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By the time he was a year old, Klara called the boy Adi. It was never Adolf or Dolfi. (Dolfi was much too close to Teufel.) "Look," she would say to her stepchildren, "look, Alois, look, Angela, isn't Adi an angel, a little angel, isn't it so?" Since the baby had a round face, big round eyes as blue as hers, and a small mouth, and therefore looked to them like any other baby, they nodded with easy obedience. She was a good stepmother and that was all right with Alois-Junior, and also with Angela, especially since they had been told by Alois-Senior that their own mother, Fanni, had been crazy.

Klara did not plan to speak with such open enthusiasm to her stepchildren about their new half-brother, but she could not help herself. The beatitude was in her eyes. Adi was giving every indication that he would still be there tomorrow.

Breast-feeding gave her some of this certainty. She was putting her own strength into him, her ready nipple never far from his mouth. Some of our minor devils, who flew over Braunau at night, would report that her prayers were more heartfelt than any of the other young mothers nearby. Devils, obviously, have minimal attachment to the sentimental, let alone the heartfelt, but one or two were bothered. Klara's prayer was so pure: "Oh, Lord, take my life if it will help to save his." Other women, being more practical, complained to God about what was missing in their days. The most greedy were always looking to own a better house. The stupid were looking for a surprisingly good lover, "yes, if you permit it, Lord." There was rarely a sweet for which they did not pine. Klara's prayers, by contrast, yearned to give long life to the child.

While the Maestro was not often sympathetic to breast-feeding since its absence could stimulate ugly energies we could later employ, he was

more tolerant in cases of first-degree incest. Then he wanted the mother to be close indeed to the child. All the better for us! (A monster is most effective when it can call on mother-love with which to charm new acquaintances.)

Excretory dramas also offer advantages. A dirty butt on a baby can send a signal—the mother may be a potential client for us. The opposite is also of use. Klara proves a fine example here. She always kept a clean house. Her rooms at the Pommer Inn were now as spotless as any home tended by several good maids. The furnishings gleamed. So, too, did Adi's pip-squeak of an anus offer its glow. It was kept as immaculate as an opal, small and glistening, and of that, too, did I approve—an incestuary must always be kept aware of the importance of his or her excrement, even if it comes down to a little asshole that is forever being polished.

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Not long after Adolf was born, Alois decided to leave the Pommer Inn. This move amounted to his twelfth change of address in Braunau over fourteen years. But, Alois had good words for the Pommer: "It has elegance. I don't know that I would use such a word for anything else in this little city." He had a dozen such remarks to enliven a hundred situations of small talk. "Women are like geese," he liked to say. "You can recognize them from behind." Heavy tavern laughter would follow even if none of them could explain what was so particular about the rear end of a goose. Or, when speaking to fellow professionals: "To pick out a smuggler is easy. Either they look like the wretches they are, or they are too good to be true.

They dress too well, they speak too well, and the amateurs always work very hard at looking you in the eye.”

When asked, however, why he had moved from the Pommer Inn after a residence that had lasted for four years, he would shrug. “I like a change,” he would say. The truth was that he had used up the waitresses, chambermaids and cooks at the Pommer who were not too old or too ugly, and he could have added (and did to one or two friends), “when a woman goes dry on you, change your house. That can put a little oil in her.”

On the day when the Hitler family left the Pommer Inn, he had, however, a most uncharacteristic thought. It was that fate could yet choose him for high position. I will remark that his idea of high position was to become Chief Customs Official for the provincial capital of Linz. Indeed, fate would yet give him exactly that post. Never superstitious (except when he was) Alois decided that the shift from the Pommer Inn to a rented house on Linzerstrasse was a good move. He and Klara both agreed that they needed more room, and now they had it. Of course, there were no females in the attic, but he could manage with that. He had nosed out a woman who lived on his route home from the tavern. He had to pay for the privilege by

giving her a gift time to time, but then the rent on Linzerstrasse was low. It was a dreary house.

All the while, he fought against falling in love with his wife. She infuriated him. If ants were like bees and had a Queen for whom they labored, then Klara was Queen of the ants, for she commanded his skin to crawl, his crotch to itch, and his heart to toll in his chest—all of this coming from no more than the presence of Klara on her half of the divided bed. He would keep thinking of how she had looked on the night of her wedding. She had worn a dark silk dress, rose-colored with a white collar—that much white she allowed herself as a bride—and on her white forehead, she had teased some charming curls. At her breast was pinned the one piece of jewelry she possessed, a small green cluster of glass grapes looking real enough to mislead a man into reaching for one. And then there were her eyes—no mistake! He had to fight against falling in love with a woman who kept the cleanest house in Braunau just for him and for three kids—two of them not even her own!—a woman always as polite to him in public as to an emperor, a woman who never complained about what she had and didn't have nor nagged him about finances, a woman who still had only one good

dress, the one worn at her wedding party, and yet if he laid a finger on her, she would have bitten it off. He wondered if the difference in their age was what it was about. Better than marrying her, he should have put her in a convent. Yet his skin itched at the thought of how she would not let him near.

Drinking at the tavern, he would look to regain some pride. His dislike of the Church had by now become a conversational grist. He could certainly say a few things. He would occasionally page through an anti-clerical volume he had found in an antique bookshop in Braunau; indeed, the store owner, Hans Lycidias Leipziger, would meet him on many an evening for beer. While the bookseller kept himself at a scholarly level above more mundane discussions by offering no more than a nod of his head from time to time, his wise presence, his shaven chin and shaven upper lip, his full mutton chops, his peephole spectacles, his half-bald head of burgeoning white hair, offered a slight but legitimizing resemblance to Arthur Schopenhauer and thus gave support to Herr Leipziger's smallest assent, just enough to carry the other Customs Officers around the more bruising turns of Alois' argument. While they were hardly to be counted as

church-goers—"No good man wants to be neutered," most were ready to admit—still they were officials. So, they could hardly feel at ease when a prestigious institution was mocked, let alone the Holy Roman Church.

Not Alois. He showed no fear in declaring that he had no fear. "If there is a Providence larger than Franz Josef's power to provide for us, I have not encountered it."

"Alois, not everything comes up to a man with a printed sign," said the officer closest to him in rank.

"Yes, it is all a mystery. Mystery, mystery, mystery, and the Church keeps the keys, they are our caretakers, yah?"

The others laughed uneasily. But Alois was thinking of Klara and how her piety left a hot rock in his stomach. He would grind this rock to powder. "In the Middle Ages," he said, "do you know? The whores, they were more respectable than the nuns. They even had a Guild. For themselves alone! I have read about a convent in Franconia so stinking bad the Pope had to investigate. Why? Because the Franconia Whores' Guild complained about the illegal competition they were receiving from the Franconia nuns."

"Come now," said two drinkers at once.

"True. It is true. Absolutely true. Herr Leipziger can show you the text." Leipziger nodded slowly, reflectively. He was a little too drunk to be certain on which side his authority should fall. "Yes," said Alois, "the Pope says, 'Send a monsignor to look into it.' I ask you: What does this good monsignor report? It is that half the nuns are pregnant. This is the sober fact. So, the Pope now takes a real look at his monasteries. Orgies. Orgies of homosexuals." He said it with such force that he had time to take a long swallow from his tankard.

"That, of course," said Alois, once fresh breath had also been ingested, "need not surprise us. To this day, half of the priesthood are momma's boys. We know that."

"No, we don't," muttered one of the younger officers. "My brother is a priest."

"In that case, I tip my hat to him," said Alois, "if he is your brother, he is different. But that was then. And I assure you: The priests who were real men did worse. You ever hear this saying by the Pope? From the

same Pope. He said, 'No priest needs to marry so long as the peasant has a wife.'"

The unspoken demand of his voice was that the junior officers be ready to applaud with laughter. So, they laughed. "It was exactly like that," he said. "'The poor merchant has one wife, the priest has ten, and the Bishop cannot enter heaven—too many wives to bring along.'"

"Which Bishop?"

"The Bishop of Linz, don't you know?"

Alois had not forgotten the Bishop of Linz who, six years ago, had refused his application to marry Klara. In order to defray the expenses of translating his letter into Latin, Alois had been forced to declare that he was a pauper. Six years ago. It still rankled.

On the walk home, his mood remained foul. He came to an unhappy conclusion: his tirades against the Church might have to cease. He was fifty-four years old, and for many years, had not worried about his position in life. He knew that he would rise in the ranks open to him, but no higher.

Now, however, all this might be shifting. From a friend in the Finance Watch, he had been told that in Vienna there was talk of a

promotion for Alois Hitler up to Chief Customs Officer at Passau. Given his lack of formal education, this would be a true rise in rank, a most innovative promotion. "However, you must now watch yourself, Alois," the friend from the Finance Watch said. "This is still a year away. Keep a good name if you want to be moved to Passau."

He had always seen himself as exceptional, afraid of no one (except for certain superiors in uniform), possessed of a genuine magnetism for women (how many men could say that much for themselves?) and up from the ranks. Moreover, he had never been timid about public opinion. Nobody he knew could say as much. In that department, he was no coward.

But now this respected friend (who had a confidant in the upper councils of the Finance-Watch) was saying, "Watch out for the townspeople in Braunau."

This worry travelled into his digestion. Because Alois could not decide whether to trust his friend. The man was a practical joker. In fact, he was the same one who had once told him: "The townspeople of Braunau are nothing. You can put your thumb to your nose at them." Alois had indeed put together a good many habits around that remark, but the truth

was he had certainly said too much tonight if there was any ground to the rumor concerning Passau. Most unsettling! Of a sudden, he was learning how much ambition he had, a real ambition which he had never admitted to himself. He couldn't. It would have been like a river breaking through a levee. But now he could recognize that a flood-water was waiting. He had to stop pissing on the Church.

Yes, in this sense, his wife, a cold tit to him and a jug of warm milk to the baby—what a guzzler! never off the tit, but, get by all that!—she was a useful wife. Good for the children, good cook, very good with the Church.

Now, he, personally, was not going to be caught at a High Mass except for State occasions, holidays. He did not wish to live with a new itching attack, no, he did not see the confessional box for himself. His skin prickled. A serious official of the Crown like himself should not have to bare his soul (and some of the private stuff below the belt!) no, not to one more priest. Let them find nourishment elsewhere for their masturbation.

Women, however, should be seen in church. The people in Braunau must be able to say that his wife never missed a Mass.

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In our ranks, we look upon ambition as a force that is usually at our disposal. While we accept the likelihood that many human emotions were designed by God, we are ready to attach ourselves to any passion that veers out of control. Of no emotion is this more true than ambition. It is so related to the Lord's purposes that He is invariably ready to encourage it. I would suppose His goal is for every living human to fulfill some part of His Vision. To that degree, God will also prosper.

Of course, such a supposition is a folly. As the Maestro is never loathe to tell us, a human who suffers from too much ambition is advertising the Creator's own lack of anticipation. The D.K., wishing His Vision to be not

only effective, but innovative, had encouraged the human will to be free of Him. In doing so, He enabled us to take in a horde of clients. Once again, God had miscalculated. Ambition is not only the most powerful of the emotions but the most unstable. Defeat became intolerable and so many of the most ambitious choose to blame God for a run of bad luck. (They call it Fortune, but secretly, they are enraged at God.)

Large ambition, therefore, has to awaken our interest. The D.K., a prodigious optimist, had not foreseen that the men and women who could promulgate His Vision by the intensity of their ambition had better be saints. Otherwise, they might betray Him. In contrast, the Maestro has always been alert to the lodes of perversity to be found in every vein of human nature.

Consider the case with Alois. Many people guard their ambition as the most sequestered part of their emotions (guarded even from their own awareness). For so soon as ambition begins to burn too brightly, it is ready, if necessary, to shred a good many long-held convictions about the inviolability of one's honor. Or one's loyalty to close friends. All too often ambition becomes as blind a cutting tool as a laser.

No surprise then if Alois was not the only one in the Hitler family to suffer such a disruption. Ambition, being a true germ, is highly infectious. If Klara now had a child who was actually giving signs of staying alive, her breasts, in consequence, were suffused with joy, the most generous joy she had ever known. Klara now wanted everything for Adi. And to such a degree, that she was even ready to forgive her husband sufficiently to allow him to cross the middle of the bed.

Their second courtship began. She was still breast-feeding Adolf. So, there was no question of a pregnancy. What inspired the return of some little carnal interest was her growing appreciation of Alois. He had built strong foundations, after all, for the good future of Adolf. Even as her husband had risen from the mud of Strones and Spital to the honor of a high uniform in the service of Franz Josef, she, in turn, was ready to dream of the heights to which little Adolf could ascend should his ability prove equal to the vigor and upward progress of his father.

For that, however, he would need this same father to love him. Once, in her gentlest voice, she said to Alois, "Sometimes I wonder why you never hold Adi."

"It will just make the other two jealous," he answered. "Jealous kids are not to be trusted with babies."

"Alois and Angela hold him all the time," she said. "They are not jealous. They like him."

"Let us keep it that way. Maybe they are happy I do not hold him."

"Sometimes I am afraid he is not very important to you," she dared to say.

She had gone one step beyond where she had thought to go. Bad enough for him that he had only half a bed, but now she was looking to scold him? "Important to me?" he said. "That I can answer. He is not important to me. Not yet. I want to see if he will live."

She did not weep often, but here she burst into tears. The worst had happened, and once again she felt weak before her husband. She was not free of loving him.

At that moment, the dog began to bark. Alois had bought a mongrel boxer for a few gulden from a farmer he knew. Since they were living in a house, rather than at an inn, the purchase could be considered protection worth the cost. But the dog, whom he named Luther, proved disappointing.

While Luther worshipped Alois and quivered before his master at every shift of tone, he did not seem otherwise alert. Moreover, he had nervous habits. On this night, as Alois shouted at him to stop howling, poor Luther watered the floor.

Afterward, Alois had his regrets. The dog, after all, did adore him. First, however, he whipped him. Even as Luther tried to crawl away, the poor bottom of the beast became soaked in his own outpourings. All the while, he was yelping in full terror. The uproar woke the children. Alois-Junior came out first, then Angela, and Adi at the last, not yet two years old, but agile enough to get out of his low bed and totter into the midst of this. Klara leaped up to seize him. She was ready for the worst, she hardly knew what—that the child would step into the urine, that he would cry for her breast, that Alois might strike them both—she had seen the look in her husband's eye when Adi became too greedy with her nipple. None of this happened, however. To the contrary, the child looked with solemn interest at the whimpering dog, then at the flailing hand of the father, and the boy's blue eyes had a gleam, a look of remarkable intensity for one so small. She had seen it on his face when suckling him. He would stare at her with the

tender expression of a lover overwhelmed for a moment by the implicit equality of flesh to flesh, soul upon soul. At such instants, she felt as if this child was closer to her and knew more about her than anyone.

Now, as Adolf stared at the wet dog and then at the over-flushed face of his father, there was no tenderness in this look, but much comprehension.

Klara felt an odd panic as if she must now startle the little boy into weeping so that she could give him her breast and thereby remove him from the room. And, she succeeded. Adi burst into a rage as she took him up, bore him away, and force-fed him. Indeed, armed with his first tooth, he nipped her enough for Klara to cry out, whereupon he stopped bawling long enough to give a deep and hearty chuckle.

From the room she had just quit, she could hear Alois bellowing.

"That dog can't learn to control himself," he cried out of his own pain at the awful turn the evening had taken. Luther was bleeding at the mouth from blows he had received full-face on his muzzle, but in turn, Alois' palm had a small but ugly laceration from raking one fierce slap across a broken incisor in the middle of Luther's sad front teeth.

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It will be noted that I write about my people much like any reasonably good novelist. By turns, I am ready to observe them sardonically, objectively, ironically, sympathetically, judgmentally, even compassionately. Nor am I often sinister. This should not come as a surprise. Why descend to a casual reader's notion of how a devil is supposed to behave?

From the onset of our service, the Maestro has instructed us to make humankind our ongoing study. He even encourages us to feel close to what is godly in people as well as keening to the spoils that may be there later. To comprehend the nobler facets of humankind, precisely those that can

present obstacles to us, is important. If we had religious Orders in our muster, I might be like a Jesuit. Indeed, I share with them a fundamental understanding. I am always ready to acquire a sympathetic comprehension of whoever is our adversary—I see it as my duty to be ready, indeed, to know more about godly sentiments than all but the most gifted of the angels.

That may be why the Maestro encourages us to speak of God as the D.K. (At least those of us who work in German-speaking lands. In America, it is the D.A.—dumb ass! In England, the B.F.—bloody fool! For France, A.S.—L'Ame Simple. In Italian, G.C.—gran cornutto! For Spanish—G.P.—grande payaso.) So D.K. stands for Dummkopf. It is not that we look upon God as stupid—never so! Moreover, we know from experience (and lost battles) that the Cudgels can, on occasion, be as bright and incisive as ourselves. Our use of the word Dummkopf comes, I would suppose, from the Maestro's intention to wean us from our greatest weakness—the unwilling admiration we feel for the Almighty. As the Maestro never allows us to forget, God may be powerful, but He is not All Mighty. Hardly so! We, after all, are also here! If the D.K. is the Creator, we are His most profound and successful critics.

All the same, we have to recognize that the Angels have succeeded in getting most men and women to believe that our leader is the Evil One. Nor is there real opportunity to protest this canard. So, our best recourse, as the Maestro suggests, is to take pride in the term. When I write E.O., or speak of the Evil One, it is with full knowledge of the irony of the concept. The Maestro has given us so much, our subtle master. "Leave excessive reverence to the God-worshippers," he tells us. "They need it. They are always on their knees. But we have work to do, and it is tricky. I recommend that you keep thinking of Him as the Dummkopf. For, indeed, given what He could have achieved, this is what He is. Remember: It is our universe to gain. It is His to lose. Keep calling Him the Dummkopf."

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The outpouring of the urine, the shit, and the blood of Luther became the first in a series of episodes remarkable for their powers of transmogrification—that is to say, dramatic and thoroughgoing metamorphosis.

So, for example, Adolf's bowel movements now began to dominate Klara's life in the house on Linzerstrasse. Before the episode with Luther took place, she had certainly been alert, no matter how often Adi soiled his wrapping cloths, to keep the child clean, indeed, the act, as I have remarked, became a dalliance between mother and boy. She wiped him so carefully that his eyes shone with transmogrificational delight. He discovered

Heaven. There it was, right up in his anus next to the gas and the cramps. All the while, his mother subtly, tenderly, delicately expunged the soil, wet or dry, from his rosebud, (which was, of course, Klara's secret name for her dear baby's incomparably dear little hole—die Rosenknospe.) She was so proud of its pink sheen that she could not even suppress her joy when her step-children were watching. Indeed, unlike other good mothers in Braunau, she barely bothered to teach Angela how to substitute for her. She was, after all, wholly superior to the unhappy elements in the procedure. His stool, (which could on occasion be as rank as any other colicky child) did not occasion her disgust. If the outpouring was rank in smell, or what was worse—gave a hint of the empty cavern that lurks in the odor of grave illness—her breath remained calm. But she preferred the stink to be rich enough to overpower anyone else. The stronger, the better. A sign of health! Such was her love for Adi.

Yes, love sparkled between them. His eyes danced as she dredged his cheeks with feather-smooth wipes of the rag, and her eyes—whether she knew it or not—were full of admiration that his little penis stood so erect. She, in turn, would giggle and coax it back (most properly) as they both

laughed. For, of course, it jumped up again. Whereupon she kissed the tip, (once), and then blushed. Be assured! She did not allow her mind to suggest that such an act might be subject to Confession. No, not with such innocent joy.

All this had to change after the episode with Luther.

She lived again in high fear of Alois. Now, she was always in fear that Adi's swaddling cloths might bag open. What if Alois came upon a full plop on the floor? Once, stepping out of the parlor to start a dish in the kitchen, she returned in the next minute to see the child playing with his spoil—he had already plastered his upper lip and chin. She shuddered at the thought of Alois coming through the door.

So, training began. It was like trying to teach a bright but willful dog. In the beginning, Adi might even tug at her skirt, or take her to the closet that held the chamberpot and cry out for her to remove his cloth. After which, complimenting him for his prowess, they would go, two spirits in one, through the wiping. For such intelligence, she offered full praise. His eyes would glow.

She became, however, too ambitious. She wanted Adi to learn how to unsnap the safety pins that held his cloth. Indeed, he was able to. Day by day, success followed success, until one morning, he pricked his finger. After that, he would not go near the pins again. She lost patience. He had come so near and now he refused to continue. Finally, she scolded him, and that was certainly the first time he had heard such a tone issue from his mother. He rebelled. Knowing how important he was to her, his response was keen—he felt the same clarity of mind with which he had watched Alois beat Luther. At that moment, Adi had been illumined by new knowledge. He did not measure the difference between a dog and a man, not yet, for Luther was as much a person to him as his father, but he could see the instant result: Luther had collapsed into abject terror but the dog still loved his master.

So would Klara love him, he decided, even when he would not obey her. Taken out of his cloth and allowed to run naked from the waist down, he began (never when his father was at home) to shit on the floor. Sometimes he would do it right next to the chamber pot, which brought Klara so close to screaming that Adi could hear every sound she did not

make, and felt in consequence masterful. He had no fear of Klara even when she came close to striking him.

He went too far. One day when she was in the midst of waxing her kitchen floor, he spread excrement over the upholstered arm of the parlor couch, studied it, knew by a new tumult in his chest—so curious in sensation—that this was different. Risk was present. All the same, he would show it to her. He did.

This time she stood stock-still. She sensed that he had done it on purpose, and so did not say a word, merely cleaned the sofa by which time he had an attack of diarrhea and the floor was dirty again. He began to laugh and to bawl, but she did no more than sigh and clean him soundlessly in a listless loveless fashion. This made such an impression on him that he awoke in the middle of the night and went to her bedroom. Alois had been called to Passau for preliminary interviews and the house had not seen him for a week, but just before midnight he had come home. Since the boy enjoyed going to his mother's bed whenever she was alone, he was surprised, even as he cracked the door, to hear a little gasping, and wheezing, and then the bull-roar of Alois' voice. It came in spasms.

Beneath it and above it were his mother's cries, soft, and full of the oddest torture. Those cries spoke of joy soon to come, so soon to come, yes, just beyond reach, yes, now, almost! No, not yet! Through the half-open door (kept open particularly for her to hear him should he cry) he saw a sight his mind would not take in, not at once. Something looked like four arms and four legs and two people, but one of them was upside down. He could make out Alois' bald head and side-whiskers pressed between his mother's legs. Then, without a word his father sat up. He was now sitting on her face!

Adolf walked away as silently as he had entered, but he had no doubt. His mother was betraying him. Just then he heard a final set of cries intense enough to turn him back toward the room. From what he could see by whatever moonlight was coming through the window, his father had begun to belabor Klara with all of his body, his big belly slapping on her belly. And she was grunting like a dog. So full of contentment! "You beast, you are an ugly man, you are an animal, you!" and then again, "You, yes, you, yah, yah, yah." There was no question. She was happy. Ja!

He would never forgive her. That much the two-year-old knew.

This time Adolf went all the way back to his room. He could, however, still hear them. In the bed next to him, Alois-Junior. and Angela were giggling. "Goosey, goosey," they kept saying.

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He began to bawl for his milk not thirty minutes after Klara had sunk into the best sleep she had known for years.

Must one suppose that because a child's deepest reactions seem to have a half-life of no more than thirty minutes, they cannot be profound? Because of that betrayal, he might never love his mother as much again. Yet, his feelings were heightened. There was pain in his love now, and an anger that revealed itself by nipping at her breast with his new tooth. Indeed, for a few days, he felt close to Luther, and when drowsy, would sleep beside the dog through an afternoon. Truth, he saw the hound as a sibling, and this brotherly affair went on until Adolf began to take too much

advantage of the beast, punching him in the belly, trying to poke his eyes, and sometimes loosing a kick to the ribs. When the dog began at last to growl at his approach, Adolf would whine and run to Klara. There was a period when this all made her so distraught that delight in breast-feeding was gone. The tooth had done it. The days of weaning were at hand.

In those private councils of her mind that would never be available to her child, her stepchildren, her husband, nor even to the confessional box, she had come to the conclusion that she must have another child. If this came in part from the old fear, even now, that Adolf might not live, she also feared that she would never love him as much again, no, not as once she had, and so maybe there should be another child. Besides, she was entering a new time in her marriage. She looked forward to Alois approaching their bed when he was in a most friendly mood. For on such evenings—after all these years!—desire came alive again, desire was there!—down in the marrow, deep!

We may remember that the last time we had been so close to Alois, he had been burying his nose and lips in Klara's vulva, his tongue as long and demonic as a devil's phallus. (Be it said: we are not without our

contributions to these arts!) Alois was certainly being aided by us. Never before had he given himself so completely to this exercise, and quickly he had become good at it, and so quickly, that no explanation is possible unless we are given credit as well. (Which is why we speak of the Evil One when joining in the act—we do have the power to pass transient but lubricious gifts to men and women even when we are not planning to turn them into clients.)

By morning, Alois could not believe he had done it. All that! To lower himself to such an extent! In bald fact, and to make her pay for such bottoming on his part, he had, we must recall, clumped his buttocks once more over her nose and mouth—precisely the frightful sight that drove Adolf back to his bed and caused him to bawl for milk not a half-hour later.

Yet, by morning, Alois in a most unexpected manner, also felt tender towards Klara. This unexpected gentleness in concert with the astonishing pleasure he had given her by way of his tongue, a joy whose unexpected preciosities had conducted her up to, yes, all-but-occult regions, had also left her ready enough to forgive the rotten part. (Indeed, his heavy behind actually smelled better than Adi's.)

As a devil, I am obliged to live intimately with excrement in all its forms, physical and mental. I know the emotional waste of ugly and disappointing events, the sour indwelling poison of unjust punishment, the corrosion of impotent thoughts, and, of course, I also have to engage caca itself. It is true. As devils, we live in shit and work with it. So, we often look to comprehend a marriage through the eye of the cloaca—and I will add—that is not the worst way since parenthood is not only the crown but the outhouse of marriage. As St. Odon of Cluny stated so unforgettably in a remark worthy of the best of devils: inter faeces et urinam nascimur—between shit and piss are we born. That leads me to say that the proper study of marriage resides not only in partnership, congeniality, boredom, predictable habit, daily annoyance, verbal scuffles, and daily despair, but in the guts and smear of it all—the comradely knowledge of all the forbidden tastes, smells, and bodily nooks. Indeed, if all of that were absent, the sacrament would have less foundation. On caca, is marriage based. So I would assert. You, in turn, are free to reject my opinion because I am a devil, after all, and we do look for the lowest common denominator to any

truth. Small wonder if the condign properties of waste are part of our province.

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Alois' promotion came through. The Finance-Watch named him to the post of Chief Customs Officer at Passau, and Klara was now without doubt that she was married to a man of achievement.

On the other hand, they could hardly rent their house before Alois was due to work at his new post in Passau. That was a full day's travel from Braunau. So, there were weeks at a time when Alois had to live apart from the family. In consequence, Adolf could loll in the big bed next to his mother.

If it was grievous that Klara had to put him aside whenever Alois come home, so did the child also learn that the loss of such happiness would be regained so soon as Alois was off again to Passau.

This condition lasted for a year. Even when the family did make the move to Passau, Alois had to oversee other border towns and was, therefore, absent nearly as much as before—which permitted Adolf to sleep right up close to the nocturnal warmth of his mother.

Now, in Passau, the new position gratified Alois' vanity, but also offered a threat to his confidence. Back in Braunau, a less important station, the smugglers they rounded up were petty individuals. Most of the product to be examined was agricultural; weighings were tedious. Braunau might be nicely situated on the river Inn, but even its architecture was humdrum.

In Passau, Austrian customs, by mutual agreement, operated on the German side of the Danube. The difference was highly visible. Passau had once been ruled by a Prince-Bishop, and so could boast of medieval towers. Some of its churches dated back to the onset of the Middle Ages; others were High Renaissance. Passau's walls reflected the grandeur of dedicated duty, ancient crimes, torture chambers, dark secrets, by-gone glory, and—

much to the point for Alois—criminal smugglers with imagination enough to be something of a match for him.

So, he was not without discomfort in the new position. If, until now, his uniformed presence had been a full warning to would-be malefactors, he knew that much depended upon the rigor of his professional manner. So he took professional pains to present a personality of monumental official calm, a man who had set an incorruptible seal on himself. Let travellers know that he was not the fellow with whom to play games. He had studied many an upper-class customs officer—those with university learning, some with livid, invaluable dueling scars. They were the ones to model oneself after.

Taking up his command in Passau left him feeling, however, less inside his own good Austrian skin. His tone, in consequence, became a touch too harsh. Occasionally some trifle would provoke him unduly. Once he went into a tirade because an underling addressed him as “Herr Official” rather than “Herr Senior Official Hitler.” He could sense that this Passau cohort of subordinates was better educated than the younger officers at Braunau. Were these new faces growing critical of him? Now and again,

looking down from his post at the rush of the Danube below the Customs' bridge, his eyes would sparkle with tears. He would find himself thinking of Braunau, and of the two women buried in the region, dear carnal-spirited Franzeska, yes, and for an instant he would also mourn Anna Glassl. No beauty, but she had known what to do under the sheets.

He smoked all the time. His nickname, unknown to him, was The Chimney. (The German is good enough to offer here: Der Rauchfug!) "And today, what is the mood of der Rauchfug?" one young officer might ask another as he came on duty. Alois knew these juniors were resentful because he did not allow them to smoke on their shifts—nonetheless, he knew that the very injustice of it would enforce his authority. A good officer must be fair for the most part, yet still exercise certain specific inequalities. Done judiciously, that proved effective. One's inferiors were reduced a notch.

Now that Klara and the children had joined him in Passau, he also became more severe with his offspring. Alois-Junior and Angela soon learned not to speak to him unless they were asked a direct question. Otherwise, they were not to interrupt his thoughts. If Alois-Junior happened

to be outside, the father would put two fingers to his lips and whistle. It was identical to the call he used to summon Luther. In turn, Alois-Junior, fresh-cheeked, strong, stocky, and with a face like his father's, had driven Klara and Angela into hysterics one afternoon by picking up a monumental turd that Adi had chosen to deposit on the parlor rug. When stepmother and sister began to scream at the sight of it in Junior's hand, dark, doughty, and forbidding as a primeval club, he chose to stalk after them, his eyes wild. What a mischief! Klara and Angela were crying out in terror. This was a monstrosity! Then, Adi joined the chorus. He screamed with the rest even as he chose to prance right behind Alois-Junior, and kept on with it until his big brother, tiring of the sport, tore off an inch of the stuff, whirled around and planted it on the tip of Adolf's nose.

That evening Klara told Alois-Senior. The beating that ensued was comparable to the attack on Luther. Alois-Junior could just about crawl off to school next day. Profound, after that, was the discipline in the house. When Alois came home from his duties, the children dared at most to whisper. Klara, unwilling to upset him, was also quiet. Supper was eaten in

silence. The smell of Alois' breath, rich with meat and sour from beer, mingled with the aroma of red cabbage.

After dinner, he would take to the armchair, select one of his long-stem pipes, tamp his tobacco into the bowl with all the authority that is ready to reside in the thumb of a man of official importance, and then proceeded to overpower the air with his own smoke. Alois-Junior and Angela went to their room once permission was given. But, Adi was called forward.

His father would cup the three-year-old's head in his hand, and with a divided grin—fifty percent affection, fifty percent pure meanness of spirit—would blow smoke into Adolf's face. The boy would cough. The father would chuckle.

As soon as Alois let go of his head, Adolf would smile and run off to the water closet. There, he might throw up. Sometimes, head bent over the pail, the three-year-old would remember the sounds of Alois making love to Klara, and such groans accompanied him through the lurches of his esophagus. He kept asking himself why his mother never complained about the smoke.

She did not dare. She sensed that the greatest provocation to her husband would be to comment on his pipe.

Moreover, Adolf had provided her with new cause for fear. Cleaning his bottom one day (and she did not make this large discovery until he was three—such were her curious proprieties) she came to notice that he had one testicle, not two.

A town doctor reassured her that this medical phenomenon was not fearsome. Such boys often grew up to be men with large families—"The good God, dear lady, gave more than enough to the first testicle, before He chose to double it."

"So he will not be different from others when he goes to school?"

"Boys of his condition are sometimes active. Highly active. That is all."

These kind words did not soothe Klara. The missing testicle left one more stain on the Poelzl family. Her sister Johanna was not only a hunchback but, according to Alois, half-mad. And then there was a first cousin—a true imbecile. Not to speak of all of Klara's dead brothers, her dead sisters, her own dead children. There was not enough, she decided, of

Alois' strong constitution in Adolf, no, none of the strength Alois had so obviously passed on to Alois-Junior. This was also her fault. She had loved her husband on the night that Adolf had been conceived, but only on that night, and in a way—was it unholy?—such a night!

But now—could it be too late?—she would say that she loved her husband again. She came to this conclusion slowly, step by step, over many months, but on one fine night in June, a year and a half after his transfer to Passau, she felt a new respect for him. For just that afternoon—he had learned that in another six months, he would be transferred to Linz, the capital of the province, there to serve as Chief Customs Officer. It was the most important assignment you could find in all the Service between Salzburg and Vienna.

On that night, they conceived. Perhaps there was never an hour when she loved Alois more simply, or realized she wanted a second son so much. Little Adi with his one testicle, had put a small but year-long horror into her heart. She did not dare to think any longer that Adi might live a long life. On the contrary, they needed another child. The new one, she decided, must belong to Alois as much as to herself.

Edmund was born on March 24, 1894, a few weeks before Adolf would be five. Klara had told him that he would soon have a brother or—if God so desired—a sister, and Adolf was ready either way. He looked forward to playing with the baby on arrival. He expected to meet a child half his age, at least as unweaned by size, a living creature ready to speak, but in any event, certainly able to listen. On the approach to Klara's bed, however, he was right: for he saw no more than a cloth bundle on her breast with a face visible as an old apple.

Having been sent the night before to a neighbor's house where he went through the dinner table sleeping on a small bed between Angela and

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Edmund was born on March 24, 1894, a few weeks before Adolf would be five. Klara had told him that he would soon have a brother or—if God so desired—a sister, and Adolf was ready either way. He looked forward to playing with the baby on arrival. He expected to meet a child half his age, at least as measured by size, a living creature ready to speak, but in any event, certainly able to listen. On the approach to Klara's bed, however, he was aghast for he saw no more than a cloth bundle on her breast with a face inside it as wizened as an old apple.

Having been sent the night before to a neighbor's house where he went through the discomfort of sleeping on a small bed between Angela and

Alois-Junior (who kept pinching each other over his intervening body) he knew that changes were coming. This perception turned into his first large sorrow when, next day, as he rushed to his mother's bed, the midwife put out a hand as large as his face and said, "Stay back. Don't hurt the baby."

Klara made it worse. She put a hand on his head. But it was so passing in its touch that he could feel no love. Tears came to his eyes.

"Ah, the poor little one," said the midwife and led him out of the room. "In a few days," she said, "you can get nearer to the baby."

"Will he talk to me?"

"Oh, you will be the first to understand him." With that, she laughed and returned to the bed where his mother lay.

He rarely got near enough to Klara. Yet just a few weeks ago, no more, he used to enjoy the same conversation each morning with her.

"Mommie," Adi would ask, "are you the most beautiful woman in the world?"

She would tease his hair. "What do you think?"

"I think you are the most beautiful."

She would hug him to her breast. The love her breasts held for him was not what it used to be, but she would pretend that it was. Not a year had passed since she had stopped feeding him. Now, he would gorge on the cream puffs she often prepared for dessert, indeed, he would wolf them down at such a rate that Alois-Junior would complain audibly if Klara was present, or, in her absence, would crack a knuckle across his head. Klara, prey to new uneasiness at how little attention she gave to Adi these days, would defend his right to the cream puffs. "He is so little," she would say, "he needs them more than you."

Now, following the birth, Klara was often too fatigued to cook. The temporary servant made cream puffs that tasted like sour milk. Klara, in her turn, was breast-feeding Edmund all the time. So it seemed to Adolf. He experienced a new sorrow which blended with the sad undertone of the church bells in Passau, so many bells, so frequent. In his ears, it sounded as if she was forever feeding Edmund.

Now, when he tried to ask if she was the most beautiful woman in the world, she would laugh unhappily. "Oh, I am an old worn-out girl," she would say, "I am not beautiful, Dolfchen. But your sister Angela will be."

Adi did not agree. Angela was undependable. Angela was always ready to pinch him. She was nice, at times, but treacherous. "No, you are more beautiful than Angela," he would say, and his mother would shake her head.

Meanwhile, much of the time, his father was in Linz. One week after Edmund's birth, Alois took up new and full-time duties there. Since Linz was fifty miles east of Passau, Alois did not return to his household more than twice a month. The weight of his strong voice was not there now to quiver through the boy's body. During the day, when Angela and Alois-Junior were away at school, Adi would be alone with his mother and the infant, yet Klara still did not have a lot of time for him. And at night, he no longer could be certain where he would sleep. Alois-Junior would often take over his cot, and Adi would have to move to Angela's bed. She would tickle him too much. Sometimes she would tell him that he did not smell good. "So, Adi, your breath is rotten," she would say. Often, he would put a blanket on the floor to escape her.

He was also afraid to go outside. There were boys his age and older playing in the field back of the house, and their yells were fearsome. He

spent his time looking at the illustrations in a book his father had bought about the Franco-Prussian war of 1870. He decided he would like to be a brave soldier. Could he be? He was so afraid!

One afternoon, after school and much at Klara's bidding, Alois-Junior pulled Adolf out of the house, and led him to the field behind the house. Yes, he had known it would be so. A dozen small boys were playing at war.

Alois-Junior studied the group, then selected the leader of one army, a stout five-year-old. "This is my brother," Alois told him, "and if you let anyone on the other side hit Adolf, you will hear from me." He punched the boy on the arm hard enough to certify his words, and departed.

When Adolf came home that evening, Alois-Junior told him, "From now on, I eat the cream puffs first. As many as I want. If you cry to your mother, momma's boy, I will not protect you on the field."

"I won't cry," said Adi, holding his breath as tightly as if he were clinging to a rope.

Next day, he went to the game by himself. He was more afraid of Alois-Junior's derision than of any blows he might take in the battle.

Actually, there had been little enough punishment on the first day. The fat boy was quick to use his own body to shield Adi from every attack. Besides, it did not take long to grasp the basic principle. The game was simple. Divided into two teams, the boys took turns chasing each other. It was really not a war. More like tag. Once you were touched, you were dead. And each melee lasted but a few minutes. After which, the boys, close to breathless, would count the losses, take a breath, and start up again. On the first charge across the field, somebody would always get knocked down. Once, when the fat boy that Alois-Junior had chosen was waylaid by two kids from the other team, it even happened to Adolf. A rude shove on the shoulder and he was slammed to the ground. Earth drove up his nose.

He did not cry. It took a considerable effort of his will. In the following minute, he had to negotiate with himself in order to keep from weeping. He was hurt that no one had applauded his new-found stoicism. His feelings were as bruised as the scrape on his cheek. His nose burned from the outrage to his stuffed-up nostrils, but he managed not to cry. One's will could be as strong as a wall if one was ready to command it. So he told himself. He was nothing if not precocious.

He also managed to get through the rest of the battles that day without another collision. He was quick enough to dart away whenever an enemy soldier came near. To his delight, he even tagged one boy.

On the next day, his face was in the dirt again. Action was everywhere. It was hard to dodge the rush. He was knocked down again.

The fat boy was rueful about it and begged him not to tell his brother. Adi had the pleasure of patting him on the back. No cause for alarm, he announced, not a word would he say.

That night he could hardly sleep. He felt that in time to come, the fat boy, Klaus, would be his lieutenant, while he would be captain.

To accomplish such an aim, he came up with a new set of rules. War, he reasoned, was not two armies charging at each other all the time—war was maneuver! He did not know the word as yet, but he had certainly acquired the concept.

To his new mates he now proposed that they move from the flat field to a hill in the next meadow. Each army could now begin at the foot of opposite slopes, and so would not be visible until one or the other crossed the summit.

Once he had convinced the boys of this change, he brought in an amendment. The leader on each side, he insisted, must not be touched. "The highest officer," he argued, "must always be respected."

To gain his point, it did not hurt that stout, sturdy Klaus was always by his side. All the same, Adi was a little amazed at how well he could deal with these matters. So was I. For a boy of five, his eloquence captured my attention.

Following young Adolf's first war games, I was determined to take a more direct interest in his development.

So I understood that further investment is never rational. Each case is unique. The average man is worst, paralyzed by his ignorance, assumes one can lose one's soul to the devil on an instant, and permanently. The promise is false but is reiterated every Sunday by the most dedicated and well-meaning ministers. The real situation is that we do not appropriate people by way of a lightning flash. Our dear Father's omnipotence brands a path or events forever as our vessels. Rather, it is an ongoing tug of war. So long as we seek to invest our powers in a client, the Cudgels are likely to appear.

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Following young Adolf's first war games, I was instructed to take a more direct interest in his development.

Be it understood that further investiture is never routine. Each case is unique. The average man or woman, paralyzed by his ignorance, assumes one can lose one's soul to the devil on an instant, and permanently. The premise is false but is reinvigorated every Sunday by the most dedicated and mediocre ministers. The real situation is that we do not appropriate people by way of a lightning flash. Nor does Satanic entrapment brand a man or woman forever as our vassals. Rather, it is an ongoing tug of war. So soon as we seek to invest our powers in a client, the Cudgels are likely to appear.

Quick possession rarely occurs. Indeed, after a series of such battles, the odd soul actually captured by the Cudgels or ourselves can bear more resemblance to a throwaway than a prize. (Insane people can be the victims of such sustained contests.)

Entrapment, then, is not free of paradox. The clients that we find most difficult to approach are those with the greatest potential. Conversely, individuals who are easy to pick up rarely prove of real service. It takes so little to traduce a drunk or an addict. We do, however, polish what is left of their charm. That helps to consume a little more of the compassion of their families, especially if the mother, father, or any of the siblings are obsessed with not losing the last of their charity. In effect, we injure that family's God-loving hearts! But such is simple work. Gains are small. Ultimate ends are not served. Our final aim, after all, is to draw the majority of humans away from allegiance to the D.K.

There is, however, another factor in every contest—an economic factor. It concerns the separate resources of Divine energy and of Satanic energy. They differ.

I can allow that even in the higher cadres of devils and angels, we hardly know who has more Time to give to a contest once we vie for possession of a given man or woman. Of course, this does not involve larger matters. The D.K. can, for example, disburse whole bonanzas of divine substance into His sunsets (which—it must be admitted) do bolster human morale. There, I would call Him a spendthrift, but, then, we devils have to give our attention always to the reserves of our budget. Ergo, we have to estimate closely the expenditures of Time involved in securing a new client. To give years to a promising varlet who eventually goes over to the Cudgels leaves a budgetary blemish on one's record. So, when choosing a target, we try to exhibit more acumen than our opponents.

For example, we rarely fail to attend the joinings of rich and powerful people (so full of infidelity!). As has been noted, whether rich or poor, we do not ignore incest. Other copulations, however, particularly those illumined by angels, present a more demanding task—it is not routine to slip through their blockade! It seems—I dare to speak here only for myself—as if the E.O. has never been able to accept his failure to be present in the hour when Jesus Christ was conceived.

Fortunately for us, Jesus proved to be a not untypical Son. (The record we are furnished informs us that He was often at odds with His Father.)

But I stray from my point. The prevailing fact of our existence is that we are obliged to live within a limited budget, and so, our projects are chosen with discretion.

Except in special instances, we do not, therefore, take large interest in the early development of children. "Over the first few years," our Maestro will remark, "a child is caught between the need for love and the development of its will. These inclinations are so naturally at odds with each other that an approach is rarely necessary until the child involved is older."

Except for unusual cases (like Adi's), we exercise no intervention until the age of seven. (Indeed, well into the nineteenth century, a very young child was always in danger of being carried off by one disease or another.)

Once turned seven, a prospective client's health becomes easier for us to assess. On the other hand, our Maestro terms the next five or six years:

The Age of Clods. "They are now encountering the world in its basic form—their school years. Nearly all of them rush toward habit, routine, and stupidity as the most immediate forms of protective insulation. These are the years when the average human ego takes shape in all of its readiness to lie, mis-remember, distort and forget—all in order to keep the young ego in some readiness to support the ongoing project, oneself."

More often, our selections commence with adolescence. Then, the best energies invested by the D.K. are there for us to subvert. (For He is usually eager to invest a good deal in very young men and women even when they do not know what to do with this sudden inrush of new resources.) Dramatic distortions of His Intention become open to us.

I have mentioned these reserved processes of selection because I wish to emphasize how uncommon was the special attention given to this one particular five-year-old. That his name was Adolf Hitler was, after all, of no importance then.

All the same, I had lived (by proxy) in the demonic instant of his conception, and had then been assigned to review the work of the devils who would oversee his family's activities. It was light surveillance. Our

jargon for this kind of action was milk-runs, an expression we employed long before it was adopted by U.S. Air Force pilots in the Second World War. Any one of our devils might pass by a house in the hours before dawn, and by way of the small and large family storms that had transpired since the last visit, new information was ingested. It required no large expenditure unless the abode was guarded by angels. In a more normal condition, one could take a quick pass by the house and sweep away with the findings. While humans slept, we did our work. (As did the angels. Yes, those forces of Light also worked through the night!)

I had been able to keep up then with a close history of the Hitler family for all the years since Adolf had been born. (Be it understood that my devils also kept track of numerous other projects in that region of Austria.) If what my agents had offered up to now was modest, it had, nonetheless, sufficed. Reviewing Adolf's early years, I confess that I saw no vast promise in the boy. He was outrageously in need of love and damnably vulnerable. The odds were that he would creep through life with a self-protective ego. At least, so I would have judged if the Evil One had not been present at his conception. That event, however, had to affect my

judgment. Even on the busiest nights, the Hitler family was included on every milk-run.

This routine of careful but passive observation was overturned altogether for me on the day that Alois-Junior dragged Adi off to the boys' game of war. The E.O. intervened. I received a direct message: "Take closer care of him now. Stiffen his spine. We will lose many of his future potentialities if we don't take steps."

There is no room for rebellion when given a direct order. I did what I was told to do. I stiffened the boy's spine. Indeed, I will make the claim that I accomplished this with finesse. For I did not bring any special hands into his courage or his will; rather, I provided him with enough will to carry out the job himself. He had been the one, after all, who chose not to weep when his face was in the dirt, and afterward, displayed his own cunning in finding ways to avoid physical punishment. It had been enough that I was (as to speak) at his side. Yet, the man acted as guardian angel. (For great claims, only!)

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There is no room for rebellion when given a direct order. I did what I was told to do. I stiffened the boy's spine. Indeed, I will make the claim that I accomplished this with finesse. For I did not inject any special funds into his courage or his will; rather, I provided him with enough wit to carry out the job himself. He had been the one, after all, who chose not to weep when his face was in the dirt, and afterward, displayed his own cunning in finding ways to avoid physical punishment. It had been enough that I was (so to speak) at his side. We, too, can serve as guardian angels. (For prime clients, only!)

I was aware again of the superior insight of the Maestro. Adi showed a few signs that he might be worth the work. The child had powerful instincts, and was as much superior to an average five-year-old as a young race-horse to a run-of-the-mill mule. I enjoyed working with him, and that was just as well since the order had come during a period when I could not afford new inroads on my budget. Improving a child's courage usually demands the use of precious stores, precisely those funds of love and force we have managed to steal from the Cudgels. Of necessity, we have become skilled at impersonating angels. Even an adult, feeling our infusion of love, tends to believe it is bona-fide, that he or she is the recipient of Grace. (I suspect Kierkegaard had just that in mind when he suggested people would do well to be wary of feeling too saintly, since they could then be working for Satan.)

I speak of this because we devils are human to this degree—a fine return on our investment puts us in the best of moods. So I came to enjoy being in company with Adi as he looked to improve the little game of war that was being played by these five-year-olds in Passau in the spring and summer of 1894. Indeed, the change in my sentiments was as rapid for me

as for the child, but then, I was there night after night to instruct Adi while he slept, and indeed, he delighted me for during the day, he did show his capacity to improve the war games.

He soon saw, and I believe this came as much from his perception as mine, that outposts were necessary. It was wrong to send soldiers over the hill with no knowledge of what they might encounter. So, a scout from each army had to attempt to work his way up close enough to the summit to gain a look at the dispositions of the other side. Following in logical sequence came another change in the rules—an advancing army had to be free to move its forces from flank to flank, even as it climbed the hill. The defense could also shift their outposts. Of course, this called for larger forces on each side, but Adi was soon able to convince his regulars that more boys should be invited from nearby streets and fields. Of course, they, the originals, having been first on this hill, were entitled to take promotion in rank. Let me offer one of his speeches to his troops.

“Why are we here?” he would ask. “Is it because we need to know more about war? Yes. Because, my friends, when we are big men, we want to be heroes. Is that not true? Klaus, do you want to be a hero?”

"That is what I want."

"Of course. It is what we all want. All of us. But for that, we must learn more. So, we need more soldiers. How are we to do this?"

"I will tell you. It is by talking to all who are willing to join us. Then, we who are here can be given high rank. We who command must be very high in rank. Not just a captain, or a major, but a general.

"Klaus here, will be my colonel."

Those words are close to what he said. While I have certainly endowed him with an eloquence no five-year-old could muster on his own, I also have to admit that not all of the good turns of speech that came out of him were mine.

Before long, he and his troops were engaged in hour-long contests. There were endless alterations of the rules. The numbers increased to fifteen and twenty a side.

Word came from the E.O. "Enough for now. Let us see how much of this endures after the move."

That was not uncharacteristic of our Maestro. We had to be ready to accept quick changes. In this case, the situation of the family had altered.

Alois was going to move Klara, Angela, Alois Junior, Adi, and the baby Edmund, up from Passau to dwell nearer to him in Linz.

While the war games are now done for a while, I feel the need to soothe any uneasiness in the reader. Good readers are the most unprotected of humans—their allegiance moves in advance of their judgment. Some may have felt uncomfortable, therefore, to discover that they were enjoying these first successes of the child Adolf Hitler. Be assured. To read about the skills or triumphs of any protagonist is bound to elicit happiness in just about all who follow the story, especially if there is a suggestion of the sentimental, or even better, the magical—useful tools for any author who wishes to arouse quick emotions in the reader. That is why so many popular writers come looking for us. We love them. We do not disabuse them. So, popular writers usually believe they are working for God as well as for their own prosperous selves, and all the while we encourage them to steep their readers in baths of misperception. The profit comes to us. Misperception of reality will, at the least, waste God's Time, and that is one more form of compound interest in our kind of economy.