

the cooks and maids of the Gasthof. Worse, they had no interest in him.

Indeed, he did not even mind ~~one more weight he did not have to carry on~~

~~his person.~~ Yes, that was old age, he told himself.

^{would} I ~~could~~ even say that ~~for the present~~ Alois was happy. ^{for once} That is a

~~matter of no great interest to a devil unless such happiness impinges upon a~~

~~client, but for the time, it did not make life easier for Adolf.~~ Since that

could yet prove good or ill for my ^{Adolf} purposes, I did keep an eye on ^{the father's} his

activities. ~~They were modest these days.~~ He loved walking the streets, ^{of Lambach} and

^{and} took a proprietary interest in the medieval flavor of ^{the town} Lambach. Its

population might not be large, ^{but} ~~1700 souls they claimed, and maybe it wasn't~~

~~quite that much any more.~~ Situated between Linz and Salzburg, it reminded

Alois ^{for it, too, had a} ~~more~~ of Passau, ~~yes, Passau with its~~ history going back a thousand

years ~~and more~~. Lambach had a Benedictine monastery founded in the 11th

Century and Alois even visited ^{it} ^{several} ^{long-established} ^{times} once as a matter of respecting good culture,

indeed, ^{the monastery offered} its walls showed more than a few Byzantine frescoes as well as

~~paintings~~ by medieval masters, minor artists, Alois was quick to decide, yet

~~nonetheless~~ well-preserved.

There was also a church ^{Paura} ^{which} in Lambach called Paura, and it was unique.

Built in the shape of a triangle, it had ~~no less than~~ three towers, three gates,

and three altars, ⁵⁰ and it soon became part of Alois' daily promenade. ~~The~~ ^{Three}

three walls, ~~so unusual for a church~~, had the oddest effect on him. He began

to believe—who could account for such thoughts?—~~he began to believe that~~

^{that} ^{some} (he had a previous life in this place ^{some} hundreds of years ago. What other

impulse could have brought him here, family and all? Could there be such a

condition as reincarnation? He did not dismiss the notion as quickly as

once he might. How better to account for his lifelong sense of his own

importance? Could he have been, perhaps, ^{during} a knight in some earlier

existence here in Lambach? Der Ritter! Might that not account for his best

qualities as a man? Der Ritter Alois!

^{He was} Alois is obviously in a period of transition. ^{Normally, he} Indeed, he is having

^{have} ^{(such thoughts, but} ~~thoughts he would normally have scorned to consider.~~ He is beginning to

^{Alois' ego was at a tripping point. He was} ~~beginning to~~ brood just a little about some of the possible dimensions of death. Not his

own ^{as} this time, but ^{(death in general.}

^(can be) If it could be asked how ^{I am (such private)} ^{concerns} one could be aware of these passing

^{Alois,} ~~ratiocinations~~ when, after all, Alois is not my client, I ^{can easily} may as well confess

— as indeed I have indicated more than once —
that over the years, we ~~do~~ ^{can} ingest a good deal of the mental workings of him

that ~~when it concerns an important client~~ ^{usually} that we are able to ingest a good deal of the mental workings of ~~that~~

~~of~~ ^{There is no question}
~~and~~ close associates of an important client. While we are not often in touch

~~that at the least, during~~
 with their most sequestered thoughts, the casual spew is ~~certainly~~ available,
 and in periods of transition we also
 grow alert to ~~our~~ their unvoiced themes.
 So and Alois' meanderings about death can so be characterized. He does seem
 came to us without hindrance although
 they did occasion some surprise. He had decided
 able to recognize that no living man or woman ~~can~~ ^{could} comprehend how it ~~is~~

~~was~~ ^{indeed could they}
 (possible that they might cease to exist. How can they possibly come to an

Didn't Alois tell himself, believe in secret ~~that~~
 end? Doesn't everyone deep down believe that they will always live? He
 that they would always be alive?
 He also began to question the
 had a thought considered shameful years earlier and that was that it might

nature of God. If He existed, would
 do no harm to explore religion a little more. For instance, might there be a
 He not be so

God? If so, would he not be immensely busy ~~then~~ with the world's affairs,

~~so busy~~ that He would not have a great interest in each individual person?

Concerning the nonentities, there was bound to
~~quite likely, there would~~ be minimal interest. To Alois, this ^{was} stimulating.

thought. It explained a good deal to him.

Religious people were always taking it for granted that God was ~~so~~

interested in them, but Alois had seen too much of life to believe that ~~God~~

any higher power,

would have the patience to put up with most human beings. No, life was

here to live, as indeed he had lived it, and reincarnation—well, maybe that

was where you received your due reward or your punishment. ^{that could} ~~If that were~~

certainly be yet if so,

so, this Ritter Alois must have been one hell of a licentious knight. ~~How~~

Alois ~~else explain his modest state now? All the same, he was in a very good~~

mood. New ideas always did as much for him.

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This ^{new} late vanity in Alois, ^{with so fresh a point of view,} of believing that new ideas had large appeal

^{surprising} for him may account for the reception he gives to a request from Adi. Klara

could hardly believe ^{that} her husband ^{was able} could say yes. She ^{had come} came close to telling the

boy not to ask, ^{but} and then felt some considerable anxiety at the thought that ^{it} God ~~might be~~ ^{might be} God's intention ~~that~~ ^{for} Adi ~~should~~ ^{should} ~~might want Adi to~~ sing in the Benedictine choir. If so, she was interfering

with the Lord's purposes.

So Adi, spiritual hat in hand, ^{did} approached Alois, and explained that they ^{were} ~~giving~~ had singing lessons in the ^{his} ~~monastery~~ school and the monks had chosen him as one of the boys with ^{a fine} ~~the best~~ voices. ^{with} So if he had his parents' permission, ~~therefore~~ he could become a member of the choir.

If it would be asked why Alois would be amenable to allowing his son ~~to study with the Benedictines~~, ^{if Alois} the father's answer was immediate. "I have ^{These Benedictines} made careful inquiries. ^{but} They are not only the best school in Lambach, ^{have} they are, for practical purposes, the only decent one. Since I wish Adolf to go far

in life, so, too, do I wish him to obtain the best education available, ^{which means taking advantage of all extra opportunities offered.} In turn, Adi loved the school and was soon seen by the monks as one

^{At ready} ~~of their best pupils~~ Alois was delighted with ^{Adi's} his marks. ^{He had received} ~~He is taking twelve~~

courses and receives the highest grade ^{in all of twelve courses,} given in every one of them. So Alois
 Alois, having just seen the report card ~~was~~
 in a rare benign mood when Adolf approached with his request.

"Let me tell you," Alois responded, ^{"it is no surprise to me"} "I can understand ~~that~~ that you possess

a talent for singing. Do you know ~~that~~ ⁼⁼ when I was young, I, too, had a fine

voice? I would say ~~it~~ ^{became} was a gift from my poor mother who ~~was~~ the soloist in

the parish church in Dollerschein when she was a young woman."

"Yes,"

^{do} "Oh, yes, Father," said Adi. "I remember how well you sang ^{to the} on the day

^{you took us} road from Linz to Hafeld. Even the horse, Gaubart, knew ^{you were} the singing was so

so good."

^{Alois laughed,}

"Nothing but ditties from my childhood," said Alois, "yet on that day I did

^{some of them."}
 remembered ~~them all~~

(great difficulty) join the
There would be no question then. Adi could become a member of the

children's choir in the monastery school.

any however, only
"I ~~am~~ agreeable to your request, Adolf because I believe in excellence.

therefore given
You are entitled to be rewarded for the excellence you have shown in your
new school.

To himself, Alois was thinking, "Of course, I will not encourage him to

too far with this. (turn out in the end) Yet
No need to have him ~~and~~ as a sickly priest. But so long as

receive
he continues to get good marks like these, I will not lay a hand on him."

~~provided he does nothing crazy."~~

wholly has
Of course, Alois is not aware of how powerfully Adi has been

the
affected already. The old walls of that monastery have even inspired him,

To hold my story in one hand and
authority in the other! His world
is the Abbot in this monastery. He is tall
he is ~~grace~~ ^{grace} ~~beis~~ ^{beis}

to wonder if ~~one day~~ ^(and wear the black garb?) he might
become a monk. The silences
of the church resound in his head,
~~his heart~~ ^{his}. Adli is ready
to weep before the power of
the hymns ~~as the music~~ ^{"Grosser Gott, wir loben Dich}
~~resounds in his heart~~
"Holy God, we praise thy name
Infinite ~~thy~~ ^{thy} vast domain,
Everlasting is Thy Rein
Fill the heavens with sweet accord;
Holy, Holy, Holy Lord."

I was with Adli for much
of this. ~~the~~ The Maestro had
encouraged us to ~~be able~~ ^{learn} to
listen to the most angelic
sounds without a wayward
tremor. (I could explain the
method but it would revolt to
many.) ~~who would read what~~
~~I write.~~ Leave it that all the
while he ~~was~~ sang, I was
encouraging Adli to believe that
one day he might rise to very
high authority, even supreme
authority over all these monks. *