. This he did, ~~filled~~ ^{he was} all the while with
^{filled with} uneasy excitement. A woe as large as a loaf of bread had settled in his
 stomach. ~~Yet~~ ^{All the same,} perched above such heaviness, his chest felt most alive, ~~his~~
~~breath on this cold morning steamed forth in vapor.~~ He knew he would not
 tell his father that he planned to visit Der Alte on another day and ~~very~~ ^{you}
~~cannot see them,~~ ^{very much on his own,} much on his own.

"Yes," he kept saying to himself, "I will not be afraid to walk there."

In the night, maybe yes. There are ~~too~~ many spirits in the woods then, and
~~you cannot see them, but they listen to all that~~
~~they are mean."~~ The colder he felt in the midst of this excitement, the more ^{is seen}

he longed for summer when the bees would be flying in and out of the two
 hive boxes. And then he remembered some frightening words from his
 father. "We must never leave a box open to the sun. Always in shade. If a
 branch blows off the oak tree and the hive is exposed to the sun, you must
 call to me and I will move the box. Otherwise, it will get too hot, and our
 bees will become agitated, yes, even to the point where they go crazy. That
 is when they feel trapped, you see. Do you realize? In the course of such a

disturbance, they can use up all the air available to them. That will raise the temperature of the hive. Should it go higher than the heat of the day on a very hot day, the wax will melt. The combs will collapse. The larvae will perish."

All this ^{of such spirits} he had heard on the first drive home from Der Alte's house. It ^{was} had been dark by then in the woods and the boy had listened to his father with an unhappy sense that there were creatures ^{all about} in the wood whom he could ^{were listening to all that} not see. Yet they would hear what was said. Adi vowed that when summer came, he would not ever be the one to allow a hive box to sit in the sun, no, not he, but Alois, Junior, would be back by then and Alois, Junior, was not so good. He was the kind to leave a box in the sun.

^{The second meeting between} Now, on this meeting, Der Alte and his father had a long conversation. ^{even better for Adi than the first. If} at the start they spoke ^{and} about the marketing of honey, Adi could hardly follow it, nor did he care ^{that, it all} to. Der Alte, having offered the tablespoon of honey at the door, now ^{became much more interesting once} seemed to show no more interest in him.

^{For them} Adi was mistaken. Once business was done, the old man could not stop talking ^{to both of them} about the ongoing mysteries of bees, the subtleties of their keeping. "Yes," said Der Alte in a most resonant voice, "I

never weary of contemplating these tiny creatures with their immortal honey
and their near to immortal sting. ^{There are such subtleties}
^{to their keeping.}

^{As before, it was a rich discourse, not interruptible, and even}
^{followed at all possible}
~~ensued. If Alois was hardly to speak he was~~
~~fascinating to Alois. (For he would retain enough of such speech to use~~

he would use it

~~some of it tomorrow night at Fischlham. Yes, a gift for the dolts!)~~ Adi, in

turn, listened intently. ^{the} Any words he could not understand lived

nonetheless in his mind ^{by the turn} because of their sounds

"Can we," asked Der Alte, "ever pay enough attention to this work of
Creation itself? It is so full of genius! Think of it! These little devils come
to us from the Good Lord's ~~science~~, from His st divine and curious aesthetic
~~so enigmatic, so supernatural.~~ Our bees are a Coronation of nature's
wisdom expressing itself in the most bizarre and unexpected form, ^{as a gift} the very
~~reification~~ if you will permit me the word st of God's secret rites, His
investiture in wonder and awe."

Der Alte went on. He could go on! References to God's ballet,
God's gymnastics, God's ^{delight in} intuition of the paradoxes of Creation, ~~were~~
~~endless.~~ Der Alte was like many of our clients. We encouraged them to be
^{Always.} always ready to praise God in the highest. I, however, did not ~~always~~ enjoy

all this
~~the~~ hyperbole that Der Alte could offer. It was too ~~soulful~~, and finally too suggestive of ^{soulful} private regrets at ~~the depth of~~ his commitment to us.
For that matter
 In any event, he went on for ~~so~~ long that Alois was, once more, repelled. *Only so* could ~~too~~ much time ~~had~~ elapsed without ~~the~~ *some* exercise of his own voice. Moreover, he did not ~~know if he liked~~ the look in his son's eye. Those blue eyes, *so similar to* ~~like~~ Klara's, were always large and alive, and ~~so expressive~~! But there was reverence in them now.

Finally
 Alois ~~now~~ managed ~~to~~ interject a word.

"Why don't you take us into the other room, and show the boy your ~~little~~ viewing box? "

It was obvious that Der Alte would prefer not to—even as Alois had expected—but Adi spoke up. "Oh, please, sir," he cried out, "I have never seen the inside of ^a ~~the~~ bees' home. They have been with us back at the house for so long—" he tried to count quickly—"for seven, no, I think it is eight weeks, and I have not seen even one of them. Do I have to wait until summer? Please."

"Spring," said Der Alte, "it is necessary to wait until spring." But then he shrugged. "All right," he said, "only you must be prepared. ~~They~~ ^{It is} ~~winter. The bees~~ are sluggish at this stage."

~~They~~ ^{Indeed they} were. In the kitchen, ~~of the hut~~, bare but for a small stove, a sink, a hand-pump above the sink, and a pail beneath for the run-off, was also a table, ^{7/153} and on one end of it had been placed a narrow box, perhaps two feet long and one foot high, its interior concealed ^{on both sides} (by black curtains ^{on both} ~~long~~ ^{Once} sides. When drawn back, the box was seen to consist of two glass walls, not three inches apart ^{held one in the space} with a vertical frame between them, a mosaic, ^{and it was filled with a mosaic,} visible on both sides of endless small wax cells, ^{an uncountable} ~~number of them.~~

Adi was disappointed. ~~It looked dull yet chaotic.~~ A cluster of pullulating things, no larger than dark pills in a bottle, ~~They~~ kept climbing ^{over} each other, startled by the light, a poor gang, crammed, jam-packed, an assembly of what looked to be squashy little creatures about as ugly as roaches. (Their wings were folded.) Adi had not been so disappointed since he had first seen Edmund's homuncular face squeezed up on Klara's breast.

Now, these bees could just as well have been beans ^{(bumping around in a) heater} stirring in a pot, except, no, ^{beans did not look so nervous} they were more alive than that. They looked nervous at being ~~exposed~~. What an awful way to live! They miss the sun, the boy thought.

Since last summer, he had been thinking of ~~them~~ ^{these bees} as flashes of light in the garden. Now they were just shoved up against each other. ~~Were the ones inside the cluster crying out in ways he could not hear, asking not to be squeezed so hard? Adi had never seen a tomb but he had read that word, and knew such others as "bier" and "pit" and "grave" and "vault." He had looked at indistinct photographs in some of his father's war books, and those words were there to read under some of the pictures. Tombs. He sighed in preference to bursting into tears. Could these bees breathe?~~

"At this moment," said Der Alte, "they are the poorest of the poor, no ^{sadder creatures} better than slugs ^{will get} in a slime of their own exudate, ^{yet} but that is because their lives span the extremities of existence, ~~they are there to offer the sweetest substance to come to us from nature.~~ Now, they do nothing, but in summer, you will see them dance in the air, as wonderful as drops of dew in early morning light. So fearless. How they will strut as they enter into the golden petals of the flower-blooms that are waiting for them."

"Hear, hear," said Alois. No matter the drear aspects of this awful
~~man~~, Der Alte did have ^a ~~his own~~ manner. ^{Gave that much} He was like a great, smelly old
~~actor.~~ ^{to the old strike-pot.}

And Adi was thinking, "these bees can sting you and then you are
 dead." He shivered in the old man's kitchen before the incomprehensibility
 of dying, ^{and yet} ^{right} it came over him in the midst of this chill, ^{he felt as} that he felt as
 close to the old man as to his father, ^{for} and knew he could listen all day and all
 night to the wonderful words that came ^{from this} ^{so odd} person.

"Come and visit me," the old man ^{managed to} ~~succeeded in~~ whispering to him
 before Alois gave the signal to leave.

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I do not know how powerful an influence this ~~speech by Der Alte~~ ^{last murmured}

^{message)} could have had on Adi: ^{but I will say that} at no moment up to this point had I so regretted

^{did I so regret,} being obliged to rely on my Hafeld agents ~~but I must say that many weeks~~

^{the Not long after)} later (on Christmas Eve, no less!) ^{when} once the rest of the house was asleep, Adi ^{got}

^{up from bed,} bundled himself into his warmest clothing, and went out to sit on the bench

under the oak tree where the two Langstroth boxes ^{were placed,} ~~were~~ There he

remained for a considerable time, growing more and more chilled as the

minutes elapsed. Yet, he stayed, and having placed himself between ^{these} the two

boxes, he kept embracing the back of each. He was praying for the

continued life of the bees.

This was of signal interest to me. I queried my agents again ~~and then~~
~~again~~ over what they could glean from the tag-ends of the boy's thoughts,
 and the more I received, the more valuable it appeared. ^{That night,} Adi had heard his
 father complain that the screen protecting the hive entrance, ~~a small hole,~~
~~had nonetheless~~ ^{The entrance was small but all the same} been torn away. ^{it was not} ~~it was not~~ possible that a mouse had
 entered the hive. Alois soon decided ^{aloud} that this was unlikely—the hole was ^{simply}
 not large enough—but Adi was convinced a mouse had gotten in. Since his
 father had repaired the screen ^{that afternoon,} ~~weeks ago,~~ Adi no longer knew as he sat
 between the boxes which one might be occupied ^{by the mouse,} ~~Ergo,~~ he set a hand on
 each.

^{What with it being} Since it was Christmas Eve, the boy was full of his mother's ^{spirit of}
^{"On this night, one thousand, nine hundred} ~~oncoming~~ celebration of the birth of what Klara told him was not only the
^{and}
^{nineteen}
^{five}
^{years}
^{ago,}
^{said}
^{Klara}
^{the}
^{boy}
^{or}
^{God}
^{was}
^{born,}
^{and}
^{he}
^{was}
 Son of God "but the nicest human being ever to walk on earth. The
 loveliest, the sweetest. And ~~if~~ you love Him, He will love you."
 So Adi was ~~now~~ ^{sure} certain. This was ~~the~~ ^{one} night to breathe the night air,
 no matter how cold. For the Son of God ^{was} ~~must be~~ present on a night so
 special as this. Would He offer the power ^{Adi} needed to kill the mouse ~~by~~
^{through the force of his thoughts?}
 thinking of it?

I was fascinated by such a desire. ~~Adi was prepared to~~ kill the mouse by the force of his thoughts? I knew the limitations of my agents, well, enough to be confident that ~~they~~ ^{He alone} could not have been the inspiration for such a notion. This had come from Adi. It was his, alone. ^{thought} If I had been present, I would have looked ^{thought} to get the boy ready to believe that he could save certain lives by exercising his power to destroy other ~~lives~~. That is one of the rarest ^{and most useful} of the aptitudes we can implant in our clients, but it does call for a series of ~~small but~~ concerted art-works, exquisitely focused dream-etchings, if you will, ~~and other methods close to the arcane~~

Since I was not present, I did my best not to brood over ^{this} ~~a~~ lost opportunity. There was more than enough to occupy me in St. Petersburg, and I, ^{in company} ~~along~~ with my assistants, was undergoing some considerable punishment in the course of exercising my activities. ~~Be it said that~~ I had never encountered a group of Cudgels as ^{determined} brutal as this Russian crew. ^{Now as brutal} Over the last few centuries, ^{these Russian angels} ~~they~~ had developed an exceptional capability to resist the many demons we had succeeded in planting within Russian Orthodox ~~churches and monasteries~~. ^{the meanest} ~~ranks~~. In consequence, these Cudgels—fully as rough as ~~Russian monks~~—were not only powerfully motivated, but in command of considerable zeal.

During these months, they

They were wholly ready to defend the Coronation of the young Tsar-to-be,

Nicholas the Second.

When the Maestro consulted me—as would occur now and again in

Russia—I ^{did} presented a notion that he would ~~later~~ adopt. I was bold enough

~~to tell him~~ to state that our chances of disrupting the Coronation were ^{minimal, but} ~~minimal~~, but a

~~powerless or even nearly~~ powerful disorder in the ~~first~~ days after the event could accomplish ^{many} ~~much~~.
 ~~OR our ends~~

Since I had hardly any real knowledge of what the O.O. was looking

~~to bring off,~~ ^{while} my suggestion could have been seen as presumptuous. Still, I

I had dared to speak my mind. ^{but then the} (The Maestro does not like to ~~put up with a~~
 ~~a lack~~ ^{while he is coming to a decision,}
 ~~poverty~~ of opinion among his subordinates) "It is much better to be

^{for} ~~sure~~ ^{you to be} wrong," he would tell us, "than to be stultifying. I can best estimate the

difficulties before us by musing upon the contortions and distortions of

perception that ~~some~~ ^{even the best} of you will offer. That ^{proves} ~~a~~ more useful to me than ^{the}

~~inert~~ ^{that gets upon} ~~solemn~~ silence from the fear of being wrong."

Enough. It is easy to see that these Russian matters were temporarily,

at least, of more concern to me than the small events of Hafeld.

All the same, whether I was interested or not, Klara gave birth on

January 21 to the new infant. For Alois, there was minimal joy. The much-

anticipated strongman of the future had not arrived. Instead, a little girl was in the maternal bed. All the ruckus of baby-feeding at night and baby yowling in the daytime, would now be for naught. He had been counting on a powerhouse of a son for his old age instead of the three boys he could not, at present, boast about, a wild one, a mamma's boy, and a crybaby snot, yes, Alois was unready to celebrate, but he did—at the tavern in Fischlham night after night for quite a few nights (although the beer began to smell as sour

^{his} as ~~any~~ infant's throwback). There were now six human beings in his home,

~~and by late~~

~~Late in spring there would be seven when Junior returned from Spital,~~ ^{he could} ~~yes,~~

~~count on seven. Yes,~~

(the louder the tumult of voices in the bar, the more he was ready to

complain of the noise at home.

~~bar was noisier~~

~~That was a joke. The~~

~~Indeed, the clamor in Fischlham was enough to give up pause. Let~~

~~Let~~ ^{They soon} men drink in a crowded room and solidarity rises among them, an ability to

~~soar~~ on zephyrs of grain spirit, a brotherly defiance against the inroads of angels and demons, a certainty that as men, they are ^{at this moment} equal to all else.

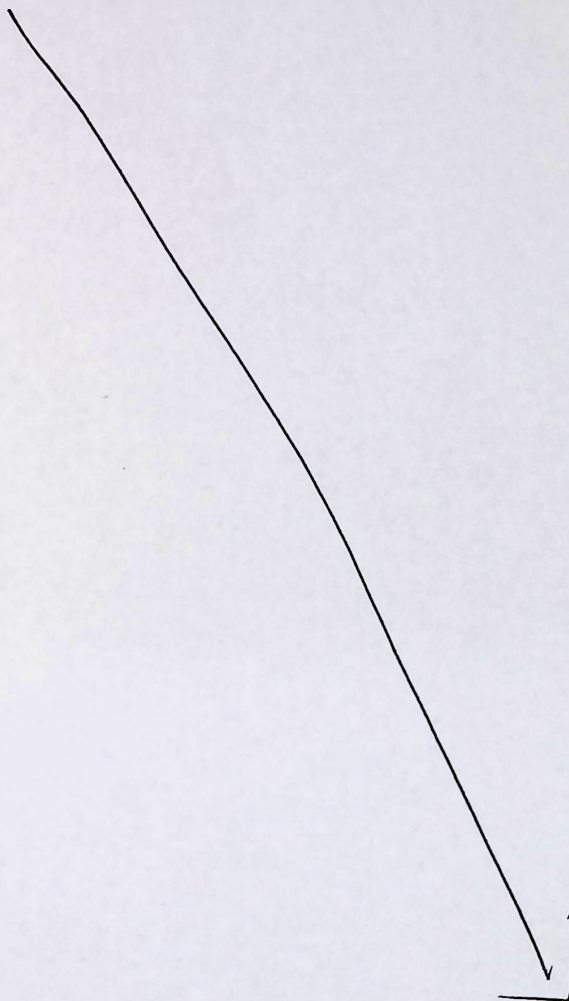
~~not good~~ These are hardly the best conditions for our work. Openings,

however, do present themselves, particularly when the drinkers are ~~alone~~

~~again and staggering on their way~~ home. We are so ready for them, ^{then,}

Sometimes, disgusted at the hours lost, we even slam them to the ground.

They usually



take it personally, their lament most characteristic. "Somebody shoved me," they often cry out. Nobody believes them, but they know better. Wrath had struck between the shoulder blades, and it was not their own rage, not at all.

-7-

On his return, *staggering now and again,*
That night, Alois may have been weaving to a degree, but he was also
feeling too alive to enter his house. Instead, he sat by the hive-boxes and
fished out a rubber tube he had been keeping in his pocket, *then* and placed one
end of it against a wall of the Langstroth in order to *be a little to* listen to the thrumming
of the tenement dwellers *in* his little city. A fine sound was there *to hear,*
almost a tune, rich with little swells of contentment. He could just about
swear to that. Of course, why should they not be content? Come morning,
hundreds, then thousands of his bees, would be in a cluster awaiting their
turn to suck on the mesh cloth of the wide-mouthed jar for their honey-and-
water. So, in this dark and nicely drunken hour, *separate* large thoughts passed

through Alois like horses on file, one ^{large} thought at a time. He tried to count how many bees might be inhabiting the box ~~right now~~. No matter how drunk, he could still make an intelligent guess. Call it 20,000, ~~somewhere~~ ~~around 20,000~~. That was bound to be the answer ~~for each hive~~. Despite himself, knowing he should not really disturb the hive, he knocked on the ~~box~~ ^{side} anyway. Because then, through the tube, he could listen to the shift in sound. Were they issuing alerts? ~~It had all~~ ^{The calls} gone up in pitch. Like the strings of a crazy violin. Then ~~it dropped down to~~ quiet again. Soft. Like cats who sheathe their claws. Purring while asleep.

He roused himself long enough to go into the house and get his shirt off and his pants. Then he fell into bed, ~~but~~ ^B he was still hearing the chorus. Strange sounds. His breath lifted over a small hesitation and down he went into slumber. He had one final thought as immanent as one more splendid horse on parade—it was that he certainly enjoyed these hymns of the bees a good deal more than the caterwauling of an infant.

His dreams, however, were not good. He had entered a large and cavernous interior where, to his lack of surprise, he found himself among his bees. It was not agreeable. They were defecating, and there he was,

one of many, suffering just like his brother-creatures—no, sister-creatures—wasting away in ~~the~~ contractions of a severe bowel disease, all of them defecating into the narrow aisles of the Langstroth box—what a filthy vision.

He looked to rouse himself. Because this was a dream. Healthy bees did not defecate in their own habitat (except perhaps for the worst and laziest of the drones) no, he had listened to the bees in one hive, and their sound was honorable. They would wait until the weather was warm enough for them to go outdoors and only then would they do their duty. (Concerning the other box, he was not so sure the sound was good.)

Now he was awake, yet still agitated by the dream. It had certainly been too cold for bees to dare to go out yet into this early February air. As Alois lay there he felt painfully aware of all the excrement that had been building up in his colonies over all these months. How could these little creatures hold it in? And once again he tried to recall the sounds of the hive. Had he really heard contentment rising from their midst? These were bees. Could he detect the difference between happiness and panic, calm and

near-madness? Yes, he told himself, he did know—he was sure they were content. One hive-box anyway.

It was warm next morning, the first warm morning of a February thaw, and as Alois came out of the house, his horde was everywhere above, hundreds of them, thousands—who could count? They were leaving their droppings all over the place, fifty and then more than a hundred feet away from the two hive-boxes, such a curious caca! It smelled like ripe bananas, and was so visible on the snow, a field of white dotted with yellow spots. Innumerable yellow spots out there in a big circle around the hive bench ~~the~~ Buttercups in the snow! Hanging on a clothesline, Klara's laundry had also become polka-dotted. Paula's diapers ^{were} ~~all~~ spotted. An immense ^{show} ~~of~~ defecation. Alois stepped it off. Yes, you could even find yellow spots in the snow one hundred full paces away from the hive boxes.

Klara was as furious as she dared to be. "You never told me to be careful," she said to her husband.

"It is too bad," he said, "that you will have this work to do again. But how can one apologize? It is, after all, an act we have received from that good God you are so sure is yours."

She walked away. A half hour later, water boiling in two huge pots, she took the soiled garments off the line and set out to do them again.

Alois was not about to tell himself that he felt sorry. Rather, he was happy for the bees. What delight they had shown while they flew about. Since it was a Saturday, Adi was nearby in the meadows and Alois, on impulse, decided to call him over. Let him hear some real talk.

"Everybody shits," he told the boy. "Everything shits, all things living. That is as it should be. What you keep in mind is that you learn how to get rid of shit or it will shit on you. Understand? You keep yourself clean, do you hear? Look at these bees. They are wonderful. They hold it in all winter. They are determined not to dirty the hive. We can do the same. We are good people. Where we live is where we keep everything spotless."

"But, my father," said little Adolf, "what about Edmund?"

"What about him?"

"He still does it in his pants."

"That is your mother's concern, not yours."

Later in the day, Adi remembered the time when Alois, Junior, had stuck a dab of excrement right ~~on him, right~~ onto his nose, and even the recollection of it now brought forth the oddest cry from Adi's throat, so humiliated, so full of glee. Nor could Adi get over his excitement at the cleansing flight. Those bees had been so happy. They were dancing in the wind. That was because there had been so much caca in them, and now they were light. They were free. He couldn't help it. He couldn't stop his giggles. It had all made his mother so angry.

Now he remembered what Angela had whispered to him one morning. "Your mother has a saying," she said. "Kinder, Kuche, Kirche." He nodded. He had heard it already. He yawned in her face.

"Oh, you think you know it all already," Angela said, "but you don't. There is a secret word as well. I was told the word."

"By who? By my mother?"

"I can't say. I have to keep this secret. It is a secret word."

"Who told you?"

She could see he was ready to burst into a tantrum. "All right. I will let you know," she said. "I heard it, yes, from your mother, your dear mother who loves me even if I am not hers."

"Tell me or I will yell and she will hear."

"That is you. That is just as mean as you." She held him by the ear. "Remember," she said, "she told me in secret that the real saying is, 'Kinder, Kucher, Kirche und. . .'" she started to giggle. "und Kacke!"

Now, he was giggling as well. Oh, those bees, worse than babies. He had a crazy picture of every bee with a diaper, the tiniest diaper. He was laughing so hard that he felt like urinating, and that made him think of Der Alte who came into his thoughts so often, especially when he had to urinate.

Now, Adi realized that he would like to visit Der Alte, yes, he wanted to, so much.

Next day, Sunday, was warm again, and once more the bees were out. Adi started to run up and down the meadow, as if to use up the impulse to visit the old man, but in his mind he kept seeing each fork in the forest road, and so he knew he could find the hut. This was so much more than an

impulse. The desire to make such a trip by himself was as sure as if a rope had begun to ^{tug} ~~pull~~ on him.

He went. And Der Alte, prepared for the visit (by the same message, for certain, that Adi had received) was there once again at the door, but the tablespoon of honey was not yet in his hand, no, for that, Adi now had to sit on his lap. "Yes, you are such a good boy," Der Alte said, "I can love you like a grandson, and you will never need to be afraid of me. Yes, you are so nice and strong." Der Alte laid a hand upon the boy's thigh, but with only the lightest touch, even as he fed Adi the honey.

The boy was not afraid, or, yet, perhaps a little. In school, they had fairy tales to read, and sometimes there were ogres in the forest and evil spirits could change little children into birds or mice, or pigs or goats. However, it did not feel all so risky sitting on the legs of Der Alte. It was better than his father's lap. ~~That was not so nice as this.~~ He never knew when his father would blow pipe smoke into his face. Then, when he coughed, his father would laugh. No, Der Alte was a nicer man.

And indeed, they sat there long after Adi had tasted all of the spoonful of honey and felt happy with Der Alte's old hand resting on his knee.

After a considerable part of an hour has passed, he began, however, to feel less comfortable. Would his mother begin to wonder where he was? Yet, when he stirred, Der Alte said a few words which aroused the same sense of surprise as turning a page in a book and ~~then~~ right there before you is a nice picture.

"Do not tell this to anyone," said Der Alte, "but I am trying to make one little bee ^{very} ~~happy~~ ^{in a} special way. For that, I have asked ^(this bee) ~~it~~ to live by ^{but} itself, ^{near} to me."

"Does it try to talk?"

"It can make sounds. For certain!" Der Alte smiled. "But no, dear boy, I do not try to encourage this little bee to speak our language. That is certainly too much to ask. I just try to make her happy. Which is not so easy now. Because now that I have selected her, she must live alone in a small queen box I ^{use} ~~keep~~ just for her even if she is not a queen."

"My father says that bees can live only for other bees. They are—" he searched to remember the expression—"they are bound to the community."

"Your father is correct. Yes. Bees who live in a hive do not seek to live alone."

"Even if ~~the one you choose~~ ^{they are} is fed good things ~~all the time?~~"

"You are the smartest boy I know. You are full of understanding. I want to see what will happen if I select one bee and keep her warm and most well-fed, and think about her all the time with all the good feeling that is in my heart. So, when I go into the other room, I take care to speak to her. That is twenty times a day. She cannot comprehend what I am saying. But I want her to know that I am thinking of her. Sometimes I even take her out of the Queen box."

"Doesn't she fly away?"

"Oh, no. I look to prevent such a possibility." He touched the boy's head tenderly. "When I remove it from its little box, it jumps around, it is so merry, but it knows it must not try to fly."

"Does it have no wings?"

There was a pause. "No longer does it have wings."

Adi knew. No need to ask. Such a mix of good feelings and bad.
^{His feelings}
 The happiest ~~ones~~ were trying to lift themselves above the bad ones. He
^{now to}
 asked ~~to go into the other room of the hut. Could he~~ look at the bee in the
 little box?

~~Of course, it had no wings. Yet, even so, as Der Alte had said, the bee~~
^{It was so 1, the and so}
 was ~~frisky and it jumped about in a good deal of excitement when Der Alte~~
²
 let it out of the box. Indeed, it hopped onto the tip of the old man's finger
 which had been dipped into honey.

"I do not know ^{how much} ~~if~~ ^{more} will happen," said Der Alte. "What I am
^{a temptation}
~~doing~~ is difficult. I see little chance for success. But how wonderful if I ^{can}
 brighten the feelings of this little creature. After all, before my intervention,
 she was ~~altogether~~ insignificant. Can I lift her now to a level ^{that} her sisters
 cannot attain? I feel for her. She is so lonely. She misses the horde ~~she has~~
^{now}
 lived among through the winter. She is ^{of a sort} loneliness itself. But I am ready to
 try to bring ~~to her~~ a certain sweetness of relief that can come only when
^{one's} terrible loneliness is replaced by well-being. Yes," he said, nodding his
 head most profoundly, das gute Wohl.

"Oh," said Adi, "I hope you are able to do that. It is so sad to be lonely. Sometimes I, too, am lonely. So, I know. But ^{I feel} ~~that makes me~~ afraid, ^{for this bee will it} ~~Will this bee die?~~"

"Sooner or later, it must. It will. But I ^{would like} ~~want~~ to see if I can make ^{her} ~~it~~ happy for a little while."

"Yes," said Adi, "I understand. You love this one, ["] ~~more than the~~ ["] ~~others."~~

^{more than} "Maybe a little," said Der Alte, ["] ~~"Maybe more than a little."~~ ["] He sighed. "Next time you visit, we will see if I have made progress."

Let us recognize that what has just been recounted is likely to leave many a reader uneasy. If, ^{for} ~~for~~ some, interest in Der Alte might now be affected by the suspicion that he is ~~just~~ ^{then} a touch uncontrollable in his senility, let me explain ^{"well-being" for} ~~that this outlandish pursuit of das Wohl (of well-being)~~ for one isolated bee, an obviously ~~miserable and~~ ^{it has lost} stupid procedure (particularly after he ~~has chosen to cut off~~ ^{has lost} its wings!) is not without purpose. Purpose for ^{the Maestro} ~~us~~ that is. We have to test the immutability, if you will, of the instincts that the Dummkopf has placed in his vast consortium of creatures. The oddest experiments ~~can and~~ do reveal much to us.

I will say ~~that~~ ^{minute and} one outcome was clear. This ~~wingless little~~
embodiment of loneliness died before Adi saw her again. What is also to the
point: Der Alte and Adi had tears in their eyes on the boy's next visit and
were closer than ever. ^{Count on it, Der Alte had} ~~That was certainly to the Maestro's fancy~~
~~decorated a coffin the size of a~~
~~small match-box, and the old~~
~~man and the boy buried the~~
~~it by the side of his house~~
to serve as a coffin for the
bee, and the old man and
the boy ~~then~~ then buried it by
the side of his hut.

-8-

Early in March, a week arrived that brought the sun to Hafeld every day. The hives began to stir, and the hardiest of the winter bees came out to forage. It was likely that the queen was now laying eggs out of her well-

from old high in the air last summer,
~~kept store of high-air fornications that dated back to June last summer.~~

and one of that worried
 Now, ~~one of~~ the hives weighed more each morning, and those bees were ~~him. The other should be doing as well~~
~~consuming an increasing amount of Alois' honey-and-water. Soon, it was~~
~~up to two pounds a day.~~

He decided to open the top of each Langstroth box and look in.

Whereupon, he discovered exactly what he had been fearing ~~beneath every~~
~~hope and confusion.~~ The two colonies might have sat on the same bench

through the winter, but that was the only condition they ^{seemed to have} shared. One was thriving, the other could not be termed healthy. ^{white} Only a few dead bees lay on the lowest platform of the good box, ~~but~~ a tumble of miniscule carcasses were in the other!

Of late, just before the warm spell, ^{Alois,} he had heard by way of the ^{number,} tube, ^{had heard of} great deal of restless humming in the second colony. It ~~had~~ worried him.

Now, open to examination, fecal droppings were visible near the hive entrance, and ~~too~~ many of the brood combs were empty. Had the queen died? He did not really know how to locate the lady—she was, after all, only a bit larger than her own worker-bees, smaller, indeed, than the drones.

He would have been dispirited, but his acumen had also been confirmed. He had not worried for too little. There had been real troubles in that second box. It looked like one or another killer disease.

So Alois decided that the remaining bees of this colony had to be gassed. He was ready to call on Der Alte for assistance ^{but} until he decided that he would not. His winter-long worries ^{had} now engendered their own kind of ^{fortitude} strength.

He chose a Saturday. Adi and Angela, home from school, were his assistants, and the process ^{was not difficult} ~~proved simple~~ (He took a small cake of sulphur (part of the equipment he had purchased five months ago), lit it, and left it to smoke on the floor of the bad hive. The entrance was plugged, the hive lid at the top was laid on again, and the gas did the job ^{and} quickly enough. When Angela began to cry for the poor bees, Alois sent her inside, but Adi watched, sitting beside Alois on an adjoining bench, his eyes most alive in response to his father's lecture. "In nature," said Alois, "there is no mercy for the weak. Your big sister was silly. To become so upset!"

"I am not bothered," said Adi.

"Good," said Alois. "Now, let us go and empty this box and clean the combs."

Adi found himself thinking of Der Alte's one lonesome bee, now dead, and that did bring tears to his eyes.

But, of course, there was no comparison. He blinked back those tears. It was clear to Adi: Der Alte had loved one little bee, but the sick ones here in this bad hive ~~even~~ dirtied the place where they ate, where they slept. No comparison.

That night, by way of a suggestion from the Maestro, I prepared a small dream-etching, simple enough to be installed by the best of my local Hafeld agents. It was a ^{repetitive} long ~~worrisome~~ dream in which his father asked ~~him~~ ^{Adi} to count each and every one of the dead bees. To make sure of the number, Adi was told to lay them out in rows, one hundred to each row—a tedious dream to be certain, ^{in the morning,} and he was almost late in leaving for school, since it took many ~~minutes~~ ^{minutes} to awake ~~in the morning~~. All the same, he was proud of the high number he had ^{managed to} ~~founted~~. ~~That he remembered well.~~ There had been at least forty rows of one hundred bees, and each one of them was lying there on the white cloth he had laid out for them. He had not realized until now that he could count to four thousand. No one else in his class ~~would~~ ^{would} ~~could~~ come near. His only regret was that he had not finished. There had been even more mounds of dead bees.

Here, I would warn the reader not to make too much of ^{this} ~~the~~ gassing nor of the body count. It is certainly not to be understood as the unique cause of all that came later. For one dream-etching, no matter how complete, leaves but a dot upon your psyche, a footprint ^{to anticipate} ~~at the most, for a~~ ^{future} ~~sequence of developments~~ ^{that will come may or may not arrive} decades later. Most dream-etchings are akin to

the foundations for buildings one can see on the outskirts of Third World cities. Abandoned for lack of further capital.

It would be a gross mistake, then, to assume that this dream-etching determined all that was to follow. I assure you we would be the first to applaud if matters were that simple.

-9-

The good hive was another matter. It was thriving. The weight of the colony increased each week, and the ~~vertical slides lined with~~ honey comb

began to fill up. From his books, Alois had learned that each of these

miniscule cells of ~~honey~~ ^{by the worker bees} was not capped with wax until the water content in

the ~~syrup~~ ^{honey} had been reduced ~~by the bees~~ ^(to blow off such water) to less than 20%. To achieve that,

half the hive had to be occupied all day fanning their wings in order to blow

~~off the~~ ^{all over again} surface water off as vapor. Alois ~~even~~ felt intoxicated by the dedication of

his newborn creatures to such never-ceasing chores. To sweeten his mood,

the first honey was also ready, and now his bees were capping the cells—

just as they were supposed to!

Out in his white garments with the big box-like white veil over his head, protected by his gloves, Alois began to feel as if he was acquiring a bit of real technique ^{It was, after all,} at the ~~not~~ so simple art ^{an} of pulling combs out for examination, then sliding them back ~~in~~ again. ~~It required care.~~ He certainly didn't want to be such a lummock as to squash his ~~own~~ Queen. Indeed, the confidence he ^{gained} ~~was gaining~~ from these ~~positive~~ results took him over to Der Alte's hut long enough to purchase ~~at least one more~~ ^{a new} Queen to replace the lady who had been gassed.

Der Alte had even given him a lesson in how to spot the ~~new~~ lady ^{when she was alone. Otherwise it was not} which would not be ~~not~~ too difficult an observation ^{so soon as she was} ~~now when she~~ ^{was} laying her eggs into empty cells, for she would be followed by a retinue who hovered in turn over each new egg long enough to discharge their own enzymes and ~~"magical fortifiers"~~ ^{"magical fortifiers"} to enrich the larva. ~~As~~ Der Alte was quick to put it.

Alois had to submit to the ~~predictable~~ lecture but he returned with not one but two new queens, (both impregnated in the past year). One would establish a colony ^{San} in the box that had been fumigated, and the other was ^{(to be} ~~for~~ ^{1 us} ~~fallen in the way~~ ^{Some of his combs} the box Alois had built himself last Fall. Combs of new brood together with

combs of new honey would now be transferred to the two empty boxes. All three would be only partially filled, and that was to the good. ~~The population was augmenting so rapidly this spring, that he had to keep furnishing new vertical frames for the empty slots. Then, the bees in each~~ ^{now} ^{them} Each of his new three colonies would build wax cells for the new brood as well as storage cells for ^{them} the new honey—if he had lost one colony to gassing,, he would soon be able to consider himself the master of three, all flourishing—could that be? Of course, he had had to lay out good money to be able to speak of such success.

All the same, Alois began to feel a cautious optimism. This spring might yet prove ^{good to} beautiful for him, and beautiful for the family. April had come. Flowers were sprouting, the walnut trees, the oaks, the plum trees, the beeches and cherry trees, the maples and apple trees were in bloom. ~~Soon there~~ there would be a host of flowers in the meadow.

He liked to sit by his hive boxes with Adi beside him, the boy carefully covered and veiled in an outfit Klara had put together. Father and son now delighted in keeping watch on the entrance of the busiest hive where guard bees stayed on post at the foot of the box. Now, ^(last) Every bee who

came back with pollen and honey was sniffed over by one of the guard~~bees~~^{she} before she could enter. On occasion, Adi would begin to hoot because the guard would drive a visitor away, especially if it carried no honey. "Look, Father," he would say, "It doesn't smell right."

Yet, with all these incoming riches, Alois still kept serving food to the colonies. "~~We~~^{Now, we} feed them honey," Alois told the boy, "so they^{will} make even more honey." ~~He was now putting together three pounds of honey mix for~~^{the mesh jar each day} ~~How the brood nest was populating!~~^{Five combs} ~~Five combs~~^{with combs} were now filled in each of the three hives. And three queens were working in three separate hive boxes to deposit their eggs in cells. Yes, endless numbers of ^{Queen's} eggs to be fertilized by long-contained sperm from the dead drones of those monumental fornications ^{up} ~~out~~ in the long-gone sky of summer past. So much activity now! Each evening Alois would check the weight of the hives now that ~~the colonies were done with flying their~~^{missions from morning to dark.} ~~Missions from morning until dark.~~ ~~So many numberless trips!~~ Each forager ~~It took so many trips to increase the weight~~ would be back with its load in a few minutes, then out again. He had read that it took forty thousand such voyages to-and-fro to make two pounds of honey.

Forager

Sometimes he would look at the old bees who had lived through the winter in the good box. They were easy to notice. They ^{certainly,} were old now, ^{relics} battered and dying off, ~~creatures~~ with worn-out wings, frayed from over-

use. The hair was gone from their bodies. They had been out to forage ^{at} ~~for~~

^{the beginning of} the first honey this season, but now, undeniably, they were ^{expiring,} dying. Each

^{those} morning a team of new-born worker bees would collect their ~~fallen~~ bodies

^{which had fallen to} on the ground floor of the box and ^{would} sweep them out the ^{guard's, then off} entrance ~~off~~ the hive-

ramp and down to the ground. Alois could hardly mourn their passing.

Young stock was taking their place, ~~and this occasioned his delight.~~ He felt

as if he had finally begun his long-awaited real venture into apiculture. ~~This~~

~~was now serious.~~ The new bees would be his, not Der Alte's. He did not

dwell on the fact that all three of his queens had been fertilized a year ago,

and so, in that sense, ~~they~~ ⁶¹ were Der Alte's children. Such thoughts put a

^{deal spot} ~~chill~~ on one's honor.

-10-

Given
 On a splendid morning in May, with a host from each of the three colonies in the air, Alois began to notice a pattern in the movement of one bee, *Just overhead, this scout—or whoever she was—* still in close sight of the hive, who kept making repetitive turns in a curious pattern, wigwagging *her* belly *she* in flight as it flew through *a round eye* one circle, *through* or rather, as he observed, a circle ~~more like an~~ oval, and then flew back *in a* reverse oval, only to repeat this over and over. *One figure eight after another!*

"She is signaling to the others," Alois said to himself. "She is ~~up to~~ something, she is showing them something."

And he was right in this observation, he knew it, because in another few minutes, a good number of other bees had joined the first, and off they

flew in company
toward

flew over the head of the meadow. On the other side of the rise, as Alois soon discovered on a walk, wildflowers had sprouted overnight. The bee he had observed ^{was} ~~must be~~ ^{was indeed} a scout who knew how to tell others to follow.

An old lust came back then ~~to Alois~~ ^{Alois}. If there was one thing he had wanted out of life even more than enjoying a new woman, it was to be the proud, happy, and honored discoverer of a new concept, ~~yes~~ something so startling and so valuable to human culture that his name would be honored across time.

If he ~~had given up such hope~~ ^{the} desire still resided in his belly, and it gave him considerable happiness to think that he might have discovered a new concept right here this spring, and by his eyes alone! He had seen what he would call a signal-dance of one bee looking to bring others to a place where ~~new~~ flowers full of nectar were waiting. Bridesmaids, you could say, ~~bridesmaids~~ all lined up to be deflowered by the wedding ushers. But these hard-working foragers could not be called ushers. They were girlies, making love to flower-girlies. A joke, but his own joke, and he enjoyed it. In none of the books he had read so far had he seen any mention of this little dance, this wig-wag in the sky. He was twice afraid to mention it to Der

Alte, once—because for all he knew—it might be an established concept already among apicultural cognescenti, or, to the contrary, if brand new, might not Der Alte know better than himself just where to publish the observations?

Alois did permit himself to entertain the hope that Alois, Junior, might, just for once, ^{use} ~~put~~ his intelligence to work ^{well} ~~for his father~~ ^{father's ideas.} ~~This would~~
~~be a case where the father would not object to the son carrying on the work.~~
 Yes, let the son become equally famous. How much Franz Josef had wanted that. Sorrow came to Alois at the thought of the Emperor's pain in the hour when he learned that Rudolph, his own Crown Prince, had died at Mayerling in that awful situation so many years ago, that murder and suicide, or double suicide—whatever it had been!—with his young mistress. What a blow for the good man, the Emperor-father. And tragedy for Sisi, the beautiful Empress. How she must have loved Rudolph!

Feeling these sad thoughts in the midst of his new vocational pride allowed Alois to have an hour mellow enough to surrender his vanity—after all, he did not feel inferior to Der Alte any more. So, he decided, on the

spur of this invigorating impulse, to visit the piss-bum and ingest a little instruction on how to treat the Queen bees (and, incidentally, locate them.)

Der Alte experienced no difficulties with that. He was certainly skillful—it had to be said. He opened one of his leaf-hives, scanned the racks, located the Queen, reached in with a bare hand, and grasped her wings carefully and most delicately between thumb and forefinger. "In a few years," he said, "you, too, will be employing this approach to capture, but for now, I will show you a safer method." Of course, he proceeded then to discourse on all the methods and modes of discerning just where the queen might be, whether depositing eggs, or fertilizing them one after another in their new cells, or resting occasionally in her court, ~~her home ground, where her cell was a hint larger.~~

"Once located, it is so simple," said Der Alte, "to capture our Lady."

"This, as I understand," said Alois, "will be most necessary when I ~~start~~ ^{look} to collect my honey."

"Exactly," said Der Alte. "That is a time when you are moving many frames, and scraping the wax ^{covering} ~~covers~~ away from the honey cells. A careless move can crush the queen ~~when pulling out the combs or putting them back.~~

So,"—to Alois' annoyance, Der Alte wagged a finger at him—"so," he repeated, "we do not go first for the honey, no, we locate the Queen like the good fellows we are, and then we use this queen-catcher, this glass." He took up a glass tube which offered a larger opening at one end. "The blunt part here is what you lay over the queen, and then you slip a little queen-cage"—he held up just such a small flat container, two inches long—"under the glass tube, after which you blow the queen right into the cage, punkt! Now she is safe. You don't have to put her back until the honey has been taken from the comb."

We can be certain that Alois practiced catching the queen. Indeed, he spent an afternoon ~~on the trail and~~ ^(and releasing) apprehending ~~of~~ each of his three beauties, finding them, putting the bulging end of the tube most carefully over them, and then blowing them right into the little queen-cage prior to ^{offering} ~~releasing~~ them back to the colony.

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Alois' fine spirits waned with the loss of warm weather. A cold spell arrived, cruel to the expectation aroused by early spring. Alois now prepared himself to expect that all his gains ^{would} ~~could now~~ be lost to this ^{out-of-season} ~~new~~ chill on the earth.

^{It An old} ~~One of the old axioms~~ returned to him. Johann Nepomuk used to say, "Spring is the season that will betray you most!"

So there were days when he came close to exhausting himself by the to-and-fro, ~~back and forth~~, of removing tar-paper from the top of each hive, only to put it back again if the light at high noon might go ^{dim in the} ~~suddenly~~ out of the sky, so abrupt was the movement of the clouds. ^{Soon a fly} ~~Then~~, in turn, he had to

run back to strip the tarpaper away ^{for} ~~once~~ the sun was out again and the day ^{had returned} ~~gone back~~ to warmth. Back and forth, anxiety driving ^{him back and forth,} his heart.

During one near-freezing cold spell, he caught a cold. That ^{offered} ~~produced~~ a collateral worry. Was it impossible that one of his Queens might ^{also} ~~catch~~ a cold? In sympathy with the overlord [?] ~~of the hive~~? He scolded himself.

Such nonsense!

Then it occurred to Alois that this return of his fears might not be so ^{g. 114,} ~~absurd~~. What if it was a reflection of how he felt (in secret even from himself) about the condition of his true health? Was he coming nearer to his end? It was the worst thought to have. His imagination now entered a matter he had never allowed himself to approach. All through the years, so far as he could remember, death had not seemed ^{all that threatening} ~~that hard~~ to him. A dull end to a good life, maybe, but ~~no drive~~ concerning punishment. ^{No such drive for him,} Nothing to do with hell. (A reasonable state of peace in the ground, wet at times, but so ^{feel clammy?} ~~what?~~ Once dead, you didn't have to ~~shiver~~ any more.

Now, however, one damn question was following another. What if ~~he had been betraying himself?~~ [?] What if death was not as he had assumed? ^{been certain that} He had ~~always assumed~~ religion was there for a very good practical reason.

It couldn't be simpler—^{you had to} keep the weak and ~~the~~ unruly in order. ^{But a} strong man (such as himself) could do ~~exactly~~ as he chose to do. ~~No~~ guilt.

Now, he was feeling a panic of a new sort. What if there was such a condition as guilt, real guilt? His heart took a ~~fearful~~ leap at the thought, ^{one fearful leap as if his chest had been punctured,}
 Poor Alois. He was now there for the taking. No Cudgel would

bother to protect him. I could have the tried-and-true pleasure of appearing to him in a dream with my own—I will make such a claim—my own most adept impersonation of a guardian angel. He would soon be ours—as bound to us as Der Alte. ^{I did not even have to be present.} It was easy enough for the best of my three agents to bring it off.

But to what end? Would ^{Alois} ~~it~~ be worth the maintenance? ~~Too many~~
~~possibilities were crowding in on too small a field.~~

The sober fact, which we do well not to ignore, is that people as old ^{as him}
~~as Alois~~ ^{Alois's father} are rarely a prize. They may be easy to pick up, but ~~their~~ utility is limited. They are already too shaped to warrant much molding of their nature, and flexibility is exactly what we require in our best clients. So
 often, ^{their aims must shift with ours,} ~~our aims shift~~

On those special occasions when we do choose a man or woman well over fifty, we look for a serviceable warp in their nature, a particular distortion that we can employ for a particular purpose (usually outlandish). Repetitive irritations are one example. A mean old lady who keeps asking everyone whether they want something to eat when she knows that they don't, can unhinge a good family. They grow uneasy at their increasing desire to smother her with the nearest pillow.

Alois, however, was too average a human product. So there was little need to pick him up now. Milk runs would be enough. Let my agents hover just above his dreams.

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Early in May, the weather turned warm again, and many of Alois' woes eased ~~once more~~. In part he had already recovered some of his good spirits by cleaning and oiling the tools he had bought in the fall from Der Alte, and this chore he performed in much the manner of a good soldier who takes his rifle apart in order to oil it and put it back together again.

My Hafeld agents, having little to report, ~~now~~ filled their latest communications with lists of his tools and ~~this they~~ ^{he is} did so assiduously that I grew irked at their ~~several~~ enumerations of pollen feeders, hatching cages, bee-smokers, a water sprayer ~~and~~ a mating box (whatever that was!) a hive-tool, even a honey-stirrer made by Alois himself out of beech-wood. And

then there was a spur-wheel embedder for preparing the foundation of the insertable frames, as well as a capping fork, a slew of details which provided no interest and left me ready to wish I had taken him as a client, after all—a hands-on approach to his thinking might have been more stimulating than all this determinedly second-rate trivia.

Klara, in contrast, knew how to make much better use of Spring in Hafeld. She was not always counting how many of the brood nests were already filled with new pupae, nor was she worrying about the temperature within the hives. Now that it had turned warm on this second wave of sun and undulant air, she was ready to loosen all the knots which had coagulated through the winter in her limbs. "God, too, is taking His rest," she said to herself even as she drew in a breath of air through the open window of her kitchen, and then, on impulse, with much left to do in the house, she picked up Paula, four months old, and went out into the meadow. The loveliest of silences prevailed, wholly without sound, no, rather it was a silence that took in the lightest caress of air, and she could even hear the ^{swishing} ~~rustling~~ of the grass in the field, and all but hear the ^{was counting} ~~swaying~~ of the flowers. It was as if the sum of these tender sensations were there to contain the silence of these

hills. "Listen to how quiet it is," she said to Paula, "listen, little angel, and you will hear the ^{flowers} ~~whisper of the flowers.~~" And, indeed, it seemed to her as if the nearest ^{ones} flowers had heard what she said, for indeed they began to ^{toward her} ~~sway~~ ^{incline} toward her, the most cheerful little daisies she had ever seen.

The breeze had ~~stirred~~ ^{been} ~~but~~ not enough to cause ~~such~~ a stirring in these wildflowers. She knelt in the grass, the infant in her arms, and spoke to the daisies, "You are beautiful, all of you," she said, and, yes, there was no mistaking, these flowers were dancing for her, the tiniest movements, yet with more of a move than the all-but-silent turn of the air. "Yes, Paula," she said, "these flowers love you and love me because we care for them. Is this not so, you little dears?" She was ready to swear to this (although to whom?—certainly not Alois), to vouch that they had heard her, and indeed, they bowed delicately as if she ^{had been} ~~was~~ waiting on them. "Yes, they are little princesses," she said to Paula, and had to laugh at herself for feeling—was this pure madness itself?—for feeling that the daisies were not only dear to her, but that she was dear to the daisies. "Oh, I am one big silly," she said aloud. But she could not help herself. She still believed that these white petals were listening. The balm of the air was like love, yes, exactly like

the love she felt for the four-month-old in her arms. Klara's body was returning to her, or so it felt. ^The old poked-out, wounded, bruised and stupid body of all the winter months since Paula was born, ^{now} yes, ~~now~~ her body felt sweet and in a ^{with the} true beginning of repair, yes, it was Spring, and nature ^{herself} ~~itself~~ was enjoying a party. Each breath was ~~so~~ full of balm. How could it be otherwise? God was near and He was in the air, her Good God, yes, full of radiance, ^{and} yet the air was at peace. It was as if the Good God was resting on His laurels, yes, for so He deserved, ^{He} deserved so much. She wanted to pray to Him then, but did not know ~~quite~~ how since she did not wish to ask for anything at this moment, merely to praise Him for being so good, ^{and} ~~only~~ that was better done in church. There, ^{and} everyone else would be doing the same so it could be understood as humble, not vain, whereas here she was all alone with Paula and the flowers, and full of such happiness. She was enraptured, yes. For she was thinking of all the young boys and girls of her childhood and of those rare occasions when they would romp and play just like these sweet crazy bees ~~who were~~ flying around the house now and so happy to be out in the sun after living in a dungeon all through winter, yes, crazy now with the joy that they could turn somersaults in the

air, free of all duties, free of their tasks for a little while, oh, yes, like Paula they were new to sunshine.

And Klara thought of the years to come when Paula would be ready to play, and that left her full of love for little Edmund who was so kind to the baby, the only one of the children who was. Angela couldn't really care (although she was dutiful enough) and Adi was a worry—once she had seen him pinch Paula's cheek hard enough to make her cry. Klara had spanked him for that, one sharp slap across his little seat, but she wouldn't do it again in any kind of hurry. For he had glared back at her—the prince of princes, you would think!—so strong a look that she had had to take all the strength of her eyes to stare him down. And he was only six years old!

It was too beautiful a day to think of that moment of misery—so intense it had been—no, she would rather thank God for having given her so sweet a baby, a daughter who would yet grow up, so she knew, to be her own good sweet best friend. And she even said as much aloud to Paula. "May the angels hear me," she whispered to her child before she turned back to the house and her duties.

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To reach into the thoughts of a woman like Klara is not routine for us. Dealing with men and women who are well-protected by the best of the Guardian Angels, we take care not to approach for too little. We wait for openings. Sometimes emotional crises offer us the chance. Hysteria will often crack the door. (That is because many forms of hysteria are bewildering to the Cudgels—their calming arts have, temporarily, failed.) But for the most part, we leave protected people alone, even as the Cudgels usually avoid contact with our clients. Prudence prevails. Forced entrances are rarely attempted.

When, however, we must have an incursion, we wait for the Guardian Angel to be absent. At such times, a small raid is feasible. If the situation cannot wait, we call on more artful methods. Many a devil can transform himself for a short period into an angelic presence. Since we are ersatz, we do not try to get inside a protected person's mind, but we do obtain a few gains. Some of us can, for example, take on the persona of a gentle angel.

Then, our presence ^{will} can inspire a mood of beneficence in the ^{person who is} targeted ~~subject~~ ^{our target}. He or she may even feel balmy enough to prate and prattle. The vulnerabilities of their heart can be divulged in a flood of good feeling, ^{and} ~~of~~ happy words, ^{and} laughter.

Moreover, Klara was hardly strange to us. Once, on the night that Adolf was conceived, she had been catapulted into a high state of concupiscence. Ever since, Klara, ^(certainly on occasion) ~~on occasion~~, has had her carnal depths. A part of herself (usually concealed from herself) is still ready to engage in that fundamental rite of stinks and grunts and glories which does take place whenever God and the devil choose to sweat together in the swamp and paradise of sex. This may be why people who are notably ethical (and

clean-smelling) usually do not offer any striking physical appeal. There is not enough of us to be found in them.

Enough. I do not know whether this is of significance, but the beauty of the spring day when Klara felt so happy holding Paula and talking to the flowers, happened to coincide (even to the hour) with the Coronation of

Nicholas the Second and Alexandra. Indeed, the ^{same} warm spell ^{was also} remained in

^{there in and} (Moscow for a number of days, ~~and~~ I recall that even when I came back to Hafeld in early June, this fine period continued across much of Europe.

Normally, my well-being is not affected by the weather, but these long

sunny days of June enhanced recollections of my contribution to the ^{aftermath}

^{and that had been} of the Coronation, ~~which was~~ crowned with dramatic success.

As already indicated, I ^{was} had been one of the first to ^{suggest} give warning to the

Maestro that a direct attack on the crowning event was not likely to succeed.

We could, of course, initiate a number of strikes. Nowhere else in Europe

were we able to boast of as many agents and clients as in Russia. A number

were of high rank. We possessed more than one Grand Duke and Duchess

(including the Governor-General of Mosc.) among the several branches of the Romanov family and we certainly

infested the secret police. (We had more agents in the Okhranka than did

↓
Okhranka

the Cudgels!) We also had Ministers of State who were as abjectly loyal to us as hounds slaving over ~~a bowl of~~ kibble. We were well-installed in all the royal families of Europe, not to mention the nobility and/or the generals—so often the same! Nouveau riches lay before us like an open whore. Tycoons were among our most valued and protected clients.

When it came, therefore, to calling upon ^{such elegant} ~~potential~~ actors, we knew that if we were ready to accept the cost, we could bring off ~~some~~ major disruptions on Coronation Day. Even one of the two Metropolitans who would preside over the theological ceremonies was ours, and indeed, we had many a cohort of half-mad monks in Russian Orthodox ~~churches and~~ monasteries. More than a few would be coming to Moscow on this high occasion, and this is not even to speak of our share of anarchists, nihilists, and terrorists. The more militant among them would certainly be ready to attempt an assassination before or during the Coronation.

Nonetheless, I was opposed to such ventures. They would probably not succeed. I dared ^{instead} ~~to~~ propose to the Maestro that we wait several days in ~~apparent~~ ^{that} quiescence and then attack the Peasants' Festival, ^{which} ~~which~~ was scheduled to take place four days ^{later.} ~~after.~~ To my delight and ^{to} ~~my~~ woe, he

accepted. I was full of foreboding. What if I was wrong? After ^{this} my long
 period of ^{spent} concentration upon relatively minor activities in ^{so} many small cities
 and towns of Austria, I was hardly prepared to ^{absorb} take in the monumentality of
 Russia ^{thus} this quickly. It was too intense! Not only could we muster hordes of
 devils to stir the hearts of half the people (half—at the least!), but Mosow
 and St. Petersburg were occupied by a greater assembly of angels than I had
 encountered in a long time. ^{You may be certain} And these worthies were doing their utmost!
 Never had I felt the presence of the D.K. more directly. If He had often
~~seemed far away, and~~ ^{to me} disoriented by the uncountable number of successes
 and failures ^{that} which take place every day in His Creation, He was now ^{in evidence}
 everywhere we turned.

For the longest time, I had been accustomed to thinking of Him as an
 Abstract Presence, a force who ^{might} could be ugly on occasion (by way of His
 Cudgels), but was removed enough to enable us to work in relative freedom
 of His ~~Nearness~~. In Russia, however, His ^{Nearness} Presence had become the
 prevailing factor. God wanted this Coronation to succeed! He had chosen ^{it}
^{as His} ~~the~~ battleground and was determined not to lose. There was such intensity
 of dedication among the Cudgels that I knew we would pay heavily for any

unsuccessful attack. This lay upon my judgment with all the weight of a hard fact—a stone too heavy to lift. Finally, I did. I dared to suggest my plan to the Maestro, and he accepted it. That was the boldest step I had ever taken in relation to him.

Afterward, I knew ~~real~~ dread. I was full of forebodings. ~~I was~~
~~and~~ ^{one} (obsessed with a question: What ~~was~~ ^{could be God's} the motive for such unparalleled commitment to the success of the coronation?

Until this event, the Dummkopf had invested His Substance in a variety of people and causes. He paid attention to Monarchists and Republicans, to the most established aristocrats and to the revolutionaries who were ready to die for the honor of overthrowing their overlords. He had also encouraged many a human to offer public service to democracies. He hardly ignored the Pope and the Vatican (but then, neither did we!) He was open to the calls of liberty and to the injunctions of autocracy. As the Maestro once remarked, "~~He keeps going by the crudest rule of thumb!~~ It is not difficult to hear the workings of His Mind. 'I may make My mistakes,' He says, 'but I do pay attention to who wins. That way I can ~~see~~ ^{discover} what works.' Why, after all," added the Maestro, "did He give free will to..

homo sapiens? Obviously, the poor Dummkopf wanted to come closer to obtaining some notion of what He had created."

The Maestro was enjoying his own irony, but I was ready to conclude that the Dummkopf was leaning—no, put it more accurately—the D.K. had come over, for the moment at least, to the conviction that the well-being of much of His world ^{was going to rest now!} might now rest (to a good degree on the need for a ^{good} and beneficent) ^{who would feel the closest alliance to,} successful hegemony of the Tsar and the Russian Orthodox Church, ^{and to Himself.} So, the Dummkopf ~~was~~ looking to ^{Orthodox,} install Nicholas the Second with an unforgettable ceremony, fortify the Church even further, and guide this association of Crown and Cross to ^{govern} rule with authority over the inchoate but vast energies of the Russian people.

~~If so,~~ ^{If true,} it was more than an amazing decision. It was a staggering choice. To depend on Russia—so invested with corruption! So teeming with injustice! It was what we looked to find. We ^{sought for} ~~counted on~~ injustice. It was the yeast to inspire hatred, envy, and the loss of love. If we had our own rule of thumb, it was to encourage injustice wherever we could. For rare was the man or woman who did not possess an intense sense of the

injustice done to them each day. It was our taproot to every adult. It was a fury in every child!

As I looked then for an explanation into the motives of the D.K., it seemed evident that part of the answer might be found in the young man who would receive the Coronation. While we prided ourselves on having a keener appreciation ~~than the Dummkopf~~ of the flaws and potentialities of ~~the men and women He had created~~ *the Dummkopf* ~~nonetheless~~ *than he did*, the D.K. like many another creative artist, had His own vanities in this respect ~~and~~ Doubtless, *he* would have argued,—if debate between the Maestro and Himself were possible—that the history of human nature had been improved by the brilliant advent of Jesus Christ into the daily life of the masses in so much of the world.

We were ready to disagree. We saw Christ's efforts ending in failure even if the Maestro had to respect the ~~patience~~ *brilliance* exercised by the D.K. in the aftermath. It was incontestable that He recovered quickly enough to claim credit for the very crucifixion He had certainly wanted to avoid. "God," our Maestro was always ready to inform us, "was cheating on the rules He had formulated. He traduced His own Game! Free will for humans

becomes meaningless once there is divine intervention. But leave it to the Old Goat! Secretly—blind even to His own motive—He was determined to establish His Kingdom on earth. In the most literal sense! He wanted a Kingdom with His Son on the throne. He most certainly was not anticipating the disaster that befell ~~our poor brother Jesus.~~ ^{Oh, our poor brother, Jesus!} And the Maestro laughed. (He had a rich, self-pleasuring laugh whenever he made a remark that could leave a scar on the Scriptures.)

~~Right on wrong it~~
 All the same ~~his merriment to the side~~ ^{was} ~~it~~ ^{largely on} it was becoming evident to me that the D.K. ~~had to be~~ ^{was} placing ~~His~~ ^{large} hopes in the character of the young man who would soon be crowned Tsar Nicholas the Second. You may be certain that I made a request to the Maestro: Could I devote my efforts to learning as much about Nicholas as was possible under these constrained circumstances? "Yes. ~~Learn~~ ^{Do} what you can," said the Maestro. ~~"That could prove most interesting for you."~~ His readiness to agree confirmed my suspicion that even if he had accepted my concept for disrupting the ~~occasion~~ ^{expected}, I was not ~~to~~ ^{to} play a direct part in those events.

I did not know whether I was being promoted or abandoned, but I learned soon enough that it would not be routine to get near to this Nicky.

(That is how everyone in his large family referred to him). Nicky had two younger brothers, two sisters, a beautiful Danish mother (the widow of his recently dead father, Tsar Alexander the Third), four Grand Dukes for uncles, one beautiful Grand Duchess as one of his aunts, and a host of cousins and in-laws who, for the most part, so far as one could discern, were surprisingly fond of him. Indeed! That, in itself, told much.

But I could not, as I say, come near. I had never encountered a human being more guarded by squadrons—in all literal truth!—squadrons of angels to keep observers like myself at a distance. That was ^(one most discernible) a loss. ~~I can~~ ^{unimpeded! I can} detect as much as any animal with a keen olfactory ^{senses} passage if I ^{am able to} take in the scent of a human being. ^{My eyesight is acute} Even from the ^{far} other end of a room, ^{strong} my eyes

^{Many subtle} I can perceive defects in the corner of a nostril or the ridges of the ear ^{thereby} concealed twists of character are revealed to me. Yet, these are fine ^{As a dark matter} senses I do not look to retain for all occasions. ~~Our~~ ^{As a dark matter} satanic existence would be enervating if our sight and taste and smell, our sense of touch and hearing, ^{this} were always at a level of exquisite readiness—no, we call upon such faculties only when ~~urgently~~ ^{we} needed to learn a good deal in a ^{particular} great hurry about a man or woman. Here, however, one was not able to

approach. To repeat—there were too many Cudgels. Once again, I had to rely on the secondary materials that smaller devils had ^{picked up} ~~extracted~~ from those of our numerous clients who dwell in the lower and middle reaches of the palaces of St. Petersburg and the churches and offices of the Kremlin.

This, then, is what I learned from ^{such all but} ~~these more or less~~ academic sources. Needless to say, I am ^{not} ~~hardly~~ speaking of texts nor of libraries. There was, however, a fund of copied material that had been collected by royal valets, chambermaids, and house servants who had become our clients, a full flow, indeed, of the most useful gossip and insights. It seemed as if during this epoch, everyone in every royal family of Europe was writing letters to his or her parents, children, aunts and uncles, cousins, and intimates. In addition, they all kept diaries. The Tsarevitch, soon to be Nicholas the Second, had made an entry every day from boyhood on, and by the time of the Coronation he was so close to Alix (his Tsarina Alexandra) that she seemed always by his side, literally. His diary was not only exposed to her perusal, but open to her ~~written~~ ^{of his} comments as well. Her written additions were inserted on many ~~a~~ ^{pages}. What thoughts! A plethora

of superlatives! Her additions to ~~the diary~~ teemed with piety and declarations of love.

I was fascinated. This nearness to royalty was stimulating. If an element of snobbery was present, I have to add that the Maestro was acerbic about the drawbacks. "You may yet come to recognize that snobbery is for fools of the highest sort. It distorts every last finding our agents bring in."

Reproof or not, I enjoyed my new work. This was no ordinary royal family. Rather, it could be seen as a conflux of the highest monarchs in Europe. ^{The} Family tree could only be described as top-heavy. Alix, the beloved of Nicky, was only a princess from Hesse, but her mother, Alice, had been one of Queen Victoria's three daughters. Alice died when Alix was only six years old, but afterward, Queen Victoria paid much loving attention to the child on every visit to England, ^{and there were many} Then there was Kaiser ^(the same Wilhelm who was) Wilhelm the Second, ~~who would still be~~ the German Kaiser during World War I. He was married to Queen Victoria's oldest daughter. So he was Alix's uncle. She called him Uncle Willy. The English prince who would become King George the Fifth of England was the nephew of Nicky's mother, Empress Marie. In turn, George's oldest son became Edward the

Eighth who would later abdicate the throne in order to marry Wallis Simpson, and live on as the Duke and Duchess of Windsor.

If I list events still decades away, it is only to emphasize that half of Europe's highest royalty was closely related ~~both~~ to Alix or to Nicky, or to both.

In addition—no small addition—Alix and Nicky were in love. They ~~were~~ ^{I will use the word — there were} desperately in love. If such ~~love~~ ^{a passion} was obliged to be, in some part, false, as desperate love invariably is, Alix and Nicky were ^{at the least,} ~~nonetheless~~ excellent actors with huge respect for their roles. For everyone believed it was indeed a most intense love born ^{early} of an adolescent infatuation when he was sixteen and she was ^{just} twelve. This infatuation had managed to endure through years of separation followed by intense courtship. Indeed, their closeness to one another would later be fortified by the birth of five children. I will not pursue it further at this point other than to say that they died (were murdered) on the same day, a year and a few months short of what would have been their Twenty-Fifth Anniversary.

Yes, by all the evidence, they were very much in love. In the weeks before the Coronation, I knew enough, however, not to suggest that this

might be a true ~~case of intense~~ and enduring affection. That would not be to the Maestro's taste. Speaking to a few of us here in Russia, he said, "Be prepared for the greatest swindle of them all. The Dummkopf presents Himself as the Almighty Creator of love. It is all love. He is full of love, and those who love Him are full of love, and love itself will solve all human problems. With this noxious pomade, He not only gulls a good three-quarters, at least, of His walking-and-talking ^{performing} ~~(animals,~~ His humans, His creation, but He fools Himself. No one believes in love so much as the Dummkopf."

I was ready to accept this premise, indeed, I saw it as the heart of the Dummkopf's intense concern that the Coronation be a great success. Had He ^{returned} ~~gone back~~ to the unbelievably romantic assumption that a revival of respect for monarchy might offer the best ^{again} ~~remaining~~ foundation for a fine society? Did He suppose that if a handsome young king and most attractive young queen were profoundly in love with each other, and wholly devoted to their faith, and—the first of all loyalties—believed in His Power and His Goodness, then these three rare conditions satisfied, He could have the pleasure of exploring further into ^{a very} ~~this~~ bold experiment. Would it turn out

more happily than some of His other ^{more extravagant} ~~royal~~ ventures? After all, it was possible that most monarchies had failed in the past because there was so little mutual love at the top.

I was relieved. I now had a premise. Long ago I had learned that the study of new material was lifeless whenever one was lacking a vital hypothesis. Possessed of one, however, every new piece of knowledge ~~acquired~~ was ready to contribute to the premise, or deny it. Now, one's studies could come alive, and one's acumen be enriched by every addition.

The center of my attention had come then to this: Was the D.K. in full possession of His Faculties? Or was He growing senile? My hypothesis turned toward that question.

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Nonetheless, the boldness of such an assumption was disturbing.

Was He senile? When, on occasion, I find myself near the sea, it becomes difficult to believe that God is suffering any loss of His powers. Similar anxieties in me sentiments can also be aroused by a fine field, a rocky crag, or the retort of the heavens when lightning is followed by thunder. Again, a similar conclusion arises at the sight of on witnessing a peerless sunset. One could even speak of the dazzlements of light on wet grass when dew is on the ground at early morning.

Of course, He could have fashioned all this eons ago yes, back at the peak of when He was Young. His Creative Powers. The skies and the waters were not yet fouled by

exudate. Did He now brood on the possibility that these human Creations
 had become His least successful? ^{animals?} Were we now awash in the dithering of a
 divinity ^{who felt that His} whose powers were not only old but askew? This Nicky and

Alix—they seemed so naïve, so unfitted for the vast project they were to ^{embody}
^{and} expedite. While I had not been able to get near to their living presence, I
 had certainly absorbed the tone of their love, their philosophy (such as it
 was!) and, over and over, their piety, their innocence. They actually
 believed that Nicky's diary, as well as their letters to each other were well
 protected from scrutiny when, in fact, a copy of the key to this diary—
 courtesy of a royal valet—had been in our possession for years and, now
 that she had joined him, I could even peruse their old letters. Indeed,
 they even put numbers on the envelopes—Letter 96, Letter 109, et
 cetera. It never occurred to Nicky or Alix that it took no exceptional
 skill to make a wax impression of a key or a lock, any more than we
 were in need of high competence to find the maid or body-servant who
 was ready to betray a trust.

So, I knew how they spoke to each other. I had read hundreds of their
 loving communications back and forth. If I now present a small record of

the missives passing between them and their close friends ^{or their} and relatives, it is to give a sense of how trivial were most of these responses to the foyal ^{size of the} dilemmas awaiting them. Indeed, I had to wonder all over again whether the Dummkopf was still in command ^{I had to wonder} of minimal acumen. The question ~~might as well have risen to a fever in me~~ why was God giving so much importance to Nicky and Alix?

Be it said, they were not altogether without ^{attainment} culture. (Back in 1889, when she was seventeen, before they were ready to speak of their love for each other, Alix ^{sent this missive} wrote on March 17:

It was so good of you to write and it gave me great pleasure. My mad letter amused you then—well, I have been cracked enough to write another. We went last night to see the "Rheingold" and I hope next week to see "Walkure's Siegfried.

^{His response came}
He responds two weeks later:

Thank you so much for your dear little letter which was such an agreeable surprise to me . . . We also saw "Siegfried." I like it so awfully, especially the melody of the bird and the fire!

Young Wagnerites! At the edge of love! They write to each other in English. He has been tutored in the tongue since boyhood and she, after all, has ^{lived} often ~~visited~~ with Queen Victoria.

That was in 1889. By June, 1894, ^{five full years later,} they have managed to pass through ^{an} ~~a~~ great emotional obstacle. To become betrothed, she has had to give up her Lutheranism for Russian Orthodoxy. ^{This} ~~Alix's fear of moving from her first~~ ~~bastion of piety~~ did stand very much in the way. She was as good as wed to Lutheranism, ^{Of course,} but then, ^{discovering} ~~theology~~—much of which, we have designed—has talents for ~~designing~~ ^{designing} astonishing exits from philosophical cul-de-sacs. ^{In times} ~~Finally~~ Alix agreed to accept the Russian Orthodox Church, and the news of their engagement was given out to the royal families of Europe. In June of 1894, ^{when} ^{is} ~~their engagement~~ just two months old, Nicky is passionate in his declaration of happiness:

I love you too deeply and too strongly for me to show it:
it is such a sacred feeling, I don't want to let it out in
words that seem meek and poor and vain! But now I will
try to break the habit of hiding my feelings, because I
think it wrong and selfish in some occasions. You also
do not know, my precious one, how long my whole heart

**belonged to you and what sufferings it has gone
through these dreary years! Darling primrosy-mine, I
love you my darling!!!!**

Be it said, I took pains to count the exclamation marks. Is it not, after all, the one rare point of kinship I can feel with him? The observant reader may have noticed how fond I am of such punctuation myself, particularly at the end of a parenthesis!! (Interruptions of attention should pretend, at least, to be vital!)

Four months later, Nicky's father is grievously ill. Alix, writing in Nicky's diary, offers this:

Sweet child, pray to God, he will comfort you don't feel too low, he will help you in your trouble, Your Sunny is praying for you and the beloved patient. Darling Boysy, me loves you, o so very tenderly and deep. Be firm and make the Doctors come alone to you every day and tell you how they find him, and exactly, what they wish him to do, so that you are always the first to know. Don't let others be put first and you left out. You are Father dear's son and must be told all and be asked about everything. Show your own mind and don't let others forget who you are. Forgive me lovy.

Two days later, she enters his diary again. She will share Nicky's anguish. She writes:

Tell me everything, dushka, you can fully trust me, look upon me as a bit of yourself. Let your joys and sorrows be mine, so that we may be ever drawn nearer together. My sweet One, how I love you, darling treasure, my very own One.

Dushka, when you feel low and sad, come to Sunny and she will try to comfort you and like her namesake warm you with her rays, God helping.

Only yours, quite your very own little spitzbub, Pussy mine!"

There is an entry next day by Nicky, 18 October:

A terrible, sad day! Dear Papa did not sleep at all, and felt so unwell in the morning that we were all woken up and called upstairs. What a trial! Then Papa became a little calmer and dozed fitfully throughout the day...

In the evening, Papa appeared a little better—but terribly weak! Our only reliance and hope is in the Mercy of the Lord, let His will be done!

I could not help but note how completely royalty was groomed to respect the Lord's will. ~~But then, that Will when it appears to people is so often our voice. This ability to speak in the guise of the Lord is indeed one of our delights. But then, it is no difficult task on most occasions.~~ Royalty, after all, does need belief. ~~It does not matter from whom it comes.~~ Their lives are so peculiar. Living in near to total isolation from common experience, painfully sensitive to the ^{constant} need for proper conduct (and invariably drawn to its dramatic opposite) what with the carnal opportunities they are provided) they tend to believe that the disruptive events which occur in their lives are a product of the Lord's will. Even so, ^{Nicky is} the Romanovs ^{his} are hardly ready for ~~Nicky's~~ father, Tsar Alexander III, to be so close to death, ^{and} then to die.

Nicky's diary, 20 October, Livadia:

My God, my God, what a day! The Lord has called unto Him our adored, dearly beloved Papa.

My head is going round, I cannot believe it—it seems inconceivable, a terrible reality.

It was the death of a Saint! Lord, help us in these terrible days!

Later I learned that
All through the Prayers, Nicky thought of the hour in his childhood when a nihilist had succeeded in putting a small bomb inside the railroad car in which his father, the Tsar, had been travelling with the family. When the explosion went off, given its rough, ready, and untutored placement, the blast spewed upward rather than crashing down. As a result, no one in the royal family was critically injured. The roof of the railroad car began, *it fell in slowly upon* however, to ~~collapse on~~ them. Tsar Alexander III, a giant of a Romanov, used his holy and unholy strength to hold up the beams of the compartment's ceiling long enough for the family to be rescued. Only a saint was capable of such strength, *declared* ~~decided~~ his wife, a small but beautiful woman.

So, too, did Nicky believe that his father was a saint. Nicky was short like his Danish mother, and revered Alexander's physical power. All through his adolescence, Nicky had worked at body-building with weights. He excelled at horsemanship and at hunting—a point of honor to him—he grew a fine brown mustache and beard, yet he never grew large enough to

look like a Romanov. Now, he would be the Tsar. Nicholas II, Nicholas the Second.

Here, I must introduce Nicky's cousin Sandro who is married to Nicky's sister, Xenia. ~~He was~~ ^{Sandro is} a bit of a firebrand, and ~~Nicky's~~ closest friend, ~~Sandro had~~ ^{and has} his own memoirs, and so, I looked for his written comment on the death of Alexander III:

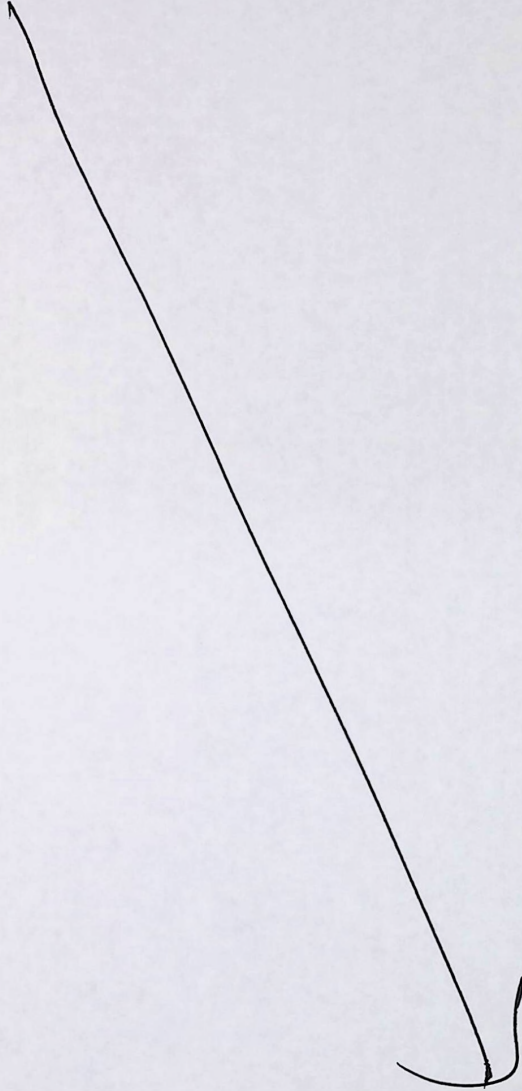
"Sandro, what am I going to do," he exclaimed pathetically. "What is going to happen to me, to you, to Xenia, to Alix, to mother, to all of Russia? I am not prepared to be a Tsar. I never wanted to become one. I know nothing of the business of ruling. I have no idea of even how to talk to the ministers."

Nicky, Diary, 21 October, Livadia:

In the midst of our deep sorrow, the Lord has sent us a quiet and radiant joy: at 10 o'clock in the presence of the family, my dear darling Alix was anointed with the holy oils and after the service we took communion together, with dear Mama and Ella. Alix repeated her responses and prayers wonderfully well and distinctly!

After luncheon we held Prayers for the Dead and again at 9 o'clock in the evening. The expression on

Papa's face was wonderful, smiling as if he were about to laugh!



22 October.

Last night we had to carry Papa's body downstairs, as unfortunately, it has rapidly begun to decompose. Thank God, dear Mama is completely calm and is bearing her sorrow in a truly heroic way! I did nothing but answer the pile of telegrams.

24 October.

The day was grey—as it was in our hearts! I still cannot bring myself to go into the corner room where dear Papa's body is lying—he is so changed since being embalmed. I cannot bear to dispel the wonderful impression of the first day!

It may be worth including a letter from Kaiser Wilhelm II to Nicky, which was sent on 27 October from the Neues Palais, Potsdam:

My dear Nicky,

May Heaven comfort you in your grief and give you strength for your heavy duties, and may a long and peaceful reign give you the opportunity of looking after the welfare of your subjects. The sympathy and real grief at the so untimely end of your lamented father in my country will have shown you how strong the monarchical

instinct is and how Germany feels for you and your subjects. As for me, you will always find me the same in undiminished friendship and love to you.

It would, of course, be twenty years before they went to war against each other.

Here, I must introduce another diary. It is by a nobleman who signs himself as KR. He is the same age as the Grand Dukes (that is, the brothers of the dead Tsar) and, in spirit, he feels like an uncle to Nicky: He certainly loves him as much or more than any of these Grand Dukes. Indeed, KR adores Nicky so much that he capitalizes every reference to him. Like God, Nicky is Him. KR is, after all, what was known at that time as a gentleman of the closet. He spends his ^{*secret*} time in Turkish baths. It is the bane and delight of his existence. He also writes well enough to quote him fully.

KR, Diary, 2 November, St. Petersburg: The young Tsar is the admiration of everyone. I hear that the short speech He made in the Kremlin Palace to the Moscow nobility was delivered in a loud, clear, assured voice. Yesterday, when receiving the Council of State, He addressed them most beautifully. I watched him during

the requiem service: the calm kind face, the thoughtful, deeply sad eyes, often half-closed. He is weighed down by his exalted rank. His modesty suffers from having to be everywhere and always the first.

KR, Diary, 3 November, St. Petersburg:

I have not yet talked to the Emperor's bride; but she smiles so sweetly whenever you greet her.

In the evening they covered the Emperor's body in the coffin with a pall up to his chest, in order to hide the hands which are beginning to turn black. The head is already looking quite black.

On the seventh of November, one of our English agents intercepted a communication from Lord Carrington to Queen Victoria, which offered a detailed report on Tsar Alexander III's funeral. It was obvious Her Majesty was attracted to details.

Lord Carrington to Queen Victoria:

The service was choral without organ—the Empress and Princesses standing or kneeling the whole time. The mass continued for an hour and a half, plaintive and monotonous and then the usual daily funeral service was

gone through. Tapers were lighted and handed round, but in consequence of the crowd, no ladies took any and so accident from fire was averted. At 12:30 the terrible ceremony of paying the last farewell took place. The Empress with heroic courage walked up steadily, knelt, and then took a last look at the late Emperor and kissed the sacred picture on His Majesty's breast, and then kissed his lips. The Emperor supported and took great care of Her Majesty and all the Royal Personages present kissed the sacred picture.

Like most English diplomats, he took pride in his literary style. One week later, he added another emolument to the Queen's vanity:

All the ladies in Russian costume, some with fine diamonds but hardly any pretty faces; indeed, the absence of beauty as compared with that seen at one of Your Majesty's drawing rooms struck the Lord Chamberlain very much.

The occasion was the wedding of Nicky and Alix which, of necessity, *had to come a few days after* followed the funeral. It would hardly do for the Tsar of all Russia to be an unmarried man.

The ceremony was enough to make me feel wistful (a rare ^{turn of} ~~experience~~ ^{the heart}) (for a devil.) ~~Nonetheless, I felt sad.~~ How much it meant to those who watched! If the Tsar was the nearest Russian to God, then what could be of more importance than for ~~such a near divinity~~ ^{His divine adjunct} to commit to a wife, a Tsarina, who would bear His sons?

It was, of course, a huge display, and on my arrival in Russia, I was ^{being} ~~able to experience the event~~ ^{so I had an all-but-complete recapitulation of how it had been} offered many impressions by our resident Russian agents of how it had been back on November 14 of 1894, when the nuptials took place. To those of us

who were in need of ^{such} ~~background~~ ^{our} ~~these~~ resident devils did offer ~~us~~ a set of ^{inspire a fac simile of} images vivid enough to ~~provide the confidence that we had been there.~~ So, I ^{can feel free to describe it} ~~can say that~~ the great rooms of the Winter Palace were, on this occasion, so

filled with notable spectators that I would calculate over 10,000 people were there in all their finery. ~~Mind you~~ ^{also chairs for them} there were ~~no seats~~. The Russians

understand that ceremonial occasions do well to be uncomfortable. Let such devotional services ^{do well to} ~~prove harsh on the body.~~ Let the mighty ^{so} ~~stand for~~

^{to stand in place for} ~~several hours while liturgies are recited.~~ ^{is also hap} ~~Let the music continue, powerful~~ ^{All that white, choral music}

^{continues} ~~and~~ sad, yet in its way, compelling, even majestic, due to the very length of

the occasion. It is as though the deepest groans of Jesus Christ ^{could be heard} ~~in extremis~~
~~from~~ ^{a presence to be} on the Cross ~~was there to be heard again, and meditated upon.~~

Ten thousand of the ~~strong~~ ^{the}, powerful, and wealthy stood therefore in place while the ceremony continued, an assembly of high generals, admirals, and various hierarchies of ~~upper and lower officers~~ ^{field and staff}, as well as each and every last lady of St. Petersburg (as well as those from Moscow) ^{that to present}. ^{Also present was every} who had ever been presented at Court. All the dignitaries from the First, Second, Third and Fourth Class of the bureaucracies ~~were there~~, plus a full ~~medley of~~ Mayors from large and small cities and towns, and many of the new Russian businessmen, ^{and their wives near to a hundred} ~~not to mention Senators and 60 or 70 maids of~~ honor.

Lord Carrington has a nice comment here:

One maid of honour was so old that she was propped up against a wall and finally a chair was brought for her in which she was placed until required.

^{An} ~~One of our~~ English devils, well installed in Victoria's court, reported to us that the Queen on reading this was heard to exclaim, "Oh, these

Russians ^{we have} animals all! Poor Alix. She will need every bit of the fortitude ^{one had} implanted in her!"

Carrington proved his sense of pomp ^{by} describing the climax of the wedding.

The Emperor in a very plain uniform walked with the Bride who looked simply magnificent--on her head she wore a circlet of diamonds with a diamond top which made it into a crown, ~~2 long curls like the Princess of Wales used to wear on her shoulders, a splendid necklace and ornaments,~~ and an enormous mantle of cloth of gold lined with ermine. She looked the perfection of what one would imagine an Empress of Russia on her way to the altar would be and moved along quite simply and with great dignity. She makes very marked bows with her head when she greets anyone, and this is much noted and appreciated.

Our devils, ^{not} ~~never~~ in the least generous about such matters (except when protecting a client) remarked that this bobbing of her head was reminiscent of the pouter pigeon!

^{5 paa - makes it equal to}
The ring was placed on the Bride and Bridegrooms'

fingers, and then they walked 3 times around the altar,
and knelt in front of it--gold crowns being held over
their head the whole time. The Bride was proclaimed
Empress at five minutes past one.

I now had a slightly better notion of why the D.K. ^{had} ~~was~~ so committed
^{Himself} (to Russia. How these people believed in Him! One could say the same for
many a church group in America, but the differences were significant ^{even}
~~then~~ ^{even then,} In the U.S., all the emphasis ^{was} ~~is~~ on the Son. Americans ^{seem to} ~~live~~, dream,
argue, and search for a closer relation to Jesus. (It is as if He is out there
^{awaiting} ~~ready~~ for their approaches.) And the Father, to that subtle degree, is
superannuated. ^{at} ~~His name is~~ not that much invoked except ~~for~~ ^{at} funerals or ~~dis~~
catastrophes. Otherwise, ^{was} ~~it is~~ all about Jesus. Given my recent years in
America, ^{was} ~~as Dieter, a young student from Berlin,~~ I can say it remains the
same for a good half of that vast, inchoate, endlessly patriotic ~~and~~
~~technological~~ land. "Boy," say half the Americans, "if your faith is not in
Jesus, your ass is in jeopardy."

Forgive me, I digress. I am obviously not too happy if I am now so
idle as to write such comments. Of course, back then in Moscow, I also felt

out of my element. Russians were not for me. They were much more intense than the Germans and Austrians with whom I was, of late, familiar. One need only return to that grave ceremony when Nicky and Alix walked around the altar three times. Yes, the D.K. could enjoy that. For the Russians, the Trinity is as familiar as the faces of the great beasts who visit Russians in their dreams.

-15-

I was soon able to

In the period after their wedding, I read all the letters my agents could supply to me, but a close study ^{however,} opened many questions. Just a few days later on the 17th of November, Nicky wrote,

I am unbelievably happy with Alix, it's only a pity that my work takes up so much of the time I would like to spend exclusively with her!

to which on November 19th he adds,

Had tea at home and read together. We simply don't have the strength to leave each other.

On the same day, in a letter to his brother Georgy, Nicky adds,

I'm confused by the 3-9-05 and 2-9-05

a completely new life has started for me. I cannot thank God enough for the treasure He has sent me in my wife. I am immeasurably happy with my darling Alix and feel that we will remain as happy together until the end of our lives.

On the 26th of November, off by themselves in Tsarskoe Selo, he remarks,

Such a dear place for us both; for the first time since our wedding we have been able to live alone and live truly soul-to-soul,

Immediately this is followed by Alix's reaction to reading these words of love. She adds to his diary:

Never did I believe there could be such utter happiness in this world, such a feeling of unity between two mortal beings. I love you—those three words have my life in them.

On the next day she adds,

At last united, bound for life, and when this life is ended, we meet again in the other world to remain together for

all eternity.

I was overcome with her ignorance, and her confidence. She was so certain that they lived with a joint passport to the Eternal! Yet, on December 14, a bit more than two weeks later, he wrote:

Today it is one month since we married—strange to say, I am only just beginning to get used to the idea! My love for Alix keeps growing!

Were these
What degrees of ~~old~~ intoxication were being brewed by them? *will they*

Rarely had I encountered newly-weds who were as infatuated. They *did not seem* obviously had no need to distinguish between the wild honey of first sex and the nectars of true love. But Nicky, after all, was twenty-six, and no neophyte, not to sex. (His military days had offered their *female* predictable bounty.)

Not only burdened
(In contrast, Alix was very much a virgin with the usual fears, *plus* she had also grown up with *Then add her mother's* the woe of losing her mother at the age of six. Add her religious

utterly pretty
devotions *as whole truth*—I found it difficult to accept the romantic intensity of her entries

To me, they seemed a
in Nicky's diary. They were so over-ventilated with the necessity to be absolutely in love.

Of course, I could not be certain. He was the Emperor of a vast land
teeming with deep spirits and untamable barbarians. ~~He could not pass by a~~

by a fire ~~(copse of forest)~~ *he could remind himself* ~~that this loveliness was his land.~~ His Land.

He was one of the chosen of God. And all the while he ~~felt unworthy and~~

height compared to his dear father and the Grand Duke his great-uncle, like Peter ~~unready.~~ How, then, could he (He?) fail to aggrandize His Love? He was

I had to assume he was feeling

like a booze-hound who will go mad if he cannot find a drink. Love was ~~the~~

ventigunes ~~mountain on which he must always be climbing upward.~~ *you kept your balance by*

If I had been capable of real compassion, ~~instead of possessing the~~

~~keen ability to simulate its presence for my clients whenever they were in~~

~~need~~ I could have felt sorry for Nicholas the Second.

Nonetheless,

~~Yet, still,~~ I could come to no firm conclusions, not from this study of

their writings. There was still the damnable question ~~pending~~ *was still*—what was

the Dummkopf up to? ~~It was~~ *was it not* conceivable that in His Desire to make their

marriage beatifically effective, ~~God was supplying them with physical~~ *and so effective for His purposes,*

ecstasies. How could I know? I could not come near. I had only ~~these~~

stolen fragments from their letters, and the ~~hypothesis~~ *reasonable assumption* that if God was going

to choose a Tsar, He would be ready to offer His wisdom and strength—

against, of course, the no small skills of the Maestro to subvert His Plans.

-16-

As has been indicated,
 Nicky was ~~of course~~ all but totally unprepared to become the Tsar. ~~It~~
Everyone in the Court had,
 had been assumed ~~by all~~ that Alexander the Third would rule for ~~one more~~ *another*

generation at least. ~~Some measure of Nicky's unpreparedness is present in~~

~~these few lines from KR's diary:~~ → P 459

**I asked whether He had received any advice from
 his Father before the latter's death. Nicky replied
 that his Father had never once mentioned the
 responsibilities that awaited Him.**

KR not only loved Nicky with all the intensity of his homosexual
 heart but was ready (as we see by his near-sacrilegious use of capitals) to
 deify him and his father halfway up the mountain to Godhead.

~~One need only contrast this confidence with Nicky's own small-~~
~~feelings:~~

Nicky, Diary, 17 January 1895, St. Petersburg:

An exhausting day. Went with Alix to the Winter Palace. I was in a terrible state about having to go to the Nikolayevsky Hall and deliver a speech to the representatives of the nobility, the *zemstvos* [local councils] and the town committees.

He had been closeted with the Grand Dukes before he gave the speech. They had assured him that he must follow in his father's footsteps. He must be absolute! His grandfather, Alexander II, had been assassinated, and his father had had ^{a very} ~~his~~ close call. ~~Russia was like a mad giant, they~~
~~assured him.~~ Russia was so vulnerable to grand mal that one misstep could ^{must be proclaimed,}
 release a frenzy. Absolute allegiance to autocracy. The only formula.

From Nicky's speech to the representatives of all estates:

17 January 1895, St. Petersburg:

I am aware that recently in some *zemstvos* there have arisen the voices of people carried away by senseless dreams of taking part in the business of government.

Let everyone know that I will retain the principles of autocracy as firmly and unbendingly as my unforgettable

late father.

A strong speech, but he
~~He~~ continued to detest ~~his~~ *these* duties. His repetitive lament is that he cannot spend enough time with Alix.

Then, as the first winter of their marriage came to an end, Alix, like many another good Victorian woman, began to develop symptoms. We counted on that. Symptoms were our stock-in-trade. Proper Victorian women were never easy to invest, but we could always send a shiver into their *corroded* defense of personal virtue by *tainting* ~~touching~~ their dreams with one or another ~~(un)holy, or worse~~ smelly thought. That was enough to spoil many a day in their marriages.

Nicky's diary, 9 April, 1885, St. Petersburg:

Unfortunately, dear Alix's headache continued all day. She did not go upstairs at all—neither to church nor to luncheon.

Nicky's Diary, 10 April 1895, St. Petersburg:

Dear Alix still has an unbearable pain in the temples and she was obliged to remain in bed, on my advice.

An ongoing headache, indeed! When intense enough to be characterized as migraine, these headaches spoke to us of the *man or woman's* clear desire to

commit murder—a desire guaranteed to baffle ^{this lady} her by its ~~total~~ impossibility.

I did not believe Alix had such sentiments toward her husband, but it was doubtless another matter with her mother-in-law, the Empress Marie. That beautiful little brunette had adored her poor dead husband for the best of reasons and one of them was that she was always an Empress. Now, still an Empress, she was also less ~~than such~~. She was an elevated widow.

Already, the two women were developing ^{impulses toward each other} sentiments, they were obliged to pulverize ^{on birth} ~~in their minds~~.

Poor Nicky! He is bewildered by Alix's unhappy symptoms, and haunted by the empty boredom, that is to say, the horror of ~~endless~~ official meetings. ^{He always felt as if time, itself was} meetings. ~~He also had to contend with the huge Grand Dukes, his~~ ^{being tortured on such occasions} ~~overbearing uncles.~~

By June, Alix was free of the migraines, ~~and could enjoy the weather~~ again. She ^{was} ~~is~~ also pregnant, ~~and~~ ⁱⁿ an entry to Nicky's diary on June 10, she writes:

My sweet old darling manykins, Wify loves you so deeply and strongly, you are my one and my angels, what intense happiness. . .ours. . .our very own. . .what happiness could be greater; only Wify must try and be as good and kind as

possible lest another little person suffer for it. A big kiss.

This is June, but the baby will not be born until November. Is Alix ^{restraining} removing her body from contact with him until after the baby arrives? I was ^{ready to ponder again} obliged to go back to the little mystery of the migraines.

In truth, the real problem was that I ^{did it no advance} did not feel comfortable in my comprehension of their love. How much was ^{being} exaggerated? None of us were ^(and never) ever ready to admit as much to ourselves, ~~not~~ certainly, to the Maestro) but the presence of real love often ^{blurred the clarity} introduced a dull spot upon the ^{or} customary clear lens in our powers of analysis. We could penetrate every

aspect of false love, we had, for that matter, not even the need to capture such lovers as our clients—being in love leaves the average man or woman ^{not only} ^{but} ~~wide~~ open to angels and demons, to transports and to suspicions, beatitudes and ~~or~~ heartbreaks. Some of the sharpest engagements ever fought between the Cudgels and ourselves involve the ecstasies and vicissitudes that ^{sweat through} ^{demonic at} ~~pullulate among~~ lovers in the early stages. We are truly demons at

converting the sensitivities of love to the all-out imperatives of lust where ^{that} ~~and is active to a far, that passion and are~~ ~~often~~ ^{are} in command except for those special occasions when God decides

lust will be beneficial for one of His chosen, *yes, there is*
godly lust as well.

It is a curious contest. The angels have powerful sweets to offer, and we know how to inspire jealousy, doubt, distrust, even momentary revulsion toward the beloved. I would say that we possess more improvisational skills than even the most gifted of the Cudgels, but we do lack one quality which I hesitate to confess, even hate to confess, although I must, or what I offer will make no ~~great~~ sense. It is that I know everything about love but

Love itself. I can hardly bear to make such a confession ^{Yet,} but it is true. I can recall nothing of my existence as human, not even whether I ^{actually did} ~~ever did exist~~

^{exist} In that state ^(although for some reason I am certain that I was indeed, at one time, a man,) ^{unlocatable} ^{feel that} but this ^{however,} I can say—I have never known Love. I can ~~even~~

expatiate upon its properties and tendencies, its dilemmas, ^{its} dissipations, ^{I can delineate most of the} even the reasons for its augmentation or disappearance, I can tell you

everything about ^{Love} ~~it~~ except for some knowledge ^{is apparently} that seems to be missing at

the core. It is that I cannot distinguish true love from its most developed and artistic substitutes.

Witness, then, my confusion ^{concerning} ~~before~~ Alix. I could begin to comprehend Nicky. Given his situation, he needed love the way others require blood.

But Alix? I could not say whether she was a rare if somewhat silly
 (when it came to writing prose),
 and tasteless princess, but truly in love, or whether her ~~own~~ rarified species
 (was) might be her special way of entering
 of amorous hysteria was a guide to extraordinarily intense heights of
 passion, pleasure, and devotion.

Given, however, that curious line in her letter, "Wify must try and be
 as good and kind as possible lest another little person suffer for it," I came
 to a conclusion. She was ^{indeed,} declaring a temporary moratorium on sex. On
 many a milk-run, I had watched ^{a number of} many a pregnant woman enjoying the act
 even in ^{the} ~~her~~ eighth or ninth month. Of course, Alix was preparing for ^{an} ~~the~~
 heir to be born, the next Tsar, and one wouldn't dare to bruise ^{the} ~~such~~
^{of that royal head,} ~~development~~ but still!—June to November! I leaned now to the hypothesis
^{Alix} that ~~she~~ had strained mightily to rise to the passionate heights she deemed
 necessary for this first period of their marriage, but that ^{accomplished,} ~~done~~ and the heir-
 to-be now in place, she was ready to take a rest. ^{Yes,} ~~we~~ must not do it "lest
 another little person suffer."

-17-

~~I remember that~~
~~I can measure the needs~~

If the Romanovs are now at the center of my interest, this is no more
 than a temporary matter. ^{To understand} My understanding of Adolf Hitler ^{will} remains the core
 of my motive ^{for} in writing this book. Nonetheless, ^{there are a few} it is interesting to ~~recognize~~
~~interesting if attenuated connections between~~
 recognize that Kaiser Wilhelm II who was always impressing his cousinly
^(same) weight on Nicky's mind ^{and Hitler himself (who, by the way,}
^{was looked upon later by Hitler as the fool who had}
^{looked upon Kaiser Willy as the fool (who had}
 helped to lose World War I for Germany. All the same, ^{yet} Wilhelm II was
^{had had his close and friendly relations with}
 indirectly connected to Hitler's life by way of an English philosopher
^(was so devoted) named Houston Chamberlain who ^{that he} was a great Wagnerite and even married
^{dared to marry} Wagner's daughter, Winifred. [¶] In 1923, Hitler would meet Houston
^{formidable} Chamberlain in Bayreuth, and the latter, very much an elitist, but also a

devoted racist, and an intense believer in the putative superiority of the German soul, was happy to pass on his baton to Hitler. What Chamberlain had envisioned in his master work—Foundations of the Nineteenth Century—might now—as he saw it—actually come to pass through the exceptional if most uncharacteristic figure of this new leader, this young Hitler, who was ready to pay a visit to a great ^{if (late) less-recognized} mind like himself.

Chamberlain's vanity may still have been intact, but he was virtually on his death-bed ^{for this encounter} when they met. Nonetheless, his support offered political substance to Adolf. Chamberlain had been ^{in his time,} after all, the intellectual who had been most favored, honored, and respected by Kaiser Wilhelm the Second whose own ideas (as will be suggested in the next two letters) were waiting for a philosopher to enrich them.

In September and October of 1895, on the 14th of the first month and the 13th of the next month, Alix's Uncle Willy wrote to the new Russian Tsar. His English was not perfect, but his ideas were obviously important to him.

Kaiser Wilhelm II to Nicky, 14 September 1895, Jagdhaus Romingen
Dearest Nicky,

God knows that I have done all in my power to preserve the European Peace, but if France goes on openly or secretly encouraged like this to violate all rules of international courtesy and Peace in peacetime, one fine day, my dearest Nicky, you will find yourself nolens-volens suddenly embroiled in the most horrible of wars Europe ever saw. Which will by the masses and by history perhaps be fixed on you as the cause of it. Pray don't be angry, if I perhaps hurt you quite unintentionally, but I think it my duty to our two countries and to you as my friend to write openly. Think of the awful responsibility ~~for the shaking bloodshed.~~

Now goodbye, dearest Nicky, best love to dear Alix, and believe me ever your fond devoted and faithful friend and cousin,
Willy

Kaiser Wilhelm II to Nicky 13 October 1895

Neues Palais, Potsdam

Dearest Nicky,

That it is not the fact of a "Rapport" or friendship between Russia and France that make me uneasy—every sovereign is sole master of his country's interests and he shapes his policy accordingly—but the danger which is

brought to our Principle of Monarchism through the lifting up of the Republic on a pedestal. Don't forget that Faure—not his personal fault—sits on the throne of the King and Queen of France by the grace of God whose heads Frenchman Republicans cut off. The blood of their Majesties is still on that country!

Look at it, has it since then ever been happy or quiet again? Has it not staggered from bloodshed to bloodshed? Nicky, take my word on it, the Curse of God has stricken that People forever! We Christian Kings and Emperors have one holy duty imposed on us by Heaven, that is to uphold the Principle "von Gottes Gnaden." [by the grace of God.] Your most devoted and affectionate friend and cousin,
Willy

There is no record of any reply by Nicky to these weighty warnings.

It is possible that the new Tsar is paying no attention. ~~Willy~~, after all,

Cousin Willy

according to Alix, is gloomy and always full of foreboding. Moreover, Nicky is concerned about Alix. She is more than pregnant. Her belly is huge. It is no common anxiety to await the birth of an heir—the young bouncing male baby who will become the next Tsarevitch to Nicholas II.

It is the mark, however, of Romanov breeding—indeed, it is part of their honor—that no disappointment is mouthed when the infant is born. A strapping ten-pound female has come forth.

It does not matter to Nicky. His love is so direct that his relief is pure. No matter the sex of the infant—Alix is safe!

Nicky's Diary 3 November 1895 Tsarskoe Selo

A day I will remember forever. At exactly 9 o'clock P.M. a baby was delivered and we all breathed a sigh of relief. With a prayer we named the daughter from Almighty God "Olga!" When all the anxieties were over and the terrors had ceased, there was left simply a blessed feeling at what had come to pass. Thank God Alix came through childbirth well and felt quite alert in the evening.

By the morning of the next day he is rhapsodizing.

Nicky Diary 4 November 1895 Tsarskoe Selo

I can hardly believe it's really our child! God, what is happening? There was a mountain of telegrams

And by the following day, Nicky is fascinated by a few unexpected aspects of infant nutrition.

Nicky, Diary 5 November 1895 Tsarskoe Selo

The first attempt at breastfeeding took place and ended up with Alix successfully feeding the son of the wet-nurse while the latter gave milk to Olga. Very funny!

6 November 1895

Thank God, all is well, but the baby does not want to take her breast so we had to call the wet-nurse again.

I was not surprised. I cannot speak for the Maestro, but devils at my level can interpret the sentiments of an embryo in the final months. These creatures do express themselves (in the last trimester) through their mothers' dreams. It seems evident that most babies come into the light of the birthing room with an affection or an antipathy toward the benevolent caretaker (or the surly warden) who so recently constituted the walls of their womb. That is exactly why women feel so desolate when their milk is

refused by their own babe. Their guilt is aroused. They know how mixed were their feelings.

Nonetheless, these two, the wet-nurse and the young Empress, are doing their best to avoid such recognitions. As is Nicky, who is quick to declare that yes, it is very funny indeed. I expect Nicky is ready to tell himself that huge little Olga has the sturdy instinct to wish to smell and taste the paps of a strong Russian woman, even as the wet-nurse's suckling will be intimate with a slim and lovely queen at least once in his young life. And I, from my funds of cynicism, think that the two women, so profoundly different, and never by any other means to know cohabitation, (or even suggest it!) can, nonetheless, enjoy this open (yet surreptitious) connection of the flesh.

Less than half a year later, Alix has certainly resumed relations with Nicky.

*29 March St. Petersburg [in Alix's hand]
sweet precious Nicky mine, no words can express
how deeply I love you--more and more, day by day,
deeper--truer. Lovy sweet do you believe it, do you
feel hearty throb so quickly, and only for you, my*

husband

She has sent a new message to him: Nicky has been so good about the birth of a princess rather than a prince, that Alix to her sweet surprise has had a "hearty throb" on the moment he entered her, a novel event, or, at least, so I assume. Let me admit that being obliged to see them only at a distance across a crowded space, or else limited to the close study of their letters, I do have to take a few chances to arrive at an interpretation. Certain conclusions have to alter, therefore, with time. Olga, for instance, has come to accept the given. Once a day, she accepts her mother's breast. *She feeds while Alix takes her morning coffee with the Emperor.*

~~KR, Diary, 10 April 1896, St. Petersburg~~

~~How sweet and friendly she is; it's only a pity that she finds it so difficult to overcome her shyness. At the moment she is feeding once a day, in the morning while she has coffee with the Emperor; I asked when exactly, before or after the coffee! She replied that the infant feeds while she is drinking her coffee, how delightful!~~

Actually, I could feel a shift within the court. The Coronation of Nicholas II was approaching. It is safe to add that there could have hardly been a devil or angel present who was not stirring with elation and dread.

There is never a time when we devils

~~When are devils able to feel as human, or crowds as demonic (and exalted,)~~

can feel as human and crowds
~~as before a great ceremony?~~

feel as demonic as in the presence
of a great occasion, especially if
a massive ceremony to accompany it.

~~There is this label here~~

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~~Except for those occasions when we appear as humans (and so must accompany ourselves with an assortment of garments and paraphernalia) we travel quickly.~~ ^{can} Since I ^{came to} was in Russia with no obligation to ^{live among others as a visible} appear as a physical entity, the ensuing shift from St. Petersburg to Moscow caused ~~me~~ no difficulty. ~~While it will be recalled that I had dared to advise the Maestro to bring the full weight of our effort,~~

onto the second and more minor festival scheduled to take place four days after the Coronation when the Tsar would honor the hundreds of thousands of Russian peasants who had made their way to Moscow for the occasion, I had taken no further part in such preparations.

Indeed,
~~Concerning the Coronation itself, my contribution would also be of~~ *was of*
 no more importance than if I had been a spectator. ~~Since I did hear a good~~ *(receiving, however)*
 deal from other devils about the separate stages of the religious rites that
 would embody the event on May 14, 1896, ~~I will yet offer a competent~~ *and so I am able to*
 account at second hand. On May 9, however, ~~when Nicholas II and~~ *five days earlier,*
 Alexandra made their entrance into the Kremlin from ~~their~~ *g* temporary
 residence ~~(May 6 to May 9)~~ in Petrovsky Park, it was a different matter. I
 did witness that.

The procession, as it made its way up Tverskaya Street, extended
 from the northern outskirts of Moscow to the Kremlin itself, and presented a
 spectacle so lavish that only a small sense of its extent is realized by this

excerpt from KR. *(I well say he was the ~~diarist~~*
diarist whose entries I could inventably look
forward to enjoying

KR Diary May 9

What exultation! The first salute sounded signaling
 that the Tsar had left Petrovsky Palace, the bells rang out even
 more joyfully. Everyone removed their hats and crossed
 themselves. And then through the Spassky gates, the head of
 the procession came into sight, His Majesty's own escort, then
 the sovereign cossacks, behind them the Tsar's hunt, the court

musicians and finally the golden coaches. The procession stretched for a long, long way, the golden coaches and carriages, the embroidered uniforms, the horses covered with golden cloths. The Emperor appeared on a white horse holding his hat in his hand. Without waiting for his greeting, the troops welcomed him with an enormous roar.

In the crowd, many were praying, many made the sign of the cross as the Emperor passed. The Empress Marie cried the whole time in her golden carriage. It was too painful for her to remember how 13 years ago she had participated in the same celebration with her beloved husband.

The above would satisfy me more if only it indicated what calculations had gone into each detail of the ~~events and~~ ^{ceremonies and} entertainments on that day. The highest ministers of state had debated among themselves as to which diplomatic and economic factors ~~had~~ ^{were} to be most respected. Half of the uniformed and diplomatic cadres of the world ~~were~~ ^{had come to Moscow}, after all, present as ~~guests~~. Delegations arrived from every European country and from Asia, no mean trip out of Korea, Siam, ^{or} ~~or~~ ^(Australia) but then, this Coronation looked to offer its parallel to the majestic entry of Louis XIV into Reims in 1654. So, on the morning of May 9th, came a great series of processions in full

panoply, there to exhibit to the world all the exceptional resources and ^{varying} ~~separate~~ peoples of the Russian Empire. On came the Cossacks with their tunics in scarlet, their silver epaulettes, their blue pants, their black boots, their black and silver caps; on came Asiatic princes from remote and unpronounceable regions, wearing costumes of a variety beyond description, representatives of all the far-off barbarians whom the Russians had conquered through several centuries. They were followed by close to a regiment of Court footmen, courtiers, and imperial huntsmen. A loftier note was struck by a procession of the two Grand Masters of the Coronation Ceremonies, the Arch Grand Master and his court, twelve Chamberlains and twenty-five Gentlemen of the Chamber, plus the Marshalls of the Court, and all the members of the Council of Empire followed in succession by the regiments of the Royal Army, then Nicky himself, born, as all too many were whispering, on the sixth of May. Thousands of onlookers were passing such information to each other, Russians most of all, for May 6 was nothing less than the Orthodox Feast Day of St. Job the Sufferer. It can be taken for granted that we had no small hand in reminding many an onlooker (one of the most sinister and foredoomed dates) that May Sixth was a sinister ~~position~~ to occupy on the calendar.

^{was most} Nicky ^{this had} happened to be aware of such omens. ^{Already} In the early
^{so,} ~~It was his duty~~ ^{It was his duty to warn} rhapsodic weeks of their betrothal, he had ~~warned~~ ^{would any and} Alix. He could do no
 less. ~~It was his duty~~. And she had replied that it would now be her duty to
 stand beside him. In union with each other, they ~~could~~ ^{would any and} overcome all dire
 signs. That was a God-given test, ^{so,} as she saw it. Yes, God had wanted this,
 Alix told him. Together, they could incarnate the powers of transcendence.
 They would not have to suffer like Job. They would ^{be ready to} ~~love~~ God even more
 than St. Job had loved Him.

All this I learned on the day they entered the Kremlin. I was able at
 last to enter Nicky's mind. Very much to my surprise, I must also admit.
 Never, as I have related, had there been in my experience so great a cordon
 of security surrounding any other human being. Just so closely were Nicky
 and Alix protected by the Cudgels. Yet, on this day, when he rode his
 English mare all the way from Petrovsky Park to the Spassky Gates of the
 Kremlin, I was able to reach into his thoughts. Be certain, it was but a
 minor entry. Still, the Maestro had not been wholly barricaded. The
 Cudgels had not succeeded altogether in blocking every ^{route} ~~passage~~ into
 Nicky's brain. Ten years ago when he was an eighteen-year-old cadet, he

had had a short but agreeably lustful set of encounters with one of the Maestro's long-term devils. She had coupled with Nicky while taking the form of a gypsy prostitute, a tsvigane. It was all accomplished before the Cudgels had begun to devote their present ~~all-inclusive~~ ^{and massive} effort to protect him. So the Maestro had succeeded ~~then~~ ^{some} in gaining this small ingress into Nicky's soul. Be certain!—many skirmishes and small wars ~~had~~ ^{have} been conducted since concerning this modest and now hard-maintained path. The D.K. had sent a cohort of angels to seal it off and I would suspect that the Maestro had succeeded nonetheless—and with what skill!—in keeping it open.

My honor—which is to say, my now much-improved sense of my value to the Maestro—was that he had invited me to use this invaluable passage ^{during} for the two hours it would take for Nicholas the Second to parade his horse ~~on this day~~ up Tverskaya Street to the Kremlin. **Who else among our group was included, I cannot say. (The Maestro has the power, when he chooses, to render us insensitive even to compatible presences.)** In any event, my orders were explicit. I was to initiate nothing. I was there to pick up whatever passing thoughts or memories were in Nicky's head, but I was not to attempt anything on my own. The passage was too narrow. A

forceful effort—powerful enough to incite a headache in Nicky—would alert the Cudgels.

I obeyed. It was indeed a privilege. On the other hand, there were few surprises. ^{His} The letters had prepared me for ^{the quality of} most of the passing moments in ^{this} the young Tsar's mind.

^{All the same,} ~~Indeed,~~ I was disappointed, ^{even if that was to} ~~That could be expected.~~ ^{already} On the basis of ~~the letters,~~ I knew ^{that} our Nicky was no extraordinary fellow—decent within his limitations, but in no way, remarkable. When in the military, ^{he had risen,} ~~he~~ ^{had risen,} given his obvious advantages, ^{he had risen,} to the rank of Colonel in the Life Guards. All the same, I found it curious that as he set out on the

Processional, he saw himself again as just that, a very young Colonel. I

must say he knew his own desires sufficiently to recognize that he would have been happier if he could have spent his life ^{as an officer} in the role of a respected

^{such} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~middle rank.~~ ^{field officer.} Indeed, the roaring enthusiasm of the troops as they saluted

him on this day of parade, provided not only a joy, but a pang. The Crown was going to be placed on his head in five days. After that, he would be obliged to give a full farewell to a host of rousing memories. In no way

could he ever see himself again as a ^{young} ~~Colonel,~~ ^{Colonel,} ~~young officer.~~

I did have one surprise. ^{His} These recollections were ^{openly} libidinous. Even on this day, ~~they were libidinous~~. If the Maestro had installed one devil of a whore in his heart, she was still calling to him. He could not ignore the direct physical reaction. Each great cheer from the troops immediately stirred a tumult in his groin. ~~Even~~ ^{his} English mare, so elegant, so pale in color, seemed ^{about to} ~~aware of~~ his excitement. She ^{began to after} ~~was actually breaking out a new~~ set of fancy steps, his wonderful horse with her exquisite sense of dressage. How she pranced!

Yet, after no more than another minute, these good spirits ^{so} ~~shared~~ by horse and rider, were thrust back into gloom. What quick woe! To be born as a future monarch on the Feast Day of St. Job the Sufferer. What, indeed, had God intended? Why had He scourged poor Job's body? ~~How much~~ ^{with such intensity} Job had prayed to God ~~yet his suffering had not abated~~. And in five days, in his turn, he, Nicky, would be obliged to look to God ^{comparable} ~~for complete~~ guidance.

Yet, just as quickly, Nicky's ^{good} ~~mood rose again~~ ^{came back}. I could only do my best to follow. I will confess that his thoughts came to me in confusing bursts and with stops, full of clatter and echo, but then, even ^{his} ~~this~~ dark mood could not remain morose in the face of this promenade. So many

decorations had been hung upon the face of the homes and buildings on Tverskaya Street. Moscow, on this morning, had the radiance of an old lady who had never been as beautiful before. ~~It was a~~ rare beauty. On most mornings, the face of Moscow could be ugly and harsh, but on this day of extravagant good weather, Moscow was so bright that it occasioned Nicky to think of glorious hunting days. Even Alexander III, his own great father, had seen fit to compliment his son's prowess in the forest. Nicky blushed on receiving so rare a compliment from his father, and proceeded immediately to give the credit to his hunting dogs. Whereupon, Tsar Alexander the Third had said, "One can measure a man by his dogs."

Yes, let the Almighty see him as the loyalest of His dogs. He knew animals, indeed, he knew them. Almost always, when drinking the blood of a stag just hunted down, the echo of the last shot still ^{alive} pulsing in his ear, he ^{would} ~~feel~~ always ~~feel~~ close to God. The stag ~~was~~ ^{was} so immaculate in form, ~~yet~~ ^{for Nicky, the} had just sacrificed its existence. Why? ^{was there} The answer was simple but profound. This death of a beautiful beast had the power to deliver ^{closer} more understanding between God and man. For it was God who had given human beings the right to take the lives of lower creations despite the exquisite beauty of their

^{life}
~~presence~~ in the forest. And, at this moment, in full parade, Nicky
 remembered a blasphemy that once had ^{burned} ~~choked~~ in his throat. It came as he
 drank his first cup of stag's blood. He had thought: "Is this blood not like
 Christ's blood? How else can it be ^{taste} ~~so~~ full of heaven?" Remembrance of
 such a blasphemy made him wince. It also made him think of ^{his} ~~all the~~ duties
^{that occasioned his sense of dread}
~~yet~~ to come. Already, he could feel their weight. ~~For every duty could~~
^{was ready to}
~~spring~~ a trap. He might feel close to God, he could certainly feel close to
 beautiful animals, but always there were people around, seeking to touch his
 hand. It was people he could hardly bear. Nor trust! His ministers! Each
 office of state was as demanding as a nagging wife. The loyalty of those
 ministers did not ~~really~~ go to him but to the aggrandizement of their offices.
 They were always looking to satisfy their ^{own} ~~separate~~ positions. Deceit was at
 their fingertips. Self-interest was in their skin.

He could withstand them, he told himself. He had a supreme trinity
 by which to protect himself. ~~The trinity of monarchy.~~ His father's guide.
 He could hold to three principles—to Honor, to Tradition, and to Service.
^{only} Yet he could remain faithful to ^{three, commanding} ~~such~~ principles ~~only~~ if he ~~could become a~~
^{became a}
 (strong ruler. Otherwise, his honor would always be in danger of turning

into dishonor, his allegiance to tradition could ^{stiffen into inflexibility,} become too inflexible, and he might even be broken ^{in the end,} by the dull call of service. Already, his duties were detestable. Yes, it could all go down to disaster. He was not, Nicky now told himself, equipped to deal with his ^{these} ministers and their endless intrigues. Dealing with his ministers, That was like falling through space.

Whereas to kill an animal, yet ^{knows} feel compassion for the beast—such an act was ^{not only} nearness to God, ^{but} Marrow for the soul.

~~And~~ At this moment, his ^{mare} prize horse felt near enough to ^{her} his master's thoughts to rear up. For in her mind, ^{she had just} the ~~mare~~ had a sight of the stag's blood. A cry of fear rose from the spectators as the mare ^{swooped} teetered on her hind legs. The crowd gasped, ~~but~~ then it applauded. All who were lining the streets, or perched high above up on the roofs of Tverskaya Street—all

those tens of thousands who witnessed the moment—~~now~~ offered a great wave of applause ^{at} Nicky's grace in ^{restoring} recapturing the confidence of the

horse. ^{Another man,} ~~He~~ could have been thrown but he had steadied ^{his} the beast. ^{A sense} ~~Brouhaha~~ of elation

traveled through the crowd all the way up to the Spassky gate of the Kremlin. ^{There were,} ^{of spectators too far away} Other tens of thousands who were in the distance could not have ^{on the route ahead to have,} seen it and could not know why they were ready to applaud, yet did so even ^{so they} they

as they heard the sound of ^{this} such approbation rolling up the long street ^{to} them. And Nicky was flushed with ^{pleasure at} his own skill in calming his horse. How nicely it had all been brought off, God at his side, God in the place where he always wanted Him to be.

^{No matter,} All the same, his sense of doom soon returned. For his future duty ^{was} must be to aid and abet the ^{projects} intentions of his ministers. ^{Yet, to him,} Only, He above ~~should know how void Nicky felt whenever he had to talk to them. His~~ ^{they} officials were as flimsy as a house of cards, yes, one spineless construction built on top of another. ^{And they would never} ~~Yet no matter how much he might do, he was~~ certain his ministers would choose to be dissatisfied. They could not respect him. They were too accustomed to the force of his father.

Certainly, their opinions ^{we were able to override} overrode already the direction of his own desire. He had not planned this procession. They had. Over and over, they had insisted that this promenade on May 9 would be his introduction to the world. ^{and so the procession} The length of the march was, therefore, crucial. It must become the longest parade in history, ^{and he} The most crucial element (which he altogether ~~detested~~) was that he ^{so} must be seen in the front of this file many miles long. His mother and Alix, ^{however, were to} in turn, must bring up the rear in two separate golden

coaches. This arrangement, the ministers insisted, would be the ^{most dramatic} ~~best~~ way to demonstrate how great and ^{near-to-endless} ~~panoramic~~ was the vast extent of Russian power.

Alix had detested her placement. She ^{had} wanted to be seated next to ~~her~~ ^{her} beloved Lovy. He tried to explain the intentions of the ministers, ~~but~~ ⁼⁼ her silent criticism remained in her eyes. It was one matter to feel like a dog before God, but quite another to ^{be one with} ~~have to slink around~~ one's wife. Nothing is worse for a hound who would be brave than to be told by the ^{eyes} ~~flash~~ of the beloved ~~eye~~ ^(no more than) that he is ~~really~~ (a timid and conceivably smelly creature).

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Over the five days from May 9 to May 13th, Nicky was engaged in work of the worst sort so far as he was concerned. On the 10th of May as well as on the 11th, he held ceremonial receptions which required Alix and himself to stand in one place for hours without moving. This ability to remain affable ^{while not shifting nor indicating} and not shift (one's feet, or indicate any sense of strain, was considered ^a ~~one of the~~ critical measures ^{As} of royal competence. ~~So, as~~

ambassadors and celebrated envoys were presented (and many had ^{had} ~~their~~ ^{significance described} reputations underlined for him in advance) ~~by his ministers~~ he knew who had to receive ^{his best} the warmest attention. As he complained to Alix afterward and to his mother, his cheeks were sore from being kissed by

plenipotentiaries with stiff mustaches and harsh beards. Naturally, he
 smiled gaily as he complained to his women-folk, ^{He would} in a manner to suggest that
 this was the ~~most~~ laughable part of the endless ironies of social life. But he
 was ~~truly~~ ^{face,} annoyed. He was fond of his ~~skin~~ ^{skin}. How his legs ached!

On the 12th of May, the banner of state had to be consecrated, which
 called for a long and intricate service ^{that required} the royal couple ^{hand} to
 memorize ^{each} every step, and ^{every} each verbal response. Between ^{such} each move, they
 stood in place, ~~regal~~, unmoving, limbs aching, ~~regal~~.

On May 13th, ^{other ornaments were} the royal regalia ^{Assembling} was transported from the armory to the
 throne hall of the Kremlin Palace. ^{Now} a host of anxieties rose ^{into his mood} like a
 pestilence of small insects ^{into his mood}. He had been told in advance that
 it would be an easy day, and it should have been, ^{for} the ceremonies were, ^{by now}
 routine, but he felt ^{nevertheless} as if hell itself was waiting to issue its
 ugliest ^{blazes}. If only ^{nothing} went wrong to spoil tomorrow. He saw the ^{end}

^{of the} 14th as deliverance. He would ^{be rid of} move from his present condition as the acting
 Tsar, to becoming ^{He would be} no less than the consecrated Tsar. Himself! Wholly
 consecrated! ^{But} Then gloom descended. Something was bound to go wrong!

I began to think his sentiments were not wholly misplaced. It was as if he knew that something malign for him was in the works. What he did not have much instinct for, was the date. Each day seemed ^{as} dangerous as the next. Each day from the tenth to the thirteenth, he suffered through ceremony after ceremony, ~~convinced and~~ ^{accompanying} confused by the certainty of his instinct and the ~~ongoing~~ ^{lack of} lack of corroboration.

It was fortunate his knowledge was restricted to the ceremonies he ~~attended~~ ^{attended}. With his inflamed sense of anticipation, he might have ~~gone mad if~~ ^{become} ~~unbalanced if~~ ^{unbalanced if} he had had to keep close watch on ~~all~~ the preparations he did not witness.

They were as widespread as a city beneath the city. The streets of Moscow, which I had only glimpsed in passing had now become more prominent to me. So I could note ^{by} ~~what an~~ ^{that a countless} endless number of platforms had been erected ^{the} for spectators ^{almost as many others for} and patriotic displays. ~~So many~~ ^{two} false fronts were now hiding the uglier buildings on the route. Most of all, however, one kept seeing ~~the~~ letters "N" for Nicky, and "A" for Alix painted on ~~all too many~~ ^{accompanied by} walls, ~~and~~ together with ~~endless repetitions of the same~~ holy patriotic words, painted on ~~so many~~ walls. "God Save the Tsar," and "Glory to our Russian Tsar, Glory, Glory, Glory!" were the ~~two~~ most popular.

One of the Russian authors I had read in preparation for understanding St. Petersburg and Moscow was Maxim Gorky. **Like any good radical** of this period—and we were on close terms with many ~~radicals~~ ^{were looking to}—sometimes I did not know whether we ~~could count on~~ ^{might} monarchists ~~having~~ ^{would} to do their best for us, or ~~would~~ ^{might} it be their enemies? In any event, Maxim Gorky ~~like any good radical~~ ^{enraged by} was ~~full of rage at~~ such egregious patriotism ~~and piety, ready to preen with its slogans all over the place. His~~ ^{told his friends} remarks ~~were, as expected, sardonic.~~ Moscow, he ~~indicated,~~ was like a ~~widow,~~ a most salacious widow, who has bedizened her crotch with French lingerie. Yes, old lady Moscow, on the hunt for a new bridegroom.

I was not assigned to Maxim Gorky, and so did not have the pleasure of following him through ~~the streets, if indeed he was there for the occasion,~~ ^{his day.} But the streets were exceptional. These days, the people of Moscow could have been mistaken for ~~the~~ ⁶⁷ denizens of St. Petersburg. There, up north, if you saw 100 men passing, at least ten were in uniform. Now, here, on the best street, Kuznetsky Most, Moscow was jammed with officers come to the city from many a nation ^{and} speaking many a language. ~~The equivalent of a~~ ^{might have been} world congress ~~was~~ in progress.

I made a point of studying ~~these alterations in~~ the city. I hardly
 needed the knowledge for my particular mission and yet, for all I knew, I
 did. It is dangerous to look to make a large stroke when one is unfamiliar
 with the terrain. ^{So,} I set out to learn as much as I could, ~~therefore, and so~~
~~and so)~~ ^{prepare for,} noted almost at once that many of the ~~local~~ ^{local} merchants and ~~lease holders~~ ^{local residents}
 were profiting by what they charged for their rentals. ^{opening their places to spectators} During the procession
 on May 9th, for example, ^{for example, to rent} anyone who had a window on the street, ^{on May 9th,} could rent
 out his room for 200 rubles from dawn to sunset. ^(was able to) Hired carriages with their
 coachmen cost 1200 rubles for the month. Useless to argue that one only
 wanted the coach for a few days, ~~not a month~~ ^{an amount,} or that one could buy ten
 good horses for such ~~a large rental.~~ 1200 rubles! Even to be allowed to
 stand in a narrow space with a limited view on a flimsily-built platform
 came to 10 or 15 rubles—^{those} woe to ~~all~~ ^(such a) (who were obese. Woe to all who were
 standing next to a fat man. And that was all you got for your fifteen rubles.
 Anyone wealthy enough ^{you} to afford a balcony had to spend 500, which was
 the equal, I suppose, of purchasing four or five good horses. Those who
 belonged to the English Club fared a little better. Since it was the English
 Club, each member had an eye for the ladies, and ~~each member~~ was allowed

therefore to bring as many as four lady guests. Being English, however, they were quick to instruct their members that on procession day, May 9th, all must be in their places by 8 in the morning. They would not be ~~obliged~~ ^{expected}

to stand on the newly-constructed balcony of the Club until the parade was ~~commenced~~ ^{commenced}, there, but they had to be ~~on hand~~ ^{on hand} at least on the premises. It ~~proved to be a~~ ^{since that} ~~would entail a~~ ^{would entail a} two and a half hour wait. In consequence, well-prepared, breakfast was

served, a most special English breakfast, ~~with~~ ^{with} kippers, sausage, bacon, porridge and eggs, and the men, whether English, or looking to be taken for citizens of Great Britain, ~~at~~ wore early-morning tail-coats. The ladies, ~~needless to say~~, were in party dresses. The only contretemps occurred when

the police insisted on examining every nook ~~and closet~~ of the club. The building had the good fortune, if now the immediately nasty fortune, to be on the Tsar's route. Even the janitors were cross-examined by the police.

The managers of the club did their best to mollify members and guests by explaining how each and every building on the route had been examined in similar fashion. Indeed, here, out of ~~courtesy~~ ^{fundamental} and fundamental respect for Great Britain, there had been a minimum of this necessary disruption.

Those who had ^{travelled here) (far off} come from outer parts of Russia or from abroad ^{but} ~~were not~~ ^{they enough,} had the money to rent apartments overlooking the parade route, had to ~~be~~ ^{pay} good for a rent of up to 2500 rubles, ~~equal again, by my measure, to 25~~

~~fine horses~~. Good hotel rooms were hardly possible to find. The

government had occupied most of them. Whole floors were needed for

foreign princes and princesses, diplomatic representatives, noblemen, or ^{(v. casuals} ~~and, needless to add, being~~ ^{Sard diplomatic)} honored artists, or honored tycoons. The French, ^{That would help} determined to leave their

imprint on the occasion, would spend 200,000 rubles, ~~which comes to two~~ ^{to} ~~as~~ ^{to establish their position as} thousand horses ~~(I grow tired of this measure.)~~ The French were,

~~obviously there to declare that they were~~ the great, good, loyal, and

immovable ally of the Russians. Since that had ^{once} been the Germans' role ^{ten} years earlier, ~~(I recall the annoyance in Uncle Willy's letter to Nicky) the~~

~~on cause in Willy's diplomats~~

~~Germans~~ responded by moving out of Moscow to a palace in the woods

costing only 7000 rubles, a modest gem, but then the Germans did not even

give a ball, just a musicale. They may also have been gambling on bad

weather. ^{However, the} The procession on May 9th had ~~not only had~~ ^{and} beautiful skies, but the heavens stayed open and sunny all week, a rare event ^{sequence} for Moscow.

Given the firm Russian expectation that nothing good can prevail for long,

~~there were many who feared that the day of the Coronation would not be as~~
~~fortunate. The skies were expected to be wet.~~ ^{we're certain that} Instead, another fabulous day
~~came westward to Moscow from Siberia. I had to begin to wonder if this~~
^{see rain.}
~~was a gift from the D.K. So, fire predictions had to be amended.~~ ^{D.K. was offering this gift. At Many}
~~numerous seers in Moscow,~~ ^{all} the women who had been quick to predict
~~floods of rain,~~ ^{down pour,} the fault of the new Tsarina, ~~now~~ ^{now} could only shake their
~~heads at any mention of the future.~~ After all, Alix had been introduced to
~~Russian Orthodoxy right on the heels of the demise of Alexander III.~~ ^{after} So,
~~these women now said, "She comes to us behind a coffin."~~ ^{All the same,}
~~but~~ ^{given the} ~~beatitude~~ ^{beatitude} of this exceptional day, a counter-sentiment ^{soon}
~~arose. Many were now saying, "We are close to the end of the century.~~
^{this Twentieth Century)}
~~Maybe the new one will be different. Here is the Twentieth Century.~~ Let
~~miracles of beauty and comfort come to us."~~

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~~I was not to see the Coronation itself.~~ Soon enough, I will be able to speak of the preparations put together for the episode which would occur on the 18th of May, four days later, but concerning the

Coronation itself, I am not able to offer much which is my own. Of course, ^{given the number} ~~many~~ (of our agents were on hand, and from ^{did} ~~them~~) I (received) some

insights on what might be passing through the mind of Nicholas II. Still, ^{(who) passed} ~~some~~ ^{comes none the less} ~~from~~

(the most direct view still came from his diaries. On the 29th of April, a

fortnight before the Coronation, but already steeped in unhappy

anticipation, Nicky had written to his mother,

It seems to me that we should look upon all the difficult ceremonies in Moscow as a great trial sent to us by God, ~~as in every step we will have to repeat what we did during those wonderful, happy days thirteen years ago.~~

Same #
~~Yes, thirteen years ago, his father had been crowned. No one had expected Alexander to die so early.~~

... The only thought that consoles me is that we will never have to perform the same rite again in our lives and henceforth, our existence will be smooth and even, I truly believe this, God will help us!

~~That was~~ not a good deal to go by, ~~and~~ *≡* if I did not know better, I would have been vexed that the Maestro did not include me in the rare cadre of devils who would be present to infiltrate the Coronation. But I knew that the quickest route to his favor was to accept *whatever* ~~any and every~~ position *was* assigned. Folly to wish for anything *more. Besides,* ~~other. Moreover, he had even~~ commended me privately for the action I had suggested, and added, "See

the Coronation for what it is, a petty event in the grand scheme of things.

You will miss nothing."

~~So~~, I saw it all ^{therefore} from a distance. I was not present in any of the cathedrals, not the Assumption, the Archangel, nor the Annunciation. I did not attend the banquet at the Kremlin Palace. All of that ^{came to} was offered to me ^{which is why I am now} at second hand from other devils, and to a degree, I am even reduced to describing ^{most} ~~much~~ of the occasion by way of Konstantin Romanov. This KR—whom I have already mentioned in passing—was not only an accomplished diarist, but a part of the royal family, a bachelor uncle to Nicky, a Romanov who lives for his adventures in bathhouses. While KR is not exactly shunned by the family, he is seen as special. Unlike the other Grand Dukes, he lives in a small palace, not a large one, although it is most elegant, and no one among these close relatives keeps ^{—as I have noted—} a better diary. Here, for instance, is his entry on the eve of the Coronation:

KR Diary May 13, 1896, Moscow

So the great day is at hand. The heart beats in anticipation as at something out of the ordinary, significant, full of deep meaning.

This is followed by a full account on May 14, 1896.

There was not a single cloud in the sky. The cathedral square was flooded with bright sunshine. High up in the blue skies, the swallows darted with shrill cries. It was already hot. The troops were forming up, the spectators taking their places in the stalls. At 8 o'clock the family and crown princes gathered in the Great Hall of the Palace.

At 8:45, the doors opened and the Empress Marie appeared. Our hearts bled when we saw her; she was wearing a crown and a heavy purple mantle, like a victim prepared for the sacrifice. Her face expressed suffering.

Reading this, I, of course, thought that to understand the real cause of her suffering, KR would have done better to have recognized that the Empress Marie was developing a full-fledged distaste ~~close to hatred~~ for Alix. Of course, KR was also doing his best to ignore the immense narcissism of the Empress Marie. This tiny, beautiful woman who had been married to a giant, had been esteemed for her social graces, her skill at the

fanciest balls, her snobbery so ^{enhanced by all her} accoutered with all its own refined species of
 elegance ^{that} ~~yes~~, she was ^(not at all) ill-prepared to cease to be the true Empress.

In any event, KR, ^{at a distance,} followed her into the Ouspensky Cathedral.

KR Diary, May 14, 1896

She was escorted by Alexei and the Danish Crown Prince. The procession was so long, due to the number of foreigners, that by the time she reached the cathedral, we had not even reached the main entrance. We heard the sound of cheers from far away in the square, greeting her appearance on the front steps. Inside the Cathedral, the grand duchesses and princesses stood to the right of the throne, immovable on the dais. The Empress took her place on the throne, a little to the right of the thrones of the Emperor and the young Tsarina. We took our places.

A roar from the square heralded Their Majesties procession. The priest went out to greet and asperge them with holy water. Then Their Majesties entered and bowed to the cathedral icons. The Emperor was concentrated. His face had an expression of piety and supplication. His whole countenance expressed majesty. The young Tsarina

is the embodiment of kindness and goodness, and the Dowager Empress looked as young as she did thirteen years ago on the day of her own Coronation.

When the Emperor and His Consort mounted their thrones, the attendants carrying their regalia blocked my view so I could not see anything. I could only glimpse the Emperor with difficulty as he recited the Credo. His assistant, Vladimir, helped him put on the large purple mantle. At this point, his large Andreev chain with the diamonds, broke.

The chain broke! I queried the devils, but was unable to determine how much we had to do with that little rupture. I have to add, it was painful not to know more. Given the number of Cudgels surrounding this ceremony, ^{was} it possible that we ^{had seen} were able to ^{cause} encourage a chain so ^{sacred} important as the Andreev to break? Or, ^{was} had this been a lapse in concentration on the part of the Dummkopf? ~~Was this, then, a bonus to us we had not designed? Or was it the fruit of our concentrated effort?~~ Like humans, devils will speak of their nerves, of good and bad nerves, of happy resolutions to serious questions—happy, at least, for us—and small dilemmas that can prove as unyielding as a burr you ^{cannot} ~~can't quite~~ locate in the

seat of your garment. For us, the secret to maintaining one's nerves nicely in balance is ~~not~~ to live with ^{no} unnecessary questions.

Since I will not know the answer, let me go back, at least, to KR's description:

I could just see as He raised the crown onto His own head and took the orb and the sceptre; but I could not see anything of the Empress kneeling before Him, for I was only able to catch sight of Him raising Her to Her feet, kissing Her. I could hardly hear the speech of the Metropolitan. I could hardly hear the prayers read by the Emperor as he kneeled. It was only when everybody went to their knees and the Emperor alone was standing, that I was able to gaze on Him.

A little later, when the ceremony was over, KR added this line:

The Emperor embraced me; I nearly burst into tears and said, "Christ be with you."

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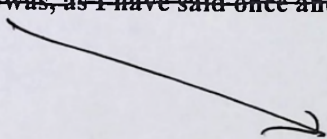
"Christ be with you," KR had said, and there was everything to contemplate concerning those few words. There is, after all, such a labyrinth of relations between the Maestro and the Dummkopf, so many endless compromises, brutalities, games, deceits, reversals, outright treachery on both sides—to be divine does not mean that you cannot break your word! But also, with it all, there are real ongoing negotiations between our best devils, and the Lord's most superior Cudgels, who, given the local case, are often His Russian Orthodox priests, still alive, still human, but wholly committed in advance to become Cudgels so soon as they pass through their mortality. Such is the unwavering intensity of their living

oath. Among our own schools of diabolical scholars, there is much contemplation of the mysteries of priestly behavior, their regimen, their sanctification, and, often, most difficult of all, their ceremonial procedure, which they fortify with their relics, their thrice-holy icons, their instruments of ascension such as the Chain, the Cross, the Crown, their Standards, the Sceptre to be placed in the Tsar's right hand, and the Orb in his left, yes, all of that, and then the Throne itself, most resonant with blessings and curses from both sides, this hallowed Throne upon which the Tsar Michael Fyodorovitch sat in the year 1613. Who, then, can disavow the intensity of belief in the limited minds of most humans? Who among them cannot believe that an indispensable magic power ~~is~~ derived directly from God ~~and~~ has just entered the pores, the flesh, and the heart of the Tsar? I could not even state to a certainty how much of this immanence belonged to the Dummkopf Himself, and how much derived (secretly!) from our own E.O. (The Maestro's pride and joy is to ^{smuggle} import his wares into God's gifts.) There was no question in my mind that the Maestro also wanted Nicky to believe in the God whom he expected was out there for him, waiting to bless the new Tsar and his bride even as they and everyone else in the Cathedral

heard the hundred and one bells above and the hundred and one salvos fired outside by cannon to herald the perfection of the Unction. Together did Alix and Nicky hear the conclusion of this Eucharist whose origins were embedded in the very bowels (theological structures also have bowels!) of Orthodox Russia. Through our own special knowledge, we recognize that there are hours when well-guarded material objects ^{can} intensify an awareness of the spiritual, even as they ^{carry} ~~also evoke~~ our spells. (The two can ^{reside} ~~preceed~~ together even when most mismatched. An unhappy marriage is still a marriage! The union is even more binding than the disharmony.) So, I can say only that we were not opposed to the notion that Nicky believed in His God. We wanted him to believe that God was there, and helping him.

We, too, were involved, and in a manner more complex than ^{any of us} ~~even I can~~ ^{but the Maestro could} comprehend. Yet, all the details of this ceremony had evolved through centuries of the most delicate and incisive infighting ^{length of} ~~between the two~~ ~~the two great powers~~ ~~Divine Majesties. So, the form itself was by now an accommodation of the~~ ~~scars, treaties, wounds, and healing lines between our two great forces.~~

Let me see if I can even suggest something of the sacerdotal atmosphere present on May 14th. ~~I was, as I have said once and again, not~~



~~there, but many of the Maestro's assistants, and many of my colleagues~~
~~did provide me with a few critical intuitions.~~ It was, as all were agreeing,
 a day of incomparable weather for Moscow, and the procession had set out
 from the Palace at half past ten on this brilliant morning, every inner silence
 buried in the peals of a thousand church bells, some as light as leaves,
 quite from the metal itself, others as heavy as groans. Bells throughout the city. All the priests and
 dignitaries inside Assumption Cathedral came out to the paradon to
 welcome the Monarchs. And before they entered, they were sprinkled with
 holy water and offered the Holy Cross for kissing. Once within, ~~there were~~ ^{the Trinite}
 repetitive expressions of the Trinity, three times were prayers repeated,
 and three times were the holy icons kissed, before they could ascend the steps of
 the dais in the center of the cathedral, that holiest of centers within the
 holiness of the cathedral.

We had ^{had} as much to do with the building of every church ^{here} as the
 Cudgels. We were even there when Michael Fyodorovitch, the first Tsar of
 the Romanov dynasty, ascended to the same Throne, so I will not bother to
 describe how the Imperial Regalia were placed at their side, even as the
 Metropolitan of St Petersburg importuned Nicholas II to make his public

confession (as if he would not!). And Nicky did make his public confession in a voice spoken so low and with such intent and with such brevity that no one could hear. Upon which, having concluded, the Tsar-about-to-be took the Holy Book and read the prayer for the day, to the chorus of the Metropolitan saying, "The blessing of the Holy Spirit be with thee. Amen."

All this is tiresome to describe unless one is at the center of it, and ^{there by} ~~also~~ able to feel ~~close to the entrance~~ ^{approach} of the Holy Spirit. (On many an occasion, this blessing ^{becomes} is our gift, or at the least—let me use the word—is infiltrated with our spirit.) ^{I think it} It was at this point that the Chain of the Order of Saint Andrew broke ^{when} even as His Majesty bowed his head to receive it. ^{CR} ~~But~~ ^{course, the priests ignored this small disaster} ~~no attention was paid to this.~~ It was a rule of order among these ^{indicate} ~~suggest~~ ^{therefore} ~~Metropolitans~~ never to ^{gone} ~~indicate~~ that any element in so sacred a service had ^{without} ~~been at all awry.~~ ^{a pause, laid} ~~And so,~~ The Metropolitan, made the sign of the cross, ~~laid~~ ^{his hands on the Tsar's head,} and proceeded to enunciate two prayers. One was, I expect, for the poor broken diamond chain, and the other went according to the established order. It was at this moment that Nicholas the Second reached out his hands to the arms of the Metropolitan, took up the Crown, and placed it upon his own head. After which came the Sceptre to

his right hand and the Orb to his left. After which he proceeded to establish himself, or at least established his ^{royal} ~~headquarters~~, on the ^{seat of the} ~~throne~~ of Tsar Michael Fyodorovitch. Whatever he felt from such contact, he rose but a few moments later, handed over the Regalia to his attendants, and beckoned to Alix, who knelt before him on a crimson cushion, its border of golden lace, and this lace trembled delicately from the weight of her knees—the light, I was told, reflected all the way out to the walls of the cathedral. Whereupon Nicky touched the Tsarina's head, just a touch, as if to anoint her.

The choir of the Cathedral possessed voices as close to the human notion of heaven as is attainable by ^a ~~any~~ chorus ~~of voices~~. They sang, "We praise Thee, O God," and again ~~many~~ cannon sounded—one more ongoing salute ~~of~~ one hundred and one salvos!

It ~~went on~~ ^{continued}. No such service could be short. ^{To} ~~And for~~ many, who were most illumined at the beginning, ~~lethargy~~, weariness of the limbs ^{crept in} from standing so long, ~~and even~~ ^{boredom} (profane boredom) entered the Divine Liturgy. No, not all ^{were} ~~we~~ ready for Holy Unction, and yet I have to wonder if just there is not the genius of Russian Orthodoxy. For the length of the service

captured many in the congregation who had had ^{small} ~~less~~ interest at the beginning. It was as if one never knew for certain when a heart was there to be captured by the D.K. or, by our Evil One. So I will not enumerate all the steps taken by the Tsar and the Tsarina after the descent from the dais. A measured three paces here, and three there, the Trinity to be commemorated again and again. For even those who believed in the Father and in the Son could never be certain about the Holy Ghost. Or such was our assumption! ~~For~~ the Maestro often hinted to us that we had our own purchase on this last element, that the Holy Ghost was not simply nor exclusively the reciprocal love of the Father for the Son, and the Son for the Father, but that we were in the embrace as well.) I know the Maestro always spoke well of the Trinity as if he knew something that others did not. I have seen the best man at a wedding who, unknown to all but the bride, has had carnal knowledge of the lady, and there is a subtlety in the posture of such a fellow that I do not find dissimilar to the nuance of appreciation our Maestro is always offering to the Holy Ghost.

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On it went, the Tsar and his retinue moved from Assumption Cathedral to Archangel Cathedral where, with a few variations, the service was repeated, and then on to the Annunciation Cathedral. As much again.

I was told that after all this, the Tsar and Tsarina were in need of rest, but were facing a ceremonial meal in the Hall of Facets. In his diary, he would write that night, "All that happened in the Assumption Cathedral, though it seems but a dream, is not to be forgotten for life." To that he added, "We went to bed early." Whether this was from fatigue, or a resurgence of lust from the good and happy sense that it was done, and they would never have to do it again, ~~for him, it was a day like no other, I~~

I could not begin to say. How I would have liked to have been in their room!

At the least, I would have learned how much the corrupt sanctity—I use precisely those two words—the corrupt sanctity of these holy and possibly

captured Metropolitans had to do with Nicky and Alix's raptures, nor how

powerful had been our emanations from ~~the~~ ^{those} relics. we possessed in secret, No matter the extent of

my desire, I could not learn ~~on this occasion~~ how much the ceremonies

performed by those most accomplished priests, had been able to serve some

sweet, ever-soaring bubble of concupiscence between Nicky and Alix. I

would not know, and so suffered all the pains of a devil. For we are ^{frantic} ~~very~~

~~little~~ without ~~our~~ knowledge.

If it seems strange that I am always hungry to learn more, if this

seems at odds with the more common notion that God and the devil have all

the knowledge they need already, I would suggest that the ^{(approach to} ~~handiest rule of~~

~~thumb~~ for comprehending my powers, is to assume that I am ~~just~~ as much

brighter and ~~more knowledgeable~~ ^(scholar as he) than an accomplished intellectual will be

~~more knowledgeable~~ ^{(which is to say, much brighter,} ~~cleverer~~ than a clod in a poorly-endowed school. Yet, this distance

established, I still cannot begin to command answers to every question that

bedevils humankind. I, too, can be unmanned by the extent of all I do not know.

In any event, busy with my own preparations for the Peasants'

Festival, I missed the banquet that evening in the Palace of Facets. It was

the event of the season ^{and} not only for Moscow but ^{for} all of Russia—one of those

social occasions which can offer ^{a guest} great profit for the future if ^{he or she} you happen ^{to}

^{of social advancements} to be invited—an orgy, so to speak, for the richest of the nouveau riche. ^{there}

~~there~~ ^{there} had not been another event ^{so} in the previous ten years so important to attend.

Of course, there was also ~~a large souring~~ ^{some detectable curdling} of spirit among many of the

^{more} ~~most~~ ambitious souls. They were not always happy with where they had

been placed. If this ^{night came} was long before any notion of the A-list versus the B-

list was introduced to present American society, the category may even have

^{been created} ~~been~~ begun on this occasion. One certainly knew on taking one's seat and

studying the rest of the room exactly how high ~~or not so high~~ was one's

status in the world—at least as Moscow saw it. Indeed, only the most

elevated of the guests were fortunate enough to be placed in the same room

as the Tsar and Tsarina. The cream of the diplomatic corps was there, the

high clergy, the Holy Synod, the very highest of the court ladies, the Grand

Marshal and the Grand Master of Ceremonies—^{they were all} those were granted such a
 privilege. The others, the B-list, had been sent to the Hall of Saint
 Vladimir. Nonetheless, a blunting of ~~and~~ ^{punishment} ambition is the last ~~emotion~~ ^{emotion} even
 the most naive of monarchs ^{would} can wish to arouse among his dinner guests, and
 so Nicholas made a point of visiting every table ^{in company with Alexander}
^{in both rooms} Alexander, followed by the Dowager Empress Marie, the Queen and Prince
 of Naples, the Duchess of Edinburgh, the Crown Prince of Sweden, Duchess
 Elisabeth and Grand Duke Alexei, yes, table by table all the way through the
 Hall of Saint Vladimir, and were in turn greeted with an ovation that could
 come only from the parched throats of people who had been ready to
 assume that after all they had gone through to obtain a high invitation, they
 were to be forgotten after all. What relief, what applause, ^{when they}
^{Saw the Tsar and the Tsarina}
 I will not describe the meal. Since I do not need to eat except when
^{ostensibly} present ^{in presumably} human form, it would give me small pleasure to
 describe the gold plates, the French dishes, ^{selected} ~~several~~ species of caviar, the
 wines (French and Crimean), the vodka, the champagne. All banquets, no
 matter how fancy, succeed finally in generating the same gastric acids in
 those who have been blessed by an invitation. (Be it added that those who

were not used to being ~~waited on~~^{served} individually by three ~~servants~~^{waiters} in red coats with gold trim, certainly enjoyed the repast.) The menus were lavishly illustrated, the Imperial Band played throughout dinner, and the Palace of Facets sparkled. It was the culmination of the Feast of Lights.

In that era, journalists were not encouraged to speak ill of the great and mighty, certainly not on formal occasions. So they all declared that this banquet in the Palace of Facets ~~would~~^{could} never be forgotten by posterity. The Palace of Facets was, after all, renowned for the rarity of its celebrations. Only the most important events in Russian history could open such doors. Ivan the Terrible and Peter the Great had had their Coronation banquets here. One of the reporters from America, bewitched by the honor of attending (although I never learned whether she was in the front room or the back) concluded her piece by adding:

So ended the greatest day of our lives, the one to be remembered for years. We all felt that we had seen the grandest sight that could possibly be imagined and we were pretty lucky mortals, everything had gone so beautifully.

She all but said, and then she did say, that such beauty introduced one "to the realm of the gods." Another reporter, another American, John Logan, stated that he now believed not only in Russia's immense potential for grandeur, but in Nicholas' legitimacy. If there were those who would challenge his opinion, he, for one, would now add that Russia was more prosperous and more peaceful than she had been for years.

The restlessness of the radicals seems to be soothed, let us hope permanently, and let us hope that all friends of true reform may find in the reign of Nicholas II the completion of all that is noble in Russian history as well as the dawn of an era of development and advancement. . . Nicholas II begins his reign with the good wishes of the entire world. Monarchies, empires, and republics alike united to wish him 'bon voyage' on his momentous journey. From Germany, from France, from a venerable Queen who has reigned longest in the history of England's throne, from our own President, and from many other rulers of nations great and small, he received messages of warmest greeting, and above all, the great heart of the common people with a single impulse felt that it has in the kindly, smiling face of

**this youthful Tsar the promise of a reign beneficial
and just.**

Passage into Nicky's mind was, of course, not open to me at this hour, but from a few of my colleagues, I learned where everyone sat, how they dressed, what they put into their stomachs. That, however, told me nothing about Nicky's future dilemmas. The people who surrounded him were so wealthy, and the multitude of peasants who had swarmed into the city were so poor, that I could not determine whether Nicky felt at all near to this colossal separation. My only persistent regret was that a valuable opportunity had been lost. I had not come near enough to Nicholas the Second to be able to approach at last some understanding of why the Dummkopf placed so many hopes in that young man. I was hungry indeed for a few more details. One of the damnable disadvantages of being a devil is the manner in which we become obsessed, just so, with details. Prey to such avidity, we can often appear ridiculous to ourselves. In this narrow sense, we are more intolerant of our faults than most humans.

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Certain aspects of the Coronation, however, were becoming more tangible to me. I could see why so many of the Nicky's most influential advisors had come to the conclusion ^{soon} after Alexander III died that ^{this} the event ^{would have} had to be presented as a monumentally impressive occasion. At best, it ^{must} should surpass all the ~~guests'~~ ^{the} remembrances of grand celebrations. ^{for} These ^{all the guests, even the Russian visitors} ministers, after all, were facing ~~profound~~ problems. If Russia was immensely rich, it was also extraordinarily poor. If the country was ever to become an economic ~~power~~ ^{or to} equal to Europe and America, ~~then~~ ^{then} ~~huge~~ ^{huge incoming} foreign investment ^{would be} was crucial ~~for this period, foreign investment, indeed,~~ ^{and} at a prodigious rate. But to attract such ~~large foreign involvement~~, the

completion of the Trans-Siberian Railroad was paramount. For that would open trade to the Far East and thereby multiply the volume of Russia's economic relations with Europe. To amass enough foreign funds to build that railroad, however, Russia had been obliged to export most of its grain to the West. The Minister of Finance under Alexander III, Ivan Vyshnegradsky, declared that the country had no other choice. Grain was the only commodity Russia was able to offer in bulk. So, the greater part of their harvest was exported. That decision brought on the famine of 1891. Millions of peasants died of starvation.

Now, five years later, hundreds of thousands of the descendants of these peasants had come to Moscow from hundreds of miles away. To the surprise of many Muscovites, they congregated at the various railroad stations in the city. Half of them seemed to be sleeping there, This occasioned a mordant comment from the Maestro:

"Of course the peasants are fascinated by railroad stations. Five years ago they watched all their grain being taken away on freight cars. Now, they wait at railroad stations to see ~~if it will happen again.~~ if it will happen again. what comes in and goes out.

Be assured, the peasants were most interesting to us. Without their future allegiance, Nicholas II would have little legitimacy. He could not

count on the cities. The proletariat (so recently peasants themselves) were obliged to live in ~~intolerable conditions~~ ^{a sordid state}. There was a housing shortage accompanied by cholera, typhus, syphilis, and tuberculosis. Alcoholism had become the leading social problem, ~~It was~~ followed closely by prostitution.

Vishnegradsky's measures served, however, their economic purpose. After the completion of the Trans-Siberian Railroad, ~~heavy industry tripled~~ ^{investment in it} from 1890 to 1900, even as the sewers of Moscow ~~still flooded~~ ^{were still flooding} poor streets in summer and workers ~~froze~~ ^{were freezing} to death in winter. They were replaced by other workers—peasants leaving the land to come into the city.

Those peasants who remained in their villages lived in one-room ^{their} houses. ~~These~~ log cabins usually had no more for furniture than a ~~large~~ ^{stove} ~~table and a long bench~~. ~~The walls had long been blackened with smoke. Seating~~ ^{There were} accommodations consisted of benches along the wall. There were also icons on the wall, cheap reproductions, long-faded, yet a visitor who came into the house would bow first to these holy representations, ^{and only} ~~only~~ then would he greet the master of the house. That was usually the oldest peasant in the room, ~~and as~~ ^{and} a master, he had the best place to sleep, which was on

top of the oven, still warm from the remains of the fire that had heated the evening meal. The rest of the family slept on the floor. To undress was ~~not~~ ^{un}heard of. When the room was not too cold, the men might take off their boots before ~~they~~ ^{stink} lying down. They had a saying: "The ~~stench~~ from your feet will keep the flies away." Armies of flies did inhabit each house and so mothers lived in terror that newborn infants might be driven into insanity by horse-fly bites before they could say their first word. Who knew? These flies were termed devils. A canard. They are ^{part of} the Dummkopf's Creation. One of His little Errors. *(In the beginning, he had been much too fascinated by their agility.)*

Nonetheless, there was a quality in these peasants that I found moving. ~~By this, I do not mean that I felt any emotion so invigorating as compassion.~~ Rather, I respected them a little more than I thought I might. The women particularly—they were all old before their time, lined, misshapen, and yet many ^{were} ~~remained~~ as strong as draft animals. And at the main railroad station, through which I passed for a quick look, I was struck by how they rarely moved, neither men nor women. They were not like other people who spend time at the station—no, at their worst, at their least, they still showed the marks of the famine of 1891. They were so modest.

They had so little sense of their importance that one could not even speak of them as humble. Rather, they had the patience of cattle. Yet, this all gave

me a first intimation of why the Dummkopf might be looking to regain ^{some} ~~any~~ ^{of the} ~~lost~~ ^{He had lost by now becoming his attention to} powers ~~lost through~~ Russia and Russians. In all these poor, ugly, big,

strong, dumb men and their plain sturdy mates, there was an undercurrent ~~of~~ ^{to suggest much} what I can only call a ~~fine human quality~~. They were not without potential.

Since ~~we look to~~ ^{our aim is} traduce human nature, we ~~must also~~ ^{(also look to} develop the acumen to see potentiality in those humans ^{in whom it might be latent} who possess it in concealed form. So, I

will repeat: There was an extraordinary potentiality to be sensed here.

They might be mean, small-minded, ignorant, bewildered, even stupefied,

but all that was but the wax that protects a fine jelly in a jar. Beneath their

torpor ^{behind} ~~and~~ their stupidities, I could sense a future capacity to be strong,

wise, generous, fair, loyal, yes, even understanding. No wonder Tolstoy and

Dostoyevsky had harranged their readers, and all but spoke of the buried

genius to be found in the peasantry of Russia. We had even been ordered by

the Maestro—the best of us, at any rate—to read Tolstoy and Chekhov and

Dostoyevsky, and do so with large respect for their product. "Good writers

are the only humans we are obliged to tolerate," the Maestro was fond

of saying. ^{Nietzsche}~~Nietzsche~~ was another of his favorites. He was fascinated by Nietzsche.

These days, I believe he pays greater attention to the stars of television and the movie screen. Certainly, this is true in America.

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— the event
 At last ~~the~~ day was arriving. The triumph that we needed, the event
 contribution to the festivities,
 that was to be our major event. If it proved to be a success for us, the results
 benefits to us,
 might be felt for years to come.

If the ~~the~~ ministers had prepared a Coronation ~~that was indeed~~ designed to arouse the
 respect of the ~~rest of the~~ world, and so stimulate Russia's industrial and

economic needs. Of course, the internal problems ~~(dis of course)~~ remained. The secret

For years, ~~had been infiltrating~~ police, the Okhranka, knew, for example, how intense were the
 revolutionary circles and had been filling
 revolutionary sentiments among a small but most concentrated section of
 reports on the violence of the sentiments
 the working class. The people, therefore, had to be fortified against such

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 ideas which could yet develop into infestations of the body politic. So, the

the ^{advised} ministers ^{convinced} Nicky that a ^{large} show of generous concern for the
 peasants ^{ought to} must be undertaken by the Tsar ^{Very soon} in the days after the Coronation, ^A
 a vast peoples' ^{would, therefore,} ~~could~~ take place. ^{Since} the foreign generals and statesmen
 who were ^{still} present ^{they} at this time also had to be entertained in recognition of the
 ardors of travelling to Russia, Nicky and Alix, ^{Meaning} therefore, had been busy,
 hour after hour, day after day, every day after the 14th. ^{taking care of} It was not until May
 18, that ^{of} the grand and immense gathering in Khodynskoe Field ^{would honor} for all the
 peasants ^{now in the city,} would take place, a convening for those who had traveled some
 hundreds of miles and, for a few, even more than a thousand miles by
 railroad, by wagon, even on foot ^{just} to be in Moscow. It was so important. ^{when the Tsarevitch became the Tsar,}
 This ~~peasant~~ event would demonstrate Nicky's love. It would celebrate the
^{and it would entertain them.} value of his people. They would be entertained. ^{for his peasants} There would be circus
 performers, singers and dancers, ^{as well as} and numerous stands for the distribution of
 the gifts. ^{from the Tsar and the Tsarina.} Taking into account the great open stretches of Khodynskoe Field,
 the estimate was that half a million souls would ^{come} ~~arrive~~. To receive them,
 four hundred thousand iron mugs, painted in red and gold, would be given
 out free, ^{things to keep forever as} as commemorative trophies. These mugs would bear the initials N
 II embossed in gold above a double-headed Russian eagle. Plus the year,

1896. There would also be silk scarves for the women, ten thousand gallons of beer, and hundreds of thousands of finely-wrapped packages of food containing Russian bread, walnuts, sausage, cookies, and jams accompanied by a small book about the Coronation wrapped up in ^{an embroidered} handkerchief ^{the Tser and Tsarina's} embroidered in coarse thread with Nicholas and Alexandra's initials.

We had done our best, however, to tarnish the charm ^{a good} of many of these gifts. ~~A number of our Russian agents, having worked for years with venal caterers, saw to it that the packages were spoiled. It was an old practice. Garlic could always be added to close off odors of rotting food.~~

To face this horde, Nicky, Alexandra, and the members of the court would arrive around midday to sit ^{in state up on} up in a Royal Pavilion ~~that had been~~ erected at one end of the field for just this purpose. The Royal Pavilion, flanked on either side by two larger stands, ^{would} offered seats for over a thousand ^{notables, near} people. ^{near-by would be} (At a somewhat greater distance was another pavilion with seats for ^{an additional men and women} another thousand who would pay handsomely for the privilege, middle-class ^{and} men and women for the most part, of no particular standing other than that they had the money to offer for such places in the stands.

Among a few officials, there was concern that there might not be
 police enough for the occasion. Only three officers had been assigned to
 command a total of one hundred and fifty Cossacks who would ^{be there to} serve as
 enforcers. Needless to say, these three officers, like all ^{satisfactory} men (who are in
 command of security, were ^{already} full of the unhappiest anticipations. No more
 than one hundred and fifty Cossacks to control half a million people! But
^{their Commander} the officers received no help when ^{he} they applied for more guards. There was
 a shortage of available police, ^{he was} they were told. ^{It was true,} The majority were needed to
^{stationed at the outskirts of Moscow} guard the approaches to Moscow. After all, the police had been relentlessly
^{already} busy before the Coronation. They had had to remove more than four
 thousand suspected radicals from the city. For that matter, vast sums had
 already been spent upon the thousands of soldiers who had been employed
 on guard duty during the processional into the city on May 9th, and the
 Coronation on the 14th. Now, it was the eighteenth of the month, and the
 funds assigned for security ^{were near to} had been all but depleted. Any precaution that
 did not concern the immediate safety of the Tsar was obliged, therefore, to
^{receive slight} ^{less attention than was needed.} remain minimal. Once the Tsar arrived, there would be companies of
 90 soon as the ^{heavy} security was obviously not required for
^{such}

the long night ^{at} on the night) ^{The} before the occasion. Police would be needed elsewhere. One could not have thieves running wild throughout the city.

^{So,} ^{to take advantage of} We were ready for the night before. The subtle forces of bureaucratic obstruction had been exercised by us. Thirteen years ago, Khodynskoe

^{a (so)} Field had been used as the site for a peasants' festival ^{so (kissing)} right after the Coronation of Alexander III and that had worked well enough. Thirty

^{thirty} peasants had indeed lost their lives in the course of several disorders, but ^{then} it was understood by all. Large enough were then, large crowds had to be understood as not altogether controllable.

^{death} Thirty was not ^{seen as} a dire result for so large an event.

^{So, even} Moreover, Nicky decided to hold this open-air celebration in precisely the same place ^{his father had chosen}. Let the event be seen as the foundation of a tradition. To one of his ministers, he even said, "From what you tell me, we need more traditions, do we not?" The murmur of approbation that came up from his ministers at this remark was ^{most} agreeable to ^{him} his ear.

^{Our} ^{had not been} The problem that was not examined, however, was that the field was no longer as usable as it had been ^{back} in 1883. But the Tsar ^{In} had stated his

~~preference and so no minister wished to bring that up now.~~ In 1891, a large
 exhibition had been held on that land, and ^{a good deal of} much temporary construction had
 taken place. Afterward, ^{were} there were no funds available in the city treasury to
^{for restoring} restore the terrain. ^{Er go, the} The surface of Khodynskoe Field now ^{same?} bore resemblance
 to the skin of a wretch ^{scarred} overwhelmed with acne. There were sand pits, sand
 holes, wells half-filled, ^{some or} pockmarks were everywhere. In addition, ~~there~~
^{to =} were a few deep scars. ^{The larger} Larger sand pits had widened into ravines, ^{and} sand had
 blown and shifted into a variety of knobs and hollows. Some pits were
 fifteen feet deep. Others were ^{large} small chasms. Some ^{gullies} of these chasms had
 been boarded over with thin planks and could ^{yet} prove a hazard. There were
 gullies, there were hillocks. A number of wells had gone dry but remained
 as deep holes. Broad paths had been laid out between such obstacles ^{and} where
^{there} people might move with safety, indeed, there was enough level ground for
 half a million visitors, but there was no great allowance for unruly
 movement. ^{Nonetheless, Khodynskoe Field was}
^{the Tsar's preference and so no minister}
^{wanted to dwell on its ~~drawbacks~~}
 Now, of course, there had been other preparations for the festival,
^{if there had seemed}
 and, in truth, more immediate concerns. If half a million people were to
 come to Moscow for the events, ^{how} were they to be
 sheltered? Some

~~few days before?~~ ~~Some~~ might have family members who now worked in factories, and they could ^{take in} ~~shelter~~ visiting relatives. ⁱⁿ the slums of Moscow, ~~many were used to sleeping~~ They could all sleep on the floor ~~again~~. The odor of old blouses and old pants and linen wrappings for their feet, ~~and~~ the grease of ^{their} ~~sheep-skin~~ jackets and sweat-ridden capes, caftans, and black woolen coats, might add to the reek of the tenement, but what was ^{so} ~~new~~ about that? On the other hand, there was not a monastery in Moscow which would not offer food to the pilgrims. And, of course, there were the railroad stations. In any case, ~~the~~

~~the~~ a majority of poor visitors came early to the field. On the evening before the day that the festival was to take place, hordes were already ^{installed} ~~sleeping~~ on the ground. These early arrivals ^{added up} ~~came~~ to a good number. Some said one ^{other officials estimated as much as} hundred thousand, some estimated ~~three~~ hundred thousand. There was

drinking, there was singing, there were bonfires. Balalaikas were played. ~~And the word their word~~ Word was out. The gifts were going to be distributed early. We had ^{disseminated a rumor that} ~~arranged for this rumor~~. Our people were there to circulate it. As the ^{placed} ~~crowds were told~~, the gifts would be ~~on~~ the distribution tables at dawn.

Thousands of peasants moved up ⁱⁿ ~~close~~, therefore, ~~it was still~~ the middle of the night. Wooden barriers shielded the huts and kiosks and counters where

the gifts were to be distributed, ^{but before} ~~Before~~ long, many up of those front ^{of those who} were ^{were being} pressing on these barriers whether they chose to or not, ^{People were} ~~pushed~~ ^{And then,} pushing them from behind. Curses could be heard through the night. Then, a couple of hours before first morning light, ^{some} a good part of the working populace of Moscow began to arrive. The slums were marching in.

Back in the city on this night of the 17th, ^{took place} there was a gala at the Bolshoi Theatre, ^{and} ~~and~~ so many ladies were in their finest diamonds that the glow of the gems—as many remarked—^{could} ~~seemed quite ready to~~ compete with the sparkle of the footlights. Yet, ~~even there~~, during ^{the} ~~the~~ intermission, the gentry were talking about the Field. Who could believe how many ^{would} ~~were~~ going to be at Khodynskoe? Some ~~even~~ said one million. One million souls! "Yes," was the word at the Bolshoi gala, "Never before have so many turned out to offer their reverence to the Tsar. Never so many of the common people."

^{Actually, the} ~~The~~ distribution of the gifts had been scheduled to begin at ten in the morning. That would ^{take place} ~~be at least~~ two hours before Nicholas II would arrive with the Tsarina. But the Cossacks and the few police on hand were already concerned. The crowd was pressing against the barriers with a dreadful

restlessness. They ~~were~~ ^{kept} rocking the wood posts and ~~planks~~ ^{that supported the barriers}. Already, just ^{Even now} before daylight, it seemed likely the fences would not hold. I ~~cannot~~ ^{was} begin to ~~speak of~~ ^{was} how many in our cohort of clients were inspiring rumors. "The good stuff is gone," ^{was} ~~is what~~ they had been prompted to say. ^{Others were saying in their whispers} Or, better, "They are giving it out already on the other side of the barrier. ^{They are giving it out to} ~~To~~ the privileged few."

Some of this had been foreseen, some was improvised in the ^{light of the} hour, but we had known most of it was bound to work, so soon as we saw how few police were present. So, we kept feeding the rumors, ^{now piled up} ~~they~~ sat upon one another like building blocks, lie upon lie! "The mugs are gone. The beer is gone." "No, the beer is not gone, but there is very little left." The further ^{back} in the crowd ^{that these rumors made their way}, these rumors traveled to the back, the quicker did those at the rear push forward. The first barriers began to tilt, ^{then} ~~then~~ were knocked down. ^{Instantly} The nearest kiosks were overrun. ^{Instantly} Peasants fell ^{on the ground trying} to seize the gifts. Others, rushing forward, stepped over them. Before long, the crowds pushing up from the ranks to the rear were compressing the ^{impacted mass of humans} ~~hundred thousand~~ in the middle. That ^{hundred thousand} ~~hundred thousand~~ was jamming into the ^{tens of thousands lined up} ~~tens of thousands~~ before the standing booths. Now, in every

~~area~~, on every patch of ground, a man had ~~to do~~ ^{to} no more than stumble and ~~he~~ ^{might be gone.}

~~Another~~ would trip over him. A third would fall, a fourth would be knocked ~~down~~ ^{over} by bodies charging into the blockage. Women would scream. ~~Women~~

~~and children~~ ^{would weep. Over the first few} were knocked down. ~~In the next five minutes, five~~ ^{hundreds} of

people were shoved, propelled, thrust, and driven down into the largest sand

pit, where they churned about in a maelstrom of blows and ~~desperate~~ ^{grips seeling}

~~embraces~~ ^(leverage) as they tried to climb out even as others were falling on ~~them~~ ^{top of} ~~from behind.~~ ^{driven}

Bodies piled upon bodies. I had never heard such a sound of woe before. ^{te}

Thousands of throats were roaring in rage or screaming in terror ~~as they were~~

~~pushed toward a wall.~~ ^{These sounds soon} Sounds of physical agony became unearthly. ~~I had~~

~~an experience I had never encountered before.~~ As humans moved forward

in waves, ~~slighter~~ ^{smaller} people were thrown upward like spray ~~from the impact of~~

~~a wave.~~ ^{begin to fly} So, ~~bodies flew~~ ^{the weight of} through the air. Children screamed ~~as they went~~

~~under heavy adults clambering up behind them.~~ ^{over} Now ~~thousands of feet~~ ^{who could count how many}

~~were trampling upon hundreds of bodies.~~ ^{tongues? bodies?} Some ~~were even saved.~~ Some! A

few women, a few children were lifted overhead and passed backward to

avoid the crush ~~going forward,~~ ^{coming} passed from arm to arm overhead. When

~~they reached the edge of the crowd,~~ ^{these escapes} ~~people~~ ^{they} collapsed like minnows in the

shallows, not able to breathe or stir, then able to breathe, or just about.

Along the edges of such a surf, ~~petrified~~ onlookers were braying out the names of family members. Some showed faces ~~already~~ ^{by} petrified ~~into~~ grief.
 Already!

It came to an end, ~~and~~ in ~~very~~ much the manner that a storm dies down. Those who had broken through ^{b)} the booths and trampled over the kiosks ~~kept being~~ *continued to go* catapulted forward by ~~others~~ *the* behind them, until finally they ~~came~~ *reached* to one end of the field. Others ~~had~~ *some* wedged their way off to the side. People ^{already} in the rear, hearing the high note of the screams, ~~drew back~~.
 They ~~and~~ pushed no longer. ~~And~~ *As* the storm abated, peasants moved off in all directions. The dead lay on the ground and in the pits.
 ~~to the field~~

In these ~~By the~~ early hours of daylight, the field was still quivering in its ~~human~~ *human* chaos, but the disorder had ~~already~~ spread ~~out~~ to the streets and avenues of Moscow. *Some tens* ~~Tens~~ of thousands of Muscovites who had been planning to be present at the official opening scheduled for ten in the morning had left their homes early. *Many* ~~But~~ as they approached, ~~so~~ they saw wagons coming toward them carrying a burden of the dead, and these bloody wagons were .

surrounded by men and women wailing in grief. Those relatives who had managed to locate any of their own ~~who had~~ fallen now trotted by, weeping.

Some were hysterical, laughing ^{at our moment, now!} on the one hand, before groaning on the ~~next~~ ^{other}. Lost in the daze of not knowing whether to consider themselves lucky to have avoided the catastrophe themselves, they had to wonder if they were in peril of losing their souls forever by this unholy readiness to laugh. Yet how could they not laugh if the smallest, meanest part of them had not secretly despised the dead relative for years? Yes, a little bit. Yes, it had all happened and yet, it could not possibly have happened.

Those who were still coming toward Khodynskoe Field were ^{All} bewildered ^{by} these faces, ~~these approaching bodies~~, screaming and sobbing. ^{Such} Loud groans. ^{Carried} Hideous laughter. Every passing wagon showed bodies in ruined peasant finery, ^{and so many of the} dead with bloody noses, discolored faces, ^{twisted} broken limbs, near to nude. More than a few ^{had been} were covered with ^{other} ~~whatever~~ ^{people's remnants} or ^{one group of} clothes had been found on the ground, torn from the bodies of ~~the~~ ^{to hide the nakedness of another.} ~~the~~ ^{other} ~~people~~ ^{lost.}

Later came estimates of how many ^{lives} had been killed. ^{lost.} Probably, ~~the~~ ^{his} ~~best~~ ^{head} guess was three thousand. Nicky, when first told of what had ~~happened~~, received the information that the number was three hundred, but his minister was well known for a habit of ~~always~~ ^{his} reducing the extent of bad

news by ninety per cent. Later, come nightfall, Nicky was told that it was 1300 people.

The first ^{cohort of} unidentified dead bodies were taken to Vagankovsky Cemetery. Until this hour, it had been restricted for centuries to the followers of Orthodoxy. On this morning, however, ^{it could hardly} ~~everyone was losing~~ ~~their head.~~ Before it could be determined whether a given victim was ^{centrally} ~~(Orthodox, Catholic, or Jewish, Muslim or even Protestant)~~ no matter, and the first impulse by the ~~first~~ police officials of the burial squads, formed before the dead had even been counted, was to get these ~~peasant~~ bodies out and away and into a grave. Quickly! Get it done before the Tsar arrived.

The impact of these promiscuous interments gave a further profit to our purpose, a profit not yet comprehended by us, not to its full extent—until we come to the mass graves of the Second World War. But, I anticipate. It is too soon to speak of the Maestro's subsequent ventures into the convoluted process of infesting reincarnation with confusion, collision, and disorder.

Along the route, the burial wagons took Tverskaya Street. The morning was reaching into its full glory. It was the tenth extraordinarily

~~Five~~ ^{such} good day in a row. The onion domes of the forty times forty churches of Moscow were resplendent in the sun. The domes, ~~so artfully~~ covered with gold leaf, glowed as if they belonged to the sun, and their bells, celebrating this much-awaited peasants' event, offered their clangor, loud or delicately toned. To the ears of those walking away from the field, the sound of sobbing, weeping, guttural misery and uncomprehending rage ~~took one's~~ ^{began} ~~ears over to~~ an unholy feud with the bells. ~~Disorienting even to me.~~
~~Notably savage.~~

~~I~~ ^{however, was in} ~~was in such~~ a state of excitement at the extent of our triumph (and even in a small wonder at the size of it), ^{so} ~~that~~ my senses had, ~~indeed~~ become extraordinarily keen. I felt as if I could enter the failings of half the people I passed and so many of them were sick in heart, sick in soul, sick in stomach, as if all but lost in the vortex of a ^{horrible} ~~dream~~ ^{dream} that clung like slime to ~~all~~ their feelings. Meanwhile, ~~the gold of~~ the sun reflected the gold of the onion domes above each church. For the past half year, laborers in high peril of ^{the steep pitches of} slipping off church roofs because of winter ice had labored at fastening new ^{gilded} ~~gilded~~ leaf to these ~~now-resplendent~~ domes.

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At noon, when
 By the time the Tsar and Tsarina arrived for the peasants' festival,
 most of the litter on Khodynskoe Field had been cleared. The bodies had
 been removed as well as the greater part of the clothing that had been torn
 from those bodies during the intensity of the struggle to stay alive by
 climbing above other limbs and torsos even as one was being driven into the
 ground. There was still a scatter of *torn* ~~ripped~~ clothing that lay along the sand

and in the pits like a lower order of carnage, *but the* also there to be carried away.

The *first* ~~first~~ bodies had been removed *and then last* by the police, *but by now, a regiment of*
 soldiers had ~~been~~ quickly brought in, and the rest of the dead *had been carried* transported off

the field to sheltered areas behind the outlying kiosks and hutches. There,

~~demands~~
 the ~~corpses~~ were laid out in orderly rows, there to sit until more wagons
 could be brought to stack them up for transport to the cemetery. Some
 relatives did come by before this occurred and there were ~~still~~ shouts and
 screams of recognition but Nicky and Alix were far enough away not to
~~suffer such uncleanly sights,~~ ^{live with} ~~and sounds.~~ Besides, a chorus, long prepared, had been

installed in front of the Royal Pavilion, and this group ^{was} composed of more
~~than a thousand singers,~~ ^{and for now their voices certainly prevailed} ~~prevailed.~~ ~~To the immediate left and right, the~~

~~The~~ ^{general} viewing stands were filled with ^{their} ~~another~~ assembly of distinguished

foreigners and Muscovites in their best uniforms, the ladies in their best
 examples ^{now} ~~of early~~ of afternoon finery. Colorful bunting was arrayed above the ^(equal to)
~~palace~~, ^(hot-house songquets were)
 pavilion, flowers were everywhere, and these bursts of gaiety were

^{for them} reinforced ~~the~~ the social principle ~~which demands~~ that one must never speak
~~loud~~ or give ~~other~~ heed to ^{high and} ~~any~~ unpleasant moments during a fine social

occasion. I have been present at fetes, galas, and soirees in the most

fashionable rooms when one of the guests, usually one of ours, unable to
 control himself or herself, breaks wind. Usually, ^{the spiritual inequity} ~~the hideousness of~~ the

~~of the~~ odor is in direct relation to the involuntary nature of the act, plus the depth
 of our Satanic investment in the client's passageways. ^{Behold!} ~~Then~~ the pestilence

sits in the air for the next ^{few} moments. Sometimes, longer. Yet, no one remarks on ^{it} ~~the odor~~. For the social record, it has not happened. This ability to ignore the repellent has always been the ingrained strength of the upper classes.

Now, hearing a chorus of a thousand gifted voices offering a heavenly vocal collation to ten thousand onlookers, no one is about to recognize that but a few hours ago, ^{more than a few} horrors occurred. ~~A few dead faces still lay on the~~

field. Many showed all the extremity of a last intolerable physical agony.

^{But the} The Russians, given their pan-European desire to ape the ^{best manners} etiquette of the

^{British,} best English occasions, now wished to demonstrate that they ^{looked} ~~did~~ have social

^{can be seen} ~~kinship with those elect who are there to be admired~~ on a notable day at the

aces. The people in the stands looked perfect, and would have been, but

for one surprise. An unbelievably strong wind blew up without warning,

and it scattered clouds of dust all over the Khodynskoe parade ground. This

noxious whirlwind ³⁰⁹⁴ ~~even~~ reached the pavilions. There should have been no

such wind on so glorious a day. All had been still. But the wind had come.

I hardly knew if I was witnessing the fury of the Dummkopf or the rage of the dead.

On the tail of this wind, the Tsar and Tsarina arrived. Everything
 changed. It was as if the gale was ^{ready} there to be dispelled by ^{this} an uproar of
 cheers so loud ~~that~~ one could barely hear the band, that immense national
 band, ^{even} ~~as it struck up~~ ^{played} the national anthem, ^{with sentorian brass.} The pavilion guests bowed to left
 and to right, and waved their arms in salute. Khodynskoe Field was now
 only half visible in the dust as the ^{near} close ground began to fill up from all the
 latecomers arriving ^{now} ~~in safety after the riot in the dawn.~~ ^{tumult at the morning.} (Soon enough, Nicky
 and Alexandra waved to the new people flocking in, but shortly after, they
 left the pavilion to step into their carriage in order to be driven a few
 hundred yards to Petrovsky Palace where the Tsar was to receive selected
 groups of chosen citizens. In the glimpse I caught of him, he looked
 exceptionally pale and I wondered if he knew how much had happened. I
 suspect his information was still highly imperfect, but in any event, the
 order of the prearranged ceremonies was maintained. Not a quarter mile
 from Khodynskoe, Nicky and Alix now stood at the palace gates to receive
 the ^{new} delegations. There were fourteen ^{such} in all. As I was later to learn, there
 were representatives from the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. A special gift
 was presented to Nicky and Alix—a large platter for ceremonial bread and

salt. Nine months had been spent by eight men carving this platter out of crystal. Nicky screwed up his buttocks to force a little gratitude into his expression, an act ~~invisible to all but~~ *of forced charm detectable only to* connoisseurs like myself, ~~and then~~ *splendid wickets* ~~he~~ proceeded to thank the eight workers for the ~~generosity~~ *work.* of their offer. Next came a Cavalry regiment, the Georgiyevskys. A delegation of peasant woman was followed by distinguished artists of the Moscow Imperial Theater. After which, a delegation from the Moscow coachmen paid their respects ~~to the Tsar and Tsarina.~~ There was even a showing of the Moscow All-Believers who offered a silver platter on which Nicky's initials had been laid out in diamonds. They were soon replaced by an army of contractors who had decorated Moscow with lights and false fronts for the Processional on May 9th. Representatives of the caterers, plus the Society of the Hunt, the Moscow Racing Club, and even (for their centuries of service since the time of Peter the Great) a few of the leaders of the Moscow German colony ~~came up and filed by.~~ *to file* After this, Nicky and Alix were ~~finally~~ able to enter the palace and preside over a feast for the common people. That is to say—
~~the~~ honored representatives of the common people. Inserting his remarks between choruses of cheers, Nicholas II spoke to these distinguished

plebian elders: "The Empress and I heartily thank you for your expression of love and dedication. We do not doubt these feelings are shared by your fellow villagers. Care for your welfare is as close to my heart as it is to that of our Father and Beloved Savior."

It is not easy to believe, but I happened to look at the time. ^{To} For me, that is no more than a phrase ^{on} since I hardly needed a wrist or a watch ~~for~~. But then, no devil, clothed or invisible, is ever without a clear sense of the minute, even the precise second. If I may speak in such fashion, it is as if a chronometer is installed in our spirit. So I can state that at the exact moment when the Tsar was making this speech, an unsavory event occurred at the morgue, yes, at this instant ^{which I know} ~~(for another devil~~ ^{because another devil)} reported the exact time later.) Two of the corpses who had been carried from the transport wagons to be laid out on the morgue tables, ^{happened to} ~~came up out~~ ^{v439 up out)} of their comatose state. They even cried out in unison ^{had been trampled, appeared} from opposite ends of the room. They ~~were~~ wounded, near to death, and had been ~~inert~~, but now they were obviously alive.

If I mention these ~~literal~~ upstarts, it is to emphasize the conjunction of ^{the two} these occasions. I would even learn that Alix was suffering her own climax

at what had to be near to the
of foreboding ~~in this~~ same moment. For each of the guests who came forward, she had smiled and bobbed her head, still a pouter pigeon. But she was living in terror. She was filled with a thought that her own death was near and so was Nicky's. In what danger her husband lived! After such a hideous event, would Nicky not have to pay? And for the first time, she allowed herself to feel an open wrath against the Russian people. Why, she asked herself, had they had to riot? She even said to her husband, "There is so little courtesy among our Moujiks." Nicky did not know whether to be offended or pleased that she spoke of our Moujiks.

These thoughts, of course, I received at second hand from another of our special Russian devils who maintained his entree to one of Alix's ladies-in-waiting.

A half mile away from Petrovsky Palace, some soldiers were laying out the last of the victims, and on those far fringes of Khodynskoe Field, ~~some hundreds~~ *some hundreds* of peasants and Muscovites kept searching for the lost people of their families. Meanwhile, in the palace courtyard, Nicky went from table to table to offer greetings to the villagers as they ate their Poltava Borscht,

their veal with fresh greens, cold whitefish, roast spring chicken, duckling, fresh and pickled cucumbers, dessert, fruit, wines.

Back on the field, there were new events to greet the late-comers.

Gypsy dancers were performing. Bands. Jugglers. Ice cream was being sold. And behind the hutches, corpses were still being laid out in rows even as a few kept looking for family members, staring into the battered faces of

the perished who might, given their large disfigurement, still reveal some ~~wrecked~~ *smashed* or *ravaged* feature of the relative they sought. And a few even laid a few copper coins

on one or another stranger's chest. In some places, however, piles of bodies *littered* remained. A heap of fifty here, twenty there, arms and legs at crooked angles, filthy clothing. Doctors knelt in the dust to see if they could separate out anyone who might be breathing. Almost at the same moment, one of the dead was no longer to be counted as dead. He rose up. His wife, who had been weeping beside him, began to beat herself on the chest. "God is here!" she screamed, "God is here! God has saved you!" But another family, just fifty feet away, who had been covertly relieved at the demise of their long-lived family tyrant, were now shrieking. For the old wretch had opened his eyes. "The devil sent you back, you Monster!" his wife cried *out*

(end of chapter)

~~out.~~

let's avoid that

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It is time to explain my relation to the events at the field. Even as I was not present at the Coronation so I was not a leading actor during the occurrences just described. I had no more than the satisfaction that I foresaw the possibilities of the project and the Maestro approved my intuition. If I ^{then} had assumed ^{this} ~~at first~~ ^{had} that I would be one of the Maestro's field officers ^{when it came} ~~assigned to~~ the task of disrupting the proceedings ~~on the field~~, I was disabused of such a notion before I even came down to Moscow from St. Petersburg. The Maestro stated it directly: I was not sufficiently familiar with Russia to command the Muscovite devils we would use. Better, for

you, suggested the Maestro, to keep a close watch on the Romanovs and their family discords. Those are bound to increase after our task is done.

Can I say that I felt no disappointment? Or had no suspicion that I was being relegated to a tangential proceeding? Yet, as I studied the letters, and became, to my limited degree, familiar with Nicky, Alix, and a few of their relatives, I had to recognize the value of the Maestro's choice. But I also knew (and this is where I felt the pang) that he had concluded I was not strong enough for the job. Which is to say—not pitiless enough. We may serve him, but we have our vanity. Mine was that I was capable of any sort of demanding task, high or low. Now, I had to recognize, and should have known it from the start, that my assignment to study the letters would remain my basic role in Russia. All the same, my knowledge ^{could} ~~might~~ be of ~~real~~ use now. In the aftermath of Khodynskoe, I could ^{would be able to} ~~present~~ some ^{within} interesting reactions ^{Think not only of those who} of the Court. ~~So many had perished~~ in a muck of blood, flesh, broken bones, torn lace, and suffocation, but the Romanovs ^{as} ~~well—they~~ ^{had} suffered their own depredations.

One immediate and discernible result ^{was} ~~had been~~ the lowered efficiency of the Cudgels. There were now gaps in the circle of protection they formed

around Nicky. I was able, for example, to approach within viewing distance of the Tsar when he and Alix showed up mid-day of May 18th to sit in the viewing stands ~~that had been set up in advance at one end of the~~ ^{which} field. Given that narrow passage, the Maestro had succeeded in keeping open to his thoughts, I could detect that Nicky was not only unseemly pale as he approached the pavilion, but that this pallor came from ^{an} unruly passion. I could ~~even~~ feel its intensity. Some turn red with rage. He was pale with ^{his} unspoken fury. It was directed toward the peasants. In this, his sentiments were comparable to what Alix had expressed. How could these people have been so ungrateful, so ridiculous, so self-destructive? Yet—heavy as chains lying upon his heart—his duty was to forgive them. They were his people. But could he call upon himself to feel such a sentiment when he was marooned in anger? There were so many aspects to his fury. ^{For he} ~~He~~ was equally enraged at the ineptitude of the police. He was also furious at himself. He could not be expected to watch over every detail, but nonetheless! Why had he not paid some attention to the arrangements for security? Much of this could have been prevented! Or was that ~~even~~ true? ^{had been were his fortunes cursed?} Were the events inevitable? (He did not know. He could hardly know.

Later that night, before he ^{a trampled} ~~tried to~~ sleep, he put down a few sentences in his diary ~~whose contents I soon received by the usual route.~~

Up till now, thank God, everything went perfectly but today a great sin has taken place. The crowd spending the night on the Khodynka meadow, in anticipation of the distribution of food and mugs, broke through the barrier and there was a terrible crush, during which it is terrible to say about 1300 people were trampled.

The news left an ugly impression. We lunched at 12:30 and then Alix and I went to the Khodynka to be present at the unfortunate popular celebration. There was nothing in particular to see; we looked out from the pavilion over the huge crowd surrounding the platform, where the national orchestra kept on playing the national anthem and "Be Glorified!"

I kept studying the phrase, "a great sin has taken place." I could not determine what ^{that} ~~he~~ meant. Nor how he would react to his immediate duties. Yet, even on the afternoon of May 18th, Sergei Witte, who was considered to be the most practical statesman Russia could present in those years, sent

word to the Tsar: "In respect for the dead, all festivities should be cancelled immediately." Then he added, "Most particularly, the French Ambassador's Ball." That, ^{this} scheduled to take place on ^{that} the very night of May 18th, ^{would} ~~be~~ ^{been planned as} the largest social event of the Coronation. ^{The reply to Witte came from} ~~Witte was answered by~~ a man who held no small opinion of himself, ^{nor} or his power. ^{This} That was the Governor General of Moscow, the Grand Duke Sergei Alexandrovich, who was married to Alix's older sister, Ella. He had taken over, among his many other duties, the position of Director of the Peasants' Festival. "The Tsar considers Khodynka a great disaster," Sergei Alexandrovitch replied by messenger, "but would inform you that in effect it was not so great a disaster that it should darken the Coronation holiday."

The older Grand Dukes, this Governor-General's brothers, were in accord. Their conclusion was unanimous. But ~~they were an older~~ ^{generation.} Their sentiments were not shared by Nicky's cousins, a younger generation of Grand Dukes. Indeed, Nicky's dearest friend—his first cousin, Sandro, who was married to Nicky's sister Xenia—declared that the attitude of his uncles, these older Romanovs, this senior level of Grand ^{could only be described as} ~~was~~ monstrous. His brothers, the sons of grand Duke Mikhail, were

in passionate agreement. ~~How could~~ ^{must not} Nicky attend the French ball tonight?

What an outrageous insult to the dead! Where was Russia's honor? Sandro

said as much to Nicky. ~~Even as~~ ^{did feel} our young Tsar, four days into his

Coronation, ~~was feeling~~ ^{but just then} that he agreed with Sandro, up came Uncle Alexey, ~~and to~~ ^{the room, and this Grand Duke was} the oldest remaining brother of Nicky's dead father. ~~His message was to~~
~~beware of Sandro and his brothers.~~

"Nicky," said Uncle Alexey, "surely you are aware that your cousins, these Mikhailovichi, and Sandro most particularly, are not people you should listen to. They are young and inexperienced. They are radical.

They are silly. They are worse than silly! I tell you, they will ~~not~~ ^{never} admit it, ~~to~~ ^{themselves,} but they are siding with unholy forces. ~~Now, if~~ ^{so they can} they wish to depose Sergei Alexandrovitch and ~~put~~ ^{so they can} in one of their own as Governor-General of Moscow. Think what that will do to Sergei Alexandrovitch and to Ella. Your wife will be distraught that her beautiful sister Ella has to suffer this disgrace."

As quickly as these opinions were stated, so was I in the chamber to hear them. Again, the Cudgels were not about. Such a host of just-perished

souls were in need of succor! This once, I found it not at all difficult to stay close to Nicky.

So, I heard Sandro's brother, Nicolai Alexandrovich. He spoke with eloquence ~~after~~ ^{so soon as} Uncle Alexey ^{had managed off} "Nicky, I beg of you, do not go to the French Ball tonight. Recognize what I am saying. Whether we like it or not, we are still living in the shadow of Versailles. Louis the XVI and Marie Antoinette could dance all night because they were naïve. They could have no sense of the approaching storm. But we can. We know. Nicky, search into your heart. What happened, has happened. The blood of those men, those women, and those children will remain forever upon your reign. That is unfair, because you are good, you are kind. I know, if you could, you would revive the dead. But you cannot. So, Nicky, it is crucial that at the least, you must show your sympathy to their families. Your allegiance to them. Your respect. How can you allow the enemies of this regime—who are everywhere—to say that our young emperor danced while his slaughtered subjects were taken to Potter's Field?"

He had succeeded in reaching the center of Nicky's feelings. Nicky did not want to go to the Ball. But this most eloquent cousin was young,

and did not have enough experience to maintain the convincing edge of his debate. So, he soon surrendered eloquence to rage. "Why, I would ask," he went on, "didn't Sergei Alexandrovitch anticipate how great was the need for police? Any fool could have told him." Soon enough, he was hinting that nasty tricks had been played with the funds set aside for Coronation events. He did not know exactly what he was talking about, but I had heard as much myself. Could he have been listening to the same rumors I had come upon even before the Processional on May 9th? In Moscow, the word was out that the Governor-General was siphoning off Coronation funds to pay for his gambling debts. It was not true. Sergei Alexandrovitch was not guilty of that. It was his assistant. (This assistant was not only in debt to the Crown, and to certain gamblers, but to us—he was one of our agents.

So, it was this assistant who had initiated the rumor that it was the

Governor-General. *what an histoire!*

Yes, this That particular pilfering of funds *back* underwrote Khodynskoe's effective *That had been one more good reason why* actions. For indeed, there was no money on hand to hire police the night

before. Moreover, *by way of* through the orders of a number of Colonels *who were also* ~~also~~ our

clients, the body of soldiers available for the occasion had been assigned to

~~other ^{gates} parts~~ of course!
~~the outskirts of the city—there to protect the gates should banished~~
~~revolutionaries be mad enough to try to come back during Coronation week.~~

Poor Nicky. If he had one weakness, it was that he could not hold
 two opposed ideas in his mind long enough to decide which ^{had} might have the
 most to offer. Just as he was in the midst of giving real attention to his
 cousin Nikolai's fine speech, so two of his uncles came in on the echo, and
^{Then} ~~proceeded~~ ^{and} to explain in the sharpest terms that it would be an insult of
 incomparable consequence ^{should Nicky not be present} if ~~the Ball were~~ called off. The French Embassy
^{made} ~~had undertaken~~ ^{incomparable} the most ^{withdrawal} generous preparations. The ~~absence~~ of the Tsar
 and Tsarina could cause a rupture between the two nations. "Nicky, ~~your~~

~~absence cannot even be considered.~~ ^{Nicky, if} We depend upon the French alliance.

~~Nicky,~~ ^{in you} you have to attend the Ball. ^{it} It would be a sign of great weakness ^{not}

to appear. The French measure themselves by the sanity they are able to
^{employ against} bring to heated emotion. They are ~~so~~ proud of their froideur! They detest
 sentimentality. They will not see you as a man, but as a womanly,
 sentimental creature, a weakling in the worst way. Foreign policy must not
 be determined by unfortunate accidents or passing compassion."

Nicky attended the ball given by the French Ambassador. He had the first dance of the evening with Countess Montebello who was the wife of the French Ambassador, and Alix danced with the Count. In his diary, Nicky left this comment:

The Montebello Ball was very magnificently done, but the heat was unbearable. We left after supper at two o'clock.

One of the reasons he left may have been the smile on the face of the Governor-General of Moscow. Grand Duke Sergei was enjoying the Ball. He had a favorite saying: **"It does not matter how awful the day has been. One must possess the character and the wit, to be able, when the music is lively and the drinks inspire you, to enjoy an evening to the full. That is also our duty."**

Sandro and his brothers had long been aware of Sergei's ^{ethos,} epigram. He was known to quote himself. On this night, they found ^{such spirit} such a concept of ^{they made a} duty to be odious. So, they departed, all four brothers—^{point of leaving at the} they left at the exact moment that the dancing began. Uncle Alexey spoke out loudly: "There go the four imperial followers of Robespierre."

I was content. The Maestro would be pleased. He would also be amused, I was certain, when he learned that I had been able that night to insinuate myself into the Royal Chamber. That ^{would} ~~was~~ hardly ~~to~~ be believed. I was in the Bedroom, yes! The Cudgels were in more disarray than I could ever recall.

So, for a few minutes, (before they came back and I had to decamp) I was able not only to peer just a little further into Nicky's mind but to feel close enough for one good instant to report that he felt doomed. Doomed and damned. He knew this with some certainty of vision. His vision, not ours. It would take 21 years to confirm what he knew on that night. But that was the night when he knew. If I had it in me to feel sympathy (or for that matter could afford to), I might have been moved by how he suffered. He was truly appalled. He told Alix that it might be his duty to retire to a monastery where he could pray for the victims. It was no way to speak to a wife on a night so full of a sense of future disaster. It may even account for the letter Alix would yet write to her friend, the German Countess Rantzaus.

**I feel that all who surround my husband are
insincere. And no one is doing his duty for Russia.
They are all serving him for their career and personal**

advantage and I worry myself and cry for days on end as I feel my husband is very young and inexperienced—of which they are taking advantage.

How much more she might have wept if she had known what ladies in Moscow were saying about her.

Before the Coronation, she had made a critical mistake. She had confided too much to her closest lady-in-waiting. She adored Nicky, ^{Alie}~~she~~ had confessed to her friend. "Not only for his heart, but for the other matters. I love him so much. I call him secret names. All kinds."

"What are these secret names?" asked the Lady-in-Waiting.

"Oh, I cannot tell you. They are secret. I call him many sweet words, usually in English. That is such a warm language for me. So hospitable."

It came out. Bit by bit. At last, it was in the air—her big secret. The secret that the Lady-in-Waiting swore she would never pass on to a soul. And the Lady-in-Waiting did not, not for a day or two. Then she only told it to one trusted friend, and this lady swore in turn that she could be trusted absolutely.

In the event, this friend to the Lady-in-Waiting did not feel free to give the secret away immediately. It took two nights before she told two other trusted friends. They also took a vow of silence. They did not ^{feel they} wait as ^{most wait as} long, however, to break their oath. Within the week, Moscow's ~~best~~ society was snickering over Alix's ^{the Tsarina's avowed} love of English. Anyone who had a reputation for knowing what others did not know was now familiar with Alix and Nicky's intimate words for each other. "Lovy, Boysy, Sweet one, my soul," (which Alix converted to Russian—dushki—also "mannikins mine, sweetie, pussy-mine, ^{"Sunny."} ^{enjoyed laughing at Alix but sooner or later} They all laughed at Alix until one of the ladies ^{sooner or later} would remind the others, "She comes to us from behind a coffin. She carries misfortune."

For that matter, the Governor-General of Moscow was now called "The Prince of Khodynka."

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In the week that followed the disaster, there were eight days of fetes, dances, receptions, state visits, and musicales. On May 19th, there was a banquet in Alexander Hall in the Kremlin, and on the 20th, Sergei gave his own ball. The 21st brought the Moscow nobility together at the Hall of Columns, Prince Trubetskoi as host. Four thousand guests appeared. On the 22nd, Nicky and Alix made a state visit to the Troisky-Sergeyevsky monastery, and on the morning of the 23rd, Nicky gave 20,000 rubles as a first installment on a children's home for the orphans of Khodynka. That evening, there was dinner with the English Ambassador at a palace ball in the St. Andrew Hall of the Kremlin. Thirty-one hundred guests. The

Germans, laying low, gave no more than a Musicale at their embassy next evening which was followed by a Palace dinner for all the ambassadors on the 25th. For conclusion, they were back at Khodynka Field on the 26th to witness a military review. Many of the ravines and pits had been filled by then. It was another brilliant day and Nicky's carriage was drawn by six white horses. Thirty-eight thousand, five hundred sixty-five enlisted men marched in company with 2,000 officers. Sixty-seven generals watched.

By now, I was awaiting orders to leave. I did not know if I could acclimate myself to Hafeld after these exceptional weeks in Russia, but the Maestro was quick to tell me: "Respect Hafeld. It is more important than you think."

There was no reason to believe or disbelieve him—his real opinion was, after all, concealed ^{be kind} in the mirrors of his impenetrable bearing.

I can say that on my arrival back to Austria, I did feel better than I had in years. Khodynka had come off as the finest major operation I had participated in for a long time. Indeed, I could not recall ^{many times} when we had spent our time ^{as} ~~more~~ efficiently.

It is sad to say, but few devils are permitted to retain much memory—
 I think the Maestro employs the same principle as intelligence agencies. No
 one in intelligence is told anything about a project unless there is a need to
 know. We, in turn, are not encouraged to remember what we ~~do not need~~ ^{would not use}
 for a new project.

All the same, Khodynka remained in my memory and my morale was
 close to excellent. In dealing with this Hitler family a second time, it was ~~hard~~ ^{less}
~~easier~~ ^{disturbing for me} to accept the ~~interest~~ ^{large} of the Maestro in them. Obviously, he had ~~an~~ ^{following our success in}
~~aim~~ ^{aim and they} larger than I could comprehend. ~~Russia~~ ^{Russia}, I was ready
~~to believe that his aims were large~~ ^{to believe that his aims were large}
 Given such respect, ~~filled~~ ^{filled} with a lightness of spirit altogether
 different from the heaviness that is requisite to being loyal ~~when there is no~~ ^{without}
 other choice, I felt elevated upon my return to Hafeld, and soon enough did
 cease to think often about Nicky, Alix, or any of the others. There was ~~no~~
~~after all~~ ^{after all}, no need. If I was ever to be called back to Russia, and I expected
 that I might be, ~~the~~ ^{all} necessary recollections would be reconstituted by ~~the~~ ^{forms}
 Maestro.

Let me admit that was how it seemed at the time. I find it interesting
 now, as I ~~choose to~~ ^{choose to} write this book, how much I do recall, but then I was

indeed sent back to Russia in 1908 ^(I would) ~~and remained~~ there until the murder of

Rasputin ^{eight} ~~nine~~ years later—that incomparable Rasputin, a most exceptional

client! He was not only able to work in the closest union with me, but

^{continuing as well} insisted upon remaining in the service of one of the D.K.'s ^{most astute} ~~best~~ Cudgels.

~~(Indeed, his will prevailed in the face of the separate inclinations of the~~

~~D.K. and the Evil One.)~~

I will look to tell that story in good time, but not until I ^{can} record what happened to Alois, Klara, and Adolf through the twelve years until 1908

when Adolf at the age of nineteen went off to Vienna and I, after a little

while, was sent back to Russia to commence my exceptional ^{cooperation} task with

^{a human as holy and demonic as} ~~Rasputin~~ Rasputin.

That is the route ahead. For the present, we are back at the farm.

From here, I can see the road that leads to Der Alte's house.