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Yes, I am one of his instruments. I am indeed an officer of the Evil One. And this trusted instrument has just committed an act of treachery: It is not acceptable to reveal who we are.

The author of an unsigned and unpublished manuscript can attempt to remain anonymous, but the margin of safety is not large. Whenever we are in the presence of the Maestro, he has the capacity to read our thoughts.

If, from the beginning, I have spoken of my fear at undertaking this novel, it is because I knew that sooner or later I would have to reveal myself or destroy the work. Now, however, that I have offered this disclosure,

there is a shift in the given. I can no longer be envisioned as a Nazi officer (and researcher!) named Dieter. If I happened in 1938 to be a trusted aide to Heinrich Himmler (by the diabolical means, yes, of inhabiting a real SS officer's body) that was temporary—an assignment. We are always ready to take on such roles.

I know that these remarks can hardly be comfortable for most of my readers. Today, given the authority of the scientific world, most well-educated people are ready to bridle at the notion of such an entity as the Devil. They have even less readiness to conceive of an ongoing conflict between Satan and the Lord. Indeed, there is a modern tendency to believe that such speculation is a medieval nonsense that was extirpated centuries ago by the Enlightenment. (Voltaire did the job!) While the existence of God is still acceptable to a minority of intellectuals, the notion that there is an opposed entity equal or nearly equal to God is not. One Mystery might be allowed, but two, never!

There need be no surprise, then, that the world has so little understanding of Adolf Hitler's personality. Detestation, yes, but comprehension, no—he is, after all, the most mysterious human being of the

century. Nonetheless, I would say that I can comprehend his psyche. He was my client. I followed his life from infancy all the way into his later development as the wild beast of the century, this all-too-modest-looking politician with his snippet of a mustache.

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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), but even our soundest predictions 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 its 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 succeeded in bringing off, but not always. Occasionally, He will make an exceptional effort to save a few trapped on that edge of extinction. But this is rare—airplane crashes involve too many factors! Indeed, He could not even save His Son, (as we are never tired of reminding our clients!) Still, 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 such mortal questions come down to the extent of the expenditure. Who will choose in each specific instance to bear the cost? Occasionally, we can make it prodigiously expensive for God to war with us. To keep this understanding alive, that He is less than All-Powerful, we try not to speak of the Lord as God, but as the D.K. What this means, has to be explained before long. For that matter, we do not speak of the Evil One. Rather, we call our leader the Maestro.

Now, however, I choose to go back to Klara and her condition.

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 each of her three babies, but the prayers were unavailing. As she saw it, God's rebuke could only confirm the sin of her condition.

By the time Adolf was born, she had formed the habit of washing her mouth every morning with laundry soap. (Alois was now full of a predilection—especially in late pregnancy—to put Klara's mouth onto the Hound and keep it there, one big hand on her neck until his release had passed through its final spurt.)

No surprise then if her love was for the baby. So soon as Adolf gave some real indication of living—after two weeks he would smile with delight at the approach of her face—she began to believe that God might be kind to her this time, that He could even be ready to forgive. Would He be ready to spare this child? Was His Wrath lessened? Had He even given her an angel? Such is the nature of pious hope! Next, she had a dream that told

her to have nothing to do with her husband. Not in bed! Such is the nature of pious obligation.

Alois soon had to face the possibility that a will of iron, when forged by prayer, can be quite as powerful in a woman as a highly-developed biceps on a man. At first, Alois could not believe that her refusal to let him touch her was more than a whim, a new species of enticement. "You women go back and forth like a kitten chasing its tail," he told her. Then, deciding that rebellion such as this was to be mercilessly crushed, he seized her buttocks in one hand and her breast with the other.

She bit him on the wrist hard enough to draw blood. Whereupon he cuffed her, leaving Klara with a bruised eye. Gott im Himmel! He was obliged next morning to beg her not to go out until her eye was no longer discolored. For a week, his hand bandaged, he shopped for food after work—no tavern on those nights. Then, with her bruise gone at last, he still had to give up what he considered irrevocable rights, and was obliged to sleep in a huddle on his side of the bed.

Since this state would be maintained over quite a period, I choose for the present to stay closer to Klara. An intensity of emotion is always

attractive to demons and devils, even as farmers dream of black soil for future crops.

It need hardly be underlined that the death of Otto, Gustav, and Ida proved useful to us even if we had not been the ones to effect it. Obviously, it intensified Klara's adoration of Adolf past any usual measure of large maternal love. When he began to scream every time she kissed his lips, she came to recognize that it was the odor of lye on her mouth. But since Alois had been driven to his side of the bed, there was no longer a need each morning to use such harsh soap. So she could kiss Adolf again even as he gurgled obligingly.

We expected that this would prove useful. Excessive mother-love is almost as promising to us as a void of mother-love. We are keyed to look for excess of every kind, good or bad, loving or hateful, too much or too little of anything. Every exaggeration of honest sentiment is there to serve our aims.

However, we would wait. When it comes to turning a child into a client, we follow a reliable rule. It is to move slowly. While an incestuous procreation followed by swarms of mother-love will offer rich possibilities,

particularly when the event has been fortified by our presence at conception, and we have, therefore, every reason to expect exceptional potentiality to be present for us, still we wait, we observe. The child may not live. We lose so many. All too often, God is aware of our choice and, heartlessly—I will say this about Him!—yes, God can remove certain children heartlessly—no matter the cost to Himself! The cost to Himself? A curious calculation is present. The Lord is not insensitive to the hopes of those who surround the young one. The early death of an exceptional child can demoralize a family. Even when He knows, therefore, that a given individual has been captured in good part by us, He hesitates. Sometimes, He does not wish to take on the collateral damage to the family. Besides, His angels can always look to steal the boy or girl back from us.

So the D.K. is respectful of mother-love even when it is all-embracing. It can come as no surprise, then, that many artists, ogres, geniuses, killers, and an occasional savior live to maturity because God chose not to dispose of them. The first element of mutual recognition in the struggle between the D.K. (as we shall now call Him most of the time) and our leader—the Maestro—is their mutual understanding that no single

splendid human quality is likely to prevail by itself, unaltered by His powers or ours. Even the noblest, most self-sacrificing and generous mother can produce a monster. Provided we are present. All the same, this is not a game where we can count on the end result. That is why investing in the newborn is an unbalanced gamble for both the Maestro and the Lord.

But I can see by now that further explanation of the conditions, limitations, and powers of the world I inhabit, must be offered its exposition or too little will be understood.

-3-

I will attempt, then, an explanation of our Two Kingdoms. (I could speak of them as two antagonisms, two realms, two visions of existence at odds with each other, but Two Kingdoms has been the term used by us since Biblical times.) Needless to add, we devils are confronted daily by a formidable array of angels. (We call them the Cudgels!)

While these warring forces will not be unfamiliar 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. Milton, therefore, is high in our arcana of those few literary artists whom we do not have to look upon as unforgivably second-rate (because of their sentimental inexactitudes). Milton, after all,

did provide a rough outline of the contest between the Two Kingdoms. No matter how inaccurate were his details, he did present a pioneer demonstration of how our armies might have confronted each other at the commencement of that great estrangement which occurred when the earliest squadrons of angels divided into opposed camps, and each was convinced that they were the ones to direct the future of human beings.

One can offer respect, then, to that great blind man, even if his descriptions are out of date. Devils who serve the Maestro do not war with angels in phalanx any longer. Rather, we are artfully installed by now in every corner of human existence.

To bring, therefore, a first explanation of the sinuosities, salients, neuterings, and recesses of our war, I am obliged to offer an outline of the forces at play now in human society. I would start by remarking that there are three aspects to reality—the divine, the satanic, the human—in effect, three separate armies, three kingdoms, not two. God and His angelic cohort work upon men, women, and children to bring them under His sway. Our Maestro, and we, his representatives, look to possess many of these same humans. Until the Middle Ages, human beings could not bring much

of an active role to the contest. Often, they were no more than pawns.

Hence the title: Two Kingdoms. By now, however, we are obliged to take the individual man or woman into account. I will even say that many, if not most, humans, are at present doing their best 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!" All the while, we devils guide the people we have attracted (we call them clients), the Cudgels contest us, and many a particular individual does his or her best to fight off both of Us. Humans have become so vain (through technology) that more than a number expect by now to become independent of God and the Devil alike.

This, it can be repeated, is but a first approach to the perversities embedded in existence, a sketch of the true complexity of events.

For example, I can recover, if necessary, the concealed, even long-buried memories of a client. Such power, however, consumes Time. (Time is a word I capitalize since for us, as well as for the angels, it is a resource comparable to Money's power over humans.) We are always calculating the Time we can afford to give each of our clients. My need to acquire more

insight must always be balanced, then, against the investment required at working our will upon a particular person. For this reason, the average human is not usually 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.

Such men and women are, I fear, no longer common. Often we have to be content with mediocrities. In our Company, provided we are sufficiently patient, we can improve them. The Maestro approves of this skill. It produces promotions for oneself. I have had clients whom I was able to develop to the point where they could serve in one or another of our larger projects. The majority, however, caught in 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 unhappy period in the past, as a result of 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 encouraged 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, and more than a few 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 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 more developed skills. So often, I had to serve as proctor for clients born with little who soon proceeded to less. While I could rarely know whether the Maestro was safeguarding my talents for some future purpose or continuing to sentence me to various backwaters, I did take hope on one occasion when he chose to remark that I might yet be given a post comparable in its challenge to some of the epic encounters of our Company during the first three centuries of the Church in Rome. Yes, that might still be there for me, provided I was ready to pay unremitting attention to my humdrum duties with these wretches, thugs, and drunks. I did, and eventually, was selected to oversee the work of a number of minor demons who were keeping watch on a young Austrian family whose developed

potentialities might yet prove astounding. Insignificant at present was this embryo and his family, but he had ancestral fault-lines full of the intoxicating stink of our old friend, blood-scandal. So I was to stay close to him after his birth.

I did not dare to ask, but at this point, the Maestro did choose to speak directly to my curiosity. He said: "Why have I been so interested in this creature not yet born? Can it be that he will yet possess a mighty ambition? I may propose that you take him on full-time. But, remain at ease! At present, it is still no more than a project. It could certainly fail. His future 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 the next few years. 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?"

All this was uttered by the Maestro with characteristic irony. We never know how serious he might be when he speaks to our mind's ear. (His voice is a cornucopia of humors.)

In any case, I dared not ask: What if I fail? Many projects do. On the other hand, I soon learned how he was conceived.

~~Now,~~ Some readers may notice that I first spoke of that exceptional event as if I was the one in the connubial bed. Now, I certainly suggest that I was not. Not literally. Nonetheless, in referring to my participation, I am telling the truth just as completely as I have been purveying a lie. For even as physicists ~~now~~ assume to their scientific confusion that light is both a particle and a wave, so do 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.

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Spirits like myself can exist in events they did not attend. I did not have to be present, therefore, on the night Adolf was conceived. I was able to ingest the exact experience by calling upon the devil (of lower rank) who had been in Alois' bed on the primal occasion. I must say that that is always an option for us—we are able to share a carnal act long after the fact. On the other hand, a minor devil can, on the most crucial occasions, implore the Evil One to be present with him during the actual moments. (The Maestro encourages us to speak of him as the Evil One when he does choose to enter sexual acts, and on this occasion, he was most certainly there!)

Afterward, once I began my assignment to Klara, Alois, and young Adolf Hitler, the moment of impregnation was repeated for me by the devil who had been present. It came into my senses with a completeness of odor and physical impact that can be termed absolute. Thereby, it also happened to me. Among us, to be given an exact recollection is equal to being present. So, I also knew from the incomparable intensity of the occasion that the Maestro had actually joined with the attendant devil for one instant (even as Jehovah offered His immanence to Gabriel during another exceptional event.)

While I would not be attached exclusively to Adolf Hitler for some years, he was always in my Overview and so I am ready to write about his early life with a confidence no conventional biographer could begin to feel.

Unfortunately, it is not all that simple. What gives me pause is my fear of the consequences. What, to the contrary, gives me hope is that I may be able to do this work without attracting the attention of the Maestro. That is because in these latterday American years, he is more attuned to electronics than to print. The Maestro has followed human progress into cyber-technologies far more closely than the Lord.

I have also chosen, therefore, to write on paper—which may offer a small protection. My words may not be picked up as quickly. (Even processed paper still contains an ineluctable hint of the tenderness God put into His trees.)

While the Maestro has no desire to use up any part of his resources by monitoring every last one of our acts—there are too many demons and small devils for that!—he is also not inclined to let us go on ventures he has not selected. Years ago, I would never have dared to embark on this written record. My fear would have been absolute. But now, with America wallowing in the inundations and engulfments of mass media, one can try to get away with more.

Ergo, I feel ready to continue this biography, this novel—call it what you will! The assumption is that I can succeed in concealing my output from the Maestro. Intelligence work can be understood as a contest between code and the obfuscation of code. Since the Maestro is heavily engaged, and his present existence is more arduous than ever—he feels closer to eventual victory!—I do feel free to venture out. I have grown more confident that I will be able to conceal the existence of this manuscript

until, at least, it is finished. Then I will either feel obliged to print it or—destroy it. This second option has always offered the safest solution (except for the near-mortal blow to my vanity.)

Of course, if I publish, I will then have to flee from the wrath of the Maestro. There are options open. I could choose to enter the equivalent in our spirit-life of the Federal Witness Protection Program. That is, the Cudgels would hide me. Of course, I would have to cooperate with them.

Ergo, I have a choice—treachery or extinction.

In any case, I do feel less dread. By revealing our procedures, I can enjoy the rarified pleasure (for a devil) of being able to characterize my existence. And should I be able to finish, I will still have the choice of destroying my work, or going over to the other side. I must say, the latter option begins to appeal more to me.

Since I am unfaithful to the Maestro, I must show no sign. My modest duties in America must be performed impeccably, even as I offer these further details of the work I accomplished in the early upbringing of my most important client.

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Such men and women are, I fear, no longer common. Often we have to be content with mediocrities. In our Company, provided we are sufficiently patient, we can improve them. The Maestro approves of this skill. It produces promotions for oneself. I have had clients whom I was able to develop to the point where they could serve in one or another of our larger projects. The majority, however, caught in 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 unhappy period in the past, as a result of 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 encouraged 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, and more than a few 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 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 more developed skills. So often, I had to serve as proctor for clients born with little who soon proceeded to less. While I could rarely know whether the Maestro was safeguarding my talents for some future purpose or continuing to sentence me to various backwaters, I did take hope on one occasion when he chose to remark that I might yet be given a post comparable in its challenge to some of the epic encounters of our Company during the first three centuries of the Church in Rome. Yes, that might still be there for me, provided I was ready to pay unremitting attention to my humdrum duties with these wretches, thugs, and drunks. I did, and eventually, was selected to oversee the work of a number of minor demons who were keeping watch on a young Austrian family whose developed

potentialities might yet prove astounding. Insignificant at present was this embryo and his family, but he had ancestral fault-lines full of the intoxicating stink of our old friend, blood-scandal. So I was to stay close to him after his birth.

I did not dare to ask, but at this point, the Maestro did choose to speak directly to my curiosity. He said: "Why have I been so interested in this creature not yet born? Can it be that he will yet possess a mighty ambition? I may propose that you take him on full-time. But, remain at ease! At present, it is still no more than a project. It could certainly fail. His future 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 the next few years. 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?"

All this was uttered by the Maestro with characteristic irony. We never know how serious he might be when he speaks to our mind's ear. (His voice is a cornucopia of humors.)

In any case, I dared not ask: What if I fail? Many projects do. On the other hand, I soon learned how he was conceived.

Now, some readers may notice that I first spoke of that exceptional event as if I was the one in the connubial bed. Now, I certainly suggest that I was not. Not literally. Nonetheless, in referring to my participation, I am telling the truth just as completely as I have been purveying a lie. For even as physicists now assume to their scientific confusion that light is both a particle and a wave, so do 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.

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Spirits like myself can exist in events they did not attend. I did not have to be present, therefore, on the night Adolf was conceived. I was able to ingest the exact experience by calling upon the devil (of lower rank) who had been in Alois' bed on the primal occasion. I must say that that is always an option for us—we are able to share a carnal act long after the fact. On the other hand, a minor devil can, on the most crucial occasions, implore the Evil One to be present with him during the actual moments. (The Maestro encourages us to speak of him as the Evil One when he does choose to enter sexual acts, and on this occasion, he was most certainly there!)

Afterward, once I began my assignment to Klara, Alois, and young Adolf Hitler, the moment of impregnation was repeated for me by the devil who had been present. It came into my senses with a completeness of odor and physical impact that can be termed absolute. Thereby, it also happened to me. Among us, to be given an exact recollection is equal to being present. So, I also knew from the incomparable intensity of the occasion that the Maestro had actually joined with the attendant devil for one instant (even as Jehovah offered His immanence to Gabriel during another exceptional event.)

While I would not be attached exclusively to Adolf Hitler for some years, he was always in my Overview and so I am ready to write about his early life with a confidence no conventional biographer could begin to feel.

Unfortunately, it is not all that simple. What gives me pause is my fear of the consequences. What, to the contrary, gives me hope is that I may be able to do this work without attracting the attention of the Maestro. That is because in these latterday American years, he is more attuned to electronics than to print. The Maestro has followed human progress into cyber-technologies far more closely than the Lord.

I have also chosen, therefore, to write on paper—which may offer a small protection. My words may not be picked up as quickly. (Even processed paper still contains an ineluctable hint of the tenderness God put into His trees.)

While the Maestro has no desire to use up any part of his resources by monitoring every last one of our acts—there are too many demons and small devils for that!—he is also not inclined to let us go on ventures he has not selected. Years ago, I would never have dared to embark on this written record. My fear would have been absolute. But now, with America wallowing in the inundations and engulfments of mass media, one can try to get away with more.

Ergo, I feel ready to continue this biography, this novel—call it what you will! The assumption is that I can succeed in concealing my output from the Maestro. Intelligence work can be understood as a contest between code and the obfuscation of code. Since the Maestro is heavily engaged, and his present existence is more arduous than ever—he feels closer to eventual victory!—I do feel free to venture out. I have grown more confident that I will be able to conceal the existence of this manuscript

until, at least, it is finished. Then I will either feel obliged to print it or—destroy it. This second option has always offered the safest solution (except for the near-mortal blow to my vanity.)

Of course, if I publish, I will then have to flee from the wrath of the Maestro. There are options open. I could choose to enter the equivalent in our spirit-life of the Federal Witness Protection Program. That is, the Cudgels would hide me. Of course, I would have to cooperate with them.

Ergo, I have a choice—treachery or extinction.

In any case, I do feel less dread. By revealing our procedures, I can enjoy the rarified pleasure (for a devil) of being able to characterize my existence. And should I be able to finish, I will still have the choice of destroying my work, or going over to the other side. I must say, the latter option begins to appeal more to me.

Since I am unfaithful to the Maestro, I must show no sign. My modest duties in America must be performed impeccably, even as I offer these further details of the work I accomplished in the early upbringing of my most important client.