

-1-

A letter came in August. After that, they did not hear from Alois-Junior again. In the course of a trip to Linz, Alois-Senior learned that Ulan had been sold to a horse-trader for half of his value, and that might be enough for Junior to live in Vienna until he could find work.

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

At rest on these amputated remains of what once had been a noble oak, he would mourn the bees he had lost, and dream that he had come back

early enough on Sunday night to chase the horse and boy through the forest until brought to a halt by the pangs in his lungs.

This fantasy accompanied a long summer of mourning for all he could name as lost, and then he would grieve even more for what he could not name.

So the summer passed. He hired a man to assist him in mowing their pastures. He baled his cuttings, and sold the hay in Fischlham. With no hives left to worry about, he had no fear now of swarming, no calculations to be made of how much feed to give in the after-season to the colonies, no further examinations of the health of the hives, no further estimates as to how many old bees had died but were not yet replaced by new-born, no tremors at the thought of mouse invasions, no need to consider whether he should put up netting to keep birds away, nor any need to weigh the boxes, no more pondering whether enough pollen had been collected by the foragers to provide them with protein for the winter, and no Queen to locate. There were not even any Langstroths to repaint. No records to be brought up to date. He was done.

Sitting by the stump, there came an afternoon by the end of summer when the more caustic tastes of mourning finally passed through some vent of the mind, and he said to himself, "I am relieved that I do not have to worry about my bees any more. I loved them, but their loss is not my fault."

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

In truth, that is how we measure Time. Except for those occasions when the Maestro assigns us to arenas where history can be shaped, we live reflexively. We, too, are in need of fallow periods. For me, the quiet summer of the Hitler family went by like a passage of sleep. I tended a little to my other clients.

Alois, meanwhile, was marooned in the pall of a long and lackluster meditation. He was worrying to a modest degree about the value of the farm. If he were to sell it, could the price match what he had paid? Or would a potential buyer recognize the beginnings of neglect? That became

the focus of his attention. Nothing, he decided, can be more subtle than the onset of neglect. While he did feel more relaxed than in many a year, it did nag at him that he was leaving all too many chores to the women—certainly those which did not call for a man's strength. He did nothing with the vegetable garden. He thought of buying a new dog; instead, he examined the paint on poor dead Spartaner's dog house, and decided it was not yet ready to peel in the summer heat.

They did not seem to need a new dog. With young Alois gone, he did not have to entertain any fears of an irate father skulking in the neighborhood. No parent of Greta-Marie Schmidt was likely to appear on the doorstep—he could give thanks that that particular young lady was not pregnant, for if she were, he would by now have known all about it. And the smuggler who lived on the other side of Fischlham hardly entered his thoughts. Somehow, given the absence of Alois-Junior, that phantom of a malefactor also seemed far away.

Senior's real worry was that he might become habituated to idleness. *Even a few minutes spent in doing nothing at all, had once been guaranteed*

to annoy him. Now, he felt a little too contented by the drift of a cloud, or, for that matter, a curl of cigar smoke.

Such peace could prove expensive. A farm that remained unworked—no matter how tidy one kept the house, the barn, and the yard—might never look right. Not to a potential buyer. A small part of Alois continued to run uphill in his sleep. It was as if his unplanted fields were now reproaching him.

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

So, there might come a time when he would have to decide that it cost too much to go to his miserable tavern in Fischlham. That would double every indignity. He had to recognize a fact. He was missing Linz! There, at least, you could find a drinking-place with intelligent people. What it all came down to was that they must sell the farm. He knew it would not happen quickly. These days, the less work one did, the longer it took for anything to get done. Moreover, very much against his will, he was

beginning to feel remorse about Alois-Junior. What an ungovernable emotion! Was it incumbent upon him as a father to forgive his son? Yet what if Alois-Junior was also full of remorse? He could not bear the thought of that boy alone in a poor room, sitting on a mean cot, his eyes full of tears?

He might as well have had an amputated forearm whose nerve-endings were still alive at the elbow, Alois-Senior began to think again of Hitler and Sons, Apian Products. Because he need invest no essential belief in the idea, the dream, perversely, was sweeter than before.

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

No such drama was going to develop, however. A letter without a return address came a few days later from Vienna, a vile letter. "You killed

my mother." The phrase was repeated several times. Then, the letter declared that the son would yet be famous, and the father would twist in his grave.

Alois could not believe what he read. The rest was worse. "You were a terrible farmer, and the reason is clear. You are, as I happen to know, half-Jewish. No wonder you cannot be a farmer." And there were so many misspellings in the letter that out of a sense of shame for his son, Alois-Senior had to write it out all over again before he felt able to show it to Klara. As he wrote, his hand shook badly but the original, with its ink blots and errors of syntax, was too abominable to show. The boy had always been able to speak well.

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

Klara, however, kept the discussion well away from Poelzl. She only said, "I did not mind that thought so much. I used to think this was your reason for not going to church."

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

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

"But that does not make me Jewish."

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

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

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

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

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

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

She nodded. She hardly knew whether to be relieved or disappointed. She had always felt excitement sneak into her at the thought of being wed to a man with such blood. Jews did forbidden things in bed. That she had heard. Maybe Alois and she had even done these same forbidden things—was that not so? And Jews were reputed to be intelligent. That she had also heard. Now, she was truly confused.

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

The reader may recall that when I presented myself on the morning of the novel, I appeared as an SS man. Indeed, I was one. Over that period in the late 1940s, I was recruited corporately to a particular SS officer. I lived and functioned within a man named Dieter. At a price. We do not engage in word investment unless the stakes require it. For the personal cost is direct. One has to relinquish the stimulation of living in more than one consciousness at once. Domestic power is thereby diminished. One has become a slave, sign of a broken.

So, as Dieter, I did make inquiries in Graz in 1945 among Hitler's granulation. The only way I learned, however, that the true father of a man

-2-

The reader may recall that when I presented myself as the narrator of this novel, I appeared as an SS man. Indeed, I was one. Over that period in the late 1930's, I was invested corporeally in a particular SS officer. I lived and functioned within a man named Dieter. At a price. We do not engage in total investiture unless the stakes require it. For our personal cost is direct. One has to relinquish the stimulation of living in more than one consciousness at once. Demonic power is thereby diminished. One has become a simulacrum of a human.

So, as Dieter, I did make inquiries in Graz in 1938 about Hitler's grandfather. The only way I learned, however, that the true father of Alois

was Johann Nepomuk came by information I received directly from the Maestro.

At that time, I was not able, obviously, to name my source. In the SS IV-2a, we were obliged, like any other intelligence organization, to be credible, at least, among ourselves, and so the only way to explain to Himmler what the origin of my information had been was to fabricate the sources.

There is a complication. An extraordinary source like the Maestro enables us to inhabit two eras in Time simultaneously. If, living as Dieter, I had been made privy from the start to the actual carnal events in Strones in 1837, then the letter sent to Hitler in 1938 by the son of Alois-Junior would have presented no problem. I would have known that Hitler was not Jewish. Still, I would have been at an impasse convincing Heinrich Himmler of such a fact. To make it credible, I needed to use a means of information-gathering with which he was familiar—human sources.

I believe the Maestro concluded long ago that he must quarantine the memories of his devils if he wished to keep order in his share of the world. So, as just indicated, we do not often employ our potentiality to live in two

periods at once. Nonetheless, our instincts do reach beyond human intuition. I would warrant that the memories we are not encouraged to recall are there nonetheless to serve as our guides.

I mention this condign matter because the question whether Jewish blood is present in the family has reared up so suddenly for Alois and Klara.

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

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

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

While I cannot speak with the authority of those devils who were implanted by the Maestro in medical school and internship, I will say it is

possible that the cancer which would end Klara's life in 1908 could have taken a large step forward on this miserable night.

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

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

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

A large reason not to sleep. What was worse, she was ashamed of her cowardice. How could she have accepted the idea that Alois-Junior should be invited back? Lying there, listening to Alois-Senior going back and forth, thumping the floor with his body as he lay down, she was soon suffering her own rage. It was shocking. She could not believe what she was telling herself. If it were possible, yes, she could kill Alois-Junior. Only, she knew she could not. She would not ever. But the effort to repel such a fury in herself throbbed in her heart—which is to say, in her breast—with such force and such detestation that, yes, it is possible—this could have been the night when the breast cancer which would yet burn with hell's pains in her chest, might have begun. Since the answer is not easily available, I prefer to take return to Alois trying to sleep on the floor.

The immensity of his rage on this night was that he had betrayed himself. That spoiled all the joy that is also implicit in rage, a notion that is too infrequently considered. Rage, after all, can offer the same nourishing

sense of self-righteousness that is available on more ordinary occasions to the most hypocritical of church-goers. The core of such pleasure is never to be angry at oneself, only at others. Yet, here, on this night, Alois was infuriated at the cost of his own deeds.

If Junior had turned out badly, it was his fault, his fault alone. By such a light, he was among the worst of human beings, a weak father. He had spent his life obeying orders, and then enforcing them in the Customs Service, he had revered Franz-Josef, a gallant, great, and good king who embodied hard work and discipline. His guardianship of his own nature had become a species of homage to Franz-Josef. Yet, he had implanted none of this sense of respect in Alois-Junior. Was that because he did feel guilty about the boy's mother? Yes, he had treated Fanni badly, so badly that he could not be stern with her offspring. That had been a lack of discipline in himself.

It took every hour through the darkness of this night for his rage to subside. It was not until the first light of morning—a dim light that came with shrouds of rain at dawn—that he was able to speak from one part of his mind to the other, and so could issue a few orders on what his future

conduct with Adi must become. He was not going to make the same mistake he had allowed with Junior.

-3-

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

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

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

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

I did not see, however, why we needed anything so drastic here at so early an age. The Maestro was, however, not urging me to restrain Alois, and the father was drenching the boy's spirit with wretchedness. Adi was being given a purview of the anguish that attaches itself to ineradicable melancholia.

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

Yet, the Maestro often surprised us by such moves. He was a gambler, and often ready to take bold chances with the lives of our clients. There were occasions when the Maestro, entertaining an ambitious future for a young client, would be ready to encourage such family torture and, on occasion, incite it. I think he saw it as a species of inoculation.

Naturally, these gambles could make for future instabilities. Once we implant a deep sense of humiliation in a proud client, we also set ourselves

the task of converting such a wound into a strength. That can prove difficult. It is often equal in its demands to what it takes to transmogrify a coward into a hero. Yet, when we succeed, when the psychic abyss of a would-be suicide is transmuted into promontories of achievement, an immense gamble has succeeded. The once-humiliated wretch has now acquired the power to humiliate others. That is a demonic power, and does not come easily. I went through many years, indeed, when I was ready to give up on this project. After the death of Edmund in 1900, of Alois-Senior in 1903, and of Klara in 1908, Adi was jobless in Vienna, and all too timid in the world. He had quit school too early, was an avaricious reader who remained hopelessly superior to what he read (particularly when he could not understand it) and, in addition, was lazy, prone to temper tantrums, and possessed of an ego as swollen as a gangrenous limb. All the same, he was desperately afraid of virtually all meetings with human beings, and had no love-life with women, none whatsoever. Yes, an unmitigated mess.

I was depressed. This project to which I had been attending since his birth nineteen years ago, still remained an outrageous gamble. Unless some historic changes could thrust my protégé into prominence, he would end up

as one more failure. The upheavals in Germany and Austria after the First World War were still more than a decade away. My role was to continue to be a jockey on a horse running against unbelievably long odds. I could foresee further demotions for myself.

All this is not of much interest now. We know, after all, what happened to the horse. And I was the one who rode him--with occasional but crucial help from the Maestro. And he certainly did learn, and far better than his father, how to humiliate others. He did come a long way from the rigidity of his limbs each time he was paralyzed by his father's whistle.

Nonetheless, Adi was not reduced altogether. He was always ready to plead his case before Klara.

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

She was aware of this. The whistle had become a needle in her own ears.

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

"But what if he might be wrong?"

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

"What if he is very wrong?"

"It will not remain that way." She nodded. She did not know if she believed what she said next, but she said it nonetheless. "He is a good father. A good father always realizes sooner or later that he may have been going in the wrong direction." She nodded again as if to oblige herself to believe such words. "There can be a moment," she said, "when the father recognizes that he, too, can be in error." She put her hand to the boy's face as if to cool the fever in his cheeks. "Yes," she said, "he hears his own words and realizes that they are not correct. So, he changes."

"He does?"

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

"No."

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

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

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

Klara said this with such solemnity that the boy felt it come into him as holy strength. Yes, some day he would have a family and all who were in it would honor him and they would fear him. At this point, his need to urinate (which always afflicted him in these years whenever he was on the

point of developing large thoughts about himself) spoke up. In the midst of his mother's peroration, he almost had an accident, but did not—not if he was to be entitled in the future to these emoluments of honor.

"Yes," she said to her son, "the word of the father has to be law. Right or wrong, one must never argue with his word. You must obey him. For the good of the family. Right or wrong. the father is always right. He must be. Otherwise, all is confusion."

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

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

Yes, Adi understood, and nightly I worked upon his mind until this concept became a mental certainty equal to one of those well-paved avenues

of the mind that are always ready for heavy mental traffic. On many a night I told him again that Alois-Junior was totally separated from the family. Alive or dead, it would not matter.

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

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

-4-

Alois' decision to write a new will came after he knew that he would be able to sell the farm. The buyer had been referred to him by Herr Rostenmeier, who had even offered his good advice to Klara about this matter.

"Dear Frau Hitler," he had said, "your farm will only find a buyer for one reason—because it looks good. Is that not exactly why your husband bought it in the first place?"

"I will not say that has to be untrue," said Klara. (For her, this remark was equal to flirting with Herr Rostenmeier.)

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

The wealthy house-hunter did arrive, did like the look of the house and the land, knew even less about the pitfalls of husbandry than had Alois, and the sale took place. If the price presented no profit, neither did Alois suffer the loss he feared. The finality of the transfer convinced Alois-Senior that the end of this dream that he might live his last days on a farm could be put to rest together with any hopes that the oldest son would yet bring him some reason for pride. No, it was now up to Adi. He was not nearly so lithe nor so strong as Alois-Junior, nor nearly so good-looking, but as bright, perhaps, and obedient. He was certainly obedient. Whistling for him had become a pleasure. The response was always quick.

In his heart, however, Alois-Senior did keep the equivalent of an old photograph. There still were nights when he would sit on the oak bench and muse again on the Langstroth box he had built for himself. He would pat the seat as if to recall the sound of the slap he used to give that wooden box in the old days, yes, that nice and solid slap to stir up his bees.

That is far down the road. History (for those who have lived in it for as long as myself) is seldom recalled as all-fascinating. It is such a bed of lies. That is the only reason I could recommend the life of a devil to would-be aspirants. We know so much about how it happens, how it really happens. Who could ever wish to lose such riches? Yet it is not inconceivable that this is exactly what I have done by revealing my relation to the Maestro. Perhaps the perversity of our diabolical natures does bear some relation to that curious human nature which forces its way into existence between the hazards of urine and excrement, yet will later dream each night of a noble life.

-1-

A letter came in August. After that, they did not hear from Alois-Junior again. In the course of a trip to Linz, Alois-Senior learned that Ulan had been sold to a horse-trader for half of his value, and that might be enough for Junior to live in Vienna until he could find work.

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

At rest on these amputated remains of what once had been a noble oak, he would mourn the bees he had lost, and dream that he had come back

early enough on Sunday night to chase the horse and boy through the forest until brought to a halt by the pangs in his lungs.

This fantasy accompanied a long summer of mourning for all he could name as lost, and then he would grieve even more for what he could not name.

So the summer passed. He hired a man to assist him in mowing their pastures. He baled his cuttings, and sold the hay in Fischlham. With no hives left to worry about, he had no fear now of swarming, no calculations to be made of how much feed to give in the after-season to the colonies, no further examinations of the health of the hives, no further estimates as to how many old bees had died but were not yet replaced by new-born, no tremors at the thought of mouse invasions, no need to consider whether he should put up netting to keep birds away, nor any need to weigh the boxes, no more pondering whether enough pollen had been collected by the foragers to provide them with protein for the winter, and no Queen to locate. There were not even any Langstroths to repaint. No records to be brought up to date. He was done.

Sitting by the stump, there came an afternoon by the end of summer when the more caustic tastes of mourning finally passed through some vent of the mind, and he said to himself, "I am relieved that I do not have to worry about my bees any more. I loved them, but their loss is not my fault."

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

In truth, that is how we measure Time. Except for those occasions when the Maestro assigns us to arenas where history can be shaped, we live reflexively. We, too, are in need of fallow periods. For me, the quiet summer of the Hitler family went by like a passage of sleep. I tended a little to my other clients.

Alois, meanwhile, was marooned in the pall of a long and lackluster meditation. He was worrying to a modest degree about the value of the farm. If he were to sell it, could the price match what he had paid? Or would a potential buyer recognize the beginnings of neglect? That became

the focus of his attention. Nothing, he decided, can be more subtle than the onset of neglect. While he did feel more relaxed than in many a year, it did nag at him that he was leaving all too many chores to the women—certainly those which did not call for a man's strength. He did nothing with the vegetable garden. He thought of buying a new dog; instead, he examined the paint on poor dead Spartaner's dog house, and decided it was not yet ready to peel in the summer heat.

They did not seem to need a new dog. With young Alois gone, he did not have to entertain any fears of an irate father skulking in the neighborhood. No parent of Greta-Marie Schmidt was likely to appear on the doorstep—he could give thanks that that particular young lady was not pregnant, for if she were, he would by now have known all about it. And the smuggler who lived on the other side of Fischlham hardly entered his thoughts. Somehow, given the absence of Alois-Junior, that phantom of a malefactor also seemed far away.

Senior's real worry was that he might become habituated to idleness. Even a few minutes spent in doing nothing at all, had once been guaranteed

to annoy him. Now, he felt a little too contented by the drift of a cloud, or, for that matter, a curl of cigar smoke.

Such peace could prove expensive. A farm that remained unworked—no matter how tidy one kept the house, the barn, and the yard—might never look right. Not to a potential buyer. A small part of Alois continued to run uphill in his sleep. It was as if his unplanted fields were now reproaching him.

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

So, there might come a time when he would have to decide that it cost too much to go to his miserable tavern in Fischlham. That would double every indignity. He had to recognize a fact. He was missing Linz! There, at least, you could find a drinking-place with intelligent people. What it all came down to was that they must sell the farm. He knew it would not happen quickly. These days, the less work one did, the longer it took for anything to get done. Moreover, very much against his will, he was

beginning to feel remorse about Alois-Junior. What an ungovernable emotion! Was it incumbent upon him as a father to forgive his son? Yet what if Alois-Junior was also full of remorse? He could not bear the thought of that boy alone in a poor room, sitting on a mean cot, his eyes full of tears?

He might as well have had an amputated forearm whose nerve-endings were still alive at the elbow, Alois-Senior began to think again of Hitler and Sons, Apian Products. Because he need invest no essential belief in the idea, the dream, perversely, was sweeter than before.

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

No such drama was going to develop, however. A letter without a return address came a few days later from Vienna, a vile letter. "You killed

my mother." The phrase was repeated several times. Then, the letter declared that the son would yet be famous, and the father would twist in his grave.

Alois could not believe what he read. The rest was worse. "You were a terrible farmer, and the reason is clear. You are, as I happen to know, half-Jewish. No wonder you cannot be a farmer." And there were so many misspellings in the letter that out of a sense of shame for his son, Alois-Senior had to write it out all over again before he felt able to show it to Klara. As he wrote, his hand shook badly but the original, with its ink blots and errors of syntax, was too abominable to show. The boy had always been able to speak well.

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

Klara, however, kept the discussion well away from Poelzl. She only said, "I did not mind that thought so much. I used to think this was your reason for not going to church."

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

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

"But that does not make me Jewish."

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

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

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

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

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

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

She nodded. She hardly knew whether to be relieved or disappointed. She had always felt excitement sneak into her at the thought of being wed to a man with such blood. Jews did forbidden things in bed. That she had heard. Maybe Alois and she had even done these same forbidden things—was that not so? And Jews were reputed to be intelligent. That she had also heard. Now, she was truly confused.

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

-2-

The reader may recall that when I presented myself as the narrator of this novel, I appeared as an SS man. Indeed, I was one. Over that period in the late 1930's, I was invested corporeally in a particular SS officer. I lived and functioned within a man named Dieter. At a price. We do not engage in total investiture unless the stakes require it. For our personal cost is direct. One has to relinquish the stimulation of living in more than one consciousness at once. Demonic power is thereby diminished. One has become a simulacrum of a human.

So, as Dieter, I did make inquiries in Graz in 1938 about Hitler's grandfather. The only way I learned, however, that the true father of Alois

was Johann Nepomuk came by information I received directly from the Maestro.

At that time, I was not able, obviously, to name my source. In the SS IV-2a, we were obliged, like any other intelligence organization, to be credible, at least, among ourselves, and so the only way to explain to Himmler what the origin of my information had been was to fabricate the sources.

There is a complication. An extraordinary source like the Maestro enables us to inhabit two eras in Time simultaneously. If, living as Dieter, I had been made privy from the start to the actual carnal events in Strones in 1837, then the letter sent to Hitler in 1938 by the son of Alois-Junior would have presented no problem. I would have known that Hitler was not Jewish. Still, I would have been at an impasse convincing Heinrich Himmler of such a fact. To make it credible, I needed to use a means of information-gathering with which he was familiar—human sources.

I believe the Maestro concluded long ago that he must quarantine the memories of his devils if he wished to keep order in his share of the world. So, as just indicated, we do not often employ our potentiality to live in two

periods at once. Nonetheless, our instincts do reach beyond human intuition. I would warrant that the memories we are not encouraged to recall are there nonetheless to serve as our guides.

I mention this condign matter because the question whether Jewish blood is present in the family has reared up so suddenly for Alois and Klara.

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

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

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

While I cannot speak with the authority of those devils who were implanted by the Maestro in medical school and internship, I will say it is

possible that the cancer which would end Klara's life in 1908 could have taken a large step forward on this miserable night.

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

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

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

A large reason not to sleep. What was worse, she was ashamed of her cowardice. How could she have accepted the idea that Alois-Junior should be invited back? Lying there, listening to Alois-Senior going back and forth, thumping the floor with his body as he lay down, she was soon suffering her own rage. It was shocking. She could not believe what she was telling herself. If it were possible, yes, she could kill Alois-Junior. Only, she knew she could not. She would not ever. But the effort to repel such a fury in herself throbbed in her heart—which is to say, in her breast—with such force and such detestation that, yes, it is possible—this could have been the night when the breast cancer which would yet burn with hell's pains in her chest, might have begun. Since the answer is not easily available, I prefer to take return to Alois trying to sleep on the floor.

The immensity of his rage on this night was that he had betrayed himself. That spoiled all the joy that is also implicit in rage, a notion that is too infrequently considered. Rage, after all, can offer the same nourishing

sense of self-righteousness that is available on more ordinary occasions to the most hypocritical of church-goers. The core of such pleasure is never to be angry at oneself, only at others. Yet, here, on this night, Alois was infuriated at the cost of his own deeds.

If Junior had turned out badly, it was his fault, his fault alone. By such a light, he was among the worst of human beings, a weak father. He had spent his life obeying orders, and then enforcing them in the Customs Service, he had revered Franz-Josef, a gallant, great, and good king who embodied hard work and discipline. His guardianship of his own nature had become a species of homage to Franz-Josef. Yet, he had implanted none of this sense of respect in Alois-Junior. Was that because he did feel guilty about the boy's mother? Yes, he had treated Fanni badly, so badly that he could not be stern with her offspring. That had been a lack of discipline in himself.

It took every hour through the darkness of this night for his rage to subside. It was not until the first light of morning—a dim light that came with shrouds of rain at dawn—that he was able to speak from one part of his mind to the other, and so could issue a few orders on what his future

conduct with Adi must become. He was not going to make the same mistake he had allowed with Junior.

Now, whenever he wished to bring Adi to his side, Alois would whistle. It was a fine shrill of a whistle, sharp enough to hurt the ear. Now did he reduce the intensity when the boy was within step's reach. In the tavern, Alois was now fond of saying, "If you are raising a son, do not let go of the whip. I speak from experience."

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

Adi was paralyzed with fear. I had to wonder how the final effects of this could serve our purposes. We certainly knew how to use humiliation and self-abasement as a tool when working with magic-depression. It was

-3-

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

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

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

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

I did not see, however, why we needed anything so drastic here at so early an age. The Maestro was, however, not urging me to restrain Alois, and the father was drenching the boy's spirit with wretchedness. Adi was being given a purview of the anguish that attaches itself to ineradicable melancholia.

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

Yet, the Maestro often surprised us by such moves. He was a gambler, and often ready to take bold chances with the lives of our clients. There were occasions when the Maestro, entertaining an ambitious future for a young client, would be ready to encourage such family torture and, on occasion, incite it. I think he saw it as a species of inoculation.

Naturally, these gambles could make for future instabilities. Once we implant a deep sense of humiliation in a proud client, we also set ourselves

the task of converting such a wound into a strength. That can prove difficult. It is often equal in its demands to what it takes to transmogrify a coward into a hero. Yet, when we succeed, when the psychic abyss of a would-be suicide is transmuted into promontories of achievement, an immense gamble has succeeded. The once-humiliated wretch has now acquired the power to humiliate others. That is a demonic power, and does not come easily. I went through many years, indeed, when I was ready to give up on this project. After the death of Edmund in 1900, of Alois-Senior in 1903, and of Klara in 1908, Adi was jobless in Vienna, and all too timid in the world. He had quit school too early, was an avaricious reader who remained hopelessly superior to what he read (particularly when he could not understand it) and, in addition, was lazy, prone to temper tantrums, and possessed of an ego as swollen as a gangrenous limb. All the same, he was desperately afraid of virtually all meetings with human beings, and had no love-life with women, none whatsoever. Yes, an unmitigated mess.

I was depressed. This project to which I had been attending since his birth nineteen years ago, still remained an outrageous gamble. Unless some historic changes could thrust my protégé into prominence, he would end up

as one more failure. The upheavals in Germany and Austria after the First World War were still more than a decade away. My role was to continue to be a jockey on a horse running against unbelievably long odds. I could foresee further demotions for myself.

All this is not of much interest now. We know, after all, what happened to the horse. And I was the one who rode him--with occasional but crucial help from the Maestro. And he certainly did learn, and far better than his father, how to humiliate others. He did come a long way from the rigidity of his limbs each time he was paralyzed by his father's whistle.

Nonetheless, Adi was not reduced altogether. He was always ready to plead his case before Klara.

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

She was aware of this. The whistle had become a needle in her own ears.

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

"But what if he might be wrong?"

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

"What if he is very wrong?"

"It will not remain that way." She nodded. She did not know if she believed what she said next, but she said it nonetheless. "He is a good father. A good father always realizes sooner or later that he may have been going in the wrong direction." She nodded again as if to oblige herself to believe such words. "There can be a moment," she said, "when the father recognizes that he, too, can be in error." She put her hand to the boy's face as if to cool the fever in his cheeks. "Yes," she said, "he hears his own words and realizes that they are not correct. So, he changes."

"He does?"

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

"No."

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

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

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

Klara said this with such solemnity that the boy felt it come into him as holy strength. Yes, some day he would have a family and all who were in it would honor him and they would fear him. At this point, his need to urinate (which always afflicted him in these years whenever he was on the

point of developing large thoughts about himself) spoke up. In the midst of his mother's peroration, he almost had an accident, but did not—not if he was to be entitled in the future to these emoluments of honor.

"Yes," she said to her son, "the word of the father has to be law. Right or wrong, one must never argue with his word. You must obey him. For the good of the family. Right or wrong. the father is always right. He must be. Otherwise, all is confusion."

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

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

Yes, Adi understood, and nightly I worked upon his mind until this concept became a mental certainty equal to one of those well-paved avenues

of the mind that are always ready for heavy mental traffic. On many a night I told him again that Alois-Junior was totally separated from the family. Alive or dead, it would not matter.

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

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

-4-

Alois' decision to write a new will came after he knew that he would be able to sell the farm. The buyer had been referred to him by Herr Rostenmeier, who had even offered his good advice to Klara about this matter.

"Dear Frau Hitler," he had said, "your farm will only find a buyer for one reason—because it looks good. Is that not exactly why your husband bought it in the first place?"

"I will not say that has to be untrue," said Klara. (For her, this remark was equal to flirting with Herr Rostenmeier.)

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

The wealthy house-hunter did arrive, did like the look of the house and the land, knew even less about the pitfalls of husbandry than had Alois, and the sale took place. If the price presented no profit, neither did Alois suffer the loss he feared. The finality of the transfer convinced Alois-Senior that the end of this dream that he might live his last days on a farm could be put to rest together with any hopes that the oldest son would yet bring him some reason for pride. No, it was now up to Adi. He was not nearly so lithe nor so strong as Alois-Junior, nor nearly so good-looking, but as bright, perhaps, and obedient. He was certainly obedient. Whistling for him had become a pleasure. The response was always quick.

In his heart, however, Alois-Senior did keep the equivalent of an old photograph. There still were nights when he would sit on the oak bench and muse again on the Langstroth box he had built for himself. He would pat the seat as if to recall the sound of the slap he used to give that wooden box in the old days, yes, that nice and solid slap to stir up his bees.

That is far down the road. History (for those who have lived in it for as long as myself) is seldom recalled as all-fascinating. It is such a bed of lies. That is the only reason I could recommend the life of a devil to would-be aspirants. We know so much about how it happens, how it really happens. Who could ever wish to lose such riches? Yet it is not inconceivable that this is exactly what I have done by revealing my relation to the Maestro. Perhaps the perversity of our diabolical natures does bear some relation to that curious human nature which forces its way into existence between the hazards of urine and excrement, yet will later dream each night of a noble life.

BOOK X

TO HONOR AND TO FEAR

A letter came in August. After that, they did not hear from Alois Junior again. In the course of a trip to Linz, Alois-Senior learned that Ulan had been sold to a forest-owner for half of his value, and that might be enough for Junior to live in Vienna until he could find work.

On many a late afternoon, Alois-Senior would walk down the trail that was used on the night when the boy set out for the road to Linz. Senior would come to an old stump, see his favorite spot in the forest, and there he would listen to the birds.

As rest on these despoiled remains of what once had been a noble oak, he would mourn the loss he had lost, and dream that he had come back early

-1-

A letter came in August. After that, they did not hear from Alois-Junior again. In the course of a trip to Linz, Alois-Senior learned that Ulan had been sold to a horse-trader for half of his value, and that might be enough for Junior to live in Vienna until he could find work.

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

At rest on these amputated remains of what once had been a noble oak, he would mourn the bees he had lost, and dream that he had come back early

enough on Sunday night to chase the horse and boy through the forest until brought to a halt by the pangs in his lungs.

This fantasy accompanied a long summer of mourning for all he could name as lost, and then he would grieve even more for what he could not name.

So the summer passed. He hired a man to assist him in mowing their pastures. He baled his cuttings, and sold the hay in Fischlham. With no hives left to worry about, he had no fear now of swarming, no calculations to be made of how much feed to give in the after-season to the colonies, no further examinations of the health of the hives, no further estimates as to how many old bees had died but were not yet replaced by new-born, no tremors at the thought of mouse invasions, no need to consider whether he should put up netting to keep birds away, nor any need to weigh the boxes, no more pondering whether enough pollen had been collected by the foragers to provide them with protein for the winter, and no Queen to locate. There were not even any Langstroths to repaint. No records to be brought up to date. He was done.

Sitting by the stump, there came an afternoon by the end of summer when the more caustic tastes of mourning finally passed through some vent of

the mind, and he said to himself, "I am relieved that I do not have to worry about my bees any more. I loved them, but their loss is not my fault."

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

In truth, that is how we measure Time. Except for those occasions when the Maestro assigns us to arenas where history can be shaped, we live reflexively. We, too, are in need of fallow periods. For me, the quiet summer of the Hitler family went by like a passage of sleep. I tended a little to my other clients.

Since they occupied a broad spectrum from craved bankers to ~~Protestant~~ town prostitutes,

Alois, meanwhile, was marooned in the pall of a long and lackluster meditation. He was worrying to a modest degree about the value of the farm. If he were to sell it, could the price match what he had paid? Or would a potential buyer recognize the beginnings of neglect? That became the focus of his attention. Nothing, he decided, can be more subtle than the onset of neglect. While he did feel more relaxed than in many a year, it did nag at him that he was leaving all too many chores to the women—certainly those which

I will not dwell on them here.

did not call for a man's strength. He did nothing with the vegetable garden. He thought of buying a new dog; instead, he examined the paint on poor dead Spartaner's dog house, and decided it was not yet ready to peel in the summer heat.

They did not seem to need a new dog. With young Alois gone, he did not have to entertain any fears of an irate father skulking in the neighborhood. No parent of Greta-Marie Schmidt was likely to appear on the doorstep—he could give thanks that that particular young lady was not pregnant, for if she were, he would by now have known all about it. And the smuggler who lived on the other side of Fischlham hardly entered his thoughts. Somehow, given the absence of Alois-Junior, that phantom of a malefactor also seemed far away.

Senior's real worry was that he might become habituated to idleness. Even a few minutes spent in doing nothing at all, had once been guaranteed to annoy him. Now, he felt a little too contented by the drift of a cloud, or, for that matter, a curl of cigar smoke.

Such peace could prove expensive. A farm that remained unworked—no matter how tidy one kept the house, the barn, and the yard—might never

look right. Not to a potential buyer. A small part of Alois continued to run uphill in his sleep. It was as if his unplanted fields were now reproaching him.

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

So, there might come a time when he would have to decide that it cost too much to go to his miserable tavern in Fischlham. That would double every indignity. He had to recognize a fact. He was missing Linz! There, at least, you could find a drinking-place with intelligent people. What it all came down to was that they must sell the farm. He knew it would not happen quickly. These days, the less work one did, the longer it took for anything to get done. Moreover, very much against his will, he was beginning to feel remorse about Alois-Junior. What an ungovernable emotion! Was it incumbent upon him as a father to forgive his son? Yet what if Alois-Junior was also full of remorse? He could not bear the thought of that boy alone in a poor room, sitting on a mean cot, his eyes full of tears?

He might as well have had an amputated forearm whose nerve-endings were still alive at the elbow, Alois-Senior began to think again of Hitler and Sons, Apian Products. Because he need invest no essential belief in the idea, the dream, perversely, was sweeter than before.

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

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

Alois could not believe what he read. The rest was worse. "You were a terrible farmer, and the reason is clear. You are, as I happen to know, half-Jewish. No wonder you cannot be a farmer." And there were so many

misspellings in the letter that out of a sense of shame for his son, Alois-Senior had to write it out all over again before he felt able to show it to Klara. As he wrote, his hand shook badly but the original, with its ink blots and errors of syntax, was too abominable to show. The boy had always been able to speak well.

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

Klara, however, kept the discussion well away from Poelzl. She only said, "I did not mind that thought so much. I used to think this was your reason for not going to church."

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

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

"But that does not make me Jewish."

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

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

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

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

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

"He," said Alois, "suggested this information to me. He did state that he knew who my father was. And then he said, 'This man was not Jewish.' He did not have to say more. It was clear. There was only one way he could

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

She nodded. She hardly knew whether to be relieved or disappointed. She had always felt excitement sneak into her at the thought of being wed to a man with such blood. Jews did forbidden things in bed. That she had heard. Maybe Alois and she had even done these same forbidden things—was that not so? And Jews were reputed to be intelligent. That she had also heard. Now, she was truly confused.

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

-2-

The reader may recall that when I presented myself as the narrator of this novel, I appeared as an SS man. Indeed, I was one. Over that period in the late 1930's, I was invested corporeally in a particular SS officer. I lived and functioned within a man named Dieter. At a price. We do not engage in total investiture unless the stakes require it. For our personal cost is direct. One has to relinquish the stimulation of living in more than one consciousness at once. Demonic power is thereby diminished. One has become a simulacrum of a human.

So, as Dieter, I did make inquiries in Graz in 1938 about Hitler's grandfather. The only way I learned, however, that the true father of Alois was Johann Nepomuk came by information I received directly from the Maestro.

At that time, I was not able, obviously, to name my source. In the SS IV-2a, we were obliged, like any other intelligence organization, to be credible, at least, among ourselves, and so the only way to explain to Himmler what the origin of my information had been was to fabricate the sources.

There is a complication. An extraordinary source like the Maestro enables us to inhabit two eras in Time simultaneously. If, living as Dieter, I had been made privy from the start to the actual carnal events in Strones in 1837, then the letter sent to Hitler in 1938 by the son of Alois-Junior would have presented no problem. I would have known that Hitler was not Jewish. Still, I would have been at an impasse convincing Heinrich Himmler of such a fact. To make it credible, I needed to use a means of information-gathering with which he was familiar—human sources.

I believe the Maestro concluded long ago that he must quarantine the memories of his devils if he wished to keep order in his share of the world. So, as just indicated, we do not often employ our potentiality to live in two

periods at once. Nonetheless, our instincts do reach beyond human intuition. I would warrant that the memories we are not encouraged to recall are there nonetheless to serve as our guides.

I mention this condign matter because the question whether Jewish blood is present in the family has reared up so suddenly for Alois and Klara.

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

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

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

While I cannot speak with the authority of those devils who were implanted by the Maestro in medical school and internship, I will say it is

possible that the cancer which would end Klara's life in 1908 could have taken a large step forward on this miserable night.

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

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

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

A large reason not to sleep. What was worse, she was ashamed of her cowardice. How could she have accepted the idea that Alois-Junior should be invited back? Lying there, listening to Alois-Senior going back and forth, thumping the floor with his body as he lay down, she was soon suffering her own rage. It was shocking. She could not believe what she was telling herself. If it were possible, yes, she could kill Alois-Junior. Only, she knew she could not. She would not ever. But the effort to repel such a fury ~~in~~ ~~herself~~ throbbed in her heart—which is to say, in her breast—with such force and such detestation that, yes, it is possible—this could have been the night when the breast cancer which would yet burn with hell's pains in her chest, might have begun. Since the answer is not easily available, I prefer to ~~take~~ return to Alois trying to sleep on the floor.

The immensity of his rage on this night was that he had betrayed himself. That spoiled all the joy that is also implicit in rage, a notion that is too infrequently considered. Rage, after all, can offer the same nourishing

sense of self-righteousness that is available on more ordinary occasions to the most hypocritical of church-goers. The core of such pleasure is never to be angry at oneself, only at others. Yet, here, on this night, Alois was infuriated at the cost of his own deeds.

If Junior had turned out badly, it was his fault, his fault alone. By such a light, he was among the worst of human beings, a weak father. He had spent his life obeying orders, and then enforcing them in the Customs Service, he had revered Franz-Josef, a gallant, great, and good king who embodied hard work and discipline. His guardianship of his own nature had become a species of homage to Franz-Josef. Yet, he had implanted none of this sense of respect in Alois-Junior. Was that because he did feel guilty about the boy's mother? Yes, he had treated Fanni badly, so badly that he could not be stern with her offspring. That had been a lack of discipline in himself.

It took every hour through the darkness of this night for his rage to subside. It was not until the first light of morning—a dim light that came with shrouds of rain at dawn—that he was able to speak from one part of his mind to the other, and so could issue a few orders on what his future conduct with

Adi must become. He was not going to make the same mistake he had allowed with Junior.

-3-

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

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

Adi was paralyzed with fear. I had to wonder how the final effects of this could serve our purposes. We certainly know how to use humiliation and self-abasement as a tool when working with manic-depressives. If we look to

drive a client into a violent act, a series of humiliations can stir the subject into oscillating too fast between the poles of his depression and his mania. Soon enough, there is an eruption.

I did not see, however, why we needed anything so drastic here at so early an age. The Maestro was, however, not urging me to restrain Alois, and the father was drenching the boy's spirit with wretchedness. Adi was being given a purview of the anguish that attaches itself to ineradicable melancholia.

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

Yet, the Maestro often surprised us by such moves. He was a gambler, and often ready to take bold chances with the lives of our clients. There were occasions when the Maestro, entertaining an ambitious future for a young client, would be ready to encourage such family torture and, on occasion, incite it. I think he saw it as a species of inoculation.

Naturally, these gambles could make for future instabilities. Once we implant a deep sense of humiliation in a proud client, we also set ourselves the task of converting such a wound into a strength. That can prove difficult. It is

often equal in its demands to what it takes to transmogrify a coward into a hero. Yet, when we succeed, when the psychic abyss of a would-be suicide is transmuted into promontories of achievement, an immense gamble has succeeded. The once-humiliated wretch has now acquired the power to humiliate others. That is a demonic power, and does not come easily. I went through many years, indeed, when I was ready to give up on this project. After the death of Edmund in 1900, of Alois-Senior in 1903, and of Klara in 1908, Adi was jobless in Vienna, and all too timid in the world. He had quit school too early, was an avaricious reader who remained hopelessly superior to what he read (particularly when he could not understand it) and, in addition, was lazy, prone to temper tantrums, and possessed of an ego as swollen as a gangrenous limb. All the same, he was desperately afraid of virtually all meetings with human beings, and had no love-life with women, none whatsoever. Yes, an unmitigated mess.

I was depressed. This project to which I had been attending since his birth nineteen years ago, still remained an outrageous gamble. Unless some historic changes could thrust my protégé into prominence, he would end up as one more failure. The upheavals in Germany and Austria after the First World

War were still more than a decade away. My role was to continue to be a jockey on a horse running against unbelievably long odds. I could foresee further demotions for myself.

All this is not of much interest now. We know, after all, what happened to the horse. And I was the one who rode him--with occasional but crucial help from the Maestro. And he certainly did learn, and far better than his father, how to humiliate others. He did come a long way from the rigidity of his limbs each time he was paralyzed by his father's whistle.

Nonetheless, Adi was not reduced altogether. He was always ready to plead his case before Klara.

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

She was aware of this. The whistle had become a needle in her own ears.

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

"But what if he might be wrong?"

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

"What if he is very wrong?"

"It will not remain that way." She nodded. She did not know if she believed what she said next, but she said it nonetheless. "He is a good father. A good father always realizes sooner or later that he may have been going in the wrong direction." She nodded again as if to oblige herself to believe such words. "There can be a moment," she said, "when the father recognizes that he, too, can be in error." She put her hand to the boy's face as if to cool the fever in his cheeks. "Yes," she said, "he hears his own words and realizes that they are not correct. So, he changes."

"He does?"

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

"No."

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

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

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

Klara said this with such solemnity that the boy felt it come into him as holy strength. Yes, some day he would have a family and all who were in it would honor him and they would fear him. At this point, his need to urinate (which always afflicted him in these years whenever he was on the point of

developing large thoughts about himself) spoke up. In the midst of his mother's peroration, he almost had an accident, but did not—not if he was to be entitled in the future to these emoluments of honor.

"Yes," she said to her son, "the word of the father has to be law. Right or wrong, one must never argue with his word. You must obey him. For the good of the family. Right or wrong, the father is always right. He must be. Otherwise, all is confusion."

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

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

Yes, Adi understood, and nightly I worked upon his mind until this concept became a mental certainty equal to one of those well-paved avenues of

the mind that are always ready for heavy mental traffic. On many a night I told him again that Alois-Junior was totally separated from the family. Alive or dead, it would not matter.

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

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

-4-

Alois' decision to write a new will came after he knew that he would be able to sell the farm. The buyer had been referred to him by Herr Rostenmeier, who had even offered his good advice to Klara about this matter.

"Dear Frau Hitler," he had said, "your farm will only find a buyer for one reason—because it looks good. Is that not exactly why your husband bought it in the first place?"

"I will not say that has to be untrue," said Klara. (For her, this remark was equal to flirting with Herr Rostenmeier.)

"Yes," he said, "it is good you recognize this. I believe you will be able to sell your property to people who are less experienced at farming than

yourselves, but—" he held up a finger—"more well-to-do, not so? You must have the patience to wait. Soon enough, one of these comfortable people will come along. And when he does, you must please send him to me. I will be your friend. I will know how to answer all the questions that are asked."

The wealthy house-hunter did arrive, did like the look of the house and the land, knew even less about the pitfalls of husbandry than had Alois, and the sale took place. If the price presented no profit, neither did Alois suffer the loss he feared. The finality of the transfer convinced Alois-Senior that the end of this dream that he might live his last days on a farm could be put to rest together with any hopes that the oldest son would yet bring him some reason for pride. No, it was now up to Adi. He was not nearly so lithe nor so strong as Alois-Junior, nor nearly so good-looking, but as bright, perhaps, and obedient. He was certainly obedient. Whistling for him had become a pleasure. The response was always quick.

In his heart, however, Alois-Senior did keep the equivalent of an old photograph. There still were nights when he would sit on the oak bench and muse again on the Langstroth box he had built for himself. He would pat the

seat as if to recall the sound of the slap he used to give that wooden box in the old days, yes, that nice and solid slap to stir up his bees.

That is far down the road. History (for those who have lived in it for as long as myself) is seldom recalled as all-fascinating. It is such a bed of lies. That is the only reason I could recommend the life of a devil to would-be aspirants. We know so much about how it happens, how it really happens. Who could ever wish to lose such riches? Yet it is not inconceivable that this is exactly what I have done by revealing my relation to the Maestro. Perhaps the perversity of our diabolical natures does bear some relation to that curious human nature which forces its way into existence between the hazards of urine and excrement, yet will later dream each night of a noble life.