

~~8~~ Edits

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Once they began to talk, however, Alois proceeded to supply Adi's head with so many new names, continuing to walk at a good pace, that before long the boy was twice breathless for he did not dare to lag behind by a step nor a word. In turn, Alois, so rarely in the habit of spending time or thought on this little Adolf, was a hint short of breath himself. Over the years, he had packed enough rheumatism into his knees and enough constriction upon his lungs (via tobacco) to move as a rule more measuredly. But now, finding a vein of conversation to pursue with the boy not only proved an unexpected obstacle, but a stimulus to his legs. He was ~~that~~ ^{pleased} Adi had wished to go with him. Indeed, he was almost able to approach his own feelings. It

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was not Alois' habit to ~~venture over~~ to full sentiments about his younger children, indeed, he had never considered fatherhood ~~as~~ a subject of personal interest until a child was old enough to work by his side. Now, most unexpectedly, he felt a sense of mystery in the very presence of his boy. That was not only uncommon but unprecedented. He actually wished to enlist the admiration of this little creature trotting along next to him.

His desire was already fulfilled. Adi was ~~so~~ excited, *to be* ~~he~~ Finally, he was ~~at last~~ in the company of his father. The word which he had barely learned to spell stood before his eyes as FATHER. Just so large was his recognition of the size, and—no other word will do—the immanence of the big man striding along beside him. Alois was larger at that moment by the child's scale of measurement than the awe which filled the expression of his mother when she would speak of der gute Gott, yes, there was Alois next to him, so big, so high above him, quite an equal in emanative force to Jehovah. (Or Franz-Josef, for that matter, equal to Jehovah, given the way that Alois pronounced the name of the Emperor.)

How the boy wanted to please Alois! At the commencement of the walk, their mutual silence had been formidable. It remained so until Adi

found a few words. "Have there always been bees?" he asked at last. It was a simple question but fortuitous. It came just before they would have remained mute for the rest of the walk.

"Yes. Always. Bees," he amended, "have been on our fine earth for a very long time."

"So they go so far back, Father?"

Alois gave him an encouraging pat on the nape of his neck. The boy's obvious desire to keep the conversation in flow now served to activate Alois' funds of exposition. "Yes, I would say, the answer is ~~is there~~ Way back! Maybe longer than us. And there has never been a day when we didn't look to steal their honey." He laughed at the extent of his own insight. "I have read that already, from the time of the Bronze Age, we were all eating honey, yes, and I can say for certain that I have seen drawings and some old poems in glass cases right there in our dusty little Linz museum, that speak of how back in the Middle Ages, beekeeping was already a serious activity. Although wild, very wild still."

Given his touch of rheumatism, Alois was walking fast. Adi's breath was now seizing his lungs in a unique mixture of happy fervor at the fact of

the conversation itself, and desperation that he might not be able to keep walking (half-running) at his father's pace. So many unfamiliar words were coming into his mind at once. On this August already passed he had been standing under the walnut tree near their farmhouse when a gale of wind came by like the sound of a whip, whereupon three walnuts, hard as stone, pelted his head with such authority that he had not even been ready to cry—it was as if the walnuts had their own voice and told him to be silent. Now, he was buffeted by the Bronze Age, and next, the Middle Ages—maybe he had heard Middle Ages before. He felt as if he half-knew it. No question of stopping to ask—he strode along as fast as he could keep up with the burning air in his lungs.

"They had," said Alois, "no hives in the Middle Ages. Beekeepers already, yes, ^{honey, yes,} but they had to go out hunting to where they could find some bees gathered together. Where? Where else? In hollow trees. Locate such a tree, and then grab what you can of the honey before they ^{stung} your head off. That was how they must have done it then. Only even that was not enough. They also had to get the wax. This beeswax was so important. Once you have beeswax you can have light in your hut. Every night.

Candles! But, oh, they had to pay. So many bites. Then along would come their Duke or their Baron. If he heard you had honey, you had to pay up. A good share. Imagine. What do you think he gave you back?—a bow, a nice strong cross-bow. Why? Because what the huntsman was doing, was dangerous. The bears in the forest were ~~also~~ looking for honey. Think how crazy those bees must have got when a bear stuck his nose in their hive in the log. It is one thing to sting a man, but how do you stop a bear? A bear with his fur and that thick skin! They had to go for the eyes. It didn't matter. The bear would still come looking. Ja, a man needed a cross-bow—to kill the bear. Not so easy to go near honey if the bear got there first, but you could have compensation. Sometimes you had bear meat. Once in a while, you had bear meat and honey."

Adi's breath by now was wholly on fire. Their path was wandering through a small wood, and he was looking for a bear.

"Sometimes," said Alois, "on a cold day this time of year a man would find a tree ready to fall, a dead tree with a big hollow in it, and a swarm of bees right there in the hollow. All clustered together to stay warm against the cold. The good peasant would dare to take the tree down. He would have to

do it carefully, so carefully, not to stir up too much, and he did it in the evening, only in the evening ^{be-} cause these little bees are more quiet then, especially when it is cold, and then he and a big son, or maybe a brother, would carry the tree back to their hut, so they could ~~begin to~~ learn how to get more of the honey."

"What about the bears? Would they come?"

"Yes. The kind of man we're talking about had to be ready to kill the first bear and hang him up near the bees. That kept all the other bears away. Yes, that's how it began. But now, now, what has it become? A hobby! A little risky, maybe, but sometimes profitable."

"Hobby," the boy repeated—another new word.

"Soon," said Alois, "it will be a business."

They walked in silence. Der Steckenpferd was how Alois had put it—a horse-on-a-stick, a plaything, a hobby. Soon it would be a business, he had said. The boy was confused. The continued pace at which they were walking was now pinching his breath past the point where he could ask even one more question.

Abruptly, Alois stopped. He had become aware at last of his son's discomfort. "Come," he said, "you sit down." He pointed to an available rock, then sat next to him on another rock. Only then did he feel the pain in his own knees and legs.

"You must understand," he said, "this bee-keeping will not be fairy-tales for us. Honey is sweet, but bees are not. Not so sweet. Sometimes they are cruel to each other. Very cruel. Do you know why?"

"No," said Adi. His eyes were, however, alight. "Please, you must tell me why, Father."

"Because they obey one law. A single law. It takes care of everything. It is so clear to them. Their law says to them: The colony must survive. Nobody will dare to be lazy inside this colony." He paused. "Nobody, except for the drones. They are there to serve their one good purpose. But then it's all over for them. They are gone. Goodbye."

"Are they killed?" The boy knew the answer.

"Killed. Yes. All of them. Once a year, right about now—just after summer they are gotten rid of. No charity." He began to laugh again. "In the home of the bees, there are no good Christians. No charity whatsoever. You

will not find one bee in any hive who is too weak to work. They get rid of the cripples early."

As they rested, however, Alois' thoughts wheeled back into his early silence. He was full of dread. It was not intense, yet it seemed to live everywhere within him on this Sunday morning, a cloud holding many shapes at once. He could not even name all his fears. He knew he was directly afraid of being cheated by Der Alte. Alois had understood what the neighboring peasants ^{were} not ready to say. They had praised Der Alte, they had ^{been} echoed each other speaking of his vast knowledge on this subject of apiculture. Yet Alois could hear no great allegiance to the man himself. One neighbor even whispered, "You can trust Der Alte, yes, I think so," but Alois neither liked nor trusted this neighbor. And did not the neighbor feel the same way about him?

This was but one hint of his fear. If the fine and attractive location of the farm had been the good reason for its purchase, he could not say the same for the quality of the land. He did not wish to be cheated again. Indeed, given the trouble with Alois, Jr., he had kept putting off his decision to go into this beekeeping. Now, all of August was lost. It might even be too late

to start the winter colony. He did not feel competent about this aspect of apiculture, but he knew—he had delayed too long, his choices were restricted. He had to buy and buy soon. He might have to pay whatever unnatural price would now be asked for the stock and materials. Yes, this late in the season, he would be held up, wherever he went. He certainly ^{did} ~~had~~ ^{NOT enjoy} ~~not enjoy~~ ^{these} ~~distaste~~ at the thought of the peasants laughing at him again, but it was not his prime uneasiness. He could not quite admit it to himself. Yet the last time he had dabbled in this bee business, going at it just as a horse-on-a-stick, one hive kept in a little town walking distance from Braunau, a place he could go to in the evening to get a rest from the tavern and his fellow officers, or be able to visit on a Sunday in order not to have to watch everyone going to church—a diversion, he had thought. But then he had had a near disaster. On a given Sunday for no mistake he could point to, he had been stung so quickly and repeatedly by so many infuriated bees that he decided afterward he must have been poking about in the Queen Bee's quarters. Who could tell? He realized the degree of his ignorance of the real stuff if he was ^{so} ~~so~~ ^{open} ~~open~~ ^{to} ~~to ^{ambush} ~~ambush~~ in the course of working with a hive.~~

Now, he could say he knew ^{much} a ~~good deal~~ more. He had been reading on the subject. At length. Given his lack of education, no one could claim to be a quicker student than himself. He retained what he read. How many could say that? Where, then, was his fear?

But he knew. He could tell. By the way he was preparing in advance to recount to this man, Der Alte, that he had taken many stings on his hands and his knees and that that had subsequently proved beneficial for the stiffness in his joints, yes, that stiffness acquired over the years of standing at Customs posts. For certain, he felt ready to impress Der Alte with his knowledge of bee venom and the degree to which diseases in ancient Egypt had even been treated in that manner. He would speak of Pliny and Galen. Great doctors. They, too, knew to make various ointments from bee venom and bee honey. Charlemagne and Ivan the Terrible as well. He could speak of their afflictions of the joints and how they had had such pain eliminated, or so it was reputed, by bee stings.

But was he really prepared to enter that kind of conversation with Der Alte? At that moment, he regretted bringing Adolf with him. Alois ^{felt} ~~even~~ felt trapped. To the ~~full~~ degree that he had spoken so much to Klara on the

subject, he had lost his room for choice. He had to start beekeeping. Or else?

Did he wish her to ever ^{get her} ~~become~~ ^{know} aware of the fear he had now developed in his heart that this might not be, no, not when you got down to it completely, that this might not be the next step to take?

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Already, as I would remind the reader, Magnus Gerucheles, Der Alte Zauberer, was one of ours. I have called him a pensioner and that is accurate. In recent years, we have not used him often and any benefits he has received from us have not been large. From time to time, we provide him with a bit of added intuition for his perceptions, a species of gift-giving practiced by angels and demons alike—we look to revive faded loyalties with such a lagniappe, a Trinkgeld, so to speak. In turn, our pensioners will do a little work for us. The impulse to put a spoonful of exquisite honey on Adi's tongue even as he and Alois came through the door was entirely ~~by~~ my suggestion. For certain, the old doctor did it just as I requested. The old

doctor. Even I call him that. It is one of his least attractive vanities. (He will insist that he is an honored and learned university graduate.) I have heard him speak on separate occasions of his years at Heidelberg, Leipzig, Gottingen, Vienna, Salzberg, and Berlin, none of whose great schools he attended. Indeed, only Heidelberg and Gottingen were ever honored with a visit. Our old and learned doctor is a fraud, a half-Jewish Pole, of no certified ^{higher} ~~upper~~ education who, nonetheless, much through his own efforts, has acquired some of the verbal skills and superior manner of a good German Doctor of Philosophy. If he has chosen in his old age to live like a confirmed drunk, an odd choice (since in fact he does not drink) he is attracted all the same to many of the slovenly habits of old sots. His clothes are filthy. Even his long woolen cap manages to be full of soup stains (for he wipes his mouth with the tail of it) and his white beard is stained with nicotine. Often he smells of these unhappy ~~body~~ odors we look to reduce in our clients. To put no pretty word on it, he is incontinent. Not only his clothes but his furnishings have the astringent authority of old urine.

Nonetheless, he is striking. That long stocking cap which he even wears in summer and indoors does serve his devoted image of himself as

some kind of a throwback, can it be, to a court jester?—for he sits in his hut swathed in an old cape full of faded bright colors, a fool's motley. One could hardly expect him to be impressive in appearance, yet he is. Undeniably, he is. His eyes are extraordinary, as blue as the coldest skies of the north, yet full of merry lights that offer a clue to many a trick he has learned.

Alois, who had encountered hundreds of people a day for forty years, was hardly to be surprised by someone new. For that matter, he had ~~had~~ ^{developed} the ability to capture the first moment, so to speak, in just about every passing exchange. Travellers were not prepared for the phenomenon of meeting a Customs official who possessed such a degree of authority. Yet there he was at his post, or, later in career, at his desk, exhibiting the strength of his peasant roots, while offering his uncanny physical resemblance to Franz Josef. The first moment, therefore, invariably belonged to Alois. Few were prepared for the intelligence that stood out in his immediate glance. "Try to fool me—you will fail!" was the unmistakable message.

This may have been why I gave the order to Der Alte to meet the father and son at the door with a spoonful of honey, then insert it without leave or hesitation into the boy's mouth. Whatever Alois had been preparing himself

for, hardly could it have been this. So rude. So gracious! All at once! And nothing offered to Alois but a superior smile from Der Alte as if his small hut, this piss-soaked den, worse than an abode of fifteen cats and their leavings, was nonetheless Der Alte's place and he was happy in it, and, I may as well add, diabolically unembarrassed.

Moreover, Der Alte had won the boy over. It had taken no more than that one stroke. (Plus our work at etching a dream ~~on~~ the night before!) Alois now perceived a look of admiration in Adi's eyes for this extraordinary old man. Indeed, the boy's eyes were alive with the same intensity of admiration that Alois had received during all the length of their walk together. ~~The idea seemed~~ ^{yet} ~~it felt~~ ridiculous to him, ~~but~~ he reacted as if Der Alte had stolen the boy.

Now, they sat down. The old man fussed a little albeit most skillfully at preparing tea. To Alois' further discomfort, the procedure was courtly. A very old gentleman, or even a very old lady, might have been showing our Alois how little he knew—after all these years!—of the putative elegance of a tea ceremony, particularly between absolute strangers. (I will say that this old sorcerer could also be intimidating when I am in the offing.)

when he sensed that he was overmatched. Indeed, he had all but cloistered himself into such a habit.

So he began by citing Pliny and Galen, Charlemagne, and Ivan the Terrible, just as he had planned. He spoke, he believed, most movingly of the afflictions of those two great monarchs and the dedication of those two medical geniuses who had looked to deal with ailments so grievous that others could find no cure. It was not, he would vouchsafe, that he, personally, had suffered inhumanly from gout or rheumatism, merely, you could say, that he had received his intimations of future miseries, and, in recompense, had also learned a great deal from one particular occasion. He had been prey to an unprecedented attack, "just the one time, many bites to the knees which subsequently provided considerable relief to what might have been the commencement of my rheumatism. At that point, I would have given much to be a medical scientist for I would have begun research on just this subject. I am even sufficiently confident of myself to believe I would probably have made significant discoveries."

"Just so," said Der Alte, "you might, you might very well have done just that. Because indeed, dear sir, what you then believed was there to be

discovered had indeed been detected by no less a figure than Dr. Likomsky back in 1864, thirty-two years ago when you were still a young man, and I might also mention Doctor Terc who put the crowning cap on what could have been your thesis. Yes! Herr Doctor Terc came forth with serious chemical studies on the nature of bee venom and its as-yet-undeveloped potential for precisely these valuable cures. Rheumatism and gout might both be seen by now as ailments of the past if not for the innumerable obstacles which present themselves in the way of administering treatment. We are still looking for more precise positioning of the bee sting onto the affected body. It is rumored that the Chinese"—now with a melting look (designed most shamelessly to add to the mutual delight that existed already between him and the boy) he added, "the Chinese who live on the other side of the earth from us. Have you heard?"

Adi nodded solemnly. He had heard of the Chinese, heard of them in his one-room school house during the hour when Fraulein Werner instructed the geography class (two grades above) on the far-off placement of India and China.

"Yes, in that far-off near-mythical land, esteemed Finance-Watch Chief Officer Herr Hitler, it is said that these Chinese employ the stings of needles to alleviate gout, an excellent solution I would think, since the least attractive aspect of my beloved bees is their eagerness to sting, yes, we love them for their honey, but not necessarily for their so-often-martyred condition when they seek to defend themselves."

Alois sensed that he would do well to leave this topic. The tea had left a most penetrating aroma in his nostrils which, to his surprise, was curiously compatible with the urine. Needless to say, he would have preferred a good swallow of beer to pump up a few of his prepared remarks into more forceful statement, but as of now, this conversation did belong to Der Alte. At what length he went on!

"I cannot," he remarked, "begin to call you my good friend as yet. For I do not know you. Except, of course, by your fine reputation. Word of your former most respected position preceeds our meeting. Your father," he now said to Adi, "is well-regarded by all, but"—and he was now back again with Alois—"I am still ready to call you my friend because I feel in myself an imperative to counsel you, for, oh, I must say, there is, dear sir, so much to

learn about these bees and their good keeping." He sighed with a sound of woe as physically intimidating in its resonance as any of a number of less poetic bodily sounds.

"Let me declare that I would not wish in any manner to impose on your pride." He stopped. Now, he would not proceed without a laisser-passer.

"No, tell me, good Doctor, you must tell me what you think," said Alois, his voice most normal (to the degree he could command it) but his nostrils were near to quivering. He hardly knew if he was at the onset of an intolerable sense of woe or whether a true burden was about to be lifted. What could be this imposition on his pride?

"Given your gracious permission, I would say that I must caution you about ~~this~~ honorable and honest desire ~~you contain at present~~ to enter the endless vagaries of apiculture. It is, you see, a vocation." He nodded. He turned again to Adi as if the boy was one more equal, yes, all three sitting there as equals. "You, little fellow," Der Alte said, "you, who looks so smart, are you smart enough to know what a vocation might be?"

"No," said Adi, "but maybe I do. Yes. Almost."

"You do. You know it even before you are aware that you know it. That is the first sign of a truly intelligent person, not so?" The sound of "nicht war?" vibrated into the tender pit of Adi's stomach.

"A vocation," said Der Alte, "is not something you do because others said that that is what you must do. Not at all. When you have a vocation, there is no choice. You give all that you have to doing what has become so important to you that, yes, you must do it."

"I would not wish to dispute your learned words," said Alois, although by now he was "so far out of his skin" (as they used to say in Spital) that he had to get out of his chair and start pacing the room, "no, I do not wish to dispute, but surely one can keep a hive without building a monastery to enshrine it. Absolutely not. I foresee a serious but modest investment for a good retired man like myself."

"Dear sir, it cannot and will not ever be that way," said Der Alte. "That much I can promise a strong person like yourself. Heartbreak or happiness. Nothing between!" He nodded with all the profundity of the decades he had accumulated of presenting himself as a great and learned doctor. "Herr Hitler, I cannot allow you to consider such a project until you

can be made fully aware of the risks that await you, the diseases and mortal enemies that surround our delicate sweet-seeking bees. They know. From the point of view of nature itself, the honey they make is the equivalent of gold. It is as if so many of the creatures of nature, large and small, are jealous of the life of these remarkable bees who are not only able to make honey but to live constantly in such a golden and intoxicating presence. I can inform you of one genus of spider who is evil, nothing less. Die Krabbe-Spinne, it is called. So soon as it finds a promising flower, it ensconces itself deep in the perfumed cavern. There this crab-spider waits, fully at home in the intoxications of the corolla. It activates the scent of these flowered walls until its own odor is overcome by the elixir of the petals. What then? It waits. When the forager-bee, our sweet hard-working female with its undeveloped ovaries—only the Queen is complete in that compartment!—ach, these other females are there to work for the length of their short lives, to clean house, to serve the Queen's court, or to forage. So here, contemplate our poor forager. ^{She} ~~It~~ smells the inimitable ^{get the honey} ~~redolence of the flower's~~ ^{She} ~~cavern, it~~ enters to pick up its lustful store of nectar and pollen and is, at once, done in. Cruelly, so cruelly. For, at first, the poor bee is only half-gone. ^{She} ~~It~~ has been

paralyzed by the sting of this crab-spider. ^{She} ~~It~~ lies there, numb, incapable of saving itself, while the other, altogether evil, proceeds to sip away on the vital liquids and subtle constituents of the bee's internal elements. When nothing is left but the dry whisper of an empty hull, a husk, this crab spider goes to the actual labor of ejecting the remains from the flower, after which, I must suppose, it ensconces itself in all the bliss of a successful destroyer's sleep. It slumbers, all sated, in the corolla."

Adi would dream for weeks to come of the bee, the flower, and the spider. So would Alois if in wholly different ^{way,} ~~fashion~~. But there was more unhappy detail to come. Der Alte ^{was} ~~now~~ ^{was} ~~found it~~ ^{was} ~~requisite to talk~~ ^{was} ~~about the~~ ^{was} ~~bee-wolf, a veritable female brute, a wasp who would strike at the honeybee~~ ^{was} ~~in the moment it was alighting on a flower. The bee-wolf, "most~~ ^{was} ~~appropriately named," would always go for the throat. "Always! The~~ ^{was} ~~honeybee has a soft throat. So once again, our forager is paralyzed. The~~ ^{was} ~~wasp is now in complete command of what she knows how to do. She~~ ^{was} ~~proceeds to squash the belly of the honeybee in order to disgorge all the~~ ^{was} ~~nectar that hard-working bee has already taken into herself. This honey~~ ^{was} ~~squeezed up from the belly overflows out of her mouth into the maw of the~~

bee-wolf. Is that enough? No. Our vile predator now undertakes the labor of flying away with her stricken little victim. She brings her to a nest specially prepared and lays her down next to as many as six or eight still-living but wholly-paralyzed other honey-bees, and then proceeds to deposit in that crypt one egg ^{which} ~~who~~ will later feed on those live but unmoving victims. ^{when} ~~so soon as~~ this solitary egg becomes a larva, it is ready to eat its way up the scale of life into the form of another wasp, another bee-wolf. Every last one of the suspended but living bodies has been put there for its tidy growth. The victims cannot even die. They must wait to be eaten. And what can it be that preserves them until they are engorged? The answer is simple. Our good system of nature has all the cunning of a maniac. It is the venom in the wasp's sting that preserves the flesh of these paralyzed bees ~~over all the days~~ ^{for weeks} that ~~one hungry needs for its growth.~~ ^{larva}

"I have offered these two exceptional cases as lively examples of the perils to the life of any colony you may hope to protect. There are so many enemies. Skunks will fret their claws on the front wall of a hive until the guardian bees within come forth to repel him. They are heroic, but futile. They are swallowed en masse. Toads wait beneath to pick up the droppings.

(B) this is singular or plural

Another variety of spider will wrap artful webs about each bee they net. Ants are capable of invading your hive. I have seen a number of colonies, never my own, where the bees must tolerate the ants, and will even surrender a portion of their territory in order that the ants do not attack the combs that contain the future brood. With mice, it is worse. They loot the combs for the honey stored in them. In winter, they inhabit the hive for warmth and construct a nest for themselves. When the most valiant of our home guard attack the intruder, and succeed by sheer numbers in stinging that invading monster to death, what can they do with the dead mouse? To them, it is larger than Leviathan. The carcass will rot, and make the hive intolerable.

So they choose to cover this catastrophic dead presence with disinfectant,

~~which is still another substance~~
~~that~~ they know how to manufacture from pollen and a few green buds. Have ^{which} you heard of it? This propolis?"

"Certainly," said Alois. "They also use propolis for mending cracks in their walls." He looked not at all disconcerted.

"I see," said Der Alte, "that I may have failed to discourage you."

"I live by the law of averages," said Alois. "I prefer to think of the ongoing possibility of profit rather than of the perils."

"Does the bee-wasp frighten you?" asked the old man of the boy.

Adi nodded, but then was quick to say, "If my father is ready, then so must I be."

"You have a splendid son," said Der Alte.

Alois was ready to agree for the first time that this might be a viable possibility. How nice it was to learn that his little Adolf was more than a bed-wetter and might even be, conceivably, the equal of Alois Junior one of these days.

But thoughts of Alois Junior invariably reminded him of all that might not be in place. So now Alois wondered why Der Alte had been seeking to discourage him. It made no sense. Given the state of his hut, the old man could use the money. Doubtless! Why then scorn a potential customer's desire to invest?

For the first time, he felt as if he had a grasp on Der Alte. The hermit understood him better than others, decided Alois. "He knows that I am a man who looks to keep his pride intact. I do not give way to the first warning. So Der Alte must know that the more he discourages me, the more I will be ready to begin my colony. He will have his money after all!"

Alois now gave Der Alte what he considered his largest and most confident smile. "I respect your cautions," he said, "but we must move now to the other side of the question. Can we speak of what you will do for me, and what I can do for you?"

"Not quite yet, said Der Alte. "If you wish to remain a man with a modest little hobby, I will, of course, be available for the necessary materials. But I see in you, Sir, if I may speak on a more personal level, the possibility of a true vocation. So, I would propose another consideration, a better approach. I, for example, to learn my metier, put in an apprenticeship that lasted for three years and provided me with an advanced license. What I would propose to you is a more collegial relationship—may I put it so?—I am prepared over the next few years, for the most modest fees ~~of instruction~~ to have you study with me as I work on my colonies. It could prove a most agreeable arrangement. You will learn much, and I will have the pleasure of an intelligent man's company. It is sad to say, but in all these verdant hills and fields that surround ^{our} Hafeld here, we are the only two individuals of interesting intelligence."

Alois kept the smile on his face but his nostrils were still paying their tithe. "Work for three years with you, you foul-smelling old goat?" was what he did not utter. The compliment to his intelligence prevented the insult as completely as his need to come to an arrangement with the old mountebank for materials.

In turn, I was horrified. No professional has a greater desire ^{to} ~~to~~ ^{for} maintain his own competence than a devil. I had been incompetent here. Der Alte might be a pensioner, but I might have neglected him for too long. The loneliness revealed in these last remarks ^{was} ~~were~~ like the chill in an old stone house that has not been occupied for many winters. I was not worried that Alois would take up his offer, but now I more than understood how intense was the old man's yearning to see more and more of Adi. No bold move is ever free of ^{unplanned} ~~uncharted~~ consequences. My notion to expedite the etching with a spoonful of honey could have been a serious mistake. The Maestro would not be tolerant of any mischief that developed between Adi and Der Alte.

Calculated mischief was our province, but must not belong to a client, not if we could prevent it. We look to direct romantic habits, rather than ^{serve the} ~~serve the~~ obligation to correct them! Any future episode between the old man and the ^{fact we must} ~~fact we must~~

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Stet

boy would not be to the Maestro's ^{to have} ~~inclination~~ ^{liking}. Not so early! Too many indeterminables! But in the etching of the dream composed for Adi, had it been my notion to use ^{the} a spoonful of honey, or was that by way of the O.O.? The line of demarcation is never clear among us unless the O.O. chooses to make it so.

At this point, Alois said, "I am honored by your personal interest in me, but I must explain. In my family, we are blockheads. All of us, blockheads. The worst to be said is that we are proud of that. So, I must work alone. That is how I am. I look forward, therefore, to enjoying a mutually agreeable commercial relationship."

Der Alte nodded. He, too, had his pride. No matter the need, he would not repeat his suggestion.

"Yes," he said, "we will make arrangements. I will establish a couple of colonies for you and supply those tools and products you do not have in hand already." He turned to Adi. "Soon your father will be very busy. Are you able to count to one thousand?"

"Yes," said Adi. "They do that in the upper class, and so I know."

"Good. Because this spring your father will be master of many, many thousands of bees. Will you be afraid of them?"

"I am afraid," said Adolf, "but you know, I am also curious."

"A wonderful boy," said Der Alte, and his expression was full of love. Tears came into Adi's eyes. His mother would soon have another baby, and it would be just like before with Edmund. *She would be far* ~~Far~~ away again. He would not see the love he searched to find in her eyes. Not for a while.

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—^{his} ~~he felt the same kind of clarity with which~~ ^{his} ~~was in much the same state of clarity with which~~ he had watched Alois beat

~~surges were as sharp as when~~
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.

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

Must one suppose that because a child's deepest 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~~ ^{she} have another child. If this came in part from the old fear, even now, that Adolf might not live ~~into adolescence~~ ^{decided to} she also feared that she would never love him as much again, no, not as ~~once~~ ^{she} 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 ^{even if} ~~we~~ ^{them} are not looking to turn ^{into} clients.)

In the morning, Alois could not believe he had done all that. ^{To lower} ~~to~~ ^{to such an extent!} ~~to~~ ^{Lower} ~~mean~~ 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.

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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.

*superior
for points*
Working in Passau ^{*satisfied at*} ~~proved agreeable at first~~ ^{*with*} for Alois' vanity, but soon ^{*satisfied*} 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.

^{was}
~~was~~
 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~~ ^{considered} 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 ^{one get} ~~and~~ ^{gone} 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

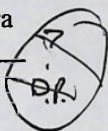
customs officer—those with university learning, some with livid, invaluable duelling scars. They were the ones to model oneself after.

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~~ ^{3rd} the Customs' bridge, tears would come to his ~~eyes~~ ^{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. (The German is good enough to offer here: Der Rauchfng!) “And what is the mood of our 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~~^{not} 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~~^{not} to overpower the fireplace

and then

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.

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Edmund was born on March 24, 1894, a few weeks before Adolf

sketch ~~At that time~~ would be five. Klara had told him that he would soon have a brother or—if
~~fifth birthday~~

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. ² ~~Adi~~ 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 ^{Alois Jr.} ~~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 ^{side side} ~~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~~ ^{came} 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.

*Through his
is a line??
↑
The other
side is
Quadrant?*

-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 ^(much) ~~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 ^{5 feet} ~~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~~ ^{absence} 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 ^{result from} ~~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 ~~becomes~~^{becomes} 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~~^{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.

All the games I was
and so
 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 ^{very} ~~damnable~~ 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 ^{definitely} ~~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 ^{routine} ~~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."

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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; ~~he~~ rather, I steered him to do the job himself. That proved enough. He had been the one, after all, 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 had been 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 too saintly, since they could then be working for Satan.)

I speak of this because we devils are human to this degree—a fine return on our investment puts us in the best of moods. So I came to enjoy being 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 big men. Is that not true? Klaus, do you want to be a hero?”

“That is what I want.”

“Of course. It is what we want. All of us. But 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 all who are willing to join us. Then, we who are here can be given high rank. We who command must be very high in rank. Not just a captain, or a major, but a general.

“Klaus here, will be my colonel.”

Those words are close to what I remember. While I have certainly given him an eloquence no five-year-old could muster, I have also to admit that some of the good turns of speech that came out of him did not seem his words, nor mine! I began to suspect that they could have been inspired by some agent of the D.K. who was, unknown to me, also present. At this point, was he being helped by both sides at once? What a large investment to put into 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 such a quick change. In this case, the entire situation of the family was 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. ^{5 are} ~~A~~₂ good reader ^{is} ~~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 in any book about the skills or triumphs of a protagonist is all-but-guaranteed to elicit happiness in whoever follows the story, especially if there is a suggestion of the sentimental, or even better, the magical. Those are two useful tools for any author who is desirous (at all cost!) to arouse quick emotions in the reader. While a few fine minds may be ready to come to working terms with the devil, (Faust was one!) 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 want them, indeed, 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 found what might be the right property in a town called Hafeld, thirty miles from Linz. 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~~ *a few dents*
~~serious inroads on a~~ *dents in it* (most impressive edifice. I speak of Alois' ego. It was its
~~dents in~~
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 lived with this special notion of himself as a
species of meditative nectar rather than as a serious expectation.
Nonetheless, it would seep into his sweetest thoughts. Male company, good
beer, and tobacco mingled dependably in the tavern after work with this
larger view of himself.

By his final year as Chief Customs Officer of Linz, some rudiments of
this concept—"a man of importance"—were even satisfied. While this last
position could hardly rise so high as the thin air of his dreams, still the title,
Chief Customs Officer, 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 center 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 in any way to fulfill the~~ ^{the failings of} ~~post~~. 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} ~~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. ⁶¹ ~~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. 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 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 ^{as} in the way the first three of 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 all that well. The holding had been near Spital, about 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 might be a good way to take care of his sister-in-law, Johanna Poelzl, in preference to 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 dome on her back.

All the same, he did feel some admiration for the woman. Johanna 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, Johanna did not run the farm very well. Each and every peasant who worked for her was, sooner or later, antagonized by Klara's sister's sharp tongue, and finally she decided to give it up and go back to live with her father and her mother—also named Johanna. If we recall, ^{this Johanna} ~~that~~

was the one who
Johanna had been Alois' mistress on ^{an} ~~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 the Windy Estate) 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 a cow, plus one prize sow.

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 and 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 to keep The Chimney from smoking us out with his bees."

In truth, he did see himself as something of a philosopher concerning 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.

So, 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: It is to build a future for the generations who will follow. The honey they convert from the nectar and pollen that they bring back from the flowers is not only for their consumption, but, gentlemen, it is also 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 the most modern chemist. Moreover, great care is taken in the construction of the hexagonal cells. They know how vital it is that future generations succeed them."

His company nodded, their spirits glum. This was not the most lively beer talk. But Alois, for these last nights, had become the kind of dogmatic

^{who is always}
lecturer ~~who is~~ ready to exhibit 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 their continuing 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 tireless activity. They never stop fanning their wings. A good many even wear out their wings. After which, they are ready to die. Why? To create a draft to cool the hive. Because the larvae cannot survive in too much heat. Think of it. Thousands of wings all fanning away, even as others go out to forage ~~for~~ for more supplies in the fields of flowers. They collect pollen in pods on their legs and then fly back to the hive. They are able to ^{stay aloft} ~~fly~~ under the weight of loads of pollen and nectar 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, in the hive, 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."

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I was not well-prepared for 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 ^{being stung} receiving a serious number of bee stings. While it might be reasonable to engage in such efforts rather than ^{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. But the desire for money is the tap-root that drives most men and women into new activity. Therefore, a relative absence of this desire concerns me. Obviously, I have to

feel like a sorry devil if I cannot come close to a client's real 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 close 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 might be limited, but he had acquired some book knowledge of the subject, and was now fascinated by a new mode of cultivation. It looked as if bee hives made of straw would soon be done away with. Skeps they were called, squat-ribbed domed objects about the size and shape of big-bellied human torsos, and these skeps did have their drawbacks. 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 built to the scale of bees that could soon become the equivalent of a modern bee-city. 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 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 was now comparable 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 more than bothered. Klara might believe him but I did not. I had decided that 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. The Maestro could, of course, enter into our thoughts, but he did not often choose to do so, preferring to reserve his resources for more exceptional 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. We had never had such a need. He was by our measure an average man, which is to say, sufficiently corrupt to be available for our use whenever we might decide 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 for them to protect? Whereas, when it came to someone like Klara, we did not choose to go near. Not for 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 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 matters askew. For me, at least! There are few atheists like Alois 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 this 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—usually seen by them 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 latter-day 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 excursion. (It is not unlike a blind bet in poker)

On this occasion, I penetrated quickly, and soon was out. I gathered what I needed. I now knew 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.

being
beings

They discover, for example, that a puppy or kitten is a warm cuddly bit of existence ~~much like themselves~~ ^{not wholly unlike} ^(in the need for affection) 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 ^{other} ~~humans~~ ^{people} in that regard—but I had found a 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 to the bee's tongue, while the hairs of the honeybee covered themselves with the pollen of the stamens. In another moment, the bee would separate from one passionate lust to look for another, whichever fine flower of the same species 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, and his stomach valve full of nectar. 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 travellers looked to steal and keep for themselves. But he had been 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~~ ^{people}, but it was true for the best of them, those who were like Franz Josef. They were good ~~people~~ ^{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 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 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 some

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 might be there to disseminate 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, but this much 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 it all.

Could these large epiphanies be the product of full retirement?

The answer was obvious: Alois ^(was) ~~did not seem~~ ready to retire. I looked forward with my own trepidation to how he would deal with his four children now that Edmund was there. For that matter, how would it be to live on a farm with Klara? In my purview, I could anticipate the unexpected rages in 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 ^c 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.

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Another situation had arisen. On the very night in April when they slept for the first time in the house at Hafeld, Klara became pregnant. Until then, the farm, purchased in February, had not been occupied by the Hitler family. Klara had kept the children in Passau because Edmund was ailing. Besides, it was winter. Alois would not be able to join them permanently until the end of June when he retired. By April, however, Klara decided finally to brave the difficulties and right after Easter, accompanied by Angela, Adolf, Edmund, and the sum of their possessions, she accomplished the move. It was made even more difficult since she was without Alois, Jr. to help her with the luggage—he had had to stay behind and board with a

neighbor until the end of his school year. Nonetheless, whatever the difficulties, she embarked by train from Passau early in the day and her husband met them at the station in Linz with a large wagon and two work horses to carry their trunks, valises, packing crates and packages over the last thirty miles to Hafeld.

This portion of the trip lasted from noon to dark, but the day had been warm, and Alois, to everyone's surprise, entertained the children with one song after another—his voice was rich, and Klara, who had a clear if delicate soprano, would join him when she knew the words. Alois was in a rare mood, and proud of his skill with the horses and wagon. Having done little of that in decades, he had almost hired a driver, but given his oncoming responsibilities as a farmer, felt it incumbent to take on the project himself.

The previous owner had—as was local custom—stocked each fireplace with logs and kindling, and so the rooms, before long, were warm. What with bread and sausage, plus a carefully packed jar of split pea soup, they had enough to eat and went to bed more happily than not. Alois would even spend the next day with them before driving his rented wagon back to Linz.

That first night, however, Alois was also ready to establish a little connubial investiture of the premises. By the light of the gas lamp in their bedroom, he could see that Klara looked in fine color, not pale at all, and said as much only to hear her laugh in true merriment.

"You, too, Uncle," she said. "Your nose is very red from the sun."

"Ah," he said, "you are still calling me Uncle. Soon, it's ten years that we are married and still, what am I to you? Uncle Alois? Do you mean Old Uncle Alois? That is a disgrace."

"No," she said, "we are all very proud of you. Today, so much. You did it all. And so well. Something you never did before."

"Well, I can do a lot of things you do not know. I am never so simple as you think."

"I do not think you are simple," she said, "no, that I do not think."

"Yes, you can tell me. What do you think, my little Niece?"

It was not often that she was ready to speak to him so directly, but on this night, an exceptional night, after all, 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 most certainly belonged to other kinds of women.

"Maybe I call you Uncle," she said, "because you are such a big, healthy fellow of an Uncle."

He was not about to pass this by. Instantly, the Hound was straining on the leash. Alois' voice was heavy. "How would you know what is the size of a healthy fellow?" he asked.

"I do not know. But I am free to guess. You are a very big Uncle."

That was all it took to make her pregnant. He was excited enough to take her by the side of the bed, both of them standing, half-dressed, and then he took her again in bed. He was full of love—for himself, first, and his prowess—such a fine power at his age—and then he felt some love for her to some degree—plus a good deal of love for the farm. It was a beautiful piece of land. He even took pleasure in the thought of coming a little closer to his children, which is to say, he had an image of kids working along with him in the fields, doing what, he hardly could say, he was about to fall asleep and now thought of summer bees searching the meadows. He was unusually

delighted with how much power had been in his loins on this night. To have it all there, just when he had begun to wonder.

He even held Klara in his arms, which was hardly his habit, and when he woke up to honor the alarms of his bladder, he almost kicked over the chamber pot. In the dark, what with his unfamiliarity with a new bedroom, he was stumbling around, and Klara was giggling. Then, she wrapped her arms around him as he came back to bed. "I am happy," she said. "I think this will be the place for us."

"Silence!" he growled. "Don't be a goose! One does not make silly predictions!" Yes, he could feel the earth of the farm, all those nine acres to the rear and to the front of them, and felt just as superstitious as any of the peasants of his childhood. A person should not be as ready as Klara to speak out with good feelings to empty night air. Not aloud! Was it so empty after all? Who knew what spirit might be there to listen to you with his evil ears?

In the morning, she could sense his impatience to be done with the unpacking. It was obvious. He wanted to go out and walk his grounds. So, she took over the larger part of the immediate tasks while he gave the children a tour of the barn, all three huddled close to him now before the

animal immanence of the two horses, the cow, and the prize sow that had been part of the purchase price. Those animals were huge to the children, and close to overpowering them with the fetid statement of their odor, all three, Angela, twelve; Adi, now close to six, and Edmund, not yet one and a half years old and a fine toddler. Edmund hugged Adi. He loved to walk with his hand in Adi's hand.

Now, Alois told them to go back to the house and help their mother. In the afternoon, he would, he promised, teach them how to milk the cow, feed the pig, and curry the horse, not to mention the hen house and the eggs, but for now it was their good mother who needed them.

He wanted to walk his lands alone. He had more than a few decisions to take. So, once again, he studied the condition of the orchard. When he had seen it last, there was more than a little snow on the ground, but he had been able to determine that the trunks of the walnut trees looked healthy, and the bare branches appeared to have integrity, strong, reasonably straight, and not too many tortured shapes to suggest the aftermath of crazy storms when the trees were young.

In truth, he realized now, he had hardly studied the place before buying it. Enough that the price, comparatively, was not too high, and the house and the view were the best he had found. No, he could not manage to keep spending full days in travel out from Linz. This place was enough. In his work, after all, he had had to be good at making quick decisions. You could not examine in complete professional detail every traveler who might have something wrong about him, no, you made your choices on the spot. He had been good at that.

All the same, he was not so much at ease with his purchase as he had anticipated. Walking the meadows and the one small hill of his new domain, the land was less extensive than he remembered, no larger, really, than what it was, nine acres, a good-sized parade-field. On the other hand, it was small enough to encourage him to do a little more farming than he had anticipated. Three or four of those acres would make a decent but manageable potato field. Should he give another acre to beets? Could he plant this year? That would be the question. He could not get going until the end of June, the beginning of July, but Alois, Jr. would be back here then from Passau, his

school year finished, and, yes, maybe they could take on some late plowing, maybe get some planting done.

All the while, his true disappointment came back to him. He must recognize—once again—that he could not cultivate his bees, not this summer. The brunt of the project would have to wait until next spring. A season of honey-gathering began in April and hardly lasted into September. He had to be there at the beginning. He must wait. All right, he would have nine months now to prepare, counting at least from the time when he would be back here again, permanently, in June, late June, and an unexpected and most unpleasant shiver of anticipation came to him at this thought. Did he know what he was doing? Such a bad thought! He forced it back. He had been in control of his feelings since he was ten years old, and he was not preparing to let go now.

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By July, life became considerably different for Alois. Klara, for one example, was most definitely pregnant. In seven months, if the baby was born without incident, there would be a total of eight kids who had come into existence because of him, eight, if you include the three who now were gone. Of course, if he so desired, he could add some Kinder not exactly accounted for—quite a number of cooks and chambermaids who had managed to conceive with what might be called mixed male parentage, much mixed. Yes, when one of them told him she was pregnant, he had agreed that it was possible. He could be the true father, but then, hadn't she also been with Hans and Gerhardt and Hermann and Wolf? With rare exceptions (like

Fanny) those women were not in a position to argue who was the true father.

It was enough to give them a decent gift.

Here in Hafeld, he was face to face with the other side of such achievements. Through the heat of July, in this farm-house up on the hill, he had to look at five faces every meal, from Klara down to Edmund, sixteen months old and walking, even trying to talk. And by January, there would be another. He was used to living with peoples' faces in front of him, more new faces than most people had to meet up with every day, but now it was always the same mugs. He was not used to dwelling with such questions as whether Edmund, for example, had come up with a new phrase or was just gurgling as usual, blobs of sound, no real sense of language.

Managing the farm was another matter. He could take pleasure in Angela's work. For a twelve-year-old who had been putting cold cream on her hands ever since she was eight—a little city girl, ready to be spoiled!--she was now, to his surprise, decent help. She was always currying the two horses, and washing down the cow even when that hefty lady didn't need another bath. She would also get Adolf and Edmund to laugh at the hearty contentment to be heard in the full-gutted sound of the sow every time they

approached with food. Rosig (Pinky) was large for a pig, large even for a prize pig, and so happy in that smelly wallow with its pink rosette tacked above her stall, an old prize rosette from the summer before they came to the farm. By next summer, when all this new work wouldn't be weighing on them, and there might be a little time, Angela wanted to prepare Rosig again for local competition. Yes, his girl, Alois decided, was a prize herself. Angela even took the pains to separate out the manure of the farm animals before carrying each collection to a different pile. Why? Because she declared to Klara, "My father would want it that way. Nice and neat." She even succeeded in getting Adi to take up a part of the slack. While he could be counted on to throw a tantrum, Angela would ride it out. Then the boy would follow her, his nose up to heaven in horror, but nonetheless carrying a second manure pail.

His school year over in Passau, Alois, Jr., came to the farm at the beginning of July. For a short period, no one could surpass him at work. Right off, he was splendid with the horses, particularly the younger one, Ulan, a stallion five years old. Alois was proud of how quickly Junior took to the saddle. He was also ready for the joy of a quick canter bareback up the

hill and down, accompanied by full screams of excitement from Angela and Adi. Yet, he also seemed content to work the plow for hours in the sun with the dray horse, Graubart. Before too long, they had turned up three acres of hard soil pasture for the potatoes, the same sprouting potatoes Klara had bought and stored in the root cellar a week after her arrival. Alois, Junior, worked harder for two weeks than his father would have believed. Then, all this splendid flurry of hard labor fell off. Bad news arrived in a letter from Alois' school in Passau. He had failed half of his courses this last semester. He would have to take those studies over again.

"I won't go back," he told his father. "The teachers are so stupid we laugh at them."

Yes, the boy must have been living with what he knew the Realschule news would bring. Had he been living with it for these two weeks, and not said a word, just kept working hard in his father's field? They had tilled ten inches deep into the three acres chosen, a stubborn, resistant soil, then laid the seed potatoes in shallow trenches and covered them lightly, each of the sprouters a foot apart, each row of furrow less than a yard away from the next, but that had been only the beginning. Now, came the labor that went

into weeding, and into fertilizing. Bad memories, more than forty years old, came back to Alois. Disasters might yet be out there waiting for him. He now encountered white grubs and wire worms, and had to watch as the earliest potato leaves were nibbled into green lace by aphids and flea beetles. Every day one had to go back for more weeding. Then, drainage became an ongoing problem. One could only dig the irrigation canals down a few inches, or else too many potato roots would be slashed by the hoe or the shovel. Then these shallow trenches filled with silt. Hours had to be spent carrying pail after pail of well water up the slope to the meadow. On one of those afternoons, Junior disappeared. He was out riding Ulan. Alois put Angela to work in his stead, and for the rest of the working day, she carried the water, heavy duty for a girl her size.

That night, Alois gave his son a tongue-lashing in front of the rest of the family. It was memorable. "You are," he said, "very much like your crazy mother. Only with you, worse. You have no excuse. Your mother, by her end, was out of her mind, yes, but at least she had always been hard-working. You are lazy. You are full of filthy, foul laziness!" If the episode had happened even a year earlier, Alois would have given him a beating,

exactly the apocalyptic variety that leaves a scar on the heart, but now the boy was big, and wild enough in the occasional expression of his eyes to make Alois pause. So, he did not strike him. Which, he came to decide in the days that followed, was a mistake. He should have given him one hell of a wallop. Now, Junior might think his father was a little afraid of him, maybe a little, yes. Thereafter, the boy kept picking at the edges of his work, reducing one way or another the total of his hours. He was no longer acting like a farmer's son, more like some boy from the city doing summer labor at a job he did not like. Often, short of sundown, even much before the day's effort was done, he would ask Alois to let him take Ulan for a ride over the hill.

The trouble, Alois told himself, was that as a father, he was false. Under all the hard bite, he had a soft palate. The truth was that he adored Alois, Jr. The boy was so attractive. Restless, yes, victim to terrible moods like his mother, much too prideful, and at present in full flight from education, yet he could be as charming as Fanni when he chose to be. He reminded Alois of how well she used to move. He even felt pride at how quickly his son had gotten on good terms with the stallion. Alois himself hesitated to

ride him. It was truly a long way to the ground for a heavy man! But Alois Junior could saddle up with all the eclat of a prize cadet—the sort who used to promenade along the best streets of Vienna wearing the kind of boots that Alois had made for cadets in those years, all the way back then when he had so admired those well-turned-out young men. Memories came of those young officers strutting on the Ringstrasse with their handsome ladies, while he, the apprentice, had dreamed of finding an elegant and lovely young milliner for himself whom he might persuade to start a shop with him where the finest hand-made hats and most exceptional boots would be up for sale, a stupid dream, but now his own Junior reminded him of those cadets. Such a striking young man. He was not at all like Adolf, full of hysterical temper, or tiny Edmund, full of snots.

So, Alois could not bring himself to refuse when Alois, Jr. would ask for an hour off. Ulan, after all, had to be exercised. And the horse did love his young rider. But not Alois! The beast would paw the straw of his stall when Alois approached, showing his large horse teeth in an unmistakably evil grin. He might just as well have been ~~saying~~ ^{sitting in perfectly good German)} that he did not like the father, ~~saying it would~~ but was much taken with the son.

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On one warm evening in August, Alois, Junior, took another unpleasant liberty. This time, Klara was infuriated. The youth was at table ready for their evening supper, but Angela was not. She was in the barn currying Ulan's wet hide after her brother had put the charger into a gallop on the way back from the woods and then provided a walk-down which was neither long enough nor slow enough to allow the hard-breathing animal to cool. Klara could not believe such selfish behavior. It was one of the few times in their marriage when she spoke sharply to her husband. After six pregnancies, he was no uncle to her now, not at this moment. "You allowed your son to leave such work to Angela? That is certainly not right."

"Angela likes wiping Ulan down," said Alois, Junior. "I can do without it."

"I may not know horses so much as some people," said Klara, "but I am still ready to say that he who rides a horse has his duty to it afterward. The horse sees the difference. Even if you don't."

"You know nothing about horses," said her step-son. "Nothing. Ten degrees less than zero."

"Silence!" shouted Alois. "You will keep your mouth shut for the rest of the meal. Not one word more."

Coming into the fray these several steps behind Klara, he had to be masterful. "Yes, silence," he repeated. "I call for it."

"Jawohl!."

The boy did know how to pick at the edges of every proposition. Now, Alois had to ask himself whether he was being mocked or obeyed? "I told you," said Alois, "You are to be silent for the rest of the meal. Not one word. Not even 'Jawohl.'"

Alois, Jr., stood up and left the table.

"Come back," said Alois, "come back, sit down, and be silent. I repeat, Not one word."

There was a pause, and then Alo did come back, but in the pause was a suggestion of what might be ^{yet} ~~more~~ to come.

They finished the meal in silence. Angela came in, flushed from currying, started to speak, and then did not. She sat down, her face still moist from the quick wash she had taken with the dipper, and put her face to the food. Adi, sitting next to her, full of excitement and foreboding, was now ~~living in the~~ ^{living in} fear that he would wet himself. And Klara? She ate slowly, pausing often with her spoon in the air. She was filled with an unruly desire to upbraid her step-son, again and then—no small impulse—upbraid her own Alois as well. She said nothing, however. She did not dare. To interfere with two men in such a rage with each other was not safe territory to her. The air looked ready to quiver. Edmund, pale, pasty-faced, lip-dribbling Edmund, began to cry.

That offered a solution. Klara was able to pick him up and leave the table. Then Alois rose and quit the room. Angela and Adi gathered the plates for washing, and Alois, Junior, continued to sit at the table, poised

within his own silence, gravely poised, as if he had converted his father's order into a species of silent reverence addressed to himself.

That night, Alois, Senior, could not sleep and by the end of the next afternoon, he quit work early. For the first time since he had come to Hafeld, he went to the only tavern in the area, a full mile away at Fischlham.

He had hesitated whether to go. The company would certainly be less to his taste than the old fold of beer cronies in Linz. Besides, he knew enough about farmers to anticipate the nature of his reception. Given his natural predilection to lord it over his fellow drinkers, he was not looking forward to what would be the sly edge of their attitude. He could hear their thoughts in advance. "The peasant who tries to act like a millionaire," they would say behind his back. Or, as easily, exactly the opposite—"this rich idiot who wants to play at being a peasant."

He had visited a couple of his much-dispersed neighbors in January when he first ~~visited~~ ^{looked at} the house he was to buy, and he had asked a few questions. They had not trusted him ~~too~~ much. He had expected that. They were not about to offer the truth to a stranger who could choose not to buy the farm, yet might repeat enough of what he had heard to leave the owner

offended at them. So Alois ^(was told) ~~only received~~ ^{good news} the best of remarks, yes, everything good, land good, just a few animals, but excellent livestock, the prize sow, your walnut orchard—that ⁱⁿ ~~itself~~ ^{was} ~~should be~~ easy money once a year.

Alois had not bothered to believe them. Nor to disbelieve them. He had wanted the farm. He had assumed it would not be as good as it looked, and, of course, it couldn't be. Already the fine big cow who had been giving good milk every day had come down with udder trouble.

He did bring just that matter up at the tavern in Flischlham. He needed to. He was looking for a few opinions on the respective merits of the two veterinarians in the district, and used it as a calculated opening to stimulate the farmers now drinking with him to say a few things. He had decided to be mild, and most modest. Nothing could be worse than to be perceived from the outset as a retired fool throwing his city weight around. So, he listened to their guarded opinions of what they might know about his land.

When he told them that he had planted potatoes, they looked uneasy. In the most indirect manner, it did come out that he might have been wiser to consider beets.

"I planned to put one acre in like that, but not this first year. Too much at once."

They nodded. Farming and work. Yes. The oldest marriage. One must never do too much at once if one could help it.

They were more slow-spoken than most of the voices he had heard for, yes, the last forty-five years! It took an hour of staring at the unadorned wooden walls of the tavern, fretting all the while over the one spike of a splinter in his behind (a gift of the dried-up wood of the tavern bench) before one of them would come forward with the muffled hint that this land on which he had planted potatoes should have been given to beets. That was because last year's crop had been wheat. Now, they spoke of a variety of wheat whose genus was unfamiliar to him, but that was what the previous owner had been planting these last three years. Who knew? The soil could have been depleted by the wheat. They did not say as much; they just drew on their pipes and drank their beer and looked sad. Worst of all, as he could tell, the sadness was hardly for him, no, it was offered to the outrage done to the earth now owned by him, a rich man, an interloper trying to be a peasant.

The smell of the tavern became unpleasant. He could not locate the odor that mingled with the beer, but it was impure—sour milk? Old manure? A compost pile outside the door that had gone wrong? What he resented most about this quiet dun-brown wooden den was that there was not even a hint of schnapps in the air, no, not even one good town drunkard.

The evening, however, proved not altogether a loss. He learned the names of a couple of apiculturists who lived in Hafeld. Veterans who knew bees were nearby. To console himself further, the walk home became agreeable. The late summer moon was out, a harvest-orange moon, and he finally felt ~~on this night~~ ^{that} the pleasure ~~beer~~ usually provided just so quickly as he could quaff it. Tonight, however, those pints had merely been banked in his stomach, stored there to dispense the ~~pleasure~~ ^{goodness} now, now at last that he was able to find himself alone. He had a long splendid urination by the side of the road.

Next morning he was back in his gathering gloom. He had to live with the disappointment of his three acres of potatoes. He had ended with a crop where not much more than half ~~looked to be~~ ^{would be} ~~salable~~ ^{marketable}. His drinking companions of last night (who in memory now smelled as dank as the

Fischlham tavern) had been right. He knew it in the pit of his stomach, knew it whenever he dug up another potato. He had felt a few twinges in that same gut during the last few days of August and his heart was definitely acting up, yes, full of high pressure now. Whenever Alois took Ulan for a ride, Alois, Senior could feel the boy chipping away one more time at the edges of his authority. That was guaranteed to get his own heart to race! Sometimes he even felt as if this long-trusted organ—such a hearty companion—was now forcing itself right up under his brain. Which is to say he was having headaches.

Given the work to be done of digging up the potatoes and carting them to the market in Fischlham, he ended by hiring a day laborer for the week, a stupid fellow working for his beer at night and not much else, yet, on balance, the man probably served up as much useful labor as Junior with his Ulan.

How was that boy going to end? Would he yet be a criminal? Alois could *certainly* (conceive of him ~~ending up~~) in something like the French Foreign Legion.

Dark thoughts, but they had their appeal to Alois. When he was young, he would have made a good soldier of that variety, ready for anything. Or was that nonsense? There was something in the boy that was wilder than himself.

Was that why, these days, they always had to speak to each other as if they were in ballet shoes? Up on tiptoe!

The day laborer was stupid, but he was not so incapable of thinking when it came to putting a number of those potatoes aside for himself, and Alois could not even be certain that there had been a theft. Feeling ill one afternoon, he had let the laborer take the produce to market for him, and the man returned with less Kronen than Alois had estimated. Just a little less. More fingering at the edges.

soon at heart
Alois was ~~sick~~ There had been a *sudden and* miserable end to all the pride

Angela had been taking in the prize sow. It died. The girl was disconsolate. Alois was now amazed at how much and how long a twelve-year-old female could cry.

It started with that big, pretty pig being a little ill. Then, day to day, it got worse. Angela was so upset that Alois broke into his own reservoirs of pride and actually turned to his three nearest neighbors for advice. It was then he had to recognize all over again that he had forgotten what he was now remembering too late. One of the laws of his childhood received from Johann Nepomuk before he was even ten years old was that when it came to farming,

there were no laws you could count on if you had the bad luck to meet an unexpected problem. Even your lifetime friends could and would disagree ~~you~~ on the solution. Of course! Every farmer, he now learned, had his own idea of how to cure a sick pig. Of course!

The three neighbors to whom he turned in this case offered three solutions, an emetic, a binder, and a diarrhetic. All were wrong. The sow stopped breathing and was gone. All three men had assumed the trouble could only be in the stomach or the bowels. Where else in a pig? Who had ever heard of consumption in such a heavy porker? Perhaps it was something else. Even the veterinarian he called in after the demise was unsure.

Nothing could have aggravated Alois more. To pay good money after the animal had died! Why? Because he had to know the cause. What an idiocy! He wasn't going to raise any more pigs, not now! but still he had to know. And then he found out that the specialist—if you could call him that—was not even sure of the cause. It would take, he told Alois, the further expense of lab tests in Linz, or maybe, even all the way to Vienna. To hell with that! Such an expenditure would be obscene. On top of it all, he even had to bury the animal whole. He was tempted, but he did not dare to carve

away any good part of it for the family. Left to himself, Alois would have looked for some choice cuts—how much did the hams have to do, after all, with the lungs? But, no, the vet was definite. "Do not take a chance, Herr Hitler, on any part of this animal."

Yes, that is what the vet told him, but only after he had been paid! And there was Angela going on and on with that her hiccups and her sobs, "Ach, ach, ach!" Not to mention the labor of digging a big goddamn hole for the carcass.

Yes, these were losses to calculate. What kind of profits could he point to from his mediocre potato crop? When he added the cost of the seed potatoes, the compost he had bought for the three acres, and then subtracted the wages of the hired hand, the loss of the sow, and the fee of the vet as well, how could he claim to have made any respectable sum? If he divided the total from the sale of the potatoes by the number of hours put in, could he say that he had earned any more each day than in his first years with the Finance-Watch? Worse. The real calculation was humiliating. He was living here rent-free. No mortgage payment to worry over. The house had been bought outright, after all. But if he had had to give money quarterly to the

bank, could he have claimed any profit? Perhaps a token profit. The walnuts. They had brought in some easy money, money off the ground. For the rest, it had been a good deal of work. For not much at all. He couldn't even complain to Klara.

He had to reassure himself. It wasn't that he was in real financial trouble. Never yet! His pension alone was six times the income of any day laborer like the poor fellow he had hired, who, dumb or not, was also able to cheat him. But, all right! In the old days, in the best years of his earning power at Passau and Linz, he had been situated in what you could call the well-salaried layers of the middle class. Why, he had made more than any principal in an elementary school. Not bad when you consider that he, more respected, economically speaking, than the principal, had never even finished elementary school.

Alois could talk to himself in such a way but it did not dig the real thorn out of his gut. One of his strengths with the younger officers who came from good families had always been that he, at least, being good peasant stock, could know at least when people were cheating him. And now he had discovered that the land he bought was not as good as it had looked. Once

upon a time, he might have been a peasant. Now, he could just as well call himself one more ^{Gauguin} ~~middle-class~~ idiot, fooled on a deal involving land! He felt all the shame a peasant could not bear to know. Would it be any worse if Klara had taken up with a farm boy? That was impossible, but then, how had it been so possible for himself, Alois Hitler, to be gulled on this deal?

He went into a depression. By October, he was settled in gloom. The Hound was one sick puppy these days. How was he to look at himself—a man in his late middle age who dangled a sick pup between his legs?

Klara, seven and a half months pregnant, tried to explain it to him. Now that the potato crop was in, so much hard work was finished. It was natural to be unhappy. Women, she could tell him, felt that way after a child was born. So much had gone into the womb, so much hope and effort, but now one was empty again. The baby might be there and beautiful, but for a time the woman had to feel empty, even awful. For a little while. It was natural.

She had never waxed so philosophical before, not to him, but he almost took her head off. "What am I, a woman?" he wanted to shout.

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Changes occurred, however. Alois' depression lessened. Junior was gone. Klara had taken it upon herself to suggest that he should be sent to Spital where he could work with her father, Jo^hann Poelzl, who by now was certainly old enough to need a strong young assistant. It developed that Alois, Junior was in favor of the move as well. His father's depression, conveying its own muted threat of future despotism, had lived in the midst of the son's rage like a fist being jammed in his face.

So, it was arranged. The transportation would begin on Alois' farmer's cart driven by the hired man. That would take the fourteen-year-old to Linz, then on by train to Weitra, where he could get on a jitney which passed

through Spital every other day. So, the boy was transported, and a cloud of unhappy expectations lifted.

In September, Adi and Angela began school in Fischlham, Angela in the fourth and most advanced grade for twelve-year-olds, Adi, at six, going to first grade.

His first school days went through a bright September, mellow with sun. The green was still on the fields. It was a fine walk hand in hand with his sister over hills and through meadows with but one peril on the route—a full-grown bull grazing in a fenced-in pasture. Depending on the bull's mood, they could choose to take a detour, or dare to cross the field, this last ^{also (their own)} depending ^{also} on the mood of their spirits ~~which varied~~. On most days, one or the other was not up to ^{it} the bold move, and so could be mocked.

Soon enough, Adi learned that it was not wise to shame Angela when she was in a fearful mood for she ^{knew} ~~did know~~ how to pay him back. She would inform him that he smelled awful! Sometimes, it was his breath, as often, his body odor.

Probably, she did not know to what depth in his quick-beating chest these accusations entered, but deep they went, and for good cause. They

were true. He did have an odor—touch of sulphur and an unmistakable hint of something rotten—of that I may soon choose to speak. Such off-odor is one of the constant problems of our clients. It besets us. The Cudgels pick it up.

From Angela's point of view, it was simple. If Adi was trying to make her cry, of course she would look for ways to bring tears to his eyes as well. Besides, bad smells did not bother her that much. By now, she was accustomed to sour milk and horse manure. But a wind full of pig wallow brought a real sorrow to her heart—poor dead Rosig!

"What are you crying about now?" asked Adi. "You tell me how I am bad-smelling and I am the one who should cry—you are mean."

"Oh, shut up. It's not you I cry for."

That meant she was thinking of Rosig and he did feel sad for her. This was not because he had liked the sow so much (in fact, he had been jealous of Angela's affection for the beast) but because he did like his older sister. She was good most of the time. Besides, she was the brightest girl in the school, just as he was the smartest boy inside the four walls of the one-room school house.

Depending on weather and the immediate needs of the neighboring farms for additional labor, there were sometimes less than forty boys and girls, sometimes it was down to thirty, even twenty-five, but the school-room contained seating divisions for these four grades; and each child, First to Fourth, six to twelve in age, was able to listen willy-nilly to all that took place in each other class, a routine matter since there was only one teacher, a middle-aged lady, Fraulein Werner, who had a long nose and wore spectacles.

Adi was soon able to follow the lessons in all four classes. His introduction to German History came by way of the senior grade, the Fourth, where Angela and the others were studying the exceptional deeds of Charlemagne. An hour later, in First, Adi would be asked in company with the other beginners to decide which pictures of animals should be connected to given words. In the beginning, it was wondrous—all those awesome letters that made a word. At first, those letters vibrated in his eyes ~~like a cabalistic rite~~, but before long, it became no more to him than a puzzle. By the time he had reduced it to a problem, it was only a matter on which he took care not to make the same mistake twice. Indeed, he was usually eager to

receive the next picture that Fraulein Werner would show them, even if it he soon grew bored waiting for the others in his class to catch up to him. Soon, he could barely wait for the lessons of the Third who were studying the geography of the Hapsburg empire, the great Hapsburg Empire, as Fraulein Werner would always say. If permitted, he would have been ready to speak out to those students who were simpletons, and could not find any of the places on the map he had already noticed, Braunau and Linz being the first to catch his eye.

So, at the age of six, he was in effect absorbing the lessons of the eight and ten and twelve-year-olds, and it pleased him that Angela was the brightest in her class. By the approval in Fraulein Werner's eyes each time they entered the room, he also knew that when it came to what they were wearing, they were the neatest brother and sister. That was Klara's doing, and it helped to install them high up in Fraulein Werner's favor. All the same, such neat dress obliged him to stay apart from other boys during recess in order not to get into a fight. There was one bully a year older who kept daring Adolf to wrestle with him.

"Are you crazy?" he would answer. "I am in my good clothes. My mother will kill me if I get them dirty." The daily wars of Passau had enriched his voice with just enough assurance to deter the other. But then that boy was nothing. If Adi could manage to live with Alois, Junior, how much had he to fear from a fool like this, also named Klaus, same as his lieutenant in Passau? It was Angela who bothered him with all this teasing.

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She was all too concerned these days by what might be her own odor, having come in the last few weeks to her first period. Here, Klara had been of great help, and had done her best to allay the girl's fears, indeed, her outright horror. It had become connected in Angela's mind with Rosig who, by the end, had been hemorrhaging blood all over her hams.

To bring some calm to Angela's poor outraged state, Klara spoke for the first time of intimate matters. She adored her step-daughter. The twelve-year-old was by now her substitute for a woman who could become her nearest friend, and so she spoke not only of this new condition for Angela,

but went on at good length about the naturalness of odor in general, and its peculiar subtleties in nature. Casting about for happy examples, she passed on a piece of information Alois had provided her in passing. Once, Klara had asked how he could be sure his own bees (once he did start his hives) would know how to come back to home. As she understood it, he planned to have, once his plans were fulfilled, three of those hive-boxes he kept describing, each a full colony in itself. There they would be, sitting side by side in the shade of the walnut grove. "How will these thousands of bees know where they belong?" she asked.

He had been sufficiently pleased by her curiosity to explain that he would paint each of his boxes a different color, green for one, sky-blue for another, even pink for the third. Bees, he explained, liked to return to dwellings that could be close to the color of the flowers whose nectar they brought back.

"But you tell me that each day these little creatures go to a different kind of flower. They are faithful only for this one day at a time to each variety of flower. Is that not so?"

"Yes." He wasn't certain he liked the conversation. Would he be able to answer all her questions? *without sliding into such other matters as his old propensities?*

"So it could be a flower of one color on one day, and another color is what they like tomorrow?"

"Yes."

"How do these bees not get mixed up?"

Yes, he was reluctant to tell her. It was not something to talk about. Not necessarily. Still, he chose to proceed. For Klara to be interested in apiculture might, on balance, be better for him than if she showed indifference. "Each queen bee has its own odor," he informed her. "Since she will fertilize every miniscule cell in every comb and so puts tens of thousands of eggs, yes, larvae, into separate wax cells which is their beginning in life, so she is certain to pass her own odor into each of her thousands of children."

"That is so remarkable," said Klara. "How do you know this, Alois? So much you know."

"I have read about these discoveries in books," he said grudgingly.

"You have never smelled it yourself?"

"Do I look so stupid as to put my nose into a hive in order to give a dozen bees the opportunity to fly ^{into the nostrils?} ~~up my nose?~~"

She began to laugh. In certain ways, she knew him well. He might read his books on the subject, but, at bottom, he was still good peasant stock—he did not like to admit that he had not learned the subject by way of his hands, his feet, his strength, his own patience and his five good senses, not even to mention the mysterious sixth.

Alois, however, had indeed told her a little too much. She had to know more.

Before the conversation was over for this night, she actually prodded him to explain how the queen was fertilized. She had, after all, to be more than curious about any queen who could create so many thousands of children and still remain a queen! She could see it! There was such admiration in Alois' eye when he spoke of this Queen. Everything depended on her—the absolute success of the hive, you could say, nothing less.

So Alois did choose to lead Klara through some descriptive steps. Given her evident excitement about the Queen Bee, he could sense it would

be to his advantage on this night. She was clearly full of ardor at the thought of so female a creature, so tiny, so noble. So extraordinary.

He explained then that the young queen, very much a virgin, not twenty days out of her own wax cell, (which was no larger in width and depth than the little eraser you could find on the end of a new pencil) would be fed on her emergence from that cell, by bee nurses and bee attendants. Yet, just three weeks from the day she had emerged, she would be ready nonetheless to take her maiden flight out of the hive as a full virgin, and this usually took place on the first warm day in May. Up she would lift into the heavens on this first sortie, higher than all but a few male bees would dare to go.

"The ones who are called drones?" asked Klara.

"Yes, fat, spoiled fellows. They jam their corner of the hive. They live to eat, and on a good day they fly around like fools. For the fun of it. They do not even bother to bring back honey. It is only when the virgin queen comes out for her first flight that they can justify their existence. It is then that they are overcome by how phenomenal she is. And they know it. On this day, they have been flying around waiting for her. They know she is coming. This Queen who flies so high, who is so beautiful compared to all

her sisters, those thousands of worker bees, yes, work-horse female bees always looking for more nectar to bring back—those poor girls do not have full ovaries so they go out and forage, unless they have been attached to neccessary duties for the hive. Clean-up duties. Chores. But this Queen, she is different, still a virgin, she is not yet really a queen, more, I would say, like a princess. And then, I would say, very much like a princess, she flies so high that only a few of these drones can follow. Then it comes down to two drones, to one, but, oh, this last strong one, he reaches her, he puts what he has, yes, you know what I mean, his very own ~~sperm~~^{sperm} organ which he keeps inside himself until now when it comes out and goes, springs, you could say into, yes, yes, springs into—call it her vagina—why not? It is so, and she takes it all in even as they are up in the air so high, just the two of them."

"It is a wonder," said Klara. Her eyes had begun to shine. She almost said, "A miracle of love."

"No, not exactly," said Alois. Now, he did not know how to continue. If he said too much, he could spoil what he was looking for on this night. Still, his shrewd side was ready to speak for him and he knew, yes, the best was most likely to come from telling it all.

"This drone," he said, "this one good brave drone, sticks it in so far, which is exactly what nature demands, we must suppose, that then he cannot get it back."

"What?"

"No, Donnerwetter, he can't pull out! The queen has hooks, or something of the kind, very sharp hooks for certain to keep him there. He is stuck. When he does insist, when he has to pull away, you won't believe it, his good organ is ripped right out of him. He has to leave it behind. His manhood! Gone. All gone."

"And him? What happens then? To him?"

"Oh, he dies. Of course! He is gone. He falls to earth."

"The poor creature," she said. But she could not help it. Against her will, Klara's mouth pulled into a smirk, then slipped over to a smile. Once begun, she had to laugh. Then, she could not stop. Never before had Alois heard her laugh so long.

"What a life," she finally said; and Alois had been right to tell her. She was over six months into her pregnancy, but they made love that night. Alois had known more than one woman who could even give you a good piece of

the real business in that very last week before she would pop out someone else's baby. But that had hardly been the case with Klara. On this night, however, she was different. It was equal to her best.

Of course, he certainly did not go on to tell her of two other things. The first was that the queen was perfectly capable of having other lovers after that first fabulous flight. Over the next few weeks and into June, she could have five or six more lovers. That would store enough semen in her ovaries to lay thousands, then tens of thousands of eggs, one each to every cell among those thousands of cells, and continue to do so until cold weather came. Then this cycle could be repeated for as much as three years to come. (All that wealth of impregnation derived from no more than five or six copulations!) This meant that for the rest of her life, she would have no more to do with drones, but would be feeding honey and pollen to the pupae she had created while her court, her own worker females, followed her with devotion, capping cells of bees yet to be born with a mysterious wax substance they made from the pollen of the May flowers, a wax that no chemist could duplicate in the laboratory. No, he did not describe how devotedly the Queen would have to work for the rest of her life, and he

certainly did not tell Klara that when mating season was done, these female worker-bees would evict the drones from the hive, or working in teams would sting to death those who would not stir. (Nor did they lose their sting. The belly of a drone was much softer than human skin.) After the slaughter, they would sweep the dead bees out. He did not speak of more worrisome complications. There was always a tendency, once warm weather began and the empty cells of the hive had been filled near to capacity with new brood, for as much as half of the colony to be ready to desert, to swarm, that is, to fly away. You could lose most of your future profit in a hurry. Nor could he conceive of telling her of new queens being born, five or six perhaps, fed for that purpose on royal jelly, who were often extinguished by the royal court around the Queen Bee. No, he left such details alone. It was better that Klara should remain sympathetic to what would be his oncoming enterprise.

Klara had not only been engrossed by what he told her that night, but now, (much like an older sister), would attempt to cajole Angela out of these prime adolescent woes. Klara, remembering her own early flow, could certainly recall the depth of vulnerability in which it had left her. She had felt herself to be an open wound open to depredations men might yet exact from

her. So, now she chose to describe to Angela the hapless self-amputation of the brave drone who had succeeded in reaching the Queen. This time, Klara had company in her laughter. They carried on perfectly, girls of the same age or just about, and so as Klara divulged more and more of what she had learned from Alois on the subject, the topic turned not only to odor, but to the exceptional power of the Queen Bee. There she was, hardly larger than her own nursing bees and certainly smaller than any drone. Nonetheless, this Queen Bee had the power to impregnate the air of the hive and the thousands who dwelt within it. All of them would know their own hive for they all smelled the same. "It is," said Klara, full of a new set of giggles, "as if all Russian men and women have one kind of awful aroma, and those Polish oafs another. Maybe there is a good decent smell of tea for the English, and we Austrians, we have to be something special, we are warm like strudel." Again, she had Angela in laughter. "And the French, yes, a shameless ugly scent. So harsh!." They were hugging each other by now. "Maybe the worst, the Bohemians. I shouldn't describe them."

"Why not the Hungarians? They could be terrible!"

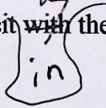
They wiped their eyes. Adi, hearing their laughter, came to join them. He was annoyed when they explained nothing, merely kept laughing at the sound of each country.

Some happy notion remained with Angela. School now gave a special tingle to her nose, and Fraulein Werner with all her talcum powder, just like much too much on a baby, and her own little brother Adi. He absolutely had this terrible stink when he ran up and down too many hills, and she was always coaxing him to use more soap, or on those nights once a week when Klara boiled enough water for each of them to bathe in the big farm house tub, Angela would insist on lathering his back and his armpits before handing him back the bar of soap. Then, with a wholly mischievous grin—"You have the soap now, so put it where it can do some work, you careless boy."

Adi would scream with anger at such rudeness, loud enough for Klara to come running in, but he would not tell his mother. He was in a turmoil of indecision. Either he smelled as bad as Angela kept saying, or she was crazy. Who could know? He could barely sniff a thing on himself.

Angela, however, would begin to brood again on the death of Rosig. The prize sow had indeed been full of a strong odor at times, not unlike Adi

at his worst, or was it Rosig at her worst?—enough! Angela began to cry for both, the boy and the pig together. Full of remorse for teasing him, she tried to make amends by telling him a few of the wonderful secrets Klara had told her, all of this new knowledge about bees, and on many a morning as the two walked to school, she would take up the topic again—her head was so full of what she had been told that Adi's imagination was soon inflamed by the mysteries of the Queen Bee.

Ever since they had come to the farm in April, he had been most aware of the nearness of bees. In May and June, there had been hours in full daylight when the sky was full of tiny lights, glints of light whipping about, flying in so many directions. His mother was always warning him that he must not try to touch any such tiny creature, not if he saw one on a flower. Worse, he must never dare to kill one. That same bee could give him something to remember! Then one fine morning in July, Edmund got stung and didn't stop screaming for an hour. So Adolf, in his turn, had been most respectful of the dangers implicit ^{face} ~~with~~  their presence.

Now, however, to hear that the Queen Bee shared an odor of herself with every bee in the hive (and he could count by now to ten thousand) yes, that did excite his thoughts.

So when he heard that his father might be going to talk to a neighbor about purchasing what Alois called "the first materials"—an announcement he made on a Saturday evening at dinner, Adi had a dream that night about bees, and saw an army of them flying in circles above the farm. Standing on the ground near ~~to~~ their house was an old man and he was dressed differently from anyone Adi had ever seen. His shirt remained outside his pants and came down to his knees, and he wore an old hat over his white hair, as long as a stocking. It hung down half over his back. He was not short, but he still looked like a dwarf because he was bent over. In this dream, Adi knew his name. The man was called Der Alte, and the boy woke up on Sunday morning thinking he was the only one who knew this odd man's name only to discover that he was in error.

Sunday morning, Adi asked his father if he could go with him to see Der Alte, and Alois, surprised, and then pleased, gave his assent. On Sunday, Klara would be picked up by another farm couple to take the road to

Fischlham in their wagon for Sunday Mass in that town's small chapel, and she would travel with the three children, even as Alois, exercised his own matter of conscience. "In truth, in good conscience, I cannot go," he would tell her, and he would be left alone to walk his fields. This morning, therefore, he was all the more pleased that Adi asked to join him.

This request was the product of the boy's dream the night before. I can say that I had been directly instrumental in shaping his invocation of Der Alte. This was the first active participation I had taken with the family since entering Alois' mind just after he had first begun to opine to all in that Linz tavern about the beauties and wonders of apiculture.

Now, I feel (with some unease) that I must address the reader again on a more unappetizing matter. It ^{does} concern ^{Adi's characteristic smell,} ~~Adi's odor~~ ^{the smell of} ~~Adi's~~

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It is curious, yet, after all, not so curious that few matters concerning men and women are as difficult to discuss as ~~unattractive~~ odor. To make matters even less agreeable, it is also true that our echelon of aides to the Maestro do not possess a keen sense of smell. Gossip among devils can hardly avoid the notion that we, too, may ~~smell offensive~~.

Enough! It is not a good ~~subject~~ subject for us. At this time, approaching the end of the Nineteenth Century, many of our problems in managing our clients were to be traceable to one phenomenon. Many of the humans ^{being} in whom we

had invested, had to be exceptionally fastidious in their personal habits, or they would ~~give off~~ ^{but maybe} at varying times smells ~~sufficiently remarkable to arouse~~ ^{bad enough to arouse} the distrust ~~of many~~.

How this condition began, I do not know. ~~If~~ ^{but} I have served the E.O. for many an age, ~~my~~ ^{but} recollection of earlier eras is no more grounded in the far past than is a human's sense of previous incarnations. It is probably not to the Maestro's interest to have us know any more than we need to know. Rather, we are asked to deal as effectively as possible with the problems immediately before us. We do not have to call, after all, upon Judas or Bluebeard or Attila the Hun to encourage a drunken client to slug down another shot of booze. In consequence, we have almost no idea of the real beginning of the war between the Dummkopf and the Evil One. Whether they were brothers (the D.K. being presumably the older) or, as Milton proposed, the contest was ^{as important as} between God and an angel ~~of the stature of~~ ^{as important as} Lucifer—that is entirely beyond my province. Perhaps the E.O. was there from the onset. Perhaps, he only appeared later. ~~It is not for us to know.~~ ^{we don't} Nor can we dismiss the possibility that the Dummkopf (in whole command of this earth and this solar system) was obliged nonetheless to speak to higher powers somewhere in the galaxies

of his immediate need for an assistant. It is possible that the O.O. (to use for a moment his highest self-assigned title—the Other Omniscience) was sent here on purpose by those greater powers. Why? Why not? They may have been feeling dissatisfaction with the performance of the D.K. Such ^{higher} ~~a species~~ Knowledge of ~~cognition~~ is, of necessity, also unavailable to us. In these matters, there are only questions; ~~there are no answers.~~

I cannot even speak with authority on simple matters, ^{For example the} ~~on this much~~ ^{higher} ~~this one~~ ^{smaller} ~~matter~~ ^{indeed} ~~of odor.~~ Yet, if I am to offer my conjecture as to what ^{might} ~~could~~ have taken place ^{time consumed by} ~~some time~~ during the interminable ~~eons~~ of evolution, I would posit that the D.K. is undeniably the Creator of that familiar world of weather, flora, fauna, and primates that we inhabit, all of us, all we separate souls, bodies and spirits—divine and satanic. So, yes, if He is the Creator, then evolution was certainly His great laboratory, and the signs of His Stupidity as well as of His Genius are to be found in all those endless experiments concerning the development of His creatures, yes, the eons it took before He could divine how to enable certain of His beings to fly, the extreme divergences in size of His earth-bound and marine species, His great and godly hopes that went, for example, into the dinosaur (only to discover

that that particular construction of animal life was simply too large to survive in the proportions the D.K. had brought to him—that is one failure.) A myriad of others are there ~~to be cited~~. The Creator had His relative successes and His abysmal failures, but it has to be admitted that He never gave up, even if He was not always in firm control of the earth He had fashioned. It is incontestable that earthquakes and ice ages brought many an interruption to His experiments and savaged many of His pursuits. Why? Because He had incorrectly designed His sphere of earth in the first place.

Of one matter I am relatively certain. By the time men and women had entered into the D.K.'s concept of how He was to develop His primates, so ~~did~~ our Maestro also appear. With *his* entrance, the perversities and uncontrollables of human activity were stimulated. There, at just such a point in the creative development of the world we inhabit, came a metamorphosis in the nature of odor. Its presence became a subtle but often determining factor in human relations.

I can be fairly certain that in the bygone era of primitive man, odor had been one of the D.K.'s assets, an enhancement to aid the development of all the species. In large part, animals were drawn or repelled by one another by

the messages that came to their noses. Presumably their smells (as conceived by the laws the D.K. had built into them) were there precisely to reveal the depth of each animal's courage, perseverance, fear, treachery, loyalty, their determination to propagate—no end to the list. It was all useful to the D.K. It was enabling Him to take the best creative steps forward in evolution.

I think by the time our Prince entered the lists, the D.K. must have been much enraged by the reduction of His status. No longer could He see Himself comfortably as All-Good and All-Powerful. So He began to search for a method whereby His Cudgels could determine (assuming that they possess a good sense of smell!) which men, women, and children had separated from Him in their loyalty. And so, if the Good Lord was not without His own skill as a sorcerer, (and indeed, how could He not employ such powers given the new and dire complexities of dealing with the varied acts of the Maestro) I would go so far as to say that the D.K. even had the ability to mark each of our clients with a touch of condign odor, a marking process, if you will, chosen for its simplicity and relative lack of expense considering the inevitable disbursements of divine funds that are inherent in

any change of program. From the Middle Ages on, however, our Maestro combated this forceful obstacle to his subtle intentions by encouraging many of his alchemists to develop perfumes whose subtleties became a means whereby harsh or rotten odors could be marinated ~~with~~ⁱⁿ sweeter, earthier, more untraceable, and finally more appealing fragrances, even exotic in their hint of a curious, even exciting, evil beneath the bouquet. (It is, for example, impossible to reconstruct the history of court life in France during the reign of Louis XIV without pondering those redolent tricks of camouflage. Moreover, it proved a great boon to all of our clients who were wealthy enough to afford the best such perfumes.)

By the end of the Enlightenment, matters had altered once more. Soaps, developed by us, were able to add their powers of obliteration to many varieties of perfume. ~~Again~~^{And} Again, the Dummkopf was confounded. At this time of Adi's boyhood, and indeed, throughout the decades to come, a pervasive anesthetization of human odor became part of our immense progress in this sector of divine combat. Soaps, bath-tubs, cleansing oils and the development of plumbing all came into being, due in large part, to the determined and highly focused energies of those entrepreneurs in whom we

our share of the human species more as active stocks investments than as

had made successful investment. I think it is true that we look upon most of

our humans as more analogous to stocks than to living creatures.

By the middle of the Twentieth Century, it can be noted clearly that the D.K.'s dependence on bad human odor as a system of warning that the Evil One is near, had been rendered more or less obsolete. Deodorants carried the day. By the time of this writing, hardly anyone ever knows any longer how their closest partner might actually smell. (This is certainly true in the most developed nations!) This loss of cognitive power for the D.K. has given great impetus to our work.

Back, however, in the period I now relate, ~~that~~^{my} was not so, not yet, and the meeting between Alois, Adi, and the bee-keeper called Der Alte was characterized by a curious but immediate intimacy between the boy and the old man.

I must not leap too quickly, however, over the walk to Der Alte's farm since Alois may have had his first real conversation with his son, Adolf Hitler, on this occasion.

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What may be more important, however, is to speak of the dream I installed in Adi's sleep on the Saturday night before Alois' meeting with the beekeeper on Sunday. It was done in response to a direct order from the Maestro. Let me say that laying in a dream which is a complete fiction unconnected to the dreamer's previous experiences is not in the least routine. While we have the power to provide chimerical episodes, or even on rare occasions such as this, insert whole scenarios into our client's sleep, it is also true that any such dramatic shift in the psychic regions of a child, can produce

real inroads on our budget. Inner dramas are expensive to produce ex nihilo.

Moreover, there is risk involved when the client is that young.

To install whole dreams on special occasions can tamper with the early, less protected, roots of nocturnal material belonging to the child. The unhappy result can be that dream-works manipulated by us often end in some chaos, particularly if they stimulate open conflict with the Cudgels. Attacks and counter-attacks within the depths of any ^{man or woman's} human's sleep, young or old, rarely result in conditioning favorable to our purpose, indeed, it will often generate nightmare. A set of delicate manipulations calculated to alter a subject's psyche should not be undertaken under such battlefield conditions. File, state the obvious, few people
~~Not many prosper from a nightmare.~~
~~few people~~

It has been my experience that the installation of highly selected visions, phantasms, false certainties, whole illusions, effective hysterias, even outright deliriums can deliver exciting effects, but that is most attainable when one can work slowly with the protégé, nimbly, subtly, proceeding in small steps over many a night in order that the Cudgels are not alerted. Count on it, His working angels can react savagely to dream-work that we initiate. From the commencement of human existence, I would warrant that the D.K. must

have been most attached to the ^{power to influence} ~~power~~ that dreams could bring to Him over ^(whom) those late primates. He was then nurturing and developing into humans ^{beings}. Much later, during what we can call the Jehovah Period (that is, approximately 1000 B.C. to the advent of Jesus Christ) it is clear to see that the D.K. had a host of awards and punishments available. He could arouse visions in prophets and plebians alike and drive these wards in any direction He desired, often, I suspect, on not a ^{much} ~~great deal~~ more than His imperious whim.

Our entrance, however, into the comings and goings of humankind resulted in a diminution of His divine powers. No longer could Jehovah employ dreams to control His chattels so easily. Today, as a result, the effect of dreams is profoundly reduced. Half of humankind ~~seem~~ ^{is} to be employing their best efforts to have as few relations as possible with either the D.K. or the Maestro! Dreams are no longer seen as visions. They present themselves as eccentric, jagged, totally confused, and for the most part, non-productive and non-comprehensible intrusions. People do their best not to follow whichever messages they can extract from any episode in their sleep.

So the D.K.'s imperious use of dreams is, at present, inoperative. Once our forces began to vie with the D.K. concerning the growth and future

direction of men and women. He had, willy-nilly—and I use the word advisedly!—He had willy-nilly to reduce these absurd sportings of His ego. Manic obsession with Himself and His Powers, so swollen during the Jehovah Period, became—if I may use the epithet—obsolete. Now, He could not insist quite as much on the absolute adoration of His servants. They no longer felt so obliged to bring gifts and sacrifices all the time. Instead, Jehovah had to give Himself to an agonized search for more sophisticated modes of operation. He bent to the need. (To some degree.) On occasion, He could now show Himself to be wise in His nocturnal insertions (most often via the Cudgels) into His best remaining human servants. The function of the dream now altered. Much less often did it serve as a medium for delivering commands from Above. Rather, the purpose was converted. Now, the dream served, ideally, to give the dreamer a closer sense of buried disturbances in his life. If a trusted friend might prove a hint treacherous, the dream was there to alert the dreamer to just such a possibility. If, on the other hand, one was unwittingly ready to betray a close friend, that possibility could also be suggested to the sleeping mind. The D.K. was now looking for the best means to encourage a closer sense in ~~each man and woman~~ ^{people} of their ~~grammar~~ ^{grammar}

what might be their

(real condition in the world. The D.K., given all His shortcomings, was

all the same
~~indeed now~~ looking for a way to protect His most elaborate creation—His

brings
humanity. Indeed, for those lucky or worthy few who had been sequestered

by the strongest guards among the Cudgels and so could rarely be approached

by us, (real candidates for sainthood being one example of such protection),

the D.K.'s new approach did prove efficacious. On the other hand, dreams

intended as direct prophecy became rare. A vogue which for a short period

saw dreams as wish-fulfillment became a popular notion, but never proved to

be more than a theory. As revised by the D.K., dreams were now supposed

to serve as an intimate form of communication between the human creation

and Himself. Indeed, on those occasions when we devils and demons were

not present to distort the content, a dreamer might actually obtain insight into

his or her vulnerabilities. The intense but mock situations created by the

dream were there to dramatize the subject's ability to withstand anxiety. In

that manner, a dreamer's attention could be directed to encounters it was wise

to avoid. One would now be most unhappily aware of how one possessed

less courage, less loyalty, less devotion, less love, or less health than he or

she had previously assumed. The function of the dream was therefore more

direct—it was to give illumination on how to cope with modern life. It was—
if one could only hear the signals within the dream—a security system full of
warning bells.

To the degree, however, that we could interfere with the allegiance of
any man or woman to the Cudgels, we were able to warp that system at the
least, and sometimes sabotage it. In return, we have to put up with trained
angels who delight in undermining our influence over our best captives.

To be certain, these wars produced chaos. To the degree that any
given man or woman had been penetrated by both forces, the person's dream
became an extravaganza, usually incoherent. I may add that it was also
wasteful to our budgets.

So, the ^{time-consuming} act of creating a whole dream for a child appeared, on the face
of it, to ~~promise the loss of time and effort to~~ ^{detract from} my other projects. As I have
remarked, the Maestro did not, for the most part, allocate ~~too~~ many of our
incursions toward early development in children. Looking upon their growth
as essentially indeterminable, he saw such actions as ~~counter-indicative to~~ ^{likely to fail,}
~~well-thought-out procedure.~~ It will be recalled that when the Hitler family
made their move from Passau to Hafeld, I was instructed to cease paying

attention to little Adolf. He and his family were now to be monitored by the routine milk-runs of my assistants. ^{Except for the occasion} ~~With the exception of the single occasion~~ when I had slipped into Alois' brain long enough to delve into his fascination with beekeeping, I had been working in the region with other clients. The milk-runs of my assistants proved sufficient to provide me with any information I needed vis-a-vis the Hitlers of Hafeld.

Now, however, had come this unexpected and direct communication from the Maestro—no ordinary event. I was formally instructed to implant a dream into the head of a six-year-old, none other, of course, than our young first grader, little Adolf Hitler. Indeed, the order proposed considerably more than the passing insertion of a concept. Etch was the verb employed by the Maestro. "I want you," he said, "to etch Adi's brain with a permanent notion. We have been quiescent in that direction long enough to expect ^{no interference from} to be free of the ~~presence~~ of the Cudgels. You can probably ^{gain} ~~expect~~ ^{no ~~to~~ interference} an open operation." ^{from}

That was not a short speech for the E.O. ^{His} ~~The size of his~~ regard for each ^{one} of us could be measured by how quickly we ^{were} ~~could be~~ ready to carry out his desires.

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The act itself took no more than a few minutes, but the preparation had not been simple. Etch, I must repeat, was the determining word. A fixed notion, once successfully installed, can link the client to us. (Often we use it to return him back to us should he wish to stray.) But etching is not an easy ~~made~~ to learn, ~~nor to~~ bring off. It must be done with an incisive stroke. Misapplied, it can drive the recipient into madness.

I will go so far as to say that on this occasion, I was deft. Given the knowledge absorbed from the milk runs, I knew that Alois would soon be

visiting a neighboring beekeeper known in the area as Der Alte, Der Alte
~~Zachar?~~ ~~Zauberer~~—the Old Sorcerer. So was he perceived by the neighboring
 peasants.

The term was an exaggeration. This old man was highly eccentric, a
 bit of a hermit, ~~a mean individual~~, mean as a winter wind who could on prime
 occasions muster the facade of a warm old fellow. The peasants in Hafeld,
 having known him for decades, knew better, but he was the only apiculturist
 in the area whom they could recommend in good conscience to Alois since he
 knew more about beekeeping than anyone ^{else} within a day's walk in any
 direction. So they said. Besides, they were curious to see whether he would
 succeed in charming Alois before cheating him.

What was most useful to me about Der Alte was that he had belonged
 to us for decades. In effect, he was ^{an} ~~one~~ old pensioner. Moreover, he and Adi
 would be kin in odor, and so were likely to find that the other had a good
 smell. So, the nature of the dream suggested itself. I would etch the boy's
 mind wⁱth a picture of Der Alte in advance of their meeting.

As a matter of style, I had always been inclined to ~~work~~ limit the extent
 of a dream-work. One could lose oneself in too many virtuosities. I

considered modest scenarios to be more effective when it came to fitting external dream material into the existing framework of the subject's psyche. In this case, given the necessary precision of the art-work required, I foresaw a considerable disbursement of available funds, but it did work. I laid in as close an image of Der Alte as I could produce with my skills and then did no more than to place this image into the very center of a short dream. Adi, however, was now given a close representation of Der Alte—his appearance, his voice, his manner of movement. For the setting, I chose one of the two rooms of his hut, and the yard was visible through the window. In the distance was his bee-house. The action of the dream could not have been more direct. Der Alte led them inside his quarters, and fed Adi a spoonful of honey, a task I was careful to monitor in the dream. I made certain it was exquisite on the boy's tongue. (Never to be forgotten, forever etched!). I left that for the climax. Adi awakened with wet pajamas from navel to knee plus a whole sense of happiness. He stripped his wet night-clothing, a not unusual event, and went back to into slumber, replaying the dream (on his own) in small variations, looking to taste such honey again. There was no question in his mind that he would soon meet Der Alte, and this emboldened him to ask

his father to take him along the next morning. Alois, as I have remarked, was pleased indeed to fulfill that request.

Their conversation on the walk to the Sorcerer's house is yet to be recounted but I will choose to jump ahead long enough to say a little more about the Maestro's concept of etching for it has fine applications to our work. For example, we now knew ^{that} when Adi met Der Alte on this Sunday, ^{he} ~~it~~ would feel, ^{as the dream} ~~given the power of his dream on Saturday night,~~ that it was all happening ~~in the manner he~~ ^{as the dream} had foreseen. The boy was astonished, he was thrilled, he was full of a sense of importance that seemed to commence in the very heart of his thoughts, as if he had the power to peer in advance into exactly how matters would proceed. Indeed, we had reaped our expected bounty. Der Alte had been instructed in his sleep to give the boy a taste of his finest honey directly on meeting him, and the experience did prove so close to how it had been foreseen that it took up permanent lodging in the boy's memory.

Be it said again, this man, Magnus Rudiger, called by all the men and women in the area as Der Alte ³ ~~Rauberer~~, was in fact not much of an old sorcerer. His curses were neither remarkable nor effective, and his command

of magic was rudimentary. Whenever a sense of dread came to him from forces he could not name (usually one or another branch of the Cudgels) he hardly knew more than to lay a circle of salt around the kitchen table where he sat by himself. That was, for all its picayune effect, more effective at nudging us away than the Cudgels. (His error, common to so many of our clients, was to assume that naturally and of course! he was on the side of the angels. So it was demons who had inspired his dread.) Minor clients such as this Magus Rudiger are an annoyance. Particularly when they grow old. Still, he was enough of an actor to keep everyone in the area respectful of him. No neighbor was in a hurry to attack his self-esteem, and indeed, he did muster a full suggestion by way of his dress, his odor, his resonant, even reverberating, voice, and his undeniable knowledge of bees, that he was a species of magician. That is, I suppose, a power in itself—the ability to safeguard one's self-esteem even when the psychic revetments are flimsy. On the other hand, he rarely failed to lend himself to my uses. (An individual of greater inner strength might, for example, have been too proud to rush to feed that spoonful of honey while the boy was still on the threshold.)

In any event, Adi was now etched by the dream, and equally important, the visit. His belief that he would, on occasion, be able to bring vividly and accurately to mind the presence of people or events he had not yet encountered, would be no mean instrument for us.

I will say that we were to exercise such a spiritual device often during Adolf Hitler's service as an Army messenger scurrying up to the trenches and darting back to Regimental Headquarters on many a day and night during the First World War. It was dangerous work, and a confidence in one's ability to anticipate the future was of no small assistance. It is, however, too soon to speak of that. His experiences as a soldier—a most complex amalgam of magic, luck, desperation and dedication—are still eighteen years away. For now, I will leave discussion of the profits and problems produced by etching until it is altogether necessary to discuss the practice again.

For now, I would rather steal into the unspoken thoughts of the conversation he had with his father on the walk to see Der Alte ³Kauberer. *#* Alois, of course, did most of the talking, and was anticipating his meeting with no great confidence. It was never routine for Alois to encounter a man who knew more about a subject than himself.