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Part III

1.

Just now, I committed an irrevocable act of treachery: We are not supposed ~~ever~~ to reveal who we are, *not ever.*

Of course, ^{my} ~~this~~ disclosure, so far, is ~~only~~ ^{still} on paper and I can eliminate what is recorded here. The Devil—it is more agreeable for me to speak of

him as Our Maestro, or as the Source—^(in one way) is like all other creatures vast and small. Everyone, ~~indeed~~ ^{indeed} (including the Lord!) is obliged to live within

certain restrictions, or—if you ^{(will — paradoxes. There are certain} will—~~certain~~ cruel paradoxes which ^{circumscribe} delineate ^{So, I can vouch} (one's nature. I can suggest therefore, that the accomplished and

most respected leader of my Service (a minor matter but most limiting ^{is} ~~is~~)

not fond of common paper. That substance is derived, after all, from trees

~~and they happen to be~~

~~(who we repeat are God's most loyal, faithful, and trusted servants.)~~

No, paper is ~~not~~ ^{cannot be a} first choice for the devil. These days, he is ~~more~~

~~much more so~~

attuned to electronics ^{and near to uncommensurable} than is the Lord. Each, as I say, despite their

prodigious powers, live with ^{most still} their separate paradoxes. For that reason, I

have trained myself to work with paper in such a manner that ^{since there is much less} none of my

^{likely hood that may} words radiate out to him. ^{(add that this has been in concert} I can tell you this is ^{with} a procedure wholly in

defiance of the Maestro. ^{for some time.} He, if I may speak of his complexity as "he"—

forbids such a practice. While he has no desire to use up ^{too large a} any fair portion of

his resources by ^{monitoring} ingesting every last detail of our minds—there are too

many demons and small devils for that!—he is certainly not inclined to

allow us our own ^{unapproved} ventures.

^{He does not keep a constant watch} ^{on us, but then we does not have to.} ^{leave me in true} ^{fear of him.} ^{the}

Now, however, that I have acquired this characteristically human skill

of holding many ^{being able to hold} of these thoughts to myself, I feel ^{somewhat} more ready to continue

my ^{my} history, or biography, this novel, ^{for} (call it what you will). From time to

time, I may even offer a few more hints ^{for a short explanation} on the make-

up of our Two Kingdoms. That ^{as a} is a title ^{as a} to encompass a most embattled

duality, ^{serve} for ^{work for} it includes that world of spirits who work for God, and are

known by the somewhat inexact name of angels (I would remind you that we call them the Cudgels), and they are in opposition to our army of devils ^{who cleave} loyal to the Evil One (whom we usually refer to as the Maestro, the Source, or the E.O.) While these remarks will not be all that unfamiliar to anyone who is familiar with "Paradise Lost," I will note that many on our side happen to be well-versed in that English classic. (I cannot speak for the angels, who, for all I know, ~~spend time absorbing devotional prose and pious tracts~~ ^{are actually} but devils are obliged to be devoted to good literature ^{of} such material is a professional complement to our work with humans, indeed, we detest most best-sellers for their sentimental ~~inexactitudes~~ ^{distortions} Milton, to be certain, is high in our arcana of poets and novelists whom we do not have to look upon as unforgivably second-rate. He did, after all, provide a synopsis, a rough and ready outline of the contest between the Two Kingdoms. No matter how distorted and inaccurate (and unfair!) is Milton's panorama, it offers, nonetheless, a pioneer demonstration of how our armies might have faced each other at the commencement.

One can offer one's respects, then, to that great blind man, even if Milton's landscape is, of course, outdated. Devils who serve the E.O. are by

now installed in every fold, redoubt, and corner of human existence. Much like the immensely complicated Japanese game of Go, (with its 387 intersections where one can deposit a stone) the positions occupied bit by bit with our black stones are forever surrounding or being surrounded by the white stones of the angels. (It is even said that when Go is played by two Japanese Masters of the Ninth Degree, it can take almost as long to count up the results of their black and white encirclements of each other as to play the match.)

To enforce, therefore, this first explanation of the sinuosities and recesses of our war, I am obliged to offer my own crude outline of the divine, satanic, and human forces at play. There are, indeed, three separate conceptions of what reality might be, the divine, the satanic, and the human, and/or what it ought to seek, three ^{really} separate armies in effect, and so, there are ^{by now} also three kingdoms, not two.

God and his angels work upon humans to move them in His ~~declaredly~~ ^{is self-love} exalted (if self loving) direction. Our E.O. and his loyal devils look to through the Middle Ages, humans had virtually no role in infiltrate, or, better, possess many of these same humans. But, ^{to take into account} ^{now} then there is also the individual man or woman. I can say that many men and women do their best to be beholden neither to God nor to the E.O. They are always

this war. Hence the title - Two Kingdoms

seeking to be free, to be the creature of their own destiny, ~~to belong to no~~
~~external force.~~ Their greatest desire is to become what they wish to be, ^{by the}
~~light of their desires.~~ In the actual event, as matters proceed today
~~the event,~~ we devils try to guide those men and women we have attracted

(we call them clients), the Cudgels contest us, and the particular individual
 usually does his or her best to fight Us off, both of Us, God and Devil alike.

Humans have become so vain (through technology, I suspect) that quite a
 number now wish to be ^{wholly separated from} independent of both of us.

This, it can be repeated, is but a first ~~necessarily~~ oversimplified
 approach to the subtle perversity embedded now in existence ~~itself.~~ My
~~Overview is, however,~~ a poor excuse for the true complexity that sits within
 (people and affects events. My hope—given the curious ~~but~~ forthright
 temper that has overtaken me lately, and with such force—is that I will be
 (But why is not altogether clear to me as yet.)
 able to capture the real and inner life of Adolf Hitler. Let me be ready, then,
 to explain not only my strengths and yes, my talents for this task, but also
 my weaknesses. I promise you: No devil is without a profile! Some of us
^{can be}
~~indeed, are~~ as complex as men and women, and, on occasion, as
 disappointing. We have many powers of which the first is our ability to

enter the human mind, but on all too many occasions, ^{such} ~~these~~ powers become seriously misplaced.

2.

It is safe to say that I know a good deal. ~~I can~~, as I have just remarked, ^{I can} enter into many a mind; I can recover, if necessary, the concealed, even the long-buried memories of the particular client to whom I am assigned. While ~~this~~ ^{Time} consumes much Time (which word I capitalize since for us, as well as for the angels, it is a resource comparable to the manner by which Money serves as a matrix ^{among us} for humans), I am, if necessary, calculating how much ~~time~~ ^{we are always} we can afford to give each of our clients, and the ~~cost~~ ^{range} increases when we choose ^{able} to inhabit people's dreams. My power of insight (that is, of investment and insight) when brought to focus upon a single person is close to complete but ~~that time~~ ^{can use excessive amounts of time for this reason, perhaps,} ~~complete~~, whereas the average human has, at best, a memory that usually manages to function ^{can} only in one or another restricted state. My sense of recollection is free, however, of most distortions. Existing within a set of absolute commands, there is no need for me to develop the sort of vigorous

^{human}
 (ego that must be ready—sometimes at all costs—to transgress divine or
 social laws because the person is ~~that~~ determined to carry off a major
 endeavor. The demands of such vanity in union with a passion for
 independence is ^{guaranteed to} responsible for the warp ^{the larger the egg,} of their memory. So often such a
^{the more must a memory only}
 memory can retain only those recollections which are of immediate use, no
 matter how they are misremembered or wholly untrue. Nonetheless, those ^{are}
^{the warps}
 distortions are all they can afford.

In contrast to such men and women, I have a more simple ^{existence} ~~life~~. For
 the most part, I look to make my clients successful. In our Company, that is
 just about certain to produce reliable results for oneself. Sooner or later,
 you are promoted. Over many periods, I have had clients whom I was able
 to develop to the point where they could serve directly in one or another of
 The Maestro's larger projects. The majority of humans, however, caught in
 the push-and-pull, the back and forth between their guardian angel ^{or some} ~~and~~
^{directing devil like}
 (myself, end by producing little that is useful to either Kingdom. On the
 other hand, I can recall a few unhappy situations when ^{I lost a catch} ~~an attempted~~
^{at the last moment}
 conversion was lost altogether. The guardian angel who was my opposite
^{contest retained}
 number in the particular ~~case ended by~~ gathering the spoils.

At one period, not so long ago, as a result of several ~~successive~~¹ such losses, my position suffered. For a time, thereafter, I was assigned clients of petty origin or modest achievements. I encouraged common soldiers, for instance, to injure morale in their company by desertion, I served workers and peasants who looked to stir up revolutions, but turned corrupt. I knew a few priests in small towns who got into trouble with little boys, or mayors who pilfered funds. I served petty barons and counts as they gambled away the last of old holdings, and I might as well list petty suicides, petty thieves, drunken louts, unfaithful wives of the worst sort, ~~and~~ ditto their male counterparts, as well as comparable flotsam and typical jetsam. I had a horde of clients, but only a few could offer a new or interesting problem for my developed instincts. I had all too many now nameless men and women who were born out of little and proceeded to less. It could have been cause for despair. I admit that only large projects appealed to me even as recognition from a social summit gives real life to a snob. While I could rarely know whether Our Maestro was using me for some strong if imperceptible purpose or marinating me to enlarge my experience, I did, on occasion, take hope that he had not lost interest. He even remarked once

that I might seek high rank again, a post comparable to some of the epic encounters of our Company during the first three centuries of the Church in Rome. All of that might be there for me once more, provided I would pay unremitting attention to my present wretches, thugs, and drunks. I learned then that the E.O. had selected me to ^{oversee} ~~monitor~~ the work of a number of other agents ^{who were keeping} ~~assigned to keep~~ watch on a young client whose potentialities might ^{yet prove to} ~~conceivably~~ be immense. Insignificant at present was this person and so was his family, but there were ancestral fault-lines ~~that happened to be full~~ of the intoxicating stink of our old friend, blood-scandal. The boy in question, who by 1908 was a jobless young man in Vienna, happened to be stricken with timidity, 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 was, in addition, lazy, prone to temper tantrums, and possessed of an ego comparable to the size of a swollen limb. All the same, he was desperately afraid of virtually all meetings with other humans. Yes, this boy was an unmitigated mess.

I did not dare to ask, but of course I could not hide my curiosity from the E.O. any more than any of my agents could conceal their active reactions

from me. At this point, the E.O. actually chose to speak directly to my thoughts. He said: "Why am I interested in this boy? Can it be that he possesses the largest ambition one could possibly encounter in a young man who is not already insane? I may propose that you take him on. But, remain at ease! It is still no more than a project. It could certainly fail. He will need endless instruction. His terrors must be bolstered with the most confident experiences you can arrange for him. And you must guard him from any more crushing defeats to his ego. In time, if he develops the greater part of his potential promise, he could become your only client. Must I say more? We are looking at a project worthy of a major effort."

I will say all this was uttered by the E.O. in a voice he chose to underline with his characteristic irony. Since he usually responded with no more than an unspoken intimation which was all we needed (in much the manner that a dog can rise from his sleep and shake himself at his master's silent command), we never knew how serious The Master might be when he spoke aloud. The consummate irony in the tones of his voice took away any certainty that he was committed altogether to what he said. Sometimes I felt

that might come from his own uncertainty, but this was too perilous a notion to entertain for more than a moment. The S.O. would put up with our critical thoughts or even a passing outburst but we knew better than to allow them to persist. In any case, I did not dare to ask: What if I fail? Many of our

projects do. Particularly ~~the~~ ^{the} major ones. They are such outrageous gambles. Our Source is not unlike God in ^{that} regard. There are ~~so~~ ^{all too} many blind alleys in existence, after all—and a good many, I can tell you, were designed by the Lord Himself. ^{The dinosaurs, for example,} (If God is the greatest artist, He ~~can~~ ^{has} also made the ~~greatest~~ ^{largest} mistakes.)

I was depressed. The new project was at present a backwater, ~~one~~ ^{twisted} more dubious potentiality among many. I knew about such ~~clients~~ ^{their future} warped and with a ~~hopeless future~~ ^(an historic era developed) unless a time arose ~~(that could prove historically~~ ^{uniquely)} favorable to the distortions ^{present} in that person. At this point, there seemed no sign of such ~~conditions~~ incomparably special circumstances. (The First World War and the disasters that fell upon Germany had not yet occurred.) My role, as I saw it, would seat me as 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) ~~who rode the boy~~ ^{but crucial!} (with) occasional help from

the Maestro) ^{I with Adolf} and rode him all the way up to glory (and down again—which

is half the matter, the other half being why I now propose to tell the tale). I

so ^{this knowledge} ~~it~~ seems to exist as a separate force within me ^{separate and independent of} know too much. If I seem ready ^(at last!) to break the first of the rules of ^{immense} our exquisitely powered fold, which is that we never explain what we know to the ^{uninitiated}. Nor further into what I knew of Alois and Klara, especially since I have told ^{is it simple to do so}. In ⁱⁿ example, I have told how Adolf was conceived on that night, those extraordinarily special

circumstances when I could speak of myself as being present, ^{as} a catalyst, a

Gabriel come from our side to ^{stand in for} represent the Evil One, ^{it is true,} yet it is, ^{by ordinary measure,} not true ^{in truth,} I was not exactly in that bed during that occasion of ^{this}

^{a pacalyptic} unfettered carnality, ^{no,} not literally. Nor did I have to be. Nonetheless, in

stating that I was present, I was telling ^(the) ^(fully as much as I was purveying) a truth as well as a lie. Even as light

is a wave and a particle, so we devils ^{can} live at once in the lie and the truth,

^{since} and both exist side by side.

The explanation—provided one is ready to follow!—is considerably less

difficult than, let us say, Einstein's Special Theory of Relativity. Spirits

exist in a relation to Time that is not comparable to ^{any} the human perception of

that ^{same} mysterious word. Ingesting the experiences of ^{compatible} demons, ^{we}

^{enables} higher devils ^{are} able to vault back and forth. We pass through periods of

Time that humans can only recognize in linear fashion as chronology. But, I, *as a devil, had no need* ~~did not have~~ to be present on the night Adolf was conceived. That was not necessary in order for me to ~~recreate~~ *bring into myself later* (the exact experience of what happened.

Another devil (of lower rank) had been ~~consigned~~ *present in* to Alois' bed for ~~the~~ *that* occasion. By order of the E.O., he (or it, if you prefer) had entered the act.

I must say that this is always an option for any of our cohort. We can enter *(On rare occasions, and this was one of them, the demon can call)* into any and all cohabitation. *(So can the angels. Since the resources of God*

and the Devil are not—believe it if you will!—infinite, such insertion must not be merely desirable, or entertaining, but purposeful. The devil who had *look to their Master,* *years later, but* actually been present that night transmitted the experience to me *for the presence of the E.O.* with a

completeness of odor and carnal detail that can be called absolute. It is fair to say that indeed it happened to me, and if he was the first Gabriel on the occasion when Adolf was conceived, I was very much a second Gabriel who subsumed him.

That is because for all practical purposes, I had been there. (Among us, to be given an *proves* exact recollection ~~is~~ equal to being present.) So, I also knew from the irrevocable intensity of the occasion that the E.O. had also been

there, had joined with his petty agent for one instant (even as Jehovah had been with Gabriel during another exceptional event.)

While I was not going to be ^{exclusively} formally attached to Adolf Hitler for many years, ^{as I have indicated} the E.O. had placed him in my Overview. ^{It is exactly} That is equal to saying that the devils who worked with little Adolf were there to pass their experiences on to me. Over a period of time, his life and ^{modest} small deeds as a boy were conveyed to me. Then, as the hour approached when I would look to take possession of him, so did my concentration upon the sense-offerings of the minor devils in my domain take on more prominence until I was as steeped in the life of the boy and young man as if I had been alone with him over all the years of his childhood and adolescence. For that reason, I am ready to write about his life with an insight no biographer could attempt. ^(what I can relate about) Ditto for Klara, Fanni, Anna Glassl, Alois, Sr., Johann Nepomuk, Johanna, and all the others.

Now, this profound if most mysterious urge to share my insights with men and women I do not even know has to be part of ^{the same, that is} a strange force behind ^{may} ^{what seems to be} my incontestable readiness to betray the E.O. Indeed, I have begun to understand why I ^{am} ~~must be~~ doing it. Profound experience that is

communicated to no one will scourge the soul. I, who have lived so long
 with the firm belief that I am no more and no less than a spirit, ^(= a presence void of soul) may have to

face a serious disruption of my condition. Somewhere within, I sense the
^{something much like} remnants of a soul in myself, ^{comparable perhaps} some long-gone virtual model of the long
~~truncated ends, let us say, comparable~~ to nerves still attached to an

amputated limb—nerves which all but insist on promising the body that this
 limb can grow again. ^{Such is the force of the thought}

^{in me that we must} I have to recognize I am offering too much for so early a moment in
^{may be} ^{much}

our biographical endeavor. It will take all of a book that I may never be

able to finish for you, dear reader, who is not at all in my likeness, and not
 my brother, to begin to absorb the confession just offered. ^{disturbed then to a degree} If you are, ~~to a degree~~

^{well, well,} ~~disturbed~~, so am I. The present is with me again, the precise period of these
^{now as} years ~~where~~ I live in an America I can barely comprehend. If I am a

presence who consists of no more at this instant than the all-but-retired
 spirit of a devil who is without a serious assignment, I also sense that I must

keep returning to the premise that an account of the life of my former client,
^{yes, will help to reestablish my footing on} yes, Adolf Hitler, yes, will help ~~to delineate~~ some long-lost terrain where I
^{can begin} might hope ^{what may once} to search for the remaining oddments of my soul.
^{have been my soul.}

3.

Given the dominance of the large new technologies
 In setting down these explanations, I have to say that one of our
 world, one of our (ongoing missions is to convince the majority of ^(world citizens) ~~men and women~~ ^{the large?} ~~in our new~~
~~all-pervasive technological world~~ that there is no such entity as the Devil.

^{a hell of a lot of}
 And, for that matter, not too much existence for God. Certainly, there is very
 little on the modern intellectual horizon that ~~sees~~
 nothing like a war between two opposed spirit orders. Given the purview of
^{anything further} ~~the New Technological World~~ ^{regimes} ~~NTW~~ ^{asked to be} the universe is subject to reason,

nothing else. God, alone, as a solitary mystery, may prove acceptable here and there, and is even subject to adoration by full-service idiots who see Him as all-good, all-powerful, all One. ^{Never posit a Devil.} Forget the Maestro. ^{but} ~~only~~ one mystery, not two! (Indeed, at the insistence of the E.O. we do not capitalize our endeavors, only His.)

There need be no surprise, then, that the general understanding of Adolf Hitler's personality is dim. He is, after all, a third mystery, the most mysterious human of the century, a man, when all is said, who was all-too-human, if, it will be agreed, the average man or woman does possess large funds of the inhumane. Nonetheless, over the years, I grew able to comprehend his psyche better than my own. How can I not take pride in this? As a specimen of the human, he was close to unmeasurable, and developed without question into the wild beast of the century, this all-too-modest-looking client whom in the beginning I belittled as "little Adolf," yes, I knew him when we still referred to the young man who grew out of the boy as "little Adolf with the big ideas."

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

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

It is probably true that she was ready to die if he did not live. Devils are sound at anticipating motive (the more sordid, the better—Analogy Rex!), but our predictive attempts fade at the borders of mortality. Man proposes, the Devil imposes, and the Lord disposes, is not accurate for all cases, but we are obliged to recognize that God has the final power to

decide on the timing of the death of every human. ~~To take the extreme~~ *of that has just created, but we have brought it*
 example, an airplane which we have brought into malfunction (a most difficult process to accomplish, ~~Nonetheless, we do not have the power to destroy~~ *difficult process! is still not able to kill everyone when it crashes unless every one on board. It is our Adversary (God) who determines*
 Our Adversary (God) so determines. *have to accept* In most such cases, He will accept

what we have succeeded in bringing off in secret or against His wishes,

~~because it~~ *for God* is too costly to countermand us. Do not assume that it demands

no exceptional effort for ~~God~~ *Him* to save a few humans trapped on that lip of extinction—airplane crashes involve so many factors! Indeed, He could not

even save His Son, (as we are never tired of reminding our clients!) but

there are occasions when a death we looked to create ~~did~~ *does* not ensue. From

even in extreme difficulties, time to time *(God still disposes.*

Be it understood, then, that the question comes ^{again} right down to the ^{matter} implicitly vulgar ~~situation~~ of expenditures. A most useful rule of thumb—^{is that} for human endeavor as well—all wars are ultimately determined ~~after all~~, by who can best ^{bear} ~~afford~~ the cost. Even as we devils are never all-powerful because He is our Adversary, so He, in turn, is never all-powerful either. Besides, it is often ^{prodigiously expensive} ~~a prodigious expense~~ for Him to war with us. To keep this understanding alive—that He is not All-Powerful—the E.O. demands that we try not to speak of the Lord as God, but as the D.K. (What D.K. means, I plan to explain ^{before long} in good time.)

Rather, allow me ^{now} (to take up Klara and her condition ^{as she becomes} now that she is ~~again~~ a mother, ^{for the fourth time}.)

The attention she gave to ^{Adolf's} the ~~early days~~ of her fourth child would have been seen as hysteria in any woman who had less cause for concern, but then, Klara was living at the edge of an abyss. She had had ^{all of this} ~~nine months~~ ^{pregnancy} and ten days to contemplate earlier years with Alois, ^{her} all the way in memory from ^{travelling on} recollections of their first illicit joining to the penetratingly corrupt smell of the sickroom as Otto, Gustav, and Ida were lost one by one in the same few months of the same year. She had prayed devoutly to God to save

them. He had chosen to ignore her. As she saw it, that rebuke could only confirm the wretched evil of her condition. ^{so she looked looked} In such cases, the victim, ~~naturally obsessed, looks~~ to go back to the beginning. In Klara's case, it was ~~to try to comprehend~~ ^{first during} her feelings on the day she met Alois ~~on~~ his visit in Spital. She was sixteen then and had never seen a man who disturbed her so directly, ~~so literally,~~ so physically—she fell back a full step on their meeting at the door. She might as well have received a blow to the stomach.

Yet she had also admired Alois, immensely, and at once. Her mother had an expression on her face Klara had not seen before. For one instant, there in full pride and longing, Johanna had seemed beautiful. On the next moment, Klara knew ^{same} the feeling, ^{but} ~~and~~ with a closeness to her mother that was a good deal more than their animal sense of sharing the same bed-rags of existence, no, it was as if she inhabited her mother's heart ^{over} ~~for~~ the blink of an eye, and then took in the full force of the pang that followed. In truth, Klara had had a visitation from us. One fine joy we devils can know occurs in the instant ~~that~~ we invest our spirit into the man or woman who might yet be a client. Johanna was not much of a devil (only for an hour in the straw with Alois could one say that she had been more or less invested) but it was

different for Klara. She was able to feel all of her mother's old desire at ^{the} ~~this~~
exact moment when ^{she saw} ~~Alois came to the door~~. If one may speak of a pang of
joy, she felt indeed just such an ^a ~~unexpected~~ bolt.

We need not, however, journey again along the back and forth of Klara's passion for Alois, nor return to the depths of her piety. By the time Adolf was born, she would wash her mouth every morning with laundry soap, a natural act given her mate's predilection (especially in late pregnancy) for putting her head into his groin and keeping it right there, one big hand on her neck.

No surprise then if her love was for the baby. So soon as Adolf gave, in the midst of early colic, some real indication of living—after two weeks he could smile with delight at the approach of her face—she began to believe that God might be kind to her this time, that He could even be ready to forgive. Would He be ready to spare this child? Was His Wrath lessened? Had He even given her an angel? Such is the secret nature of pious hope! An angel, however, required that she have nothing to do with her husband. Not in bed! Such is the nature of pious obligation.

Alois soon had to face the possibility that a will of iron, when forged by prayer, and then girded about with ^{more} prayer, can be ^{quite as} ~~more~~ powerful in a woman ^{as} ~~than~~ in a man. ^{At first, he} ~~He~~ could not ~~at first~~ believe that her refusal to let him touch her was neither a whim nor a new species of drawn-out enticement. "You women go back and forth like a dog chasing its tail," he told her in exasperation. Then, deciding ^{this} ~~the~~ rebellion was to be mercilessly crushed, he seized her buttocks with one hand and a breast with the other.

She bit him on the wrist ~~did it~~ hard enough to draw blood. Whereupon he cuffed her, leaving Klara with a bruised eye he was obliged to beg her to conceal. (What a nasty scandal if she decided to go out and face all those women of Braunau who lived by the view from their window!) So she could not go out. For a week, his hand bandaged, he did the shopping ~~early in the morning and~~ after work—no tavern ale for those nights. After which, her discoloration no longer visible, he gave up what he considered to be his irrevocable rights and continued to sleep in a lump on his side of the bed.

Since this state was to be maintained for close to three years, it will certainly be worth returning to Alois and the solutions he found to lift such

a matrimonial siege. But, for now, we stay close to Klara. An intensity of emotion is always attractive to ^{our folk,} ~~us~~ even as farmers dream of black soil for future crops.

It need hardly be underlined that the death of ~~the Poor Little Trio,~~ ^{had not been the ones to} Otto, Gustav and Ida, proved useful to us even if we ~~did not~~ effect it.

Obviously, it intensified Klara's love for Adolf past any usual measure of large maternal love. When he began to cry out ^{every time} as ^{his face,} she even came to understand that it was the odor of lye on her mouth. ^{But since} Since Alois was now driven to his side of the bed, ^{there was a need} she no longer had to wash her mouth in the morning. Therefore, she could ^{kiss} give her mouth to Adolf with ~~her~~ full content even as he gurgled all obligingly.

It hardly required the insight of the E.O. to know that this ^{could later} might prove ~~most~~ ^{disalmost as promising} useful. Excessive mother-love can be as productive to our ^{to us as the void} purposes as the whole absence of mother-love. We were keyed to look within the experiences of our clients for excess of every kind, good or bad, loving or hateful. Every ^{exaggeration} distortion of honest sentiment could contribute to our aims.

If the E.O. and the D.K. are generally obliged to pay little attention to ^(themselves) the majority of men and women (because of the stalemate ^{most} our warring interests ^{us really end as a stalemate} interests so often establishes in the average person) it is certainly important ^(no small matter)

^(for us to) ~~when we select~~ ^{because} ~~to us should we~~ select child early, ^{then} For then, a large investment is possible

^(for the period of grace) yes, I will use the word before the Lord (whom,

to remind you, we call the D.K.) or His Cudgels become aware of our

infiltration. Early choice, ^{is a high-stakes} as has been indicated, is a gamble. ^{but the E.O.} ~~The E.O.~~

^{made such a decision} chose Adolf early, and by a most reliable rule of thumb. An incestuous

procreation followed by swarms of mother-love has ^{to offer fertile possibilities} ~~to be a favorable~~

commencement for us. (When here, as we know, the event was fortified by

^{a transcendent occasion} the presence of the E.O. at the conception, ~~a dare~~ ^{I will dare to call it a}

^{often unbelievable possibilities,} transcendent occasion, there was every reason to expect that the child

would ^{prove} extraordinary. If it lived. We lose so many. All too often, the

D.K. spots them and heartlessly ^{I must a heartless! - yes,} ~~if I may say this as well~~ the D.K.

^{heartlessly} removes them, no matter the cost to Himself. The cost to Himself! A

curious calculation is often present. The D.K. is not insensitive to the hopes

^(the early) ~~for any~~ of an exceptional child of those who surround the child. Early death can demoralize whole families

most) (dreadfully. ~~So~~ even when the D.K. knows ^{therefore} that a given individual ^{was} ~~has come~~
^{so grounded early by} over to us, He hesitates. He does not like collateral damage. ^{Besides, he}
^{can always steal the boy or girl back from us.}

So the D.K. is respectful of mother-love that is all-embracing. It can

come as no surprise then that many artists, gargoyles, ogres, geniuses,

killers, and an occasional savior live to maturity because God chose not to

dispose of them. The first element of mutual recognition in the struggle

between the D.K. and the E.O. is probably the understanding that no single

splendid human quality can ever prevail by itself, unaltered by us or Them.

Even the noblest, most self-sacrificing and generous mother can produce a

monster provided we get there first. We are always on the alert for

candidates who are loved outrageously in early childhood. All the same, as

I have warned, this is not a game where one can begin to speculate ^(on what might be) the ~~final~~

^{end result during} ~~see~~ in many of the early stages.

4.

By the time he was a year old, Klara called the boy Adi. It was never Adolf or Dolfi. (Dolfi was much too close to Teufel for comfort.) “Look,”

she would say to her stepchildren, "look, Alois, look, Angela, isn't he an angel, a little god?" Since the baby had a round face, big round eyes as blue as hers, and a small mouth, and therefore looked to them like any other baby, they nodded with easy obedience. She was a good stepmother and that was all right with Alois, Jr. and also with Angela since they had heard from Alois, Sr. that their own mother, Fanni, had been crazy.

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

She was certain she would keep him alive. Breast-feeding gave her ~~such~~ ^{that} a virtuous sense of certainty. She was putting her own strength into him. Her nipple was never far from his mouth. Minor devils, out at night in that region would report that her prayers were more heartfelt than any one of ~~the near thousand~~ ^{scores of other} ~~in the region~~ ^{in the region} young mothers of Braunau they passed in the dark.

Devils, obviously, have minimal attachment to the sentimental, let alone the heartfelt, but one or two were bothered by Klara, yes, even haunted if but a

touch. Her prayer was so pure: "Oh, Lord, take my life if it will help to save his." Other women, being more practical, complained to the D.K. about what was missing in their lives. The most greedy and stupid were always looking to grab a better house, more money, even a lover, "yes, if you permit it, Lord."—there was rarely a sweet for which they did not lust. Klara, by contrast, looked to give comfort to the child, and there was her breast, count on it, always in his mouth.

While the E.O. was in general not sympathetic to breast-feeding since its absence often stimulated an essential if ugly energy in future clients, his attitude was more tolerant in cases of first-degree incest. For such

situations, the closer the mother to the child, why, the better for us. *(A monster can be more effective when it also has stores of love with which to charm people.)* The same was true of excretory dramas. A dirty butt on a baby, if found daily, offers its signal. The mother is a potential client for us. No

chance of that with Klara. If she had always kept a clean house, her rooms at the Pommer Inn were now as spotless as any home with several fine servants. The furnishings gleamed. So, too, did Adi's pip-squeak of an *have its glow* anus. It was kept as immaculate as a small glistening pebble, and of that, too, did the E.O. approve—an incestuary must always be kept aware of the

If certain advantages can also be obtained by us through the excretory dramas, while a dirty butt on a baby if found daily, a lawyer sends us a signal, the mother is, yes, a potential client. Klara is an example. If she always

importance of his or her own excrement, a Diktat that was never quite explained to us although it did offer ^{some} hint of explanation merely by being stated. ~~One basic instruction was that every rule, no matter how generally effective, was here to be reversed in special cases. Sometimes I would even think that the E.O. judged our potentiality to improve by our sensitivity to just this nuance—that we could be ready for the special case, even if it came to no more than a little asshole that was forever being polished.~~ ^{because we knew} ^{were}

5.

Not long after Adolf was born, Alois decided to leave the Pommer Inn. This move added up to his twelfth change of address in Braunau over

fourteen years. But, Alois had good words for the Pommer: "It has elegance. I don't know that I would use such a word for anything else in this little city." He had a dozen such remarks to enliven a hundred situations of small talk. "Women are like geese," he liked to say. "You can recognize them from behind." Heavy tavern laughter would follow even if none of them could explain what was so particular about the rear end of a goose. Or, when speaking to fellow professionals: "To pick out a smuggler is easy. They are too good to be true. They dress too well, they speak too well, and the amateurs always work very hard at looking you in the eye."

When asked, however, why he had moved from the Pommer Inn after a residence that had lasted for four years, he would shrug. "I like to move," he would say. The truth was that he had used up the waitresses, chambermaids and cooks at the Pommer who were not too old or too ugly, and he could have added (and did to one or two friends), "when a woman goes dry on you, change your house. That can put a little oil in their juices." He could even have given the real reason—no matter where he lived, a restlessness came upon him sooner or later that proved intolerable.

On the day when the Hitler family left the Pommer Inn, he had, however, a most uncharacteristic thought. It was that ^(the determining factors in) ~~the forces of the~~ ^{— others might call ~~this~~ fate! — could} universe ~~might~~ ^{would not} yet choose him for high position. I will remark that his idea of ~~such~~ high position ~~could~~ be satisfied by promotion to Chief Customs Official in the provincial capital of Linz; indeed, he would yet be given that post before he retired. Never superstitious (except when he was) Alois decided that this last promotion came in good part because of the move from the Pommer Inn to a rented house on Linzerstrasse. He and Klara both agreed that they needed more room, and now they had it. Of course, there were no females in the attic, ^{yet} ~~but~~ he could manage with that. He had nosed out a woman who lived on his route home from the tavern. He had to pay for the privilege by giving her a gift time to time, but then the rent on Linzerstrasse was low. It was a dreary house.

All the while, he fought against falling in love with his wife. She infuriated him. If ants were like bees and had a Queen for whom they labored, then Klara was Queen of the ants, for she commanded his skin to crawl, his crotch to itch, and his heart to toll in his chest [—] ~~all~~ of this from no more than taking in the presence of Klara on her half of the divided bed. He

would keep thinking of how she had looked on the night of her wedding. She had worn a dark silk dress, rose-colored with a white collar—that much white she allowed herself as a bride—and on her white forehead, she had teased some charming curls. At her breast was pinned the one piece of jewelry she possessed, a small green cluster of glass grapes looking real enough to mislead a man into reaching for one. (Or just about!) And then there were her eyes—no mistake! He had to fight against falling in love with a woman who kept the cleanest house in Braunau just for him and for three kids—two of them not even her own!—a woman always as polite to him in public as to an emperor, a woman who never complained about what she had and didn't have nor nagged him about finances, a woman who still had only one good dress, the one worn at her wedding party, and yet if he laid a finger on her, she would have bitten it off. He wondered if the difference in their age was what it was about. Better than marrying her, he should have put her in a nunnery. Yet his skin itched at the thought of how she would not let him near.

Drinking at the tavern, he would look to regain some pride. His dislike of the Church had by now become a forceful conversational

instrument. He expressed a superior scorn. Yes, he could say a few things. He would occasionally page through a section of an anti-clerical volume he had found in an antique bookshop in Braunau; indeed, the store owner, Hans Lycidias Leipziger, would meet him on many an evening for beer, and while the bookseller kept himself at a scholarly level above more mundane Customs Officers' discussions by offering no more than a nod of his head from time to time, his wise presence, his shaven chin and shaven upper lip, his full sideburns, his peephole spectacles, his half-bald head of burgeoning white hair, offered a slight but legitimizing resemblance to Arthur Schopenhauer and so gave support to Herr Leipziger's smallest assent, just enough to carry the other Customs Officers around the more bruising turns of Alois' argument. While they were hardly to be counted as church-goers, "No good man wants to be neutered," most were ready to admit ~~on the side~~ still they were officials, and could hardly feel at ease when a prestigious institution was mocked, let alone the Holy Roman Church.

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

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

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

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

“Come now,” said two drinkers at once.

“True. It is true. Absolutely true. Hans Leipziger here can show you the text.” Leipziger nodded slowly, reflectively. He was a little too drunk to be certain on which side his authority should fall. “Yes,” said Alois, “the Pope says, ‘Send a monsignor to look into it.’ What does ^{this good monsignor} he report? Yah?

Half the nuns are pregnant. This is the sober fact history must live with.

So, the Pope takes a real look at the monasteries. Orgies. Orgies of

homosexuals.” He said it with such force that he had time to take a long large swallow from his tankard.

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

“No, we don’t,” muttered one of the younger officers. “My brother is a priest.”

“In that case, I tip my hat to him,” said Alois, “if he is your brother, he is different. But that was then. And I assure you: The priests who were real men did worse. You ever hear this saying of the Pope? From the same Pope. He said, ‘No priest needs to marry so long as the peasant has a wife.’”

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

“Which Bishop?”

“The Bishop of Linz, don’t you know?”

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

On the walk home, his mood was foul. He had come to the conclusion that the days of enjoying open tirades against the Church might be coming to a close. He was fifty-four years old, and for ^{many} ~~the last thirty~~ years, had never worried ~~too much~~ about his position in life. He had known he could and would rise in the ranks open to him, but no higher.

Now, however, his stomach was unsettled. From a respected friend in the Finance Watch, he had been told that in Vienna there was talk of a promotion for Alois Hitler up to Chief Customs Officer at Passau. Given his lack of respectable education, that would be a true rise in rank, an innovative promotion. "However, you must watch yourself, Alois," the friend had said. "This is still a year away. You must keep a good name if you are to be moved to Passau."

He had always seen himself as exceptional, afraid of no one (except for certain superiors in uniform), possessed of a genuine magnetism for

women (how many men could say that much for themselves?) and up from the ranks. Moreover, he had never been timid about public opinion. Nobody else he knew could say as much for himself. He was no coward in that department.

But now this respected friend who gave every evidence that he had an ear in the councils of the Finance Watch was saying, "Watch out for the townspeople in Braunau."

This was a ^{worry} ~~job~~ ^{to} to travel right into him. Because Alois could not decide whether ~~he could~~ ^{to} trust this friend. The man was a practical joker. In fact, he was the same one who had ^{once} ~~told him years ago~~ "The townspeople of Brannau are nothing. You can put your thumb to your nose at them." Alois had indeed put together a good many habits around this remark, but the truth was that tonight he had said too much, absolutely, what with this most unsettling and exciting rumor concerning Passau. He was learning how much ambition he had, a real ambition ^{which} ~~he had~~ never admitted to himself. He couldn't. It would have been like a river breaking through a levee. But now he could recognize ^{that} ~~what~~ a flood-water was ^{waiting} ~~there~~. If he wanted to stay afloat, he had to stop pissing on the Church.

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

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

Women, however, should be seen in church. It was time to accept such a fact. The people in Braunau must not be able to say that he didn't allow his wife to go through the portal.

6.

Within the Company, we look upon ambition ^{in men and women} as a force that is often at our disposal. While we accept the likelihood that most human emotions

originate through God's inclination, even as He gave necessary instincts to the animals, nonetheless, we ^{also are ready to adapt work} do consider that ^{all the} most human feelings can be ^{way over} adapted to our purposes. Of no state is this more true than ambition. Plus,

its weak sister, avarice. Avarice is simple to deal with—it is pure greed—

but ambition ^{who is} ~~a more lively force~~ ^{is more ready to} is ^{more} closely related to the Originating

Vision. That is why the D.K., ^{who is} ~~so often~~ ^{is more ready to} interested in putting serious

restraints upon human behavior, ~~do~~ encourage ambition. (I would suppose

^{his goal is for each and every} that He desired ^{to} that each man and woman possessed ^{to} the potential (on their

own!) to fulfill some part of His Vision, or rather, His notion of what

~~humanity could rise to and becoming something like~~ ^{never to the notion of gods} humankind could become.) ^{could also} ~~in the cosmos~~ (The E.O. is

~~so could God rise in the cosmos~~ ^{spread} ~~limiting us to us that there are~~ ^{other} ~~gods~~

Such demands proved, of course, too arduous. As the E.O. has often

^{that of course is cosmic ambition. Return us,} ~~however to the more human variety~~ ^{quite equal}

remarked, the difficulty was created by the Creator. In order that His

^{is never loath to tell us, too much ambition is} ~~all too often to be an impediment set up by the Creator~~ Vision be effective, real and independent force had to be granted to the

^{For the} ~~human will~~ ^{to} ~~In doing so, He left room for us. We captured a horde of~~ ^{strength} ~~clients. It may be sacrilege to some, but I would propose that God~~ ^{was obliged to leave}

miscalculated. Ambition is not only the most powerful of the emotions but

the most unstable. It cannot bear defeat with signal grace. Not often! So, ^{or} ~~what~~ ^{existence} ~~might yet~~ ^{be} ~~become.~~ ^{At that level, the} ~~E.O. remarks, the~~

⊗ D.K. is no more than one entrepreneur among many!

defeat does turn a putative client closer to us. There are many who ^{so)} ~~refuse to~~ ^{are ready to} blame God for a run of bad luck.

Personal ambition, therefore, ^{awakens our interest} is always interesting to us. The D.K., who, I must emphasize, was always a prodigious optimist, had not foreseen that the only men and women who could promulgate His Vision by the

intensity of their ambition would have to be saints. Of course, few humans ^{have any} ~~can~~ ^{desire to} develop to that point. I will be blunt. The D.K. made miscalculations ^{judgement} that were—no lesser word—grievous for Him. He overrated the potential ^{development of} ~~the~~ ^{he had created} for good feeling in human nature. Whereas our E.O. has always had a keen ^{how much} ~~comprehension of the sum of~~ ^{to be told} ~~was there~~ perversity in men and women.

Consider the case with Alois. Many ^{people} men and women guard their ambition as the most secret part of their emotions, ^(even generated energy) ~~guard even~~ ^{from their open thoughts} (even from themselves).

For ~~soon~~ ^{ambition} soon as it begins to burn brightly in the mind, it is ready to shred ^{personal} ~~a~~ ^{good many long-held} ~~long-maintained~~ vanities about the honor and high level of one's purity. It is then that ambition reveals its ^{pride} ~~perverse~~ ^{intensity} pride, and can ^{soon} ~~prove~~ ungovernable. ~~It is a blind force.~~

No surprise then if Alois was not the only one in the Hitler family to suffer this disruption. Ambition is a true germ, and quite infectious. If

Klara now had a child who was actually giving a few vital signs of staying alive, this was due, as we have remarked, to her belief in the life of her milk. Her breasts were suffused with joy, the most generous joy she had ever known. So, Klara now wanted everything for Adi. And to such a degree, that she was even ready to contemplate forgiveness for her husband, a bit of forgiveness in any case—enough maybe to allow him to cross the middle of the bed.

Their second courtship began. It was not at all like the night when ~~Adi~~ ^{occurred} ~~occurred~~ ^{had set} ~~occurred~~ ^{spelling?} Gustav was conceived. No apocalyptic shift in old habits. Here she was still breast-feeding Adolf. So, there was no question of a pregnancy. What inspired the return of some little carnal interest was her growing appreciation of Alois. He had built strong foundations, after all, for the good future of Adolf. Even as her husband had risen from the mud of Strones and Spital to the ~~high~~ ^{high} honor of a uniform in the service of Franz Josef, she, in turn, might begin to measure the heights to which Adolf could ascend should his ability to go beyond his origins prove equal to the vigor ~~and upward progress of his father's career~~ ^{of his father.}

For that, however, he would need a ^{this} father ^{to} ~~who could~~ love him. Once, in her gentlest voice, she had said to Alois, "Sometimes I wonder why you never hold Adi."

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

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

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

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

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

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

At that moment, the dog began to bark. Alois had bought a hound at a low price from a farmer he knew. Since they were living in a house, rather than at an inn, the purchase could be considered protection worth the cost. But the dog, whom he named Luther, proved disappointing. While Luther worshipped Alois and quivered before his master at every shift of tone, he did not seem otherwise alert. Moreover, he had nervous habits. Even as Alois shouted at him to stop howling, poor Luther would urinate on the floor.

Afterward, Alois might have his regrets. The hound, after all, did adore him. First, however, he whipped the dog. Even as it tried to crawl away, the poor bottom of the beast became soaked in its own outpourings. All the while, it was yelping ^{its} full terror. The uproar woke the children. Alois, Jr. came out first, then Angela, Adi at the last, not yet two years old, but agile enough to get out of his low bed and totter into the midst of this. Klara leaped up to seize him. She was ready for the worst, she hardly knew what—that the child would step into the urine, that he would weep for her breast, that Alois might strike them both—she had seen the look in her husband's eye when Adi became too greedy on her tit. None of this

happened, however. To the contrary, the child looked with solemn interest at the whimpering dog, then at the flailing hand of the father, and his blue eyes had a gleam she had seen before, a look of remarkable intensity for one so small. She had seen it on his face when suckling him. He would stare at her with an expression equal to the same look on Alois' face, the rare tender expression of a lover overwhelmed for a moment by the equality of flesh to flesh, soul upon soul, the very communion of being able to speak without a word. At such instants, she felt as if this child was closer to her and knew more about her than anyone in her life.

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

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

From the room she had just quit, she could hear Alois bellowing at Alois, Jr. and Angela to clean up the puddles.

“That dog can’t even shit right,” he cried out of his own pain at the awful turn the evening had taken. Luther was bleeding at the mouth from blows he had received full-face on his muzzle, but in turn, Alois’ palm had a small but ugly laceration from raking one fierce slap across a broken incisor in Luther’s sad front teeth.



7.

It will be noted that I write about my people in much the mode of any reasonably good novelist. I am ready by turns to observe them sardonically, objectively, ironically, sympathetically, judgmentally, even

compassionately. ^{Nor am I} And I am not often sinister. This should come as ^{not} ~~so~~ ^{too great a} surprise. ^{Why should I be regarded as such?} If I am a devil, that does not require me, to subjugate my style

down to the ~~low~~ ^{low} level of a casual reader's notion of how a devil might present himself.

From the onset of our service, the Evil One has instructed us to make humankind our study. We do the E.O. honor every time we are able to appreciate a man or woman in full. The Maestro's way has always been to encourage us to feel close to what is godly in people as well as to the ^{spoils} ~~profits~~

that may be there later for us. To comprehend the godly facets of humankind, precisely those that could prove inimical to us down the road, is important. If we had religious Orders in the Company, I would serve as a Jesuit. Indeed, I share a fundamental understanding with Jesuits as, for certain, does the E.O. I am always ready to acquire a sympathetic comprehension of all that in essence will prove to be our final adversary—I

see it as my duty to be ready, indeed, to know more about godly sentiments
 than all but the ^{most of them} best of the angels.

That is why the E.O. encourages us to speak of God as the D.K. (At
 least those of us who work in German-speaking lands.) D.K., I must now

confess, stands for Dummkopf. It is not that we look upon God as directly

stupid (not so!). Moreover, we know from experience (and lost battles) that

the Cudgels can, on occasion, be as bright and incisive as ourselves. The

root to employing such a term as Dummkopf comes, I think, from the E.O.'s

desire to wean us from what has been our greatest weakness in the past,

exactly that ~~the~~ admiration we often feel unwillingly before the

Almighty. As the E.O. never allows us to forget, God may be powerful, but

He is not All Mighty. Hardly so! We, after all, are present. If the D.K. is

the Creator, we are His most profound critics. Often, very often, we are

successful opponents.

So successful, indeed, that the E.O. wished to rearrange the balance.

If the Angels had succeeded in brainwashing all too many men and women

to believe that our Source was the Evil One, (until we are obliged to live

without any real opportunity to protest this canard), then our best recourse,

Classification in German speaking lands. In America
 it is the D.A. — Dumb Ass! In England, the B.F.
 — 6 bloody fool! For France, A.S. —
 In Italy (D.K.) — Gran cornuto! For
 Spain, G.P. — Grande Payaso. So, the D.K.
 is really the D.K. — Dumbkopf.

Stupidity!
 I'm
 Italian
 G.C.
 — Gran
 Cornuto
 For
 Spanish
 G.P.
 — Grande
 Payaso.
 So, D.K.
 stands

as the E.O. suggested, is to take pride in his initials. Or, try to. Which we do. When I write E.O., or speak of the Evil One, it is with full knowledge of the richness of the concept. He has given us so much, our subtle master who disdains to capitalize any reference to his presence. "Leave all that to those God worshippers on their knees," he tells us. "We have work to do, and it is tricky. I recommend that you keep thinking of Him as the Dummkopf. For, indeed, given what He could have been, that is what He is. We are brighter by far. And, of late, we are more creative. Remember: It is our universe to gain. It is His to lose. Keep calling Him the Dummkopf."



PP 168-237

Fixed by DW
1/13/048.

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

So, for example, Adolf's bowel movements now began to dominate the tenor of life in the house on Linzerstrasse. Before the episode with Luther took place, Klara had certainly been alert, no matter how often Adi soiled his wrapping cloths, to keep the child in clean state, indeed, the act as I have remarked, became a daily dalliance between mother and boy. She wiped him so carefully that his eyes gleamed with transmogrificational delight. He discovered that Heaven was in his anus ^{right there with the cramps.} all the while ~~that~~ his mother subtly, tenderly, delicately (and with unwitting demonic finesse)

expunged the soil, wet or dry, from his rosebud, (which was, of course, Klara's secret name for her dear baby's incomparably dear little hole. ^{— die Roseknospe} She was so proud of its ^{pink sheen} ~~rosy shine~~ that she could not even suppress her joy when ^{her step-children} ~~the other two children~~ were watching. Indeed, unlike other good mothers in ^{bothered to teach} Braunau, she barely taught Angela how to substitute for her. In truth, she

[die Roseknospe]

preferred to be alone when taking personal care of Adolf. For then they would have the best of times. This was possible because she was superior to the unhappy elements of the procedure. His stool, (which could on occasion be as rank as any ^{other} diarrhetic disaster) did not occasion her disgust. It might disturb her if the outpouring were sick in smell, or worse, gave a hint of that empty cavern which lurks in the odor of grave illness, but her breath was calm even when the stink proved rich enough to overpower anyone else. She looked for the stench to come through as strong. The stronger, the better. That was a sign of health. Such was her love for Adi.

It sparkled between them. His eyes danced as she dredged his cheeks with feather-smooth wipes of the rag, and her eyes were full of love, so full that his little penis certainly stood erect. She, in turn, would giggle and coax it back ~~then~~ (most properly) while they both laughed. For it jumped up again. Whereupon she kissed the tip, (once), and then blushed. Be assured. She did not allow her mind to suggest that the act might be subject to Confession. No, not such innocent joy.

All this changed after the dog was whipped.

She lived again in high fear of Alois. Now, it seemed as if Adi's swaddling cloths were always in danger of bagging open. What if Alois should find a full plop on the floor? Once, stepping out of the parlor for a minute to start a dish in the kitchen, she returned to see the child playing with his spoil—he had already plastered his upper lip and chin. She gasped at the thought of Alois coming through the door.

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

Now, she became ambitious. She wanted Adi to learn how to unsnap the safety pins that held his cloth, and indeed he was able to. Day by day, one success followed another, until one morning, he pricked his finger. After that mishap, he would not go near the pins again. She lost patience that he had come so near and now refused to continue. Finally, she scolded him, and that was certainly the first time he had heard such a tone in her

voice. He rebelled. Knowing how important he was to her, his response was keen—he was in much the same state of clarity with which he had watched Alois beat Luther. At that moment, Adi had been illumined by new knowledge. He did not measure the difference between a dog and a man, not yet, for Luther was as much of a person to him as his father, but he could see the instant result: the dog had collapsed into abject terror but still loved his master.

So would Klara love him, he decided, even when he would not obey her. Taken out of his cloth and allowed to run naked from the waist down, he began (never when his father was at home) to shit on the floor. Sometimes he would do it right next to the chamber pot, which brought Klara so close to screaming that Adi could all but hear every sound she did not make, and felt in consequence masterful. He ^{had} ~~felt~~ no fear of her even when she came close to striking him.

He went too far. One day when she was in the midst of waxing her kitchen floor, he spread excrement on the upholstered arm of the parlor couch, studied it, knew by a new tumult in his chest—so curious in

sensation—that this was different. Risk was present. All the same, he would show it to her. He did.

This time she did not scream, she stood stock-still. She sensed that he had done it on purpose, and so she did not say a word, merely cleaned the sofa by which time he had an attack of diarrhea and the floor was dirty again. He began to laugh and to bawl, but she did no more than sigh and clean him soundlessly in a listless loveless fashion, ^{thus} ~~that~~ made such an impression. ^(that he) ~~he~~ became awake in the middle of the night and went to ^{her} ~~his~~ ~~parents'~~ bedroom. Alois had been called to Passau for preliminary interviews and the house had not seen him for a week, but just before midnight he ^{undoubtedly} ~~had come~~ ^(came) home. Since the boy had formed the habit of going often to his mother's bed whenever Klara was alone, he was surprised, even as he cracked the door, to hear a little gasping, and wheezing, and then the bull-roar of Alois' voice. It came in spasms. Beneath it and above it were his mother's cries, soft, and full of the oddest torture. Those cries spoke of joy soon to come, so soon to come, yes, just beyond reach, yes, now, almost! Through the half-open door (kept open particularly for her to hear him should he cry) he saw a sight his mind would not take in, not at once.

Something looked like eight arms and legs and two people, yes, two, but one of them was upside down. He could make out Alois' bald head and side-whiskers pressed between his mother's legs. Then, without a word his father had turned around and was sitting on her face.

Adolf walked away as silently as he had entered, but he knew, there was no doubt—his mother had betrayed him. Just then he heard a final set of cries, a sobbing full of wonder, and he turned back and peered into the room, seeing what he could by the moonlight in the window, and his father was ^{beating} ~~beating~~ ^{beating} Klara with ^{his body, his big belly} ~~his body~~ slapping on her. But she was grunting like a dog. And full of contentment! “You beast, you are an ugly man, you are an animal, you!” and then again, “You, yes, you, yah, yah, yah.” There was no question. She was happy.

He would never forgive her. That much the two-year-old knew. All her love had been for him. Now, she was with another. And now his father was behind her, and on top of her back.

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

(end of chapter)

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9.

9.

If the scar would remain, the active fury was soon gone. Once back ^{rest of} on her breast, the child was ready to forgive, ^{once they fell asleep} even if the odor of Alois' sweat ^{just} was on her drowsy body. But then, ^{he began} he had begun to bawl for his milk not thirty minutes after she ^{Klara} had sunk into the best sleep she had known for years. -

^{stet first 1 1/2 times} Must one suppose that because a child's deepest feelings have a half ^{stet} life of thirty minutes, they are not profound? ^{As we have learned, such} experience is designed by the D.K. to create deep feeling, then bury it, and ^{stet} move on quickly. The residue can stay with the child into maturity

There we will leave Adolf ~~for the moment~~. Because of that betrayal, he would never love his mother as much again. Yet, his feelings were more intense. There was pain in his love now, and an anger that revealed itself by nipping at her breast with his first teeth. ^{for a few days, almost as} Indeed, he felt close to Luther, and ^{could sleep} when drowsy, often slept beside the dog through an afternoon. Truth, he saw the hound as a brother. They had both taken a fearful beating on the side of the heart that is most tender, and indeed, the love affair went on until Adolf began to take too much advantage of the beast, punching him in the belly, trying to poke into his eyes, and sometimes, when standing, loosing a

kick to the ribs. The dog began at last to growl at his approach and Adolf in turn would whine and run to Klara. There was a period when this made her so distraught that all delight in breast-feeding was gone. The teeth had done it. The days of weaning were at hand.

In those private councils of her mind that would never be available to her child, her stepchildren, her husband nor even to the confessional box, she had come to the conclusion that she must have another child. If this came in part from the old fear, even now, that Adolf might not live into adolescence, she also feared that she would never love him as much again, no, not as once she had, and so maybe there should be another child.

Besides, she was entering a new time in her marriage. She looked forward to Alois approaching their bed ^{when} ~~where~~ he was in a certain mood. For on such evenings—after all these years!—desire came alive again and was there!—there, down in the marrow, deep.

We may remember that the last time we encountered Alois ^{in the dark} ~~he~~ had been burying his nose and lips in Klara's vulva, his tongue as long and demonic as a devil's phallus. (Be it said: we are not without our contributions to these copulatory arts!) Alois was certainly possessed by

us. Never before had he given himself that much to such an osculatory exercise, and yet he had become so good at it, and so quickly, that no explanation is possible unless we were there as well.

(We do have the power to give transient gifts to men or women we are not looking to turn into clients.) (that's)

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

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

As a devil, I am obliged to live intimately with excrement. And this is true for all its forms, physical and mental—the emotional waste of ugly and disappointing events, the sour indwelling poison of unjust punishment, the corrosion of impotent thoughts, and, of course, the literal aspects of caca

itself. It is true. As devils, we live in shit, we work with shit, we prosper from it (as I may yet attempt to explain). It is natural for us, therefore, to comprehend a marriage through the eye of the cloaca—and I will add—that is not the worst way. For parenthood is not only the mansion but the outhouse of marriage. As St. Odon of Cluny stated so unforgettably (in a remark worthy of the best of devils: inter faeces et urinam nascimur—between shit and piss are we born), so the proper study of marriage resides not only in partnership, congeniality, boredom, predictable habit and daily despair, but in the guts and smear of it all—the daily, almost comradely knowledge of all the forbidden tastes, smells, bodily places. Indeed, in ~~its~~^{their} absence, ~~marriage~~^{the sacrament} has less foundation. On caca, is marriage based. So I would assert. You are free to attach my opinion to my spiritual investment. I am a devil, after all, and we are creatures with a need to look for the lowest common denominator in any truth, especially within the properties of waste itself.

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10.

Alois' promotion came through. The Finance Watch named him to the post of Chief Customs Officer at Passau, and Klara had the ^{confirmation} pleasure of knowing she was married to a ^{successful} man ^{with} powers of achievement.

On the other hand, they could hardly rent their house in Braunau at such quick notice, yet, Alois had to work in Passau and that ^{took a hell of a} was a long day ~~apart~~ of travel. So, there were periods, often for weeks at a time, when Alois ^{from the family,} lived apart. In consequence, Adolf could loll in the big bed with his mother.

The child's joy was profound. If it was grievous that Klara had to put him aside whenever Alois come home, so did he also learn that such happiness could be recovered. ^{For a while} After a day or two ^{at most}, Alois would be off again to Passau.

This lasted for a year. Even when the family eventually ^{moved to} joined their ~~father~~ in Passau, the new position required Alois to oversee other towns. He was, therefore, away ^{at night} (as much as he was home, permitting Adolf to sleep ~~most nights~~ right up against the nocturnal warmth of his mother in the big dark bed. ^{There were nights when he almost loved her as completely as once he had,}

To Alois, ^{praved} ~~was not~~ working in Passau had been agreeable at first for ^{Alois} ~~his~~ vanity, but soon proved to be a burden ^{to} on his confidence. Braunau, after all, ^{had been a} ~~was~~ ^{considerably less important station.} only a few thousand people. Trade with Germany was limited, and for ^{the} ~~to~~ most part, the smugglers ^{they encountered} were petty thieves. Any ^{the roads} road to Munich or to Vienna that ^{crossed} ~~traversed~~ the frontier ^{in that region were} here was of secondary importance. The tourists ~~who crossed~~ were rarely well-to-do. Nothing to catch a good customs-man's eye. Most of the product was agricultural; weighings were tedious. While Braunau was situated nicely on the river Inn, most of its architecture was humdrum, and there was not much substance to the view. Braunau ^{had few} dark secrets, ~~were few~~ ^{next to none}.

Passau proved another matter. It was German. By agreement, Austrian customs ^{also} operated on the German side of the Danube. Here, the buildings at the river bank afforded rich historical connotation. Passau had once been ruled by a Prince-Bishop. It had medieval towers, it had castles, and some of its churches dated back to the onset of the Middle Ages; others ^{Passau's walls} were high Renaissance. Passau, ^{spoke of} grandeur, dedicated duty, ancient crimes, torture chambers, by-gone glory, and—much to the point for Alois—criminal smugglers with imagination enough to be a match for him.

~~But he~~

~~He~~ was left uneasy by the new responsibilities of his position. If he

had always thought his uniformed presence to be a full warning to

malefactors, a conclusion he fortified for himself before every mirror

available, he also knew that ^(rigorous professional) this was due to the manner he had developed

^{over many years.} ^{present} ^{the heaviest}
~~over the years~~ (On duty, he could offer a personality of official calm

~~and that was~~

guaranteed to provide no easy peace to the traveler before him. His weighty

approach as much as ~~he had to put a seal on himself~~ ^{as said that any man} ~~to be able to manifest such calm~~

presence suggested that beneath this calm, indeed, to be able to manifest

~~this calm, he had had to put a seal on himself. That was the way to be the~~

~~effective to people that I think he was not~~

~~the people you dealt with could feel it was important for them not to disturb~~

~~him. He had studied many an upper-class customs officer—those with~~

university learning, some with livid, invaluable duelling scars. They were

the ones to model oneself after.

Taking up his command in Passau left him feeling, however, less

settled. While he made few outright errors, his tone became, at times, too

harsh. Rudeness toward inferiors was reasonable only when the cutting

edge of the criticism was accurate. One's subordinates learned correct

procedure best under the sting of a whip well-applied. Occasionally,

however, some trifle would provoke him. ^{fine} ^{unduly.} Once he went into a tirade

must have set

Impress
 the people
 you
 deal
 with.
 let
 them
 know
 that you
 are not
 the
 man
 with
 whom
 to
 play
 games.

because an underling addressed him as "Herr Official" rather than "Herr Senior Official Hitler." He could sense that his new Passau contingent of juniors, so much more sophisticated and educated than the younger officers at Braunau, were ^{growing /}critical of him. Now and again, when he ^{looking}looked down from his post at the rush of the Danube below the Customs' bridge, tears would come to his eyes. He would find himself thinking of Braunau, and of the two women buried in the region, dear carnal-spirited Franzeska, yes, and for an instant he would also mourn Anna Glassl. No beauty, but she had known what to do under the sheets. ~~The hand was stirred~~

He smoked all the time. His nickname, not known to him, was The Chimney. ^{"And what is the mood of"}~~In what kind of mood is~~ "The Chimney today?" one young officer might ask another as he came on duty. Alois knew ^{these}that the juniors were resentful that he did not allow them to smoke on their shifts—nonetheless, he insisted. The very injustice of it would enforce his authority. His years had told him. A good officer must be fair for the most part, yet ready to ^{employ}use certain small inequalities. Done judiciously, it was ^{most}effective with inferiors. It reduced them, ^{one}to a necessary notch. ~~in their self-esteem~~

Now that Klara and the children had joined him in Passau, he became more severe with his offspring. Alois, Jr. and Angela soon learned not to speak to him unless they were asked a direct question. If Alois, Jr. was outside, the father would put two fingers to his lips and whistle. It was identical to the call he used to summon Luther. In turn, Alois, Jr., fresh-cheeked, strong, stocky, and with a face like his father's, had driven Klara and Angela into hysterics one afternoon by picking up one of Adi's monumental turds that baby brother had chosen to deposit on the parlor rug. When stepmother and sister began to scream at the sight of it in his hand, young Alois chose to run after them, his eyes wild with mischief. Soon, Klara and Angela were crying out in terror and in whole indignation at the monstrosity of the act. Then, Adi joined in their chorus. He screamed with the rest even as he also galloped right after Alois, Jr., until his big brother, tiring of the sport, tore off an inch of the ^{stuffy} ~~turd~~, whirled around and planted it on the tip of Adolf's nose.

That evening Klara told Alois, Senior. The beating which ensued was ^{comparable to} ~~worse than~~ the attack on Luther. Alois, Junior, could just about crawl off to school next day. Profound, after that, was the discipline in the house.

When Alois came home from his duties, the children dared at most to whisper. Klara, unwilling to upset him, and full of remorse for having told her husband, was also quiet. Supper was eaten in silence. The smell of Alois' breath, rich with meat and sour from beer, mingled with the aroma of red cabbage.

He would take, then, to the armchair, select one of his long-stem pipes, tamp his tobacco into the bowl with all the authority that could ^{reside} ~~rest~~ in the thumb of a man of official importance and ~~do his best to overpower~~ ^{then seemed to be doing} ~~proceed to overpower~~ the fireplace with his own smoke. Alois, Jr. and Angela went to their room once permission was given. But, Adi was called forward.

His father would cup the three-year-old's head in his hand, and then, with a divided grin—fifty percent affection, fifty percent ^{mean} ~~close~~ to outright meanness of spirit—~~he~~ would blow smoke into Adolf's face. ^{and} ~~As~~ the boy would cough, ^{and} the father would chuckle.

As soon as Alois let go of his head, Adolf would smile and run off to the water closet. There, he would throw up. Sometimes, head bent over the pail, the three-year-old would remember the sounds of Alois making love to Klara, and such groans and sobs were ~~right~~ there with him in the lurches of

asking himself) ~~Brandenburg~~ (why his mother ~~had not~~
~~never came~~ never complained about the smoke,
 head, Klara would come to his aid.

No, she had not.

She did not. She did not dare. She sensed that the greatest
 provocation to her husband would be to comment on anything he did with
 the volume of his smoke. Did he quiet his intimations of possible failure at
 Passau by the clouds that rose from his pipe?

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

A town doctor reassured her that this medical phenomenon was not
 exceptionally uncommon. Such boys often grew up to be men with large
 families—"The good God, dear lady, gave more than enough, and then
 doubled it."

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

"Some boys in that condition, such a minor condition, are sometimes
 active highly active. That is all."

Kind words could not soothe Klara. The missing testicle was one more stain on the Poelzl family. ~~was a true imbecile~~ Her sister Johanna was not only a

hunchback but, according to Alois, half-mad and an idiot. ^{And then there} ~~A first cousin~~ ^{was a first cousin — a true imbecile.} ~~was a true imbecile.~~ Not to speak of all of Klara's dead brothers, dead

sisters, and her own dead children. ^{she decided} ~~No, there was not enough of Alois'~~

^{strong} ~~constitution in Adolf, she decided~~ ^{no} none of the strength Alois had so

obviously passed on to Alois, Junior. This was also her fault. She had loved her husband on the night that Adolf had been conceived, but only on that night, and in a way—was it unholy?—such a night!

But now—could it be too late?—she would say that she loved her husband again. ^{She came to this conclusion slowly, step by step, over many months but} ~~Indeed~~ on one fine night in June, a year and a half after his

transfer to Passau, she felt ^{a rush of} new respect for him. For just that afternoon—he

had learned that in ^{six months} another half-year he would be transferred to Linz, the

capital of the province, there to serve as Chief Customs Officer. ^{It} ~~That~~ was

the most important assignment you could find in all the Service between Salzburg and Vienna.

On that night, they conceived ^{realized} ~~another child~~. Perhaps there was never an hour when she loved Alois more simply, or ^{missed} ~~wanted~~ ^{a second} ~~another~~ son ^{so much} ~~that~~.

Clarification — or realized she wanted a second son so much

~~much~~ ^{but year-long} Little Adi with his one testicle, had put a small horror into her soul.
She did not dare to think any longer that ^{Adi might} ~~maybe~~ Adi could live a long life.
^{On the contrary,} ~~no,~~ they needed another child. The new one, she decided, must belong to
Alois as much as to herself.

11.

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

Having been sent the night before to a neighbor's house where he
went through the discomfort of sleeping on a small bed between Angela and
Alois, Jr. (who kept pinching each other over his intervening body) he knew
that changes were coming. This perception turned into his first large
sorrow when, next day, as he rushed to his mother's bed, the midwife put
out a hand as large as his face and said, "Stay back. Don't hurt the baby."

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

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

"Will he talk to me?"

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

For weeks, he could hardly get near enough to talk to Klara. Yet it had been just a few weeks ago, no more, when he would have the same conversation each morning with his mother.

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

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

"I think you are the most beautiful."

She would hug him to her breast. The feeling ~~in~~ those breasts ~~was not~~ *she had held for him was not* what it used to be, but she would pretend it was. Not a year had passed since she had stopped feeding him. Now, he would gorge on the cream

puffs she often prepared for dessert, indeed, he would ~~keep wolfing~~ them *down at such a rate that* ~~until~~ Alois, Junior, would complain audibly if Klara was present, or, in her absence, would crack a knuckle across his head. Klara, prey to new uneasiness at how little attention she gave to Adi these days, would defend his right to the cream puffs. "He is so little," she would say, "he needs them more than you."

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

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

Adi did not agree. Angela was undependable. Angela was always ready to pinch him for no good reason. She was nice, at times, but

treacherous. "No, you are more beautiful than Angela," he would say, and his mother would shake her head.

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

He was also afraid to go outside. ^{wild} The yells that boys made while playing in the field back of the house ^{were} ~~sounded~~ fearsome ~~to him~~. He spent his time looking at the illustrations in a book his father had bought about the

Franco-Prussian war of 1870. He would like to be a brave soldier. Could he be? He asked himself. He was so afraid!

One afternoon, after school and much at Klara's bidding, Alois, Jr. pulled Adolf out of the house, and led him to the field behind the house where ~~a number of~~ ^{not a dozen} small boys ^{had divided their ranks and into two, and} were playing at war.

Alois, Jr. studied the group for a few minutes ~~and~~ then selected the leader of one of ~~these two miniature armies~~ ^{the army}, a big stout five-year-old. "This is my brother," Alois told him, "and if you let anyone ^{on the other side} hit Adolf, you will hear from me." He punched the boy on the arm hard enough to leave a memory, and departed.

When Adolf came home that evening, Alois, Jr. took him aside. "From now on," he said, "I eat the cream puffs first. As many as I want. If you cry to your mother, mamma's boy, I will not protect you on the field."

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

Next day, he had to go over to the game by himself. He was more afraid of Alois, Jr.'s derision than of any blows he might take in the battle.

Actually, there had been little enough punishment on the first day.

The fat boy was quick to use his own body to shield Adi from every ^{attack} ~~assault~~ ~~on their redoubt~~. Besides, it did not take long to grasp the basic principle.

The game was ~~so~~ simple. Divided into two teams, the boys took turns chasing each other. It was really not a war. It was more like tag, ^{since} ~~once~~ ^{once} (caught, you were dead, ^{but then each} Each ^{After which,} melee lasted only a few minutes. ^{take a breath and start a new game,} By then, the boys close to breathless, would count the losses, ~~That was all except that~~ ~~Every now and again,~~ ^{usually} given the clamor of the ~~first~~ charge across the field, somebody would ~~get~~ ^{usually} knocked down. Once, when his leader was waylaid by two boys from the other team, it even happened to Adolf. ^A ~~One~~ rude shove ^{to shoulder} ~~on the head~~ (and he was slammed ^{on} to the ground. ~~Some~~ ^{his will} earth drove up his nose.

He did not cry. It took an absolute effort of ~~his~~ ^{his will} will. But he did not ^{permit him to} ~~make~~ ^{make a sound.} One minute later, he had to negotiate with himself once ^{in order} again to keep from weeping. That was because no one had noticed his new-found stoicism. His feelings were as bruised as the scrape on his cheek, the outrage to his stuffed-up nostrils.

He managed to get through the battles that followed ~~for the next hour~~ until dark. He had discovered that he was quick and could usually dart away whenever an enemy soldier tried to touch him. To his delight, he even tagged one enemy soldier in the next raid.

On the second day, his face was in the dirt again. Action was everywhere. It was hard to dodge the rush.

He hated being knocked down. The fat boy was rueful about it every time it happened and begged him not to tell his brother. Adi had the pleasure of patting him on the back. No cause for ^{alarm} ~~fear~~ (he announced, not a word would he say.

That night he could hardly sleep. ~~All of them had been playing like fools.~~ He felt that not only did he know more already than they did, but in time to come, the fat boy, Klaus, would be his lieutenant, while he, himself, as captain, would make the rules.

~~In fact, soon enough,~~
~~Before long,~~ he did come up with a more interesting game. ~~War was~~ ^{last to go}
~~more than two armies running at each other,~~ ^{should be} war was ~~trickery,~~ ^{not for}
~~armies running at each other all the time~~ ^{war was}
maneuver. He did not know the word as yet, but he had certainly arrived at the concept. (And without our ~~help~~ assistance.)

~~Put~~ 17 To his new ~~play~~ mates he now proposed that they move ^{from this flat field} to a hill in the next meadow. Each army ^{was to} ~~(whether five or six boys)~~ could group on opposite slopes. That way, they would not be visible to each other until one team or the other crossed the summit.

Once he had convinced the boys of this change, he brought in an amendment. Given, for example, a total of six boys to a side, each army could now divide its forces into four soldiers and two—a two-pronged attack. If four men met only two on the other side, those two were automatically captured. No tagging was necessary. (He still detested being knocked down.) If, on the other hand, four attackers met four defenders, then the attackers lost. Still, no tagging.

More improvements were soon on the way. He could see that his innovations dampened the fire of the occasion. When the flank that had four boys came over the hill to meet four defenders, the encounter became no more than a flat-out surrender. So, tagging, to his dislike, had to be reinstated. This brought on a new debate, for he insisted that the captain on each side (he had become, as foreseen, the German Captain—and Klaus was his lieutenant), must not be captured. The leader must not even be touched.

With preternatural eloquence, he made his major point. “The highest officer must always be respected.”

To gain this point, he had to pick up allies one by one. (It did not hurt that stout, sturdy Klaus was always by his side.) In time, Adi prevailed. He was a little amazed at how well he could deal with these matters.

12.

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

Be it understood that a serious investiture of any ^{man or woman} ~~person~~ ^{person} is never routine. Each case is unique. The average ^{person} ~~human~~ ^{can} assumes that one loses

one's soul to the devil in an instant. The premise is not only false but the ^{few} ~~dedicated and often mediocre ministers who work~~ product of endless propaganda by the Cudgels. ~~In the real case, we do not~~

~~the real situation is that we~~ ~~franchising assets~~ ~~do not~~ appropriate people through Satanic entrapment, then keep them forever as

our vassals. To use a particularly crude and contemporary American

example, Avis versus Hertz, or Burger King against McDonald's is closer to

the mark. So soon as we seek to invest our powers in a client, the Cudgels

appear in direct competition. Sole possession rarely occurs. Ploys and

gambits, ~~manipulations and counter-manipulations~~ proceed on their separate and conflicting course for years. Rarely do our demons or the angels of the Dummkopf realize a significant victory. (Indeed, after a series of such ~~battles, the odd soul actually captured in toto by us or by the D.K.~~ ^{Cudgits,} bears more resemblance to a wretch than to a prize.) ^{of} (Insane people are often the victims of such sustained contests.)

The process is full of paradox. For example, those
 One element can often bring to focus, however, our interest. It is the ~~self-protective sense of the person we seek to invade.~~ ^{potential clients that} Those we find most difficult to approach are often possessed of the greatest potential. *Conversely,*

~~Conversely, those~~ ^{a great deal} ^{focus} individuals who are easy to enter usually prove of no great service. It does not take much to traduce a drunk or an addict. We polish what is left of their charm, which helps to consume a little more of the compassion of their families, especially if the mother, father, or any of the siblings wish to remain under the charitable purview of the Dummkopf. In effect, we injure their God-loving hearts! But that is easy work. Such gains are small. Ultimate ends are not served. We wish, after all, to conduct human nature through a transmogrification away from the Vision of

The

the D.K. We work for the eventual project—yet for me to name!—^{superior and} ~~the more~~ ^{advance} ~~advance~~ ^{vision of the Evil One.)}

There is, however, another factor in every contest which I am bound to explain. It concerns the separate economies of Divine energy and Satanic energy. They differ considerably.

I can allow that even in the higher cadres of devils and angels, we hardly know who has more Time to give to a contest ~~when it is~~ devoted to one man or one woman. I have to suspect that for most situations, the Dummkopf is ^{ready, more} more powerfully endowed (and vastly more spendthrift). On most evenings, for example, He discharges untold bonanzas of effort to His sunsets (which—it must be admitted—do bolster human morale in general) but His gifts are not always pertinent to His direct aims. The E.O. has often remarked that the D.K. is analogous to a spoiled wealthy lady who only wishes to hear fine remarks about ^{her} good taste and beauty, whereas we devils have to be obsessed with ~~the~~ head-on budgetary demands. For certain, the E.O. is forever obliging us to forecast ^{what} the expenditures of Time ^{involved} might be to secure a ^{new} putative client. Such ^{assessments} prognostication can be onerous, especially if one is wrong. To spend years on a promising fellow who

eventually ^{results} ~~succeeds in resisting~~ us is not only a budgetary blemish upon our individual record, but a general loss for the project. ~~To prevail!~~ the E.O. is always reminding us, ^{So, we try} ~~requires us~~ to choose our targets with more acumen than the Cudgels.

Over the millennia, our E.O. has evolved principles from which he rarely diverges. We do not have to be ^{reminded to take cognizance of} ~~instructed to remain alert to any~~ ^{any fornication} ~~copulation~~ that promises to get us off to a good start.

Our targets are obvious. Rarely do we fail to attend the ^{joinings} ~~couplings~~ of rich and powerful people (so full of infidelity!). As has been noted, we do not ignore the occasional wretched couple whose rites engorge incest. Other copulations, however, ^{particularly} ~~those surrounded by angels~~ ^{attended} ~~present a more~~ ^{then} demanding task—it is never routine to slip through ~~a~~ ^{their} blockade of angels. It seems—I speak here for myself—as if the E.O. has never been able to accept his failure to be present in the hour when Jesus Christ was conceived. The result, if one is to put it in the familial sense, is that our Source, our Prince, our E.O. soon had a half-brother whose powers were at least comparable to his own.

Fortunately for us, Jesus proved to be a typical Son. (The private record we are furnished by the E.O. is that He was much at odds with His Father.) Jehovah, indeed, was often incensed by the rebelliousness of this good son. *But, let me keep to the point. The prevailing*
 good son. *Indeed, we consider ourselves fortunate that the covenant*

of God go
 between the Dummkopf and Jesus *that the* is as full of oxymorons as any of the *Christian churches have been in a state of ideological*
 Christian churches, not to mention Mohammedanism, Buddhism, Judaism, *can't*
their conflicting dogmas are comparable to a Lutheranism, Sufism, et al. Et al, indeed! *Since*
Why go on? Whether the E.O.

can't
Since
Why go on?
 wars against the Lord and His Angels with a well-integrated army, or on *Demolition*
Del. W.
 certain occasions will muster no more than a guerrilla force against a *behemoth, the prevailing*
 behemoth, the prevailing fact of our existence as devils and demons is that
 we are obliged to live within a limited budget. You may believe that our
 projects are chosen, therefore, with discretion.

For example, we are usually active (as previously stated) during
 copulations likely to satisfy the needs of the near future—that is, *Speak of*
 the nearest oncoming half-century. Yet, *paradoxically* the E.O. does not
 ask us to show much interest in the early development of the children who
 come out of such acts. "In the *early* years of life," the E.O. will remind us,
 "there are *too many* accidents and surprises." Sometimes we keep no more than a

short record of those families who interest us. "Over the first few years," he will also remark, "a child is caught between the need for love and the development of the will. Those two ^{eminent factors} are so naturally at odds with each other that we can rely on the D.K. ~~and his Cudgels~~ to mess it up. This is particularly true with Catholics. To capture a child's philosophy so early is to ensure future rebellion or severe meanness of spirit."

Indeed, our general strictures are as follows: Except for the most unusual cases, we ~~usually~~ exercise no intervention until the age of ~~three~~ ^{seven}.
~~Even then, we often hold off.~~ (Until well into the nineteenth century, an extraordinary child was always in danger of being carried off abruptly by one grievous disease or another, ~~which for us proved a waste.~~) Indeed, ~~Even from three to seven, we avoid intervention that is without a clear goal—a most important tenet.~~ Any devil seeking to invest ^{earlier} in a particular boy or girl, has, in effect, to argue his case.

Once a child has turned seven, it became easier in most cases, to decide. But it is still not ^{promising} interesting. (The E.O. looks upon the next five or six years as—indeed, he terms it so—the Age of Clods. "They are now encountering the world in its most basic form—the school years. Nearly all

of them rush toward habit, routine, and stupidity as the most immediate forms of protective insulation. These are the years when the average human ego takes shape in all of its readiness to lie, mis-remember, distort and forget—all in order to keep the young ego in some readiness to support the ongoing project, oneself. ~~There is no need to pick up any of them at this time, nor unless they are, against all likelihood, possessed already of the most promising potential.~~

Our hunt then commences more often with adolescence. Here, we are at the first lively stage of divine intervention. Often the best energies of the D.K. are there for us to subvert since He is invariably ready to invest resources in very young men and women who hardly know what to do with their sudden inrush of increased will and appetite. Promising distortions of His newly fortified creatures are now open to us.

I have proceeded this far into explaining our processes of selection because it was altogether uncommon for the E.O. to direct me to pay strong attention to ^a ~~this~~ five-year-old ~~Adolf Hitler~~. *that his name was Adolf Hitler was, after all, of no importance then,*
~~Now~~ *Rather,* having been present (by proxy ~~as I have allowed~~) at his conception, it had been ~~more than~~ a matter of course for me to keep several

minor devils abreast of his family's activities. Our jargon for this kind of surveillance was milk-runs, an expression we employed long before it was adopted by U.S. Air Force pilots in the Second World War. Any one of our minor devils could pass by a house in the hours before dawn, and quickly

ingest by way of the small and large storms, inertias, and joys of the

~~in his absence since the last visit could ingest~~ ^{that transpired}

previous day or week or, for that matter, a longer period (a fund of

information, ^{It} ^{exceptional} which required no particular expenditure of effort. (Unless the

abode was seriously protected by guardian angels.) In a more normal

condition, one swept by the house and then relayed the findings in capsule

to appropriate superiors. While humans slept, we did our work. (As did the angels. Yes, those forces of Light also worked in the Dark!)

^{was supplied with}

I had a close history, then, of the Hitler family ^{available to me}

years since Adolf had been born, knew it ^{at least} in such detail as was

imparted to me by the separate devils who kept track of our numerous

projects in that region of Austria. If what my agents offered was virtually as

modest as the narrative I have presented, it had, until now, sufficed. In

reviewing Adolf's early years, I confess that at the time I saw no large

promise in the boy. He was outrageously in need of love and damnably

vulnerable. The odds were that he would perish early, or creep through life with a broken-down ego, mutilated or cicatrized. At least, so I would have judged if not—to repeat—for the ^{11. kel. head}possibility that the E.O. had been as present at his conception as was Gabriel at the Christ's. So far as I knew, that was not ^{impeccably}definite, but ~~then, it~~ could hardly be ignored!—even on the busiest ~~and most hard-working~~ nights, I was instructed to include the Hitler family on every milk-run. That was no ordinary injunction.

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

13

As is true of all reasonably disciplined armies, there is no room for rebellion when given a direct order. I did what I was told. I stiffened the boy's spine. Indeed, I will make the claim that I accomplished this with some finesse for I did not inject any of our special funds of energy into his courage or his will, no, rather, I steered him to do the job himself. That proved enough. At bottom, he was the one who chose not to weep when his face was in the dirt, and afterward, he displayed his own cunning in finding ways to avoid physical punishment. It was enough that I was (so to speak)

at his side. That gave him a subtle confidence. We too served in effect as guardian angels. (For special clients, only!)

I was aware again of the superior insight of the E.O. Adi showed ^{a face} ~~(that)~~ signs he might be worth the work. The child had powerful instincts, and was as much superior to an average five-year-old as a young race-horse is to a run-of-the-mill pony. I enjoyed working with him, therefore, and that was just as well ^{since} ~~for~~ the order had come during a period when I could not afford ~~for many~~ new inroads on my budget. Improving a child's courage usually demands the use of precious stores, precisely those funds of love and force we have managed to steal ^{By then} ~~from~~ His Cudgels. Warmth and gifts of courage are His preserve and if ^{the D.K.} ~~He~~ were not such a wastrel, and we not so adept, our chances would be paltry at best. Of necessity, we have become skilled at ^{impersonating angels} ~~impersonation~~. Even an adult, feeling our infusions of love, tends to believe it is bona-fide, ^{→ that} Sometimes the person will even assume he or she is the recipient of Grace. (I suspect that was what Kierkegaard had in mind ^{just that} when he suggested ^{ought to be} ~~that~~ people be wary of feeling ~~most~~ saintly, since they could then ^{be} ~~(working for Satan.)~~)

I speak of this because we devils are human to this degree—a fine return on our investment puts us in the best of moods. So I came to enjoy being with Adi as he proceeded to improve the little game of war that was being played by these five-year-olds in Passau in the spring and summer of 1894. Indeed, the change in my sentiments was as rapid for me as for the child. (Secretly, we do cherish our power to bestow gifts upon a putative client.) We must. Often the only way to capture a child so young is, as I have indicated, to spend some of our limited stores of love to seal the conquest. A risky business. One might lose a lot. All too often, a child's *shifting inclinations creates too much* capacity for quick and independent change, *(being less habit-ridden than we can I see)* ~~adults to shifting inclinations~~ *our youngest clients* can waste our efforts. ~~They~~ *they* alter themselves on their own, ^{or} ~~they~~ resist us, or, worse, the Cudgels move in.

To forestall this event, I was there night after night to instruct Adi while he slept. Indeed, he delighted me (the rarest of pleasures for a devil!) by the development of his activities during the day. To repeat—he was no ordinary five-year-old, no, he had an exceptional capacity to tinker with his game of war. Rarely did he fail to improve it.

He soon saw, and I believe this came as much from his perception as mine, that outposts were necessary. It was ^{wrong} ~~not enough~~ to send soldiers over the hill without ^{some knowledge} ~~some knowledge~~ of what opposite force they might encounter. So, a scout from each army had to attempt to work his way up close enough to the summit to obtain a covert look at the dispositions of the other side. Following in logical sequence came another ^{change} ~~shift~~ in the rules—an advancing army had to be free to ^{move} ~~shift~~ its forces from flank to flank, even as it climbed the hill. Ditto for the defenders. The defense could also shift their outposts. Of course, all this soon called for larger forces on each side, ^{but} ~~and~~ Adi was able to convince his regulars that more boys should be invited in from nearby streets and other fields. They, the originals, having been here first, could take promotion in rank. Let me offer one of his speeches to his troops.

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

“That is what I want.”

"Of course. It is what we all want. All of us. And to do this we must learn more. For that, we need more soldiers on both sides. How are we to accomplish this?

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

"Klaus here, will be my colonel."

Those words are close to what I remember. While I have certainly given him an eloquence no five-year-old could muster, I will insist that good turns of speech did come out of him and these words were not only not his own, nor mine, but ^{seemed equally (by)} ~~were as~~ inspired as if some agent of the D.K. ^{showed} ~~was~~ ^{have been} also present, and ^{was} ~~also~~ helping him from the other side. What a large investment was being placed in this little Adi. ~~Powers other than myself, were also concerned to give him the power to speak. Of course, he had natural talent.~~

Before long, his—I will indeed say his boys—were engaged each afternoon in hour-long battles. There were startling shifts of tactics and

endless alterations of the rules. The numbers increased to fifteen and twenty a side.

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

^{This} That was characteristic of ^{our} the Maestro. ^{had to be} We ~~were~~ ^{always} ready to accept ~~external~~ changes in circumstance. In this case, the situation of the family altered. Alois had decided to move Klara, Angela, Alois Junior, Adi, and the baby Edmund, up from Passau to dwell nearer to him in Linz.

Let me apologize for this change of venue. A good reader is the most unprotected of humans—their sympathy moves in advance of their judgment, ~~or mature expectation~~. Some readers may ~~then~~ have felt uneasy, therefore, to discover that they were enjoying the first successes of the child Adolf Hitler in his games of war. Be assured. To read about the skills or triumphs of any protagonist is all-but-guaranteed to elicit happiness in whoever follows the story, especially if there is a small suggestion of the sentimental, or even better, the magical. ~~(Provided such magic comes on the easiest terms!)~~ Those are two ~~most~~ useful tools for any author who is ~~ready, even~~ shamelessly content, to arouse quick emotions in the reader. A

Fine minds may be
 few good authors are ready to come to working terms with the devil, but,
 count on it—popular writers and champions of the sentimental come to us
 for us all the time. We love them. They are such dupes. They think they are
 working for both God and their own prosperous self. We do not disabuse
 them of that fine sentiment. Rather, we encourage them to let them marinate their readers in baths of
 misperception while we enjoy the profit.

This time, Alois had a serious reason for moving. He had decided to
 retire. He ^{wished} wanted to become a bee-keeper. For that, he would buy a farm.
 In the last year of his Customs work at Linz, he had begun to look about and

by January of 1845, he found what ^{might} ~~looked to~~ be the right property in a town called Hafeld, thirty miles ^{from Linz,} ~~away~~, and in February he bought it. In April, Klara and the children moved from Passau to ^{that} the house. They would ^{still} ~~now~~ be at a distance from city life. Even the closest school was in the next small town to Hafeld, Fischlham, where Adi would soon be ready for the first grade. Over the next few months Klara and the young ones were to live on the farm while Alois completed his service in Linz.

Of course, the oncoming retirement would not come without some serious inroads on a most impressive edifice. I speak of Alois' ego. It was its own kind of monument, impressive, yes, when we consider the meager materials out of which he had been able to construct it. Through his adult years, ^{having} ~~he had~~ managed to keep an unspoken sense of himself as a man destined eventually for serious achievement. ^{certainly,} Since he was not ~~in the least~~ lacking in a sense of reality, ^{as well and so kept} ~~he did no more than keep~~ this notion as a meditative nectar, ^{rather} rather than a serious expectation. Nonetheless, it would seep into his sweetest thoughts about himself when male company, good beer, and tobacco mingled dependably in the tavern after work.

~~Be it said that~~ ^{By} his final year as Chief Customs Officer of Linz, even ^{— were every}
~~satisfied~~ some rudiments of this concept—"a man of importance," ^{satisfied. Let's see} While
 (his final position could hardly be as elevated as the thin air of his dreams,
^{did} ~~could~~ ^{ticked} still the title offered ~~the~~ marrow of real satisfaction.

If only he had enjoyed working in Linz, it might have been enough,
 but the problems with personnel encountered at Passau were now

aggravated. Linz was an important station for the Finance Watch. Since it
 (a most important) ~~Upper Austria~~ ^{Upper Austria} was capital of its province, ~~CK name of province~~ Customs was stocked

with young, ambitious, and well-educated junior officers, ^{socially-sophisticated} Possessed of
~~social sophistication~~ ^{could never at a loss to} they were not unready to show a quiet contempt for a

^{Senior officials who might lack any of the amenities. Most of these young men came from well-to-do families, and so their own future attainment of high office was}
~~senior officials who did not satisfy the mark. Most of them came from~~
~~well-to-do families, and so their own future attainment of high office was~~

taken for granted. This attitude, as palpable as the air itself, left Alois

^{joint} ~~feeling~~ somewhat out of date. Indeed ~~he~~ ^{he} was getting on. For the first time
 in all the years he had been wearing a uniform,
 in his career, he did not always strike the passing eye as immaculate in

~~uniform~~ (That now demanded too many pains!) Nor was he as confident of
~~his~~ quick decisions. Certainly not as severely punctual as once he was.

Sometimes, at the point of issuing disciplinary reprimands, he would hesitate long enough to contemplate the possible repercussions.

For ^{just} such a reason, he eased up on smoking restrictions. He no longer ~~felt all that ready to face~~ ^{enjoyed facing} into the inheld wrath of younger officers. In

consequence, he enjoyed his own tobacco less. He ~~also~~ began to feel as if ~~too many of~~ ^{had patients} his associates were looking for him to retire. He was, ^{after all,}

^{near to} ~~approaching~~ forty years of service. He was eligible. While he could

continue for another twelve-month and even another, he did not deem it wise. Small, steady inroads on his vanity ^{kept} ~~were~~ moving him toward a

smaller dream. What if he chose to become a gentleman farmer? That would not be so bad, no, not out there in the autumn sun of his career. Such a life could fulfill a few other inclinations. What the hell! Born a peasant, he could end as a prosperous agriculturalist.

He had money enough. He could buy a decent farm outright. He would have his pension, and his savings—he and Klara had certainly exhibited thrift. Besides, he had in hand the sum and interest of the larger part of three wives' dowries. It could be said that the first two had brought some real money to the union. If Anna Glassl had succeeded in recovering,

through law, half of her large dowry in lieu of their separation, still, she had been nicely well-to-do, and Franzceska, while hardly up to that measure, was nonetheless the child of a prosperous farmer. Even old Poelzl, Klara's father, had come up with some florin.

On the other hand, Alois understood money only too well. He knew not all coin was equal. Deep in one's conscience, one ^{had to} could pay a tithe to money that ^{was} had not ~~been~~ earned properly. That was incontestable to Alois. Money gave back its reflection of how it had been ^{gained} earned. Sometimes, he felt a passing chill. A good part of his prosperity could be seen as ^{the} a flower ~~which~~ ^{that had} sprouted from the coffin-soil of dead wives' dowries.

During this last year of service, while Klara took care of the children in Passau and he was free in Linz, he had begun to feel too old for other women. That was when he told himself ^{to} go back to the earth. It was what he had always heard from Johann Nepomuk—"the real woman is in the fields." The old man had only to get drunk enough, and he would repeat it over and over. "The real woman—look for the real woman in the fields. Respect her."

It was an adage Alois could enjoy but ~~hardly support~~. After all, his ⁷
 present plans did not include heavy duty in agriculture. ^{as a farmer,} His aim, rather, was
 apiculture. He was interested in developing beehives. He would market the
 honey. That would be his real crop. All the same, owning a little land
 might be equal to acquiring another limb, a fifth appendage so to speak, as
 important to a man with peasant roots as a trunk to an elephant.

He had indeed bought a farm five years ago about the time Adolf was
 born. In many a way that purchase had been more exciting to him than the
 birth. Land, at least, was not going to die on him in the way the first three
 babies had gone back to wherever they came from.

The reverse had occurred. The land did not perish, but his ownership
 did not go so well. The holding had been near Spital, a hundred miles from
 where he was then working in Braunau, yet he had had some far-off notion
 of retiring to the place. In the interim, it seemed a good way to take care of
 his sister-in-law, Johanna Poelzl, rather than having her dwell with them as
 a maid. Johanna, he had long decided, was not only surly but half out of her
 head. In addition, she was a hunchback. He did not want her in the parlor
 every night, especially not with that body.

All the same, he did have some admiration for Johanna. ~~She was Klara's sole remaining living sister, but that had little to do with it. He respected Johanna's temper.~~ She had the fierce pride of someone who was not in the least afraid of God. She would put no trust in Him. ~~She was ready to say as much.~~ "God," she would declare, "did not have to kill off so many of us in the Poelzl family." Alois could tip his hat to that ~~defiance.~~ "She's not like my wife," he was fond of telling ~~his fellow convivialists in~~ the tavern. "Klara is ready to kiss every cross she meets."

Still, Johanna did not run the farm very well. Each and every peasant who worked for her was, sooner or later, antagonized by Johanna's sharp tongue, and finally she had to give it up and go back to live with her father and her mother—also named Johanna. If we recall, that Johanna had been Alois' mistress on one unforgettable occasion. ("Sie ist hier!")

Alois was able, however, to sell that first farm at a modest profit and ~~so felt well-disposed~~ ^{was not ill-disposed} to taking on the property in Hafeld these several years later. This farm he would work himself. It was called the Rauscher Gut (which can be translated freely as Windy Lands) and it offered nine acres plus a wooden house under a thatched roof with good views from the high

ground of the mountains of the Salzkammergut. In addition to some fruit trees, there was an orchard of walnut trees. A hayloft was in the stable and stalls for two horses and three cows, plus one prize sow who also came with the purchase.

It was perfect all ways but one. After the purchase, (and only after the purchase) neighboring farmers were ready to hint to the new arrival that the land might be beautiful, but it was not necessarily going to be famous for its crops.

He looked upon these comments as ^{exactly the kind of} ~~hazing ceremony~~ ^{that} that resident farmers would visit on ^a the newcomer. Oh, he assured them, it did not matter. The land would be given a rest. He was there to raise bees. That was his element. Good honey could become the most prosperous crop of them all.

Indeed, in the last days before his retirement ceremony (which was acceptably eulogistic to Alois but most impressive, even thrilling, to Klara) he did have a series of drinking nights as a closer way of saying farewell to his staff and to the decades of his work. Since he had no desire ever to be seen as a man who would moon over the past, he dwelt on his future, he

bullied his junior associates, plus a couple of old cronies, and a few respected town officials to drink more than one stein with him on the merits and mysteries of bee-keeping. Indeed, he belabored each table on each night with a ^{so much} good deal of kultur on ~~the~~ ^{these} subject of hive maintenance and the "mysterious psychology of his oncoming fabulous little creatures," ^{that} ~~in~~ ^{that} ~~advance~~ ^{Alois} would his junior officers ^{would want} tell each other, "Try to keep The Chimney from smoking us out ^{tonight} with his bees."

In truth, ^{he} ~~Alois~~ did see himself as a philosopher on ^{this} ~~the~~ subject. What an achievement for an untutored ^(peasant from the Waldviertel) ~~Austrian~~ to be able to give a lecture equal to a ^(Heidelberg) ~~German~~ savant! "Honey bees form an amazing and most complex society." "There are many social structures to perceive in each hive," he would inform the drinking gang ^{by way of introduction to the subject} each night.

In the last weeks before retirement, in the same Linz tavern he ^{had} ~~would~~ frequent ^(frequent each night) most nights after his customs house shift, Alois spoke more and more often of ^{the} ~~these~~ higher concepts ^{to be found} in apiculture. Honey bees formed an amazing and complex world, he kept informing his drinking cohort. "With rare exceptions, these tiny creatures give their lives to one purpose: Build a future for the generations ^{who will} to follow. The honey they are

able to convert from ^{the} ~~the~~ nectar and pollen ^{that} they bring back from the flowers
 is ~~not only~~ for their ~~own~~ ^{own} consumption, ^{but} ~~no~~, gentlemen, it is ^{also} accumulated ^{in a}
^{necessary excess of hard work to} feed their larvae." He nodded. "These larvae are installed in ^{the finest} ~~the~~ hexagonal
 cells, ~~that are~~ a wonder to behold, yes, they are constructed superbly and
 symmetrically out of the very beeswax these insect workers know how to
 make from pollen. Great care is taken in the construction. They know that
 future generations must succeed them."

His company nodded, their spirits glum. This was poor beer talk,

~~indeed~~. But Alois was off on his peroration. Indeed, he was the essence of
^{that} the kind of dogmatic lecturer who ^{is perfectly prepared to} ~~virtually~~ prides himself on his lack of
^(if they are insufficiently grateful to listen carefully) sensitivity to his audience. "Some bees," he now remarked, "the bigger

ones, ^{hester} ~~even~~ become guards to watch over ~~the security of~~ the entrances to the
 hive. ^{Do you know?} They are ready to go into battle at the cost of their lives. They ~~are~~ ^{? will ever}

~~obliged to~~ fight off such powerful raiders as wasps or spiders or termites,

Yes, all the insect world is looking for a free meal in the honey. But that is ^{only one}
^{(of the obstacles to a peaceful life for the bee,} only one difficulty. They come up with ingenious solutions to serious

problems. ^{have to} If I may be permitted to speak thus, ^{All through the summer months,} Many of the worker bees are, as

^{one example, constantly engaged in keeping} constantly engaged in keeping the interior of the hive cool in summer.

~~through the summer months, keeping~~

Clarification: to a peaceful life for the bee, if I may be permitted to speak thus, they have to come up with ingenious solutions to serious problems.

How? By means of ^{their} tireless activity. They never stop fanning their wings. ^{must} After which they are ready to die. Some even wear out their wings. Why? To create a draft to cool the hive.

^{This act is so necessary, cannot} For that is necessary. The larvae ~~can~~ survive neither in too much chill nor in

too much heat. Think of it. A ~~cluster of wings~~ thousands of wings all

fanning away, even as others go out to forage ^{for more supplies} out there in the multitude of

flowers. They cover themselves with pollen and ^{store the pollen in pockets on their legs} nectar and then fly back to

the hive. Absolutely loyal to the needs of the hive, all of them. ^{I can tell you} They fly

under the weight of loads that weigh more than their own bodies. Could we

do that? Perform such labors day after day? Think of them as flying work-

horses. Yet, they are only the size of bees. And all the while, others are

working to make beeswax from the pollen ^{that} mysterious and extraordinarily

useful beeswax. I tell you, they create a society comparable to ours. But

maybe more rational."

None of the junior officers were ready to argue. (If they did, he might ^{for} go on another hour.) It took one of the older town officials to reply. Taking several portentous sips of smoke from his pipe, he said, "Come, Alois, they are only insects."

"No, good sir! With all due respect, you are mistaken. There is much more to them than one would think. Some are, I believe, more inspired in purpose than the average human dolt. Let me say, they are one of the wonders of our universe."

15.

I was not well-prepared ^{for} Alois' interest in these matters. ^{here} ~~This~~

was not the man I knew. While I could see a practical purpose to acquiring a number of hives since the product was eminently salable, and beeswax in particular, brought a very good price, I could not find the balance.

Apiculture had its risks, including the ^{unscheduled} ~~always-present~~ peril of receiving a serious number of bee stings. While it might be reasonable to engage in such efforts rather than endangering his long-worked heart by looking to plow a field, I had, all the same, an uneasy suspicion. Alois was too sincere

in his enthusiasm, ^{it was not sufficiently} ~~and not concerned enough~~ with profit. The desire for money is, however, ^{often the tap-root} ~~so much the usual root~~ of the motive that drives ^{most} ~~(men~~

and women into new activity, ^{therefore} ~~that~~ signs of its absence always concern me. ^{Obviously, I} ~~I~~ ^{cannot get} ~~have to~~ feel like a sorry devil when I ~~am not~~ ^{near to} a client's private

intentions. Yet here was Alois ready to undertake this venture because it satisfied something in him ^{that} ~~that~~ I had not yet detected. Normally, Alois ^{kept a close relation to} ~~counted~~ the money he made ^{most} ~~most~~ carefully.

I did recall that he had tinkered with keeping a hive in one small town, dabbled, and soon gave it up, but a few years later, went back again. Always on the smallest scale. In the last few months, he had, it is true,

written a short article for a journal that served bee-keepers in the area around Linz. To my surprise, the piece was literate. Alois' experience was obviously limited, but, indeed, he had acquired some book knowledge of the subject, and was now fascinated by a new mode of cultivation. Bee hives made of straw might soon be done away with. Skeps they were called, squat-ribbed domed objects about the size and shape of big-bellied human torsos, and skeps had their drawbacks. For example, to harvest the honey, bee-keepers had to keep the population of the hive stunned, which was usually done by smoking them into near-comatose condition. It was an imprecise process, and the skep often had to be ripped open to collect the ~~product~~^{product}. Despite the smoke, some honeybees awoke long enough to sting the collector.

^A
~~This~~ new and much-discussed innovation was, however, being developed in England and in America. Already ^{even in} there was talk about it in Austria, ~~Some~~^{Some} local bee-keepers were ~~now~~ ready to do away with the old ungainly straw structure. If the skep had been ^{for} its time an improvement over the more barbaric practice—common in antiquity and the Middle Ages—of rooting the bees out from their hole in a tree, ~~more~~ advanced bee-

keepers around Linz were now speaking of hives that could soon become the equivalent of a modern city built to the scale of bees. This new housing, would be no greater in size than the skep, ^{was} ~~no more than~~ a wooden ^{cabinet} ~~box of~~ ^{that could} ~~comparable volume~~, but it would be filled with glass trays installed vertically. ^{the} ~~By this new mode~~, worker bees ^{seemed content to} ~~could~~ build their miniscule hexagonal wax cells on both sides of each inserted pane of glass. ~~It was a transparent wall one could insert into the box at will, or remove as easily.~~ Since ^{this new kind of} ~~this wooden~~ chamber could hold a good number of upright trays, and each tray had room for thousands of cells in a grid of layers and rows, some keepers calculated that each hive could yet be compared to a giant apartment building in some future megalopolis like Berlin or New York.

To explain this venture to Klara, Alois did emphasize the pecuniary promise. Good money would come back from clean work, and Alois Jr. and Angela would help, he told her. And Adi as well! He convinced her that the new project was eminently practical.

I was still bothered. Klara might believe him but I did not. To me, ^{looking to Linda to come} Alois was finding his own way of coming nearer to the Dummkopf. That, ~~I~~ ^{can promise you}, was not a matter I could afford to ignore.

K. H. for the
usual reason

16.

I was now debating whether to pass this concern on to the E.O.

While the Maestro could ^{so enter} enter, whenever he desired, into our thoughts, as a practical matter, he did not choose to ^{do so} ~~all~~ that often. He would ^{reserve} ~~direct~~ preserve his efforts ^{resources} for more exceptional ^{rather than general} activities.

On the other hand, he ^{I was supposed to be on the alert for} would not be about to favor any high-ranking assistant who did not send out ^{any} ~~his~~ alert on any unexpected turns concerning ^{in any of} ~~one of our prime clients~~. One could ^{also} fall to the side of too much caution ^{or} ~~on not enough~~ ^{not enough}.

My conclusion on this matter was ^{not} to inform the E.O. Alois had ^{after all} never been one of our clients. There ^{was never the} had been no need. He was by our measure an average man, which is to say he was sufficiently corrupt to be available ^{whenever we might} for our use if ~~we needed~~ to invest temporarily in him. The assumption was that he would be open to a quick invasion ^{since} the Cudgels would hardly be guarding him. To what end? He was so self-centered. What ^{could} ~~would~~ there be ^{in him} ~~be in him~~ for them to protect? Whereas when it came to someone like Klara, we did not dare to go near ^{not} ~~for~~ so little. It would have proved ~~too~~ ^{we did not need her directly} punishing and again—to what end? Some of our most exceptional clients ^{are the offspring of} had come from good mothers. Indeed, evil children that issue from the most

loving women are always able to injure morale. The Dummkopf's long
ranks of average men and women ~~do~~ find it hard to accept that ugly results

can issue from devoted efforts.

It shakes their faith in the Dummkopf. How could God allow this? A ~~stand~~ lament.

Indeed, we had ~~not~~ gone near Klara, ~~it~~ ^{had} been enough to reach her ~~on~~ ^{on that} (one incomparably special night—that lightning raid—when Adolf had

been conceived.

After that, paradoxically, she could ^{was} prove more useful to us as ^{herself} ~~she~~ ^{innocent} ~~was~~, there, nurtured by the attentions of the Cudgels, ^{this however,} but that is so complex ^{that} a matter it will have to wait. To give but an indication, let me say that

Klara, being gifted with depths of love, would not only adore her Adi, but

would become enchanted by the new one, Edmund ^{which was just} ~~This could prove~~ ^{about certain} enough to flagellate many of Adolf's ~~early~~ feelings.

To watch over a child through the early years is, as I have indicated,
so complex and chancy a procedure, that we ^{usually wait.} ~~do not~~ embark upon it often.

Life itself will shape unexpected openings for us to ^{find our way} ~~get~~ into men and women ^{Besides,} we have not yet gone near, ~~and~~ our best efforts, as I have also remarked, can

be contravened by the Cudgels.

We deal then with likelihoods, with reasonably expected outcomes. Alois, in himself, on the hoof, that is to say, Alois, his faults and virtues all more or less predictable, had been serving as the keel for our ongoing comprehension of the Hitler family. He was so dependable in his strengths and habits, his productive contributions, his built-in cruelties and crudities, that one could, if necessary, intensify or reduce the heat of Adolf's hatred for his father in such a way as to mold the boy. Depend on it! We depended on Alois. He was ~~so~~ predictable.

Now, his outsize love for bees ^{was turning} promised to turn ^{for me.} things askew. (There are few atheists who can go all the way to the grave without being challenged in their heart on one or another occasion by the fear or, worse, the intimation that God does exist. In this sense, they are comparable to ^{pious virgins} ~~virgins~~ who are tempted into sudden and unholy heats. Like many such ladies, they cannot accept sex (in ^{the} ~~their~~ atheistic case, religion) as a force to be met on equal terms. No, like the ^{good} ~~virgin~~, the atheist, has to take it, so to speak, through the back door. They fall in love with God by way of nature, paganism, service to others, technology ^{seen} as the best possible solution to humankind's problems, ^{or} through exceptional allegiance to a fetish or a

mystery. In Alois' case, it happened to be ^{an overblown} a recognition of the immense collaboration that could be present between the mighty and the miniscule.

Since he was hardly ready to ^{bather in a} dive into any immediate pool of joy ^{for} ~~in~~ ^{greater} the glory of the Lord, he approached his newly opened sense of Mystery by way of ^{the} ~~his~~ old allegiance, ^{as to} Franz Josef. This much I learned by ^{engaging in} a quick raid on his mind, an activity ^{that depended on the likely} ~~as I have suggested~~ that depends on ^{probable} ~~the~~ good chance no Cudgels are near during the length of ^{my} ~~your~~ raid. (It is ^{an appealing} ~~not~~ unlike ^{would be} a blind bet in poker, and the E.O.—who may be the greatest poker player of all time—does not encourage us to form ^{any} ~~a~~ predictable habits ^{in that direction} ~~there~~.)

On this occasion, I penetrated quickly ^{from that raid} on my raid, and soon was out. I gathered what I needed, I now knew a good deal more about Alois' new

dispositions. My unhappy sense of what might be in his mind was confirmed. These bees had a life he could find ^{analogous} sympathetic to his own.

^{This} ~~That~~ is why ^{natural phenomena are} ~~nature is~~ so often the first entrance ^{perception by} ~~for~~ humans ^{into} the conceivable nearness of God. They discover, for example, that a puppy or kitten is a ^{existence} ~~small~~ warm cuddly bit of nature and love ^{who is secretly} much like themselves and so can serve as the gateway ^{to larger suppositions} ~~into~~ a larger imaginative

~~existence.~~ ^{To} ~~For Alois, the bees had a life he could compare to his own, the~~ ^{foragers at home in (the flowers}
~~weve creatures he could understand~~
~~foragers most of all.~~

On any warm day, bees ~~who were out~~ ^{intimate yearning} scouting for new fields of
 flowers knew the heat of the sun and the intimacy ^{(that only the sun could}
 arouse in flower petals. Alois ^{was not about to throw open any bolted door to the} would never allow to ^{side of} harboring an unbolting
 mystical side to himself—he was ^{altogether} like most humans in that
 regard—but I had found the spot, the much-protected psychic soft spot, ^{the soft spot in his psyche,} He
 would, ^{actually,} in the innermost recess of his ~~unadmitted~~ ^{begin to} thoughts, muse on
 the ~~extraordinary~~ art that must be present in any creation which would

choose to bring the honeybee into the perfumed caverns of the flower. It
 stirred him ^{to think of two} to think of this: Two wholly separated existences ^{growing} had become
^{with each other} so entranced by the burgeoning heat of the sun that they were ready to serve
 each other. The flower would surrender its nectar, while the honeybee

covered itself with the pollen of the stamens. In another moment, the bee
 would separate from ^{this one} one passionate love to look for another, whichever
^{fine} ~~next~~ flower was ^{beckoning in the breeze, and then would be} ready to gather more nectar for the hive even ~~as it~~
^{as it left some of} spread the pollen of the previous stamens ^{first} onto ^{was left on} this second infatuation.

Such images ^{It was the} ~~actually~~ gave life to Alois. The balance between hard work and satisfied desire ^{He felt close to that, ~~who~~} was so fine. Indeed, the bee would stagger back in flight ^{Sully its} with its pollen bags and honey ducts. ^(yet) And had not Alois, in his turn, given much to women and brought back much for himself, so much accumulated wisdom on how to deal with the world, or, at least, his customs-house corner of the world where by the end of his career, he ^{invariably} almost ~~always~~ knew what was true and what was false in declarations offered by strangers, particularly women who might wish to deceive him, yet could not, because he was wiser than they were. He possessed the true honey. Wisdom was the knowledge of what others were up to.

As Alois saw it, honey was a concentrate of secrets—secrets held by passing travelers and commercial people, secrets as sweet as honey, all those little goods you could steal and keep for yourself. But he was there to ^{take their secrets} stop them. He could work as hard and long as any honeybee on the hottest and most productive day of summer when the flowers were ^{most} open, working hard for a future beyond themselves, even as he, Alois, had labored on many an occasion to protect the glory, centuries upon centuries old, of the Hapsburgs and their exceptional Empire, so devoted to the future. Not all

the Hapsburgs had been great, perhaps, not all ^{so very} good as people, but it was true for the best of them, those ^{who were} like Franz Josef. They were good humans, very good. Alois could hope to find a resemblance to Franz Josef in his own features—the same sideburns, the same dignity. It was said of the Emperor Franz Josef that he could work for endless hours at his necessary and near-to-endless duties. When necessary, he, Alois, was also ready. And yet they knew enough, both of them, to comprehend that it was not enough to carry the honey back, but that one must keep a ~~good~~ part for oneself.

Some people in Linz he knew, fools for the most part, had been shocked when gossip ~~had~~ spread about the actress, ^{Frau} ~~Miss~~ Katharina Schratt whom, is was now bruited about, Franz Josef had taken for a mistress. Even when he had a wife as beautiful as Empress Elizabeth! Such news had spread like a spill of oil which has no boundaries. It had been a blow to some. Not to Alois. He understood. Both the best of men and the worst had to keep their share of the honey for themselves. As he entered retirement, this thought actually brought a taste of peace.

Let me not be altogether captivated ^{however,} by the voluptuous turn Alois has just brought to his meditations. After all, he had his fear of bees as well. Once, in previous years, he had been stung so ferociously and apocalyptically (if I may put it so) that he never forgot the attack of vertigo it caused. Such power to create pain! That it could exist in creatures so ^{did not come from} small! It ~~could not be~~ the honeybee alone, he decided, but must derive from ~~that little being's~~ congress with the sun! Such pain might even ^{express} be an end-
~~product of~~ the rage of the sun. With that, Alois was familiar. He had worked through many a summer in the blare of hottest daylight, stuffed into his uniform. Of course he knew the rage of the sun. It was there to disseminate goods and warmth from the heavens above, but also to glow as a manifest of divine rage.

These were thoughts too large for Alois to ^{accept?} ~~take in~~ openly. He never brought such meditations all the way forward into words, only his thoughts—which was good enough for me. This much, however, he knew: Honeybees were agents of the sun even as he was an agent of the Hapsburgs, and both were close to the ultimate power of them all.

Could these large epiphanies be the product of full retirement? Had he lost his own power to bring harsh ~~and severe~~ levys upon any stranger who ^{might try} ~~was ready~~ to abuse his realm?

The answer is obvious: Alois was not ready to retire. I looked forward with my own trepidation to how he would deal with his four children now that Edmund was born. For that matter, how would he ^(+be to) live ~~on a farm~~ with Klara? In my purview, I could anticipate the unforeseen and unexpected rages of a man whose heart was not wholly in his retirement. Like unclassifiable clouds on the horizon was the shape of my disturbance. Given Alois' propensity to blow pipe smoke into Adi's face, I could feel the return of my obligation to keep more than a small eye on the premises. All the same, I would not be able ^{later} ~~later~~ to pretend to the E.O. that I was ready for the trouble that Alois, Junior, would bring in the next year when he turned fourteen. ~~The farm would be in Alois's hands~~

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Part III

1.

Just now, I committed an irrevocable act of treachery: We are not
~~allowed~~ supposed to reveal who we are, not ever. ~~From the stated~~
~~to be a secret is inevitably painful to our spirit~~

Of course, my disclosure is on paper. I can still eliminate what is
recorded here. The Devil—it is more agreeable for me to speak of him as
Our Maestro, or as the Source—is in one way like all other creatures vast
and small. Everyone (including the Lord!) is obliged indeed to live within
certain restrictions, or—if you will—paradoxes. There are certain cruel
paradoxes ^{that} ~~which~~ circumscribe one's nature. I can vouch that the
accomplished and most respected leader of my Service (a minor matter but
most limiting for him!) is not fond of common paper. That substance is

derived, after all, from trees (and they happen to be God's most loyal, faithful, and trusted servants.)

No, paper cannot be a sympathetic choice for the devil. These days, he is attuned to electronics much more so than is the Lord. Each, as I say, despite their prodigious and near to incommensurable powers, must still live with separate paradoxes. For that reason, I have trained myself to work with paper since there is much less likelihood that my words will radiate out to him. I can add that this has been in covert defiance of the Maestro for some time. He, if I may speak of his complexity as "he"—forbids such a practice. While he has no desire to use up too large a portion of his resources by monitoring every last detail of our minds—there are too many demons and small devils for that!—he is certainly not inclined to allow us our own unapproved ventures. He does not keep a constant watch on us, but then, he does not have to. We are in true fear of him.

Now, however, that I have acquired the skill of being able to hold many thoughts to myself, I feel somewhat more ready to continue my biography, my novel—call it what you will! From time to time, I may even offer a few more hints on the make-up of our Two Kingdoms. That title

encompasses a truly embattled duality. It includes that world of spirits who serve God, and are known by the somewhat inexact name of angels (I would remind you that we call them the Cudgels), and they are in opposition to our army of devils who cleave to the Evil One (whom we usually refer to as the Maestro, the Source, or the E.O.) While these remarks will not be all that unfamiliar to anyone who is familiar with "Paradise Lost," I will note that many on our side happen to be well-versed in that English classic. I cannot speak for the angels, but devils are obliged to be devoted to good literature. Such material is a professional complement to our work with humans, indeed, we detest most best-sellers for their sentimental inexactitudes. Milton, to be certain, is high in our arcana of poets and novelists whom we do not have to look upon as unforgivably second-rate. He did, after all, provide a synopsis, a rough and ready outline of the contest between the Two Kingdoms. No matter how distorted and inaccurate (and unfair!) is Milton's panorama, it offers, nonetheless, a pioneer demonstration of how our armies might have faced each other at the commencement.

One can offer one's respects, then, to that great blind man, even if Milton's landscape is, of course, outdated. Devils who serve the E.O. are by

now installed in every fold, redoubt, and corner of human existence. Much like the immensely complicated Japanese game of Go, (with its 387 intersections where one can deposit a stone) the positions occupied bit by bit with our black stones are forever surrounding or being surrounded by the white stones of the angels. (It is even said that when Go is played by two Japanese Masters of the Ninth Degree, it can take almost as long to count up the results of their black and white encirclements of each other as to play the match.)

To enforce, therefore, this first explanation of the sinuosities and recesses of our war, I am obliged to offer my own crude outline of the forces at play. There are, indeed, three separate conceptions of what reality might be—the divine, the satanic, and the human. Three separate armies in effect, and so, there are really three kingdoms by now, not two. God and his angels work upon humans to move them in His direction. Our E.O. and his loyal devils look to infiltrate, or, better, possess many of these same humans. Through the Middle Ages, humans had virtually no role in this war. Hence the title: Two Kingdoms. But now there is also the individual man or woman to take into account. I can say that many do their best to be

beholden neither to God nor to the E.O. They are always seeking to be free, to be the creature of their own destiny. Their greatest desire is to become what they wish to be by the light of their desires. In the actual event, as matters proceed today, we devils try to guide those men and women we have attracted (we call them clients), the Cudgels contest us, and the particular individual usually does his or her best to fight Us off, both of Us, God and Devil alike. Humans have become so vain (through technology, I suspect) that quite a number now wish to be wholly separated from both of us.

This, it can be repeated, is but a first approach to the subtle perversity embedded now in existence, a poor excuse for the true complexity that and affects events. My hope—given the curious temper that has overtaken me lately—is that I will be able to capture the real and inner life of Adolf Hitler. (Just why is not altogether clear to me as yet.) Let me be ready, then, to explain not only my strengths and yes, my talents for this task, but also my weaknesses. I promise you: No devil is without a profile! Some of us can be as complex as men and women, and, on occasion, as disappointing. We

have many powers of which the first is our ability to enter the human mind, but on all too many occasions, such powers become seriously misplaced.

2.

It is safe to say that I know a good deal. As I have just remarked, I can enter into many a mind; I can recover, if necessary, the concealed, even the long-buried memories of the particular client to whom I am assigned. This consumes much Time (which word I capitalize since for us, as well as for the angels, Time is a resource comparable among us to the way in which Money serves as a matrix for humans). We are always calculating how much Time we can afford to give each of our clients, and the cost increases when we choose to inhabit people's dreams. My range of

insight (that is, of investment) when brought to focus upon a single person is close to complete, but can use excessive amounts of Time. For this reason, perhaps, the average human has, at best, powers of insight and memory that usually can function in one or another restricted state. My sense of recollection is free, however, of most distortions. Existing within a set of absolute commands, there is no need for me to develop the sort of vigorous human ego that must be ready—sometimes at all costs—to transgress divine or social laws because the person is determined to carry off a major endeavor. Such vanity in union with a passion for independence is guaranteed to warp their memory. The larger the ego, the more must a memory only retain those recollections which are of immediate use, no matter how they are misremembered or wholly untrue. Nonetheless, those are the warpings they can afford.

In contrast to such men and women, I have a more simple existence. For the most part, I look to make my clients successful. In our Company, that is just about certain to produce reliable results for oneself. Sooner or later, you are promoted. Over many periods, I have had clients whom I was able to develop to the point where they could serve directly in one or

another of The Maestro's larger projects. The majority of humans, however, caught in the push-and-pull, the back and forth between their guardian angel and or some directing devil like myself, end by producing little that is useful to either Kingdom. On the other hand, I can recall a few unhappy situations when I lost a catch at the last moment. The guardian angel who was my opposite number in the particular contest retained the spoils.

At one period, not so long ago, as a result of several such losses, my position suffered. For a time, thereafter, I was assigned clients of petty origin or modest achievements. I encouraged common soldiers, for instance, to injure morale in their company by desertion, I served workers and peasants who looked to stir up revolutions, but turned corrupt. I knew a few priests in small towns who got into trouble with little boys, or mayors who pilfered funds. I served petty barons and counts as they gambled away the last of old holdings, and I might as well list petty suicides, petty thieves, drunken louts, unfaithful wives of the worst sort, ditto their male counterparts, as well as comparable flotsam and typical jetsam. I had a horde of clients, but only a few could offer a new or interesting problem for my developed instincts. I had all too many now nameless men and women

who were born out of little and proceeded to less. It could have been cause for despair. I admit that only large projects appealed to me even as recognition from a social summit gives real life to a snob. While I could rarely know whether Our Maestro was using me for some strong if imperceptible purpose or marinating me to enlarge my experience, I did, on occasion, take hope that he had not lost interest. He even remarked once that I might seek high rank again, a post comparable to some of the epic encounters of our Company during the first three centuries of the Church in Rome. All of that might be there for me once more, provided I would pay unremitting attention to my present wretches, thugs, and drunks. I learned then that the E.O. had selected me to oversee the work of a number of other agents who were keeping watch on a young client whose potentialities might yet prove to be immense. Insignificant at present was this person and so was his family, but there were ancestral fault-lines full of the intoxicating stink of our old friend, blood-scandal. The boy in question, who by 1908 was a jobless young man in Vienna, happened to be stricken with timidity, 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

was, in addition, lazy, prone to temper tantrums, and possessed of an ego comparable to the size of a swollen limb. All the same, he was desperately afraid of virtually all meetings with other humans. Yes, this boy was an unmitigated mess.

I did not dare to ask, but of course I could not hide my curiosity from the E.O. any more than any of my agents could conceal their active reactions from me. At this point, the E.O. actually chose to speak directly to my thoughts. He said: "Why am I interested in this boy? Can it be that he possesses the largest ambition one could possibly encounter in a young man who is not already insane? I may propose that you take him on. But, remain at ease! It is still no more than a project. It could certainly fail. He will need endless instruction. His terrors must be bolstered with the most confident experiences you can arrange for him. And you must guard him from any more crushing defeats to his ego. In time, if he develops the greater part of his potential promise, he could become your only client. Must I say more? We are looking at a project worthy of a major effort."

I will say all this was uttered by the E.O. in a voice he chose to underline with his characteristic irony. Since he usually responded with no

more than an unspoken intimation which was all we needed (in much the manner tha a dog can rise from his sleep and shake himself at his master's silent command), we never knew how serious The Master might be when he spoke aloud. The consummate irony in the tones of his voice took away any certainty that he was committed altogether to what he said. Sometimes I felt that might come from his own uncertainty, but this was too perilous a notion to entertain for more than a moment. The E.O. would put up with our critical thoughts or even a passive outburst, but we knew better than to let ~~ft~~ *persist such ideas molder.*

In any case, I did not dare to ask: What if I fail? Many of our projects do. Particularly, major ones. They are such outrageous gambles. Our Source is not unlike God in this regard. There are all too many blind alleys in existence, after all—and a good many, I can tell you, were designed by the Lord Himself. The dniosaur, for example. If God is the greatest artist, He has also made the largest mistakes.

I was depressed. The new project was at present a backwater. I knew about such twisted clients, their future hopeless unless an historic era developed that could prove uniquely favorable to the distortions present in

that person. At this point, there seemed no sign of such incomparably special circumstances. (The First World War and the disasters that fell upon Germany had not yet occurred.) My role, as I saw it, would seat me as 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). I rode with Adolf all the way up to glory (and down again—which is half the matter, the other half being why I now propose to tell the tale). I know so much. This knowledge seems to exist as a separate force within me, separate and independent of Our Maestro, a force, indeed, so intense that I feel ready to break the first of the rules of our fold, which is that we never explain what we know to the uninitiated. Nor is it simple to do so. If, for example, I have told how Adolf was conceived on that night, in those extraordinarily special circumstances when I could speak of myself as being present as a catalyst, a Gabriel come from our side to stand in for the Evil One, it is true; yet it is, by ordinary measure, not true.

The fact is that I was not immediately in that bed during this occasion of apocalyptic carnality. Not literally. Nor did I have to be. Nonetheless, in stating that I was present, I was telling the truth fully as much as I was purveying a lie. Even as light is a wave and a particle, so we devils live at once in the lie and the truth. Both exist side by side.

The explanation—provided one is ready to follow!—is considerably less difficult than, let us say, Einstein's Special Theory of Relativity. Spirits exist in a relation to Time that is not comparable to any human perception of that same mysterious word. Ingesting the experiences of demons enables higher devils to vault back and forth. We pass through periods of Time that humans can only recognize in linear fashion as chronology. But, I, as a devil, did not have to be present on the night Adolf was conceived. That was not necessary in order for me to bring into myself later the exact experience of what happened. Another devil (of lower rank) had been present in Alois' bed for that occasion. By order of the E.O., he (or it, if you prefer) had entered the act. I must say that this is always an option for any of our cohort. We can enter into any and all cohabitation. On rare occasions, and this was one of them, the demon can call for the presence of

the E.O. So can the angels look to their Master. Since the resources of God and the Devil are not—believe it if you will!—infinite, such insertion must not be merely desirable or entertaining, but purposeful. The devil who had actually been present that night transmitted the experience to me years later with a completeness of odor and carnal detail that can be called absolute. It is fair to say that indeed it happened to me, and if he was the first Gabriel on the occasion when Adolf was conceived, I was very much a second Gabriel who subsumed him.

That is because for all practical purposes, I had been there. (Among us, to be given an exact recollection proves equal to being present.) So, I also knew from the irrevocable intensity of the occasion that the E.O. had also been there, had joined with his petty agent for one instant (even as Jehovah had been with Gabriel during another exceptional event.)

While I was not going to be exclusively attached to Adolf Hitler for many years, the E.O. had, as I have indicated, placed him in my Overview. It is equal to saying that the devils who worked with little Adolf were there to pass their experiences on to me. Over a period of time, his life and modest deeds as a boy were conveyed to me. Then, as the hour approached

when I would look to take possession of him, so did my concentration upon the sense-offerings of the minor devils in my domain take on more prominence until I was as steeped in the life of the boy and young man as if I had been alone with him over all the years of his childhood and adolescence. For that reason, I am ready to write about his life with an insight no biographer could attempt. Ditto for what I can relate about Klara, Fanni, Anna Glassl, Alois, Sr., Johann Nepomuk, Johanna, and all the others.

Now, this profound if most mysterious urge to share my insights with men and women I do not even know has to be part of the same strange force that is behind what seems to be my incontestable readiness to betray the E.O. Indeed, I may have begun to understand why I am doing it. Profound experience that is communicated to no one will scourge the soul. I, who have lived so long with the firm belief that I am no more and no less than a spirit—a presence void of soul—may have to face a serious disruption of my condition. Somewhere within, I sense the remnants of something much like a soul in myself, comparable, perhaps, to nerves ^{once} ~~still~~ attached to an amputated limb—nerves which all but insist on promising the body that this

limb can grow again. Such is the force of the thought in me that something like that may be present, some species of spiritual larva in its cell.

I have to recognize I may be offering much too much for so early a moment in our biographical endeavor. It will take all of a book that I may never be able to finish for you, dear reader, who is not at all in my likeness, and not my brother, to begin to absorb the confession just offered. If you are disturbed then, to a degree, well, so am I. The present is with me again, the precise period of these years now as I live in an America I can barely comprehend. If I am a presence who consists of no more at this instant than the all-but-retired spirit of a devil who is without a serious assignment, I also sense that I must keep returning to the premise that an account of the life of my former client will help, yes, will help to re-establish my footing on some long-lost terrain where I can begin to search for the remaining oddments of what may once have been my soul.

3.

Given the dominance of the large new technological world, one of our ongoing missions is to convince the majority of world citizens that there is no such entity as the Devil. And, for that matter, not a hell of a lot of existence for God. Certainly, there is very little on the modern intellectual

horizon that sees anything like a war between two opposed spirit orders. Rather, the New Technological World requires the universe to be subject to reason, nothing else. God, alone, as a solitary mystery, may prove acceptable here and there, and is even subject to adoration by full-service idiots who see Him as all-good, all-powerful, all One. Never posit a Devil. There can be but one mystery, not two! (Indeed, at the insistence of the E.O. we do not capitalize our endeavors, only His.)

There need be no surprise, then, that the general understanding of Adolf Hitler's personality is dim. He is, after all, a third mystery, the most mysterious human of the century, a man, when all is said, who was all-too-human, if, it will be agreed, the average man or woman does possess large funds of the inhumane. Nonetheless, over the years, I grew able to comprehend his psyche better than my own. How can I not take pride in this? As a specimen of the human, he was close to unmeasurable, and developed without question into the wild beast of the century, this all-too-modest-looking client whom in the beginning I belittled as "little Adolf," yes, I knew him when we still referred to the young man who grew out of the boy as "little Adolf with the big ideas."

I can state that as a newborn he was a most typical Klara Poelzl Hitler product. That is, he was close to desperately unhealthy. Indeed, he terrified Klara every time a drop of snot oozed out of his nose or a bubble of sputum popped up from his infant lips.

It is probably true that she was ready to die if he did not live. Devils are sound at anticipating motive (the more sordid, the better—Analogy Rex!), but our predictive attempts fade at the borders of mortality. Man proposes, the Devil imposes, and the Lord disposes, is not accurate for all cases, but we are obliged to recognize that God has the final power to decide on the timing of the death of every human. Take the extreme example of an airplane that has just gone down. Let us say we have brought it into sufficient malfunction (a most difficult process to accomplish.) Nonetheless, we do not have the power to destroy everyone on board. It is our Adversary (God) who determines the result. In most such cases, He will have to accept what we have succeeded in bringing off in secret or against His wishes. It is too costly for God to countermand us. Do not assume that it demands no exceptional effort for Him to save a few humans trapped on that lip of extinction—airplane crashes involve so many factors!

Indeed, He could not even save His Son, (as we are never tired of reminding our clients!) but there are occasions when a death we looked to create does not ensue. From time to time, even in extreme difficulties, God still disposes.

Be it understood, then, that the question comes down again to the implicitly vulgar matter of expenditures. A most useful rule of thumb—for human endeavor as well—is that all wars are ultimately determined by who can best bear the cost. Even as we devils are never all-powerful because He is our Adversary, so He, in turn, is never all-powerful either. Besides, it is often a prodigiously expensive for Him to war with us. To keep this understanding alive—that He is not All-Powerful—the E.O. demands that we try not to speak of the Lord as God, but as the D.K. (What D.K. means, I plan to explain before long.)

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

The attention she gave to Adolf's early days would have been seen as hysteria in any woman who had less cause for concern, but then, Klara was living at the edge of an abyss. She had had all of this pregnancy to

contemplate her earlier years with Alois. Recollections of their first illicit joining travelled on to the penetratingly corrupt smell of the sickroom as Otto, Gustav, and Ida were lost one by one in the same few months of the same year. She had prayed devoutly to God to save them. He had chosen to ignore her. As she saw it, that rebuke could only confirm the wretched evil of her condition. So she looked to go back to her feelings on the day she first met Alois during his visit in Spital. She was sixteen then and had never seen a man who disturbed her so directly, so physically—she fell back a full step on their meeting at the door. She might as well have received a blow to the stomach.

Yet she had also admired Alois, immensely, and at once. Her mother had an expression on her face Klara had not seen before. For one instant, there in full pride and longing, Johanna had seemed beautiful. On the next moment, Klara knew the same feeling, but with a closeness to her mother that was a good deal more than their animal sense of sharing the same bed-rags of existence, no, it was as if she inhabited her mother's heart over the blink of an eye, and then took in the full force of the pang that followed. In truth, Klara had had a visitation from us. One fine joy we devils can know

occurs in the instant we invest our spirit into the man or woman who might yet be a client. Johanna was not much of a devil (only for an hour in the straw with Alois could one say that she had been more or less invested) but it was different for Klara. She was able to feel all of her mother's old desire at the exact moment she saw Alois. If one may speak of a pang of joy, she felt indeed just such a bolt.

We need not, however, journey again along the back and forth of Klara's passion for Alois, nor return to the depths of her piety. By the time Adolf was born, she would wash her mouth every morning with laundry soap, a natural act given her mate's predilection (especially in late pregnancy) for putting her head into his groin and keeping it right there, one big hand on her neck.

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

pious hope! An angel, however, required that she have nothing to do with her husband. Not in bed! Such is the nature of pious obligation.

Alois soon had to face the possibility that a will of iron, when forged by prayer, and then girded about with more prayer, can be quite as powerful in a woman as in a man. At first, he could not believe that her refusal to let him touch her was neither a whim nor a new species of drawn-out enticement. "You women go back and forth like a dog chasing its tail," he told her in exasperation. Then, deciding this rebellion was to be mercilessly crushed, he seized her buttocks with one hand and a breast with the other.

She bit him on the wrist hard enough to draw blood. Whereupon he cuffed her, leaving Klara with a bruised eye he was obliged to beg her to conceal. (What a nasty scandal if she decided to go out and face all those women of Braunau who lived by the view from their window!) So she could not go out. For a week, his hand bandaged, he did the shopping after work—no tavern ale for those nights. After which, her discoloration no longer visible, he gave up what he considered to be his irrevocable rights and continued to sleep in a lump on his side of the bed.

Since this state was to be maintained for close to three years, it will certainly be worth returning to Alois and the solutions he found to lift such a matrimonial siege. But, for now, we stay close to Klara. An intensity of emotion is always attractive to our fold, even as farmers dream of black soil for future crops.

It need hardly be underlined that the death of Otto, Gustav and Ida, proved useful to us even if had not been the ones to effect it. Obviously, it intensified Klara's love for Adolf past any usual measure of large maternal love. When he began to cry out every time she kissed his face, she even came to understand that it was the odor of lye on her mouth. But since Alois was now driven to his side of the bed, there was no longer a need to wash her mouth in the morning. Therefore, she could kiss Adolf with full content even as he gurgled all obligingly.

It hardly required the insight of the E.O. to know that this could later prove useful. Excessive mother-love is almost as promising to us as the void of mother-love. We were keyed to look within the experiences of our clients for excess of every kind, good or bad, loving or hateful. Every exaggeration of honest sentiment could contribute to our aims.

If the E.O. and the D.K. generally pay little attention Themselves to most men and women—our warring interests usually end as a stalemate in the average person—it is no small matter for us to select a child early, because a large investment is possible before the Lord (whom, to remind you, we call the D.K.) or His Cudgels becomes aware of our infiltration. Early choice is a high-stakes gamble but the E.O. made such a decision by a most reliable rule of thumb. An incestuous procreation followed by swarms of mother-love has to offer fertile possibilities. When here, as we know, the event was fortified by the presence of the E.O. at the conception, there was every reason to expect that the child would offer extraordinary, unbelievable possibilities. If it lived. We lose so many. All too often, the D.K. spots them and, heartlessly—I will say this about Him!—yes, the D.K. heartlessly removes them, no matter the cost to Himself. The cost to Himself! A curious calculation is often present. The D.K. is not insensitive to the hopes of those who surround the child. The early death of an exceptional child can demoralize whole families most dreadfully. Even when the D.K. knows, therefore, that a given individual was subsumed by us, He hesitates.

He does not like collateral damage. Besides, He can always steal the boy or girl back from us.

So the D.K. is respectful of mother-love that is all-embracing. It can come as no surprise then that many artists, gargoyles, ogres, geniuses, killers, and an occasional savior live to maturity because God chose not to dispose of them. The first element of mutual recognition in the struggle between the D.K. and the E.O. is probably the understanding that no single splendid human quality can ever prevail by itself, unaltered by us or Them. Even the noblest, most self-sacrificing and generous mother can produce a monster provided we get there first. We are always on the alert for candidates who are loved outrageously in early childhood. All the same, as I have warned, this is not a game where one can begin to speculate on what might be the end result during any of the early stages.

4.

By the time he was a year old, Klara called the boy Adi. It was never Adolf or Dolfi. (Dolfi was much too close to Teufel for comfort.) “Look,” she would say to her stepchildren, “look, Alois, look, Angela, isn’t he an angel, a little god?” Since the baby had a round face, big round eyes as blue as hers, and a small mouth, and therefore looked to them like any other

baby, they nodded with easy obedience. She was a good stepmother and that was all right with Alois, Jr. and also with Angela since they had heard from Alois, Sr. that their own mother, Fanni, had been crazy.

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

She was certain she would keep him alive. Breast-feeding gave her that virtuous sense of certainty. She was putting her own strength into him. Her nipple was never far from his mouth. Minor devils, out at night in that region would report that her prayers were more heartfelt than any one of the scores of other young mothers of Braunau that they passed in the dark. Devils, obviously, have minimal attachment to the sentimental, let alone the heartfelt, but one or two were bothered by Klara, yes, even haunted if but a touch. Her prayer was so pure: "Oh, Lord, take my life if it will help to save his." Other women, being more practical, complained to the D.K. about what was missing in their lives. The most greedy and stupid were

always looking to grab a better house, more money, even a lover, “yes, if you permit it, Lord.”—there was rarely a sweet for which they did not lust. Klara, by contrast, looked to give comfort to the child, and there was her breast, count on it, always in his mouth.

While the E.O. was in general not sympathetic to breast-feeding since its absence often stimulated an essential if ugly energy in future clients, his attitude was more tolerant in cases of first-degree incest. For such situations, the closer the mother to the child, why, the better for us. (A monster can be even more effective when it also has stores of love with which to charm people.)

Certain advantages can also be obtained by us through the excretory dramas. While a dirty butt on a baby, if found daily, always sends us a signal—the mother is, yes, a potential client for us—the opposite can also be useful. Klara is an example. If she always kept a clean house, her rooms at the Pommer Inn were now as spotless as any home with several fine servants. The furnishings gleamed. So, too, did Adi’s pip-squeak of an anus have its glow. It was kept as immaculate as a small glistening pebble, and of that, too, did the E.O. approve—an incestuary must always be kept

aware of the importance of his or her own excrement, a Diktat that was never quite explained to us although it did offer some hint of explanation merely by being stated. We knew that every rule, no matter how generally effective, was to be reversed in special cases. Sometimes I would even think that the E.O. judged our potentiality to improve by our sensitivity to just this nuance—were we ready for the special case, even if it came to no more than a little asshole that was forever being polished?

5.

Not long after Adolf was born, Alois decided to leave the Pommer Inn. This move added up to his twelfth change of address in Braunau over fourteen years. But, Alois had good words for the Pommer: "It has elegance. I don't know that I would use such a word for anything else in this little city." He had a dozen such remarks to enliven a hundred situations of small talk. "Women are like geese," he liked to say. "You can recognize

them from behind.” Heavy tavern laughter would follow even if none of them could explain what was so particular about the rear end of a goose. Or, when speaking to fellow professionals: “To pick out a smuggler is easy. They are too good to be true. They dress too well, they speak too well, and the amateurs always work very hard at looking you in the eye.”

When asked, however, why he had moved from the Pommer Inn after a residence that had lasted for four years, he would shrug. “I like to move,” he would say. The truth was that he had used up the waitresses, chambermaids and cooks at the Pommer who were not too old or too ugly, and he could have added (and did to one or two friends), “when a woman goes dry on you, change your house. That can put a little oil in their juices.” He could even have given the real reason—no matter where he lived, a restlessness came upon him sooner or later that proved intolerable.

On the day when the Hitler family left the Pommer Inn, he had, however, a most uncharacteristic thought. It was that the determining factor in the universe—others might call it fate!—could yet choose him for high position. I will remark that his idea of high position would now be satisfied by promotion to Chief Customs Official in the provincial capital of Linz;

indeed, he would yet be given that post before he retired. Never superstitious (except when he was) Alois decided that this last promotion came in good part because of the move from the Pommer Inn to a rented house on Linzerstrasse. He and Klara both agreed that they needed more room, and now they had it. Of course, there were no females in the attic, yet he could manage with that. He had nosed out a woman who lived on his route home from the tavern. He had to pay for the privilege by giving her a gift time to time, but then the rent on Linzerstrasse was low. It was a dreary house.

All the while, he fought against falling in love with his wife. She infuriated him. If ants were like bees and had a Queen for whom they labored, then Klara was Queen of the ants, for she commanded his skin to crawl, his crotch to itch, and his heart to toll in his chest—all of this from no more than taking in the presence of Klara on her half of the divided bed. He would keep thinking of how she had looked on the night of her wedding. She had worn a dark silk dress, rose-colored with a white collar—that much white she allowed herself as a bride—and on her white forehead, she had teased some charming curls. At her breast was pinned the one piece of

jewelry she possessed, a small green cluster of glass grapes looking real enough to mislead a man into reaching for one. (Or just about!) And then there were her eyes—no mistake! He had to fight against falling in love with a woman who kept the cleanest house in Braunau just for him and for three kids—two of them not even her own!—a woman always as polite to him in public as to an emperor, a woman who never complained about what she had and didn't have nor nagged him about finances, a woman who still had only one good dress, the one worn at her wedding party, and yet if he laid a finger on her, she would have bitten it off. He wondered if the difference in their age was what it was about. Better than marrying her, he should have put her in a nunnery. Yet his skin itched at the thought of how she would not let him near.

Drinking at the tavern, he would look to regain some pride. His dislike of the Church had by now become a forceful conversational instrument. He expressed a superior scorn. Yes, he could say a few things. He would occasionally page through a section of an anti-clerical volume he had found in an antique bookshop in Braunau; indeed, the store owner, Hans Lycidias Leipziger, would meet him on many an evening for beer, and

while the bookseller kept himself at a scholarly level above more mundane Customs Officers' discussions by offering no more than a nod of his head from time to time, his wise presence, his shaven chin and shaven upper lip, his full sideburns, his peephole spectacles, his half-bald head of burgeoning white hair, offered a slight but legitimizing resemblance to Arthur Schopenhauer and so gave support to Herr Leipziger's smallest assent, just enough to carry the other Customs Officers around the more bruising turns of Alois' argument. While they were hardly to be counted as church-goers, "No good man wants to be neutered," most were ready to admit, still they were officials, and could hardly feel at ease when a prestigious institution was mocked, let alone the Holy Roman Church.

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

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

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

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

"Come now," said two drinkers at once.

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

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

“No, we don’t,” muttered one of the younger officers. “My brother is a priest.”

“In that case, I tip my hat to him,” said Alois, “if he is your brother, he is different. But that was then. And I assure you: The priests who were real men did worse. You ever hear this saying of the Pope? From the same Pope. He said, ‘No priest needs to marry so long as the peasant has a wife.’”

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

“Which Bishop?”

“The Bishop of Linz, don’t you know?”

Alois had not forgotten the Bishop of Linz who, six years ago, had refused his application to marry Klara. In order to defray the expenses of

translating his letter into Latin, Alois had been forced to declare that he was a pauper. Six years ago. It still rankled.

On the walk home, his mood was foul. He had come to the conclusion that the days of enjoying open tirades against the Church might be coming to a close. He was fifty-four years old, and for many years, had never worried about his position in life. He had known he could and would rise in the ranks open to him, but no higher.

Now, however, his stomach was unsettled. From a respected friend in the Finance Watch, he had been told that in Vienna there was talk of a promotion for Alois Hitler up to Chief Customs Officer at Passau. Given his lack of respectable education, that would be a true rise in rank, an innovative promotion. "However, you must watch yourself, Alois," the friend had said. "This is still a year away. You must keep a good name if you are to be moved to Passau."

He had always seen himself as exceptional, afraid of no one (except for certain superiors in uniform), possessed of a genuine magnetism for women (how many men could say that much for themselves?) and up from the ranks. Moreover, he had never been timid about public opinion.

Nobody else he knew could say as much for himself. He was no coward in that department.

But now this respected friend who gave every evidence that he had an ear in the councils of the Finance Watch was saying, "Watch out for the townspeople in Braunau."

This was a worry to travel right into him. Because Alois could not decide whether to trust this friend. The man was a practical joker. In fact, he was the same one who had once told him: "The townspeople of Brannau are nothing. You can put your thumb to your nose at them." Alois had indeed put together a good many habits around this remark, but the truth was that tonight he had said too much, absolutely, what with this most unsettling and exciting rumor concerning Passau. He was learning how much ambition he had, a real ambition which he had never admitted to himself. He couldn't. It would have been like a river breaking through a levee. But now he could recognize that a flood-water was waiting. If he wanted to stay afloat, he had to stop pissing on the Church.

Yes, in this sense, his wife, a cold tit to him and a jug of warm milk to the baby—what a guzzler! never off of the tit, but, get by all that!—she was

a useful wife. Good for the children, good cook, very good with the Church.

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

Women, however, should be seen in church. It was time to accept such a fact. The people in Braunau must not be able to say that he didn't allow his wife to go through the portal.

6.

Within the Company, we look upon ambition in men and women as a force that is often at our disposal. While we accept the likelihood that most human emotions originate through God's inclination, even as He gave necessary instincts to the animals, nonetheless, we also are ready to work

most human feelings way over to our purposes. Of no state is this more true than ambition. Plus, its weak sister, avarice. Avarice is simple to deal with—it is pure greed—but ambition is closely related to the Originating Vision. That is why the D.K., who so often puts serious restraints upon human behavior, is more ready to encourage ambition. (I would suppose His goal is for each and every man and woman to possess the potential (on their own!) to fulfill some part of His Vision. To that degree, God could also rise in the cosmos. (The E.O. is forever hinting to us that there are other gods, quite equal to ours, out among the stars, and they all have extreme and separate notions of what existence might yet become. At that level, the E.O. remarks, the D.K. is no more than one entrepreneur among many!)

That, of course, is cosmic ambition. Return us, however, to the more human variety. As the E.O. is never loathe to tell us, too much ambition proves all too often to be an impasse set up by the Creator. For the D.K.'s Vision to be effective, real and independent strength had to be granted to the human will. In doing so, He was obliged unwillingly to leave room for us. We captured a horde of clients. It may be sacrilege to some, but I would

propose that God miscalculated. Ambition is not only the most powerful of the emotions but the most unstable. It cannot bear defeat with signal grace. Not often! So, defeat does turn a putative client closer to us. There are so many who are ready to blame God for a run of bad luck.

Personal ambition, therefore, awakens our interest. The D.K., always a prodigious optimist, had not foreseen that the only men and women who could promulgate His Vision by the intensity of their ambition would have to be saints. Of course, few humans have any desire to develop to that point. I will be blunt. The D.K. made miscalculations that were—no lesser judgment—grievous for Him. He overrated the potential for development of good feeling in the very human nature He had created. Whereas our E.O. has always had a keen comprehension of how much perversity was there in men and women.

Consider the case with Alois. Many people guard their ambition as the most secret part of their emotions (guarded even from their open thoughts). For so soon as ambition begins to burn brightly in the mind, it is ready to shred a good many long-held vanities about the honor and high

level of one's personal purity. It is then that ambition reveals its pride, and can soon prove ungovernable. Pride is a blind intensity.

No surprise then if Alois was not the only one in the Hitler family to suffer this disruption. Ambition is a true germ, quite infectious. If Klara now had a child who was actually giving a few vital signs of staying alive, this was due, as we have remarked, to her belief in the life of her milk. Her breasts were suffused with joy, the most generous joy she had ever known. So, Klara now wanted everything for Adi. And to such a degree, that she was even ready to contemplate forgiveness for her husband, a bit of forgiveness in any case—enough maybe to allow him to cross the middle of the bed.

Their second courtship began. It was not at all like the night when Gustav was conceived. No apocalyptic shift occurred in set habits. She was still breast-feeding Adolf. So, there was no question of a pregnancy. What inspired the return of some little carnal interest was her growing appreciation of Alois. He had built strong foundations, after all, for the good future of Adolf. Even as her husband had risen from the mud of Strones and Spital to the honor of a high uniform in the service of Franz

Josef, she, in turn, might begin to measure the heights to which Adolf could ascend should his ability to go beyond his origins prove equal to the vigor and upward progress of his father's career.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

At that moment, the dog began to bark. Alois had bought a hound at a low price from a farmer he knew. Since they were living in a house, rather than at an inn, the purchase could be considered protection worth the cost. But the dog, whom he named Luther, proved disappointing. While Luther worshipped Alois and quivered before his master at every shift of tone, he did not seem otherwise alert. Moreover, he had nervous habits. Even as Alois shouted at him to stop howling, poor Luther would urinate on the floor.

Afterward, Alois might have his regrets. The hound, after all, did adore him. First, however, he whipped the dog. Even as it tried to crawl away, the poor bottom of the beast became soaked in its own outpourings. All the while, it was yelping its full terror. The uproar woke the children. Alois, Jr. came out first, then Angela, Adi at the last, not yet two years old, but agile enough to get out of his low bed and totter into the midst of this. Klara leaped up to seize him. She was ready for the worst, she hardly knew

what—that the child would step into the urine, that he would weep for her breast, that Alois might strike them both—she had seen the look in her husband’s eye when Adi became too greedy on her tit. None of this happened, however. To the contrary, the child looked with solemn interest at the whimpering dog, then at the flailing hand of the father, and his blue eyes had a gleam she had seen before, a look of remarkable intensity for one so small. She had seen it on his face when suckling him. He would stare at her with an expression equal to the same look on Alois’ face, the rare tender expression of a lover overwhelmed for a moment by the equality of flesh to flesh, soul upon soul, the very communion of being able to speak without a word. At such instants, she felt as if this child was closer to her and knew more about her than anyone in her life.

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

Klara felt an odd panic as if she must now startle the little boy into weeping so that she could give him her breast and thereby remove him from the room. Indeed, she succeeded. Adi burst into a rage as she took him up, bore him away, and force-fed him. Indeed, armed with his first tooth, he

nipped her enough for Klara to cry out, whereupon he stopped bawling long enough to give a deep and hearty chuckle. They were back together again.

From the room she had just quit, she could hear Alois bellowing at Alois, Jr. and Angela to clean up the puddles.

“That dog can’t even shit right,” he cried out of his own pain at the awful turn the evening had taken. Luther was bleeding at the mouth from blows he had received full-face on his muzzle, but in turn, Alois’ palm had a small but ugly laceration from raking one fierce slap across a broken incisor in Luther’s sad front teeth.

It will be noted that I write about my people in much the mode of any reasonably good novelist. I am ready by turns to observe them sardonically, objectively, ironically, sympathetically, judgmentally, even compassionately. Nor am I often sinister. This should not come as too great a surprise. Why should I be required to sink my style down to the level of a casual reader's notion of how a devil might present himself?

From the onset of our service, the Evil One has instructed us to make humankind our study. We do the E.O. honor every time we are able to appreciate a man or woman in full. The Maestro's way has always been to encourage us to feel close to what is godly in people as well as to the spoils that may be there later for us. To comprehend the godly facets of humankind, precisely those that could prove inimical to us down the road, is important. If we had religious Orders in the Company, I would serve as a Jesuit. Indeed, I share a fundamental understanding with Jesuits as, for certain, does the E.O. I am always ready to acquire a sympathetic comprehension of all that in essence will prove to be our final adversary—I see it as my duty to be ready, indeed, to know more about godly sentiments than all but the most gifted of the angels.

That is why the E.O. encourages us to speak of God as the D.K. (At least those of us who work in German-speaking lands. In America, it is the D.A.—dumb ass! In England, the B.F.—bloody fool! For France, A.S.—L'Ame Simple. In Italian, G.S.—gran cornutto! For Spanish—G.P.—grande payaso.) So D.K. stands for Dummkopf. It is not that we look upon God as directly retarded (not so!). Moreover, we know from experience (and lost battles) that the Cudgels can, on occasion, be as bright and incisive as ourselves. The root to employing such a term as Dummkopf comes, I think, from the E.O.'s desire to wean us from what has been our greatest weakness—the admiration we often feel unwillingly before the Almighty. As the E.O. never allows us to forget, God may be powerful, but He is not All Mighty. Hardly so! We, after all, are present. If the D.K. is the Creator, we are His most profound critics. Often, very often, we are successful opponents.

So successful, indeed, that the E.O. wished to rearrange the balance. If the Angels had succeeded in brainwashing all too many men and women to believe that our Source was the Evil One, (until we are obliged to live without any real opportunity to protest this canard), then our best recourse,

as the E.O. suggested, is to take pride in his initials. Or, try to. Which we do. When I write E.O., or speak of the Evil One, it is with full knowledge of the richness of the concept. He has given us so much, our subtle master who disdains to capitalize any reference to his presence. "Leave all that to those God worshippers on their knees," he tells us. "We have work to do, and it is tricky. I recommend that you keep thinking of Him as the Dummkopf. For, indeed, given what He could have been, that is what He is. We are brighter by far. And, of late, we are more creative. Remember: It is our universe to gain. It is His to lose. Keep calling Him the Dummkopf."



8.

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

So, for example, Adolf's bowel movements now began to dominate the tenor of life in the house on Linzerstrasse. Before the episode with Luther took place, Klara had certainly been alert, no matter how often Adi soiled his wrapping cloths, to keep the child in clean state, indeed, the act as I have remarked, became a daily dalliance between mother and boy. She wiped him so carefully that his eyes gleamed with transmogrificational delight. He discovered that Heaven was in his anus right there with the cramps. All the while, his mother subtly, tenderly, delicately (and with unwitting demonic finesse) expunged the soil, wet or dry, from his rosebud, (which was, of course, Klara's secret name for her dear baby's incomparably dear little hole—die Roseknaspe.) She was so proud of its pink sheen that she could not even suppress her joy when her step-children were watching. Indeed, unlike other good mothers in Braunau, she barely bothered to teach Angela how to substitute for her. In truth, she preferred to

be alone when taking personal care of Adolf. For then they would have the best of times. This was possible because she was superior to the unhappy elements of the procedure. His stool, (which could on occasion be as rank as any other diarrhetic disaster) did not occasion her disgust. It might disturb her if the outpouring were sick in smell, or worse, gave a hint of that empty cavern which lurks in the odor of grave illness, but her breath was calm even when the stink proved rich enough to overpower anyone else. She looked for the stench to come through as strong. The stronger, the better. That was a sign of health. Such was her love for Adi.

It sparkled between them. His eyes danced as she dredged his cheeks with feather-smooth wipes of the rag, and her eyes were full of love, so full that his little penis certainly stood erect. She, in turn, would giggle and coax it back (most properly) while they both laughed. For it jumped up again. Whereupon she kissed the tip, (once), and then blushed. Be assured. She did not allow her mind to suggest that the act might be subject to Confession. No, not such innocent joy.

All this changed after the dog was whipped.

She lived again in high fear of Alois. Now, it seemed as if Adi's swaddling cloths were always in danger of bagging open. What if Alois should find a full plop on the floor? Once, stepping out of the parlor for a minute to start a dish in the kitchen, she returned to see the child playing with his spoil—he had already plastered his upper lip and chin. She gasped at the thought of Alois coming through the door.

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

Now, she became ambitious. She wanted Adi to learn how to unsnap the safety pins that held his cloth, and indeed he was able to. Day by day, one success followed another, until one morning, he pricked his finger. After that mishap, he would not go near the pins again. She lost patience that he had come so near and now refused to continue. Finally, she scolded him, and that was certainly the first time he had heard such a tone in her

voice. He rebelled. Knowing how important he was to her, his response was keen—he was in much the same state of clarity with which he had watched Alois beat Luther. At that moment, Adi had been illumined by new knowledge. He did not measure the difference between a dog and a man, not yet, for Luther was as much of a person to him as his father, but he could see the instant result: the dog had collapsed into abject terror but still loved his master.

So would Klara love him, he decided, even when he would not obey her. Taken out of his cloth and allowed to run naked from the waist down, he began (never when his father was at home) to shit on the floor. Sometimes he would do it right next to the chamber pot, which brought Klara so close to screaming that Adi could all but hear every sound she did not make, and felt in consequence masterful. He had no fear of her even when she came close to striking him.

He went too far. One day when she was in the midst of waxing her kitchen floor, he spread excrement on the upholstered arm of the parlor couch, studied it, knew by a new tumult in his chest—so curious in

sensation—that this was different. Risk was present. All the same, he would show it to her. He did.

This time she did not scream, she stood stock-still. She sensed that he had done it on purpose, and so she did not say a word, merely cleaned the sofa by which time he had an attack of diarrhea and the floor was dirty again. He began to laugh and to bawl, but she did no more than sigh and clean him soundlessly in a listless loveless fashion. This made such an impression that he became awake in the middle of the night and went to her bedroom. Alois had been called to Passau for preliminary interviews and the house had not seen him for a week, but just before midnight he came home. Since the boy had formed the habit of going often to his mother's bed whenever Klara was alone, he was surprised, even as he cracked the door, to hear a little gasping, and wheezing, and then the bull-roar of Alois' voice. It came in spasms. Beneath it and above it were his mother's cries, soft, and full of the oddest torture. Those cries spoke of joy soon to come, so soon to come, yes, just beyond reach, yes, now, almost! Through the half-open door (kept open particularly for her to hear him should he cry) he saw a sight his mind would not take in, not at once. Something looked like

eight arms and legs and two people, yes, two, but one of them was upside down. He could make out Alois' bald head and side-whiskers pressed between his mother's legs. Then, without a word his father had turned around and was sitting on her face.

Adolf walked away as silently as he had entered, but he knew, there was no doubt—his mother had betrayed him. Just then he heard a final set of cries, a sobbing full of wonder, and he turned back and peered into the room, seeing what he could by the moonlight in the window, and his father was belaboring Klara with all of his body, his big belly slapping on her. But she was grunting like a dog. And full of contentment! “You beast, you are an ugly man, you are an animal, you!” and then again, “You, yes, you, yah, yah, yah.” There was no question. She was happy.

He would never forgive her. That much the two-year-old knew. All her love had been for him. Now, she was with another. And now his father was behind her, and on top of her back.

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

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

Must one suppose that because a child's deepest feelings have a half-life of thirty minutes, they are not profound? Because of that betrayal, he would never love his mother as much again. Yet, his feelings were more intense. There was pain in his love now, and an anger that revealed itself by nipping at her breast with his first teeth. Indeed, for a few days, he felt almost as close to Luther, and when drowsy, could sleep beside the dog through an afternoon. Truth, he saw the hound as a brother. They had both taken a fearful beating on the side of the heart that is most tender, and indeed, the love affair went on until Adolf began to take too much advantage of the beast, punching him in the belly, trying to poke into his eyes, and sometimes, when standing, loosing a kick to the ribs. The dog began at last to growl at his approach and Adolf in turn would whine and run to Klara. There was a period when this made her so distraught that all delight in breast-feeding was gone. The teeth had done it. The days of weaning were at hand.

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

We may remember that the last time we encountered Alois, he had been burying his nose and lips in Klara's vulva, his tongue as long and demonic as a devil's phallus. (Be it said: we are not without our contributions to these copulatory arts!) Alois was certainly possessed by us. Never before had he given himself that much to such an osculatory exercise, and yet he had become so good at it, and so quickly, that no explanation is possible unless we were there as well. (We do have the

power to give transient gifts to men and women we are not looking to turn into clients.)

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

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

As a devil, I am obliged to live intimately with excrement. And this is true for all its forms, physical and mental—the emotional waste of ugly and disappointing events, the sour indwelling poison of unjust punishment, the corrosion of impotent thoughts, and, of course, the literal aspects of caca itself. It is true. As devils, we live in shit, we work with shit, we prosper

from it (as I may yet attempt to explain). It is natural for us, therefore, to comprehend a marriage through the eye of the cloaca—and I will add—that is not the worst way. For parenthood is not only the mansion but the outhouse of marriage. As St. Odon of Cluny stated so unforgettably (in a remark worthy of the best of devils: inter faeces et urinam nascimur—between shit and piss are we born), so the proper study of marriage resides not only in partnership, congeniality, boredom, predictable habit and daily despair, but in the guts and smear of it all—the daily, almost comradely knowledge of all the forbidden tastes, smells, bodily places. Indeed, in their absence, the sacrament has less foundation. On caca, is marriage based. So I would assert. You are free to attach my opinion to my spiritual investment. I am a devil, after all, and we are creatures with a need to look for the lowest common denominator in any truth, especially within the properties of waste itself.

10.

Alois' promotion came through. The Finance Watch named him to the post of Chief Customs Officer at Passau, and Klara had the confirmation of knowing she was married to a man of achievement.

On the other hand, they could hardly rent their house in Braunau at such quick notice. Yet Alois had to work in Passau and that took a full day of travel. So, there were periods, often for weeks at a time, when Alois lived apart from the family. In consequence, Adolf could loll in the big bed with his mother.

The child's joy was profound. If it was grievous that Klara had to put him aside whenever Alois come home, so did he also learn that such happiness could be recovered. For after a day or two, Alois would be off again to Passau.

This lasted for a year. Even when the family eventually moved to Passau, the new position required Alois to oversee other towns. He was,

therefore, away at night as much as he was home, permitting Adolf to sleep right up against the nocturnal warmth of his mother in the big dark bed.

There were nights when he almost loved her as completely as once he had.

Working in Passau proved agreeable at first for Alois' vanity, but soon proved to be a burden to his confidence. Braunau, after all, had been a considerably less important station. Trade with Germany was limited, and for the most part, the smugglers they encountered were petty thieves. The roads to Munich or to Vienna that crossed the frontier in that region were of secondary importance. The tourists were rarely well-to-do. Nothing to catch a good customs-man's eye. Most of the product was agricultural; weighings were tedious. While Braunau was situated nicely on the river Inn, most of its architecture was humdrum, and there was not much substance to the view. Braunau had few dark secrets.

Passau proved another matter. It was German. By agreement, Austrian customs also operated on the German side of the Danube. Here, the buildings at the river bank afforded rich historical connotation. Passau had once been ruled by a Prince-Bishop. It had medieval towers, it had castles, and some of its churches dated back to the onset of the Middle

Ages; others were high Renaissance. Passau's walls spoke of grandeur, dedicated duty, ancient crimes, torture chambers, by-gone glory, and—much to the point for Alois—criminal smugglers with imagination enough to be a match for him.

But he was left uneasy by the new responsibilities of his position. If he had always thought his uniformed presence to be a full warning to malefactors, a conclusion he fortified for himself before every mirror available, he also knew that this was due to the rigor of the professional manner he had developed over many years. On duty, he could present a personality of the heaviest official calm and that was guaranteed to provide no easy peace to the traveler before him. His weighty approach as much as said that any man able to manifest such calm must have set a seal on himself. That was the way. Impress the people you deal with. Let them know that you are not the man with whom to play games. He had studied many an upper-class customs officer—those with university learning, some with livid, invaluable duelling scars. They were the ones to model oneself after.

Taking up his command in Passau left him feeling, however, less settled. While he made few outright errors, his tone became, at times, too harsh. Rudeness toward inferiors was reasonable only when the cutting edge of the criticism was accurate. One's subordinates learned correct procedure best under the sting of a fine whip well-applied. Occasionally, however, some trifle would provoke him unduly. Once he went into a tirade because an underling addressed him as "Herr Official" rather than "Herr Senior Official Hitler." He could sense that his new Passau contingent of juniors, so much more sophisticated and educated than the younger officers at Braunau, were growing critical of him. Now and again, looking down from his post at the rush of the Danube below the Customs' bridge, tears would come to his eyes. He would find himself thinking of Braunau, and of the two women buried in the region, dear carnal-spirited Franzeska, yes, and for an instant he would also mourn Anna Glassl. No beauty, but she had known what to do under the sheets.

He smoked all the time. His nickname, not known to him, was The Chimney. "And what is the mood of The Chimney today?" one young officer might ask another as he came on duty. Alois knew these juniors

were resentful that he did not allow them to smoke on their shifts—nonetheless, he insisted. The very injustice of it would enforce his authority. His years had told him. A good officer must be fair for the most part, yet ready to employ certain small inequalities. Done judiciously, it was most effective with inferiors. It reduced them one necessary notch.

Now that Klara and the children had joined him in Passau, he became more severe with his offspring. Alois, Jr. and Angela soon learned not to speak to him unless they were asked a direct question. If Alois, Jr. was outside, the father would put two fingers to his lips and whistle. It was identical to the call he used to summon Luther. In turn, Alois, Jr., fresh-cheeked, strong, stocky, and with a face like his father's, had driven Klara and Angela into hysterics one afternoon by picking up one of Adi's monumental turds that baby brother had chosen to deposit on the parlor rug. When stepmother and sister began to scream at the sight of it in his hand, young Alois chose to run after them, his eyes wild with mischief. Soon, Klara and Angela were crying out in terror and in whole indignation at the monstrosity of the act. Then, Adi joined in their chorus. He screamed with the rest even as he also galloped right after Alois, Jr., until his big brother,

tiring of the sport, tore off an inch of the stuff, whirled around and planted it on the tip of Adolf's nose.

That evening Klara told Alois, Senior. The beating which ensued was comparable to the attack on Luther. Alois, Junior, could just about crawl off to school next day. Profound, after that, was the discipline in the house. When Alois came home from his duties, the children dared at most to whisper. Klara, unwilling to upset him, and full of remorse for having told her husband, was also quiet. Supper was eaten in silence. The smell of Alois' breath, rich with meat and sour from beer, mingled with the aroma of red cabbage.

He would take, then, to the armchair, select one of his long-stem pipes, tamp his tobacco into the bowl with all the authority that could reside in the thumb of a man of official importance, proceed to overpower the fireplace with his own smoke. Alois, Jr. and Angela went to their room once permission was given. But, Adi was called forward.

His father would cup the three-year-old's head in his hand, and then, with a divided grin—fifty percent affection, fifty percent near to outright

meanness of spirit—would blow smoke into Adolf's face. The boy would cough, and the father would chuckle.

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

No, she had not. She did not dare. She sensed that the greatest provocation to her husband would be to comment on the clouds that rose from his pipe.

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

A town doctor reassured her that this medical phenomenon was not exceptionally uncommon. Such boys often grew up to be men with large

families—"The good God, dear lady, gave more than enough, and then doubled it."

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

"Some boys in that condition, such a minor condition, are sometimes highly active. That is all."

Kind words could not soothe Klara. The missing testicle was one more stain on the Poelzl family. Her sister Johanna was not only a hunchback but, according to Alois, half-mad and an idiot. And then there was a first cousin—a true imbecile. Not to speak of all of Klara's dead brothers, dead sisters, and her own dead children. There was not enough, she decided, of Alois' strong constitution in Adolf, no, none of the strength Alois had so obviously passed on to Alois, Junior. This was also her fault. She had loved her husband on the night that Adolf had been conceived, but only on that night, and in a way—was it unholy?—such a night!

But now—could it be too late?—she would say that she loved her husband again. She came to this conclusion slowly, step by step, over many months, but on one fine night in June, a year and a half after his transfer to Passau, she felt a new rush of respect for him. For just that afternoon—he

had learned that in another six months, he would be transferred to Linz, the capital of the province, there to serve as Chief Customs Officer. It was the most important assignment you could find in all the Service between Salzburg and Vienna.

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

11.

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

Having been sent the night before to a neighbor's house where he went through the discomfort of sleeping on a small bed between Angela and Alois, Jr. (who kept pinching each other over his intervening body) he knew that changes were coming. This perception turned into his first large

sorrow when, next day, as he rushed to his mother's bed, the midwife put out a hand as large as his face and said, "Stay back. Don't hurt the baby."

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

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

"Will he talk to me?"

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

For weeks, he could hardly get near enough to talk to Klara. Yet it had been just a few weeks ago, no more, when he would have the same conversation each morning with his mother.

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

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

"I think you are the most beautiful."

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

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

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

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

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

He was also afraid to go outside. The wild yells that boys made while playing in the field back of the house were fearsome. He spent his time looking at the illustrations in a book his father had bought about the Franco-Prussian war of 1870. He would like to be a brave soldier. Could he be? He asked himself. He was so afraid!

One afternoon, after school and much at Klara's bidding, Alois, Jr. pulled Adolf out of the house, and led him to the field behind the house where not a dozen small boys had divided their ranks into two and were playing at war.

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

When Adolf came home that evening, Alois, Jr. took him aside. "From now on," he said, "I eat the cream puffs first. As many as I want. If you cry to your mother, mamma's boy, I will not protect you on the field."

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

Next day, he had to go over to the game by himself. He was more afraid of Alois, Jr.’s derision than of any blows he might take in the battle.

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

He did not cry. It took an absolute effort of will. But his will did not permit him to make a sound. One minute later, he had to negotiate with himself once again in order to keep from weeping. That was because no one

had noticed his new-found stoicism. His feelings were as bruised as the scrape on his cheek, the outrage to his stuffed-up nostrils.

He managed to get through the battles that followed until dark. He had discovered that he was quick and could usually dart away whenever an enemy soldier tried to touch him. To his delight, he even tagged one enemy soldier in the next raid.

On the second day, his face was in the dirt again. Action was everywhere. It was hard to dodge the rush.

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

That night he could hardly sleep. He felt that not only did he know more already than they did, but in time to come, the fat boy, Klaus, would be his lieutenant, while he, himself, as captain, would make the rules.

Soon enough, he did come up with a more interesting game. War should be trickery. War was not two armies running at each other all the

time—war was maneuver! He did not know the word as yet, but he had certainly arrived at the concept. (And without our assistance.)

To his new mates he now proposed that they move from the flat field to a hill in the next meadow. Each army was to group on opposite slopes. That way, they would not be visible to each other until one team or the other crossed the summit.

Once he had convinced the boys of this change, he brought in an amendment. Given, for example, a total of six boys to a side, each army could now divide its forces into four soldiers and two—a two-pronged attack. If four men met only two on the other side, those two were automatically captured. No tagging was necessary. (He still detested being knocked down.) If, on the other hand, four attackers met four defenders, then the attackers lost. Still, no tagging.

More improvements were soon on the way. He could see that his innovations dampened the fire of the occasion. When the flank that had four boys came over the hill to meet four defenders, the encounter became no more than a flat-out surrender. So, tagging, to his dislike, had to be reinstated. This brought on a new debate, for he insisted that the captain on

each side (he had become, as foreseen, the German Captain—and Klaus was his lieutenant), must not be captured. The leader must not even be touched. With preternatural eloquence, he made his major point. “The highest officer must always be respected.”

To gain this point, he had to pick up allies one by one. (It did not hurt that stout, sturdy Klaus was always by his side.) In time, Adi prevailed. He was a little amazed at how well he could deal with these matters.

12.

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

Be it understood that a serious investiture of any man or woman is never routine. Each case is unique. The average person assumes that one can lose one's soul to the devil in an instant. The premise is not only false but the product of endless propaganda by dedicated and often mediocre ministers who work for the Cudgels. The real situation is that we do not appropriate people through Satanic entrapment, then keep them forever as our vassals. To use a particularly crude and contemporary American example, Avis versus Hertz, or Burger King against McDonald's is closer to the mark. So soon as we seek to invest our powers in a client, the Cudgels appear in direct competition. Sole possession rarely occurs. Ploys and gambits proceed on their separate and conflicting course for years. Rarely

do our demons or the angels of the Dummkopf realize a significant victory. Indeed, after a series of such battles, the odd soul actually captured in toto by us or by the Cudgels bears more resemblance to a wretch than to a prize. (Insane people are often the victims of such sustained contests.)

The process is full of paradox. For example, those potential clients that we find most difficult to approach are often possessed of the greatest potential. Conversely, those individuals who are easy for us to enter usually prove of no great service. It does not take a great deal to traduce a drunk or an addict. We polish what is left of their charm, which helps to consume a little more of the compassion of their families, especially if the mother, father, or any of the siblings wish to remain under the charitable purview of the Dummkopf. In effect, we injure their God-loving hearts! But that is easy work. Such gains are small. Ultimate ends are not served. We wish, after all, to conduct human nature through a transmogrification away from the Vision of the D.K. We work for the eventual project—yet for me to name!—the superior and more advanced vision of the Evil One.)

There is, however, another factor in every contest which I am bound to explain. It concerns the separate economies of Divine energy and Satanic energy. They differ considerably.

I can allow that even in the higher cadres of devils and angels, we hardly know who has more Time to give to a contest devoted to one man or one woman. I have to suspect that for most situations, the Dummkopf is more ready, more powerfully endowed (and vastly more spendthrift). On most evenings, for example, He discharges untold bonanzas of effort to His sunsets (which—it must be admitted—do bolster human morale in general) but His gifts are not always pertinent to His direct aims. The E.O. has often remarked that the D.K. is analogous to a spoiled wealthy lady who only wishes to hear fine remarks about her good taste and beauty, whereas we devils have to be obsessed with head-on budgetary demands. For certain, the E.O. is forever obliging us to forecast the expenditures of Time involved to secure a new client. Such prognostication can be onerous, especially if one is wrong. To spend years on a promising fellow who eventually resists us is not only a budgetary blemish upon our individual record, but a general

loss for the project. Prevail!, the E.O. is always reminding us. So we try to choose our targets with more acumen than the Cudgels.

Over the millennia, our E.O. has evolved principles from which he rarely diverges. We do not have to be reminded to take cognizance of any fornication that promises to get us off to a good start.

Our targets are obvious. Rarely do we fail to attend the joinings of rich and powerful people (so full of infidelity!). As has been noted, we do not ignore the occasional wretched couple whose rites engorge incest. Other copulations, however, particularly those attended by angels, present a more demanding task—it is never routine to slip through their blockade! It seems—I speak here for myself—as if the E.O. has never been able to accept his failure to be present in the hour when Jesus Christ was conceived. The result, if one is to put it in the familial sense, is that our Source, our Prince, our E.O. soon had a half-brother whose powers were at least comparable to his own.

Fortunately for us, Jesus proved to be a typical Son. (The private record we are furnished by the E.O. is that He was much at odds with His Father.) Jehovah, indeed, was often incensed by the rebelliousness of this

good son. But let me keep to the point. The prevailing fact of our existence as devils and demons is that we are obliged to live within a limited budget. You may believe that our projects are chosen, therefore, with discretion.

For example, we are usually active (as previously stated) during copulations likely to satisfy the needs of the near future—that is, the nearest oncoming half-century. Yet, the E.O. does not ask us to show much interest in the early development of the children who come out of such acts. “In the first years of life,” the E.O. will remind us, “there are too many accidents and surprises.” Sometimes we keep no more than a short record of those families who interest us. “Over the first few years,” he will also remark, “a child is caught between the need for love and the development of the will. Those two eminent factors are so naturally at odds with each other that we can rely on the D.K. to mess it up. This is particularly true with Catholics. To capture a child’s philosophy so early is to ensure future rebellion or severe meanness of spirit.”

Indeed, our general strictures are as follows: Except for the most unusual cases, we exercise no intervention until the age of seven. (Until

well into the nineteenth century, an extraordinary child was always in danger of being carried off abruptly by one grievous disease or another.) Any devil seeking to invest earlier in a particular boy or girl, has, in effect, to argue his case.

Once a child has turned seven, it became easier in most cases, to decide. But it is still not promising. The E.O. looks upon the next five or six years as—indeed, he terms it so—the Age of Clods. “They are now encountering the world in its most basic form—the school years. Nearly all of them rush toward habit, routine, and stupidity as the most immediate forms of protective insulation. These are the years when the average human ego takes shape in all of its readiness to lie, mis-remember, distort and forget—all in order to keep the young ego in some readiness to support the ongoing project, oneself.”

Our hunt then commences more often with adolescence. Here, we are at the first lively stage of divine intervention. Often the best energies of the D.K. are there for us to subvert since He is invariably ready to invest resources in very young men and women who hardly know what to do with

their sudden inrush of increased will and appetite. Promising distortions of His newly fortified creatures are now open to us.

I have proceeded this far into explaining our processes of selection because it was altogether uncommon for the E.O. to direct me to pay strong attention to a five-year-old. That his name was Adolf Hitler was, after all, of no importance then.

Rather, having been present (by proxy) at his conception, it had been a matter of course for me to keep several minor devils abreast of his family's activities. Our jargon for this kind of surveillance was milk-runs, an expression we employed long before it was adopted by U.S. Air Force pilots in the Second World War. Any one of our minor devils could pass by a house in the hours before dawn, and by way of the small and large storms, inertias, and joys that transpired since the last visit, could ingest a fund of information. It required no exceptional expenditure of effort. (Unless the abode was seriously protected by guardian angels.) In a more normal condition, one swept by the house and relayed the findings to appropriate superiors. While humans slept, we did our work. (As did the angels. Yes, those forces of Light also worked in the Dark!)

I was supplied with a close history, then, of the Hitler family for the years since Adolf had been born, knew it in such detail as was imparted to me by the separate devils who kept track of our numerous projects in that region of Austria. If what my agents offered was virtually as modest as the narrative I have presented, it had, until now, sufficed. In reviewing Adolf's early years, I confess that at the time I saw no large promise in the boy. He was outrageously in need of love and damnably vulnerable. The odds were that he would perish early, or creep through life with a broken-down ego, mutilated or cicatrized. At least, so I would have judged if not—to repeat—for the likelihood that the E.O. had been as present at his conception as was Gabriel at the Christ's. So far as I knew, that was not impeccably definite, but could hardly be ignored!—even on the busiest nights, I was instructed to include the Hitler family on every milk-run. That was no ordinary injunction.

This condition of careful but passive observation was overturned altogether for me on the day that Alois, Jr. dragged Adi off to the boys' game of war. The E.O. intervened. I received a direct message: "Take

closer care of him now. Stiffen his spine. We will lose many of his future potentialities if we don't take steps."

13

As is true of all reasonably disciplined armies, there is no room for rebellion when given a direct order. I did what I was told. I stiffened the boy's spine. Indeed, I will make the claim that I accomplished this with some finesse for I did not inject any of our special funds of energy into his courage or his will, no, rather, I steered him to do the job himself. That proved enough. At bottom, he was the one who chose not to weep when his face was in the dirt, and afterward, he displayed his own cunning in finding

ways to avoid physical punishment. It was enough that I was (so to speak) at his side. That gave him a subtle confidence. We too served in effect as guardian angels. (For special clients, only!)

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

I speak of this because we devils are human to this degree—a fine return on our investment puts us in the best of moods. So I came to enjoy being with Adi as he proceeded to improve the little game of war that was being played by these five-year-olds in Passau in the spring and summer of 1894. Indeed, the change in my sentiments was as rapid for me as for the child. (Secretly, we do cherish our power to bestow gifts upon a putative client.) We must. Often the only way to capture a child so young is, as I have indicated, to spend some of our limited stores of love to seal the conquest. A risky business. One might lose a lot. All too often, a child's shifting inclinations create too much capacity for quick and independent change. We can waste our efforts. Our youngest clients alter themselves on their own, or resist us, or, worse, the Cudgels move in.

To forestall this event, I was there night after night to instruct Adi while he slept. Indeed, he delighted me (the rarest of pleasures for a devil!) by the development of his activities during the day. To repeat--he was no ordinary five-year-old, no, he had an exceptional capacity to tinker with his game of war. Rarely did he fail to improve it.

He soon saw, and I believe this came as much from his perception as mine, that outposts were necessary. It was wrong to send soldiers over the hill without fore-knowledge of what opposite force they might encounter. So, a scout from each army had to attempt to work his way up close enough to the summit to obtain a covert look at the dispositions of the other side. Following in logical sequence came another change in the rules—an advancing army had to be free to move its forces from flank to flank, even as it climbed the hill. Ditto for the defenders. The defense could also shift their outposts. Of course, all this soon called for larger forces on each side, but Adi was able to convince his regulars that more boys should be invited in from nearby streets and other fields. They, the originals, having been here first, could take promotion in rank. Let me offer one of his speeches to his troops.

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

“That is what I want.”

“Of course. It is what we all want. All of us. And to do this we must learn more. For that, we need more soldiers on both sides. How are we to accomplish this?

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

“Klaus here, will be my colonel.”

Those words are close to what I remember. While I have certainly given him an eloquence no five-year-old could muster, I will insist that good turns of speech did come out of him and these words were not only not his own, nor mine, but seemed equally inspired by some agent of the D.K. who must also have been present, and was helping him from the other side. What a large investment was being placed in this little Adi.

Before long, his—I will indeed say his boys—were engaged each afternoon in hour-long battles. There were startling shifts of tactics and endless alterations of the rules. The numbers increased to fifteen and twenty a side.

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

This was characteristic of our Maestro. We had to be ready to accept changes in circumstance. In this case, the situation of the family altered. Alois had decided to move Klara, Angela, Alois Junior, Adi, and the baby Edmund, up from Passau to dwell nearer to him in Linz.

Let me apologize for this change of venue. A good reader is the most unprotected of humans—their sympathy moves in advance of their judgment. Some readers may have felt uneasy, therefore, to discover that they were enjoying the first successes of the child Adolf Hitler in his games of war. Be assured. To read about the skills or triumphs of any protagonist is all-but-guaranteed to elicit happiness in whoever follows the story, especially if there is a small suggestion of the sentimental, or even better, the magical. Those are two useful tools for any author who is shamelessly content to arouse quick emotions in the reader. A few fine minds may be ready to come to working terms with the devil, (Faust was one!) but, count on it—popular writers and champions of the sentimental come looking for us all the time. We love them. They are such dupes. They think they are

working both for God and their own prosperous selves. We do not disabuse them. Rather, we encourage them ^{(We ~~do not~~ want them, instead, to} to marinate their readers in baths of misperception while we enjoy the profit.

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This time, Alois had a serious reason for moving. He had decided to retire. He wished to become a bee-keeper. For that, he would buy a farm. In the last year of his Customs work, he had begun to look about and by January of 1895, ^{had} ~~he~~ found what might be the right property in a town called Hafeld, thirty miles ~~away~~ from Linz, ~~and~~ ⁱⁿ February he bought it. In April,

Klara and the children moved from Passau to that house. They would still be at a distance from city life. Even the closest school was in the next small town to Hafeld, Fischlham, where Adi would soon be ready for the first grade. Over the next few months Klara and the young ones were to live on the farm while Alois completed his service in Linz.

Of course, the oncoming retirement would not come without some serious inroads on a most impressive edifice. I speak of Alois' ego. It was its own kind of monument, impressive, yes, when we consider the meager materials out of which he had been able to construct it. Through his adult years, having managed to keep an unspoken sense of himself as a man destined eventually for serious achievement, he was certainly not lacking in a sense of reality as well, and so kept this notion as a meditative nectar rather than a serious expectation. Nonetheless, it would seep into his sweetest thoughts about himself when male company, good beer, and tobacco mingled dependably in the tavern after work.

By his final year as Chief Customs Officer of Linz, some rudiments of this concept—"a man of importance"—were even satisfied. While his final

position could hardly be as elevated as the thin air of his dreams, still the title tickled a marrow of real satisfaction.

If only he had enjoyed working in Linz, it might have been enough, but the problems with personnel encountered at Passau were now aggravated. Linz was an important station for the Finance Watch. Since it was capital of a most important province, Upper-Austria, Customs was stocked with young, ambitious, and socially sophisticated junior officers never at a loss to show quiet contempt for senior officials who might ^{fail} ~~lack~~ *in any way to fulfill the post,* ~~one of the amenities. did not satisfy the mark.~~ Most of these young men came from well-to-do families, and so their own future attainment of high office was taken for granted. This attitude, as palpable as the air itself, left Alois somewhat out of joint. He was getting on. For the first time in all the years he had been wearing a uniform, he did not always strike the passing eye as immaculate. (That now demanded too many pains!) Nor was he as severely punctual as once he was. Sometimes, at the point of issuing disciplinary reprimands, he would hesitate long enough to contemplate the possible repercussions.

For just such a reason, he eased up on smoking restrictions. He no longer enjoyed facing into the inheld wrath of younger officers. In consequence, he enjoyed his own tobacco less. He began to feel as if his associates were looking for him to retire. He had put in, after all, near to forty years of service. He was eligible. While he could continue for another twelve-month and even another, he did not deem it wise. Small, steady inroads on his vanity kept moving him toward a smaller dream. What if he chose to become a gentleman farmer? That would not be so bad, no, not out there in the autumn sun of his career. Such a life could fulfill a few other inclinations. What the hell! Born a peasant, he could end as a prosperous agriculturalist.

He had money enough. He could buy a decent farm outright. He would have his pension, and his savings—he and Klara had certainly exhibited thrift. Besides, he had in hand the sum and interest of the larger part of three wives' dowries. It could be said that the first two had brought some real money to the union. If Anna Glassl had succeeded in recovering, through law, half of her large dowry in lieu of their separation, still, she had been nicely well-to-do, and Franzceska, while hardly up to that measure,

was nonetheless the child of a prosperous farmer. Even old Poelzl, Klara's father, had come up with some florin.

On the other hand, Alois understood money only too well. He knew not all coin was equal. Deep in one's conscience, one had to pay a tithe to money that was not earned properly. ~~That was incontestable to Alois,~~ ^{Else} Money gave back its reflection of how it had been gained. Sometimes, he felt a passing chill. A good part of his prosperity could be seen as the flower ~~which~~ ^{that} had sprouted from the coffin-soil of dead wives' dowries.

During this last year of service, while Klara took care of the children in Passau and he was free in Linz, he had begun to feel too old for other women. That was when he told himself to go back to the earth. It was what he had always heard from Johann Nepomuk—"the real woman is in the fields." The old man had only to get drunk enough, and he would repeat it over and over. "The real woman—look for the real woman in the fields. Respect her."

It was an adage Alois could enjoy but his present plans did not include heavy duty as a farmer. His aim, rather, was apiculture. He was interested in developing beehives. He would market the honey. That would

be his real crop. All the same, owning a little land might be equal to acquiring another limb, a fifth appendage so to speak, as important to a man with peasant roots as a trunk to an elephant.

He had indeed bought a farm five years ago about the time Adolf was born. In many a way that purchase had been more exciting to him than the birth. Land, at least, was not going to die on him in the way the first three *Klara's* babies had gone back to wherever they came from.

The reverse had occurred. The land did not perish, but his ownership did not go so well. The holding had been near Spital, a hundred miles from where he was then working in Braunau, yet he had had some far-off notion of retiring to the place. In the interim, it seemed a good way to take care of his sister-in-law, Johanna Poelzl, rather than having her dwell with them as a maid. Johanna, he had long decided, was not only surly but half out of her head. In addition, she was a hunchback. He did not want her in the parlor every night, especially not with that *bunched-up* body.

All the same, he did *feel* have some admiration for Johanna. She had the fierce pride of someone who was not in the least afraid of God. She would put no trust in Him. "God," she would declare, "did not have to kill off so

many of us in the Poelzl family." Alois could tip his hat to that. "She's not like my wife," he was fond of telling the tavern. "Klara is ready to kiss every cross she meets."

All the same,
~~Still~~ Johanna did not run the farm very well. Each and every peasant who worked for her was, sooner or later, antagonized by Johanna's sharp tongue, and finally she had to give it up and go back to live with her father and her mother—also named Johanna. If we recall, that Johanna had been Alois' mistress on one unforgettable occasion. ("Sie ist hier!")

Alois was able, however, to sell that first farm at a modest profit and so was not ill-disposed to taking on the property in Hafeld these several years later. This farm he would work himself. It was called the Rauscher Gut (which can be translated freely as Windy Lands) and it offered nine acres plus a wooden house under a thatched roof with good views from the high ground of the mountains of the Salzkammergut. In addition to some fruit trees, there was an orchard of walnut trees. A hayloft was in the stable and stalls for two horses and ~~there~~ ^a cows, plus one prize sow who also came with the purchase.

It was perfect all ways but one. After the purchase, (and only after the purchase) neighboring farmers were ready to hint to the new arrival that the land might be beautiful, but it was not necessarily going to be famous for its crops.

He looked upon these comments as exactly the kind of hazing that resident farmers would visit on a newcomer. Oh, he assured them, it did not matter. The land would be given a rest. He was there to raise bees. That was his element. Good honey could become the most prosperous crop of them all.

Indeed, in the last days before his retirement ceremony (which was acceptably eulogistic to Alois but most impressive, even thrilling, to Klara) he did have a series of drinking nights as a closer way of saying farewell to his staff and to the decades of his work. Since he had no desire ever to be seen as a man who would moon over the past, he dwelt on his future, he bullied his junior associates, plus a couple of old cronies, and a few respected town officials to drink more than one stein with him on the merits and mysteries of bee-keeping. Indeed, he belabored each table on each night with so much of ^{his} kultur on hive maintainence and the "mysterious

psychology of these fabulous little creatures," that Alois' junior officers would warn each other, ^{"Tonight, let's try"} ~~try~~ (to keep The Chimney from smoking us out ~~tonight~~ with his bees."

In truth, he did see himself as ^{something of} a philosopher on this subject. What an achievement for an untutored peasant from the Waldviertel to be able to give a lecture equal to a Heidelberg savant! "There are many social structures to perceive in each hive," he would inform the drinking gang by way of introduction to the subject each night.

In the last weeks before retirement, in the same Linz tavern he had frequented each night after his customs house shift, Alois spoke more and more often of the higher concepts of apiculture. Honey bees formed an amazing and complex world, he kept informing his drinking cohort. "With rare exceptions, these tiny creatures give their lives to one purpose: Build a future for the generations who will follow. The honey they are able to convert from the nectar and pollen that they bring back from the flowers is for their consumption, but, gentlemen, it is also accumulated in a necessary excess of hard work to feed their larvae." He nodded. "These larvae are installed in the tiniest hexagonal cells, a wonder to behold, yes, they are

constructed superbly and symmetrically out of the very beeswax these insect workers know how to make from pollen. and that is a mysterious process not quite understood as yet even by our most modern chemists. Great care is taken in the construction. of the hexagonal cells. They know that future generations must succeed them."

His company nodded, their spirits glum. This was poor beer talk. But Alois was off on his peroration. Indeed, he was the essence of that kind of dogmatic lecturer who is prepared to pride himself on an incorruptible lack of sensitivity to his audience (if they are insufficiently grateful to listen carefully). "Some bees," he now remarked, "the heftier ones, become guards to watch over the entrances to the hive. Do you know? They are ready to go into battle at the cost of their lives? They will even fight off such powerful raiders as wasps or spiders or termites. Yes, all the insect world is looking for a free meal in the honey. But that is only one of the obstacles to a peaceful life for the bee. They have to come up with ingenious solutions to serious problems. All through the summer months, many of the worker bees, as one example, are constantly engaged, if I may be permitted to speak thus, in keeping the interior of the hive cool. How? By means of their tireless activity. They never stop fanning their wings. Some must even wear out their wings. For the common need! After which, they are ready to die. Why? To create a draft to cool the hive."

understood
as yet
even by
our
most
modern
chemists.
Moreover
great
care

This act is so necessary. The larvae cannot survive in too much chill nor in too much heat. Think of it. Thousands of wings all fanning away, even as others go out to forage out for more supplies in a multitude of flowers. They cover themselves with pollen and store the nectar in pads on their legs and then fly back to the hive. Absolutely loyal to the needs of the hive, all of them. I can tell you: They fly under the weight of loads that weigh more than their own bodies. Could we do that? Perform such labors day after day? Think of them as flying work-horses. Yet, they are only the size of bees. And all the while, others are working to make beeswax from the pollen, that mysterious and extraordinarily useful beeswax. I tell you, they create a society comparable to ours. But maybe more rational."

None of the junior officers were ready to argue. (If they did, he might go on for another hour.) It took one of the older town officials to reply. Taking several portentous sips of smoke from his pipe, he said, "Come, Alois, they are only insects."

"No, good sir! With all due respect, you are mistaken. There is much more to them than one would think. Some are, I believe, more inspired in

purpose than the average human dolt. Let me say, they are one of the wonders of our universe."

15.

I was not well-prepared Alois' interest in these matters. Here was not the man I knew. While I could see a practical purpose to acquiring

a number of hives since the product was eminently salable, and beeswax in particular, brought a very good price, I could not find the balance.

Apiculture had its risks, including the unscheduled peril of receiving a serious number of bee stings. While it might be reasonable to engage in such efforts rather than endangering his long-worked heart by looking to plow a field, I had, all the same, an uneasy suspicion. Alois was too sincere in his enthusiasm. He was not sufficiently concerned with profit. The desire for money is, however, the tap-root of the motive that drives most men and women into new activity. Therefore, signs of its absence concern

me. Obviously, I feel like a sorry devil when I cannot ^{come close to} ~~get near to~~ ^{to a client's} ~~to a client's~~ private intentions. Yet here was Alois ready to undertake this venture

because it satisfied something in him that I had not yet detected. Normally, Alois kept a close relation to the money he made.

I did recall that he had tinkered with keeping a hive in one small town, dabbled, and soon gave it up, but a few years later, went back again. Always on the smallest scale. In the last few months, he had, it is true, written a short article for a journal that served bee-keepers in the area around Linz. To my surprise, the piece was literate. Alois' experience was

obviously limited, but, indeed, he had acquired some book knowledge of the subject, and was now fascinated by a new mode of cultivation. Bee hives made of straw might soon be done away with. Skeps they were called, squat-ribbed domed objects about the size and shape of big-bellied human torsos, and skeps had their drawbacks. For example, to harvest the honey, bee-keepers had to keep the population of the hive stunned, which was usually done by smoking them into near-comatose condition. It was an imprecise process, and the skep often had to be ripped open to collect the product. Despite the smoke, some honeybees awoke long enough to sting the collector.

A new and much-discussed innovation was, however, being developed in England and in America. Already, even in Austria, local bee-keepers were ready to do away with the old ungainly straw structure. If the skep had been for its time an improvement over the more barbaric practice—common in antiquity and the Middle Ages—of rooting the bees out from their hole in a tree, advanced bee-keepers around Linz were now speaking of hives that could soon become the equivalent of a modern city built to the scale of bees. This new housing, no greater in size than the

skep, was a wooden cabinet that could be filled with glass trays installed vertically. The worker bees seemed content to build their miniscule wax cells on both sides of each inserted pane of ~~glass~~^{wax}. Since this new kind of wooden chamber could hold a good number of upright trays, and each tray had room for thousands of cells in a grid of layers and rows, some keepers calculated that each hive could yet be compared to a giant apartment building in some future megalopolis like Berlin or New York.

To explain this venture to Klara, Alois did emphasize the pecuniary promise. Good money would come back from clean work, and Alois Jr. and Angela would help, he told her. And Adi as well! He convinced her that the new project was eminently practical.

I was still bothered. Klara might believe him but I did not. To me, Alois was looking to find a way to come nearer to the Dummkopf. That was not a matter I could afford to ignore.

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I was now debating whether to pass this concern on to the E.O.

While the Maestro could, when he so desired, enter into our thoughts, he did

~~not~~^{often} choose to do so ~~that often~~^{preferred to}. He would reserve ~~his~~^s resources for exceptional ~~rather than general~~ activities.

On the other hand, I was supposed to be on the alert for unexpected turns. One could fall to the side of too much caution or not enough.

My conclusion on this matter was not to inform the E.O. Alois had, after all, never been one of our clients. There was never the need. He was by our measure an average man, which is to say, sufficiently corrupt to be available for our use whenever we might need to invest temporarily in him. The assumption was that he would be open to a quick invasion. The Cudgels would hardly be guarding him. To what end? He was so self-centered. What could there be ~~in him~~ for them to protect? Whereas when it came to someone like Klara, we did not dare to go near ~~so~~^{too} little. It would have proved punishing and again—to what end? We did not need her directly. Some of our most exceptional clients are the offspring of good mothers. Indeed, evil children that issue from the most loving women are always able to injure morale. Average men and women find it hard to accept that ugly results can issue from devoted efforts. It shakes their faith ~~in~~^{the} Dummkopf. How could God allow this? A standard lament.

We had not gone near Klara, therefore, except for that one incomparably special night—that lightning raid—when Adolf had been conceived.

After that, paradoxically, she was more useful to us as herself, there, innocent, nurtured by the attentions of the Cudgels. This is, however, so complex a matter that it will have to wait. To give but an indication, let me say that Klara, being gifted with depths of love, would not only adore her Adi, but would become enchanted by the new one, Edmund, which was just about certain to flagellate many of Adolf's feelings.

To watch over a child through the early years is, as I have indicated, so complex and chancy a procedure, that we usually wait. Life itself will shape unexpected openings for us to find our way into men and women we have not yet gone near. Besides, our best efforts, as I have also remarked, can be contravened by the Cudgels.

We deal then with likelihoods, with reasonably expected outcomes. Alois, in himself, on the hoof, that is to say, Alois, his faults and virtues all more or less predictable, had been serving as the keel for our ongoing comprehension of the Hitler family. He was so dependable in his strengths

and habits, his productive contributions, his built-in cruelties and crudities, that one could, if necessary, intensify or reduce the heat of Adolf's hatred for his father in such a way as to mold the boy. Depend on it! We depended on Alois. He was predictable.

Now, his outsize love for bees was turning things askew for me. There are few atheists who can go all the way to the grave without being challenged in their heart on one or another occasion by the fear or, worse, the intimation, that God does exist. In this sense, they are comparable to pious virgins who are tempted into sudden and unholy heats. Like many such ladies, they cannot accept sex (in the atheistic case, religion) as a force to be met on equal terms. No, like the good virgin, the atheist, has to take it, so to speak, through the back door. They fall in love with God by way of nature, paganism, service to others, technology—seen as the best possible solution to humankind's problems—or through exceptional allegiance to a fetish or a mystery. In Alois' case, it happened to be ^{this} an overblown recognition of the immense collaboration that could be present between the mighty and the miniscule.

Since he was hardly ready to bathe in a pool of joy for the greater glory of the Lord, he approached his newly opened sense of Mystery by way of the old allegiance to Franz Josef. This much I learned by a quick raid on his mind, an activity that depended on the likely chance no Cudgels would be near during the length of ^{my} ~~your~~ raid. (It is not unlike a blind bet in poker,) ~~and the E.O. who may be the greatest poker player of all time does not encourage us to form any predictable habits in that direction.)~~

On this occasion, I penetrated quickly, and soon was out. I gathered what I needed ~~from that raid~~. I now knew ~~a good deal~~ more about Alois' new dispositions. My unhappy sense of what might be in his mind was confirmed. These bees had a life he could find analogous to his own. This is why natural phenomena are so often the first perception by humans of the conceivable nearness of God. They discover, for example, that a puppy or kitten is a warm cuddly bit of existence much like themselves and so can serve as the gateway to larger suppositions. For Alois, the foragers out in search of the flowers were creatures he could understand.

On any warm day, bees scouting for new fields of flowers knew the heat of the sun and the intimate yearning that only the sun could arouse in

flower petals. Alois was not about to throw open any massive bolted door to the mystical side of himself—he was like most humans in that regard—but I had found ^a ~~the~~ soft spot in his psyche. He would actually, in the innermost recess of his thoughts, muse on the art that must be present in any creation which would choose to bring the honeybee into the perfumed caverns of the flower. It stirred him to think of two wholly separated existences, entranced with each other by the burgeoning heat of the sun. The flower would surrender its nectar, while the honeybee covered itself with the pollen of the stamens. In another moment, the bee would separate from one passionate ^{lust} ~~love~~ to look for another, ^(of the same species) whichever fine flower was beckoning in the breeze, ready to gather more nectar for the hive even as it left some of the pollen of the first stamen on this second infatuation.

Such images gave life to Alois. It was the balance between hard work and satisfied desire. He felt close to that bee who would stagger back in flight with its pollen bags ^{heavy,} ~~full,~~ and its ^{nectar bulb} ~~honey~~ ducts. Had not Alois, in his turn, given much to women and yet brought back much for himself, so much accumulated wisdom on how to deal with the world, or, at least, his customs-house corner of the world where by the end of his career, he

invariably knew what was true and what was false in declarations offered by strangers, particularly women who might wish to deceive him, yet could not, because he was wiser than they were. He possessed the true honey.

Wisdom was the knowledge of what others were up to.

As Alois saw it, honey was a concentrate of secrets—secrets held by passing travelers and commercial people, secrets as sweet as honey, all those little goods you could steal and keep for yourself. But he was there to take their secrets. He could work as hard and long as any honeybee on the hottest and most productive day of summer when the flowers were most open, working hard for a future beyond themselves, even as he, Alois, had labored on many an occasion to protect the glory, centuries upon centuries old, of the Hapsburgs and their exceptional Empire, so devoted to the future. Not all the Hapsburgs had been great, perhaps, not all even so very good as people, but it was true for the best of them, those who were like Franz Josef. They were good humans, very good. Alois could hope to find a resemblance to Franz Josef in his own features—the same sideburns, the same dignity. It was said of the Emperor Franz Josef that he could work for endless hours at his necessary and near-to-endless duties. When necessary,

he, Alois, was also ready. And yet they knew enough, both of them, to comprehend that it was not enough to carry the honey back, but that one must keep a part for oneself.

Some people in Linz he knew, fools for the most part, had been shocked when gossip spread about the actress, Fraulein Katharina Schratt, whom, ^{it} ~~he~~ was now bruited about, Franz Josef had taken for a mistress. Even when he had a wife ^{so} ~~as~~ beautiful as Empress Elizabeth! Such news had spread like a spill of oil ^{that} ~~which~~ has no boundaries. It had been a blow to some. Not to Alois. He understood. Both the best of men and the worst had to keep their share of the honey for themselves. As he entered retirement, this thought actually brought a taste of peace.

Let me not be altogether captivated, however, by the voluptuous turn Alois has just brought to his meditations. After all, he had his fear of bees as well. Once, in previous years, he had been stung so ferociously and apocalyptically (if I may put it so) that he never forgot the attack of vertigo it caused. Such power to create pain! That it could exist in creatures so small! It did not come from the honeybee alone, he decided, but must derive from congress with the sun! Such pain might even express the rage

of the sun. With that, Alois was familiar. He had worked through many a summer in the glare of hottest daylight, stuffed into his uniform. Of course he knew the rage of the sun. It was there to disseminate goods and warmth from the heavens above, but also to glow as a manifest of divine rage.

These were thoughts too large for Alois to accept openly. He never brought such meditations all the way forward into words, only his thoughts—which was good enough for me. This much, however, he knew: Honeybees were agents of the sun even as he was an agent of the Hapsburgs, and both were close to the ultimate power of them all.

Could these large epiphanies be the product of full retirement? Had he lost his own power to bring harsh levys upon any stranger who might try to abuse his realm?

The answer is obvious: Alois was not ready to retire. I looked forward with my own trepidation to how he would deal with his four children now that Edmund was ^{there} ~~born~~. For that matter, how would it be to live on a farm with Klara? In my purview, I could anticipate the unforeseen and unexpected rages of a man whose heart was not wholly in his retirement. Like unclassifiable clouds on the horizon was the shape of my

disturbance. Given Alois' propensity to blow pipe smoke into Adi's face, I could feel the return of my obligation to keep more than a small eye on the premises. All the same, I would not be able to pretend to the E.O. later that I was ready for the trouble that Alois, Junior, would bring in the next year when he turned fourteen.