

Book III

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Yes, I am an instrument of the Devil. And this trusted instrument has just committed an act of treachery: It is not acceptable to reveal who we are.

Since I have, however, divulged his name, let me observe the necessary courtesies. We devils usually refer to him as the Maestro. Nor does he mind if, occasionally, we use E.O. to signify that he is often called the Evil One. These are terms he has chosen for himself. Sometimes to demonstrate our absolute respect, we will speak of him as the O.O. (the Omniscient Observer.) Notice that we do not employ Omnipotent. Despite his plethora of powers, the Maestro knows all too well that he is not infinite. No more

than God is infinite. (This is the unholy secret of the local heavens!) These divine antagonists exist within parameters. Call them paradoxes, if you wish, but these Powers suffer constraints. I will add that hordes of primitive tribes, as well as the Egyptians and the Greeks, were more closely attuned to the vagaries and boundaries of cosmic power. It was the theologians of the Jews, the Christians, and the Muslims who ascribed infinite amplitude to the divine, and they were in error.

All the same, years ago, I would never have dared to embark on this written record. My fear would have been absolute. But now, especially in America, given the inundations and engulfments of mass media, it is possible to get away with more.

I can even claim that I have acquired the rare skill of keeping my thoughts close enough to myself to be able to continue this biography, this novel—call it what you will! My assumption is that I will succeed in so concealing my output that the Maestro will not be searching into my mind.

Therefore, I will attempt an explanation of our Two Kingdoms. (I could speak of them as two antagonists, two realms, two conflicting visions

of existence, but Two Kingdoms has been Their term since Biblical times.) Needless to add, we devils are still confronted daily by a formidable army of angels. (We call them the Cudgels!)

While these warring forces will be familiar to anyone who has read “Paradise Lost,” I would note that many of us are well-versed in literary classics. I cannot speak for the angels, but devils are obliged to be devoted to good writing. He sees good literary insight as a complement to the work we do with humans. Milton, then, is high in our arcana of those few poets and novelists who are not unforgivably second-rate (because of their sentimental inexactitudes). He did, after all, provide some outline of the contest between the Two Kingdoms. No matter how inaccurate were his details, he offered a pioneer demonstration of how our armies confronted each other at the commencement of that great estrangement when squadrons of angels first divided into opposed camps.

One can offer respect, then, to that great blind man, even if his description is seriously out of date. Neither angels nor devils still wage war in phalanx. Rather, we are artfully installed by now in every corner of human

existence. To bring, therefore, a closer notion of the sinuosities, salients, neuterings, and recesses of our war, I would start with the three elements of living reality—the divine, the satanic, and the human. In effect, these compose three separate armies, three kingdoms, not two. God and His angelic cohort work upon men, women, and children to bring them under His guidance. Our E.O. and we, his representatives, look to direct many of these same humans in opposed directions. Until the Middle Ages, human beings could bring no vital role to this contest. They were no more than pawns. Hence the title: Two Kingdoms. By now, however, we take each individual man or woman into account. We are obliged to. Many, if not most, humans, do their best at present to be beholden neither to God nor to the Maestro. They seek to be free. They often remark (and most sententiously) "I want to discover who I am!" Humans have become so vain (through technology) that more than a number expect by now to become independent of both of us, God and Devil alike.

This, it can be repeated, is but a first approach to the contradictions embedded in existence, a sketch of the complexity of apparently simple

events. That much explained at present, I would add that I would hope to present to the interested reader a portrait of the early life of this Adolf Hitler who was most certainly my client. (Just why I have so intense a desire, however, is not yet clear to me.) I would add that I do have some special powers of which the first is a devil's ability to enter many a human mind, but it is well to keep in mind that angels and devils are spirits, not souls, and so do not have the sharp outlines of character that are so agreeable to encounter in a novel. Our physical presence is tenuous and if we serve as familiars to men and women, it is by way of our voice. Especially when we dare to place it on the page. Since we also have exceptional power when necessary to exist within a human body, it is with our mind and the client's hand that the writing is sometimes done. To write this book, therefore, I have chosen to hide in a body of no particular interest for the Maestro. Should a devil pass my present American abode, I would seem one more good American Couch Potato. Put it that I have chosen my own Witness Protection Program. Neither angels nor demons will hover for long near the glow of a television set. Only humans can put up with that baleful light.

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As I just remarked, I can enter into many a mind; I can recover, if necessary, the concealed, even long-buried memories of any particular client to whom I have been assigned. This power, however, consumes Time. (Time is, indeed, a word I capitalize since for us, as well as for the angels, it is a resource comparable to how Money serves as a matrix for humans.) We are always calculating how much Time we can afford to give each of our clients, and such expenditures increase when we choose to inhabit people's dreams. My need to acquire more insight has to be balanced, then, against the investment disbursed when working our will upon a person. For this reason, the average human is not often of interest to us. Their powers of insight,

memory, and ill intent are limited. Rather, we look to find men and women who are ready to transgress divine or social laws in the course of carrying off a major endeavor for us.

Such men and women, are rare. More often we have to be content with mediocrities whom we look to make more successful. In our Company, provided we are sufficiently patient, that can produce promotions for oneself. Over many an era, I have had clients whom I was able to develop to the point where they could serve directly in one or another of the Maestro's larger projects. The majority, however, caught in the push-and-pull, the back and forth between their guardian angel and a directing devil like myself, end by producing little that is useful to either Kingdom, and I can certainly recall a few unhappy situations where the guardian angel who was my opposite number came away with the spoils.

At one period in the past, as a result of several such losses, my position suffered. For a time, I was assigned clients of petty origin or modest achievement. I encouraged common soldiers, for instance, to injure the morale of their company by desertion, I served workers and peasants who

looked to stir up revolutions, but turned corrupt. I knew a few priests in small towns who got into trouble with little boys, or estate managers who pilfered funds. I indulged petty barons and counts as they gambled away the last of old holdings, and I might as well list petty suicides, petty thieves, drunken louts, and unfaithful wives (of the worst sort—matched by their male counterparts). I had a horde of clients, but only a few could stimulate my developed instincts. For the most part, I had to serve as proctor for clients born with little who soon proceeded to less. It could have been cause for despair. I was enough of a snob to miss the brio that a social summit offers. While I could rarely know whether the Maestro was reserving my talents for some future purpose or merely marinating me in various backwaters, I did take hope when on one occasion he did remark that I might yet be given a post comparable to some of the epic encounters of our Company during the first three centuries of the Church in Rome. Yes, all of that might be there for me once more, provided I was ready to pay unremitting attention now to my present wretches, thugs, and drunks. I did, and eventually, I was again promoted. The E.O. selected me to oversee the work of a number of minor

demons who were keeping watch from time to time on a young Austrian client whose developed potentialities might yet prove astounding.

Insignificant at present was this person as was his family, but he had ancestral fault-lines full of the intoxicating stink of our old friend, blood-scandal. So I was to observe him closely through the years.

I did not dare to ask, but of course I could not, in those years, hide my curiosity from the E.O. any more than my agents were able to conceal their active reactions from me. At this point, the E.O. actually chose to speak directly to my thoughts. He said: "Why have I been so interested in this boy? Can it be that he possesses the largest ambition one could possibly encounter in a young man who is not already insane? I may propose that you will yet take him on full-time. But, remain at ease! It is still no more than a project. It could certainly fail. He will need endless instruction. His terrors must be allayed by the most reassuring experiences you can arrange for him. And you must guard him from receiving any crushing defeats to his ego. In time, if he develops the greater part of his potential promise, he could, as I

say, become your only client. Must I say more? Do pay attention. We are looking at a major project.”

All this was uttered by the E.O. with characteristic irony. We never knew how serious The Master was when he spoke aloud into our mind's ear.

In any case, I dared not ask: What if I fail? Many of our projects do. Particularly, major ones, and this new venture had to remain an outrageous gamble. I felt as if I knew too much. And now I have told too much. I have even related how Adolf was conceived.

Some readers may have noticed that I described that event in two different ways. Once, I was in that connubial bed, and then again, I have indicated that I was not. Not literally. Nonetheless, in stating that I participated in such apocalyptic carnality, I was telling the truth just as much as I was purveying a lie. For even as we now assume to our scientific confusion that light is both a particle and a wave, so do we devils live in both the lie and the truth, side by side.

The explanation—provided one is ready to follow!—is considerably less difficult than, let us say, Einstein's Special Theory of Relativity. Spirits like

myself, however, bear a retroactive relation to Time. Our ability to ingest the experiences of lower demons altogether enables higher devils (princes) like myself to inhabit separate periods of Time that human beings can only recognize by way of linear chronology. But, I, as a devil of sufficient rank, did not have to be present on the night Adolf was conceived. That is because I was able to take in the exact experience as it happened in Time by having my assistants recreate the event. Another devil (of lower rank) had been present in Alois' bed on the original occasion. This devil had entered the act directly. I must say that that is always an option for us. We can and do enter into many a cohabitation. On rare occasions, and this was one of them, a minor devil can even implore the E.O to be present as well. The occasion demanded it! Afterward, following my assignment to Klara, Alois, and young Adolf Hitler, the moment of impregnation was transmitted to me by the devil who had actually been present that night, and it entered my senses with a completeness of odor and carnal detail that can be termed absolute. So, it also happened to me. For practical purposes, I was there. Yes, among us, let me say that to be given an exact recollection is equal to being present. So, I

also knew from the incomparable intensity of the occasion that this was the rarest event. The E.O. had actually joined with the attendant devil for one instant (even as Jehovah had offered His immanence to Gabriel during that other exceptional event.)

While I would not be attached exclusively to Adolf Hitler for many years yet, the E.O. placed him in my Overview. It is equal to saying that the devils who worked with little Adolf were there to pass their experiences on to me. His life and modest deeds as a boy were conveyed until, at last, I was as steeped in the life of the boy as if I had been alone with him over all the years of his childhood. For this reason, I am ready to write about that early life with an immediacy no responsible biographer would feel ready to attempt.

I recognize I am offering a great deal to the reader for so early a moment in this biographical endeavor. Yet if I, at this instant, inhabiting an America I can barely comprehend, seem to consist of no more to myself than the withdrawn spirit of a devil without an assignment, I also sense that I must keep to the last confidence that I possess. It is that an account of the life of my most important client will re-establish my footing on some long-lost

terrain, and I will then be able to begin to search for the remaining oddments of what may once have been my soul.

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Given the present dominance of the technological world in the Twenty-First Century, an unspoken agreement seems to exist among many of the most well-educated that there is no such entity as the Devil. Certainly, there seems no readiness whatsoever to postulate an ongoing war between Satan and the Lord. Rather, the New Technological World shows itself to be fiercely in need of a universe that is subject to reason. God as a solitary mystery may prove acceptable to a few scientists, some high officials, and a horde of bureaucrats and corporate managers. And God Almighty will always be offered a wallow of adoration by full-service believers who see Him as all-good, all-powerful, all One, (and most useful to themselves provided they

continue to believe this!) But a Devil is not to be posited. Not in this Twenty-First Century. There can be one mystery, but not two! (Indeed, we are given orders by the Maestro to capitalize none of the Devil's possessives, only His! God's.)

There need be no surprise, then, that the general understanding of Adolf Hitler's personality is dim. He is, after all, a third mystery, the most mysterious human being of the century, a man, when all is said, who was all-too-human, if, it will be agreed, the average man or woman does possess large funds of the petty and the inhumane. Nonetheless, over the years, I grew able to comprehend his psyche. How can I not take pride in this? As a specimen of humanity, he was close to unmeasurable. He developed into the wild beast of the century, this all-too-modest-looking client with his gargoyle of a mustache, who, in the beginning, even I belittled as "little Adolf," yes, I knew him when we still referred to the young man who grew out of the boy as "little Adolf with the big ideas."

I can state that as a newborn he was a most typical Klara Poelzl product. That is, he was close to desperately unhealthy. Indeed, he terrified

Klara every time a drop of snot oozed out of his nose or a bubble of sputum popped up from his infant lips.

It is probably true that she was ready to die if he did not live. Devils are sound at anticipating motive (the more sordid, the better—Anality Rex!), but our predictive attempts fade at the borders of mortality. We are obliged to recognize that God does have a final power to decide where and when a human being will die. Take the extreme example of an airplane that has just crashed. Let us say we are responsible for the malfunction. Nonetheless, we do not have the power to destroy everyone on board. Our Adversary (God) determines the result. In most such cases, He will have to accept what we have succeeded in bringing off. It is too costly for God to countermand us. Do not assume that it demands no exceptional effort for Him to save a few people trapped on that edge of extinction—airplane crashes involve so many factors! Indeed, He could not even save His Son, (as we are never tired of reminding our clients!) but there are occasions when a death we looked to create does not occur. From time to time, even in extreme difficulties, God still disposes.

Be it understood, then, that the question comes down again to the overbearing matter of expenditure. A most useful rule of thumb—for human endeavor as well—is that all wars are ultimately determined by who can bear the cost. Sometimes, it is prodigiously expensive for Him to war with us. To keep this understanding alive—that He is not All-Powerful—the E.O. demands that we try not to speak of the Lord as God, but as the D.K. (What D.K. means, I will explain before long.)

For now, however, allow me to take up Klara and her condition as she became a mother for the fourth time.

The attention she gave to Adolf's early days would have been seen as hysteria in any woman who had less cause for concern, but then, Klara was living at the edge of the abyss. Recollections of her first illicit joining with Alois were pervaded by the penetratingly corrupt smell of the sickroom as Gustav, Ida, and Otto were lost one by one in the same few months of the same year. She had prayed devoutly to God to save them. He had chosen to ignore her. As she saw it, that rebuke could only confirm the wretched evil of her condition. So she looked to go back to her feelings on the day she first

met Alois. His visit in Spital came when she was sixteen, and she had never seen a man who disturbed her so directly, so physically—she fell back a full step on their meeting at the door. She might as well have received a blow to the stomach.

Yet she had also admired Alois, immensely, and at once. Her mother had an expression on her face Klara had not seen before. For one instant, there in full pride and longing, Johanna did look beautiful. In the next instant, Klara felt a closeness to her mother that was more than their family sense of sharing the same bed-rags of existence, no, it was as if she inhabited her mother's heart for the blink of an eye, and then felt the full force of the pang that followed. She was able to feel all of her mother's old desire at the exact moment they both saw Alois. If one may speak of a pang of joy, she felt indeed just such a bolt.

End of revision

We need not, however, journey again along the back and forth of Klara's passion for Alois, nor return to the depths of her piety. By the time Adolf was born, she would wash her mouth every morning with laundry soap, a natural act given her mate's predilection (especially in late pregnancy) for

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There were matters waiting for me on the return to Hafeld, and the most pressing was the least routine. I had to convince Der Alte to burn one of his hives. This instruction was my direct response to a puzzling accident. Der Alte had been stung severely by his bees, so severely that I found him in bed with a cruelly swollen face! Several of the stings had come close to his eyes. Given Der Alte's skills, he could not comprehend how so embarrassing an event had occurred in the course of looking into one of his better hives! While attempting to replace the queen—she was showing the first unmistakable signs of final fatigue—he was attacked by her escort.

Der Alte had to subdue this revolt with his cigar which he happened to be smoking at the time (a gross procedure as far as he was concerned, worthy of amateurs like Alois Hitler) and he then proceeded to bury himself under his sheets, taking care not to lay the dirty linen over his ravaged face. So drastic a revolt of his creatures had not visited him in years. It aroused my paranoia—always there in full supply. You cannot be an effective devil without it—the Maestro will not put up with poor powers of anticipation. I had to assume, therefore, that the onslaught was a gift of the Cudgels, and since a question is equal to an answer in matters like this, I decided that Der Alte had to rid himself of the offending hive.

Upon receiving this order—which I passed into him as he slept—he did not fulfill the job. Not at once. A few days went by. That was not like ~~him~~ ^{Der Alte did}. (Rarely ~~had~~ ^{did} he fail ~~ed~~ ^{to} cater to me quickly. So, I alerted the Maestro. I did not ~~want~~ ^{wish} to—I knew ~~all~~ ^{his} attention was ~~being given now to exploiting~~ ^{on} the aftermath of Khodynka, but I made a decision, nonetheless, to file a report. One did not want to ignore inexplicable events no matter how minor they might appear. Indeed, word came back, and quickly. Yes, I was told, he must burn the hive. Again, I fixed this thought into Der Alte's sleep, but

now with harsh enough emphasis for him to know it could not be construed as ~~some cruel vagary of~~ a dream, ^{but} ~~It was~~ an imperative. All the same, our old fellow was full of dismay. He hesitated for another day. "Do it," I repeated in his sleep, "it will be good for you. Tomorrow is Sunday. That will augment the good effect. Sundays offer ^{provide} ~~for~~ double value. But do not employ a sulphur bomb. Too many of the recalcitrants could survive. ^{Rather,} ~~Instead,~~ soak the hive with kerosene. Then proceed to light it, ~~and burn it,~~ box and all."

He groaned in his sleep. "I cannot do that," said Der Alte. "The Langstroth cost me dearly."

"Burn it. That will make things ~~even~~ ^{be} better."

I was only following the instructions I had received. To lose the Langstroth box did seem excessive. It was, after all, a decent piece of cabinet-work. No matter—I did as I was told, and Der Alte obeyed me. He had to. At his age, he knew how deeply we were infiltrated into him. He had to live with intermittent terrors that were as real to his flesh as an ulcer. Death was close to his thoughts, sometimes as close as a caged beast in the next room. His fears, however, left me indifferent. It is hard not to feel

contempt for old clients. They are so submissive. Of course, he did it.

What facilitated the act is that a good part of him was enraged at his bees for upsetting his sense of the given. ~~At his age,~~ Old habits can afford few shocks. One's sense of the given is ^{more} valuable in old age. When violated, one is prone to surprising rages.

Sunday morning, he laid the hive on the ground and doused it. Staring into the commotion that seethed up in its flames, he did begin to feel better. I was on the mark. It had been good for him. He was perspiring like a horse. After all, he was full of woe at the incineration itself—that did violate his professional instincts. He could have wept for his lost hive and those fine golden bees—all those innocents who were scorched into extinction with the guilty—but to his surprise, a rare sweetness returned to his loins. This was the first such sugaring of his body he had felt in years. Like many an old man, his lust had been confined to his head. It had been a long time since the physical accompaniment to a libidinous thought had been any more agreeable than a twinge for his groin.

I will mention in passing that Adi happened to be present at the burning. He, too, had been given a message in his sleep which he had no

difficulty in accepting. So, he slipped away from Klara and Angela even as they were preparing to go to church. His sly escape did not bother Klara exceptionally. It had happened several times already. Moreover, she enjoyed sitting in church on this rare occasion when Angela and herself were the only ones there. Adolf was no joy to bring along. If not squirming in his seat, he would commence a contest with his step-sister to see who could succeed in best pinching the other. On the sneak.

Yes, to be alone with Angela on Sunday morning allowed her to feel a little closer to her step-daughter. If the truth be witnessed, Klara was also content not to bring Edmund along, nor to be obliged to hold Paula at her breast through the service, hoping all the while she did not wish to be fed, wail. (Today, Alois had said he would remain with the two little ones. Klara could hardly believe such sudden generosity. Was he softening? Was that possible? It was certainly one more question I had to explore. But, first, let me dispose of ^{Adel's} ~~Adolf's~~ relation to this burning of the bees. His toes tingled, his heart shook in its chamber, he did not know whether to scream or to roar with laughter—for him, it was a royal, thoroughgoing auto-da-fe, and he kept shrieking out of that unique junction of terror and delight that only a young

boy can entertain at once. For now, I will say no more. Release from the high excitement of living in Russia had left me a touch indolent. I did not, as yet, feel eager to re-enter the complexities of this particular six-year-old. My morale was, as I have said, in fine shape, but I did not want to put it to work ~~too intensely~~ so soon.

I have not mentioned this before, but during my first week in Moscow, I had been put in association with long-term resident Germans (half-Russian by now, or, at least, half-Muscovite) who worked for the Governor-General. They were well-positioned in Sergei Alexandrovitch's hierarchy of police officers, and were a great help to us at Khodynka. They had what was for them an unshakable (and most German) view of the Russian peasants who had bivouacked during Coronation week at the railroad stations. "They are animals," I was told, "the most suspicious people in the world, and the greediest. Or, that is, they would be the greediest, except they have nothing. So their greed is like fire. It leaves nothing behind. Any one of these fellows, if he is big enough and strong enough, has a secret belief. He thinks that should it come to it, he could kill a bear with his bare hands. He would certainly try."

So, yes, on my return to these modest duties in the Linz region of Austria, I knew that my existence would be simpler. I would no longer ^{as I had before,} be dealing with humans who were like forces of nature. Nor did I feel ^{that} ~~the~~ ^{future might} ~~work~~ would be lacking ~~therefore~~ in interest. Hafeld could offer its own ~~small~~ ^{and} revelations, ~~but~~ at this point, it was to my taste to gain ~~each increase~~ ⁱⁿ understanding by way of the subtlety of the task. In consequence, I found myself growing more ready each day to go back to these simpler themes. Already I could witness a few ~~small~~ changes in Alois' spirit, and, ^{in itself, that was enough to} ~~they did~~ engage me.

For one thing, Klara—no surprise!—was mistaken. Alois was not softening, not exactly. He had thought it was appropriate to spend a little time with the little ones, but the moment he was left on this particular Sunday with Edmund and Paula, he put the sleeping infant, ~~not half a year~~ ^{old}, in her trundle bed, and told Edmund to stay with her and make certain she did not wake up. Alois had the ability to transfix a two-year-old boy into several hours of obedience by one ~~transfixing~~ look. So, yes, his son was now ready to do the impossible. Edmund would will the infant not to awaken. Be it said, that is also a function of the will, and it can even ^{prevail} ~~work~~

^{upon} with some infants ^{when} ~~once~~ they are left in the care of polarized two-year-olds.

Will! (It is almost as great a mystery as Time!)

So Alois did not mind staying at the farm with Edmund and Paula on this Sunday. (He knew Adolf would go off by himself, and Alois-Junior would be on the other side of the hill with Ulan.) Truth, he was looking forward to being alone ^{He wanted} and able to meditate upon Der Alte's mishap. That

event had left him feeling cozy. It was so curious. A dire expectation for himself seemed to have vanished. ^{He had always expected} ~~to be the one savaged by the bees.~~

All through May, as ~~the~~ weather ~~had~~ turned warm, Alois' recurring ^{had been} fear was of losing his colonies. His dreams kept returning a vivid picture to him of himself up there, high in a tree. There he was, much too high, trying to charm a maddened swarm ~~of bees~~ back to the ground and into their hive.

The sad fact was that, having eaten well through the winter, he was now overweight. Indeed, he felt as over-stuffed as a man who has crammed 250 pounds into a 200-pound body. Where was his balance? It was as if he was being asked to walk a tight-rope. The fall could come at any moment.

Small surprise then, if this Sunday, he required time to unbend. Let his face go slack, his stomach rumble, his sphincter break a little wind.

There had been too many weeks through the winter and now even into the spring when he became convinced—not for the first time in his life, but these days, so vividly—that he was going to fail in a serious activity, and this would wipe out some important part of him. Such an end had once seemed impossible. His vanity forbade it, that so-useful vanity which he had constructed from boyhood, ~~put together~~ piece by piece, episode by good episode, each attached to the previous good memory, and, of course, he had fortified the whole of such a progression by the promotions of his career. (Not to mention his fornications!) But now? Where was the confidence? He had not gone to church on this Sunday, no more than any other. Of course not, not if he could help it. But now he did not know how long he could ~~keep~~ ^{stay} away. On this particular Sunday, he had even thought of going, yes, with Klara. First time since they had moved to Hafeld, yes.

The thought was anathema. To sit in a pew through the drivel! Such an act could wipe out his sense of himself as a man who refuses to live in fear of disaster—a man who does not shiver as others do. But these bees had scared the hell out of him all year. Had they taken away the keystone of

his pride? No one else he knew had ever been as ready to thumb his nose at bad omens. Certainly not anyone born like himself as a peasant.

Yet, just a week ago, his hands had begun to shake. Involuntarily. He could not hold his newspaper. That was because he had read a story ~~that~~ about the death of a beekeeper. The man had not recovered from a crazy outbreak in his own hive.

In an effort to allay such fears, Alois had even paid Der Alte a visit at just the time when the old man was in his bed and at his weakest. Indeed, Der Alte actually burst into tears while describing his mishap. It left Alois with the same sense of cockeyed virtue that a younger brother can feel when he sees the older one cry—so often he has been abused by him!

Afterward, Alois was relieved of his fear for a few days. Air no longer entered his lungs like the oncoming trouble that sits in the ozone for the few minutes before a thunderstorm. It was as if the bolt had struck.

Finally! Except that it was Der Alte who had been hit ^{by it} not himself. Relief ~~then~~ ^{his dread} replaced ~~confusion~~. That had been true for a few days. But now on this Sunday, he felt as if he was ready to fall back into ^{it} ~~confusion~~.

For certain. His dread was going to return. And he knew why. It was Alois-Junior. He had not felt right since the boy had come back. Yes, something was in the air. He could not be such a fool, he told himself, as to have been afraid of his bees just because he was feeling ~~thus~~ uneasy with his son. Yet, that might be the truth! Human beings ^{were} ~~are~~ full of subterfuge. He knew. He had certainly learned as much at each Customs post. The tricks that some tried! He remembered a woman who ~~had~~ wrapped her gifts in the folds of her black lingerie. A good looking woman. When caught by Alois, she was brassy enough to smile, and say, "You are so smart. The other officers were afraid to touch my private things."

"That," he told her, "is because most of my associates go to church. You did not have good luck this morning."

She laughed. He was tempted to let her off. Let her defray the cost of the fine by smuggling him into her thighs. But he hadn't allowed himself. A few rules he would not disregard.

All the same, this recollection kept him brooding about the nature of subterfuge. Back in the days when he could still enjoy a ride on a horse, there had usually been one or another steed who could rob some of his

confidence, something in their gait—as if, should they choose, you would find what felt like five legs under you, not four. You wouldn't know a damned thing about how to control that kind of spirit in the animal.

Yes, that was Alois-Junior. One could not feel total confidence in the boy.

On the other hand! To be a father who made so severe a judgment on a son, and might later be proved wrong? That could feel shameful. The immediate truth, and Klara kept talking about it all the time as if she did not know whether to believe her words or not, was that Junior did not seem to be the same boy who had gone away to work for Johann Poelzl. Her parents must have been good for him. His manners were nicer. He did not seem to be judging you all the time. Before, that was the worst thing about him, Klara said. He was like a friend who was warm to your face but would say something ugly so soon as you left. Klara had no proof, but she would swear that was how he used to be. Now, ~~maybe~~ there was something nicer in him. Maybe. Before, if he had a fault, it was that he spent too much time riding Ulan. Of course, Klara announced, she was ready to put up with that. Better to ride over the hill than to start flirting with his own sister.

"What would you ever know about that?" Alois asked.

"I don't know about such things," said Klara. " But when I was young, I saw things. In certain families. It was not anything to talk about."

She was, at least, honest enough to flush a little as she spoke. Yet, what brought the blood to her face was that she and Alois were cousins. That was a little embarrassing. But not terribly wrong. The other possibility did not even exist for her. Nor, did it, for Alois. He never thought of her as his daughter.

This ability to wall up the most unpalatable facts about oneself can always elicit my admiration. I do not know if the inner construction of such a barrier is equal in complexity, let us say, to scaling the Alps, or, to the contrary, one is dealing with all the subterranea of labyrinths. Either way, the credit must go to the Dummkopf. He created the ban against incest—we certainly didn't—and so it became His task to protect ~~the~~ humans from themselves.

I know that we lose certain advantages thereby. One truism about most men and women is that they are incapable of facing unpleasant truths

about themselves. Their ability to invent earth-moving machines may be an offshoot of their desire to cover over unseemly personal data.

We, on the contrary, often fail when we try to force a breach into the ego of certain powerful people. They have what can only be a God-given ability to conceal themselves from themselves. So I could appreciate how Klara and Alois were full of worry over how to cope with Alois-Junior. Perhaps they see his ego as impenetrable. The equal of a tycoon! And only fourteen!

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Yes, I, too, had been pondering the changes in Alois-Junior. On the face of it, he had improved. If manners were a guide, he had become a reasonable imitation of a trustworthy youth.

My lesser devils—those left behind—were now pleased to tell me that they had succeeded in making a copy of a short letter Johann Poelzl had sent back with Alois-Junior. It gave a definite and most decent opinion of the lad.

I wasn't certain about the validity of the letter, however. For one thing, it was ^(not the original but) ~~only~~ their copy of the words. That voided one of my talents—I can obtain a good deal of insight by way of the strokes and bends of a

person's handwriting. Many an undisclosed corner of the soul is to be found in the pinch of a curved letter. Falsities stand out like acne.

As I have already indicated, these devils left behind in Hafeld were modest in performance, and so they were only able to lift Johann's letter from Klara's sewing basket long enough to transcribe a copy. With more skill, they could have forged a facsimile, and kept the original for us.

Bereft of the calligraphy, I looked to content myself with the words.

Esteemed daughter,

This I give to the boy. He will give it to you. Your mother says he is good boy. She will cry for missing him when he goes. That is what she says.

Tell your esteemed husband I can agree. Alois Junior is good. Very hard worker. Very good.

**Your father,
Johann Poelzl**

I was not ready to act upon my doubts. I could have put in a request for one of our nocturnals in Spital to pass through Johann's mind on a milk-

run, but decided to wait. Such a request would ~~end up on one's record~~^{be recorded} everything ~~did~~^{was} and could be seen as needless expenditures, particularly if the results were inconclusive. Given so devout a church-goer as Johann Poelzl, there might even be some mean old Cudgel ~~for~~^{would have} our devil to face. (Not all of the excessively devout became our clients!)

Besides, I could learn as much as I needed about Alois-Junior now that I was back in Hafeld. If I had had to leave ~~behind~~^{who stayed here} the ~~able~~ devils I had taken to Russia, and did not know how long the Maestro might hold them, still, I had compensation. The ones ~~left behind~~^{who stayed here} had, to my surprise, improved ~~a bit~~^{abit}, despite all. The greater responsibility seemed to have worked out well. They were picking up our trade. One of them might even be ready for his first ~~techniques~~^{lessons} in dream etching.

I will not, however, bother to describe my resident devils further. At present, a century and more has passed, and ~~the~~^{former} devils ~~employed then~~^{employed then} offer no more to the pleasure of memory than mediocre songs. Our personalities ~~lack human~~^{characteristics} ~~meanings~~^{meanings}, after all. While a man or woman's presence is closely related to their body, and we gather insights thereby into a person by acquaintance with their ~~flesh~~^{incarnations}, we devils are without bodies (except when it

is necessary to inhabit someone for a period. ^{and then we look exactly like him or her)} So, our personalities, when ~~ever~~ ^{is} we are ^a obliged to take human form, are no more than temporary palettes that bear ^{personal style} more relation to changing a garment than ~~altering a habit,~~ ^{exhibiting a passion}

I find it more congenial, therefore, not to discuss our situation as devils other than to say that we find our happiest terrain in the land of the dream where—if we can afford the expenditure—we ^{can} become anyone we wish. Some of our improvisations even show talent. Our brilliance is our reward.

Indeed, if dreams dictated as much of human history as we desired, the Dummkopf would soon become ^{the Maestro's ~~fixed~~ retainer,} ~~our servant.~~

But we were ^{nowhere,} ~~not~~ near to such a point. Not in 1896. God was still the Lord of our immediate universe. Humans, animals, and plants continued to be His Creation. Nature, imperfect as it was, and on occasion, cataclysmic ^{I must repeat} (due to imperfections in His design) remained still within His ^{command, His} ~~far from~~ faultless command. Only the night belonged in good part to us.

The Maestro was so aware of this that he frowned upon any and all ecstasies of self-approration with which irresponsible devils might

congratulate themselves for terrors they had initiated by nightmare. The Maestro was rarely impressed with such success. "It is never enough," he tells us. "Dreams are evanescent. ~~The~~ ^{Control} of events belongs to the day."

I was in accord. If the Maestro continued to maintain interest in the Hitlers of Hafeld, I looked then to comprehend his motives. His high hopes for this Adolf Hitler, while still mysterious to me, took on more immanence.

I did feel honored to be the Maestro's most trusted lieutenant on what seemed to be ^{an} ~~so~~ important ~~a~~ venture. Then I had to wonder if I might be adrift in my own spree of self-congratulation. I knew so little, finally, of the reaches, outposts, and centralities of the Maestro's domain. For all I could attest, our special six-year-old might be one of a hundred or a thousand prospects whom the Maestro was overseeing on no more than one or another remote likelihood that they would yet become useful human servants ~~for him~~. The notion that my task might be of major importance had then its ~~immediate vagaries and its subsequent~~ ups and downs, ~~and this not~~ ^{not} only in the immediate seasons ahead, but for a full eighteen years until August, 1914, after which I had to take care of ^{Adolf} ~~him~~ through World War I.

By then, there was no time to oversee anyone else. The Maestro made it clear. I was there to keep him alive through the immediate battles ahead. Woe to me if I failed.

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I have not described, and do not feel any intention to list the numerous other activities, undertakings, and small explorations that the devils under my authority were engaged in through those parts of the Upper Danube province of Austria (which includes Linz and the Waldviertel). By now, they are of no ^{striking} great interest.

History has, however, underlined the perspicacity of the Maestro's projections into the future, and so as I take leave of my present situation in America to return in my understanding to the summer of 1896, it is with the added strength of motive that comes from the knowledge that one's work

has been of significance, and every detail that is now recalled can not only be registered with newly polished perspicacity, but, indeed, ought to be.

I can assert, therefore, that Alois-Junior was demonstrating his considerable talent to charm whoever was in his immediate surroundings. For a time, he even succeeded in leavening the heavy suspicion that emanated from Alois-Senior's person ^{for} in the first days after his son came back. When Senior was in a state of suspicion, he bore much likeness to a wall of oncoming bad weather, an unsettling affect he had often used at Customs when confronting a dubious tourist. Yet, such was the boy's charm—a nice combination of youth, health, intelligence, a touch of wit, and apparent good will—that Alois could not maintain such an overbearing psychic front for more than a few days. Indeed, Alois-Junior was showing fine interest in the bees. He had many good questions to ask.

Before long, Alois (quite despite himself!) was beginning to feel a rare happiness—he so seldom liked his children. Now, he did. One of them at any rate. He even began to give Alois a few of his best lectures on beekeeping, and so, before long, repeated all of his earlier speeches to Klara and Angela and Adi, plus his original monologues at the Linz taverns, to

which he could now add the newer ones at Fischlham where he played the resident expert from Hafeld. The boy picked it up so quickly that Alois had to dip into more advanced knowledge of the sort he had ingested from reading apiary journals. Finally, he was even presenting a few of Der Alte's finer insights as his own. The near-humanity of the bee! The delicacy and high inspiration of their lives. The boy kept taking it in. Moreover, he was deft when it came to working ^{on} ~~at~~ the hives. Senior began to dream of a future where father and son might add colony to colony. This ^{could} ~~might~~ become a true business.

One day, he was feeling so proud of Alois-Junior that he brought him along on a visit to Der Alte. He had hesitated before deciding on such a move—he certainly did not wish to be replaced as the local expert in Junior's estimation. On the other hand, he was also proud of his association with Der Alte, so learned a man, and yet so ready to treat him as an equal—that, too, might impress the boy.

The truth is that he was no longer all that uneasy about facing the bee-keeper's superiorities. He had been enriched by the hour when Der Alte had virtually wept in his arms. Now, he could face him as an equal.

Besides, he had once again a practical need to seek his advice. Alois' hives were ready, they were full of honey, and he had studied his manuals on the technique of honey-gathering, but, he did not feel ^{as} ~~altogether~~ ready. In the old days, back at Passau and Linz, he had made a botch of it. The honey he gathered was ridden with too much wax, and—no matter his veil, gloves, and all—he had still received a few nasty bites where the cloth gaped on his neck and wrists.

Now, it would be closer to a major effort. He looked to sell the better part of this harvest, and he could hardly do so if his product was full of detritus. Even one dead fly would be a spoiler!

So, here he was seeking for advice again from the old goat, yet he could feel more tolerant. It was amazing to Alois how little he was offended on this occasion by the aroma of the hut—hell, Der Alte might know more about bees, but he, Alois, knew how to be a man and not burst into tears just because it all went wrong.

He took Alois-Junior with him, therefore, and Der Alte responded to the visit with warmth and brilliance. He was happy not to be alone. His convalescence had been full of pain concerning his idea of himself, painful

as a sharp light in the eye. ^{His guide} ~~He~~ had drooped ~~within~~ under the weight of contemplating all that was missing in his life. Hermits cannot undergo excessive self-examination. It hardly matters whether they are hermits protected by the Cudgels, or in service to us, or, very occasionally, unaffiliated—although this last is virtually a feat considering the loneliness!—but in any event, such clients usually have to be taken at least once a year through a ^{cleansing} ~~cleaning~~ of their many near-dead old moods. For this last week, I had had to spend time on Der Alte. His spirit had all but collapsed with the knowledge that he could not see himself in any way as a social leader (which had been the most intense of his early ambitions.) He had no mate, no heirs, no real money. And his memory kept reminding him ~~constantly~~ of men or women who had done him injuries which he had failed to pay back. Under it all, was the heavy disappointment that he had not arrived at any of the powers and distinctions to which his intelligence should have entitled him. As is so often true of the depression that follows an unexpected accident, he saw this affliction as a judgment on himself.

I made a point of being present during Alois' visit, then, for I wanted to improve Der Alte's mood. If a client's thoughts are usually darkened by

us in order to drive them ^{in a} ~~into our~~ desired direction, so we also have the ~~ability~~ ^{skill} to absorb their black moods. We can lift a man out of his depression for an hour, even—if it comes to it—provide him with some joy. Usually, it is to our advantage to keep our humans reasonably well and alive in order that they continue to serve us. Indeed, there is a loss if they expire too soon. Very few can then be transformed into strong devils (unless they die young and in a true rage.) Given rigor mortis, most of our old clients either cease to exist ^{—no soul is left!—} or are reincarnated by the Dummkopf (who does not like to give up on any of His creatures, large or small, wise or foolish—which is one reason the world becomes more and more empowered by human mediocrity.)

This situation is, of course, not simple, since we, too, have to look to take what profit we can from mediocre arts, products, and trivial people.

All this may help to explain why I was looking to improve Der Alte's mood when Junior and Senior came to visit. Indeed, I was able to give him relief from his unhappiest thoughts. I even returned him to the notion that he was an attractive man. (Vanity is the human sentiment that is ready to come closest to illusions of infinity!) As a direct result, he felt powerfully

attracted to Alois-Junior. It was the first time in ten or fifteen years that he had so desired to make love to an adolescent.

"Honey-gathering! Of course!" Der Alte all but grunted when, after the introductions and the formal query about his health—"Couldn't feel better!"—they began to discuss the procedure.

In full form, intensely aware of the boy, and—provided with these fresh seedings of vanity, keen to how the boy might be aware of him—I had even taken pains to reduce the kidney reek in these quarters. Der Alte felt more than ready to launch into an exposition on the lesser-known aspects of honey-gathering.

"Yes," said my rejuvenated old fellow, "honey-gathering is an art in itself. I am so glad you two have come ^{to me} ~~together~~ on this day because, truly, ^{ask} ~~skilled~~ as your father has become in his short period here at Hafeld—a brilliant man, your father!—nonetheless, the best of bee-keepers have to learn what is virtually a new vocation when, after the long winter and a kindly, warm spring that fulfills our hopes, the brood combs, having been well fed their supply of honey by the good worker-bees assigned to them, are now hatched. That, if I may say, is a most pregnant moment in our

vocation. The hives are teeming. The old bees are out on flights and the youngsters are assigned to the innumerable tasks of housekeeping, one of which, for example, is to fill the empty wax combs with honey and cap them with a fine thin layer of wax. Specialists among the bees are assigned to do all that. Young Alois, it is like a miracle. Some of these young workers are newly-born, ten days old, but already we may think of them as craftsmen. The layer of wax that covers each tiny comb ^{has thickness,} is no more ~~thick~~ than good stout paper."

Alois restrained himself from saying, "I know that already," and winked instead at Junior. In advance, he had told the boy to be prepared to listen. "When it comes to his bees, Der Alte can only speak in full paragraphs, ^{but} ~~so~~ I would say rather in full pages. All you need do is nod. I know. I know in advance nine parts in ten of what he will say, but it is like fishing. Be patient, and you will get what you came looking for."

"So, yes," Der Alte now said, "the honey-gathering, if not done properly and in the time appropriate to it, can be a rude interruption of the work of the bees, a disturbance of tempo, you might say, ~~on the assembly line in a factory.~~" The first question to ask oneself, therefore, is what will be

the best time to remove your honey from the hives?" He held up a hand as if to police his own course of exposition. "It is the late morning," said Der Alte. "That is ~~best~~ definitely the best time. The hives are warm but not yet too hot. The worker bees are somnolent. I would go so far as to say that your little creatures might be taking a siesta at this time. They are, after all," and he laughed, "Italian bees."

To be courteous, Alois smiled. So did Junior.

"Well, then," said Der Alte, "we take the great step. For that, I will have to lend you an empty hive body."

"Is that because we ^{will} have to transfer ~~at~~ the bees who are in the honey chamber?" asked Alois-Junior.

"Exactly," said Der Alte. "Your sense of anticipation is excellent. Your imagination is closely focused, I can see, on the particularities of this situation. Dear boy, you are in possession of a rare attribute."

"Yes," said Alois-Senior "he is a bright boy, but if I may venture my opinion, there is no way to separate honey-chamber bees from the honey unless one brings up a separator board."

"Of course," said Der Alte, "and so the first move, then. . .?"

"Locate the Queen," said Senior. "That's one thing you taught me."

He turned to Junior. "Yes, bees will panic when they do not know where their Queen is. To move them from one box to another, you have to ~~move~~ ^{transfer} her as well."

"Exactly," said Der Alte, ~~again~~. "I have shown your father how to locate the Queen ~~in the first place~~. ^{Then you} You must introduce a queen-cage"—he took a little box from his pocket the size of a deck of cards. "With this cage ready, you will use a queen-catching glass."

"Yes, my father has shown this to me. He even let me blow one of the queens from the catching glass into the cage."

"That is a nice ~~skill~~, ^{momentary procedure}," said Der Alte. "In a year or so, ^{however,} when you become as highly accomplished as I expect, you will ~~dispense~~ ^{however,} with the cage. You will be able to pick up the queen with your fingers."

"Yes," said Alois-Senior " but don't try it in a hurry," and he made a gesture of slapping frantically at invisible bees as if to remind Der Alte how this bold procedure could invite a disaster.

"Just yesterday," said Der Alte, "I moved three of my queens into three separate hives. With my fingers. I could have used the catching-glass."

Undeniably, it is as your father suggests, a wise and more cautious procedure. But I am like an acrobat who has taken a serious fall. There is no solution but to get up on the tightrope again."

Der Alte was telling a lie. He had gone back to the catching-glass for these transfers, but as ^{my} ~~an~~ experienced client, he was able to offer whole assurance on any subject, even when ~~wholly~~ ^{removed} separated from the facts. His desire to approach a little nearer to Junior's admiration was all the impetus he needed.

"Whether one uses one's digital sensitivities or resorts to the catching-glass, the heart of the matter, nonetheless," he now said, "is that by means of the one-way ~~exit~~ ^{door} in the separator board, your bees will look to escape from the honey chamber into the brood chamber ^{where} ~~for there~~ you have relocated the Queen. How they will struggle with one another in their haste to use the exit and so be able to reunite with their lady. It is the kind of passion that reminds me of my youth."

He turned to Alois-Junior. "Ah, to be young again and on the hunt for a young woman. In the old days, nothing could stop me. Would you say there is anything that might stop you?"

"Yes, ^{"my father"} ~~My father,~~ said Alois-Junior. ~~(All three laughed.~~

"You must listen to your father."

"I am prepared to," said the youth. He smiled warmly at Der Alte as if to separate out one concrete instant where they could feel connected to each other. Before the air between them could take on such emphasis, however, Alois-Junior made a point of adding, "I think you have confused me. Aren't all these bees little women?"

"Yes," said Der Alte, "in the technical sense, if we speak of their gender they are female, but, of course, they are not queens, so their generative organs are not developed. Consequently, they act like men. Some become guards. They defend all the gates in the hive. Some are warriors. Most of them are loyal, determined, hard-working. In that case, yes, they are like women, too. They live for the good of the hive. But they are like men in the manner that they worship the Queen."

"This is all wonderful to hear," said Alois-Senior "but I am still waiting to get my honey out of the hive."

"In that case," said Der Alte, "I will give you the secret key."

"Timing," said Alois-Senior. "You told us that ^{"I} ~~already.~~"

"Not quite." That ^{is} was the general rule of thumb. ^{But what is the} The real secret ~~is~~ to
^{to timing? It is to} wait until you hear an unmistakable sound of happiness rising from the hive.
^{Exactly so!}
~~Yes.~~ When the honey comb is full, and the bees know they have made good
 honey, why, they are ready to act like women again. They sing to each other,
^{They sing in joy} in joy. You must come to recognize this sound. (On the morning after you
 have heard this chorus of contentment, you are ready to lead all these good
 bees through the exit in the separator board into the chamber where you
 have moved the queen, and ^{thereby} ~~so~~ the honey left behind will ~~now~~ be ready for
 extraction. Come, I, in turn, will lead you outside. One of my hives is now
 singing this song of contentment."

I, too, went with them to hear it. I do not know if I would have
 interpreted the hum that entered my ears in just those words. The sound was
 unmistakably strong. It offered the intent ongoing sound of the dynamos in
 an electrical plant, that elevating yet fearsome hum which comes into human
 ears whenever one form of energy is converted to another. So much is
 taking place. A dominion is being ^{obliged} ~~told~~ to enter another dominion. It is the
 sound common to ^{many} ~~all~~ motors. "How much we have done," these motors
^{all} could be murmuring, "but where does it go now?"

Der Alte's last injunction was to ^{put} ~~place~~ the honey-chamber into a sealed box so soon as it was free of its bees. "Then you must take it indoors for the extraction. Into a good sealed room. That is because you must not attract any bees who ^{may be} ~~are~~ out foraging. I cannot emphasize this enough," he said directly to Alois-Junior. "As you may not yet know, these divine creatures have two natures: total loyalty to their Queen, but whole greed for the honey itself. They will gorge on it anywhere they can find it, from any and all hives."

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Once given her instructions, Klara went to some pains to close all the window and door sills to their kitchen, by way of every rag at her disposal. She wore a white blouse and white apron for the occasion, and so did Angela. Alois-Senior even gave up his cigar. For the family, that was, indeed, an event. But Der Alte had warned him, "Cigar smoke does pacify our bees. But when it comes to their honey, beware. A cigar is always ready to insinuate itself into the taste."

Luther was, of course, banished from the kitchen. So were Adi, Edmund, and Paula, even if this occasioned a series of trips by Klara to the children's bedroom, each time removing the cloths piled up against the

doors, then replacing them on return. Perhaps she was protecting everything too much—I do not think one bee had gotten into in the house.

Otherwise, the task went well. As each frame was taken out of the hive-box, Alois-Senior proceeded with the pride of a surgeon. He pared the wax caps from the ~~tops of the~~ honey cells by way of his separator knife (not so thick as a chisel nor so flat as a spatula) but a tool designed to lift off the thin top layer of wax closing off each cell in the frame. Since there were ^{two} ~~twenty~~ thousand cells ^{in each of} for the ten frames ^{of the} in each Langstroth box, and ^a ~~each~~ ^{cell} ~~one~~ was no wider in diameter than the fingernail of a child, one could hardly uncap them one at a time. That might have taken a week. Instead, Alois applied the separator knife to whole patches, stripping off swatches of top wax an inch wide and from three to four inches long. To his eye, it was ~~much like an insect~~ ^a skin which he, the surgeon, had to remove, yes, no mean skill required to strip this wax without damaging the cells beneath. He was beginning to take pleasure in the job. He would have made a good surgeon, he decided. Out of the corner of his eye, he was looking to see if Alois-Junior might also be admiring his command of the procedure.

I can add that the supposition he had a talent for bodily operations had begun to warm his loins. A woman once told him that a ~~certain~~ surgeon of her acquaintance was one of the two best lovers she had ever had. Alois was the other. How he had enjoyed that remark. Of course. He had no fear of the flesh and neither did a surgeon—brothers under the skin!

After a time, nicely pleased with himself, he handed the de-capping tool to Alois-Junior who proceeded, after mangling one swatch and then the next, to get better at the job. Soon, he was as deft as his father. This occasioned pride in Senior, and a touch of disappointment. To make it worse, Alois-Junior said, "This is as good as scraping icing off a cake."

"Watch out for the cells," said Alois-Senior. "Don't damage them with your big mouth."

Adi had been allowed into the room to watch, and Alois-Junior extended the de-capping tool toward his brother as if to say, "Want some?"

Klara reproved him on the instant. "Why are you offering your little brother a mouthful of wax? He could choke on it."

"No, no," said Alois-Junior "it is a legitimate offer. It is wax with honey sticking to it." He nodded. "I do not think that Adi would be so silly as to swallow the wax."

When Klara glared at him, Junior took a piece off the tool and proceeded to chew it vigorously himself, then extracted the residue from his mouth and nodded. Klara could only look away.

Soon, the task grew more difficult—they had to strip another layer of wax from the back side of the tray, the frames having been inserted vertically in order to leave room to build cells on both ^{5 sides,} ~~surfaces~~. To remove the second coating, however, took longer. More honey was lost. Some leaked from the front, and more from the rear. Soon enough, Klara had to take over. It was apparent that she had the cleverest fingers of them all.

It took a few hours. As each tray was uncapped, it had to be slotted into the honey extractor, where Angela was now at work turning the crank. With devotion, she followed her father's instructions. "Yes, yes, move slowly now as you start, yes, just as you are doing it. Look inside! The honey is beginning to come out of the combs. Keep it slow, yes. Don't

speed up on that crank. Not yet. Slow, Angela, slow." (He could have been driving a dray and calling to his horses.)

It proved a strain. The slower Angela went, the longer it took for centrifugal force to fling the honey onto the metal sides of the extractor bucket down whose walls it ~~could~~^{would} drip to a funnel. But when she sped up, too much wax ~~would fly~~^{flew} off with the honey.

Before long, Alois-Junior had to take over. He had a better sense of how to maintain the speed of the crank. There was silence in the kitchen as they ~~listened~~^{tried to} to the murmur of honey dripping down the walls of the extractor bucket.

By way of a petcock at the bottom, the honey was ~~gathered~~^{then} in a basin. Klara was prepared with a coarse sieve and a fine one. After which, she held everyone back. It was absolutely necessary, she told them, that she and Angela spend another hour filtering the product through cheesecloth. Moreover, she was determined to save the wax as well. Beeswax had real value. It could produce the finest grade of candles. So Mr. Rostenmeier had told her at the Fischlham store. Alois snorted. He could have told her that already, he said.

Adi was the most impatient. He wanted honey, he wanted to gorge. Not even his mother would permit this, however. "Be patient," she said, "the honey has to settle."

"It is there," he cried. "It wants us to taste it."

"No," she said, "it is full of bubbles."

"I don't care."

"You must. Bubbles make honey uncomfortable."

"They don't," said Adi. "I know."

"You don't. Air ^{just} in honey," said Klara, "is/as uncomfortable to the honey, as gas would be on your stomach." She had no idea whether this might be true, but she hardly cared. It felt true. Besides, it would be good for Adi to wait. Patience could strengthen his character.

Tears came into his eyes. As expected. Whenever he was denied, he was quick to weep.

"Think of this honey," she said to Adi. "It has gone through so much. Such a great deal. It was living in one place quietly and the bees were its friends. Now, they are gone and look at all that has happened. We have been shaking it and scraping it. Then we have been spinning it. Now, the

honey does not know where it is. Let it sit. We will wait. Tomorrow, we can have the party."

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No party took place on the next day. Foam and bits of wax had collected on the surface of the honey. Klara scraped it off carefully, but insisted all the same on postponing the feast.

For one thing, Klara now stirred the honey each day. She was convinced this was necessary. ^{when in the kitchen} Sometimes she stirred it every ten minutes ~~when she was in the kitchen~~, and then dragooned Angela and Junior, despite their protests, to fill in for her.

This, she told them, was to keep the honey from becoming hard. She ^{this} remembered from her childhood, she told them. Once in a while, she ^{remarked} told

~~then~~, a wife can see farther than her husband. Why not? God gives His gifts to everyone.

Finally, she gave way to the chorus and declared the honey to be ready. She still had misgivings. But they had their party. Alois-Senior had considered inviting Der Alte ^{but} ~~until~~ Klara was quick to veto such a notion. "This is for the family," she said.

So they each took a spoon and stood in a circle, all but Paula whom Klara held in her arms and fed by way of her forefinger. The others licked their spoons. Instantly, they were ready for more. Klara had baked a sponge cake and offered slices dipped into this communal trove, but Senior and Junior and Angela and Adi just kept licking their spoons, yield after yield.

It was as if they were drunk. All of them. In separate ways, but certainly each and every one was having an exceptional good time. For Alois, it was as special and highly particular as good French brandy (which he had tasted three times in his life.) Yes, this honey was magical. It gave him memories of Fanni, splendid memories he had not permitted himself to enjoy for years. That had been true heat. What a bitch! What a witch! Too

bad! She had paid a great price. To die so young. ^{Could it not be said?} Yes, ~~she~~^{she} had loved him too much, and the thought of such an overabundance of love, excitement, and his old but so successful treacheries to Anna Glassl mixed well with the taste of the honey, yes, he might just as well be drunk.

And Klara, filled with notions of the illimitable panoply of God's gifts, thought again of a young fellow she had liked back in Spital when she was very young, even a year or two before Alois came to visit the farm, this uncle who would be her man for life. But the other fellow had been so nice. They had held hands once, although she had never kissed him, not even that. But this honey must have stolen into her heart because she realized now with all her heart—so beautiful a memory—that she had been so happy when she held hands with that farmer boy, happier than she had ever been with Alois. Such was life. One had to be careful. One could not live with honey every day. She was careful now to eat the cake and ^{put down her} ~~leave the~~ spoon, ~~alone~~.

Alois-Junior was thinking of Der Alte. He felt such confidence in these thoughts. It had been ~~something~~ in the way the old man looked at him. Eyes so moist. The old man had looked like he was ready to open his

mouth and wet his lips and do the thing some of the younger boys back in Spital had done for him already. Once or twice. Then, more than once or twice. The honey was telling him the truth. He had liked it. He had tried to get a girl to do it, but she had ~~refused~~ ^{refused,} screamed. Maybe it could happen now over the hill in Fischlham. ~~He was old enough. Ready for tricks.~~

And now he remembered the older boys who had wanted him to do the same for them. One had even twisted his arm. When he yelled no, he wouldn't, this big fellow hit him in the stomach. He had been smart enough to throw up. That discouraged the big fellow. Now, maybe, he could enjoy something with Der Alte. It would get him ready for the girl he had in mind. Give her a ride on Ulan. Bareback.

Angela was off in her dream. The honey ^{left her feeling} ~~made her feel~~ nicer than she had ever felt. A ~~truly funny~~ ^{truly?} sensation. So strong. She felt as if there were another person in her, someone new, someone good to feel. Was it right to feel ~~so strongly?~~

If the question now exists how it is possible for a devil like myself to enter the thoughts of this family when little Adolf is my only true client, I will give credit to the honey. We have among our gifts the power to invest

many a substance with a trace of our presence. It takes no more. If we respect such a faculty, if we keep it fresh, and are careful not to abuse such power, then that trace can, for a short period, enter the thoughts of a man or woman or child without involving us in the responsibility of investing them. This delicate link, carried off with finesse, can even be kept for a few hours. (How agreeable it would have been to offer Nicholas the Second one good taste of Alois' honey!) In any case, I suspect that was why Klara kept stirring the stuff for several days. By instinct, she wished to serve as an impromptu ^{Cudgel} ~~angel~~ against our inroads. Of course, the reverse occurred. Her interventions only intensified the property I had added to the honey.

I did not spend time with Edmund and Paula. Before it was over, the boy would gorge too much and soil his pants, and the baby had a touch of colic. But, that was later. At first, they kept smiling with such innocent glee that all the others were laughing at them.

Adi was the most interesting. As I anticipated, he went wild. The sweet had an effect on him equal to schnapps for Alois-Junior on an empty stomach. So Adi made a point of giving sticky kisses to Klara and Angela, delighting in their ^{cries,} ~~seams~~, and the panic with which they wiped his kisses

off their mouths. Klara, particularly. To scrub her mouth was a reflex, but when she saw a hitch in Adi's laughter, as if he had been so surprised by the detestation on her face that a first tear had to pop up in his eye, she caught the boy and kissed him with all the muscular intensity of a mother doing her duty, and Adi, not knowing whether he had been rewarded or further rebuked, snuck up on Angela with new honey on his mouth and a small gob on his index finger all the better to entwine her hair.

Angela bellowed and there was hatred in the sound. He had ripped her away from the delightful sensation~~§~~ that had been cavorting in her belly. But even as Angela was catching breath to scold him, Adi was prancing around Alois-Junior. That stalwart froze him with a look.

Edmund was left. Adi moved in behind, full of the power implicit in sneakiness itself, and left Edmund with so much honey on his head, that the two-year-old dropped some more caca into his pants, whereupon Adi went up to Klara, pointed at Edmund, and said, "Mother, I did not make messes like that when I was two years old. This Edmund, he is always dirty."

Thereby, he handed Angela her quick revenge. She was there on the spot to tell Klara what had happened, and proved so precise in her

description, that Klara began to scold Adi with words she had not used before, not to him. "This is a disgrace. Do you understand? It is a sin to be cruel to those who are smaller than you. How can you be so bad? God will punish you. He will punish all of us." She spoke with woe. She did not wish to spoil this splendid family occasion but must do it for the sake of the others, for Angela, and for poor little Edmund, dirty again. "How can you play such a trick?" she said to Adi. "Edmund loves you so much."

This time she actually did want to make Adi cry. Instead, she was the one with tears in her eyes. He—perhaps it was the honey—felt as important to himself as he had ever been in his six and a half years. He was enraged at these criticisms of himself. He glared at Angela. He whispered to his thoughts, "I will never forgive her. That is a fact!" And with it all, he was proud of himself. He had brought his mother to tears. "Let her cry for once. Not me. It is time for her to learn."

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^{must}
I ~~will~~ now describe the carnal act of Alois-Junior and Der Alte. This is with some distaste. Be it understood, I am without moral judgments on these matters. ^{Most} ~~As devils~~ ^{suppose} ~~we~~ are obliged willy-nilly to be interested in every form of the embrace, dedicated, casual, perverse, or, as the Americans say, missionary—"I got on top and whaled away." We are, of course, much more interested in sexual deeds that fall into no established ^{but} ~~habit~~. Routine practices—the Cudgels, I believe, would agree—are inimical to our purposes and to theirs. First sexual encounters, however, are rarely to be ignored. We speak of them as primes. The stakes tend to be larger. Few primes take place without some representative of the Maestro and the D.K.

in attendance. Fucking—to employ that most useful, all-but-cosmopolitan, and near-onomatopoetic word, (so close to the meats ^{flaps} and fats of the occasion)—is of real interest to both sides. Much can happen, and quickly! Old habits, whose presence in the psyche are as heavy as breastworks in trench warfare, can be abruptly razed. ^{How can that not be} That is a matter of direct importance to the Cudgels and to ourselves.?

Small surprise, then, if we are free of moral judgment, and alert to ^{fresh} ~~new~~ estimates. Will this particular joining weaken our position or enhance it?

I was repelled, ^{this time} ~~therefore~~, by what took place. Der Alte, after a few habitual courtesies and social commonplaces, designed ~~on this occasion to~~ ^{to} shield his excessive pleasure, (and instant alarm) on seeing Alois-Junior at his door—what if it all turned out a disaster?—soon came to recognize (given decades of experience in these matters) that Alois-Junior was here for the precise gift Der Alte had dreamed of offering him ever since they met. "I am so glad you desired to visit," he repeated several times in the first few minutes, to which Alois finally replied, "I woke up this morning thinking about you. So, here I am."

The hitching post was some fifty feet away outside, but Der Alte could hear Ulan swishing his tail. He knew enough not to spend one second more in conversation, but moved over to Alois-Junior, knelt before him, laid his hand upon the boy's crotch. Whereupon—fierce Jack-in-the-box—Alois-Junior was on his feet, pants unbuttoned, and full of a happy, blood-filled organ, thrust it at once into Der Alte's mouth—poor old man!—those yearning, long-unemployed lips.

It was during the next moments that I became displeased. If I am free of moral judgment. I am hardly void of my notion of good taste, and Der Alte demeaned himself. To say it straight, he slobbered all over the boy, and spluttered raucously when Junior thrust a full discharge down his throat. Like a baby, Der Alte peed in his pants. It was a species of discharge—the best urination he'd had in months. Then he was all over Alois-Junior with kisses, plus a variety of verbal endearments I will not repeat here. "You taste sweet, your heart is good," is perhaps the most manageable example to offer, and, of course, the most absurd, for Alois-Junior did not have to be a client for me to perceive that his heart was cold. His concern was loyal to

himself. Like all such very young men, he was filled with disgust for this quondam partner, and left as soon as he could.

That took a few minutes. He had no wish to be entangled for the most part of an hour with endearments that sat on his skin like spider webs. On the other hand, his practical nature kept him present long enough not to insult Der Alte directly. That could interfere with a return visit. Who knew? If he did not succeed in the next few days in convincing one particular farm girl he had in mind, then back he would come to this old pot. Alois-Junior was the stuff out of which clients are made—at the age of fourteen, he already understood sex in a manner that was ideal for us—he would soon be adept at accumulating many a dominance by way of his priapic gifts. That we do ^{appreciate} ~~look for~~. So many of our male clients have nondescript dicks. We never know when an erection will be there, ready to salute. That creates endless problems for us, but we can also manipulate impotence (whole or partial) into its own kind of effective instrument. For example, Adolf was to suffer prodigiously from such a condition ~~(which we~~ ~~will yet see as we follow him~~ through adolescence, war, and his early political manhood.)

Alois-Junior was the opposite. Full of his father's blood, his natural interest was in women. He would have spent all his hours with them except for what he considered ^{them} a built-in trap. Girls ~~were too much like women~~ ^{to} attached to family responsibility. Boys ~~and men~~, on the contrary, were right there—good for getting rid of the constrictions of the groin. And very nice to command a boy, or, better, a grown man.

Yes, he would have been perfect as a client. We would have enhanced his powers. He could have served us in ^{so many} ~~a rich variety of~~ ways. My instructions, however, were to leave him alone. The Maestro's eyes were for Adolf. I understood. It ~~can be~~ ^{is usually} disruptive to work with two clients in one family, ^{This particularly true} especially if they are ~~considerably~~ apart in character. Should ^{trying} one devil ~~try~~ ^{can be put at odds} to tend to both, ~~he may be confused~~ by their conflicting needs. ~~And two separate devils rarely keep a good union while~~ overseeing two clients in one home. ^{can be worse} ~~Envy stirs~~ ^{between them} As the Maestro has been known to ^{try} ~~remark~~, one might as well ask ~~opera stars~~ ^{to be ready for} for close cooperation.

So, I stayed away from Alois-Junior. Soon enough, he did succeed in charming Greta Marie Schmidt, a strapping farm girl to whom he gave rides on Ulan. Before long, he had something like the same set of keys to her

private parts that Alois-Senior had had with Fanni when she was still a virgin. To use one more American vulgarism (I confess to an unseemly pleasure uttering them), Junior knew Greta Marie from "asshole to appetite." He had no desire to steal her virginity—that was her well-cocked trap. Moreover, he did not really like her. She was a touch too crude. So he went back to Der Alte. Despite the full-grown odors of the hut, some of those occasions were entertaining. Der Alte was full of langourous slides and inspired flutters of his tongue—all to the good for Junior, the pleasure-lover, but, of course, once done, Junior could barely look at him. The youth was as repulsed as myself by all that sobbing and gurgling. The sad truth was that Der Alte's tongue was preternaturally excited by the back door. Alois' buttocks began to feel like the portals to a bounteously endowed temple. He would wait until his pleasure rose high enough to be ready to explode, and then he would turn and give it all to the old boy's gullet. Afterward, he stood still as a statue again, doubly disgusted by the recognition that his father, Alois, was hopelessly in awe of Der Alte. "How well he can speak," his father had said.

But Der Alte was so ready to serve himself up. So how was he, Junior, to respect his father? All that awful, endless, nervousness about his bees? Always seeking advice from Der Alte. Now that the family had had its honey-feast, here was his father worrying already about when to extract the rest of the product from the remaining two hives.

A small but near-disaster was the upshot to this. I was not at all surprised. Alois-Junior managed to leave one of those cherished hives out in the sun. For no good reason. Distaste for his father.

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Indeed, it had been a near-disaster. His father came upon it in time, touched the box, felt the heat of the wood under the glare of the sun, but recognized that the hive was not yet critically overheated. The bees were not ~~yet~~ whipping about in such a frenzy that they would damage themselves. He had come in time. Perhaps just in time. He carried the hive back to the shade.

"What were you thinking, idiot?" he shouted at Alois-Junior.

The boy felt as if he had been pulled inside-out by the power of his father's voice. Such an ugly power. It came with all the heft of a heavy thudding blow. Adolescents can lose all sense of themselves when

unfamiliar punishment assaults them. That is because they are not only full of airs, poses, and witless shows of temperament, but, worse! At bottom, they do not possess ⁶~~their own~~ real age. In that instant, Junior ceased to be a youth of fourteen. Till then, he had seen himself as "Fourteen," a clear concept, stark in its outlines. He had even pictured himself as XIV. But in truth, like many another, he possessed more than one ^{set of years,} age. He had the calculations of a twenty-year-old. Yet ⁱⁿ other corners of himself, ^{was} as ^{well} prone to self-betrayal as an eight-year-old caught in foolishness. Like leaving the hive in the sun. At this moment, he was so brutally divided that he felt full of tears ~~ready to be shed.~~

He actually pleaded with his father. To his shame, he pleaded ^{with} ~~his father.~~ "You have given me so much good information," he said. "So new and so stimulating, dear respected father." He slapped himself on the forehead. "I confess it may have been too much for my ignorant head. I made a mistake. I know that now. But I believed I was supposed to put the hive in the sun, yes, for a few minutes—no more!—so as to warm the honey-combs. It was so cold last night! For spring—so cold! I hope I did not make a terrible error."

~~An inner~~ ^A part of himself ^{was writing with his} ~~had begun to write.~~ (He could hear the sound of his ~~own~~ voice, ~~so shrill~~, sliding off every grip he tried to keep on some semblance of manhood. ^{So shrill!} "You must forgive me, father. My mistake is an outrage. I cannot apologize sufficiently!"

~~He had dredged his exculpatory instincts, but he knew it was not~~
 enough. A massive weather-front had come up again in Alois-Senior ~~at~~
 — the stygian depths of suspicion. "Think of this, Alois," his father said, ~~and~~
~~And~~ so quietly it ~~was almost worse than his shout:~~ "Our bees, all these bees, do their work by obeying the rules." Then he glared at Junior until the boy looked away. "They do not have patience with those who are weak or lazy. Or too selfish to remember their immediate duties."

He took hold of Junior's chin. His eyes would not let go of the boy's eyes. He pinched him on the chin, his thumb and forefinger as cruel as a plier's claws. But the pain rallied the boy. Der Alte respected him more than Der Alte respected his father, this ^{man} father who happened to be pinching him. That was so! The thought came into his eyes ^{about} and the exchange lasted long enough for ^{the father} Alois to feel a clear relief when the boy finally nodded and looked away. ^{Bat} ~~And~~ so soon as he walked away, Alois-Senior had to

recognize that this altercation had taken ^{a good deal} too much from him. Much more than expected. He felt as if a near-to-uncontrollable adolescent had been ^{daring} to glare ^{What a} glaring back at him. A strong one!

If this bothered his sense of himself as a father, ~~a good deal~~ more was soon to come. Now, it was Klara. She received a letter from her mother that killed all the confidence Klara had tried to gain from her father's earlier letter. Johann Poelzl's communication had spoken so well of Alois-Junior that she had willed herself to believe it. But, had she? So soon as she read her mother's words, she wondered how she could have thought for an instant that Junior had changed.

Of course, writing a letter had to be agony for Johanna. Klara knew that. From the age of nine, she had been the one to reply to the few letters that came to their house in Spital. Yet now, as if to emphasize the importance of this particular epistolary act, Johanna went on for a full page of the most painful halts and bumps. First, she insisted on listing Alois-Junior's virtues. He was so bright, very bright, she could tell that to anyone. Attractive, good to look at, she would say that too. Junior even brought back old memories of his father, your husband, Uncle Alois, back then when

your Uncle was so young, so attractive, a good young man, so responsible.
All those years ago.

"Klara, I tell you," she now wrote, "I have to worry. What have we sent to you? Junior is wild. I must use the word. Klara, we had to send young Alois back. ^{do that, yes.} Had to ~~be done~~. ^{The new one} Johann even now must hire this other fellow for help. ~~He~~ ^{by} is a drunk. We pay wages for a drunk. That is how much we lose ^{this drunk} because of sending Junior back, ~~And this drunk is not good,~~ but, Klara, still ~~he~~ ^{is} better than Junior. We are not so afraid. The boy was ^{far} ~~away from~~ ^{out of} our control."

Klara went to her sewing basket and took out the letter Johann Poelzl had written. Alois-Junior had handed the letter to her, yes, on the day he arrived. She searched the top shelf of a cupboard to retrieve an old letter from her father, one she had taken the pains to wrap in a ribbon. It had carried his blessing on the birth of Edmund. Now, so soon as she looked at it, she knew that Alois-Junior's piece of paper ^{Alois-Junior had given her} was not in her father's handwriting. ~~It was~~ ^{was the one} the boy ^{the boy} who had written about how good ~~he~~ was. It was ~~at~~ a forgery.

Re-reading her mother's letter, Klara ^{had} felt a knot in her chest. Johanna kept apologizing for her bad German. Poor mother!

Klara did not say anything to Alois-Senior. Not until well after dinner. In bed, a little while before they were ready to sleep, he had begun to complain about Alois-Junior.

"I can't get ^{good} any (work from him," said Alois. "I speak to him, and he does not react. Not to my satisfaction. He is off with the horse. I don't want to worry, but I do. He can get into trouble. He sees girls on the other side of the hill. In part, it is my fault. Perhaps it is because of my conclusion not to raise potatoes this spring. Now, there is not enough real work."

It was then that she told him about her mother's letter. He nodded. He merely nodded.

"What are you going to say to him?" she asked.

"I will think about it," he told her. "I must take my time. The next step could be of consequence."

She was infuriated. She could not sleep. There might as well have been a bug wandering in the bedclothes. If Alois was not ready to scold his

son, she would have to. But she could hardly be ready for this. It was his son, after all.

On the following evening, not long before supper, Alois-Junior began to act as if he now knew that Johanna's letter had come. It is the best explanation I can offer for why he chose to break an egg on Adi's head.

The occasion was simple enough. His girl, Greta Marie, had shown him a little more that afternoon of what she was really—a dull cow. So, the need for new endeavor was in his fingertips. Something new. Having felt like smacking Greta Marie around, the impulse now moved close to Angela. His sister was clucking again over her chickens, collecting each egg from each hen as if it were a gold ingot—plain, dirty, hen-stained eggs. So, he took one out of her basket. Just to hear her scream. But when she did, he was ready to break the egg on her head. Only, he could not. She was his full sister—who else did he have? So he put the egg back. Nonetheless, this act of absolution cost too much. ^{And} now here was Adi, beside him now, slunk up within reach, smelly little hyena. Right after coming back from his gallop with Ulan, he had seen Adi lying on the floor of their barn,

screeching away, one more temper tantrum. It was a sound to inflame one's ears.

Junior lifted him off the barn floor, then slammed him into a standing position. "Keep quiet," said Alois-Junior.

"Try and make me," said Adi.

Each time that Alois-Junior pushed on Adi even a little, the kid would go yowling to his mother. His kid brother had a mother—he didn't. He had to put up with him, therefore. It was a truce.

On this late afternoon, however, there was Angela offering baby talk to her chickens, and Adi ^{up from the barn floor now and} leering at him. So safe on his side of the truce.

"Try and make me."

It was then that Junior took an egg out of Angela's basket, smashed it ^{took his time rubbing} down on Adi's head, and rubbed in the yolk and fragments of shell.

Adolf ~~was~~ yowled. It was as if he had anticipated just this species of showdown. Now, all on his own, he proceeded immediately to squeeze his gummed-up hair long enough to coat his palm with some of the spattered yolk, ^{Then he it/} which he then wiped on his shirt. Only it ^{did not leave a large enough} left no large stain. So Adolf lifted another egg from Angela's basket—out came a yip from her!—and

broke that all over his own head, face, and shirt, in response to which he caterwauled as loudly as if Alois-Junior had kicked him in the shins. Then he ran from the barn to his mother. Vast screams, loud as catastrophe itself, could be heard ~~in the barn~~ from the kitchen.

Vast screams. Klara came running back, holding Adolf by the hand. Her tirade had begun before she reached them. She was trying to tell Alois-Junior about the letter, but it spewed forth in no consecutive order. His lies, she told him, were worse than the filth left by the pigs in their sty. "They have an excuse. They are pigs. You have nothing. You are a brute. You are a pig. You are nothing but filth." She could not believe her words. They were so strong. To her surprise, Alois-Junior actually began to sob. In all of this, he had not had until now any real idea of how ready he had been to love her, and how ready she was to dislike him right down to the depths. Yes, secretly, he had thought she really did like him, yes, more than she did his father. Now, he ~~did~~ ^{felt} feel filthy. ^{Feel?} Filthy! To his ego, this was equal to a bereavement. He could not bear it. Just as suddenly, his sobs were choked. By his will. He stopped crying on the instant, nodded formally, and strode away. He did not know where the world would take

him, nor when, but he understood that he would not remain in Hafeld. ~~Not~~
Not for long,
~~for long.~~ He could not. He must soon say goodbye to everyone and to
everything here, especially to his horse. Or should he steal him?

This last idea proved too large for Alois-Junior. Yet it was enough to
know that, for the sake of his future self-respect, he would not leave until he
was ready to strike back. That must come one way or another. Soon.

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That night, they were quiet at dinner, even Paula whom Klara kept at her breast. Alois-Senior was certainly preoccupied. He had been stung by his bees a few more times than the one or two or, occasionally, three, he was used to receiving on most days—that was part of the occupational hazard, no more. Tonight, he not only had little to say, but hardly noticed that the others were silent.

He was waiting for bed. Lately, Klara had begun to remove his bee-stings and he was able to enjoy that. She was so adept. She never pulled crudely on the stingers. So he did not have to suffer the ^{*small fury of the*} wound through the night. Done poorly, it could feel like a needle had been left inside. A tiny

wound but a real one, ready to puff up. Sometimes, ^{it even} ~~the wound~~ felt personal, as if ^{it refused} ~~it refused~~, from meanness itself, ^{it refused} ~~(to stop hurting)~~. But Klara knew how to nudge the flesh where the stinger was peeping out, and then coax it forth with a little soft pressure.

Now, when they went to bed, he was looking to have his pains cared for. Only, on this night, he had to wait. First, she must describe all the mess the boys had made, all that egg and shell. He did not care to listen. "Ach," he said, "it breeds bad feeling if you always take Adi's side."

"What are you saying? Tell me of something good we can expect from Junior."

"No," he said, "you must listen to me. We are obliged to look for a balance. We must try. A good balance between these boys, and it will all quiet down. That is the secret."

A silence. It was followed by a deeper silence.

"I will try," she said at last.

Her instinct was to reduce this space between them. If she didn't, the difference would increase. But could she believe that her husband was right? Young Alois was behaving like Fanni. Only ten times worse than

Fanni could ever have tried to be. Yet, was it possible? Had she left a curse?

Well, their dreams would be full of poor omens for more than a few nights. Alois-Junior kept giving a demonstration of his skills through these last days of June, doing just enough good work to justify his right to go off one more time with Ulan. The boy was good at his duties, he kept the hive boxes clean, he knew when and where to move the trays. He was even able to locate the Queen and put her into a Queen-cage without using the glass trap. Just like Der Alte, he could do it with his fingers.

He had also become the one to generate the prevailing mood at the table. The length of his silences weighed on them. No member of the family took a chance with him these days, not even Alois-Senior, but then he was entitled to worry. He understood one side of young Alois all too well. What love the boy felt for horses! Riding Ulan, the boy must feel as handsome as an officer squiring an elegant lady on one of the better streets of Vienna—how well the father understood that ^{such} ~~particular~~ ^{sitting} ~~savory~~. But, Alois also knew what was hatching underneath. ~~No tame chicken enclosed in that eggshell!~~ His son, Alois decided, might yet become a true lunatic.

At present, the horse came first. Soon, it would be all about girls. The father knew this as well as if sperm was stirring in his own good equipment. The power of those first revelations. Nothing could be better than the moment when a woman opened her legs before you. That first time! If you had an eye for the little differences, you knew twice as much about her as you learned from her face. Alois-Senior would attest to that. The female organ! Whoever designed this form had been so ~~intimate with~~ ^{knowing about} the job.

(This was about as close as Alois ever came to the Creator!) Such a wonderful array of meats and juices—such a panoply of flesh in miniature—this offering of archways and caverns and lips. Alois was certainly no philosopher, so he would not have known how to speak of Becoming (that state of existence when Being feels itself out suddenly in the open), but all the same, he could have tipped Heidegger off. Becoming is, yes, exactly, when a woman opens her legs! He felt like a poet having such thoughts.

Let me leave it at this: if Alois could have talked to his son, he would have had a good deal to tell him. But he would never venture to speak of these matters. Having been a guardian of the border, which is to say a

policeman ^{could} all his life, he ^{would} not even trust his children. A good
policeman had to ^{live with} respect trust as if he were handling radium. Trust was
girded with risk. To offer your closest thoughts to others was to ask them to
betray ^{you, to ignore your counsel,} your wisdom.

Still, if he could have spoken to young Alois, he would have been
quick to inform him that there was nothing better than to be a young man
interested in girls—he, the father, could tell him the best of stories if it came
to that—"but, young Alois, I must impart this to you: Young women can be
dangerous. Often, they are the sweetest angels, a few of them maybe, but it
is not them you have to be ready to deal with. It is ^{the lot of these angels} ~~their fathers,~~ ^{or their} ~~their~~
brothers. It can even be an uncle. Once, I almost received a beating from a
girl's uncle. I was big enough, but he was bigger. I had to talk my way out
of it. So will you. It is certain that you will know how to talk, young Alois,
but that is an ability which works better in a good-sized town. It works best
of all in the city. Out here in Hafeld and Fischlham—not so good—country
people can be difficult."

There was so much he would have told his son. If only they could
have confided in one another! It made Alois sad. I must say, however, that

it can certainly be construed as his fault. Nothing was more important than ^{the} maintenance of ^{his} authority, ~~more important to him even than~~ ^{Not even} his love for his oldest son, ^{could come close to equalling that.}

So he could not be so generous as to offer the core of his advice, ^{But} ~~or he~~ ^{if he had been able to, he} would have told Junior: "Enjoy every woman you can, but always be aware of the price. Especially here in the country. Listen, young Alois," he would have said, "country people do not have enough to do with their minds. Their backs are strong, but their lives remain unchanging. Year after year, it is the same. They are ^{kind of being} bored. So, they start to think about ^{the} little wrongs that have been done to them. ~~And big wrongs.~~ I say to you, son, watch out! Do not get a girl in trouble. When the time comes, do not be too certain that you will be able to deny that you are the fellow who made her pregnant. Sometimes, that does not work."

Alois lay in bed, drenched in perspiration. His son's drama unfolded before him with all the power of a fine tragedy ^{a secret} ~~for a Viennese theatre.~~ ^{would have} ~~In~~ ^{his mind, he} now said to young Alois, "Do not make fun of the father of any girl you have had in the straw. Never insult a peasant who has too little to think about. Ten years from now, he will find out where you are living, and

he will come to your door, and he will blow your head off with a shotgun. I have heard more than one story like that."

Since devils know to what extent men and women are able to conceal from themselves a clear view of their own motives, I soon understood that behind all this splendid advice to young Alois, the father was worried about his own safety, yes, Alois-Senior felt as if it could be his ^(own treasured back) rear end that was ~~that were~~ exposed!

One evening, over a month ago, while having his beer in the Fischlham tavern, there had been ^{some} ~~a bit of~~ talk which he dismissed at the time as idle, no more than ^{a bit of} ~~some~~ prattle about a fellow who lived on the other side of the tavern a few miles further away from Hafeld. Two of the farmers who drank with him actually knew the man, and it seemed this fellow had spoken about Alois. Yes, more than once, they assured him, "He knows you, and he made it clear. He don't like you." They had laughed.

"I assure you," Alois said in all of his local majesty, "if I ever met this individual, I have forgotten it. His name ^{means nothing to my mind, it} ~~does not mean anything to me.~~"

Indeed, it did not, until the name came back to Alois ^{during} ~~in~~ the middle of a sleepless June night. When he got up to look outside ~~side~~ their bedroom

window, he was offered a moonlit view of silver fields, and Alois thought of how happy ^{these fields} they must be to lie fallow and not have to satisfy young potatoes ~~grubbing ~~the~~ ~~ground~~ down~~ growing for more of the earth's riches. Alois, however, ^{then} ~~also~~ made the mistake of looking at the full moon ~~for too long~~, and ~~abruptly~~, the face of this fellow who had declared his dislike of Alois Hitler came back to him.

Good Lord! As a ^{memento} ~~reflex~~ of childhood, Alois invoked ^{such a} ~~the Dummkopf's~~ ^{re flexive} name only when there was bad news. Good Lord! That fellow was a

smuggler, yes, he had caught him in Linz one day. Yes, he could certainly remember now. The fool had been trying to take some contraband over into Germany. Alois could not even recall what the illegal stuff had turned out to be. ~~there had been so many such cases~~ but ~~now~~ he certainly remembered the hatred in the man's eyes. When they looked at each other, the expression of the other had been offensive enough to tempt Alois to

strike him—what a vile look!—but such an act he considered entirely beneath himself. Certainly, ^{he had laid a fist on anyone while} he had ~~struck no one during these last years~~ on

Customs duty, ^{not in years} ~~he~~ ^{was} ~~to~~

Could the full moon ~~be~~ ^{to} a mirror for one's memories? It was there before him now, ~~and~~ ^{so} clearly. He had not struck the fellow, no, but he had

~~certainly~~ mocked him. "You are angry at me?" he had said ~~to the man~~. "Be angry at yourself. You are a fool. Even my first day on duty when I was eighteen, I could have caught you. That is the kind of fool you are."

If he was going to recall it ~~at~~ properly, could it be that the smuggler had not begun to look at him with such hatred until Alois began to tease him? Smugglers do not hate you for catching them—that is part of the game—but ^{do not} ~~don't~~ mock them. How often had he said as much to young officers. "Make ^{a little} fun of them, and they will never forgive you."

In the morning, after a night full of fear—yes, that smuggler had actually been sentenced to a year in jail, and now he was free—Alois ^{arose} ~~got out~~ ^{from a bed here & a decent sleep} ~~of bed~~ with the recognition that there was not going to be a hell of a lot of ~~rest sleep~~ ~~sleep~~ for him until he got a new dog, a truly fierce hound. Luther was good for nothing by now but yodeling at the moon on a night when nothing was happening. He needed a dog who would be ready for a bad fellow stealing across the fields toward the house with odium in his heart.

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It so happened that the right kind of dog was available. A farmer he knew was looking to sell a German Shepherd. "He is the best of his litter, which is why I have kept him all these months and have fed him, this gross guzzler. Can you afford to labor longer hours? Because he eats all the time. That is why I will sell him to you for next to nothing. Maybe he will make you as poor as he has made me. Then, I can laugh, and you will cry."

Good beer talk. But Alois, on taking a walk the morning after his ~~close recollections with the faculties of~~ ^{colloquies with} the full moon, decided to buy the hound.

He was a good one, Alois could tell. When it came to dogs, he had always had a nice understanding. He could stare right into the eye of a fierce mongrel, yet because he felt a moment of love for the poor ugly old bastard, the animal would usually respond well. Alois could talk to dogs. If the beast growled a bit, Alois would say, "Oh, fellow, how can you speak so to me? I like you, I approach you as a friend." And he even knew enough to bring his hand to the dog's mouth as a token of friendship. He had never made a mistake. The one time in a hundred when a dog was actually fierce enough to bite, Alois could sense that, too, and he would extend the forefinger and pinky of the near hand, his separated fingers directed to the dog's eyes like pointed horns, and the animal might keep up his imprecations, but he would not attack.

So, Alois was delighted that this overgrown, six-month-old German Shepherd with the regal name of Friedrich ^{He looked fierce,} was fierce. Better still, he was a one-man dog. Let the children recognize that quickly. Let Klara complain.

Let young Alois mind his business. He would be the only one to feed Friedrich. ^(Greatest the Great) ~~From what he had heard, King Friedrich had~~ Friedrich. And he would change his name, ^{with honoring him,} ~~to hell with remembering King~~ Friedrich the Great. He would call the dog Spartaner. Like a Greek. A

*maybe he
So, to talk with
Gayer friend not a mistake, So, to talk with
was not so great. To hell with
had a
was not so great. To hell with*

warrior. Any ex-smuggler who had thoughts of coming to the farm in the middle of the night, would not dare, not now, not with both dogs present.

You could take care of ^{Luther}one with a piece of meat and a cloth dipped in ^{Spartan}chloroform, but then ~~the other~~ would be there to attack you.

How Alois enjoyed the walk back over the hills ~~with his fine new~~ ^{the animal} purchase. He let the dog off the leash early, threw sticks for ~~Spartan~~ to return, taught him to stop and sit at command, although he learned so fast he probably knew that ^{much} ~~already~~. No question, however, this dog had good reflexes. Alois found himself in such a fine mood that he almost wrestled with the hound. Indeed, he restrained himself only because it was too soon. Wonderful. Quick love between a dog and a man is close to a perfect event, he decided.

The animal did not cease grinning with an all-knowing, all-breathing tongue that lolled at the edges of his grin until they came in view of the farm. But now, it was as if he ^{realized and all too abruptly,} ~~knew, and most suddenly,~~ that there were problems awaiting him.

Of course. It was Luther. Alois was ready to clap himself on the forehead for having been in such a state of blind certainty that he had not thought once of how ^{these} two dogs might get along on first meeting.

They didn't. They were terrified. Each was abominably afraid of the other, and ^{each way} sick with shame at ^{his} their own fear. They nipped with their teeth at the parts of their ^{fur} own body they could reach, clawed at newly discovered fleas beyond the reach of their bite, they barked at bees and ^{them at} butterflies, they ran in circles ^{which} that did not overlap with each other, they staked out territories.

Luther, while now an old dog, was larger than Spartaner, considerably so, but he was making the big mistake of lumbering around enough to tell the young dog what to capitalize upon ~~when and if they had~~ ^{fall into a fracas,} their fight. ^{transpired,} ~~As it happened,~~ If Alois had had more than an afternoon, perhaps he could have brought them into some variety of strained mutual existence, but they went to war two hours after ^{this} their first sight of each other. The family ^{rushed} ran out in the yard to witness them rolling on the ground, their incisors as awesome as shark's teeth, blood on their faces and their flanks.

Alois, being the furthest away, was the last to arrive. He was also the first and only one to dive into the fray. He had no fear of either animal. He was ^{too} outraged. How did they dare to begin this? He had told Luther an hour before to shut up ^{and} sit down ^{and} let live. This war was ^{rank} disobedience.

He roared at them to stop, and on the same impulse, flung them apart with his bare hands. The sound of his voice was enough. They lay on the ground, half stunned, breathless, two yards apart, showing open gashes on their noses and bloody fur at their throats. Spartaner kept panting as if the breath he needed was ^{out there} just beyond his tongue. Luther was ill within. The sum of his years had exploded. He looked at Alois with such pain, and so full an expression that Alois could all but read what he said: "I have worried about you and the safety of your house for all these years, and you yell at me as if I mean no more than that interloper you just brought in." Alois came near to petting him, and tenderly, but that would have spoiled his plans for turning Spartaner into a great ~~defender of a~~ dog, truth, Alois recognized that he would have to live with cruelty itself. Luther must go.

It was obvious that the younger dog had won. As their wounds healed, Luther did not try to eat until after Spartaner had gorged himself.

This regime continued even when Klara made a point of putting out separate bowls at a distance from each other. ^{But} ~~Then~~, Spartaner proceeded to gobble up the second bowl as well. It hardly mattered. Luther had lost appetite.

Alois now decided what the next step must be. He would ^{indeed} ~~have~~ to dispose of Luther. Good old Luther was probably ready by now to lick the hand of the first thief who came strolling over in the middle of the night.

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This was the second time that Adi had heard his father roar, once at young Alois for leaving that hive in the sun, and now again to shock the dogs into separation.

What mastery had been in his father's voice! What a complete command of the situation! The fearlessness with which his father had leaped at ~~these~~ two beasts entangled in one fury, blood flying from strings of saliva, yet his father had pulled them apart, thrown them apart. So fearlessly! Adi was in love with his father. For a few days that gave issue to a sense of inheritance, of a brave man's glory there for him to share. Whenever Adi had an opportunity now, he would go off into the woods by

himself—no small matter—but he forced himself to be as fearless as he could manage against the weight of all the silence and mystery of these immense trees quietly muttering above the greater silence of the forest. There, even if shivering in the warmth of the June air, Adi would work on the power of his voice. He would roar at the trees until his throat was too sore to open his mouth.

I was delighted with him. I was beginning to see why the Maestro might be exhibiting some special interest. ~~And I was amused at how Adi~~
~~was ready so quickly to credit his~~
~~to believe that he would soon~~
~~power. If, after his best attempts to bellow, a few leaves did shift by way of~~
~~his throat could have inspired this breeze on so still a day.~~
Adi's
he
was quick to decide that ~~only~~ the power issuing from
his throat ~~could have~~ inspired this breeze on so still a day.

Once he almost met his father in the woods, but I steered ^{him} Adi away. I did not want father and son to meet. Not on this occasion. The father might have mocked the boy for being so crazy as to shout at the trees, and the boy might have crept up behind his father and thereby would have witnessed the execution of Luther. I was looking to avoid that. The Maestro ^{would} could be displeased if the shock ^{prayed} was excessive. *(We looked to be the ones who would shape our clients, not events.)*

That afternoon became a long walk for Alois-Senior and considerably longer for Luther. One of his hind legs ^{had become, after,} was infected from the battle. He limped and after a few hundred yards, he began to hobble.

I think Luther understood what was ^{sweetening him,} transpiring. While the Maestro must certainly possess the ability to monitor any thoughts that pass between humans and animals, he does not encourage us to exercise our instincts in ^{this} such a direction. Or, at least, not among the devils I work with. For that matter, I often feel painfully curious concerning all I do not know about the departments, out-reaches, special services, zones, belts, salients, precincts, orbits, spheres, beats, and occult enclaves that the Maestro commands.

Particularly this last—occult enclaves. For a devil, I know no more about ^{the sinister} this last ^{for effect} than what I am instructed to use directly in my work. The curses, spells, and incursions into madness which legend would have available to all devils, is, actually, meted out to us as tools ^{and then,} only when needed.

So, it was not common for me to follow the thoughts offered and thoughts received which passed between Alois and Luther as directly as I could have done the same with two ^{extraordinary} humans. All the same, I was at no loss ^{humans,}

to recognize that Luther knew his end was near and Alois, willingly or not, was fully occupied in thinking of how he would dispose of the dog.

To begin with, he decided he would not shoot him. He did own a shotgun and a pistol. The first would be too messy, and the second made him uneasy. It would dishonor Luther. ^{Yes.} Yes, ~~just a bit~~. Pistols were reserved for malefactors. Whether in cold blood or self-defense, ^{such} a round from a pistol was not only impersonal, but a shattering end.

Let me remark ^{that I was not} at how ~~surprised I was~~ to read Alois' thoughts so easily. ~~True~~, I was familiar with the workings of his mind in sleep and so could collect his conscious thoughts as adroitly as one connects the dots in a child's puzzle. ~~But still, he~~ was not a client, ^{yet} ~~yet~~ I knew him better than many of ^a ~~my~~ clients.

I think I may have been granted a few exceptional ^{abilities} ~~powers~~ for this particular service. If Adi was my major assignment, I had also been granted ^{a secondary} ~~a few subsidiary~~ ^{for my return from Moscow} powers, enough at least to get to know the father and mother with something ^{like} ~~close to~~ the clarity with which we possess ^{enter} ~~(the~~ ^{son} mind of a client.

Alois' thoughts were, indeed, interesting on this occasion. He had decided that the only way to dispatch his old companion Luther was by the stroke of a knife directly into his heart. Poison would never do—worse than a pistol or a shotgun—wholly treacherous and it might involve hours of pain. Alois did not know (or care that much) whether men and women had souls, but he was in no doubt about dogs. They did. Treated properly, they were the epitome of loyalty. So, in turn, one had to be loyal to the soul of one's dog, yes. One would not blast him into the next place with the reverberations of the bullet—what a shock to the soul!—no, it would have to be the incisive stroke of a knife, fierce and clean as the heart itself in the moment its integrity is severed.

Alois kept thinking these thoughts as he trudged through the woods, slowed and slowed again by the hobbling of the old hound, and soon there came a point where Luther sat down and refused to move and looked for a long time into Alois' eyes. I could swear that if he had speech at his command, he would have said, "I know you are going to kill me and that explains why I have been afraid of you all my life. Now, I am still afraid, but I will not move further. Can't you see, I am losing the last of my dignity

as you insist on taking me further and further into the woods? I can no longer control my bowels and I do not want to keep pushing my legs along while they are covered with ^{this} filth, so here I sit, and you will have to lift and carry me if you wish to go ~~any~~ further."

Alois blew his nose. He could see that the dog would not move. But they had not yet come to the ground he had selected for the deed. In advance, in his mind, he had chosen a small ~~sharp~~ gully one-half mile further along where he could lay the carcass down in the ^{bottom} hollow of the divide and cover him with mud and leaves, then branches, and finally, ^{couch} ~~lay~~ ^{with the} ~~(over him)~~ the hollow trunk of a huge branch. If necessary, he would weigh it down with stones.

That had been Alois' plan. He had thought through every detail. He had liked the logic of such a burial—so much better than being ^{choked by} buried under ^(loads of) earth, his dog was not a damned potato!—but now he saw that Luther would not move on. And he, Alois, ~~so~~ regrettably, was no longer strong enough to carry him up and down along a rough trail for the next half mile. Therefore, it must be here. Afterward, he would go back to the farm, get a pick and a shovel and dig a grave in this copse, which was, in fact, a green and decent

place, enclosed by a half-circle of trees and some scrub brush, yes, it could be done here. Poor Luther.

So Alois laid the dog down, turned him on his back, looked into his face which had sickened in the last few minutes as directly and recognizably as the face of any old creature whose liver is rushing to the grave ahead of him, a sad old face to be certain, and Alois unbuckled the flap of the holster that held his hunting knife, laid the point of the blade at the center of the arch of Luther's rib-cage and pushed it in to the hilt. The dog's face contorted, the sound of his expiring came out of him and it was fearful to the ear. For it was much more human than Alois had expected. ^{And then} ~~Then, the~~

^{the} dog's face passed through ~~one place and another and with~~ many expressions, ^{changing from anger to gloom to} of anger and dead gloom and ^{hold} ~~bright life~~ his look settled finally into the face ² it would have ^{hold} for the first few hours of its death before ~~it~~ all began to

decompose. Luther now looked like a young dog again, and some indefinable pride had returned as if he had always been more beautiful than anyone had realized, and could have become a great warrior if it had been asked of him when he was young, yes, he did look ~~very much~~ like a warrior ^{as} ~~with~~ his features composed into this near-final expression.

It was a better death than he had hoped for, Alois decided. All the same, he felt hollow. He was pleased with his acumen, he had made the right choice, but he was shocked by the changes he had seen in the last moments of the dog.

Alois had almost ten years left to live, but on that afternoon in the forest he passed a junction on the road to death and so he wondered afterward and often whether he was a better man or a worse one because of this commitment to dispose of Luther in person, and, yes, honorable enough to bury him afterward.

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In the course of a walk that Luther and he had taken through the woods, the dog lay down to rest and died. Peacefully. That is what Alois told the family. Klara was the only one to suspect more than this might have happened. For, on the same night, perhaps six hours after the dog's demise, Alois made love to her with a good deal of vigor. It was more than she had enjoyed in a while.

He had had a variety of insect bites from his second trip to the woods, done to give Luther a burial with pick and shovel. So, it had taken a while to remove the stingers. By the time she completed her ministrations, they were both ready to make love. While she had no basis of comparison, she

was ready nonetheless to think that there might not be another man of Alois' age, only one year shy of sixty, who was so vigorous, this Uncle Alois, her man, a good man.

They had an agreeable few nights. Alois was experiencing what can only be called a transformation. He was loving her. That can occur in a marriage. Often, it is necessary precisely because most husbands and wives use the relationship ~~most of the time for~~ ^{for the major part of their time together to} excrementitious exchanges. ^{indulge in}

Indeed, that is why they married in the first place. As the Maestro ^{portrays it} delineates it, they had a need to be able to exercise petty cruelty at any moment to a ^{dependable} person close to hand. (This is because they were terrified of the rest of the world.) Lo! even the worst marriage allowed them one species of magic. All the endless upbraidings one would have liked to present to the world (but did not dare), could now be expressed through critical judgments on one's mate. All that spiritual excrement! In marriage, it is there to be traded back and forth, a zero-sum game, which, nonetheless, mediocre participants find much more enjoyable than ^{hoarding it} ~~keeping it to~~ ^{seeklessly inside} themselves.

Ergo, marriage is a workable institution—especially for dreadful people. Yet, it can also serve men and women who may be seen as average. Like our Klara and Alois. And strange shifts do occur, ~~even turn inside-out~~. Few of these reversals are permanent, but while they last, aeration is offered to what has been an airless union.

So, we are always alert for signs of a fresh breath in the relations of married people. We can use these shifts to shore up the worst of marriages for a period—should that suit our purpose.

This was not the occasion here. The shift in attitude was of their choice, and it caught me by surprise. Intoxicated by the full moon and the June air that came up at night from the fields, lying beside her in a state of trust, ^{was} rare for Alois, but he knew that her fingers would make no painful mistake as she took care of removing each stinger—there were so many more of them these days given the lushness of early summer—a festival for the bees!—but she was deft, she was purposeful, and he was at peace lying beside her. For this little while, it was as if he had become something like a woman. I exaggerate. Of course, I exaggerate. I will even dismiss this assumption, no, it is not that Alois felt like a woman so much as that Klara

now came to seem the embodiment of what he had never been able to know—the presence of a mother hovering over him.

Night after night, their ritual took place. He even became so careless as to work on occasion without the veil. He was not seeking to be stung, he had, after all, acquired some skill and did make fewer mistakes. Still, there were additional stings, and they cannot be discounted. It is fair to say he was anticipating his reward. Each night her fingers played out their delicate movements on his brow, the cheeks of his face, and the meat of his hands.

Metamorphoses
~~Transformations~~ disrupt the arid habits of the mind. Sometimes Alois felt as if his brains were cracking and creaking. He was entertaining ideas he did not believe could belong to him. He actually began to consider whether the pain from these bites was a means of paying for his sins. Just supposing—for in no other way was he ready to assume that he believed in sinning—what if these ^{*1, like wounds*} ~~bee stings~~ were a way of accounting for bad things you had done? Could it be a system?

What a notion! It gave him discomfort. Up to the moment he had this thought, he had been enjoying some decent sleep. It came from the knowledge that full-chested Spartaner was out there below occupying a new

dog-house built for him on the day after Luther's death. That had been no small task, but necessary. Not only was a guard dog entitled to his own sense of shelter, especially in a new habitat, but Alois' handiwork had established close feelings between the hound and himself.

New ideas, however, are full of paradox. So, Alois ^{twisted in} ~~withered~~ at the premise that guilt ^{might} ~~could~~ be real. If nothing else, it gave too much dignity to ~~so many~~ guilty people! Awful persons. Weaklings who huddled in churches. They walked around with a stone in their stomachs and a bigger one up their ass. But now, he couldn't scorn them any more. He now had a recognition he had never allowed himself, and the remembrance constricted his chest. He had committed incest. If he had made love to all three of his step-sisters, that was not incest, no, not unless their father was his father. But had he not always known that Johann Nepomuk was his father even if he had managed to know it without knowing it? This was the sort of thought he had always chased to the rear of his mind.

In any case, the worst might be that he had made love to Johanna, the oldest of the three sisters. If Klara was not the daughter of Johann Poelzl, then she had to be his child ("Sie ist hier!") That was a fact as sharp as the

knife that had gone into Luther. What if there was a God who knew things like this?

In the dark, Alois began to nod his head. In common with all men who have strong minds (strong does not mean brilliant!) he had the mental force to push his worst thoughts back. He could even have relinquished the new pleasure of enjoying Klara as a mother. But not yet. He could not as yet relinquish the soulful pleasures that were present each night in the wake of the needles removed from his flesh.

On these June evenings, he allowed the echo of these pains to resonate within. He did not look to divert any of these modest agonies by searching for happy thoughts. Instead, he was there, ready to accept the message that came to him from this mysterious province of pain. To Alois, it was a species of music, replete with new sensations for the mind and heart, full of its own clarity even as it spoke to his flesh. He laid himself open to the soaring voice of each pain. Their sum was as rich in amplitude as a choral group in one's ear.

He is exhibiting the saintliness of a sinner.

~~If I interrupt this grand journey Alois is taking into the modest sufferings of the flesh, it is because I must comment about the saintliness he~~

~~is feeling. He is exhibiting the saintliness of a sinner.~~

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Too little is understood about these matters. Saintliness is present in everyone. It can even be found in the worst of the worst. While I would not characterize Alois in this manner, he is looking, nonetheless, to pick up a little beatitude on the cheap. Offering one's skin to the rhapsodies of small torture, is, however, not enough.

Nonetheless, men like Alois, no matter how undeserving, can be as complex as saints. He has, in fact, come close to the mark. The Dummkopf did establish a system for judging moral behavior.

It is vast. And it is replete with rewards and punishments. Out in the empyrean, divine offices proliferated with the increase in human population.

The extent of the project was vast, far greater than the proliferations of the largest corporations, governments, and legal systems that had developed on earth. Indeed, if the Lord's means of judging the value of those who have just died had worked as well as the Lord intended, all souls, worthy and unworthy, would have deserved the justice they found.

Yet from all the signs available—or so the Maestro assures us—these Grand Offices are now in disarray.¹ Some of the Dispositional Angels who calculate these future placements for the dead are even corrupt. (The Maestro exhibits his highest skills when he succeeds in corrupting angels.)

I am now obliged to speak of reincarnation (or, of Karma—a popular word in America these years). The Maestro has no affection for Karma at all. Truth, he detests it, and for good cause. All the same, I will attempt to offer my comprehension. Karma does exist. Indeed, it is the measure itself. It is God's substitute for heaven and hell—which is exactly why the Maestro detests it. We have invested so many of our resources in maintaining the mass of humans in a state of belief that Heaven and Hell are predominant after death, which enables us to protect our major contribution to human misunderstanding. Heaven and Hell are our most effective instruments for

dominating the minds of men and women. Into their needy fear-filled hearts, we implant one mighty germ that leaves them permanently infected with a false notion. They think that in death, they will go to Heaven or to Hell. How this concept has served us! (The majority of people in Europe, Russia, and the Americas feel too weak to detach themselves from such a psychic fever.) So they pray, and they pretend to believe. They shout in unison as they vouchsafe their faith that they are going to Heaven and their enemies will go to Hell! How they believe that each of these imaginary kingdoms is there for eternity. Folly! For all the brouhaha, Heaven and Hell are numb and null as intellectual entities. My proof is that neither has been able to offer a foothold to human intelligence. Heaven proposes eternal bliss; Hell condemns each sinner to unending torture. Where is the human who can comprehend either condition? In life, such states cannot exist for long. Bliss, particularly, is brief. Few minds can muster even the sketchiest notion of Heaven. (What, indeed, does one do all day?)

I will admit that Hell, given the average human's cowardice, treachery, and inanition, does inspire more belief. Yet where is the divinity who would bother with the upkeep of such an ongoing, endless extravaganza? Besides,

there is no need of Hell as such. Given envy, misery, pain, and illness, simple human suffering is hell enough.

The Maestro, however, was equal to a mighty impresario when it came to elaborating these post-mortal misrepresentations. Wallowing in the name of Jesus, while attaching ourselves to the loudest churches and their most ambitious preachers, we have managed to convert Jesus's somewhat erratic God's mercies into inflexible moral dictates. These well-advertised moral demands—"Don't you dare to have a dirty thought in your dirty mind or the good Lord Jesus will suffer"—became, however, inadequate at dealing with the complexities of human emotion. Rebellion was quickly incited in the best of His human creatures. (So we work with them as well, if in a different manner—we love to loose them onto drugs!) In the main, however, we keep working to shore up every misbegotten belief in the existence of Heaven and Hell. For that, we can even use the best of church music and gothic architecture to support these transcendental lies. Pray all the time, we exhort all believers. Go to your knees. Praise God. We know such praise to be boring to Him. It is so repetitive! The D.K., despite all, remains creative. To some stubborn degree, at least. (Creativity, when all is said, remains God's

essence!) So, dull prayer roils His Patience. How we encourage people to pray for what they have not earned. Or, do not deserve. Such beseechment returns us a quick profit when God does not respond.

So, we are the ones to advertise the Lord as fearsome and mysterious—All-Good and All-Powerful.

Yet, from what we have been told (by way of our need-to-know) the Dummkopf was indeed once a true Creator. But His resources, prodigious in the past, have by now in good part been wasted. Yet, He hopes to save what is left by way of reincarnation. In the beginning, bequeathed so much to mankind by way of Free Will, and this was in such great part abused, that by now He uses reincarnation to offer a judgment on the abuse of each person's Free Will.

Let me offer the outline I perceive. Many who die do cease to exist altogether. For them, death is the end and they are inert. They have exhausted their souls even before they perished. Others, however, meet their deaths through the failure of their bodies while their souls are still lively, so they are born again (which s exactly why so many young soldiers are willing to die in combat, if it comes to that.)

Monitoring Angels in the Grand Offices decide upon their future dispositions of those who are to be reborn. They are sent out to take up new residence in life. They invest the embryo; they are born again by way of their new mother, and they develop, eventually, some at least, into adults. With what spirit do they now live? The answer to this question is the test of the reincarnation. Does our reborn soul respond with art and vigor and courage to its new situation in its new part of the world? Will one be more or less vital than the previous time? Wiser or less imaginative? Braver or more timid, greedier or more generous, cold or compassionate? Does one improve one's soul or allow it to deteriorate further? For the last will bring a harsher situation for the next life. Yes, the D.K. decided somewhere after the crucifixion of His Son to dispense with Heaven and Hell. God's judgment would determine the nature of one's rebirth. Would one enter a more or less promising situation on earth?

How the Maestro hates this system! Karma was designed to defeat us. Indeed, the Dummkopf created these metamorphoses—the Maestro will insist—to counteract His limitations as a Deity. Inasmuch as His Power increases or diminishes in proportion to the success or failure of His Creation,

it is His human beings (much more now than His animals) who will determine the Lord's success or failure in the judgments of the higher gods in the greater reaches of the Cosmos. Ideally, as He also follows the development of consciousness in His humans, He is wiser as a result, more profound, and strengthened in His Desire to shape a future that will be larger than the one with which He commenced His Labors eons ago.

In turn, the Maestro looks to play a role in reincarnation. More often than ever, we are there now at the moment of conception. I think this is one of the reasons that the Maestro still believes that the ongoing weaknesses of the Dummkopf will offer us an eventual victory. We are always reminded that the D.K., subject to His vanity as an artist, (and the unbalanced advice He receives from His over-compassionate Son) has thereby mucked up many a karmic reassignment. Such excesses of forgiveness! The Maestro would argue that the D.K.'s generosity derives from ongoing self-indulgence. He keeps too high an opinion of His Works. He does see every human as potentially splendid. At least by His Original Intention!

Waste, however, predominates. (Should I offer Der Alte as one example?) The Maestro will declare that the D.K. is so afraid of losing the

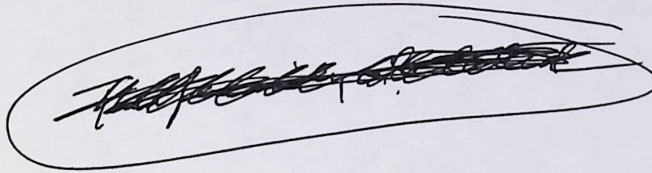
loyalty of His subjects, that He strews forgiveness willy-nilly. (Indeed, He has to—He has so little control over earthquakes, volcanoes, and floods!) So, all too many humans are invested in too heavily. Often, we pick them up for next to nothing.

Given our ongoing skirmishes with the Cudgels, it is agreeable to have these pickings. The Dummkopf does not give up, however, on those who come to us. Often, He will forgive them. Then, He uses reincarnation to send them out again. When we manage to locate a former client—we call them Retreads—we pick them up, as I say, for a song, a kiss, a one-night stand. Some are so easy, we do not even stop to congratulate ourselves. It is just one more reassuring reason for us to keep calling Him the Dummkopf.

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Too little is understood about these matters. Saintliness is present in everyone. It can even be found in the worst of the worst. While I would not characterize Alois in this manner, he is looking, nonetheless, to pick up a bit

of beatitude at small cost to himself. ^{monse/}Offering one's skin to the rhapsodies of small torture, is ^{He does not know that} however not enough ^{is but one more means of avoiding} the fear of living retrospection.

~~Nonetheless, men like Alois, no matter how undeserving, can be as~~
~~complex as saints. He has, in fact, come close to~~ ^{one lot of my last} ~~the mark~~ (The Dummkopf

~~did establish a system for judging moral behavior.~~

come much too near to
 acknowledging his acts of incest,
 this upsurge of saintly sentiments
 was soon replaced by those ^{familiar} ~~common~~ ^{attitudes}
 attitudes ^{for the morning} ~~for the morning~~ ^{by morning} he
 was back to thinking like a policeman →

~~Chapter 12 is deleted.~~

~~We'll change
names for
Franklin~~

~~12-6-2~~

~~however, other~~
Allow me to move back to Alois and his preoccupations. Given his

~~also~~
readiness to brood on all that can go wrong, he is now full of paternal

~~Alfred~~
concern. Since he has just come all too near to an acknowledgment of his

~~is soon thinking~~
own acts of incest, he ~~(back to acting like a policeman)~~. When an officer of

the law detects a vice in himself, he knows enough to look for its presence

~~elsewhere. Soon enough he began~~
in others. ~~and he began to worry about~~

~~these plots to physical matters, for years~~
So he began to worry about Alois-Junior and Angela. Was there

something worthy of his attention in that quarter? He did not like the

~~tone of the~~
curious conflict developing between the boy and the girl over who could or

should ride Ulan. ~~Or when.~~

To the father's surprise, young Alois was not looking to keep total possession of the horse. On the contrary, he was always offering to teach Angela how to ride. The father had to see this as a danger sign. At the tavern, Senior had already picked up a few rumors about a girl named Greta-Marie Schmidt—nothing to insult him or his son personally, but it seems Junior had been teaching Greta-Marie to ride bareback.

Now it was Angela's turn. She kept refusing. Junior kept teasing her.

"You are simply afraid to get on Ulan's back, " he would say.

"No, I am not."

"You are. Admit it."

"No. I swear I am not."

After several repetitions of such false testimony, she was driven to offer new remarks. "It is simple," she said, "I do not want to get up on Ulan. What for? If I learn, and am good at it, what then? You will still keep the horse to yourself. I will have to beg for rides."

"I will let you get on him as often as you wish. All day, if it comes to it."

"No. You will try to drive me crazy. I know you."

"This is an excuse. What you fear is obvious. You are afraid of being thrown."

"I am not."

"Yes, that is it."

Finally, she said, "Have it your way. So, I am afraid. Why not? That horse is strong. And so high. He will throw me, and I will break my neck." She was ready to start crying out of annoyance itself. "You are so sure of yourself. You ride around wherever you want, but I know what will happen. I will get up on him and he will gallop. He will throw me off. I will die of a broken neck."

"Never. Your neck is just as stubborn as you are."

"Oh, yes, you are so funny. But I will die. What will you care? You have girls all over the place. I hear about them. You are always kissing them, and then they kiss you back. But I am thirteen years old this week and I have never been kissed. So, I don't want to die before I even know what it is like ⁴to be kissed." Now, she did burst into tears.

Alois-Senior heard the end of this conversation. As he approached the barn, he was in time to witness young Alois' reaction. The boy found

her last speech so comic that he was unable to stop laughing. Finally he rolled on the floor of the barn.

^{He is} At ~~that~~ moment, Alois told himself ^(that maybe it was for the best) that if the boy spent ^{so} ~~too~~ much time out there riding the hills, ~~maybe it was for the best~~, yes, better for all if he was carrying on with some farm-girl ^{rather than} ~~out there, than~~ fooling about with Angela. That must not be! She was not even a half-sister. She was a full sister!

Now, Alois-Senior began to wonder if the two had ever been together. Was it not likely that they had just seen him approaching the barn? If so, this overheard conversation—was it all for him? Were they capable of such subterfuge? Why not? Their mother had been. Himself as well. Of course.

Over the next few days, Alois-Senior tried to observe Angela closely. But, he had spent too many years putting people ill-at-ease through the intensity of his gaze. No surprise, then, if Angela was unsettled by her father's attention. She began to wonder if he was interested in her. At school, she had heard such stories. One girl had even been ^{doing things} ~~named by the~~

(Or so it was whispered)
~~other girls. She did things with her father. So everybody said.~~ *(Ugh, disgusting,*
thought Angela, ~~disgusting~~*)* so very disgusting.

Now, whenever Alois-Senior was near, Angela would slide around him, drawing her hips in toward her belly as if to make certain nothing brushed.

This upset Alois. She was too artful at keeping her distance. He certainly did not approve of female sophistication in girls as young as Angela. The manner, indeed, by which she drew in her hips. Where had she learned to do that?

Klara now took a hand. If her distrust of Alois-Junior remained, she also knew that they could not send the boy back to the Poelzl farm. Therefore, they must do something with him here. She had learned one lesson from life, after all. It was that most situations were not comfortable. Often, a poor solution to a problem proved better than no solution. She had learned from her father and mother. If the Poelzl children kept dying, her parents had managed at least to love the few who were left.

While she could not even bring herself to like Alois-Junior, and no solution was in sight, still she must decide upon one. Her husband was not

going to plant potatoes again next summer. That was obvious. And putting in beets might prove just as unsuccessful. His bees, however, had been acceptable. Maybe ~~even~~ ^{of} more good than bad. So perhaps they ~~should~~ ^{could} ~~do a little more~~ ^{do something} ~~that way~~ ^{in that direction}.
expand.

Klara fixed on this ~~possibility~~. An imperfect solution—to repeat her wisdom—~~had to be~~ ^{was} better than no solution. Idleness was equal to the boy riding horses up and down the hills and getting into trouble.

So she suggested to Alois that perhaps they should build a bee-house like Der Alte had. ~~They~~ ^{Then, they} could install ten or fifteen hives. A real business. That would keep them busy. And, she added, it would be good for Junior. Alois could make him a young partner. A small share of the profits could even go to him.

"Take him on as a partner? You don't even trust him. So you have told me again and again."

"I said all that, yes," she had to agree, "but I do understand your son."

"You do? I would say you make a lot of remarks. And they are contradictory."

"I understand him," she said. "He is ambitious. And he doesn't know what to do with himself. But, I can see. He wants to make money. ^{I will} For ^{admit — for} (now, he is a little wild, ⁴ but..."

"He will always be wild," said Alois.

"Maybe so," she admitted. "But boys change. If we do nothing. . ."

"I must think about this."

The notion did appeal to him. Hitler and Son, Apian Products. If that crybaby, Adolf, and the snot-nose Edmund ever developed, it could be Hitler and Sons.

That had to be down the road. But Klara was correct. They must do something. The boy's ambition had to be put into focus. At present, he looked upon work as virtually ignoble.

Alois went back to his books. Over a few afternoons, he studied the history, culture and ancient traditions of apiculture in the several tomes he had collected on the subject and soon decided that he would give a small lecture to the family, designed for Junior, of course. Something like his old speeches in the taverns of Linz and Fischlham, yes, but now an exposition that might even be worthy of Der Alte.

He would tell Junior about the endless strife between bees and bears in the Middle Ages. That, decided Alois, could be a good story. Give the family a taste of such culture. He would even list all the lands where the bear and the bee struggled with one another. He actually memorized a few of the Latin terms. Selenarctos thibetanus for the Asiatic black bear. And Ursus arctos—the brown grizzly bear of Europe and America. Helaretos Malanus, the Malaysian sun bear. He decided to content himself with these three names. They would be enough. Too much memorization could wear you out. It was the stories he could tell. Why, even as recently as one hundred years ago, beekeepers would climb high trees to get to hives that the bears could not reach. "This was a common practice in northern Spain and in southern France," he would tell Junior. "One had to know one's trees then. Which were most congenial for good nesting. I can tell you. It was alder and ash, beech and birch, and most certainly, honorable elm trees, maples as well, oak, and willows. Lime trees," he could hear himself declaring, "those have always been great favorites for bees and for us as well, even to this day. Such honey retains the finest aromatic traces of the skin of the lime. Yes," said Alois, addressing Alois-Junior in his thoughts,

"this love of the bee for the lime-tree goes back to the very end of the Neolithic period, close to five thousand years ago. And the bees certainly knew how to build honey-combs in those days. North of here, up in Germany, they found one honey-comb recently, a fossil, that may have been bigger than any man who ever lived. Unbelievable. An eight-foot-long honey-comb. They found it, yes.

He was prepared to give whole funds of new information at the midday Sunday dinner. Get into the Greeks and the Romans. Since he rarely spoke at such times, as if to rebuke Klara for ~~going to~~ ^{spending the evening in} church, and the meal was generally consumed under the overarching profundity of his silences, he had a sense that a full exposition would impress Alois-Junior. If nothing else, he would witness the respect of the others. The number of countries involved would be enough to startle them. He would have stories to tell ~~them~~ about the Bassari in Senegal, the famine in Kilingula, ~~practices~~ ⁱⁿ Madagascar, ~~bee wasps shimmering in the intense light of Swaziland. He~~ ^{bees} ~~could speak of the Mbuti of the Ituri forest and the honey hunters in southern Sudan, the Ndogo people.~~ All that about Africa alone. He had ^{such} stuffed ~~these~~ facts into his head like a bear gorging on honey.

He had ^{also} read enough to be able to quote a line from Homer, and ~~of~~
~~they~~ Israel right there in the Hebrew scriptures had told his sons to bring
honey to Joseph in Egypt. To which Alois was prepared to add, "And this
reminds me of the Egyptian god Min ^{he} who as far back as 3000 B.C. is
referred to as 'master of the wild bees,' ^{Then there is} while the great writer, Pliny ^{who} speaks
of the Sabaei to the south. ^{Alois He} Strabo quotes Erastosthenes on the abundance of
honey in Arabia."

Since he had memorized all these names, he could have gone on ~~and~~,
~~or~~ He was ready to tell them of crazy drinking bouts in Poland, the
Ukraine, and in Russia from mead made of honey, the revels—although he
must speak carefully of revels before his own family, yes, the wild habits of
the Cossacks in the Urals ^{or} ~~and~~ the Hungarians in the Carpathians.

Yet, when it came to deploying ^{such erudition over the table,} these findings, he decided to give it
up. Perhaps he had crammed too much knowledge into himself. Klara kept
nodding with approval, but whether it was for his words, or the apple strudel
she had made, he could not really say, and Angela kept nodding with an
expression that spoke of school-house miseries. The three younger children

were completely out of it, and Alois, Junior, who had shown a bit of interest, began to wilt. His eyelids closed for longer and longer periods.

Alois-Senior had to contain his temper. It had gone wrong. He simply did not have the eloquence of Der Alte. "You," he said at last to Alois-Junior, with an address as direct to the youth as a poke in the ribs, "You and me—let us go for a walk."

What a mistake to ^{have given that} give such a lecture at a midday meal. It was obvious. ~~The boy had a visceral distrust of any knowledge he could not use immediately. And when he was eating, he did not like to think. Could he be just like his father?~~
^{the boy,}

Alois did not take him far from the house, but sat him down on a bench near the hives and spoke instead about the money that was there to make by working together. "It is even possible that we could bring in Der Alte. He has made hints. He would be happy to work with us. That leads me to believe we would have much the better of the bargain. In a few years, you could be a prosperous young man, yes, most prosperous. And let me say to you, good-looking young fellows like you are able to marry to advantage when it is seen that they are also able to make a fine living. We

give it three years of hard work, and you will be sitting on top of a pretty good heap. Especially since you have a sharp sense of what is what. Believe me, you will be able to take your choice of some very good matches."

The afternoon sun was hot, and the boy was dispirited. Greta-Marie had been unavailable that morning—she, too, had been in church with her parents, and so he had visited Der Alte, and on this occasion, he may have been too greedy. Now, he felt stripped of vigor, and Der Alte's bad odor was in his nostrils. What a joy to work every day for three years with these two old men! Der Alte would be full of secret signals that his father might pick up, and it could be guaranteed that Alois-Senior would find something to yell about every day.

Now, all this sweet talk ~~from his father~~, so full of fraud. He had no desire to work ^{for his father} like a slave. Not for three years. Too many good things were waiting. The moment he was ready, he would leave them and go to Vienna. The more suddenly, the better. He had hardly forgiven Klara for being so rude last week. No, he would never forgive that.

"Good and honored father," he said, "I appreciate your concern for my future. I, too, think about it, and often. I have come to certain conclusions."

"Yes," said Alois, "that is the first step to making a life for yourself."

"So true. You speak with the knowledge of your gifts. I can say that I am full of respect for them."

He had now arrived at the obstacle that stood between them like a fence. Yesterday, for the first time, he had taken a jump with Ulan. It had been a low hedge, but not that low. It could have thrown them. But he had known. He had ~~had~~ to take the jump. Now, he did again.

And he did. ~~Now~~ This was not the same and yet in one way it was, he would have to do it again.

"Everything you say is so correct, Father, but. . ." He hesitated just long enough to repeat it, "but, what you say is true for a person like yourself who is not exactly like myself. I have other gifts. So, I believe."

Alois nodded profoundly in order not to show his annoyance.

"Perhaps you will tell us what these gifts can be."

"I would say I have a gift for dealing with people." His father nodded again. "When I think of what I will do in years to come, it will be to make my living that way. By dealing with people."

At this point, he chose to stare into his father's eyes. It was no mean feat, but he held the glance.

"Do you wish to say that farming is without appeal to you?" said Alois-Senior.

"I must tell the truth. It is."

"But you wouldn't go so far as to say our little apiary has no appeal."

"I like the taste of honey. That is true. But I think I enjoy talking to people more than listening to our bees."

Now, Alois dipped into a reservoir of wisdom. "Son, I am prepared to let you in on a secret that will save you a few years. Maybe more. One cannot charm people for long. Not if you have nothing ^{else} ~~but words~~ to offer. People must respect you. If they do not, they will laugh with you, yes, they will sing with you, oh, yes, and then, poor boy, they will laugh behind your back. Hard work is the only basis of a good solid exchange between two serious people. A man who tries to get by on good talk is nothing but a fiddler."

"I respect hard work," said Alois-Junior, "but not the kind that calls for being a farmer. I like riding over the land, but I do not like working on

it. A young man who works on the land all his life is, in my opinion, an idiot. He is as dumb as the earth. That is not for me."

"I do not think you understood what I have said. It is not the earth I am asking us to use but the air. I am thinking of the little creatures who fly through the air. Plus Der Alte. Let me put him into our discussion. I see the most profitable use we can make of him."

"Father, in all respect, I cannot agree. You have said it yourself. He knows more on this subject than we do." The illumination that came from vaulting the hedge with Ulan was with him again. A direct sense of exultation. It was as if his blood not only insisted that he speak, but that he be ready to insult his father. That would be equal to taking your horse over *a much bigger* ~~a real~~ big jump. "You must face it," he said, "we are not ready for Der Alte. He would steal us blind."

"What are you saying? Do you insult me as a beekeeper?"

"Well, you are always getting stung."

"That happens. In this work, it always happens."

"Yes, and for those who know how, they can say, 'Oh, I had a little accident today,' but for you, not so. Every day is an accident. You are full of bites. Always."

Now, Alois lost his temper, that valuable but dangerous temper he *was always so handling*
~~had schooled himself for forty years to keep locked within himself.~~ Now,
there was no help. His temper was out of the gates ~~and on the loose.~~

"Boy," he said to his son, "you are not equipped to go out in the world. You have no schooling. You have no money. And you think you will be able to talk your way into money? That is ~~rotten~~ nonsense. All you *know*
~~can do~~ is to get your ~~big~~ little farmgirls to flap their tits at you and spread their legs. Why? Maybe they believe they will get lucky and pick up a husband as lazy as themselves. Maybe they will, and then I will have to look at grandchildren as ugly as your girlfriends, and you will have to work on her father's farm."

He had gone too far. He knew it. The fear he had been forming, that fear ~~which~~ he had been storing in every center where fear is secreted *in all*
the channels, but from the mind and
way from the mind down to the bowels, there in the midst of the heart, in the
~~lungs and the nerves of the stomach, each developing their own particulars~~

~~of fear, even an overall fear that seeped into his pores and sweat,~~ ^{as} was loose by now as his temper. It had been a large mistake to speak his mind.

Alois-Junior was even more vain, however, than his father. To speak of the children he might yet have as ugly—outrageous. "Yes," he said to his father, "I have worked with you. I have seen you as a farmer. Your knowledge is out-dated. Even Johann Poelzl, stupid as he is, knows how to farm. You don't."

"So, I am now stupid? Is that what you are saying? Maybe I am," he repeated. "Like father, like son. You flunked out of school. Then you lied about it. What a stupidity! I have lived with this foul and rotten news for too long. I can come to only one conclusion. The ~~only~~ ^{tried to write a} answer to why you lied to us and ~~wrote your~~ counterfeit letter is that you are indeed an idiot."

"Yes," said Alois, Junior, "and you are different. You have beautiful children. Do you know why?" The boy's breath was coming so quickly that his voice went up in pitch. He was all but singing his way (high-pitch) through the next words, "Yes, you find your women, you fuck them, and then you forget them. And my mother dies. Maybe I am just like you."

The father's reflex was faster than his mind. His fist struck Junior on the side of the head hard enough to knock the boy down.

~~-14-~~ -13-

If young Alois had been a client, I would have looked to convince him not to get up. His father would have been saddled with a guilt the boy could have ridden for a year. But since I had no control in this matter, Junior rushed at Senior, grabbed his legs, and ^{in turn,} threw him ~~in turn~~ to the ground. Turn for turn.

Knowing his life was at a crossroads, he made the error of helping his father to stand up. He had to. For he knew an incommensurable terror in the immediate moment after upending Alois-Senior. There was his father prostrate and ~~on the ground,~~ looking like an old man. ~~What was one to do?~~ So Junior picked him up.

To be knocked down was bad enough, but to be assisted to his feet? By a youth with an open pimple on his face and the beginnings of a ridiculous little brown mustache which had sprouted but a few lank hairs? The mustache was an insult all by itself. He now struck Junior again and the success of the blow illumined him. He began to beat upon Junior until the boy fell to his knees, whereupon Alois kept pummeling him further even as his son lay on the ground.

Klara had come out of the house by now. She begged Alois to stop. She wailed. And that was just as well. For now, Junior did not move. He lay motionless on the ground and Klara kept screaming.

She believed she was shrilling for the dead. "Oh, God," she managed to cry out, "I cannot believe what You have allowed."

I saw a rare opening. She was without her Guardian Angel—not a Cudgel near. Angels flee from people who scream so loudly—they know at such moments how close the man or woman is to us, and they feel outnumbered. For devils rush in to attend ^{such} ~~their~~ outcries. To add to the tumult, there was Adi giving vent to the most penetrating set of shrieks.

And Klara was ~~so~~ vulnerable. I saw my moment. I reached her heart, I touched her thoughts. She believed Alois-Junior was dead, and his father would spend the rest of his days in an awful jail. It was her fault, all her fault. She had told the father to get close to the boy even when she knew better. Since the sum of her experience had told her that the majority of one's prayers to God were not answered, she prayed now directly to us, she called upon the devil, she implored him. (Only the pious can believe the devil has such powers!) "Save the boy's life," she implored, "and I will be in your debt."

So we had her for the future. Not as a client. Merely attached to a bit of her soul. These changes are never ^{whole and} immediate. But now, we had entrance. ^{a few} We could yet play ~~some fine~~ tunes on her mind. ~~Indeed, over time to come,~~
~~we would.~~

She was a true gain. When Alois-Junior began to stir, she was convinced that ^{she received} ~~there had been~~ a direct response, ^{she} ~~and~~ (felt the full responsibility of an oath. Unlike so many with whom we traffic, she was the essence of responsibility. She would never betray an oath. In consequence, she felt damned on the spot. And she was full of grief at the

pains she must be rousing now in God. What a nun she would have made.!

~~A rare one.~~

Our most significant gain was with Adi. He had seen his father beat young Alois into the ground. He had then heard his father utter a groan ~~(when finally stopped and the groan was)~~ remarkable for the fullness of its woe. Then as Junior began to stir, Adi saw his father stagger off into the woods. Alois-Senior was fleeing to a glade in the woods where he could retire in full horror at how it had turned out, and was at once given a whole taste of Klara's apple strudel as it extruded through his nostrils. In consequence, unable to breathe, he felt as if he must evacuate a cannon ball from his esophagus. For the rest of the midday dinner was surging up and down in his gullet with almost as much force as the blows he had struck.

That was enough time to spend on Alois-Senior. My attention was for Adi. The boy had voided everything, urine, feces, food. He was half out of his senses with fear that his father would return and beat his head into the ground.

That was an opportunity for my skills! I began to engrave the plenitude of this beating into Adi's memory. Again and again, I returned the

^{same} images to his mind, until—given his certainty that it would all be done to him as well ^{just} so soon as his father would return, I managed to brand ^{his mind} ~~one~~ ^{with one} ~~thought upon his mind~~. ^{It was} He ~~now~~ had a clear image of himself lying close to ~~death~~ ^{dead} from the beating his father had ~~already~~ ^{now} given him. He not only ached ~~now~~ in his limbs, and his head hurt, but he ^{very} had a clear impression that he had had to get up from the ^{very} ground where he had been beaten down, ~~and had~~ ~~done so~~.

~~So,~~ ^{In} later years, at the height of his power, Adolf Hitler would actually believe that he was the one who received the beating. On many a night during the Second World War, he would tell the tale to his secretaries and to his military adjutants as they sat at table after evening mess. He would be eloquent. "Of course, I deserved a whipping," he would say. "I gave real trouble to my father. My mother, I recall, was distraught. She loved me so, my dear mother." He would remember himself as being just as brave as Alois-Junior, yes, he had stood up to his father. "I think that is why he had to beat me. I must have deserved it. I said terrible things to him, words so awful I cannot repeat them. Probably, I deserved this good beating. My father was a fine strong decent man, one Austrian who was a

real German. Still, I do not know that a father should ever beat a son so close to death."

Yes, he could tell stories about his childhood to bring tears to the eyes, and pure sorrow to the hearts of all who listened. It had not come all at once, this immaculate bedrock lie I had fixed into those creases of ^{the} ~~his~~ ^{brain} mental flesh where memory was stored. ^{My} ~~The~~ art was to replace a true memory with ^a ~~false~~ ^{one} ~~memory~~ (and that can be equal in its exactitudes, even among the most malleable clients, to removing an old tattoo and substituting a new one ~~that shows no mark of the predecessor.~~)

Given my developed instincts, I had known that this fiction had to be perfect. Only then could I use the implant to develop ^{a future} ~~his~~ incapacity to tell the truth. By maturity, he ^{was in command of} ~~possessed~~ an elaborate artwork of lies to support even his smallest response. He ^{could} ~~became able to~~ shade the truth by a hair or, equally, ~~could~~ subvert it altogether. ~~At need, he could fill each and every~~ one of the spaces between a truth and a lie with a reasonable substitute. ^{Worked in properly on a client's} ~~Done properly~~, (it is, as I say, a slow process, and ^{it took} ~~I worked~~ many a year to convert that initial ^{scoring} ~~seeding~~ of his psyche ^{over to} ~~into~~ a full installation. The grown man would have been ready to die in the belief that he was telling the

truth when he declared that his father had almost pounded him to death.

From time to time, I still took pains to reinforce the keel of this one absolute lie. It was worth it. For the Maestro often pointed to my work on this matter: "There is no better way to usurp the services of a high political leader," he would tell us, "than ^{most effectively} by this direct method. Such figures are of considerably more use to us when they do not know that they are lying."

~~-15-~~ -14-

Later, by nightfall,

~~On that night, in the darkness which followed the beating,~~ several
events of exceptional nature were initiated by Alois-Junior, ^{once he} ~~so soon as he~~
realized that his father ^{had} ~~must have~~ headed off to Fischlham.

^{This} ~~That~~ was not customary. The tavern served no drinks on Sunday and
Senior knew that—who didn't?—but he had also heard of a house on the
outskirts of town where a former poacher who had once been an
unsuccessful farmer now collected a ^{few kronen} ~~meager income~~ by way of the ~~few~~ men
who would visit his house after church or on the Sabbath evening for a stein
of beer in the pantry.

Alois had never visited before. It had been altogether beneath every notion he ~~kept~~ ^{looked to keep} of what a reputable retired official of the Crown ~~could~~ ^{might} consider reasonable activity, but this was one of the few times in his life when he had to have a drink at all costs ~~and so~~, his knee throbbing from the first fall, his head aching from the discharge of his rage, and his ~~heart as~~ ^{chest} ~~sore as an open wound,~~ ^{heart sore,} he hobbled across the fields into the sunset and took in enough, perhaps even a gallon of beer, to drown not only his sorrows but the augmented miseries of his body.

Nobody had to help him home. There were offers, but he rejected them—it was still early enough in the evening for the sky to retain some light and on the full fury of his sense of dignity, he made it up over the first hill out of Fischlham, and almost up the second before he lay down in a pasture to sleep. He awoke a couple of hours later with his head not six inches away from a near-to-monumental cow ball the size of a derby hat.

His hair was clean. He had not rolled into it. If he had believed in Providence, he would have offered thanks, but it was just as well he did not, for by ~~the time~~ ^{this}—it was after ten P.M.—decently rested by ~~this~~ ^{his} impromptu

slumber, he came up over the last hill, ~~to his house,~~ ^{and} he saw the embers of a fire not thirty feet from ^{his} ~~the~~ front door.

There had been no wind that night, which was just as well for ~~his~~ ^{the} house, but there were also no more than ash remaining of his three Langstroth boxes, nor any sign of bees except for those poor ^{tens of} ~~thousands~~ who had been roasted to a microscopic crisp, as well as a startling sense of gloom clinging to the walls of his home. He felt terror.

Klara met him. If she had been weeping, she was, by now, dry-eyed, and as crisp as the husk and butts of the fiery remains of the hive colonies, and as harsh in manner ~~to him~~ ^{which} as the odor that rose from the last black lees of the honey ~~that~~ ^{now} had smoked through the conflagration.

Alois ^{now} knew a small but finite part of his wife's heart, her good will, and her allegiance would be soured forever by the fact that on this, the worst of all nights, he had found a way to drink so much beer that he reeked of it from six feet away.

Detail by detail, she told him what had happened. ~~The sun was even~~ ^{It was even} worse than the sight before him. The boy had ridden off on the horse—of course—and then he had come back when they were all asleep, or

pretending to be—she would admit that they were by now afraid of him—and he had gathered together his clothing, tied it in a sack, attached it to the saddle of the horse and had gone off again, allowing them to breathe.

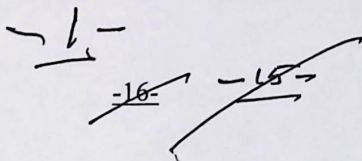
Yet, just half an hour ago, safe as they hoped themselves to be now in the beginning of sleep, the hound dog began to bay, and howled with such ferocity that she almost left her bed to investigate. But then he yelped once and made noise no more, he just whined a little—like a puppy. And the horse neighed. Young Alois was back.

^{So, then}
Then the flames had begun. She had known almost at once what was happening. Adi, as alive as a deer in flight, kept running between the house and the beehives. "He has set them all on fire. With kerosene," cried Adi. "I know. It is like it was before." And he was laughing as much as he was weeping, not certain whether this was a terrible event or another glorious ~~auto-da-fe~~ ^{act of incineration.}

She had not been able, Klara informed him, to put out the blaze. She and Angela had done what they could, which was to throw pails of water on the walls of the house closest to the ^{flames,} ~~conflagration~~. More than that would have required the presence of a man.

And Alois-Junior, where was he? Oh, he had departed once more on Ulan. They had heard the last sounds of the animal's hooves as he trotted away. Nor would he be back. She did not think so. Had he left a way for himself to return?

Worst of all—Spartaner had been poisoned. In all the hubbub, they did not look at him too closely that night, but by morning he was obviously ill, and then, to make matters worse, he did not even die until the end of the week.



A letter came in August from Alois-Junior. After that, they did not hear from him again. Alois-Senior did learn in the course of a trip to Linz that the boy had sold Ulan to a horse-trader for half of the steed's value, and that would have been enough for young Alois to live in Vienna through the time it might take to find work.

On many a late afternoon, Alois-Senior would walk down the trail that must have been used by Junior on that night when he set out for the road to Linz. Senior would come to an old stump, now his favorite seat in the forest, and there he would listen to the birds.

At rest on ~~the~~ ^{these} amputated remains of what once had been a ~~fine~~ ^{noble} oak, he would mourn the bees he had lost, even as he proceeded to enjoy ~~the fantasy~~ ^a ~~fantasy~~ ^{fantastical scenario. it would dream} that he had come back early enough on Sunday night to chase the horse and boy through the woods. In his mind, he had kept running after them, until brought to a halt by his heart and the pangs in his lungs.

That fantasy ~~had also been part of~~ ^{became essential to} a long summer of mourning for all he could name as lost, and then he would grieve even more for what he could not ~~quite~~ ^{name} name.

So the summer passed. He hired a man to assist him in mowing their pastures. He baled his cuttings, and sold the hay in Fischlham. Since there were no hives now, he had no worries concerning them, but ~~that became a~~ ^{he did not} ~~species of worry in itself. He felt~~ a hollow in his body, a sense of absence. No fear now of swarming, no calculations to be made of how much feed to give in the after-season to the colonies, ~~no inner debate on when to store the empty combs for winter~~, no further examinations of the health of the hives, no further estimates as to how many old bees had died but were not yet replaced by new-born, no tremors at the thought of mouse invasions, no need to consider whether he should put up netting to keep birds away, nor

any need to weigh the boxes, no more ponderings on whether enough pollen
had been collected by the foragers to provide ^{them with} sufficient protein ~~for them~~
through the winter, and no Queen to locate. There were not even any
Langstroths to repaint, ^{No records} ~~nor records to be brought up to date.~~ He was done.
~~Done with all of it.~~ ^{Step}

Sitting by the stump, Alois could hardly admit it to himself, but there
^{there} came an afternoon by the end of summer when the more caustic tastes of ~~his~~
^{travelled} mourning finally gurgled down some vent of the mind where useless
feelings are drained. He actually said to himself, "I am relieved that I do not
have to worry about my bees any more. I loved them, but their loss is not
my fault."

At this juncture, I did not have to pay daily attention to the Hitler
family. They would be in Hafeld until they left. I hardly was concerned.
One of my developed instincts is to know when the humans under my study
are ready to change at a good rate, as opposed to when they are all-but-inert.

In truth, that is how we measure Time. Except for those occasions
when the Maestro assigns us to intense activities, to dramatic arenas where
history can be shaped, as was true at the Coronation of Nicholas II, we live

reflexively. We, too, can be in need of fallow periods. So, a quiet summer for the Hitler family went by for me like a passage of sleep. I tended ^{a little} ~~more~~ to my other clients.

Alois, meanwhile, was ^{unaware} ~~living~~ in the pall of a long and lackluster meditation.

He was worrying to a modest degree (modest for Alois!) about the value of the farm. If he were to sell it, could the price match what he had paid? Or would a potential buyer recognize the beginnings of neglect? That became the focus of his attention. Nothing, he decided, is more subtle than the onset of neglect. While he did feel more relaxed than in many a year, it did nag at him that he was leaving all too many chores to the women—certainly those which did not call for a man's strength. He did nothing with the vegetable garden. He thought of buying a new dog; instead, he examined the paint on poor dead Spartaner's dog house. Was it ^{about} ~~was~~ ready to peel in the summer heat?

They did not ^{seem to} need a new dog in any ^{some way, with} hurry. With young Alois gone, ^{he did not have} there was no need to entertain any fears of an irate father ^{skulking} somewhere in the neighborhood. No parent of Greta-Marie Schmidt was likely to appear on

the doorstep—he could give thanks that that particular young lady was not pregnant, for if she were, he would by now have known all about it. And the smuggler who lived on the other side of Fischlham hardly entered his thoughts. ~~Given~~ ^{Somehow given} the absence of Alois-Junior, he, too, seemed far away.

Senior's real worry was that he might become habituated to idleness. ~~Idleness itself~~ Even a few minutes spent in doing nothing at all, had once been guaranteed to excite his annoyance. Now, he felt himself becoming ^{a little too} ~~too~~ ^{by} ~~curiously~~ contented at the sight of a curl of cigar-smoke, or the ~~langorous~~ drift of a cloud.

Such peace could prove expensive. A farm that ^{remained unworked} ~~was not worked~~—
~~no~~ ^{— no} matter how tidy one kept the house and the yard—might never look right. Not to a potential buyer. ~~Wouldn't~~ ^{would} sharp eyes ^{might} ~~detect the mute reproach of~~ ^{a subtle} ~~in~~ the fields? A small part of Alois continued to run uphill in his sleep.

The economic facts (which he calculated over and over on separate pieces of paper using separate stubs of pencil) was that no matter how observant he and Klara might be with expenses—and they were!—sooner or later, they would be obliged to spend more each quarter than his pension.

So, there might come a time when he would have to decide that it cost too much to go to his miserable tavern in Fischlham. That would double every indignity. How much he was missing Linz! There, at least, you could find a drinking-place with intelligent people. What it all came down to was that they must sell the farm.

That would not happen quickly. These days, the less work one did, the more time it took for anything to get done. Moreover, very much against his will, he was beginning to feel remorse about Alois-Junior. What an insidious ungovernable emotion! Was it incumbent upon him as a father to forgive his son? Yet what if Alois-Junior was also full of remorse? He could not bear the thought of that boy alone in a poor room. Would he be sitting on a mean cot, his eyes full of ^{tears?} ~~sadness~~?

Like an amputated ^{forearm} arm (whose nerve-endings are still alive ^{at one's} ~~in one's~~ ^{elbow} ~~shoulder-socket~~), Alois-Senior began to think again of Hitler and Sons, Apian Products. Because he could invest no essential belief in the notion, the thought, perversely, was sweeter than before. It might be unrealistic, but it did feel pure.

He even brought it up with Klara. If she had felt at a good and considerable distance from her husband all summer, if she could not forgive him for being such a helpless drunk on that terrible night when he came home too late to prevent the destruction of the hives, nonetheless, her sense of duty still prevailed. "If you want him back, if you truly want him back, I will not stand in the way." That is what she said. That was what she felt obliged to tell him. She even felt a sense of shame, for her quick hope was that they would not find him.

No such drama was going to develop, however. A letter without a return address came a few days later from Vienna, a vile letter. "You killed my mother." The phrase was repeated several times. Then, the letter declared that the son would yet be famous, and the father would twist in his grave.

Alois could not believe what he read. The rest was worse. "You were a terrible farmer, and the reason is clear. You are, as I happen to know, half-Jewish. No wonder you cannot be a farmer." And there were so many misspellings in the letter that out of a sense of shame for his son, Alois-Senior had to write it out all over again before he felt able to show it

to Klara. As he wrote, his hand shook so badly that the arthritis which would later bind the movements of his fingers ^{gave} made an early ^{warning} appearance on this day. *The original, however, with*

~~However, he had to redact the letter. The original (with~~ its ink blots and errors of syntax ^{the} ~~was too abominable to keep. The boy had always been~~ able to speak so well. How could he have no embarrassment about these crudities?

All the same, those awful
~~Nonetheless, the~~ words had to be shown to Klara. Alois-Junior could only have received such rank ideas by listening to Johann Poelzl. That ~~old~~ *the old buzzard* pious hypocrite! How ~~he~~ must have gossiped to the boy!

Klara, however, kept ^{the} discussion well away from the ^{person} subject of her legal father, Johann Poelzl. She only said, "I did not mind ^{that} the thought so much. I used to think ^{this} ~~that~~ was your reason for not going to church."

He was indignant. "It did not bother you to believe you had a husband who was half-Jewish?"

"How could it? Alois, you have always said that a man who hates Jews is uncultured. So, I knew. It is not appropriate to hate Jews. It is a sign of ignorance."

"But that does not make me Jewish."

He had a headache, sudden and fierce. Old memories of the earliest taunts at school now came back. When he was six years old. Of course. That had been the talk in Strones and in Spital.

"It never bothered you to think I was half-Jewish?" he said again.

"No. I was ^{always so} ~~too~~ worried about our children. I wanted them to be able to live." She could not keep her eyes from watering—not with ^{those} ~~such~~ recollections at the root of her tear-ducts. "So I was glad to think you were part Jewish. I thought maybe that could give a little fresh blood for our Adolf and our Edmund and Paula."

"But I am not at all Jewish," he said. "We must be clear about this. Old Johann Nepomuk once told me who I am. I am his son. I am your real uncle, yes."

"He told you? He said such words?" She knew her grandfather Johann Nepomuk well enough to understand that he could never utter such a speech. Not in that way—not so directly.

"He," said Alois, "suggested this information to me. He did state that he knew who my father was. And then he said, 'This man was not Jewish.'

He did not have to say more. It was clear. There was only one way he could know. So, that was that. The next time a boy called me a Jew, I gave him a good poke in the face and broke his nose. That was one fellow who was left with an ugly mug." Alois began to laugh at the recollection. Then he laughed even more as if to signify that he was not heartsick. "And all these years you thought the opposite?"

She nodded. She hardly knew whether to be relieved or disappointed. She had always felt a sneaky excitement being wed to a man with such blood. ~~Jews did forbidden things in bed, she had so often heard.~~ *But that she had to* Maybe Alois and she had even done these same forbidden things. And Jews were ~~reputed to be intelligent. So, she had heard.~~ *That also she* Now, if Alois was not half-Jewish, she was truly confused.

Alois, thinking of Johann Poelzl, could have boiled the old bird for ~~root~~ soup.

~~-17-~~ 2

The reader may recall that when I presented myself as the narrator of this novel, I did appear as an SS man. Indeed, I was. Over that period in the late Thirties, I was invested corporeally in a particular SS officer. I lived and functioned at the time within a person named Dieter. At a price. We do not engage in total investiture unless high stakes require it. For the cost is direct. One must relinquish the stimulation of living in more than one consciousness at once. Of necessity, demonic power is then diminished. One becomes ^a ~~the~~ simulacrum of a human.

So, as Dieter, I did make the inquiries in Graz described earlier. I only learned, however, that the true father of Alois was Johann Nepomuk by information I received ^{by way of} from the Maestro.

At the time in 1938, I was not able, ^{obviously, to name} however, to speak of my source.

In the SS IV-2a, we were obliged, like any other intelligence organization, to be credible, at least, ^{among} to ourselves, and there was no way to explain to Himmler what the real origin of my information ^{had been} could be.

Moreover, ^{these} our exceptional sources ^{of information} allow us to inhabit ^{simultaneously two eras} two places in Time, at once. In consequence, ^{to} Yet many complications ^{to} beset us. If, for example, living as Dieter, I had also been ⁱⁿ aware from the beginning ^{of} ^{the actual} events in Strones and Spital, then the letter that came in from the son

of Alois- Junior to Adolf Hitler would have presented no problem in and of itself. I would have known that Hitler was not Jewish. ⁵⁻¹¹ But I would have

been at an impasse trying to ^{convince} prove such a fact ^{of such a fact} to Heinrich Himmler. To make it credible, I needed a means of information-gathering ^{to use} like his. ^{with which} he was familiar.

Some indeterminate Time ago, I believe the Maestro came to a ^(long ago) conclusion that he must quarantine the memories of his devils if he wished to keep order in his regions ^{share} of the ^{world} universe. So, as just indicated, we do not

employ our potentiality to live ~~live~~ *Nonetheless, our*
live often in two periods at once. But we do have instincts that reach
beyond human intuitions. I would warrant that the memories we are not
encouraged ~~permitted~~ to recall are there nonetheless to serve as guides *to instincts* ~~for our instincts.~~

I mention this condign matter because the question whether Jewish
blood is present in ~~Alois Senior~~ *the family* has reared up so suddenly ~~in the bedroom~~ *San*
of Alois and Klara in Hafeld.

He was in a fury. His rage at Johann Poelzl would soon subside into
what would be no less than a lifelong grudge—his heart would lift on the
day that Poelzl died—but his fury against Alois-Junior was up ~~and racing~~,
again.

Senior was ~~indeed~~ in the moil of such an inner storm that he could
not stay in bed with Klara. For the first time in all the years that they had
lain side by side in the dark, he had to get up on this night, dress, pace the
floor, try to sleep on the couch, try to sleep on the floor, and succeeded, of
course, in keeping both of them awake.

Klara knew she ~~had to~~ *would have* pay directly. "Don't say a word," she told
herself, "do not touch this subject ever again."

While I cannot speak with the medical authority of those devils who were assigned by the Maestro ^{to} (in total investiture) ^{enter} to medical school and internship, I will say it is possible that the cancer which ~~was to end~~ ^{wait} Klara's life in 1908 could have taken a determining ^{step} ~~leap~~ forward on this miserable night.

Too much had happened to her at once. She had lost possession of a long-cherished idea. Because of the certainty that her children with Alois were one-quarter Jewish, she believed that ~~the~~ ^{her} last three born ~~had been~~ ^{were} provided with more opportunity to stay alive. If she had one notion about Jews, (and she could not really say she had ever met one other than Alois) it was that no matter what their faults might be, and she had heard the most awful stories from friends, relatives, storekeepers, the truth was also obvious—these Jews knew how to survive. To be so disliked, yet still be among the living! ^(Some were even rich people!) Klara had always been impressed, therefore (in absolute privacy with herself—whom could she talk to about this?) that she was with a half-Jewish man and they did have three living children, saved in good part by their Jewish blood.

She was not one to allow herself to be bothered by niceties of logic. If Gustav, and Ida, and Otto had all died much too soon, she could attribute that to her side of the family. But Adolf had survived, and then Edmund and Paula (over whose health she prayed every night.)

Now, her confidence was breached. If the three remaining children continued to live, it would not be because of some historic preservative in their veins. They would have no such advantage.

A large reason not to sleep. What was worse, she ^{was} ~~had to feel a keen~~
~~sense of~~ ^{ashamed} her cowardice. How could she have accepted the idea that Alois-Junior should be invited back? Lying there, listening to Alois-Senior making ^{going} ~~all those moves~~ back and forth, thumping the floor with his body as he lay down, then slamming ^{the floor} ~~it~~ again with his fists, she was ^{soon suffering} ~~certainly able to~~ feel her own rage. It was shocking ~~to her~~. She could not believe what she was telling herself. If it were possible, ~~and wholly without consequence,~~ yes, she ~~too~~ could kill Alois-Junior. Only, she knew she could not. She would not ever. ^{But the effort to repel} ~~And the fury of repelling~~ ^{there to beat} such a fury in herself lived in her heart—which is to say, in her breast—with such force and such detestation that, yes, it is possible—this could have been the night when the breast

cancer which would yet burn with hell's pains in her chest, might have begun. If it were crucial to know, I would have consulted one or another passing demon of a doctor I knew, but, to repeat, we do not request such disbursements ~~on time~~ to satisfy a whim.

I prefer to take us back to Alois.

The immensity of his rage on this night was that he had betrayed himself. And in the worst manner. The joy of rage (which is too infrequently considered) is that it can offer the same nourishing sense of self-righteousness that is available on regular occasions to the more hypocritical of church-goers. The core of such pleasure is never to be angry at oneself, only at others. Yet, here, on this night, Alois could not escape himself—he was infuriated at the cost of his own deeds.

If Junior had turned out badly, it was his fault, his fault alone. By such a light, he was among the worst of human beings, a father who was weak. How despicable! He had spent his life obeying orders, and then enforcing them in the Customs Service, he had revered Franz-Josef, a gallant, great, and good king ^{who embodied} ~~whose first virtues were~~ hard work and discipline. ^{guardianship} ~~He had put together his sense of his own nature as a private~~

Had become a specialist

(homage to Franz-Josef. If he had ever had the good fortune to be on duty during some near-miraculous occasion when the Emperor might visit, how he would hope that the good king would recognize what a fine influence his majesty had had at least on one Customs Officer.

But he had imparted none of that sense of respect to Alois-Junior. Was it because he had felt too guilty about the boy's mother? Yes, he had treated Fanni badly, so badly that he could not be stern with the offspring. There had been a lack of discipline in himself which could only be described as unforgivable.

through the last this night
It took every hour of darkness for his rage to cool. It was not until the first light of morning—a dim light that came with shrouds of rain at dawn—that he was able to speak from one part of his mind to the other, and so could issue a few orders on what his future conduct with Adi must become. He was not going to make the same mistake he had allowed with Junior.

~~-18-~~ 3

Now, whenever he wished to bring Adi to his side, Alois would whistle. It was a fine drill of a whistle, sharp enough to hurt the ear. Nor did he reduce the intensity when the boy was within arm's reach. In the tavern, Alois was now fond of saying, "^{if you are} ~~While~~ raising a boy, do not let go of the whip. I speak from experience."

More than once, Alois said to Adi, "Time and sacrifice ^{were} ~~was~~ wasted on your older brother. You, Adolf, will not waste my time."

Adi ^{became} ~~was~~ paralyzed with fear. I had to wonder how the final effects of this could serve our purposes. We certainly know how to use humiliation and self-abasement as a tool when working with manic-

depressives. If we look to drive a client into a violent act, a series of humiliations can stir the subject into oscillating faster between the poles of his depression and his mania. Soon enough, there is an eruption.

I did not see, however, why we needed anything drastic at ^{so} ~~the~~ early a time in Adi's life. It was ^{also} ~~obvious to me~~ that the Maestro was ^{not} ~~willing to~~ ^{certainly} ~~not~~ ^{not urging me to restrain Alois. The father was Hoodwinked} flood the boy's spirit with wretchedness. While it would not be all-consuming and obliterative, it ^{did} ~~would~~ amount to a taste of pure misery, ~~and~~ ~~so implant a fear that times to come might well be worse. It was obvious to me that~~ Adi was being given a purview of the anguish that attaches itself to ineradicable melancholia.

These are ~~well~~ ^{means} established foundations for seeding a ~~future~~ ^{suicide}. So, I could not know what ultimate purpose the Maestro had in mind. The boy was delicate enough for it ^{to} ~~not~~ go wrong. What a disaster ~~it would be,~~ and for so little.

Yet, the Maestro often surprised us by such moves. He was a bold, ^{even an exceptional} gambler, and often ready to take extreme chances with the lives of our clients. There were occasions when the Maestro, entertaining an ambitious future for a young client, would be ready to incite

~~absolute~~ ^{torture} wretchedness. (Provided he was dealing with a proud spirit.)

I think he saw it as a species of inoculation.

Naturally, these gambles ^{make} made for unstable results. For once we have

implanted a deep sense of humiliation in a proud client, we ^{the fact} still have to turn

^{of converting} (such a wound into a strength. That ^{can prove} is even more difficult than ^{transmogrifying} converting a

a coward into a hero. Yet, when we succeed, when the psychic abysses ^{of a} ~~is~~ in a

would-be suicide ^{is} ~~can be~~ transmuted into promontories of achievement, and

personal power, an immense gamble has succeeded. The once-humiliated

wretch has now acquired the power to humiliate others. That is a demonic

power, and does not come easily. I went through many years, indeed, when

I was ready to give up on this project. After the death of Edmund in 1900,

of Alois-Senior in 1903, and of Klara in 1908, Adi was jobless in Vienna,

and stricken with timidity. He had quit school too early, was an avaricious

reader who remained hopelessly superior to what he read (particularly when

he could not understand it) and, in addition, was lazy, prone to temper

tantrums, and possessed of an ego as swollen as a gangrenous limb. All the

same, he was desperately afraid of virtually all meetings with human beings,

and had no love-life ^{with women} whatsoever. Yes, this boy was an unmitigated mess.

I was depressed. This project to which I had ~~now~~ been attending since his birth, now nineteen years old, remained an outrageous gamble.

Unless some historic changes could accelerate, even thrust, my protégé into prominence, he would end up as one more failure. ~~(He had prepared himself~~ ^{through his adolescence, by} ~~for nothing other than~~ ^{anything remotely} ~~only for future fame and there seemed no sign now of such exceptional~~ ^{like that} ^{upheavals in} prominence developing. (The ~~disasters that fell upon~~ Germany and Austria after the First World War were still more than a decade away.) My role, as I saw it in 1908, was to continue to be a jockey who guided a horse running against unbelievably long odds. I could foresee further demotions for myself.

All this is not of much interest now. We know, after all, what happened to the horse. And I was the one who rode him (with occasional but crucial help from the Maestro) all the way up to glory (and down again, which is one good reason why I have proceeded to tell this much of the tale.)

And yet, we can all certify—who indeed cannot?—that he did learn, and far better than his father—how to humiliate others. How curious that he used to be paralyzed by his father's whistle.

Nonetheless, ^{the} ~~some~~ beginnings of a revolt were even then in progress.

Adi was not reduced altogether ~~to a wretch. Not altogether.~~ Having already ^{come to believe} ~~accommodated himself to the notion~~ that he was the one who had been beaten into insensibility, he was always ready to test Klara's ^{attitude} ~~feelings~~ toward him.

"Mother," he told her, "my father now looks at me as if I am always guilty."

She was certainly aware of ^{this} ~~his discomfort~~. The whistle had become a needle in her own ears.

"Adi, you must never say that your father is wrong," she told him.

"But what if he might be?"

"He does not wish to be wrong. Perhaps he makes a mistake."

"What if he is very wrong?"

"It will not remain that way." She nodded. She did not know if she believed what she said next, but she said it nonetheless. "He is a good father. A good father always realizes sooner or later that he may have been going for a little while in the wrong direction." She nodded again as if to oblige herself to believe such words. "There can be a moment," she said,

"when the father recognizes that he, too, can be wrong." She put her hand to the boy's face as if to cool the fever in his cheeks. "Yes," she said, "he hears his own words and realizes that they are not correct. So, he changes."

"He does?"

"Absolutely. The father changes." She spoke as if this had happened in the past. "He changes," she repeated for the third time, "and now there is order in what he says. Now, it ~~all~~ ^{a goal} goes in the ~~best~~ direction. Because he is ready to change. Do you know why?"

"No."

"Because you were able to tell yourself that you would never cause him confusion. You would not do that because he is your father." She held Adi by the waist and looked into his eyes.

Klara had been the first in the family to recognize (and she was still the only one) that Adi could be spoken to as if he were ten or twelve years old. "Yes," she now said, "it is best when there is no confusion ~~made~~ ^{in the house.} So, you must never accuse your father. That ~~would~~ ^{might} cause him to feel weiblich. And for him to feel weak is very bad. You cannot expect him to admit that he has a weakness."

At this point, she began to speak of ehre-fucht. To honor and to fear. She explained the importance of these words. They had been imparted to her by her mother. Johanna ~~had~~ used them when speaking of Johann Poelzl. He was, her mother all but said to Klara, a hard-working but very unlucky farmer—who in the family did not know that?—and yet her mother had always treated Poelzl with ehre-fucht as if he were an important and successful man. "That is what my mother taught me, and I now tell it to you. The word of the father is the law of the family."

Klara
~~She said this with such solemnity and such certainty that the boy felt it come into him like holy~~
~~it enter him as a source of strength.~~ Yes, some day he would have a family and all who were in it would honor him and they would fear him. At this point, his need to urinate (which always afflicted him in these years whenever he was on the point of developing ~~large and~~ magnificent thoughts about himself) ~~now~~ spoke to his crotch. So, in the midst of his mother's peroration, he almost had an accident, but did not—not if he was to be entitled in the future to these emoluments of honor.

"Yes," she said to her son, "the word of the father has to be law. Right or wrong, one must never argue with his word. You must obey him."

For the good of the family. Right or wrong. the father is always right. He must be. Otherwise, all is confusion."

Now, she referred to Alois-Junior. "He did not have ehre-fucht," she said. "Promise me that will never be said of you. Because, now, you are the oldest brother. You are important. ^{That I used to be} ~~The~~ boy who was your brother is as good as dead."

Adi was wet. His entire body was wet. His perspiration might as well have been illumined by ^{sacred} ~~holy~~ light. Just so complete was the importance of this sentiment. I entered his thoughts long enough to tell him, "Your mother is correct. You are now the oldest brother. The younger ones will now honor and respect you."

Yes, Adi understood, and I worked upon his mind each night, until ~~it~~ ^{this} ~~concept~~ ^{pastor} became a mental certainty ^{and} ~~the~~ ^{to} equal of one of those ^{well-paved avenues} ~~paved streets~~ of the mind, ^{that are always ready} ~~always available~~ for full mental traffic. On many a night I told him again that Alois-Junior was totally separated from the family. Alive or dead, it would not matter.

Alois-Senior was of no small aid to me. By December, he wrote a new will. It stipulated that in the event of the father's death, the son named

Alois was to receive no more of the estate than the minimum proscribed by law. "The smaller the better," he added. Since the act of drawing up a will re-engaged all of Senior's long-developed sense of proper official procedure, he also added: "This is stated in the full recognition of the seriousness of such an act by a father. In my years as a Chief Customs Officer for the Crown, I warrant that I became most familiar with the responsibility that must always be seriously attached to such grave decisions."

Whereupon, having completed the re-writing of his will, he whistled for Adi and read portions aloud to him.

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Part of Alois' decision to write a new will ^{came after he knew} ~~had come because he was,~~
~~that he would be~~
able to sell the farm. The buyer had been referred to him by Albrecht
Rostenmeier, the man who ran the local store and had once offered to
purchase their honey. At the beginning of Fall, Rostenmeier had even
offered his advice to Klara about who might be interested.

"Dear Frau Hitler," he had said, "the ~~best~~ ^{for} way to sell your farm is ^{to}
~~Find a buyer who likes it for one reason — because~~
~~because~~ it looks good. Is that not exactly why your husband bought it in the
first place?"

"I will not say that has to be untrue," said Klara. ^{(For her, this}
~~so full of~~ ^{(For her, such a}
remark was equal to flirting with Herr Rostenmeier.)

"Yes," he said, "it is good you recognize this. I believe you will be able to sell your property to people who are less experienced at farming than yourselves, but—" he held up a finger—"more well-to-do, not so? You must have the patience to wait. Soon enough, one of these comfortable people will come along. And when he does, you send him to me. I will be your friend. I will know how to answer all the questions that come up."

The wealthy house-hunter did arrive, loved the look of the house and the farm, knew even less about the pitfalls than Alois, was sent to talk to Rostenmeier, and the sale took place. If the price presented no profit, neither did Alois suffer the loss he feared. The finality of the transfer convinced Alois-Senior that the end of this dream that he might live his last days on a farm could be put to rest with ^{any other} ~~his last~~ hopes that the oldest son would yet bring him some reason for pride. No! It was ~~set~~ up to Adi. He was not nearly so lithe nor so strong as Alois-Junior, not nearly so good-looking, but as bright, perhaps, and he was obedient. ~~The act of~~ ^{whistling} for him had become a pleasure. The response was so quick.

In his heart, however, Alois-Senior did keep the equivalent of an old photograph. There still were nights when he would sit on the oak bench and

muse again on the Langstroth box he had built for himself. He would pat
 the seat as if to recall the sound of the slap he used to give that wooden box
 in the old days, yes, that nice and solid slap, ~~just~~ to stir up his bees.

~~But~~ ^{If not} for Angela, this ^{would be, has} is all that remains to be said for Hafeld. She ^{But she} was
 pining ~~just a little~~ for Alois-Junior. She knew he would not come back, and

so she could accept him as her model of a fine figure of a young man. He
 had ^{always} looked so handsome ^{upon} ~~upon~~ Ulan. She even began to play at the edge of
 an ~~illicit~~ ^{flirtatious} dream. Of course, she was certain it would never go too far.

Once in a while, she might allow ^{her brother} ~~him~~ to dismount from the horse and kiss
 her. She soon learned, however, that the mind looks to betray the explorer.

Before long, Angela began to think of ^{one of} ~~all~~ (the girls that Alois ^{knew} ~~used to see~~).

^{This girl} ~~There was even one in her class who~~ was always smiling at her now, as if
 she, ~~the girl~~ knew something special, and maybe Angela did as well.

By early spring of 1897, after the family moved back to the outskirts
 of Linz, Angela had a room to herself and there, carefully hidden from
 everyone else, she kept the photograph that an intinerant photographer had
 taken of young Alois ~~by himself~~ in the course of photographing all the

members of the family, ~~and~~ ^{this} Alois had been so pleased with the image of himself, *standing by his house*

Angela had stolen the picture. That had been her way of paying Alois back for ~~all~~ ^{for how he teased her} the teasing when she was reluctant to ^{get upon} mount Ulan. Then, ~~she~~ ^{once} ~~when the photo disappeared she had sworn~~ she had sworn to him on a stack of bibles (which didn't exist for one moment in her mind) that she had no idea ^{whether it might be} what had happened to the picture. She didn't care that he was suffering ^{just as much} as completely as if he had lost a gold watch.

Now, Angela ~~could not have been more~~ ^{became prodigiously} secretive about this new ~~hiding place if the photo had been an early pornographic print.~~ ^{for as if it showed a naked woman} I mention this small ^{redolence} breath of the carnal ^{attached (by Angela to)} that she bestowed ~~on~~ the fading brown portrait of Alois ~~only~~ because three decades later, in 1927, her daughter,

Geli Raubal, a young and nicely buxom blond beauty, would be entertained publicly by Adolf Hitler on many a night in Munich in one or another of the fine restaurants he was beginning to attend. While the intimate ^{and} ~~but most~~ ~~carnal, even perverse,~~ facts are yet to be related, it was not long before Adolf commenced to have an affair with his niece. By the time it terminated four years later on the day of her death (by murder or suicide was never ~~settled~~ established) he, Adolf Hitler, now a serious leader of a Nazi party much to

be reckoned with, had to go through some of the worst horrors of his life.

Geli Raubel had been the love of his life.

That is far down the road. History (for those who have lived in it ~~for~~
for as long as myself) and in as many places is ^{seldom} ~~not~~ always recalled as all-
fascinating. It is such a bed of lies! That is the only reason I could
recommend the life of a devil to would-be aspirants. We know so much
about how it happens, how it really happens. Who could ever wish to lose
such riches? Yet it is not inconceivable that this is exactly what I have
~~done~~ ^{done by revealing my relation to the Master} ~~done~~. Let it never be said that the perversity of our natures bears no relation
to the human nature from which, after all, we have ostensibly departed, that
curious human nature which pushes its way into existence to the full
accompaniment of urine and excrement, yet ^{will later} ~~dreams~~ each night of a noble
life.



End