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was termed "phthisis on account of dropsy of the chest," a galloping consumption she contracted after sleeping in the cattle-trough through her last two winters. The collateral cause was rage. Toward the end, she thought often of herself at the age of nineteen, her body quick, her singing voice praised for its beauty. She was the soloist of the parish choir in Doellersheim. But ^{then} ^{11 years} having gone on to live with the curse of ~~more~~ ^{also} ^{11 years} than three decades of lost anticipations, she was full of ~~the~~ ^{also} added fury that had been passed on to her by Georg. He, like many a drunk before him, succeeded, however, in outliving everyone's assumption that ~~his death would come early~~ ^{I am early}. After she was gone, he actually ~~stayed in existence~~ ^{11 years} for ten more years. Drink had been not only his nemesis but his dear medicine, and, at last, his executioner. He went in a day. They called it apoplexy. Having never bothered to see Nepomuk or Alois, he was not missed, but then, Alois was twenty by then and working in Vienna.

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Years passed, the daughters grew up, and new problems presented themselves concerning the size of these dowries. When it came to the oldest, Johanna, she was given a somewhat pinched share of their land, but then she had married a poor man, a hard-working but unlucky farmer named Poelzl. When it came to the dowry for the second daughter, Walpurga, who was

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Nepomuk led his new son-in-law around the property, boundary line by boundary line, and stopped at every marker that established the separation between his fields and the land of the next farmer. Nepomuk would say, "And if on any day you gather fruit from this man's orchard, even the fallen fruit, may you labor under a black sky." After which he gave Josef Romeder a clout on the ear. At each of those eight separate jogs in the boundary line, he clubbed him. Johann Nepomuk was full of the kind of woe that hangs like ~~dead-weight~~ ~~weight~~ on one's back. He was not mourning the transfer of his farm, so much

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There was an old Viennese joke that to have a flourishing society, both the police and the thieves must constantly ^{get better} ~~improve~~ at what they did. Now, he thought often of the remark. It was true for Anna Glassl and himself. The more acute her sense of what he might be up to, the finer were his lies.

She had cause for distrust. There were days when he made love to each of the three women he could look upon as regulars. In the morning, full of the bounty of sleep, he would take care of his wife, and in the afternoon when Anna Glassl was napping and his off-duty time coincided with the hour when their chambermaid washed their floors, he usually enjoyed the coquetry of her hips as she, down on her hands and knees, slung a wet cloth from side to side—truth, he rarely saw her face at such times. And in the evening after Anna Glassl had gone to sleep, there was Fanni.

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So if he took a long-range view of Klara Poelzl, it was because his nocturnal, and for the present, true interest was with this waitress at the inn, a nineteen-year-old named Fanni Matzelsberger, who was voluptuous but lithe, and—by every good measure—smoldering. He had learned to strip his eyes of all expression when she crossed the room, but that was not easy. She had an irrepressible turn to her hips. That spoke to him: Fanni was a good girl who did not want to be so good.

Indeed, as he soon learned by visits to her attic room, she was a virgin of the most tormented sort—a girl in the old peasant tradition: She had kept the formal entrance to her chastity intact but the same could not be said for the close neighbor to those private parts. That was not so agreeable for Alois. The Hound was too large to permit a good poke into “the smelly and the damned,” (or so he would characterize it). Fanni would moan in a very low voice (in order that the rest of the attic not hear) but they were both suffering. All the more intense became their embrace was truly ~~heart-to-heart~~ heart-to-heart. ~~heart.~~ (In the heat of the hour, they loved each other, a not uncommon reaction even if only half of the carnal ore can be mined.

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“How do you decide such things?”

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“Stay away from priests. They are there to suck your blood. They are the ones who will leave you weak and good for nothing.”

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Yet, in the last week of Fanni's illness when Klara did confess, the answer was brief: "This is my punishment for sending you away four years ago. That is fair."

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not fond of common paper. That substance is derived, after all, from trees (and they happen to be God's most loyal, faithful, and trusted servants.)

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

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

phonetic
impediment
and not
from
phonetic
not
needed

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

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

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For that matter — O Felix Culpe — Mr. (ton)
 saw the fall as exactly the event that put
 men in charge of his own destiny.

to God nor to the E.O. They are always seeking to be free, to be the ^{large} creature

of their own destiny. Their greatest desire is to become what they wish to be

by the light of their desires. In the actual event, as matters proceed today,

we devils try to guide those men and women we have attracted (we call them

clients), the Cudgels contest us, and the particular individual usually does his

or her best to fight Us off, both of Us, God and Devil alike. Humans have

become so vain (through technology, I suspect) that quite a number now wish

to be wholly separated from both of us.

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

This is the
 pit: Fall
 man down
 create his
 own destiny.
 Each man
 does
 create his
 own
 destiny

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

In contrast to such men and women, I have a more simple existence. For the most part, I look to make my clients successful. In our Company, that is just about certain to produce reliable results for oneself. Sooner or later, you are promoted. Over many periods, I have had clients whom I was able to develop to the point where they could serve directly in one or another of The Maestro's larger projects. The majority of humans, however, caught in the push-and-pull, the back and forth between their guardian angel and or some directing devil like myself, end by producing little that is useful to either

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Kingdom. On the other hand, I can recall a few unhappy situations when I lost a catch at the last moment. The guardian angel who was my opposite number in the particular contest retained the spoils.

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

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using me for some strong if imperceptible purpose or marinating me to enlarge my experience, I did, on occasion, take hope that he had not lost interest. He even remarked once that I might seek high rank again, a post comparable to some of the epic encounters of our Company during the first three centuries of the Church in Rome. All of that might be there for me once more, provided I would pay unremitting attention to my present wretches, thugs, and drunks. I learned then that the E.O. had selected me to oversee the work of a number of other agents who were keeping watch on a young client whose potentialities might yet prove to be immense. Insignificant at present was this person and so was his family, but there were ancestral fault-lines full of the intoxicating stink of our old friend, blood-scandal. The boy in question, who by 1908 was a jobless young man in Vienna, happened to be stricken with timidity, had quit school too early, was an avaricious reader who remained hopelessly superior to what he read (particularly when he could not understand it), and was, in addition, lazy, prone to temper tantrums, and possessed of an ego as big swollen as an infected limb. All the same, he was desperately afraid of virtually all meetings with other humans. Yes, this boy was an unmitigated mess.

~~Normal~~
~~Human~~ is an
~~objective~~

Human:
~~the~~ is an
adjective.

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

lessen better
lessen is better

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

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certainty that he was committed altogether to what he said. Sometimes I felt that might come from his own uncertainty, but this was too perilous a notion. ^{the way} This irony came ^{to} a to entertain for more than a moment. The E.O. would put up with our critical thoughts or even a passive outburst, but we knew better than to let it ^{persist} persist.

In any case, I ^{didn't} did not dare to ask ^{What if I fail?} What if I fail? Many of our projects had not asked ^{your most} do. Particularly, major ones. They are such outrageous gambles. ^{and not}

^{stet} The Source is not unlike God in this regard. There are all too many ^{stet} blind alleys in existence, after all—and a good many, I can tell you, were designed by the Lord Himself. The dinosaurs, for example. If God is the greatest artist, He has also made the largest ^{greatest} mistakes.

I was depressed. The new project was at present a backwater. I knew about such twisted clients, their future ^{to} hopeless ^{an} unless ^{an opportunity} at ^{opportunity} historic era ^{epoch} developed ^{on one} that could prove uniquely ^{even better} favorable to the distortions present in that person. At this point, there seemed no sign of such incomparably special circumstances. (The First World War and the disasters that fell upon

Germany had not yet occurred.) My role, as I saw it, ^{was to be a species} would seat me as ^{of jockeyseated} jockey on a horse running against unbelievably long odds. I could foresee further demotions for myself.

*of jockeyseated
jockey
is
implicit*

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All this is not of much interest now. We know, after all, what happened to the horse. And I was the one who rode him (with occasional but crucial help from the Maestro). I rode with Adolf all the way up to glory (and down again—which is half the matter, the other half being why I now propose to tell the tale). I know so much. This knowledge seems to exist as a separate force within me, separate and independent of Our Maestro, a force, indeed, so intense that I feel ready to break the first of the rules of our fold, which is that we never explain what we know to the uninitiated. Nor is it simple to do so. If, for example, I have told how Adolf was conceived on that night, in those extraordinarily special circumstances when I could speak of myself as being present as a catalyst, a Gabriel come from our side to stand in for the Evil One, it is true; yet it is, by ordinary measure, not true.

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

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The explanation—provided one is ready to follow!—is considerably less difficult than, let us say, Einstein's Special Theory of Relativity. Spirits exist in ^a relation to Time that is not comparable to any human perception of that

same mysterious word. Ingesting the experiences of demons enables higher

devils to ~~vault back and forth~~ ^{From our time to human time} We pass through periods of Time that human ^{beings}

can only recognize in linear fashion as chronology. But, I, as a devil, did not

have to be present on the night Adolf was conceived. That was not necessary

in order for me to ^{input} ~~bring into myself~~ ^{take in} later the exact experience of what

happened. Another devil (of lower rank) had been present in Alois' bed ^{for}

on that occasion. By order of the E.O., he (or it, if you prefer) had entered the

act. I must say that this is always an option for any of our cohort. We can

enter into any and all cohabitation. On rare occasions, and this was one of

them, the demon can call for the presence of the E.O. So can the angels look

to their Master. Since the resources of God and the Devil are not believe it

if you will!—infinite, such insertion must not be merely desirable or

entertaining, but purposeful. The devil who had actually been present that

night transmitted the experience to me years later with a completeness of odor

and carnal detail that can be called absolute. It is fair to say that indeed it

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happened to me, and if he was the first Gabriel on the occasion when Adolf was conceived, I was very much a second Gabriel who subsumed him.

That is because for all practical purposes, I had been there. (Among us, to be given an exact recollection ~~proves~~ ²¹⁵ equal to being present.) So, I also knew from the irrevocable intensity of the occasion that the E.O. had also been there, had joined with his petty agent for one instant (even as Jehovah had been with Gabriel during another exceptional event.)

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

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attempt. Ditto for what I can relate about Klara, Fanni, Anna Glassl, Alois, Sr., Johann Nepomuk, Johanna, and all the others.

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

I have to recognize I may be offering much too much for so early a moment in our biographical endeavor. It will take all of a book that I may never be able to finish for you, dear reader, who is not at all in my likeness, and not my brother, to begin to absorb the confession just offered. If you are

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disturbed then, to a degree, well, so am I. The present is with me again, the precise period of these years now as I live in an America I can barely comprehend. If I am a presence who consists of no more at this instant than the all-but-retired spirit of a devil who is without a serious assignment, I also sense that I must keep returning to the premise that an account of the life of my former client will help, yes, will help to re-establish my footing on some long-lost terrain where I can begin to search for the remaining oddments of what may once have been my soul.

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Given the dominance of the large new technological world, one of our ongoing missions is to convince the majority of ^{well-educated} world citizens that there is no

such entity as the Devil. And, for that matter, not a hell of a lot of ^{existence} ~~existence~~

^{fact} ~~fact~~ for God. Certainly, there is very little on the modern intellectual horizon that

^{that exists} sees anything like a war between two opposed spirit orders. Rather, the New

Technological World requires the universe to be subject to reason, nothing

else. God, alone, as a solitary mystery, may prove acceptable here and there,

and is even subject to adoration by full-service idiots who see Him as all-

good, all-powerful, all One. Never posit a Devil. There can be but one

40% of
Americans
believe in
The Devil
according to poll

40% of Americans
believe in a spirit
according to poll.

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mystery, not two! (Indeed, at the insistence of the E.O. we do not capitalize our endeavors, only His.)

There need be no surprise, then, that the general understanding of Adolf Hitler's personality is dim. He is, after all, a third mystery, the most mysterious human ~~of the century~~ ^{being}, a man, when all is said, who was all-too-human, if, it will be agreed, the average man or woman does possess large funds of the ~~inhuman~~ ^{inhumanity}. Nonetheless, over the years, I grew able to comprehend his psyche better than my own. How can I not take pride in this?

As a specimen ^{of the} human, he was close to unmeasurable, and developed without question into the wild beast of the century, this all-too-modest-

who or whom? looking client whom ^{in the beginning} I belittled as "little Adolf," yes, I knew him when we still referred to the young man who grew out of the boy as "little Adolf with the big ideas."

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

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It is probably true that she was ready to die if he did not live. Devils are sound at anticipating motive (the more sordid, the better—Analogy Rex!), but our predictive attempts fade at the borders of mortality. Man proposes, the Devil imposes, and the Lord disposes, is not accurate for all cases, but we are obliged to recognize that God has the final power to decide ^{when every} ~~human being will die~~ ~~the timing of the death of every human~~. Take the extreme example of an airplane ~~that has just gone down~~. ^{are responsible for the} Let us say we ~~have brought it into sufficient~~ malfunction ^(a most difficult process to accomplish.) Nonetheless, we do not have the power to destroy everyone on board. It is our Adversary (God) who determines the result. In most such cases, He will have to accept what we have succeeded in bringing off in secret or against His wishes. It is too costly for God to countermand us. Do not assume that it demands no exceptional effort for Him to save a few ~~people~~ ^{people} trapped on that lip of extinction—airplane crashes involve so many factors! Indeed, He could not even save His Son, (as we are never tired of reminding our clients!) but there are occasions when a death we looked to create does not ensue. From time to time, even in extreme difficulties, God still disposes.

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

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

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

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her. As she saw it, that rebuke could only confirm the wretched evil of her condition. So she looked to go back to her feelings on the day she first met Alois during his visit in Spital. She was sixteen then and had never seen a man who disturbed her so directly, so physically—she fell back a full step on their meeting at the door. She might as well have received a blow to the stomach.

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

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

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

If the E.O. and the D.K. generally pay little attention Themselves to most men and women—our warring interests usually end as a stalemate in the average person—it is no small matter for us to select a child early, because a large investment is possible before the Lord (whom, to remind you, we call the D.K.) or His Cudgels becomes aware of our infiltration. Early choice is a

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high-stakes gamble but the E.O. made such a decision by a most reliable rule of thumb. An incestuous procreation followed by swarms of mother-love has to offer fertile possibilities. When here, as we know, the event was fortified by the presence of the E.O. at the conception, there was every reason to expect that the child would offer ^{amazing} ~~extraordinary~~, ~~unbelievable~~ possibilities. If it lived. We lose so many. All too often, the D.K. spots them and, heartlessly—I will say this about Him!—yes, the D.K. heartlessly removes them, no matter the cost to Himself. The cost to Himself! A curious calculation is often present. The D.K. is not insensitive to the hopes of those who surround the child. The early death of an exceptional child can demoralize whole families most dreadfully. Even when the D.K. knows, therefore, that a given individual was subsumed by us, He hesitates. He does not like collateral damage. Besides, He can always steal the boy or girl back from us.

So the D.K. is respectful of mother-love that is all-embracing. It can come as no surprise then that many artists, gargoyles, ogres, geniuses, killers, and an occasional savior live to maturity because God chose not to dispose of them. The first element of mutual recognition in the struggle between the

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attitude was more tolerant in cases of first-degree incest. For such situations, the closer the mother to the child, why, the better for us. (A monster can be even more effective when it also has stores of love with which to charm people.)

Certain advantages can also be obtained by us through the excretory dramas. While a dirty butt on a baby, if found daily, always sends us a signal—the mother is, yes, a potential client for us—the opposite can also be useful. Klara is an example. If she always kept a clean house, her rooms at the Pommer Inn were now as spotless as any home with several fine servants. The furnishings gleamed. So, too, did Adi's pip-squeak of an anus have its glow. It was kept as immaculate as a small glistening pebble, and of that, too, did the E.O. approve—an incestuary must always be kept aware of the importance of his or her own excrement, a Diktat that was never quite explained to us although it did offer some hint of explanation merely by being stated. We knew that every rule, no matter how generally effective, was to be reversed in special cases. Sometimes I would even think that the E.O. judged our ~~potentiality~~ ^{ability} to improve by our sensitivity to just this nuance—were

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Not long after Adolf was born, Alois decided to leave the Pommer Inn. This move ^{amounted to} ~~added up to~~ amounted to his twelfth change of address in Braunau over fourteen years. But, Alois had good words for the Pommer: "It has elegance. I don't know that I would use such a word for anything else in this little city." He had a dozen such remarks to enliven a hundred situations of small talk. "Women are like geese," he liked to say. "You can recognize them from behind." Heavy tavern laughter would follow even if none of them could explain what was so particular about the rear end of a goose. Or, when speaking to fellow professionals: "To pick out a smuggler is easy. They are

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of them not even her own!—a woman always as polite to him in public as to an emperor, a woman who never complained about what she had and didn't have nor nagged him about finances, a woman who still had only one good dress, the one worn at her wedding party, and yet if he laid a finger on her, she would have bitten it off. He wondered if the difference in their age was what it was about. Better than marrying her, he should have put her in a nunnery. Yet his skin itched at the thought of how she would not let him near.

Drinking at the tavern, he would look to regain some pride. His dislike of the Church had by now become a forceful conversational instrument. He expressed a superior scorn. Yes, he could say a few things. He would occasionally page through a section of an anti-clerical volume he had found in an antique bookshop in Braunau; indeed, the store owner, Hans Lycidias Leipziger, would meet him on many an evening for beer, and while the bookseller kept himself at a scholarly level above more mundane Customs Officers' discussions by offering no more than a nod of his head from time to time, his wise presence, his shaven chin and shaven upper lip, his full mutton chops, sideburns, his peephole spectacles, his half-bald head of burgeoning white

beard sides
sideburns
mutton chops
sideburns

sideburns about
sideburns
mutton Chops

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

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

"Which Bishop?"

"The Bishop of Linz, don't you know?"

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

On the walk home, his mood was foul. He had ~~decided~~ ^{decided} come to the conclusion that the days of enjoying open tirades against the Church might be coming to a close. He was fifty-four years old, and for many years, had never worried

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Within the Company, we look upon ambition in men and women as a force ~~that is~~ often at our disposal. While we accept the likelihood that most human emotions originate through God's inclination, even as He gave necessary instincts to the animals, nonetheless, we also are ready to work most human feelings over to our purposes. Of no state is this more true than ambition. Plus, its weak sister, avarice. Avarice is simple to deal with—it is pure greed—but ambition is closely related to the Originating Vision. That is why the D.K., who so often puts serious restraints upon human behavior, is more ready to encourage ambition. (I would suppose His goal is for ^{all} ~~each~~ all ~~men and women~~ men and women every man and woman to possess the potential (on their own!) to fulfill some

Do devils
eschew
grammar?

Do devils
eschew
grammar?

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be saints. Of course, few humans ^{beings} have any desire to develop to that point. I will be blunt. The D.K. made miscalculations that were—no lesser judgment—grievous for Him. He overrated the potential for development of good feeling in the very human nature He had created. Whereas our E.O. ~~has~~ ^{has always had a keen comprehension of} how much perversity was to be found in ^{has always known} men and women.

Consider the case with Alois. Many people guard their ambition as the most secret part of their emotions (guarded even from their open thoughts).

For so soon as ambition begins to burn brightly in the mind, it is ready ^{if necessary} to ^{conviction} shed a good many long-held ^{varities} about the honor and high level of one's personal purity. ^{So soon as} ^{the extent of} it is then that ambition reveals its pride, and can soon prove ungovernable. Pride is a blind intensity.

No surprise then if Alois was not the only one in the Hitler family to suffer this disruption. Ambition is a true germ, ^{highly} ^{quite} infectious. If Klara now had a child who was actually giving a few ^{highly} ^{vital} signs of staying alive, this was due, as we have remarked, to her belief in the life of her milk. Her breasts were suffused with joy, the most generous joy she had ever known. So, Klara now wanted everything for Adi. And to such a degree, that she

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was even ready to contemplate forgiveness for her husband, a bit of
forgiveness in any case—enough maybe to allow him to cross the middle of
the bed.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

At that moment, the dog began to bark. Alois had bought a hound ^{for} ~~at a~~

*a few kroner
a few
a golden
kroner* ~~from a farmer he knew~~ ^{from a farmer he knew} Since they were living in a house, rather than at an inn, the purchase could be considered protection worth the cost.

But the dog, whom he named Luther, proved disappointing. While Luther worshipped Alois and quivered before his master at every shift of tone, he did

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not seem otherwise alert. Moreover, he had nervous habits. Even as Alois shouted at him to stop howling, poor Luther would urinate on the floor.

Afterward, Alois might have his regrets. The hound, after all, did adore him. First, however, he whipped the dog. Even as it tried to crawl away, the poor bottom of the beast became soaked in its own outpourings. All the while, it was yelping its full terror. The uproar woke the children. Alois, Jr. came out first, then Angela, Adi at the last, not yet two years old, but agile enough to get out of his low bed and totter into the midst of this. Klara leaped up to seize him. She was ready for the worst, she hardly knew what—that the child would step into the urine, that he would weep for her breast, that Alois might strike them both—she had seen the look in her husband's eye when Adi became too greedy on her tit. None of this happened, however. To the contrary, the child looked with solemn interest at the whimpering dog, then at the flailing hand of the father, and his blue eyes had a gleam she had seen before, a look of remarkable intensity for one so small. She had seen it on his face when suckling him. He would stare at her with an expression equal to ^{at rare times, the} ~~the same look~~ ^{one} on Alois' face, ^{the rare, tender} ~~the~~ ^{implicit} expression of a lover overwhelmed for a moment by the equality of flesh to

not clear
not clear
not clear

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Deep is the
 flesh, soul upon soul, ~~the very~~ communion of being able to speak without a
sound being uttered.
 word. At such instants, she felt as if this child was closer to her and knew
 more about her than anyone in her life.
else

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

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

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

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

~~among~~
 if Luther's sad front teeth.

among

*A gust
 of rain:
 the quiet rain,
 like me, have
 done to the house
 a lot of harm
 in the past
 like Vincent
 Ponce.*

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

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

*poor
cut this
to the
approx.*

*Get this
too explanatory*

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precisely those that could prove inimical to us down the road, is important. If we had religious Orders in the Company, I would ^{be} ~~serve as~~ a Jesuit. Indeed, I share a fundamental understanding with Jesuits as, for certain, does the E.O. I am always ready to acquire a sympathetic comprehension of all that in essence will prove to be our final adversary—I see it as my duty to be ready, indeed, to know more about godly sentiments than all but the most gifted of the angels.

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

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are here!
Mighty. Hardly so! We, after all, ~~are present~~. If the D.K. is the Creator, we
are ~~his~~ most profound critics. Often, ~~very often~~, we are ~~successful~~ ^{also His}
opponents.

So successful, indeed, that the E.O. wished to rearrange the balance. If
the Angels had succeeded in brainwashing all too many men and women to
believe that our Source was the Evil One, (until we are obliged to live without
any real opportunity to protest this canard), then our best recourse, as the
E.O. suggested, is to take pride in his initials. Or, try to. Which we do.
When I write E.O., or speak of the Evil One, it is with full knowledge of the
richness of the concept. He has given us so much, our subtle master who
other than in the use of his various names
disdains to capitalize any reference to his presence. "Leave all that ~~to those~~
excessive reverence to
God worshippers on their knees," he tells us. "We have work to do, and it is
tricky. I recommend that you keep thinking of Him as the Dummkopf. For,
indeed, given what He could have been, that is what He is. We are brighter
by far. And, of late, we are more creative. Remember: It is our universe to
gain. It is His to lose. Keep calling Him the Dummkopf."

But E.O.
is
capitalized

the
E.O.?
the
O. and
the
Source
and the
Monogton

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

So, for example, Adolf's bowel movements now began to dominate the tenor of life in the house on Linzerstrasse. Before the episode with Luther took place, Klara had certainly been alert, no matter how often Adi soiled his wrapping cloths, to keep the child ~~in clean state~~, indeed, the act as I have remarked, became a daily dalliance between mother and boy. She wiped him so carefully that his eyes gleamed with transmogrificational delight. He

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discovered that Heaven was in his anus right there with the cramps. All the while, his mother subtly, tenderly, delicately (and with unwitting demonic finesse) expunged the soil, wet or dry, from his rosebud, (which was, of course, Klara's secret name for her dear baby's incomparably dear little hole---die Rosenknospe.) She was so proud of its pink sheen that she could not even suppress her joy when her step-children were watching. Indeed, unlike other good mothers in Braunau, she barely bothered to teach Angela how to substitute for her. In truth, she preferred to be alone when taking personal care of Adolf. For then they would have the best of times. This was possible because she was superior to the unhappy elements of the procedure. His stool, (which could on occasion be as rank as any other diarrhetic disaster) did not occasion her disgust. ~~It might disturb her~~ ^{never disturbing} if the outpouring were sick in smell, or worse, gave a hint of that empty cavern which lurks in the odor of grave illness, but her breath was calm even when the stink proved rich enough to overpower anyone else. She looked for the stench to come through as strong. The stronger, the better. That was a sign of health. Such was her love for Adi.

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through the wiping. For such intelligence she offered full praise. His eyes would glow.

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

rebelled. Knowing how important he was to her, his response was keen ^{he} ~~he~~ ^{he felt the same kind of clarity with which} ~~he~~ ^{his} ~~was in much the same state of clarity with which~~ ^{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

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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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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~~ ^{start} 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

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demonic as a devil's phallus. (Be it said: we are not without our contributions to these copulatory arts!) Alois was certainly possessed by us. Never before had he given himself that much to such an osculatory exercise, and yet he had become so good at it, and so quickly, that no explanation is possible unless we were there as well. (We do have the power to give transient gifts to men and women ~~we~~ ^{even if} ~~we~~ ^{them} are not looking to turn ~~into~~ ^{into} clients)

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

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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.

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

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was
had
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 calm ^{and} that was guaranteed to provide no easy peace to the traveler before him. His weighty approach as much as said that any man able to manifest such calm must have set a seal on himself. That was the way. Impress the people you deal with. Let them know that you are not the man with whom to play games. He had studied many an upper-class

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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~~ ^{skt} the Customs' bridge, tears would come to his eyes. He would find himself thinking of Braunau, and of the two women buried in the region, dear carnal-spirited Franziska, yes, and for an instant he would also mourn Anna Glassl. No beauty, but she had known what to do under the sheets.

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young Alois chose to run after them, his eyes wild with mischief. Soon, Klara and Angela were crying out in terror ~~and in whole indignation~~ at the monstrosity of the act. Then, Adi joined in their chorus. He screamed with the rest even as he also galloped right after Alois, Jr., until his big brother, tiring of the sport, tore off an inch of the stuff, whirled around and planted it on the tip of Adolf's nose.

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

He would take, then, to the armchair, select one of his long-stem pipes, tamp his tobacco into the bowl with all the authority that could reside in the thumb of a man of official importance, ~~and then~~ proceed to overpower the fireplace

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

"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.

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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} ~~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

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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} of the house, and led him to the field behind the house where ^{side} 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.

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

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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.

*Thinks Adi
is making
a point
The other
side is
captain?*

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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

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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 ^{stet} 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

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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~~ ^{presence} 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

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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

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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~~ 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

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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

James
~~being I was~~
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!)

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

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Let me apologize for this change of venue. ^{3 are} A good reader ^{edit} 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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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

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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

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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. ^{and} ~~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

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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~~

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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

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^{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?

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Perform such labors day after day? Think of them as flying work-horses ~~and~~
~~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} rather than endangering his long-worked heart by looking to plow a field, I

had, all the same, an uneasy suspicion. Alois was too sincere in his enthusiasm. He was not sufficiently concerned with profit. 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

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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 ^{people} ~~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

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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~~ ^{people} ~~as people~~, but it was true for the best of them, those who were like Franz Josef. They were good ~~humans~~ ^{people}, 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

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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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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 ^{stating in perfectly good German)} ~~stating~~ that he did not like the father, but was much taken with the son.

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"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~~ ⁵³ 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

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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 ^{came to} ~~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

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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.

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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} ~~salable~~ ^{marketable}. (His drinking companions of last night (who in memory now smelled as dank as the

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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.

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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. *sudden and*
Alois was ~~sick~~ There had been a 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,

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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

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upon a time, he might have been a peasant. Now, he could just as well call himself one more ^{genuine} ~~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

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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 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

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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

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"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

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"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

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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~~ 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.

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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 ^{for} with their presence.

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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 ~~the~~ 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

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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. ^{does} It concerns ^{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~~.
stink fest.
stink on occasion.

Enough! It is not a good ~~a~~ 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 ^{humans} in whom we

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had invested, had to be exceptionally fastidious in their personal habits, or they would ~~give off~~ 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 I have served the E.O. for many an age, ^{but} my 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 ^{as important as} of the stature of 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.} 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

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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 ^{knowledge} ~~a species~~ Knowledge of cognition is, of necessity, also unavailable to us. In these matters, there are only questions; ~~there are no answers.~~ ^{For example, the}

I cannot even speak with authority on simple matters, ^{longer to} ~~on this much~~ ^{this one} (smaller matter ~~index~~ ^{might}) of odor. Yet, if I am to offer my conjecture as to what ^{time consumed by} could have taken place ~~some time~~ during the interminable ~~cons~~ 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 cons 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

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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

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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

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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~~ ⁵¹ 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

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our share of the human species move 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.~~
live

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, *this* ~~that~~ 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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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 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. It is 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

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have been most attached to the ^{power to influence} ~~power~~ (that dreams could bring to Him over ~~whom~~ ^{whom} those late primates). He was then nurturing and developing into humans. 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 ^{much} ~~a 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~~ ³ 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

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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~~ of their

people

grand

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what might be the in

(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

being human. 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

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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.

~~time-consuming~~
So, the act of creating a whole dream for a child appeared, on the face
of it, to ~~promise the loss of time and effort to~~ ~~deduct 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

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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 to be free of the ~~presence~~ of the Cudgels. You can probably ^{gain} ~~expect~~ an open operation." ^{no interference 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

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~~Zachary?~~
~~Rauberer~~—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 virtuositities. I

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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~~ 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

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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 Rauberer. # 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.

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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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give in
give in
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. *to be*

His desire was already fulfilled. Adi was ~~so~~ excited, *to be* 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

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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 ~~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

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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 sting 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.

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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

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do it carefully, so carefully, not to stir up too much, and he did it in the evening, only in the evening ^{the} 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.

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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 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

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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~~ ^{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 ^{stuck} ~~the degree~~ of his ignorance of the real stuff if he was ^{so open to} ~~so~~ ^{costly} ~~ambush~~ in the course of working with a hive.

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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 ^{stet} ~~even~~ felt trapped. To the ~~full~~ degree that he had spoken so much to Klara on the

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

Did he wish her to ever ^{get her} ~~become 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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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 ^{higher} ~~upper~~ 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

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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 ^{how} ~~developed the ability~~ ^{known} 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

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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} ~~It felt~~ ^{ridiculous} to him, ^{yet} 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.)

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Which, I can suggest, is one of the several reasons I do not like him. For all his gifts, real and counterfeit, he has never accomplished as much for us as I had anticipated. For a time I had expected he would become one of my prize clients. He certainly did not have to end as a bizarre, impossible, smelly hermit with an immense reputation for dealing with hordes of bees in a pretty little corner of Austria, a country filled already with its pretty little corners. I had lost valuable standing ^{with} ~~vis-a-vis~~ the Maestro by remarking ~~on~~ ~~the occasion~~, decades ago, that I saw extraordinary promise in this young half-Polish, half-Jewish Magnus ^{Of course, he was at that time} a real pagan with the ladies ~~in his~~ ~~early days~~, yes, ~~this~~ client had settled for much too little as far as I was concerned.

Once they had taken their tea, Der Alte in little sips, and Alois in three scalding gulps which enabled his host to pour him another cup almost instantly (as a most subtle form of reproof) they began at last to talk about the reason for the visit.

Alois, used to dominating the onset of a conversation with any man or woman newly met, had developed an unhappy habit out of this very confidence. He would, by now, even take the first step in a verbal encounter

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"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

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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 ~~his~~ ^{your} 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."

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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 ^{glor} redolence of the flower's ^{I have known} cavern, ^{she} 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

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

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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 the time}

that one ~~honey-bee~~ ^{larva} needs for its growth.

"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.

Is this singular or plural?

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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."

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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."

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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~~ ^{stet} obligation to correct them! Any future episode between the old man and the ~~future must~~

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boy would not be to the Maestro's ~~inclination~~^{inclination}. 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."

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"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.

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Do pp 347-351 first
in 3. check +
return.

3-47.

then pp ~~331~~ 331 to 346 in double space
2.

There is no question that I will ^{get delineate} ~~explore~~ in some detail the ~~causes~~ determining effect we were to have on the coronation of Tzar Nicholas the second, but I would prefer at this point to return to the small events, incidents and minor adventures of the latter family in St. Petersburg before embarking on any attempt to outline the more exceptional activities we undertook in ^{St. Petersburg and} ~~St. Petersburg~~ during the coronation (and, most certainly, its immediate aftermath) in May of 1896. Those ~~about~~ ^{eight} months from my departure in the ~~available~~ ⁽¹⁹¹⁵⁾ October until my return to Austria in June of 1896 will yet be, of ~~interest~~, considerably interesting or so, I would expect, but we have followed ~~the~~ ^{so closely} the activities involved in ~~apart~~ ^{apart} a full time with so much close attention that I do not feel it is proper to step away at this point.

I can point, however, to one difficulty. My knowledge of the various experiences

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of Alan Klara and the children (348) were communicated to me, as I have already indicated, through intermediaries - which is to say, the agents I kept behind. (Naturally, given the import of the new activities in Russia, I had to be my best assistant with me.) That presents a difficulty, because deviance like lesser humans in many a regard, particularly in their insensitivity (or outright torpor in the worst cases) at being able to detect the most significant details.

I can have a reasonable notion of what is transpiring among my clients and their near associates, even if I am restricted to ^{the} reports of mediocre agents, but the work, that is, the time ~~consumed~~ consumed, of preparing the next stop often suffers. I could only allocate a fraction of the available energies to keeping up with Alan and Company, and so no account of these meetings from October '95 to June '96 are of necessity,

sketches. All that saves the (349)
 occasion of this narrative is that
 with a few notable and determining
 events in little Adolf Hitler's development
 (which events I most certainly did
 pursue) ~~with the~~ nothing else of great
 moment did occur until the return
 of Alois Hitler, junior, in June 1894
 where time I was there as well.

So, the narrative will not suffer
 unduly. Obviously agents like mediocre
 human beings are humdrum in their
 powers of summary but not wholly
 incapable, and I do warrant that
 I had traversed the least ~~of~~ unpromising
 to raise the level of their performance.
 I am not quite prepared to enter the
 difficulties of explaining how systems
 of recruitment work for that lead
 almost immediately into the far
 more sacrosanct question of how
 devils are created in the first
 place, whether ^{as carefully sought after} ~~as effort~~ of the
 inferior human population ^{contracted for by} ~~most~~ ^{exceptional} selection of
 the human stock available by the
 U.S. O. himself or, ^{more} usually the

case ^{came to us as} among the lower variations (350)
 of demon, ^{came to us as a species of} rejected ^{there was a} ^{individuals} who were
 so disheartened ^{in various} or outraged by the ~~the~~
~~purpose of reincarnation~~ a shocking
 demotion of their position for a
 reincarnation that they ^{might} ~~could~~ find
 deem worthy of their merits that they
 opted out, simply as that they declared
 their desire to be liberated from the
 human fold in order to exercise another
 power. (How this arrangement was
 ever negotiated by the D.K. and the
 O.P. is altogether beyond my knowledge.
 I cannot declare when or where it
 happened, but I am familiar with
 the results. The D.K. was apparently
 willing to ~~forfeit~~ ^{lose} a fraction
 of his stock of future human beings
 in order to obtain less disruptive
 continuations in his scheme of
 reincarnation, and our O.P., looking
 to fight his way up ^{into} the level of
 equality with the D.K., had to be
 ready to accept this exodus of
 human possibility. Over the centuries,

over - it well may be - the millions (357)
we have been obliged to use a very large
part of our resources in slaughtering
and training the low-grade material
we receive. It is analogous in difficulty
to developing a symphony orchestra
out of court-martialed soldiers from
the Foreign Legion. I will not pursue
these difficulties any further at this
point, I will only say that the agents
I had left in the field, the ones so
to speak of my trained company did
their best to report on Alois' ongoing
efforts at bee-keeping, but they did
not always have a close enough
sense of his difficulties to
satisfy my understanding.

Forewarned, forewarned, I will now
present to the reader my understanding
of what went on with the Hutter and
their bees from the end of 1995 until
the middle of the next year.

not fond of common paper. That substance is derived, after all, from trees
(and they happen to be God's most loyal, faithful, and trusted servants.)

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

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

*phenomenon
ungrammatical
and not needed.*

to God nor to the E.O. They are always seeking to be free, to be the creature of their own destiny. Their greatest desire is to become what they wish to be by the light of their desires. In the actual event, as matters proceed today, we devils try to guide those men and women we have attracted (we call them clients), the Cudgels contest us, and the particular individual usually does his or her best to fight Us off, both of Us, God and Devil alike. Humans have become so vain (through technology, I suspect) that quite a number now wish to be wholly separated from both of us.

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

*This is his/her
point: Fall
man does
create his
own destiny.*

human has, at best, powers of insight and memory that usually can function in one or another restricted state. My ^{idea to move} ~~sense~~ of recollection ^{is} ~~is~~ free, however, of most distortions. Existing within a set of absolute commands, there is no need for me to develop the sort of vigorous human ego that must be ready—sometimes at all costs—to transgress divine or social laws because the person is determined to carry off a major endeavor. Such vanity in union with a passion for independence is guaranteed to warp their memory. The larger the ego, the more must a memory only retain those recollections which are of immediate use, no matter how they are misremembered or wholly untrue. Nonetheless, those are the warpings they can afford.

In contrast to such men and women, I have a more simple existence. For the most part, I look to make my clients successful. In our Company, that is just about certain to produce reliable results for oneself. Sooner or later, you are promoted. Over many periods, I have had clients whom I was able to develop to the point where they could serve directly in one or another of The Maestro's larger projects. The majority of humans, however, caught in the push-and-pull, the back and forth between their guardian angel and or some directing devil like myself, end by producing little that is useful to either

Kingdom. On the other hand, I can recall a few unhappy situations when I lost a catch at the last moment. The guardian angel who was my opposite number in the particular contest retained the spoils.

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

using me for some strong if imperceptible purpose or marinating me to enlarge my experience, I did, on occasion, take hope that he had not lost interest. He even remarked once that I might seek high rank again, a post comparable to some of the epic encounters of our Company during the first three centuries of the Church in Rome. All of that might be there for me once more, provided I would pay unremitting attention to my present wretches, thugs, and drunks. I learned then that the E.O. had selected me to oversee the work of a number of other agents who were keeping watch on a young client whose potentialities might yet prove to be immense. Insignificant at present was this person and so was his family, but there were ancestral fault-lines full of the intoxicating stink of our old friend, blood-scandal. The boy in question, who by 1908 was a jobless young man in Vienna, happened to be stricken with timidity, had quit school too early, was an avaricious reader who remained hopelessly superior to what he read (particularly when he could not understand it), and was, in addition, lazy, prone to temper tantrums, and possessed of an ego ^{like} ~~comparable to the size of~~ a swollen limb. All the same, he was desperately afraid of virtually all meetings with other humans^{beings -}.
Yes, this boy was an unmitigated mess.

Norman:
human is an
adjective.

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

ferse is better

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

certainty that he was committed altogether to what he said. Sometimes I felt that ^{this irony} might come from his own uncertainty, but this was ^a too perilous a notion, to entertain for more than a moment. The E.O. would put up with our critical thoughts or even a passive outburst, but we knew better than to ~~let it~~ persist.

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

I was depressed. The new project was at present a backwater. I knew about such twisted clients, their ^{late} ~~future~~ hopeless unless an historic ^{opportunity} ~~era~~ ^{one} ~~developed~~ that could prove ^d ~~could~~ uniquely favorable to the distortions present in that person. At this point, there seemed no sign of such incomparably special circumstances. (The First World War and the disasters that fell upon Germany had not yet occurred.) My role, as I saw it, would seat me ~~as~~ ^{jockey} on a horse running against unbelievably long odds. I could foresee further demotions for myself.

*jockey in
unghair*

All this is not of much interest now. We know, after all, what happened to the horse. And I was the one who rode him (with occasional but crucial help from the Maestro). I rode with Adolf all the way up to glory (and down again—which is half the matter, the other half being why I now propose to tell the tale). I know so much. This knowledge seems to exist as a separate force within me, separate and independent of Our Maestro, a force, indeed, so intense that I feel ready to break the first of the rules of our fold, which is that we never explain what we know to the uninitiated. Nor is it simple to do so. If, for example, I have told how Adolf was conceived on that night, in those extraordinarily special circumstances when I could speak of myself as being present as a catalyst, a Gabriel come from our side to stand in for the Evil One, it is true; yet it is, by ordinary measure, not true.

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

The explanation—provided one is ready to follow!—is considerably less difficult than, let us say, Einstein's Special Theory of Relativity. Spirits exist in ~~a~~ relation to Time that is not comparable to any human perception of that same mysterious word. Ingesting the experiences of demons enables higher ^{from our time to human time} devils to vault back and forth! We pass through periods of Time that humans ^{begin} can only recognize in linear fashion as chronology. But, I, as a devil, did not have to be present on the night Adolf was conceived. That was not necessary in order for me to ^{ingest} ~~bring into myself~~ later the exact experience of what happened. Another devil (of lower rank) had been present in Alois' bed ^{on} ~~for~~ that occasion. By order of the E.O., he (or it, if you prefer) had entered the act. I must say that this is always an option for any of our cohort. We can enter into any and all cohabitation. On rare occasions, and this was one of them, the demon can call for the presence of the E.O. So can the angels look to their Master. Since the resources of God and the Devil are not—believe it if you will!—infinite, such insertion must not be merely desirable or entertaining, but purposeful. The devil who had actually been present that night transmitted the experience to me years later with a completeness of odor and carnal detail that can be called absolute. It is fair to say that indeed it

how when to
where?

happened to me, and if he was the first Gabriel on the occasion when Adolf was conceived, I was very much a second Gabriel who subsumed him.

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

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

attempt. Ditto for what I can relate about Klara, Fanni, Anna Glassl, Alois, Sr., Johann Nepomuk, Johanna, and all the others.

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

I have to recognize I may be offering much too much for so early a moment in our biographical endeavor. It will take all of a book that I may never be able to finish for you, dear reader, who is not at all in my likeness, and not my brother, to begin to absorb the confession just offered. If you are

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Given the dominance of the large new technological world, one of our ongoing missions is to convince the majority of world citizens that there is no such entity as the Devil. And, for that matter, not a hell of a lot of ^{evidence} existence [?] for God. Certainly, there is very little on the modern intellectual horizon that sees anything like a war between two opposed spirit orders. Rather, the New Technological World requires the universe to be subject to reason, nothing else. God, alone, as a solitary mystery, may prove acceptable here and there, and is even subject to adoration by full-service idiots who see Him as all-good, all-powerful, all One. Never posit a Devil. There can be but one

40% of American
believe in the devil
according to poll.

mystery, not two! (Indeed, at the insistence of the E.O. we do not capitalize our endeavors, only His.)

There need be no surprise, then, that the general understanding of Adolf Hitler's personality is dim. He is, *being* after all, a third mystery, the most mysterious human of the century, a man, when all is said, who was all-too-human, if, it will be agreed, the average man or woman does possess large funds of *in humanity* the inhuman. Nonetheless, over the years, I grew able to comprehend his psyche better than my own. How can I not take pride in this? As a specimen *1 Ty* of the human, he was close to unmeasurable, and developed without question into the wild beast of the century, this all-too-modest-looking client *2 K+* whom in the beginning I belittled as "little Adolf," yes, I knew him when we still referred to the young man who grew out of the boy as "little Adolf with the big ideas."

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

It is probably true that she was ready to die if he did not live. Devils are sound at anticipating motive (the more sordid, the better—Analixy Rex!), but our predictive attempts fade at the borders of mortality. Man proposes, the Devil imposes, and the Lord disposes, is not accurate for all cases, but we are obliged to recognize that God has the final power to decide ~~on~~ the timing of the death of ^{every human} ~~every human~~ ^{being}. Take the extreme example of an airplane that has just gone down. Let us say we have ^{caused} brought it ~~into~~ sufficient malfunction (a most difficult process to accomplish.) Nonetheless, we do not have the power to destroy everyone on board. It is our Adversary (God) who determines the result. In most such cases, He will have to accept what we have succeeded in bringing off in secret or against His wishes. It is too costly for God to countermand us. Do not assume that it demands no exceptional effort for Him to save a few ^{people} ~~humans~~ trapped on that lip of extinction—airplane crashes involve so many factors! Indeed, He could not even save His Son, (as we are never tired of reminding our clients!) but there are occasions when a death we looked to create does not ensue. From time to time, even in extreme difficulties, God still disposes.

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

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

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

her. As she saw it, that rebuke could only confirm the wretched evil of her condition. So she looked to go back to her feelings on the day she first met Alois during his visit in Spital. She was sixteen then and had never seen a man who disturbed her so directly, so physically—she fell back a full step on their meeting at the door. She might as well have received a blow to the stomach.

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

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

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

If the E.O. and the D.K. generally pay little attention Themselves to most men and women—our warring interests usually end as a stalemate in the average person—it is no small matter for us to select a child early, because a large investment is possible before the Lord (whom, to remind you, we call the D.K.) or His Cudgels becomes aware of our infiltration. Early choice is a

high-stakes gamble but the E.O. made such a decision by a most reliable rule of thumb. An incestuous procreation followed by swarms of mother-love has to offer fertile possibilities. When here, as we know, the event was fortified by the presence of the E.O. at the conception, there was every reason to expect that the child would offer ^{any} extraordinary, ~~unbelievable~~ possibilities. If it lived. We lose so many. All too often, the D.K. spots them and, heartlessly—I will say this about Him!—yes, the D.K. heartlessly removes them, no matter the cost to Himself. The cost to Himself! A curious calculation is often present. The D.K. is not insensitive to the hopes of those who surround the child. The early death of an exceptional child can demoralize whole families most dreadfully. Even when the D.K. knows, therefore, that a given individual was subsumed by us, He hesitates. He does not like collateral damage. Besides, He can always steal the boy or girl back from us.

So the D.K. is respectful of mother-love that is all-embracing. It can come as no surprise then that many artists, gargoyles, ogres, geniuses, killers, and an occasional savior live to maturity because God chose not to dispose of them. The first element of mutual recognition in the struggle between the

attitude was more tolerant in cases of first-degree incest. For such situations, the closer the mother to the child, why, the better for us. (A monster can be even more effective when it also has stores of love with which to charm people.)

Certain advantages can also be obtained by us through the excretory dramas. While a dirty butt on a baby, if found daily, always sends us a signal—the mother is, yes, a potential client for us—the opposite can also be useful. Klara is an example. If she always kept a clean house, her rooms at the Pommer Inn were now as spotless as any home with several fine servants. The furnishings gleamed. So, too, did Adi's pip-squeak of an anus have its glow. It was kept as immaculate as a small glistening pebble, and of that, too, did the E.O. approve—an incestuary must always be kept aware of the importance of his or her own excrement, a Diktat that was never quite explained to us although it did offer some hint of explanation merely by being stated. We knew that every rule, no matter how generally effective, was to be reversed in special cases. Sometimes I would even think that the E.O. judged our ^{ability} ~~potentiality~~ to improve by our sensitivity to just this nuance—were

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Not long after Adolf was born, Alois decided to leave the Pommer Inn. This move ^{amounted to} ~~added up to~~ his twelfth change of address in Braunau over fourteen years. But, Alois had good words for the Pommer: "It has elegance. I don't know that I would use such a word for anything else in this little city." He had a dozen such remarks to enliven a hundred situations of small talk. "Women are like geese," he liked to say. "You can recognize them from behind." Heavy tavern laughter would follow even if none of them could explain what was so particular about the rear end of a goose. Or, when speaking to fellow professionals: "To pick out a smuggler is easy. They are

of them not even her own!—a woman always as polite to him in public as to an emperor, a woman who never complained about what she had and didn't have nor nagged him about finances, a woman who still had only one good dress, the one worn at her wedding party, and yet if he laid a finger on her, she would have bitten it off. He wondered if the difference in their age was what it was about. Better than marrying her, he should have put her in a nunnery. Yet his skin itched at the thought of how she would not let him near.

Drinking at the tavern, he would look to regain some pride. His dislike of the Church had by now become a forceful conversational instrument. He expressed a superior scorn. Yes, he could say a few things. He would occasionally page through a section of an anti-clerical volume he had found in an antique bookshop in Braunau; indeed, the store owner, Hans Lycidias Leipziger, would meet him on many an evening for beer, and while the bookseller kept himself at a scholarly level above more mundane Customs Officers' discussions by offering no more than a nod of his head from time to time, his wise presence, his shaven chin and shaven upper lip, his full

*Braunau sides,
of the hair!
was ground-
on mother's chops*

sideburns, his peephole spectacles, his half-bald head of burgeoning white

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

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

"Which Bishop?"

"The Bishop of Linz, don't you know?"

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

On the walk home, his mood was foul. He had ^{decided} ~~come to the conclusion~~ that the days of enjoying open tirades against the Church might be coming to a close. He was fifty-four years old, and for many years, had never worried

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Within the Company, we look upon ambition in men and women as a force ~~that is~~ often at our disposal. While we accept the likelihood that most human emotions originate through God's inclination, even as He gave necessary instincts to the animals, nonetheless, we ^{also} are ready to work most human feelings over to our purposes. Of no state is this more true than ambition. Plus, its weak sister, avarice. Avarice is simple to deal with—it is pure greed—but ambition is closely related to the Originating Vision. That is why the D.K., who so often puts serious restraints upon human behavior, is more ready to encourage ambition. (I would suppose His goal is for ^{all} ~~each~~ and every man and woman to possess the potential (on their own!) to fulfill some

Do devils
as cheap
grumblers?

beings
~~being~~

be saints. Of course, few humans ~~have~~ any desire to develop to that point. I will be blunt. The D.K. made miscalculations that were—no lesser judgment—grievous for Him. He overrated the potential for development of good feeling in the very human nature He had created. Whereas our E.O. ~~has~~ *has always* ~~always had a keen comprehension~~ *→ Anwar* of how much perversity was to be found in men and women.

not clear

Consider the case with Alois. Many people guard their ambition as the most secret part of their emotions (guarded even from their open thoughts). For so soon as ambition begins to burn brightly in the mind, it is ready to shred a good many long-held vanities about the honor and high level of one's personal purity. It is then that ambition reveals its pride, and can soon prove ungovernable. Pride is a blind intensity.

No surprise then if Alois was not the only one in the Hitler family to suffer this disruption. Ambition is a true germ, ~~quite~~ *very* infectious. If Klara now had a child who was actually giving a few ~~vital~~ signs of staying alive, this was due, as we have remarked, to her belief in the life of her milk. Her breasts were suffused with joy, the most generous joy she had ever known. So, Klara now wanted everything for Adi. And to such a degree, that she

was even ready to contemplate forgiveness^{for} ~~for her husband~~, a ^{little} bit of forgiveness in any case—~~enough~~ maybe to allow him to cross the middle of the bed.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

At that moment, the dog began to bark. Alois had bought a hound ^{for} ~~at a~~

a few Kronen ^{a few kronen} ~~low price~~ from a farmer he knew. Since they were living in a house, rather than at an inn, the purchase could be considered protection worth the cost.

But the dog, whom he named Luther, proved disappointing. While Luther worshipped Alois and quivered before his master at every shift of tone, he did

not seem otherwise alert. Moreover, he had nervous habits. Even as Alois shouted at him to stop howling, poor Luther would urinate on the floor.

Afterward, Alois might have his regrets. The hound, after all, did adore him. First, however, he whipped the dog. Even as it tried to crawl away, the poor bottom of the beast became soaked in its own outpourings. All the while, it was yelping its full terror. The uproar woke the children. Alois, Jr. came out first, then Angela, Adi at the last, not yet two years old, but agile enough to get out of his low bed and totter into the midst of this. Klara leaped up to seize him. She was ready for the worst, she hardly knew what—that the child would step into the urine, that he would weep for her breast, that Alois might strike them both—she had seen the look in her husband's eye when Adi became too greedy on her tit. None of this happened, however. To the contrary, the child looked with solemn interest at the whimpering dog, then at the flailing hand of the father, and his blue eyes had a gleam she had seen before, a look of remarkable intensity for one so small. She had seen it on his face when suckling him. He would stare at her with an expression equal to the ^{one} ~~same look~~ on Alois' face, the rare tender expression of a lover overwhelmed for a moment by the equality of flesh to

not
clear

flesh, soul upon soul, the very communion of being able to speak without a word. At such instants, she felt as if this child was closer to her and knew more about her than anyone in her life.

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

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

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

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

Norman:
too good to give
like me I have
dolls that come
to life in horror
film & too much
like Vincent
Price.

-7-

*Norman
cut this
It's too
app. in it.*

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

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

precisely those that could prove inimical to us down the road, is important. If we had religious Orders in the Company, I would ^L~~serve~~ as a Jesuit. Indeed, I share a fundamental understanding with Jesuits as, for certain, does the E.O. I am always ready to acquire a sympathetic comprehension of all that in essence will prove to be our final adversary—I see it as my duty to be ready, indeed, to know more about godly sentiments than all but the most gifted of the angels.

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

Mighty. Hardly so! We, ^{are} after all, ^{here!} ~~are present~~. If the D.K. is the Creator, we are ^{to} ~~his~~ most profound critics. ^{of his creation} Often, very often, we are successful opponents.

So successful, indeed, that the E.O. wished to rearrange the balance. If the Angels had succeeded in brainwashing all too many men and women to believe that our Source was the Evil One, (until we are obliged to live without any real opportunity to protest this canard), then our best recourse, as the E.O. suggested, is to take pride in his initials. Or, try to. Which we do. When I write E.O., or speak of the Evil One, it is with full knowledge of the richness of the concept. He has given us so much, our subtle master who ^{But G.O. is capitalized.} disdains to capitalize any reference to his presence. "Leave all that to those God worshippers on their knees," he tells us. "We have work to do, and it is tricky. I recommend that you keep thinking of Him as the Dummkopf. For, indeed, given what He could have been, that is what He is. We are brighter by far. And, of late, we are more creative. Remember: It is our universe to gain. It is His to lose. Keep calling Him the Dummkopf."

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

So, for example, Adolf's bowel movements now began to dominate the tenor of life in the house on Linzerstrasse. Before the episode with Luther took place, Klara had certainly been alert, no matter how often Adi soiled his wrapping cloths, to keep the child in clean state, indeed, the act as I have remarked, became a daily dalliance between mother and boy. She wiped him so carefully that his eyes gleamed with transmogrificational delight. He

discovered that Heaven was in his anus right there with the cramps. All the while, his mother subtly, tenderly, delicately (and with unwitting demonic finesse) expunged the soil, wet or dry, from his rosebud, (which was, of course, Klara's secret name for her dear baby's incomparably dear little hole—die Rosenknospe.) She was so proud of its pink sheen that she could not even suppress her joy when her step-children were watching. Indeed, unlike other good mothers in Braunau, she barely bothered to teach Angela how to substitute for her. In truth, she preferred to be alone when taking personal care of Adolf. For then they would have the best of times. This was possible because she was superior to the unhappy elements of the procedure. His stool, (which could on occasion be as rank as any other diarrhetic disaster) did not ^{even} occasion her disgust. It might disturb her if the outpouring were sick in smell, or worse, gave a hint of that empty cavern which lurks in the odor of grave illness, but her breath was calm even when the stink proved rich enough to overpower anyone else. She looked for the stench to come through as strong. The stronger, the better. That was a sign of health. Such was her love for Adi.

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~~ ~~was in much the same state of clarity with which~~ ~~he had watched Alois beat Luther.~~ ^{most scary time as I keep as clear} 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

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.

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~~ ^{not decided to} have another child. If this came in part from the old fear, even now, that Adolf might not live ~~into adolescence,~~ she also feared that she would never love him as much again, no, not as ^{she} once ~~she~~ had, and so maybe there should be another child. Besides, she was entering a new time in her marriage. She looked forward to Alois approaching their bed when he was in a certain mood. For on such evenings—after all these years!—desire came alive again and was there!—there, down in the marrow, deep.

We may remember that the last time we encountered Alois, he had been burying his nose and lips in Klara's vulva, his tongue as long and

demonic as a devil's phallus. (Be it said: we are not without our contributions to these copulatory arts!) Alois was certainly possessed by us. Never before had he given himself that much to such an osculatory exercise, and yet he had become so good at it, and so quickly, that no explanation is possible unless we were there as well. (We do have the power to give transient gifts to men and women, ^{and if} we are not looking to turn into clients.)

In the morning, Alois could not believe he had done all that. To so ~~demean~~ ^{leave} 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.)

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.

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

Passau ^{was} ~~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 ^{considered} ~~thought~~ his uniformed presence ~~to be~~ a full warning to malefactors, a conclusion he fortified for himself before every mirror ~~available~~, he also knew that this was due to the rigor of the professional manner he had developed over many years. On duty, he could present a personality of the heaviest official ^{one} ~~calm~~ [,] and that was guaranteed to provide no easy peace to the traveler before him. His weighty approach as much as said that any man able to manifest such calm must have set a seal on himself. That was the way. Impress the people you deal with. Let them know that you are not the man with whom to play games. He had studied many an upper-class

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

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

young Alois chose to run after them, his eyes wild with mischief. Soon, Klara and Angela were crying out in terror and in ^{not} whole indignation at the monstrosity of the act. Then, Adi joined in their chorus. He screamed with the rest even as he also galloped right after Alois, Jr., until his big brother, tiring of the sport, tore off an inch of the stuff, whirled around and planted it on the tip of Adolf's nose.

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

He would take, then, to the armchair, select one of his long-stem pipes, tamp his tobacco into the bowl with all the authority that could reside in the thumb of a man of official importance, ^{and} proceed to overpower the fireplace

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

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

"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 ~~Ad~~ the weight of his strong voice was not often present now to quiver through the boy's body, no, not often. And the house was empty during the day. Angela and [?] Junior were away at school. Adi would be alone with his mother and the infant, but Klara still did not have much time for him. And at night, he no longer could be certain where he would sleep. Often, Alois, Jr., would take over his cot, and Adi would have to move to Angela's bed. She would tickle his body everywhere. Sometimes she would tell him that he did not smell good. "So, Adi, your breath is

rotten," she would say. Often, he would put a blanket on the floor to escape her.

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

One afternoon, after school and much at Klara's bidding, Alois, Jr. pulled Adolf out ^{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.

Soon enough, he ~~did~~ ^{came} come up with a more interesting game. War should be trickery. War was not two armies running at each other all the time—war was maneuver! He did not know the word as yet, but he had certainly arrived at the concept. (And without our assistance.)

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

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

More improvements were soon on the way. He could see that his innovations dampened the fire of the occasion. When the flank that had four boys came over the hill to meet four defenders, the encounter became no

more than a flat-out surrender. So, tagging, to his dislike, had to be reinstated. This brought on a new debate, for he insisted that the captain on each side (he had become, as foreseen, the German Captain—and Klaus was his lieutenant), must not be captured. The leader must not even be touched. With preternatural eloquence, he made his major point. “The highest officer must always be respected.”

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

*The side
in question?*

we seek to invest our powers in a client, the Cudgels appear in direct competition. Sole possession rarely occurs. Ploys and gambits proceed on their separate and conflicting course for years. Rarely do our demons or the angels of the Dummkopf realize a significant victory. Indeed, after a series of such battles, the odd soul actually captured in toto by us or by the Cudgels bears more resemblance to a wretch than to a prize. (Insane people are often the victims of such sustained contests.)

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

Vision of the D.K. We work for the eventual project—yet for me to name!—the superior and more advanced vision of the Evil One.)

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

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

only a budgetary blemish upon our individual record, but a general loss for the project. Prevail!, the E.O. is always reminding us. So we try to choose our targets with more acumen than the Cudgels.

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

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

Fortunately for us, Jesus proved to be a typical Son. (The private record we are furnished by the E.O. is that He was much at odds with His

Father.) Jehovah, indeed, was often incensed by the rebelliousness of this good son. But let me keep to the point. The prevailing fact of our existence as devils and demons is that we are obliged to live within a limited budget. You may believe that our projects are chosen, therefore, with discretion.

For example, we are usually active (as previously stated) during copulations likely to satisfy the needs of the near future—that is, the nearest oncoming half-century. Yet, the E.O. does not ask us to show much interest in the early development of the children who ^{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 ~~became~~^{became} easier in most cases, to ✓
decide. But it is still not promising. The E.O. looks upon the next five or six years as—indeed, he terms it so—the Age of Clods. “They are now encountering the world in its ~~most~~^{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

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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.

Yanner Rather, ^{be sure of us} ~~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 ^{absolutely} impecably 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."

Of course, the oncoming retirement would not come without some serious ^{deeds in} ~~inroads on~~ a most impressive edifice. I speak of Alois' ego. It was its own kind of monument, impressive, yes, when we consider the meager materials out of which he had been able to construct it. Through his adult years, having managed to keep an unspoken sense of himself as a man destined eventually for serious achievement, he was certainly not lacking in a sense of reality as well, and so 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 ^{fr. fastidious} might fail in any way to fulfill the 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. ~~✱~~ Anna Glassl had succeeded in recovering, through law, half of her large dowry in lieu of their separation; still, she had been nicely well-to-do, and Franzceska, while hardly up to that measure, was nonetheless the child of a prosperous farmer. Even old Poelzl, Klara's father, had come up with some florin.

On the other hand, Alois understood money only too well. He knew not all coin was equal. Deep in one's conscience, one had to pay a tithe to money that was not earned properly. 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 ⁱⁿ ~~in the way~~ the first three of Klara's babies had gone back to wherever they came from.

lecturer ~~why 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 ~~out~~ 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 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 ^{and he} engage in such efforts rather than ^{span} endangering his ^{old} 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

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.

They discover, for example, that a puppy or kitten is a warm cuddly bit of existence much like themselves and so can serve as the gateway to larger suppositions. For Alois, the foragers out in search of the flowers were creatures he could understand.

On any warm day, bees scouting for new fields of flowers knew the heat of the sun and the intimate yearning that only the sun could arouse in flower petals. Alois was not about to throw open any massive bolted door to the mystical side of himself—he was like most ^{people} ~~humans~~ 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

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 ~~humans~~^{people}, 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} 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

Could these large epiphanies be the product of full retirement?

The answer was obvious: Alois ~~did not seem~~^{wasn't} 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 ^cwould 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.

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 in his own} stating that he did not like the father, but was much taken with the son.

"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 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 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 ^{to see it} visited 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 only ^{heard} ~~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, itself, 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.

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.

Alois was sick. There had been a 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,

upon a time, he might have been a peasant. Now, he could just as well call himself one more ^{Gugener} ~~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.

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 depending on ^{also this one} the mood of ~~their spirits~~—which varied. On most days, one or the other was not up to 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 ~~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

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

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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 ^{stink} ~~smell~~ ^{offensive}.

Enough! It is not a good a 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 ^{human} ~~humans~~ in whom we

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

How this condition began, I do not know. If I have served the E.O. for many an age, ^{but} my recollection of earlier eras is no more grounded in the far past than is a human's sense of previous incarnations. ^{being} 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 between God and an angel ^{as depicted as} of the stature of Lucifer—that is entirely beyond my province. Perhaps the E.O. was there from the onset. Perhaps, he only appeared later. ^{We don't} ~~It is not for us to know~~. 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 a ^{knowledge of} species 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 we see the} on this much smaller matter, ~~indeed~~ of odor. Yet, if I am to offer my conjecture as to what could have taken place 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

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 ⁱⁿ with 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, 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

had made successful investment. I think it is true that we look upon most of our humans as more ^{being} ~~analogous to~~ ^{the} 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, ^{his} ~~that~~ 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.

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 human's ^{sleep} 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. ^{Few people} ~~Not many~~ prosper from a nightmare.

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 that dreams could bring to Him over 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 great ~~deal~~^{many} 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 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 ^{people} ~~each man and woman~~ of their *dreams*

real condition in the world. The D.K., given all His shortcomings, was indeed now looking for a way to protect His most elaborate creation—His humans. ^{Guys} 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 act of creating a whole dream for a child appeared, on the face of it, to ^{reflect his} ~~promise the loss of time and effort to~~ 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 ^{likely to fail.} ~~counter-indicative to~~ 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. ~~With the exception of the single occasion~~^{to} 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 expect an open operation."

That was not a short speech for the E.O. The ~~size of his~~ regard for each ~~one~~ of us could be measured by how quickly we 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 ~~mede~~ 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 *2 asker ??* (Rauberer)—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 ⁱ ~~wt~~ 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

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 ^{he} ~~that~~ when Adi met Der Alte on this Sunday, ^{he} ~~it~~ would feel, ^{as} ~~given the power of his dream on Saturday night,~~ that it was all happening ^{in the manner} ~~in the manner~~ he 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.

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

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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

was not Alois' habit to ^{give in} ~~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} ~~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 ~~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

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 ^{was} not ready to say. They had praised Der Alte, they had 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 ^{didn't} ~~had~~ ^{not say any} ~~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~~ ^{easily} his ignorance of the real stuff if he was ~~so open to~~ ^{and} ambush in the course of working with a hive.

Now, he could say he knew ~~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 ~~even~~^{se} 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 ^{know} ~~become 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 ^{high}~~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} ~~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.)

Which, I can suggest, is one of the several reasons I do not like him. For all his gifts, real and counterfeit, he has never accomplished as much for us as I had anticipated. For a time I had expected he would become one of my prize clients. He certainly did not have to end as a bizarre, impossible, smelly hermit with an immense reputation for dealing with hordes of bees in a pretty little corner of Austria, a country filled already with its pretty little corners. I had lost valuable standing ^{with} ~~vis-a-vis~~ the Maestro by remarking ~~on~~ too soon ~~on occasion~~, decades ago, that I saw extraordinary promise in this young half-Polish, half-Jewish Magnus, a real pagan with the ladies in his early days, yes, this client had settled for much too little as far as I was concerned.

Once they had taken their tea, Der Alte in little sips, and Alois in three scalding gulps which enabled his host to pour him another cup almost instantly (as a most subtle form of reproof) they began at last to talk about the reason for the visit.

Alois, used to dominating the onset of a conversation with any man or woman newly met, had developed an unhappy habit out of this very confidence. He would, by now, even take the first step in a verbal encounter

"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 ^{you} ~~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."

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!—ah, 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 ^{of the flower} redolence of the flower's cavern, ^{she} 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 ^{to} ~~fashion~~ ^{way}. But there was more unhappy detail to come. Der Alte now ^{has} ~~found it requisite to talk~~ ^{belly} about the bee-wolf, a veritable female brute, a wasp who would strike at the honeybee in the moment it was alighting on a flower. The bee-wolf, "most appropriately named," would always go for the throat. "Always! The honeybee has a soft throat. So once again, our forager is paralyzed. The wasp is now in complete command of what she knows how to do. She proceeds to squash the belly of the honeybee in order to disgorge all the nectar that hard-working bee has already taken into herself. This honey 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} 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 ^{continuous until} ~~over all the days~~ that ^{wasps to be in full power} ~~one hungry~~ needs for its growth.

"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.

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. ^{with h} That they know how to manufacture from pollen and a few green buds. Have 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."

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} ~~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~~ ^{feel we must to} ~~obligation to~~ correct them! Any future episode between the old man and the

boy would not be to the Maestro's ^{liking} inclination. Not so early! Too many indeterminables! But in the etching of the dream composed for Adi, had it been my notion to use 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."