

Part III

1.

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

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 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

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

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 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—Anality 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?"

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

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

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

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.

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 preciousities 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.

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.

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

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So, she embarked by train from Passau) ~~trunks, valises, packing crates and packages, embarking by train~~ ^{day} early in the morning from Passau to Linz where, Alois met them with a large wagon and ^{and} ^{of the station in Linz} ^(and packages) carry all their trunks, valises, packing crates) two work horses to take them ^{all together} for the last thirty miles from Linz to

Hafeld.

This ^{lasted} ~~last~~ portion of the trip took from noon to dark before they reached the farm, but the day had been warm, and Alois taught the children one song ^{to everyone's surprise, entertained} after another—his voice was rich, and Klara ^{who} ^{would join him when she knew the words.} ^{with} ^{that} ^{was in a rare mood. Keeping} ~~when the children heard him singing~~ ^{he} ^{so little of} ^{he} ^{had almost hired a driver, but, given} ^{his oncoming responsibilities as a farmer, felt} ^{it incumbent to take on the project himself?} Alois keeping it to himself, was proud at his skill with the horses and wagon.

The interior of the house was chill, but the previous owner ^{had} ^{as a parting gift, had} ^{before long, what some} ^{carefully packed} ^{not} each fireplace, and before long, the rooms were warm, and with the bread and sausage they had brought along, plus a jar of split pea soup, Klara had packed

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they had ^{enough to eat} a decent meal and ~~all~~ went to bed more happily than not. Alois

would spend the ^{next day} night with them, ^{before driving} then drive the wagon back to Linz.

That first night, however, Alois was ready to establish ^{some} ~~their~~ ^{conjugial} connubial

investiture of the premises as well, ~~to visit~~ and by the
 lipit of the gaslamp in ~~their~~ ^{in 1863} their
 bedroom ~~for electricity~~ ^{in 1863}

~~Thankly available~~ ^{in 1863} ~~this far out in the country~~ ^{into the}
~~country side~~ ^{from Linz} he thought that Klara looked
 in fine color, not pale at all, and
~~told her as much~~ ^{Paul} only to ~~have~~ ^{hear} her laugh
 in true merriment.

"You, too, uncle," she said. "Your
 nose is verigred from the sun."

"ah," he said, "you are still calling
 me uncle." "Soon, it's ten years that you're
 married and still, ^{am} I ^{to you} uncle
 Alois." That is a disgrace."

"ah," she said, "we are all very
 proud of you. ^{It takes} ^{it's} ^{something} You did it all and
 so well. ^{something} ^{you} ^{never} ^{did} ^{before} I
 "well, I can do ^{some things} ^{you} ^{and} ^{now}
 I am not so simple as you think."

"I never think ^{you are} ^{simple}," she said.
 "yes, you can tell me, what do you
 think, my little niece?"

Do you
 mean
 old
 Uncle
 Alois?

28 was not often that she was ready (240) to speak to him so directly, but on this night, she said, "I wonder why you never tell me that you love me."

"Maybe," he replied, "it is because you still call me 'uncle'."

To his astonishment, her answer was the nearest she had ever come to speaking in a manner that ~~she~~ belonged to other kinds of women. "Maybe," she said, "because you are such a big healthy fellow of an uncle."

It was not about this big, the ^{to pass} ~~the~~ ^{pulling on its leash} ~~up for control~~ ^{His voice was hoarse,} "How would you know what is the size of a healthy fellow?" he asked.

"I don't ^{know} but I can guess. You are a very big uncle."

That was all it took to make her pregnant. He was so excited ^{enough to take} that he took her by the side of the bed, both of them ^{he took her} half-dressed, and then again in bed. He was full of love for himself first, ^{and then} for her. ^{He was a fine person at up to date} ^{and then} his power, ^{and then} a good deal of it was a degree, and then for the farm. It was a beautiful piece of land. He even took pleasure in the thought of coming a

he felt
some love
for her
to
soup
degree

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 Buddhal close to him
 the animal in manhood of the two
 the cow and the pig saw that had
 been part of the purchase money that
 was paid to the people who had
 to the children in the house and
 a statement in their paper and
 the

those nine acres to the rear of their balcony (247)
just off his children's ^{any} field
~~one more~~ A person should not be
so ready as Clara to release good feelings
thought to the night air. Not at all!
What kind of black-hearted spirit might
be abroad there to listen to your nothing
but evil goss?

In the morning, she could sense his impatience to be done with the unpacking so that he could go out and walk her grounds, and so she took over the larger part of the unpacking, while he gave the children a tour of the kaffir all three close to him, Angela twined, Ali now close to six, and Edmund near two, and a fine toddler, he loved to walk with his hand in Adie's hand, yes, enjoyed that almost as much as being carried on his father's shoulder.

They were to go back to the house now
and help their mother, also, to let them
In the afternoon, he would, he promised
teach them how to milk the cow, feed
the pig, and groom the horse. But for now
it was ^{now good} mother's turn to wash them.

He went ^{alone} to ~~be alone~~ ^{above} ~~to~~ ^{to} ~~work~~ ^{work} ~~his land~~ ^{his land} ~~It had all~~ ^{It had all} ~~over time~~ ^{over time} ~~he had a lot of climbing~~ ^{he had a lot of climbing} ~~and more than a few decisions to make~~ ^{and more than a few decisions to make} ~~So he studied the condition of the orchard~~ ^{So he studied the condition of the orchard}

^{and} ~~all over~~ again. ^{when he} He had seen it last 243
~~with snow~~ there was snow on the ~~ground~~
ground and he had been able to determine
no more than that the ~~frame of the house, trees,~~
and the bare branches ^{appeared to be} ~~had~~ integrity, strong
strong, reasonably ~~straight~~ straight, and
not roughly tortured splines to ~~beak of scale,~~
^{though the afternoon} ~~with a really in~~ ~~cray~~ storms.

In truth, he realized now, he had hardly
studied the ~~place~~ ^{price} place. It had been
enough that ~~the price seemed low enough~~
^{price} ~~to him~~, and he wanted it, the house and
the view were the best he had found, and
he could not ⁱⁿ ~~afford~~ to keep for any full
day, ~~more to~~ ^{to} ~~travel out from~~ ^{travel} ~~him~~.
and ~~from~~ ^{from} ~~him~~ ^{him} ~~reach for~~ ^{reach} ~~at~~ ^{at} It
extraordinary was enough that he wanted
it. ~~He~~ ^{He} ~~in his work~~, he had had to be
good at making quick decisions. You
could not ~~with~~ ^{with} ~~examine~~ ^{examine} in complete
detail every trader who might have
something wrong about him, nor every
~~but~~ ^{but} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~moving~~ ^{moving} made your choice
on the spot, and he had been good at that.

All the same, he was not to muse
at ease as he had ~~expected~~ ^{expected} ~~to do~~
walking the meadows, ^{the one} ~~the one~~ ^{the one} ~~the one~~
small hill of his new domain, ^{it was}
less extensive than he ~~had~~ ^{had} ~~remembered~~
no larger really than a ~~good~~ ^{good} ~~good~~ ^{good} ~~good~~
parade field and maybe a little more.

Good

all that was different from his own of course. He was face to face with the other side of his achievement, ~~was~~ in the heat of July, in the farmhouse above the hill he saw five faces every meal, all the way from Klare to Tolman, and by journey there would be six. He was used to people, he had lived with people's faces in Frankfurt

more face, than most people had to ⁽²⁴⁶⁾ lose
at long day, but now it was the same face,
and he had to admit it, he was ~~often~~ ^{all too often} ~~often~~ ^{and then} ~~he was~~
feeling irritated when he was not ~~well~~.
He was not used to facing problems of
such little interest.

The farm was another matter. He did take
some pleasure in Angela's work, for a twelve
year old who had been putting cold cream
on her hands ever since she was eight - what
a little city girl, so ready to be spoiled, now
she was a help to him, and was ~~was~~ always
carrying ~~to the~~ the two horses and working
down the row when it didn't reap
it, she was deft at milking and even got
Adolf and Edmund to laugh at the
heartily contentment in the fully galled
saddles of the sows when they fed her.
She was a large bra pig, and a prize
got with a pink rosette ~~which~~ ^{which} ~~was~~ ^{was} ~~attached~~
above her stall, the prize rosette from
the summer before they owned the farm. Carl
Klara told Alois that Angela was very good
~~at collecting the manure~~ ^{at collecting the manure} ~~and~~ ^{and} ~~transporting the~~
at separating and transporting the
manure of the four animals to ~~set~~ ^{set} the
separate piles of collection and even
got Adi who seemed to hate such dirty
work to take up a little part of the day.
Alois, Jr. had come to join them at the
beginning of July, and was a good help for

a short period. He liked the horses ^(left) particularly the younger ones, but he would
who was good for riding, but he worked the
learned in no time, but he worked the
the plow with the drag horse, and then turned
up three acres of the pasture for potatoes,
~~and the first year~~ and used good
sprouting potatoes, also, slains, and
slains in the next year. ~~But in~~
African that year, also, Junior worked
harder for ~~that~~ week than ~~the~~ father, would
have believed, but the first effort spent
it was never the same. ~~And~~ Out of that
flurry of hard work came the hard work.
By now, he had failed to pass over half
of his courses in his first year at
the Deulschule in Passau, and would have
to take most of that year over again.

"I won't go back," he told his father
at that school in full of stupid ~~and~~ ^{headstrong} ~~and~~

~~"I didn't know you were"~~

Yes, he had lived with what he knew
the school news would be for all of the
first week of his return to the field, and
had not said a word. Now, his
defiance came down on him.

There was a great deal of work to
do, of course, the ~~potatoes and beans~~
They had tilled ten inches deep and
and the sprouters in shallow rows
and covered them lightly, each row
five a foot apart, each furrowed row
two and a half feet apart. That was fine,

enough by now to give Alain pause (249)
and that he had to decide in
the days that followed was a mistake
in his own judgment. Also, Junior knew
it. ~~He~~ thereafter he worked at clipping
the edges of any temporary agreement ~~that~~
made on ~~any~~ ~~working~~ day the work to
be done that day. He was not a city boy
like a farmer's son but a city boy for
him at a job he did not like. Often before
sundown before the last of the ~~work~~
was done, he would coax Alois ^{into} ~~the~~ letting
him finish early so he could ride the
goat home (whom he named Ulan)
up over the hill into twilight.

The trouble was that Alois had too
soft a palate under his hard bite. He
adored Alois. In the way was so
attractive. Reckless, free to terrible
much like his mother, much too
proudful and ~~was a character~~ ~~at~~
now in full flight from ordinary
his education. He would never go back
to school, he swore. He was still as
charming as Fanni when he wanted
to be, and he moved as well as she
did. It was a wonder how quickly
he set up a communion with Ulan, that
was a horse! A sequel, a station and
Alois had hesitated to ride him. At last
a long way to the ground! Alo Junior
could saddle him up with all the skill

of a fine ~~king~~ cadet - the sort who (250)
used to promenade on the ~~boulevards~~ of
the streets of Vienna in the past, that
Alain had made for them, yes, all the way
back then when he had so admired those
well turned out young men with their
handsome ladies. It all came back to Alain
and the old never-developed dream of
finding an elegant and lovely young
millionaire so that he and she would live
the life with the finest hats and coats
in all of the capital, a selfish dream, but
Alain was so much like those young
officers, not yet fourteen (or) not a
stinking young man.

So, Alain could not quite refuse
when Alain Jr would ask for ~~the~~ an early
hand off so that Alan could ~~be~~ exercise
and ~~know~~ the horse loved him! One same
horse ~~from~~ that would ~~pass~~ pass the floor
of his stall when Alain Jr approached an
elegant, if only to show his high born back,
No, the stallion did not like the father,
but like the father, was much taken with
the son.

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17.

On the night in April when
 Another situation ~~soon~~ arose. Klara became pregnant on the first night
 they first slept in the house. (Klara became pregnant, until
 after they actually moved into the house. Purchased in February, the farm had
 then, the farm, purchased in February, ~~had not~~ had not
 been by the Hitler family. Klara ~~had~~ kept the children
 remained unoccupied until April. Back in Passau, Edmund had been ailing,
 in Passau because Edmund had been ailing
 and it was winter. Besides,
 and Alois would not be able to join them permanently until late in June after
 By April, however, ~~decided finally to leave~~
 his retirement. Nonetheless, Klara braved the difficulties and made the move
 undoubtedly ~~to make the move~~
 Angela, ~~Adolf, and~~ ~~Adolf, Edmund~~
 right after Easter with their four children and the sum of their possessions. Alois
 was left to stay in Passau with a neighbor
 until the end of his school year.