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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

often equal in its demands to what it takes to convert a coward into a hero.

Yet, when we succeed, when the psychic abyss of a would-be suicide is transmogrified into promontories of achievement, an immense gamble has succeeded. The once-humiliated wretch has now acquired the power to humiliate others. That is a demonic power, and does not come easily.

Nonetheless, I would not wish to exaggerate. Adi was, at this point, far from being reduced altogether. He was always ready to plead his case before Klara.

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

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

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

"But what if he might be wrong?"

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

"What if he is very wrong?"

"It will not remain that way." She nodded. She did not know if she believed what she said next, but she said it nonetheless. "He is a good father. A good father always realizes sooner or later that he may have been going in

the wrong direction." She nodded again as if to oblige herself to believe such words. "There can be a moment," she said, "when the father recognizes that he, too, can be in error." She put her hand to the boy's face as if to cool the fever in his cheeks. "Yes," she said, "he hears his own words and realizes that they are not correct. So, he changes."

"He does?"

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

"No."

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

Klara had been the first in the family to recognize (and she was still the only one) that Adi could be spoken to as if he were ten or twelve years old.

"Yes," she now said, "it is best when there is no confusion in the house. So, you must never accuse your father. That might cause him to feel weiblich."

And for him to feel weak is very bad. You cannot expect him to admit that he has a weakness."

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

Klara said this with such solemnity that the boy felt it come into him as holy strength. Yes, some day he would have a family and all who were in it would honor him and they would fear him. At this point, his need to urinate (which always afflicted him in these years whenever he was on the point of developing large thoughts about himself) spoke up. In the midst of his mother's peroration, he almost had an accident, but did not—not if he was to be entitled in the future to these emoluments of honor.

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

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

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

Yes, Adi understood, and nightly I worked upon his mind until this concept became a mental certainty equal to one of those well-paved avenues of the mind that are always ready for heavy mental traffic. On many a night I told him again that Alois-Junior was totally separated from the family. Alive or dead, it would not matter.

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

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

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

The wealthy house-buyer did arrive, did like the look of the house and the land, knew even less about the pitfalls of husbandry than had Alois, and the sale took place. If the price proved a profit, neither did Alois suffer the loss he feared. The finality of the transfer convinced Alois-Senior that the end

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

BOOK XI

THE ABBOT AND THE BLACKSMITH

In the early autumn of 1900, the family moved to the Gasthof Lehengerer in Lamsbach where they would live until the end of the year. Leaving behind the responsibilities of the farm, Alois began his true retirement. There were a few small but surprising changes. He had, for instance, no interest in the cooks and maids at the Gasthof. Worse, they seemed to have no interest in him. Nor did he mind it.

I would even say that Alois was temporarily content. Since that could affect our purposes in regard to Adolf, I kept a close eye on Senior's modest activities. To my surprise, he took a prelatary interest in the medieval flavor

of the town, and did enjoy walking down its streets. Lambach only had a population of 1,700, but it could boast of a Benedictine monastery founded in the 12th Century, and a church, Pörs, that had been built in the shape of a triangle with three towers, three gates, and three altars. I must say Pörs had the strongest effect on his thoughts.

Alois had begun to wonder whether he had had a previous life here hundreds of years ago. Was he feeling some shadowed hint of another life? He did not discuss the notion. He could -1- been a medieval knight? Why not? It would certainly account for his bolder qualities as a man. Dr. Alois Alois.

In the summer of 1897, after the sale of the Hafeld property, the family moved to the Gasthof Leingartner in Lambach where they would live until the end of the year. Leaving behind the responsibilities of the farm, Alois began his true retirement. There were a few small but surprising changes. He had, for instance, no interest in the cooks and maids at the Gasthof. Worse, they seemed to have no interest in him. Nor did he mind it.

I would even say that Alois was temporarily content. Since that could affect our purposes in regard to Adolf, I kept a close eye on Senior's modest activities. To my surprise, he took a proprietary interest in the medieval flavor

of the town, and did enjoy walking down its streets. Lambach only had a population of 1700, but it could boast of a Benedictine monastery founded in the 11th Century, and a church, Paura, that had been built in the shape of a triangle with three towers, three gates, and three altars. I must say Paura had the strangest effect on his thoughts.

Alois had begun to wonder whether he had had a previous life here hundreds of years ago. Was he feeling some shadowed hint of another life? He did not dismiss the notion. He could have been a medieval knight? Why not? It would certainly account for his boldest qualities as a man. Der Ritter Alois von Lambach!

If it be asked once again how I can be aware of such a reaction when Alois is, after all, not my client, I will reiterate that on occasion we do enter some of the thoughts of those humans who are closely related to an important client. Alois' meanderings about reincarnation came to me, therefore, without hindrance. He had come to quite a conclusion. It was that most people believed that they would never cease to exist.

I must say that for Alois, this was a stimulating thought. Rincarnation might well be conceivable, and if so, then he, Alois, must have been one hell

of a licentious knight. Such a possibility put Alois into an excellent mood. New ideas were exactly what he needed, he now decided. It kept you out of the quicksand of growing old.

The imperative he put upon himself to entertain fresh thought may account for the reception Alois gave to Adl's desire to join the children's choir at the Benedictine monastery. Klara could hardly believe her husband would say yes. She had, for that matter, come close to warning the boy not to ask, but then asked herself: What if God wanted Adl to be in that choir? So, she could be interfering with the Lord's purpose.

Surprising Adolf, sprinkled hat to head, did approach Alois, and managed to say that the monks told him he had a good voice. With his parents' permission to stay after school, he could rehearse.

If it would be asked why Alois was amenable in the first place to allowing any son of his to study with monks and priests, his answer would have been ready. "I have made useful acquaintances," he would have said, "and these acquaintances consider the best school in Landshut. Since I wish Adolf to do well at his school, I will let him there no matter what other objections I should be made."

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Adolf was, in fact, such enough, he was seen by the monks as one of the. The imperative he put upon himself to entertain fresh thought may account for the reception Alois gave to Adi's desire to join the children's choir at the Benedictine monastery. Klara could hardly believe her husband would say yes. She had, for that matter, come close to warning the boy not to ask, but then asked herself: What if God wanted Adi to be in that choir? So, she could be interfering with the Lord's purpose.

So, young Adolf, spiritual hat in hand, did approach Alois, and managed to say that the monks told him he had a good voice. With his parent's permission to stay after school, he could rehearse.

If it would be asked why Alois was amenable in the first place to allowing any son of his to study with monks and priests, his answer would have been ready. "I have made careful inquiries," he would have said, "and these Benedictines conduct the best school in Lambach. Since I wish Adolf to do well in life, I choose to send him there no matter what other objections I choose to retain."

Adi took to the school. Soon enough, he was seen by the monks as one of their best pupils and he knew it. In turn, Alois was delighted with his marks. The boy was not only taking twelve required courses but was receiving the highest grade, which left Alois in a benign mood about permission to sing in the choir.

"Let me tell you," he said, "when I was young, I, too, could lay claim to a good voice. It was a gift from my mother. She was once the soloist in the parish church at Dollersheim."

"Oh, yes, Father" said Adi. "I remember how well you sang on the day we first came to Hafeld from Linz."

"Yes," said Alois, "the old ditties did come back. Do you remember the one that upset your mother?"

"I do," said Adi. "She kept saying, 'Ach, not for the children!'"

They laughed. The memory prompted Alois to sing the same lines.

"He was the best I ever had,

"Together through good and bad,

"The drum called us to fight,

"He was always on my right.

"A bullet flew toward us,

"Meant for him or meant for me?

"Into his life it tore,

"At my feet a piece of gore."

Alois laughed and so did Adi. They remembered. That was when Klara had cried out, "No, not for the children!"

Now, Alois' voice grew even more resonant.

"My friend,' I said, 'I cannot ease your pain,

"But in life eternal we will meet again,'

"Mein Guter Kamerad, Mein Guter Kamerad."

Alois now declared in a voice made husky by the song, "Yes, I will give my permission. That is because I have come to believe in your future possibilities. You are to be rewarded for the excellence you have shown in your new school."

To himself, Alois was thinking, "Of course, I will not encourage him to go too far on this path. No need to end as a sickly priest."

Adi, however, was wondering whether he might, one day, become a monk, or better, an Abbot. He loved their black habits, and his image of heaven quivered in the rose windows. The boy was ready to weep before the power of Grosser Gott Wir Loben Dich:

"Holy God, we praise Thy Name,

"Infinite Thy vast Domain,

"Everlasting is Thy reign. . .

"Fill the Heavens with sweet accord,

"Holy, Holy, Holy Lord."

While he sang, I was encouraging him to believe that he might rise supreme over all these monks and would hold authority in one hand and mystery in the other. Indeed, he had a model. The Abbot of this monastery was the most impressive man Adi had ever encountered. He was tall, his hair was silver-gray, his expression was elevated. To Adi, he was as handsome as a king.

One time, alone in the room at the Gasthof that he shared with Angela, he lifted her darkest dress off its hook, and draped it around his shoulders as a vestment. Then he stood up on a stool. He knew he must speak in a low voice in order not to be overheard in the hallway, but he felt full of the sermon he had heard at mass, as well as the prayer addressed to St. Michael the Archangel which he listened to every day. Now, he was laying these sounds

on his palate for the moment when he would be alone in the forest speaking to the trees.

First, he felt impelled to repeat the sermon that had preceded the prayer. "These fires of hell," he said, "will reach into every pore of your body. They will melt your bones and your lungs. A terrible odor will arise from your throat. The stench of the body will be heinous. This is the fire that will never end."

He staggered as he stood on the stool. He had to take a breath before he could utter the prayer.

"Thy Glorious Majesty, we supplicate Thee to deliver us from the tyranny of the infernal spirits, from their snares, their lies, and their furious wickedness—O Prince of the Heavenly Host, cast into hell Satan and all evil spirits who wander through the world seeking the ruin of souls, Amen."

He felt most excited. I did my best to encourage him to believe he was receiving a sign from above. But then to spoil it all—were other forces present?—he proceeded to have the first erection of his life. Ye he also felt like a woman. It must have been the odor of Angela's dress. So, he threw that away from him, and jumped down from the stool, even kicked the dress, before

he picked it up, sniffed it again, and was abominably disturbed. He still felt like a woman.

It was at this point that he knew he must do what other students were doing. He had to feel equal to them. He must start smoking. Since he had been breathing the fumes of Alois' pipe since he had been an infant, he detested the smell, but now he had to feel male again, purely so, not half and half.

long. The moment of the priest's under whom he studied, a priest, was among the students for his class, happened to come by, and caught Adolf in the act. The cigarette in Adolf's pipe tobacco rolled into newspaper, was immediately seized and stamped upon by the clerk. He had all the flavor of a man who is squandering a part of his conscience.

Adolf was ready to weep before the priest even began to speak. "It is possible," he said, "that the devil has entered into you. If so, you will die a great sinner." Then he gave an evil smile (an evil, I must say, as my mother

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Over the entrance to the monastery was a large swastika carved into the stone of the arched gate. It was the coat of arms of a previous abbot named von Hagen who had been Abbot Superior in 1850, and von Hagen must have enjoyed the propinquity to his own name—a hooked cross was called a Haken-Kreuz.

Not too much, I hasten to add, is to be made of this. Von Hagen's swastika was subtly carved, and so offered no striking suggestion of the phalanxes yet to march beneath that symbol.

Nonetheless, there it was, a hooked cross, and on his ninth birthday, Adolf was alone and smoking a cigarette in the archway. He was not alone for

long. The meanest of the priests under whom he studied, a prelate, notorious among the students for his silent tread, happened to come by, and caught Adolf in the act. The cigarette (a twist of Alois' pipe tobacco rolled into newspaper) was immediately seized and stomped upon by the cleric. He had all the frenzy of a man who is squashing a nest of cockroaches.

Adi was ready to weep before the priest even began to speak. "It is possible," he said, "that the devil has entered into you. If so, you will die in great misery." Then he gave an evil smile (as evil, I must say, as any we are reputed to give.) He was summoning the powers of anathema he had collected through the years.

Adi swore aloud that he would never go near tobacco again. So soon as he was able to speak, he said, "Oh, Father, I knew it was wrong. I detested it always."

At that moment, however, he had to run down the stone steps of the entrance in order to throw up in the grass. The execration of the priest had presented such aridity of soul that Adi could not breathe. The long nose of this priest seemed as malignant as his lips which were as thin as a knife edge. Yet in the midst of suffering such a whole set of atrocious feelings, Adi was

already calculating how to seek forgiveness from the Abbot. He knew he would be sent over to that office so soon as he stopped vomiting.

Before the Abbot, he burst into tears again. He had the inspiration to say that he did not want this abominable act to interfere with his desire to become a priest. How much he wished to repent, he declared. When he was done, the Abbot even said, "Well, someday you may yet make a fine man of the cloth."

The sincerity in Adi's voice resonated with the full inspiration of an outright lie. His one taste of anathema had been sufficient. He was now disabused forever of the thought of becoming a priest. Only his admiration for the Abbot remained intact.

By the measure of my endeavors, it had been a profitable day. Given the many clients I was overseeing in that part of Austria, I cannot claim to have been always in the right place at the best moment, but on this occasion I was. Our mean-spirited cleric—small surprise!—happened to be one of my finest clients in Lambach and had of course been alerted to take a quick stroll over to the gate where von Hagen's hooked stone cross was emblazoned.

When Kline descended, Adi said, "Alois never always used to tell me
 himself ever cared about that."
 Alois now looked on them. "You and your mother to protect you from
 justice," he said. "I remember. She was on your side always. Even when you
 were in the wrong. This used to upset your brother very much, and maybe I did
 not pay enough attention."

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I will say, that Adi's veneration of the Abbot was retained as an echo of
 his first infatuation, but his hatred of the priest with the long nose did not
 diminish. The good memory of the hour when Alois gave him permission to
 sing in the choir was lost.

It would have dissipated in any case. By now, it was obvious that his
 father favored Edmund. Once, after Adi had given him a good shove, Edmund
 dared to poke back. "Don't you touch me," he said. "I am just as good as you
 are."

For that remark, Edmund was hit hard enough to encourage him to wail
 with all the power of his four-year-old lungs.

When Klara descended, Adi said, "Alois-Junior always used to hit me. Nobody ever cared about that."

Alois now loomed overhead. "You had your mother to protect you from Junior," he said. "I remember. She was on your side always. Even when you were in the wrong. This used to upset your brother very much, and maybe I did not pay enough attention!"

Alois chose, therefore, to give Adi a spanking. It was stinging to the boy's behind but without real force. Alois still lived in fear of the anger with which he had kept striking Alois-Junior once the youth was on the ground.

Since these quarrels between Adi and Edmund resounded through the inn, Klara was embarrassed, but the innkeeper and his wife, content with the rent provided by the Hitlers, made a point of treating Klara with the greatest respect. The wife even tried to give her the illusion that she was a notable example of a fine, middle-class lady. Of course, Klara was not about to believe her. Klara knew better. She began telling Alois that the family needed to find more space at lower cost.

She had also decided that Angela was much too old to keep sharing a room with Adi. Indeed, Angela had complained that one of her best dresses

had dusty shoe-prints all over it—that had to be her brother's doing. Klara decided not to accuse him. He would deny it. The true problem remained; they had to move. Nor was Alois opposed. Adi's quarrels with Angela had been getting on his nerves. One time, he had said to Klara, "You wish me not to give him a good one, but he's very trying."

"When children fight," said Klara, "it can be the fault of both."

"Well, I am not about to put her on my knee."

With true perturbation, Klara said, "Of course not."

"In any case, it is the boy. I repeat: I find him trying."

Klara now decided to tell Alois about the day Adi was caught smoking. In the hope that Alois might feel sympathy, she said, "Adi needs kindness. He needs that so much. After the Abbot forgave him, Adi told me, 'I didn't know a big grown man could be so kind.' Alois, he needs a little kindness from us."

Alois shook his head. "No," he told her, "already you are his slave. You don't understand—it is all to the good that he started smoking. In time to come maybe he will like tobacco so much he will even become a real guy." At which point he laughed until he began to cough.

Klara thought, "Yes, one tough guy, full of phlegm."

It could be said that Klara was beginning to have a few private thoughts. For years, she had felt that was not suitable for a good wife. Now, however, she had begun to entertain a secret project. Following the sale of the farm, she had come to the conclusion that it would be good to buy a nice house, but she knew Alois was not yet ready. At present she would have to go along with his plan to move to the unused upper floor of a nearby grain mill. That would be considerably cheaper than the inn, and would offer a good deal of space. Angela would finally have her own room. Let her begin to enjoy some of the opportunities that Klara had never had. Later, once they owned a house, whether in this town or another, she could have hopes that Angela would yet be married to a fine, middle-class man. And for the present, she certainly deserved to have her own room. She was such a good step-daughter.

So, Klara put up with Alois' desire to move to the mill. There would be endless work, but Angela was finished with school, and ready to take on her part of the task. Angela was not only a wonderfully good step-daughter, but in time she might become the best friend Klara had ever had.

Early in the winter of 1898, they did rent a floor on the upper story of the grain mill. Its owner, one Herr Zoebel, kept four mules to activate the

grinding wheel, and to add to this clamor, there was also a blacksmith shop at the rear of the ground floor worked by a big fellow named Preisinger. Living on the floor above would be a war against dust, but Klara was not unhappy. Angela was always ready to be Klara's maid, or a devoted younger sister, or a devoted friend. That left Klara free to enjoy some time alone with Paula.

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From infancy, there had not been a morning when Klara did not whisper to Paula, "You are so beautiful."

But now, although not yet two years old, Paula seemed too deliberate in her development.

Alois did not notice. He loved to dandle Paula on his knee and repeat, "You will be my darling, my princess." He was ready to dream of a time when this child would be the loveliest young lady in town. What an event her wedding would be!

But on a given day after a visit to the town doctor, Klara came home with the news that their daughter might be retarded.

The doctor had gone beyond her forebodings, but then any comparison between Edmund and Paula had already made the condition obvious. At two, their little daughter could not use a spoon without spilling most of the contents, whereas Edmund had been able to manage the trip from the bowl to his mouth not long after he was a year old. At two, he could dress himself, even begin to wash himself. Paula could not. She would lie in her cot with her friend, the rag-doll, hugged to her breast.

Long before he was two, Edmund knew the words for arms, legs, fingers and toes. Paula would giggle but knew none of these words. During the doctor's examination, when trying to stand on one foot, she could not keep her balance. At the same age, Edmund was already kicking a soccer ball. Now, Paula looked blank when the doctor asked her, "What do you do when you are cold?" (or hungry? Or tired?)

Klara tried to help Paula by saying, "Sleep," which Paula then repeated. The Doctor was annoyed. "Please, Frau Hitler, no help," he said.

"Yes," Klara now told Alois, "the doctor says she is backward."

"He doesn't know what he is talking about."

"Alois, it could be true." Klara began to weep. "I have been worried."

Alois fell into a depression. His old gifts of perception, so skilled at spotting a smuggler across a Customs shed, were now addressed to examining Paula's smile. It seemed to him that her eyes were much too vacant.

An ugliness of mood descended upon the family. While Alois was off on his walk, Adi would look to badger Edmund. To Klara, that was intolerable. She would snap at Adi, and then feel disloyal. The truth was that Edmund had now become the bright light of the family. He had certainly grown out of his runny nose and dirty pants. It was like the fairy tales Klara used to read to him. He had turned into a charming four-year-old, as full of future promise—in Klara's opinion—as a prince, and it had all happened since they left Hafeld. Edmund did have the sweetest smile, and the funniest face. Klara had to laugh at the expressions he offered, so wise, so comical and sometimes so outrageous. He was a good little boy and a scamp, all in one. But Adi was reacting badly. Soon enough, he formed the habit of sticking a leg out just far enough to trip his little brother as he ran by. Edmund, however, would not complain, just get up and keep running back and forth along the floor of the loft.

It would have bothered Klara more if she had known what Adolf's secret desire had become. It was to hit Edmund as hard as he could, and never be punished for such an act. Alois, Klara, and Angela were always commenting on how Edmund's eyes were so blue. But his own eyes, Adolf decided were a better blue. In Adolf's opinion, Edmund's face looked like it was squashed together. His parents called Edmund cute. How he would have liked to squash that face a little more.

Worst of all, Edmund was always receiving praise for the attention he gave to Paula. Adi felt he had been the first to see that Paula was not too bright. He could have told them, but instead his mother and Angela were impressed with how much Edmund loved his little sister.

Klara was even glad that the big, sweaty blacksmith, Preisinger, was down there in his shop hammering away because Adi seemed to like him and stayed there a good deal. That was better than trying to keep her eyes on him when he would sit outside her kitchen waiting for Edmund to run by so he could trip him.

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At this time I had to move from Austria to Switzerland, and was active in Geneva for the next few months overseeing the transmogrification of a petty criminal into an impassioned assassin.

Given the variety of clients I had developed in the environs of Linz, I had to return to Austria more than once to take note of their condition, and so was able to keep up with events at the grain-mill in Lambach. I will not, however, speak of those matters until more is related about my assignment in Geneva. To those readers who are, by now, wary of these expeditions off to other narrative junkets, I can promise this time that I will not be absent from young Adolf for more than an interesting chapter or two.

Moreover, a few pages of the text to come will quote Mark Twain, even if he was never my client—I would not have dared to make that attempt! In truth, if such a possibility had existed, the Maestro, given his admiration for great writers, would have looked to explore such a seduction on his own.

In the event, Twain, a most complex man, was not considered suitable material. Some of his associates were, however, and so I knew enough about him to respect the passion with which he wrote about the assassination of the Empress Elisabeth in Geneva on September 10, 1898. Married in 1854 to Franz Josef, she had long been considered the most beautiful and cultivated queen in Europe. Her favorite poet was Heinrich Heine. What added to the lady's exotic status was that after the double suicide in 1888 of her beloved son, Crown Prince Rudolph, and his young mistress, Baroness Vetsera, the Empress dressed only in black. That tragedy, known to all of Europe as "Mayerling," was an event in which I had played no small part. Indeed, that may have been why I was chosen to shepherd Luigi Lucheni around Geneva after he had been sighted as a putative assassin.

"He's a dreadful piece of work," the Maestro said, "but made to order for us. A most unbalanced little malefactor. He sees himself as a serious

philosopher, and is sincere in his belief that only the most exceptional individual deeds will leave a lasting influence on the public. So, go to it!"

I worked with Luigi Lucheni. I expanded the gaseous irresolutions of his psyche, then compressed such inflammable vapors until they were as focused as a blowtorch. Assassins need many quick magnifications of their ego if they are to be ready at the murderous moment.

I did not fail. Lucheni, an impoverished young man, chose to become an anarchist after he came to live with the Swiss. In Geneva, he found revolutionaries who accepted him, at best, with misgivings. His fellow Italians chose to call him Il stupido (which doubled the daily compression of his furies.) It was of help to me that he was being ridiculed by those whom he had expected to applaud him. "Convince them by way of your actions," I kept counselling him. "You are here among us to take the life of someone who is very high among the oppressive classes."

"Who is this person?" he asked.

"You will know when the person is pointed out."

Poor Empress Elisabeth! She was so proud and so poetic that she allowed only a few bodyguards to escort her when she was on vacation. Even

then, they had to stay at a remove of ten paces from her person. It did not matter that strangers were bound to approach. Invariably, it would be a tourist asking for an autograph. So, as she stood by herself on a promenade along the banks of the Rhone, Lucheni came up, took out a rat-tail file, and thrust it into her heart.

He was immediately apprehended, his quarters were searched, and his diary examined. All the world soon knew that he had written: "How I would like to kill someone—but it must be someone important so it gets in the papers."

He might have chosen Philippe, the Duke of Orleans who was also in Geneva then on a visit, but so was the beautiful Sisi—Empress Elisabeth. Sisi, I knew, would count for more. Even as I had led the anathematic priest by his long nose to the gateway where Adi was smoking, so did I direct Lucheni to Empress Elisabeth.

If it is discomfoting to the reader that I usually present myself as a calm observer, capable of a balanced narrative, and yet am also able to abet the most squalid acts without a moment of regret, let it not come as a surprise. Devils require two natures. In part, we are civilized. What may be less apparent on

most occasions is that our ultimate aim is to raze civilization. Such an enterprise must be able to call on one's readiness to do what it takes—a fine expression I picked up years later from a minor client who worked on a film crew.

In any event, the immediate effect of the deed was exceptional. I will, however, leave that description to Mark Twain himself.

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The author was resting then in Kaltenlangteben, a small Austrian town forty miles from Vienna. By way of the failure of his investment in the Paige Compositor, a new linotype machine, he was bankrupt.

So, he left his home in Hartford, Connecticut and traveled through Europe giving popular lectures for fees large enough to absorb some of his debts. He happened to be resting in Kaltenlangteben when the murder of Elisabeth occurred, and wrote the next day to a friend: "This murder will still be talked of and described and painted a thousand years from now."

I cannot begin to speak of the elation with which I read those words. My own opinion of the importance of the deed had now been confirmed by a

master of prose. Indeed, Twain was so powerfully affected that he soon composed an essay full of the incomparable flow of his language although, for a myriad of reasons too labyrinthine to catalogue, he chose not to publish. I, however, came into possession of these pages by way of one of his servants.

The more one thinks of the assassination, the more imposing and tremendous the event becomes. The destruction of a city is a large event, but it is one which repeats itself several times in a thousand years; the destruction of a third part of a nation by plague and famine is a large event, but it has happened several times in history; the murder of a king is a large event, but it has been frequent.

The murder of an empress is the largest of all events. One must go back about two thousand years to find an instance to put with this one. . . . The assassination of Caesar himself could not electrify the world as this murder has electrified it. For one reason, there was then not much of a world to electrify. The news traveled so slowly that by the time it reached the remoter regions, it was no longer a fresh event, it was history. But the world is enormous now, and

prodigiously populated—that is one change; and another is the lightning swiftness of the flight of tidings, good and bad. "The Empress is murdered!" When those amazing words struck upon my ear in this Austrian village last Saturday, three hours after the disaster, I knew that it was already old news in London, Paris, Berlin, New York, San Francisco, Japan, China, Melbourne, Cape Town, Bombay, Madras, Calcutta, and that the entire globe with a single voice was cursing the perpetrator of it.

... And who is the miracle-worker who has furnished to the world this spectacle? All the ironies are compacted in the answer. He is at the bottom of the human ladder, as the accepted estimates of degree and value go; a soiled and patched young loafer, without gifts, without talent, without education, without morals, without character, without any born charm or any acquired one that wins or beguiles or attracts; without a single grace of mind or heart or hand that any tramp or prostitute could envy him; an unfaithful private in the ranks, an incompetent stone-cutter, an inefficient lackey; in a word, a mangy, offensive, empty, unwashed, vulgar, gross, mephitic, timid, sneaking, human polecat. And it was within the

privileges and powers of this sarcasm upon the human
 race to reach up—up—up and strike from its far
 summit in the social skies the world's accepted ideal of
 Glory and Might and Splendor and Sacredness! It
 realizes to us what sorry shows and shadows we are.
 Without our clothes and pedestals we are poor things
 and much of a size; our dignities are not real, our
 poms are shams. At our best and stateliest we are not
 suns, as we pretended, and teach, and believe, but only
 candles; and any bummer can blow us out.
 And now we get realized to us once more another thing
 which we often forget—or try to; that no man has a
 wholly undiseased mind; that in one way or another all
 men are mad and one of the commonest forms of
 madness is the desire to be noticed, the pleasure
 derived from being noticed. . . . It is this madness for
 being noticed and talked about which has invented
 kingship and the thousand other dignities. . . it has
 made kings pick one another's pockets, scramble for
 one another's crowns and estates, slaughter one
 another's subjects; it has raised up prize-fighters and
 poets, and villages' mayors, and little and big
 politicians, and big and little charity-founders, and
 bicycle champions, and banditti chiefs, and frontier

**desperadoes, and Napoleons. Anything to get
notoriety; anything to set the village, or the nation, or
the planet shouting, "Look—there he goes—that is the
man!" And in five minutes' time, at no cost of brain, or
labor, or genius, this mangy Italian tramp has beaten
them all, outstripped them all, for in time their names
will perish; but by the friendly help of the insane
newspapers and courts and kings and historians, his is
safe and will thunder all down the ages as long as
human speech shall endure! Oh, if it were not so tragic,
how ludicrous it would be!**

I rushed to present this to the Maestro. I do not know that I had taken myself so seriously ever before. I knew that I was, at last, an actor in history.

To my woe, he was scathing. "I may value great writers," he said, "but look how Mark Twain exaggerates the event. It is hysterical. A thousand years! That is absurd. Sisi will be forgotten in twenty."

I did not dare to ask, "Does the event serve no large purpose?"

My thoughts were heard. "Oh," he said, "it's a bit of help. But you, like Twain, are much too impressed by mighty names. They count for so little once they are gone. I'd like to clean the snobbery out of you. It's not the name. Only

an exceptional client that we develop ex nihilo—or virtually ex nihilo—can affect history to our continuing advantage. But for that, we have to construct him from first brick to the last. Killing Sisi offered no such value. It was not at all conducive to ongoing social unrest. The riot at Khodynskoya is still serving us, whereas knocking off Sisi? I tell you that if I were a gourmet picking a perfect peach off the tree, I might be able to enjoy some ten minutes of gastric excellence. That would be analogous to the pleasure we can take because of your nice work with Luigi Lucheni. But it must not give you any reason to lose your sense of measure." Here, he did smile.

"There was one nice advantage to it," he said. "Our great author did retain his good sense on that point."

Twain had also written:

Among the inadequate attempts to account for the assassination, we must concede high rank to the many which have described it as "ordained from above." I think this verdict will not be popular "above." If the deed was ordained from above, there is no rational way of making this prisoner even partially responsible for it, and the Genevan court cannot condemn him without manifestly committing a crime.

"Yes," said the Maestro, "when it comes to being aware of us, that good fellow, Mark Twain, must have been so near to saying, 'Ordained from below.' Thank God, he didn't!"

How the Maestro could laugh on these rare occasions when he felt merry.

Klara, who had never been able to believe in all those years that she was worthy of her husband—she was still so profoundly an underdog—now came to realize that he might even need her. Even if he did not love her beyond measure, he did need her.

For Klara, there was a covenant between all the members of one's family, a bond never occurred to her that marriages might also exist on such a level. Indeed, one did not even have to like one's own family.

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Arrived at last with this thought, however, she was able to recognize that

I have, as I related, been at a distance from Lambach until after the assassination, and by then the Hitlers no longer lived in the grain mill nor even, indeed, in Lambach. They had moved to a larger town (Leonding, pop: 3000) and that, at first, was much to Klara's satisfaction, for it was the result of her subtle manipulation of Alois. It had taken her a long time to begin to understand how to motivate her husband. Always too God-fearing, she did not like to use calculated tactics. Until they lived at the mill, it had never occurred to her that she might make Alois jealous. But she had come at last to understand that she had to put a little fear into him.

Klara, who had never been able to believe in all these years that she was worthy of her husband—he was still so preeminently an uncle—now came to realize that he might even need her. Even if he did not love her beyond measure he did need her.

For Klara, love was a covenant between all the members of one's family; it had never occurred to her that marriages might also exist on need. Indeed, one did not even have to like one's mate.

Armed at last with this thought, however, she was able to recognize that Alois might be old enough by now to feel jealous. She, in turn, so long as she broke no covenants but merely bent them slightly, might, yes, might, make Alois jealous enough to wish to move away from the mill.

This possibility resided in the form of the big, soot-covered man on the ground floor, the blacksmith, Preisinger. Adi was fascinated by him, Adi often spent hours at a time watching him work and listening to him talk. She could hear their voices even as she worked in her kitchen on the floor above and the sounds that came up were curiously engaged with those she made—the splash of water from a pail to a basin seeming to be answered by a few ringing blows on an anvil.

She knew why Adi was eager to be with the blacksmith. The man worked with fire. That was exciting to her, even if she was not about to ponder why fire pleased her so. If she had known since childhood that God was everywhere, well, so was the Devil. As long as one did not oblige oneself to follow every thought, then the Devil could have no access. God would be there to protect your ignorance.

So it was enough for her to understand that Adi would be full of a sense of mystery as he watched the blacksmith heat a piece of iron until it was white-hot at which point another piece, also white-hot, could be attached to it. Out of the joining would come further joinings ready to become useful objects and tools, anything and everything from carriage axles to broken ploughs.

Soon enough came an occasion when she had to visit below. The water-pump in her kitchen needed a repair on its cylinder. The crack was soon mended but then, to her surprise, she stayed a little longer and talked with the blacksmith. Then, he invited her to come back whenever she would like a cup of tea.

To her amazement, this big bull of a man, this Preisinger, had nice manners. He not only treated her with the greatest respect, but he could

converse well considering that he was as uneducated as herself. He did not brag, but did leave the impression which she found most agreeable (even as she had once had just such sentiments about Alois) that he was a person of natural importance. She could hardly believe how agreeable it was to listen to him as she sat in the one good chair of his shop while Adi stood beside her close to transfixed.

Preisinger's active business was not only with farmers in the area, and occasionally with travelers whose horses were having trouble with a shoe, but, as he explained, many merchants in the area depended upon him for repairs of all variety. Moreover, he was ready to admit, he could diagnose many an equine ailment. "I have also been able to act, Frau Hitler, as a veterinarian. Yes, I can say that. Because sometimes I have to know more than the vets."

"Can you really say that?" asked Klara, and blushed at her own straightforwardness.

"Frau Hitler," answered Preisinger, "I have seen valuable animals hobbled to where they could barely walk. And for a simple reason. The veterinarian, however good a fellow he might be concerning other animal diseases, did not know as much about a horse's hoof as was necessary."

"I suppose that is true," said Klara. "You have had so much experience."

"Young Adolf will tell you. There are market days when I shoe as many as twenty horses, one after another. No stopping."

"Yes," said Klara, "how much work must come rushing in when there is ice on the ground."

To which, he answered, "I see that you understand these matters."

Klara had to blush.

"Give me a better grip on the ice," Preisinger now said. "I hear that every winter. Over and over. Once, on a freezing day, I had to shoe twenty-five horses and every one of those farmers was asking me to hurry up."

"Yes, but Herr Preisinger would not agree," said Adolf. "He told me, 'Speed is speed, yet one nail gone wrong, and that horse will never trust you again.'" Adi's cheeks were flushed. He could not tell Klara what else the blacksmith had confessed. "Young fellow," Preisinger had said, "there were nights when I couldn't sit down because I had the horse's name on my behind."

"The horse's name?" Adi had asked.

"His hoof. I can recognize horses by their hooves."

"You can?"

"Old Clubfoot. Old Crookedhoof. What name would you like? I will find it for you on my backside."

He had laughed, but then, seeing that Adi was bewildered, Preisinger was quick to add, "I am joking. Only joking. A good blacksmith knows that you can get kicked for your trouble."

"How often does that happen?" the boy asked. He was so obviously seeing the event in his mind that Preisinger removed himself at once from such images.

"No longer," he said. "Not even one time a year now. In this work, you have to be very good or you don't last."

With Klara, Preisinger preferred to discuss how he might compound his own special caulk for the hole left by the old nails—he was proud of the various kinds of problems he was ready to solve. While he spoke, she looked at the occasional imprint of horses' shoes on his dirt floor, there in the dark dust on the earth floor. She certainly did like this man. She could share his pride in the sea-anchor he was making for a rich man—no, no ordinary problem, an anchor—one had to be certain there were no weaknesses between

the ring, the stock, the crown, the flukes, the palm and the shank. She did enjoy the sound of such words. "The palm and the shank," she repeated.

After her third visit in two weeks, Preisinger insisted on returning upstairs with her one morning to collect all her knives which he then proceeded to sharpen in his smithy. Afterward, he refused all payment. What impressed Klara most was that his work clothes might be black with soot, and yet he moved with such a sense of where he was that no detritus was left in her clean kitchen.

Then, on a Saturday evening when he must have known that Herr Hitler would be off to the Gasthaus for his beer, so did Preisinger come by on a visit, dressed in his Sunday shirt and suit. That caused no little perturbation in Klara (and in Angela) but he, too, was uncomfortable and sat on the edge of the sofa.

Yet Klara would look back on this occasion with satisfaction. That was because when Alois returned, he was even more disturbed than his wife at the sight of Preisinger, sitting on their sofa, huge hands clamped together in his lap. While the blacksmith departed soon after Alois came in, he did bow to Klara and manage to say, "Thank you for your invitation."

Alois waited until he and Klara were alone in their room.

She was contrite. "No, I didn't invite him." She shook her head as if to tumble a few bits of memory back into place. "Well, yes," she then said, "I suppose I did." She had been courteous, merely courteous. Adolf had been spending so much time down below with Herr Preisinger that she thought it would be polite to make a suggestion, no more, that Herr Preisinger visit them for her strudel. But only on some day or other. She had not specified. It had not been a true invitation.

"And you did serve him strudel?"

"Well, I had to. Does one offer a guest nothing?"

"A guest?"

"Well, a neighbor."

On it went. Afterward, she never knew how much of all this could have been planned. She would deny such a possibility. Nonetheless, it had worked well.

Not two days later, Alois informed her that he had sent a letter to a friend in the Customs House at Linz inquiring whether real estate was available in Linz or nearby. "I am bored here," he told her. "The noise from below is becoming intolerable."

A week later, an answer came. There was a fine little house at a very good price in Leonding just five miles from Linz.

Klara and Alois knew that they would buy that house before they went to look at it. Each was full of the same determination for altogether opposite reasons.

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This would be all I need to narrate about Preisinger (since they would never see him again after the move to Leonding) but I cannot leave the man without speaking of one of his final conversations with Adi now that he knew Klara would soon be gone.

Needless to say, Preisinger had fallen in love. It could not be love with any lively hope for the outcome, yet he had felt a sympathetic quickening in her. Conceivably, it might in time become a legitimate match. Her husband was getting old. So Preisinger, full of his own hard-acquired dignity, was desolate when he heard that she and the boy would soon be gone.

He acted, therefore, in the only way he could. He took the liberty of offering up the depth of his working philosophy. The boy might be only nine, but by Preisinger's estimate, there was true eagerness to know more.

"Why is iron so strong?" Preisinger asked, and replied to his own question. "Because it is in its spirit to be strong." He paused. Any further exposition would depend on the boy's reaction to what he would next be told. "Every material," Preisinger said, "has a spirit which is its own spirit. Some are strong, some are gentle."

Young Adolf did not reply but he did nod. Preisinger decided to proceed. "Grass," he said, "will bend before every wind. It is ready to give way to any foot that steps upon it. It is the opposite of iron. Even so, iron ore can be found in the same earth where grass can grow above. Yet, once this ore is smelted you can make it into a scythe. A scythe is there to cut the grass."

"That is so interesting," said Adi, with real enthusiasm.

"Yes. You do not step on a piece of iron. Iron will hurt any foot that does not show respect." Preisinger's breath grew heavy with the ardor he felt for his subject. "Yes, that is because iron ore, once it has passed through the hottest fire, will turn into a unique material."

"Unique?" the boy asked.

"Unlike any other. Unique."

"Yes, that is so." The boy paused. He hesitated to ask his question, then did. "What is a will of iron? How is that made?"

Preisinger was delighted. "Think of how hot a fire must be to call out the will of iron that is in the ore. Iron is strong against every force except the one that made it iron."

Adi was agog with the unnamable interchanges between the will of iron and the incandescences necessary to create it. He even made the mistake later that night of trying to explain it all to Angela and to Edmund. Alois, however, happened to overhear and proceeded to roar with derision. "The mark of a truly stupid man," he announced to Klara, "is that he takes his own occupation so seriously that he comes to believe it is superior to others."

Nonetheless, Preisinger's discourse on the will of iron was to prove of considerable use to Adi after he received his first serious whipping from Alois. The spirit of restraint he had been looking to develop came to an end on a given night when Adolf was playing soldier in the woods and continued to stay out long after dusk. Normally, as evening approached, Alois had only to

whistle and Adi would race upstairs from Preisinger's shop or come whipping back from the nearby woods. Indeed, if he did not arrive soon after the echo of the first whistle, Alois would put him over his knee and give him a token whipping. In secret—he would hardly admit it to himself—he liked the feel of Adi's buttocks. *Other times himself against a will of iron.*

On this night, however, the lingering light in the forest proved too exciting to the boy. The last of the sun's disappearance seemed one more variety of fire, and so it was night before he came through the door.

Alois had been brooding over Paula's condition—just that day she had been trying to jump up and down in place (which, the doctor had assured Klara, would be a sign of development) but had soon given up. Despite Alois' coaxing, she would not try again. Then, Alois had to whistle for Adi. The interval became so extended that Alois decided it was a willful insult and proceeded to give him a real beating.

Full of Preisinger's precepts, Adi took an oath to live with whatever came down on him. He would fortify his will of iron. Even as the first blow fell, he was issuing orders to himself to fortify such determination by biting his

lips against each and every remembrance of sobbing before the priest and weeping before the Abbot.

Tears stood out in his eyes but he would not allow himself to cry. Preisinger's mighty biceps oscillated before his eyes even as he was being whipped. Let his father injure himself against a will of iron.

BOOK XII

EDMUND, ALOIS AND ADOLF

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Edmund felt that he was near again to the active life of a real city, a feeling he has not allowed himself to indulge in Hildesheim or Lüneburg. For Elara, however, the house would have been more attractive if it had not been situated across the street from the town cemetery. On the other hand, this was the only reason they could afford it.

For compensation, the village church was near, and their new home sat within a fine garden bordered by maples and oaks whose limbs had grown into such awful shapes that a goblin spirit must have been present. So Elara decided

Nevertheless, Klara feared the move to Leonding as if it could yet prove dangerous. Part of this was, of course, true. I would warrant, that her friendship with Freunberger, he had aroused an interest that should bring prosperity only to her marriage. She considered that possible. Now, on these streets of Leonding, many of the townspeople had been shy enough to suggest that they knew quite a bit about those treacherous sides of life. While she had certainly lived in any number of more sophisticated places: Vienna, when she kept house for an old lady, Braunau - in -1- and then Passau - she had never looked for anything larger than her duties or her family. Now, she might be

Leonding was only five miles from Linz which enabled Alois to feel that he was near again to the active life of a real city, a longing he has not allowed himself to indulge in Hafeld or Lambach. For Klara, however, the house would have been more attractive if it had not been situated across the street from the town cemetery. On the other hand, this was the only reason they could afford it.

For compensation, the village church was near, and their new home sat within a fine garden bordered by maples and oaks whose limbs had grown into such artful shapes that a godly spirit must have been present. So Klara decided.

Nonetheless, Klara feared the move to Leonding as if it could yet prove dangerous. Part of this uneasiness came, I would warrant, from her friendship with Preisinger. He had aroused an interest that should belong properly only to her marriage. She considered that perilous. Now, on these streets of Leonding, many of the townspeople had faces sly enough to suggest that they know quite a bit about these treacherous sides of life. While she had certainly lived in any number of more sophisticated places: Vienna, when she kept house for an old lady, Braunau with Alois, and then Passau, she had never looked for anything larger than her duties or her family. Now, she might be ready for more. Not permissible! So, for a time, forays to town were restricted to visiting the shop of Josef Mayrhofer who not only owned a fine grocery, but was a fine man and the Mayor of Leonding. There, she bought vegetables two or three times a week, dressed neatly for the occasion and was always friendly to Herr Mayrhofer, but invariably, she would say, "I can't stay. There's so much work waiting for me."

She was of course still living with the conviction that she had given herself over to the Devil on the night when she believed that Alois had just

killed Alois-Junior. She could see the boy on the ground again and her vow, "Oh, Devil, save him, and I will be yours!"

All the same, she is attracted to Mayrhofer. He is more worldly than Preisinger and that could prove tempting. She kept telling herself that she must not ruining a good man.

I was witnessing a comedy. I knew nothing would happen. Mayrhofer happened to be as proper as Klara. Moreover, he and Alois had already formed a quick friendship. Alois was drawn to a man smart enough to be Mayor, and practical enough to own a prosperous store. In turn, Mayrhofer respected Alois's years of service in Customs, particularly his promotions. Before long, they were drinking together at the tavern.

All the same, this subdued flirtation between Mayrhofer and Klara remained alive, and I continued to enjoy it. Now that Mayrhofer, a man of honor, had become friends with Alois, he could not even smile too often when Klara was near. In turn, that was acceptable to her. Mayrhofer had a jealous wife. Alois had told her that the woman was a shrew who was always pointing her finger. "All of these women who come to the store," Frau Mayrhofer had already told her husband, "are just waiting to throw themselves at you."

Indeed, Mayrhofer confessed to Alois that years ago, he did have a small affair. Just one. Then, his wife found out. His life had been a misery since. In turn, Alois was wise enough not to suggest that in this regard, his own life may have been more agreeable.

At first, they drank only in the local tavern, but Mayrhofer soon confessed that given his position as Mayor, the premises were a little too raw for his office, and after some deliberation, he even invited Alois to a Buerger-Abend, an evening for the town burghers. That was an occasion which took place on four separate evenings each week. The members could attend regularly or rarely, but it was an opportunity for substantial individuals to get together. These gatherings, explained Mayrhofer, rotated among the best four inns of Leonding, and were held for the sole purpose of good talk with good prosperous company. The object, as Mayrhofer explained tactfully, was not to get drunk, but to exchange good conversation. In fact, he did murmur that they had had a few tipplers who were not asked to come back. "We did it politely—as much as possible, under the circumstances—but it is essential, Alois, that a man must never appear to be even a hint unbalanced on these

occasions. Merriment is certainly acceptable, but good manners are paramount."

"I have to agree," said Alois. "That is always the essence of fine and decent company."

So Alois was introduced, and went through the considerable tension of sitting in with the local gentry. He most certainly did not get unbalanced, and he did return several times a month to keep up his friendship with Mayrhofer who would go to the tavern no longer because of one dreadful occasion when a drunken lout tried to insult him. The malcontent had been told to leave by the tavern owner, and did, but the place was spoiled for the Mayor.

During the day, Alois now spent his time working in the garden, or at his new bee-hive. He had purchased one Langstroth box, and to it added only a small population. As he explained to Mayrhofer, "Some honey for my family's use and gifts for friends—no more than that. At Hafeld, I used to feel too dominated by these little creatures. They are a force larger than oneself."

"So is the Mayoralty," replied Mayrhofer.

Soon enough, Alois grew so impressed by the Buerger-Abends that he bought a book of Latin quotations. But, retaining the phrases was a

treacherous enterprise. His greatest problem these days had been boredom. Now he had discovered its loyal assistant—poor memory!

The greatest counterbalance he found against the yawns of long, eventless afternoons at home was to play with Edmund. The little boy was more charming at four years of age than any of his other children had been, and Edmund stayed so close to him at the beehive that Klara had to make a little veil and sew up white pants to go with a white shirt and white gloves. Klara protested: "The boy is too young." But Alois insisted, and so the two were out at the hive a great deal.

Before long, Alois had fallen in love again, a charming love, indeed, for he knew it was bound to be his last true romance. He adored Edmund. It was not only that his little son was so clever, but that he was, in addition, tender and sweet. "If I had ever met a woman so perfect, I would have married her for forever," he would repeat to himself as a joke. He did like humor that was bifurcated. He could picture the look of woe on Klara's face if he ever told her this, and yet he also laughed at his own tenderness—for the boy and for Klara, too. So much of all that was good in her (which he was never about to declare) was part of why the boy was so nicely balanced. He had, as Alois

measured it, his father's intelligence and his mother's capacity for loyalty. An excellent mixture.

Yes, so bright. And Edmund loved the bees. He did not even squeak too much when some of the sluggards crawled over his gloves on their way back to the hive entrance. Once he even received a bite inside his glove but kept from crying, so soon as Alois said, "We must keep this a secret. Your mama won't let you play here again if she knows."

"No, father," said Edmund, "she will listen to you."

"It could cause trouble," said Alois.

"That is true," said Edmund and sighed. "Too bad," he said, "it hurts. I would really like to cry."

At which they both laughed.

Once, back in the house, they would play Customs. Alois even put on his old uniform (although he could hardly button the waist) and they pretended that Edmund was trying to smuggle a valuable coin past a border inspector.

"Why is my coin so valuable?" asked Edmund.

"Because it was owned by Napoleon," said Alois. "He used to keep this guilder in his pocket."

"He did not," said Edmund. "You are teasing me."

"No, I am not. It is part of the game."

"I like that."

"Yes, but just you try to hide that coin from me."

"How will you get it back?."

"I will tickle you. Then you are bound to confess."

"I won't," said Edmund, giggling already, and stepped into the parlor closet to hide the guilder. Struggling beneath the coats hanging in there from the rack, he knew where to put the coin. He wedged it into the cuff of his boot. That way, he didn't have to undo the laces.

When he came out, Alois stared at him with a fair share of the malevolence he used to direct at suspects who were being interviewed.

"Are you ready to confess?" he asked.

Edmund was hardly frightened. He began to giggle.

"Very well. Since you are so insolent," said Alois, "I will pat you down," and proceeded to tickle him under the arms until Edmund dropped to the floor in a puddle of pure helpless mirth. "Stop it, Daddy, stop it," he cried out, "I have to pee."

Alois desisted. "But you are not ready to confess."

"That is because I am not smuggling anything."

"You are. We know. You have Napoleon's coin."

"Try and find it," said Edmund and began to giggle again.

"Oh, I will," said Alois, and with a quick move pulled off Edmund's boots, shook them, and watched the guilder fall out. "Now, you are under arrest," he said.

Edmund was furious. "You cheated," he said, "you cheated. You did not obey the rules."

"State your case."

"You said you would just tickle, but you took off my clothes."

"These are not your clothes," said Alois, picking up a boot. "Clothes are garments. This is footwear."

"You just changed the rules."

Alois made a face. "That," he said in a deep voice, "is what we like to do in Customs."

For a moment, Edmund was uncertain. Then he began to laugh. Alois laughed so hard and so long that once again, he began to cough which, at first,

was fine—he could clear some phlegm—but then his coughing did not halt for many seconds, then a minute of paroxysms which brought Klara over to the parlor from the kitchen. Alois rolled his eyes at her and took a tentative breath. Had he come close, he wondered, to a hemorrhage of his lungs?

Now Edmund had begun to weep. "Oh, Papa," he cried out, "you must not die, you must not die," and the sound of his voice kept all response away from both his parents—he had seemed so certain of the outcome.

"Papa, I know you will not die," he now said in amendment. "I will ask God to forbid that and He will listen. I pray to Him every night."

"I don't pray," Alois almost said. Still cautiously in balance from the reverberations of attack, he did not speak but he did shake his head at Klara. These pious women were the real smugglers—to steal across the border of a young boy's mind, especially when he was so bright. Some day, Edmund might be a legal eminence in Vienna, one of the wealthiest and most powerful barristers in Austria, and yet his mother had to offer this religious pap, good oats for horses.

All the same, Alois was not yet ready to correct her. Religion was necessary, perhaps, for the very young. For now, he would leave it at that.

There was so much beauty, Alois decided, in the boy's love for his mother, and yes, most certainly, his father.

Up in his bedroom with the door locked, Adolf took his revenge on the sounds of laughter he had to hear from below. He chose to masturbate. The image he held in his head was a picture of Luigi Lucheni that he had seen in the Linz Tages Post. It was the assassin's small mustache, fixed to his upper lip just below his nostrils, a dark little daub of a mustache. That certainly excited Adolf. Once, at a time when he and Angela had still been sleeping in the same room, he had caught a glimpse of her pubic hair just as it had begun to manifest itself, no more than a patch of dark down, and Luigi's postage-stamp of a mustache was close in resemblance.

The combination had to excite him—that small peek-a-boo into Angela's privacy so much like the mad murderer's upper lip—he grew twice excited when he heard his father coughing away like still another maniac.

Daily did exist, but he, like one, was certainly opposed to the sanctimony of all those pariahs who would run to church at every drop of rain in their lives. He would attend on one day only of the year and that was the Emperor's birthday. "In my opinion, it is those Jews who is to be despised. Especially after Ben's death."

He soon discovered that he was dealing with a class of people who held a special attitude about such matters. While they did seem to feel superior to universal devotion to religion, yet they were prepared to be ferociously observant. They were church-goers. -2-

If Alois had been a Jew, I could have spared him. To be pitifully

On one of his occasional visits to the Buerger-Abends, Alois prevailed on himself to speak. This was after listening to the "Atheist-in-Residence," a member who delighted in assuring all the others that "I am the only brave man in our ranks since I have been blessed. I do not have to believe in God." To Alois' critical eye, he was a scrawny chap, yet a long-invested member—his grandfather had been one of the founders of the society. Nonetheless, it did seem that the man had little else to offer. So, Alois decided to speak up and declared that each intelligent human had to decide for himself whether the

Deity did exist, but he, for one, was certainly opposed to the sanctimony of all those pietists who would run to church at every drop of rain in their lives. He would attend on one day only of the year and that was the Emperor's birthday. "In my opinion, it is Franz Josef who is to be celebrated. Especially after Sisi's death."

He soon discovered that he was dealing with a class of people who had a special attitude about such matters. While they did seem to feel superior to unseemly devotion in religion, yet they were prepared to be formally observant. They were church-goers.

If Alois had been a client, I could have alerted him. To be privately superior to religion may be a privilege of the upper classes, but going to church is the keel to maintain social life in the community.

One of the older gentry did reprove Alois by saying, "I would agree that it can prove unsettling to be among those who become over-enthusiastic about every last Saint's Day observance. So often these rites become a haven for unhappy women. But let us recognize that without religion, we would suffer chaos. It is the most dependable deterrent to madness in all of world history."

Alois was ready to take up the argument. "Nonetheless, good sir," he said, "permit me to suggest that religion does offer its own kind of madness. Just think of such highly immoral Popes as"—he knew the list—"Sixtus IV, Innocent VII, Alexander VI, Julius II, Leo X, and Clement VII. Simony was not only their daily practice, but a cardinal's hat was waiting for every one of their illegitimate sons. Some of them even killed their enemies. I would declare that to be madness. Yes, good sir, that was madness in the opposite direction, I would go so far as to assert."

He sat down, pleased that there was at least a modicum of courteous applause from a portion of the buerghers, but he had to recognize that the applause was formal—each speaker did receive at the least, a minimal response. Nonetheless, a chill had come upon the room. He had been too outspoken. It made him decide, most unhappily, that he should not return too quickly to the Buerger-Abends, and when he did come back a month later, he chose to be silent.

In compensation, the evenings were diversions. These gentry certainly knew more than he did about high styles of living. They were knowledgeable about everything from antique collecting to interesting innovations that would

soon appear in indoor plumbing and electric lighting. Again, he had to feel the insufficiency of his own experience.

No surprise, then, if at the Buerger-Abends, he thought often of the young officers for whom he made boots when he was working in Vienna, dreaming all the while of a beautiful young woman who would put together exquisite lady's hats before sharing his bed in the evening. Now, on the way home from a Buerger-Abend, a wealth of pity could pass through him for what had never come to pass.

Let me suggest that the intensity of such feelings can charm the heart of a saint. Self-pity is able to reach the finest operatic heights—if at considerable expense to oneself—and Alois was paying too much. In compensation, his dreams at night had begun to bother him. He had now developed the fearful intuition that sleep was a marketplace where the dead could return in order to remind you of your personal debt to them. So he thought of Johann Nepomuk and his mother, and then he had to brood over his two dead wives. What if they met in this marketplace of sleep? What if they came to agree with each other concerning their former husband? He would then be facing a cabal. "That might even be more dangerous," he told himself, "than for two of a

man's former mistresses to become friends, and be ready to compare accounts."

One of the gentry had made that remark at the Buerger-Abends, and it occasioned the heartiest burst of laughter. Of course, the fellow was an old roué from one of the best families in town. Alois had enjoyed those words enough to make them his own, and even served them up at the tavern. He did notice that the louts laughed at this with as much gusto as the gentry.

And all of his warriors wanted to be against the redskins. This was because an Indian could stand up on a better fence behind, get an arrow around the other boy's neck, and declare, "You are scalped." Then they could run back to their dens in the forest. Adolf was then scalped once by a very quick enough Indian, would his protection. Adolf declared it illegal. "You do not stand leaders," he said. "You are an Indian and you believe in the vengeance of the war-paths. So they do not attack high officers like myself. They do not dare. A terrible vengeance would follow." -3-

Adolf liked the new school in Leonding. It was a short walk from the Garden House, and less strict than the monastery. While he was, once more, an excellent student, he could hardly wait each day for school to end. The Kumberger Forest outside Leonding was full of wooded draws and small caves where one could prepare an ambush. He began to recruit schoolmates to join the battles, and they even had small encounters in the late afternoon, although the major event every week was reserved for Saturday morning when there would be wars between white settlers and Indians.

Not all of his recruits wanted to be against the redskins. That was because an Indian could steal up on a settler from behind, get an arm around the other boy's neck, and declare, "You are scalped." Then they could run back to their dens in the forest. Adolf was even scalped once by a boy quick enough to dart around his protectors. Adolf declared it illegal. "You do not attack leaders," he said. "You are an Indian and they believe in the vengeance of the war-gods. So they do not attack high officers like myself. They do not dare. A terrible vengeance would fall on them."

He even took Edmund along, Edmund who was now five years old and certainly the youngest to participate. Nonetheless, the older kids liked him, even if Edmund could hardly be of service when attacks began. Still, Adolf liked having him alone in the forest. He could command Edmund then, which, of course, he was not able to do at home. There, Klara would protect Edmund, Angela would protect him, and Alois certainly did.

Adi could remember that they used to safeguard him from Alois-Junior, but that had been more justifiable. After all, Alois-Junior had once planted a turd on the end of his nose. He didn't do such things to Edmund. But he did giggle at the thought that if he could do it, what a joy it would be to hear

Edmund scream. Once, out in the forest, he even poked Edmund in the back with a stick, and told him it was a hornet, which, of course, Edmund mentioned to Klara. He knew it was not a hornet.

The story worried her. Was Adi's animosity worse than Alois-Junior's spite? Yes, she decided, worse. Adolf and Edmund were blood brothers.

By now, Adi was having trouble with several kids who gave promise that it could end in a fight. He had never had a fist-fight, he had always known how to avoid them, but now he took a vow that he would not allow anyone to beat him. He would do what was necessary, even if that meant he had to do it with a rock in his hand. Visions came to him on the edge of sleep. He saw a boy he truly feared staring at him with a blood-spattered head. Could that happen? Several of the soldiers who had quit his army were now back. Were they ready to give trouble?

Then an episode occurred which ended these wars for the rest of the winter. On a day when no one felt warm enough to hide motionless in ambush, a trooper declared that he was able to start a fire by rubbing twigs together. The others jeered, but Adolf said, "If you can make a real fire, then I give you the order to proceed."

The boy did. Once the fire was lit, all went off to find fallen branches dry enough to burn. Soon the fire was not only blazing but ready to advance into the surrounding brush. Since there was no water handy, they tried to stomp it out, but smoke kept rising into the sky.

They quit the fire one by one, then they ran until they were a quarter of a mile away. Adolf began to explain to the others, all twenty-odd, that they must not tell anyone.

He needed me then. I was offering the power to look into a compatriot's eye and decide whether he would be strong enough not to give them away.

"Yes," said Adolf, "if any one of you tells anybody about this fire, we will all have to pay for it. And then we will want to find out who told. And there will be consequences. A brave soldier does not betray his own comrades."

One by one, two by two, they left the forest. By now, the fire had grown to a size visible enough to bring teams of horses, fire-men and water wagons out from Leonding.

On the way home, Edmund said that he would tell one person, their father. "If you do," said Adolf, "I will be severely punished. And you, too, will have to pay for it."

"I do not believe that," said Edmund. "Our father would never permit it. So, don't you try to hit me."

"It is not me you have to fear. It is everybody else who was there and will be punished. They will be waiting for you. All of them. If necessary, I will be the one to let them know you couldn't keep your mouth shut."

"I have to tell our father. I promised."

"What did you promise?"

"I promised that I would tell him about anything that bothered me."

"All right. That is all right for you to do on other matters. But not on this. I tell you, the others will beat you up. I will not be able to protect you. I won't even want to!"

"I feel sick."

"You always were a snot-nose. Go throw up."

From there, they ran home and once there felt surprised that all was so quiet.

Alois, however, soon had his own suspicions about the fire. He held Edmund on his lap and looked tenderly into his eyes, but before he could ask a question, Edmund threw up again. Alois decided to let it go. He was

convinced that Adolf had had something to do with the blaze, but Edmund's life could become a misery if he forced him to talk about it.

Moreover, there might be repercussions. If he knew that Adolf was one of the malefactors, it would be expected of him as the father and good citizen, to inform the authorities. Once he did, however, they could hold him responsible for the costs of bringing out the fire-wagon. So, Alois wiped Edmund's spew off his own shirt and hugged him tenderly. He also made a point over the next few days of not looking Adolf in the eye too closely.

-4-

That winter, Adolf came to read a book by Friedrich Ludwig Jahn, an author who spoke of a force powerful enough to shape history. This force depended on the presence of a "Fuehrer cast of Iron and Fire. The people will honor him as a savior and forgive all his sins."

Of course, Adolf's class had also been offered Kant and Goethe and Schleiermacher, but he felt that most of these authors showed too much respect for reason. Which bored him. His father, for one, was always speaking favorably of the virtues of reason. "Human nature is undependable," he would tell his family at the kitchen table. "What enables stable societies to work is

the power of the law, not the people.” He looked around at the table and decided this might yet be of interest to his son. “It is legal constitutions that are needed, Adolf, and then only when constructed by the finest people. Then reason can receive the profound respect it deserves.”

Adolf preferred Friedrich Ludwig Jahn. Reason could be treacherous, he decided. It was like the sirens that swim in the Rhine and lead you to your death. Even while you drown, they sing sweet songs. Personal strength was of more importance. That would take care of your sins. Smaller matters would disappear.

Whereupon, he rejected Goethe and Schiller. Their humor annoyed him. It was too personal—as if they were much too pleased with what they were saying. Not serious enough, Adolf decided. The other two, Kant and Schleiermacher, he simply could not read. After Jahn, his highest pleasure came from the fairy tales of the Grimm brothers, also assigned to his class. Those were good stories, and deep! He delighted in acting them out for Edmund who was too young to read but always ready to listen. He explained to Edmund that the Grimm Brothers had written tales to show children how important it was to obey their parents and their older brother and sister. Then

he spoke of one story called The Girl Without Hands. "This is about a father who has been ordered by the Devil to cut off the hands of his young daughter." When Edmund shrieked, Adolf spoke in the voice of the father, explaining it to his daughter. "I don't want to do this, dear daughter. But I must. These are orders. It is not for me to question orders that have been given by a very high authority. So, I must obey."

"What does the daughter say?" Edmund asked.

"Oh, she is obedient. Very obedient. She says, 'Father, do with me what you will. For I am your child.' Then she puts her hands right up on the chopping block. Her father picks up a big cleaver and he does it."

"That is so awful," said Edmund. "He chops off her hands?"

"With one big whack! But she lives happily ever after."

"How?" asked Edmund.

"Her father takes care of everything," Adolf nodded. "I could tell you a worse story but I won't."

"Tell me."

"It is about a girl who was so disobedient that she died."

"What did she do?" asked Edmund.

"It doesn't matter," said Adolf. "She was disobedient. That is enough. They bury this disobedient girl, and what do you think? It is hard to believe, but she remains disobedient even after she is dead. One of her arms keeps pushing up out of her grave right into the air."

"Is she very strong?" asked Edmund.

"The devil is helping her. What else—that is the way it happens. So when her relatives see that arm up in the air, they come out to her grave and try to push it down again. They can't. The arm is too strong. So they start to cover it with a mound of dirt. But her arm knocks the dirt off. Then, her mother goes back to the house and picks up the heaviest poker in the fireplace. When she returns to her daughter's grave, she starts beating on the arm until it is broken. That way, the arm can be folded back under the dirt and the girl is able to find some rest."

Edmund was shivering. He was crying and laughing at once. "Would you do something like that to me?" he asked Adolf.

"Only if you should die and I would see your arm sticking out from your grave. Then, I would have to do it to you. I certainly would."

"Oh," said Edmund, "I don't like that."

"It does not matter what you would like. It would have to be done."

"Tell me one more story."

"It would take too long. I'll just give you the end: It's about a queen who boils a child to death. Then, she eats the body."

"You have to be a queen to be able to do something like that," said Edmund. "Isn't this so?"

"Yes, you probably have to be a queen. Especially if it is your own child that you are boiling," Adolf replied, "but nobody can take these matters for granted."

"My mother would never do that to me."

"Maybe not our mother, but I cannot say what Angela would do."

"Oh, no," said Edmund, "Angela would never do something like that to Paula or to me."

"Don't be so certain."

Edmund shook his head. "I know you are wrong."

"Do you want another story?"

"Maybe not."

"This one is the best," said Adolf.

"Is it truly the best?"

"Yes."

"Then maybe I don't want to hear it."

"It's about a young man who is ordered to sleep with a corpse. In time to come you, too, may have to sleep next to a dead man."

At this point, Edmund shrieked. Then he fainted.

Unfortunately for Adolf, this last conversation was overheard by Angela. She was standing now in the doorway shaking her head. Adolf had time to think that his luck was foul.

Angela knelt, and patted Edmund's face until he could sit up again. Then she went to tell Klara.

His mother no longer called him Adi, certainly not on any occasion when she had to scold him. "Adolf. This was dreadful. You are going to be punished."

"For what? I did nothing bad. Edmund loves the stories. He kept asking me for more."

"You knew what you were doing. So, I am going to tell your father. I have to. He will decide on your punishment."

"Mother, this is not something to bring father into."

"If I don't tell him, then I will be the one who must look for a real punishment. And maybe I will. Maybe I will buy you no present at Christmas."

"This is so unfair," said Adolf. "I try to entertain my kid brother. But he is a brat."

"Do you accept what I say? No gift for Christmas?"

"Yes. If you think that is fair, I have to accept. But, Mother, please look into your heart when the time comes. See if you will still see me as guilty then."

Klara was furious. This was even worse. He was certain that she would change her mind and buy him a good present after all.

So, that evening, she did tell Alois.

His father had no doubts. He chose to give Adolf a severe whipping. It was the worst since they moved into the house in Leonding. But this time, Adolf was determined to make no sound at all. He thought of Preisinger all the while. He stiffened his body.

Alois was beginning to feel as if he had Junior back on his hands. Another criminal to deal with!—that excited even more rage.

Between each blow, Adolf was thinking of how Alois-Junior had run away. It was one memory he could use. He would make no sound. He could be as strong as Alois-Junior. If he did not cry, then his own strength might become great enough to justify whatever he might yet want to do. Strength created its own justice. He called upon the force of command that had been with him after the fire in the forest when he ordered them all never to speak of it. Yes, he had been full of fear then, but he had called on his force of command. Then he had lived for days in the fear someone would talk. I had been with him, of course, through that turmoil. Adolf's confidence was so fragile that I had to maintain his ego then at full erection. (Egos are prey to the same weakness that good men's erections exhibit when unsure of what comes next.)

So, yes, I was there to monitor the whipping of Adolf, and fortify his resolve. If it was most important to him that he not weep, I had to be ready to diminish the intensity of Alois' blows whenever I thought the boy might break. Equally, I was ready to increase his father's force, whenever it flagged. There

were moments when Alois' fear of over-straining his heart was in direct opposition to my desire to salt Adolf's will. Let his hatred for Alois become intense enough to serve many an uncommon purpose ahead.

Nonetheless, balance is also crucial to our activities. I could not allow antipathy to his father to become excessive. Immense hatreds in childhood which find no dependable outlet can leave a client unstable. While high imbalance was altogether acceptable for me in Luigi Lucheni, that would not do for Adolf. We had put in too much effort on the boy. We did not care to have to deal in the future with endless errant impulses and blind rages. Indeed, one product of this heavy whipping was bound to be detestation of Edmund. That made me uneasy. Edmund had remained in such a sorry state after hearing the tales of the Grimm Brothers that Klara had had to lull him to sleep with lullabies. Adolf, lying in the next cot, felt as bruised thereby as if he had fallen out of a tree, indeed, his feelings became so outraged by Klara's apparent indifference to him that he decided to run away. Right there laying on his cot he so decided—aching bones and all. He even made a point of telling this to Edmund as soon as Klara had left the room.

"It is all your doing," said Adolf. "So, I must go."

Immediately, Edmund leaped out of bed and ran to tell his father. Yet, when Alois came up the stairs to collar the potential runaway, Adolf said, "It's a lie! My brother is always telling lies. This one I will not forgive him for. This lie is atrocious! I'll get him for this!"

"You'll get him, will you?"

Alois was not ready to give another beating. His arms were aching more than Adolf's. Still, he was sufficiently concerned to lock the boy in a room on the ground floor whose only window had bars. Alone, Adolf tried to squeeze his way through. He soon discovered, however, that his clothing, particularly the metal buttons on the shirt, seemed to make the difference. Those buttons kept getting caught on the bars. So he took off his clothes, rolled them up in an overcoat, put them just outside the bars, and stark naked, attempted to wriggle through once more. He was so overheated with fury and righteousness that he did not feel the cold of the open casement window nor hear the sound of his father's boots returning to the room. Only at the sound of the door unlocking did he pull away from the bars, seize a table cloth and wrap it around himself. Alois, entering, the brass key still in his hand, took in the situation, and roared with laughter. He yelled for Klara until she came through

the door. Then, Alois pointed to Adolf with a masterly scorn and said, "Look at the toga boy, our Toga Boy!" Klara shook her head and left the room. That roused Alois to a full harangue: "So, you were trying to run away. I tell you, it would not be such a loss. All the same, I forbid it. Not because I would miss you, Toga-Boy. I would not. I forbid it because I would have to call in the police to tell them you are missing, and they might put me in jail." Alois knew this was an outright exaggeration, but he was full of momentum. "How your mother would weep! Her son is lost and her husband is in prison. Shame has come upon the Hitler family! All because of Toga Boy!"

Adolf had stood up to the whipping, but now he was in tears. My work on his ego would have to be redone.

perhaps. It would serve as an explanation if it were to come out that he had struck Adolf.

In truth, however, it was even becoming more difficult to strike him. The boy now had a way of sliding and turning, a product perhaps of his skill at the war games. Usually, he succeeded in getting away from Alois after one off-centered slap on the rump. And on those times when his father did manage to spank him over his knee, there was no great arm left to give the whipping. How seldom was Alois' name on such occasions. It had been much more enjoyable to talk that verbally, or directly with -5-

Alois did have regrets. That night he awoke worrying whether Alois-Junior had been a product of too many beatings, and the next day, while walking with Mayrhofer, the subject came up again. Alois declared that he never engaged in corporeal chastisements. (He even said to himself, "Oh, you are lying like a thief.") But Mayrhofer's good opinion was crucial to him, so on he went: "I never strike my kids. I must admit, however, that I bawl them out frequently." How could a parent not? "Adolf," says Alois, "is the one I have to scold most. I tell him his behavior is bad. He can be a miserable urchin. Sometimes I say to myself, 'I'll bash him yet.'" Alois said that on then,

purpose. It would serve as an explanation if it were to come out that he had struck Adolf.

In truth, however, it was even becoming more difficult to seize him. The boy now had a way of sliding and turning, a product perhaps of his skill at the war games. Usually, he succeeded in getting away from Alois after one off-centered slap on the rump. And for those times when his father did manage to turn him over his knee, there was no great arm left to give the whipping. How sodden was Alois' heart on such occasions. It had been much more enjoyable to lash him verbally, so directly enjoyable to call him "Toga Boy." Alois kept the mockery in play over the next few weeks, and Adolf reacted by coming down with an attack of measles.

Such a connection is, of course, much too simple. In Leonding, at this time, others his age were also in bed with the disease. It was certainly contagious, but Adolf had, in effect, been physically lowered by the last small host of unfortunate events. His army ceased operations after the fire in the forest, and now the jeers about Toga Boy rankled his skin. The worst news, however, was to hear that Der Alte had died. An obituary had even appeared in the Linz Tages Post, such news forwarded all the way from Hafeld, but then,

the event could be seen as sufficiently unusual to be worth a description in newsprint. By the time his body had been found, Der Alte was in a sad state of decomposition. "Such," observed the Post, "is often the fate of lonely hermits." To make matters worse, all his bees had perished in the cold.

Adolf mourned him. The old man had always been so gracious to him. Other than his mother, Der Alte had been the only adult to treat him as if he were important.

In turn, Alois retained enough sour feeling about Der Alte to be rewarded now with a keen trace of pleasure—a most unseemly reaction to have, after all. So, to compensate—he hardly knew why—he did buy Adolf an air-gun for Christmas. It was a solid gift, ready to pump out pellets with enough power to drop a squirrel or a rat, and so would yet prove its value to the boy, but not as yet. Most definitely, as Alois could note, Adolf was still mourning Der Alte. Indeed, Alois had the impression that his son might even be crying in his sleep. He did look frightful in the morning. Then he came down with the measles.

Klara kept the house in a rigid quarantine. No one was allowed to visit Adolf in the hitherto unoccupied maid's room on the second floor. Only Klara,

wearing a gauze mask, would come in to look after him, and she would wash her hands afterward with a hideous-smelling antiseptic.

He had a rash, he had red eyes, he was not allowed to read, he suffered boredom, he complained endlessly to his mother of the monotony of his existence, yet was almost glad when she went out again. The odor of the antiseptic that she brought into the room was near to intolerable.

It worked itself out, however, as a mild case. The white spots in his throat and on his tongue disappeared in a few days, his rash lessened, his disquiet increased. He was obsessed with how filthy he felt, for was that not exactly the way they all thought of him? Diseased and therefore filthy. He worried about where Der Alte might be now that he was not only dead, but had been left alone to rot.

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A last word about Der Alte might be fitting. Adolf still hoped that Der Alte, rot or not, was on his way to Heaven. Such a sentiment in my client impressed me because I was not ready to believe we had carried him over to Hell in high style. In truth, I do not know much about Hell. I am not even certain it exists. The Maestro has kept us, after all, in enclaves. They are well sealed. We are not supposed to know what we do not need to know.

To keep up our morale, therefore, we are reminded constantly of how much cosmic pretension there is in human affairs. We are frequently brought back to Nietzsche's immortal remark, "All priests are liars."

"How could it be otherwise?" the Maestro says. "The Dummkopf is not about to open His secrets to individuals distorted enough to choose the

ministry or the priesthood in order to dominate gullible audiences with descriptions of how the Lord will reward their belief when they die. Priests are, indeed, liars. They do not know a thing about the highest matters. Nor, for that matter, do any of you."

Leave it then that I know nothing of the final destination of Der Alte. I do suspect he was the sort of long-term client that, by the end, we are often obliged to ignore. Certainly his use for us had dissipated. So, it is possible that he was ready to beseech Heaven to grant him final acceptance, and who knows—the Dummkopf, from what we are told, does accept some of our clients for reincarnation. As I have mentioned, the Maestro is not vigorously opposed to this. "Let us have the pleasure of picking up this piece of small fry again if the Dummkopf is so foolish as to give Der Alte another chance to pump up his vanities."

In contrast, throughout his illness, Adolf did think often of Der Alte, and wished the misery of his measles would visit Edmund. Then, after Adolf recovered, Edmund did come down with a severe case. I will save the reader from too detailed a description of the turmoil and then the agony that reverberated—that is the word—through the Garden House as Edmund's

condition worsened. His face swelled. He became incoherent. The doctor warned the family that he might yet suffer from encephalitis.

In their bedroom, Alois knelt beside Klara, and they began to pray for Edmund's life. Alois even said, "I will believe in God if Edmund is spared. May I die if I do not obey this vow."

We will never know whether Alois would have been true to such a promise—a lifetime of mental positions opposed to prayer and fortified one by one over the years would have been ready to attack the vow at every turn. Still, at one point he did say, "God, take my life, but spare the boy," and he meant it.

Then, Edmund died.

Prayer is an expedition beset by peril to those who pray. We, for example, have a power—which can prove most expensive to call upon—that enables us to block even the most essential, heartfelt, and desperately important prayers, and we will exercise such powers when the stakes demand it.

Cheap prayer, on the contrary, we encourage. We see all that as adding to the Dummkopf's Fatigue, adding to the Dummkopf's Indifference. Cheap

prayer wearies Him. Cheap patriotism enrages Him. (Cheap patriotism is is, after all, one of our most successful provenances.)

The point is that despite Alois and Klara's prayers, blocked or not, Edmund did die on February 2, 1900. I even felt as if I were one of the mourners. Edmund was the first child for which I had entertained so curious a set of sensations as love (or at least some representation of what might be whole-hearted liking) sufficient to explain the warmth that inhabited me when in the presence of that child. I had not known what I might be feeling. I only knew that even as Adolf was not ready to contemplate his brother's death (for, indeed, he had a secret to bury as direct and powerful as the arm that protruded from the grave) so was I not ready to contemplate it either. I, too, had been culpable.

was able to speak to our Charles then, and to Mr and Mrs, and now"—it was her turn to turn her head back—"to Edmund."

They did not quarrel. They wept together. She said at last, "You must stop being so hard on Adolf. He is now your only hope for a good son. Why must you turn him into the ground?"

Alois nodded. "I will make a promise," he said. "That is, if you will stay here with me today. For I cannot go to the funeral. I will not be able to keep myself together." Before he could finish speaking, he was weeping again. He hugged her. "I need you," -7- "I need you to stay with me in this house." He had never said that to her before. He could hardly believe he

was. On the day of Edmund's funeral Alois told Klara that he would not go. He could not even give a reason. Not at first. He stood there like a pillar of stone.

Then, he began to weep. "I cannot control my feelings today," he said. "Would you have me break down in church? A church that I hate?" For the first time in their marriage, she raised her voice in anger. "Yes," she said, "this church that you hate. But I go to it for peace. For a little consolation. I

please now sister. She was beginning to wonder if it was the fate of her family

am able to speak to our Gustav then, and to Ida and Otto, and now"—it was her turn to burst into tears—"to Edmund."

They did not quarrel. They wept together. She said at last, "You must stop being so hard on Adolf. He is now your only hope for a good son. Why must you beat him into the ground?"

Alois nodded. "I will make a promise," he said. "That is, if you will stay here with me today. For I cannot go to the funeral. I will not be able to keep myself together." Before he could finish speaking, he was weeping again. He hugged her. "I need you," he said. "I need you to stay with me in this house." He had never said that to her before. He could hardly believe he was saying it. "Yes," he declared, "I will take a solemn promise. I will not strike Adolf again."

It is a mistake to interrupt a husband and wife who are in pain, but I cannot resist remarking that in my experience, few marriages exist where a vow is not countermanded by a secret covenant.

Yes, that is our Alois, he has already told himself, "No, I will not strike Adolf again unless he does something awful," but then, Klara was not of one piece now either. She was beginning to wonder if it was the fate of her family

to be destroyed. Indeed, she was not ready for the funeral. This once, let God pay attention to her.

So, Klara told Angela that she must represent the family. "If people ask, just say that your parents are stricken. This is true," said Klara. "I don't trust myself to go, and your father cannot. I have never seen him weep before. He is near to out of his mind. Angela, it is so terrible for him. I cannot leave the man alone. I must not! So today, you will act as the woman of the family. For today at least, you must be the woman."

Angela said, "You must go to church with Adolf and me. It will be a scandal if you don't."

"You," said Klara, "are much too young to worry about scandal. Tell them we are ill. That has to be sufficient."

"Will you stay here at least, will you promise to stay in the house?" asked Angela. "I am afraid he will want to go out. He will want you to bring him to the tavern. He will get drunk so it doesn't hurt so much. You must not leave the house."

"It depends on your father."

"You are his slave."

"Silence yourself!" Klara said.

So to Adolf's surprise, he and Angela went to church by themselves.

When asked for a reason, all Angela said was, "Before we go, you must take a bath. You smell awful again."

Alone with Adolf, Klara could not bear to think of each and every death in her family, not only her children, but the deaths of her brothers and sisters. "Canst God have mercy?" she asked herself. She felt a frightening exhilaration, as if she were standing in an old house and the floor was about to give way and she had no interest in saving herself. She was tired of believing that the fault must be her own.

I have to admit that I was tempted to approach her, but I knew this would be refused by the Maestro. What, after all, could be gained by looking to pick up a client like Klara? We could put the Codys in disarray for losing her. But what labor there would be to treat so new and difficult a client.

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Alone with Alois, Klara could not bear to think of each and every death in her family, not only her children, but the deaths of her brothers and sisters. "Cannot God have mercy?" she asked herself. She felt a frightening exhaustion, as if she were standing in an old house and the floor was about to give way and she had no interest in saving herself. She was tired of believing that the fault must be her own.

I have to admit that I was tempted to approach her, but I knew this would be refused by the Maestro. What, after all, could be gained by looking to pick up a client like Klara? We could put the Cudgels in disarray for losing her. But what labor there would be to train so new and difficult a client.

Indeed, I soon recognized Klara was having no more than a rebellion that is common among pious people. Piety can also serve as a wall to keep the pious from recognizing how profoundly angry they are at God—this God who has failed to treat them by what they see as their proper right. Since this illicit wrath is usually submerged in pestilential waters of modesty, they do not make sterling clients for us, although, in the event, we do use some. Pious people can derange those in their family who are less pious. Repetition kills the soul.

On this long day, Alois felt so savaged by the loss of Edmund that he had to look into the fact of his incest. He wondered whether he and Klara were polluted people. If so, Edmund might be better off dead. Again he wept.

When, at one point, Klara began to have second thoughts and said, "Maybe we should go to the church after all," he was seized with fear. "For me to break down in public," he said again, "that is worse than death." Now Klara asked herself, "What is wrong with weeping in church when one's heart is broken?" She began to wonder. Was Alois evil? Was she? What of the vow she had taken when Alois-Junior seemed lifeless on the ground? Perhaps it was better, yes, actually better, that they did stay away. For evil people to attend a funeral might hurt the departed. Slowly, over that long day, as they

remained at home, she felt an awful flush in her breast. Was that her fury with God? She, too, was now afraid to go to church. Yes, how could one ever dare to bring such fury into a holy place? That would be like taking another vow of allegiance to the foul one.

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At the funeral, Adolf heard none of the words. His head was ablaze. In the hour that Edmund died, Alois had said to him, "You are now my only hope."

"Yes," Adolf said to himself, "it is true, my father used to see Edmund as the only hope. That is what he really was saying. But actually, he hates me. He thinks I was cruel to Edmund."

Yet Adolf refused to agree that he might have mistreated Edmund. "It was no more," he told himself, "than the way Alois-Junior used to treat me."

All too soon, however, he began to feel full of dread. How deep and unrelenting might be the anger of the angels!

Just a few days before he had been the first to come down with measles, he had taken Edmund for a walk in the woods. Still fearing then that the fire might yet have its consequences, he was uneasy about Edmund's loyalty. So he picked up a twig on the path and scalped him with a slow, ritual move. One drew a short stick in a circle around the captured soldier's head just above the forehead, above the left ear, under the back of the head, and then back above the right ear to return to the forehead. Adolf did this to Edmund and said, "Now, I own all that is in your skull. Your brain is mine."

"How can you say that?" said Edmund. "That is stupid."

"Don't be a fool," said Adolf. "Why do you think Indians wanted scalps? It was because that was the way to own the mind of the person they had just captured."

"But you are my brother."

"It is better for you that your brother owns your brain than some stranger. A stranger could throw it away."

"Give it back to me," said Edmund.

"I will when the time comes. But only when the time comes."

"When will that be?"

"When I tell you. Not before."

"I don't believe you. I don't believe you own my brain. It feels the same."

"Oh, you will see a difference. You will feel little headaches. They will bother you. That is the first sign."

Edmund might have been ready to cry but he would not, he did not, and they walked home in silence.

Now, in church, Adolf's heart was beating in time, step by step, with the pace they had taken all those weeks ago on returning from the woods.

It can be said that he was feeling a most peculiar pain in his heart from this recollection. It was as sharp as a splinter driven under one's fingernail.

Looking to lose such pain, he told himself not to think about Edmund any more. Not on this day. Indeed, he prayed to God to be able to cease thinking of Edmund and (with my help) succeeded to the degree that one can remove nearly all of a splinter that is under the nail. The fragment that remains, however, has now become a root ready to offer steady discomfort.

I can say that Adolf was absolutely not ready to think of the very last time he had seen Edmund, and so the memory festered in his heart.

It was his turn now to be ready to weep. He thought of how Klara used to call him "Ein Liebling Die Gotter." "Oh," she used to tell him in those years, "you are so special." He remembered how she said he was "a beloved of God." That was true, he told himself. He had not been like Gustav and the others. Perhaps he had been selected by Destiny. He had survived.

I could see the extent of the reconstruction that lay before me. I would have to bring all of Klara's once-loving words back to Adolf; restore him once more to what he knew when he was three. Yes, he, Adolf, had been the one selected to go on living.

Now, to the contrary, he had begun to feel that his mother would be ready to abandon him, just as she had abandoned Edmund. Why, then, must he feel so guilty? Let her be the one to feel these pains. She had pretended to love Edmund and yet she was not here in church. How awful. So unfeeling!

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Even as the brother and sister came away from the grave, the mourners began to pay attention to Angela who was embarrassed at knowing how red-faced she had become while trying to speak of how terrible were her parents' feelings. "It is so frightful a day for them—they are both in bed. They are too weak to move." On she went, embarrassed, and yet excited to be the center of this occasion.

Once they were alone, however, and could walk off into the forest, he did say, "Why do I know that my mother will not come to my funeral?"

Angela berated him: "Klara is the finest person I have ever known. The kindest. No one is more good! How can you say something like that? She is suffering for your father. He loved Edmund so much!" And when in payment for this remark, Adolf looked venomous, she added, "As well he should.

Edmund was a beautiful child. I cannot say that of you. Even on this day of your brother's funeral"—she had to repeat it!—"you still have an unpleasant body odor."

"What do you mean?" he answered. "I took a bath. You know that. You even forced me to. You said, 'Going to the funeral, smelling as you do Get into the tub,' and I told you it would take too long to boil the water. What did you care?"

He had had to use cold water. It had been a splash and a wipe, no more. Maybe he still did smell. "No," he said now, "I forbid you to speak that way to me. I do not have an unpleasant odor. I did take a bath."

Angela said, "Bath or no bath, Adolf. You just may not be a very good person."

He was so furious with her that he stepped off the forest trail into the snow. She, just as upset, just as angry, followed him. The moment they were out of earshot of any person who might have been at the service, she yelled at him so loudly that he ran off, "Not a good person. An awful one. You are a monster."

Alone in the forest, Adolf began to have fears of his own death. It was so cold in the snow. He had pictures of Gustav and Ida and Otto and Edmund. And, now in his mind, he saw Edmund's arm rise out of the grave. He recalled the look of terror in Edmund's eyes as he listened to the Grimm Brothers fairy tales.

When Angela caught up with him, they walked home silently to find their father with a red and swollen face. Alois turned to him, weeping, and said, "You are now my life." He embraced Adolf and began to weep all over again. How false were his words, thought Adolf. Alois still believed that Edmund was the only hope. He could not even pretend that anything else was true. "I hate my father," Adolf told himself once more.

I was a partially worked up dream, but I had to ask myself whether such a belief was being implanted too soon. It did suggest that he would never die. Of course, that is not at all impossible to believe. There is a reason why it is so difficult for any human to picture his or her own death. The real, I would often, does expect to be immortal, and to a degree, this may even be true. Many humans, after all, are born again. I would not wish to suggest that this is by way of the passing hand of a priest or reversed, while being suspended in the ether, no, they are born again through minor creation. The Minister has told us that this is part of a conceptual scheme developed by the D.K. "He does see himself as an artist—in the Divine A—-11- But he is a blunderer—so many of his creations are flawed. A good many are discarded which is then placed

Several nights after the funeral, I prepared a dream-etching where an angel spoke to Adolf long enough to tell him that his cruelties to Edmund would yet be justified. Why? Because Adolf's life had been spared in infancy. There was a special purpose yet to come. He need only remain loyal to every command he received from above. In this manner, he could escape all ordinary death. He would yet become God's gift to the people, fierce as fire and as strong as steel.

It was a carefully worked-up dream, but I had to ask myself whether such a belief was being implanted too soon. It did suggest that he would never die. Of course, that is not at all impossible to believe. There is a reason why it is so difficult for any human to picture his or her own death: The soul, I would offer, does expect to be immortal, and to a degree, this may even be true. Many humans, after all, are born again. I would not wish to suggest that this is by way of the passing hand of a priest or reverend, while being upended in the river, no, they are born again through reincarnation. The Maestro has told us that this is part of a conceptual scheme developed by the D.K. "He does see Himself as an artist—as the Divine Artist. But he is a blunderer—so many of His creations are botched. A good many are disasters which He then plows back into the food chain. That is His only means of removing His multitudinous meaningless spawnings from choking the existence of the rest. Indeed, there is more art in his food chain than in the rest of His creation. Yet, I will admit, He is dogged. He is still looking to improve His previous creations." As the Maestro describes it, the Dummkopf is bound to try over and over, even with many of His most unsatisfactorily developed humans. And that is why few men and women really believe that they will cease to

exist. They would say it aloud if not for their fear of appearing ridiculous. Indeed, their real anxiety is that the new life, because of the ways in which they dissipated the last one, might bring them closer to the heat of the Dummkopf's Wrath, closer than on any previous incarnation. One's new position in life might well be a reflection of how badly the last life was lived, and so the rebirth would offer a pure example of human Hell, living Hell. While the Maestro does not impart such answers to us, I am convinced that there is a region in the unconscious of every human being where belief does exist that one is immortal, part of the scheme, so to speak, that conceived of life in the first place.

I may as well add that this conviction of personal immortality does cause us considerable difficulty. Many of our men and women, particularly late in life, come to the conclusion that if they atone for their sins, they will be reborn. That can play havoc with hitherto dependable clients. They are not, after all, completely unbalanced on this certainty. No matter how abominable and unrepentant are a few of the humans chosen by Him to be born again, he probably does feel there is something exceptional present even if it failed to develop properly on the last time out.

At this point, I even began to wonder whether the Maestro had developed his own species of reincarnation and so might have input on some of the D.K.'s councils. It is, obviously, too large a question for me, but the Maestro does seem to know which of our clients have been chosen for rebirth. Yet to speak of this with greater authority, I would have to know how the D.K. envisions the future of His Creation. Is it comparable to the ruthlessness of our Maestro? Is ruthlessness indeed a necessary passion in these divine matters?

-12-

A few months after Edmund's death, Klara began to have fearful thoughts. Was it possible that Adolf's attitude to Edmund had been more than cruel. Was it even unforgivable? Angela told her that when the brothers played together she had overheard Adi terrifying Edmund with fairy tales from Grimm, the very worst ones.

From her bedroom window, Klara could see Adolf shooting at rats, while sitting on the cemetery wall. She would flinch each time she heard the popping sound of the discharge. For her, the air-gun was equal to an ugly

voice. She felt as if she could hear disaffected spirits coming up to her from the cemetery. When someone is not a client, we can still exert a modest everyday influence on them, and in this case, I certainly did not wish Klara to be impelling Adolf more deeply into his depression so I did lay atmospheres upon her sleep to suggest that Adi was not evil, but suffering terribly. This technique is always there to work with any mother who retains some love for her child, and so, over a period, the situation did improve. Klara came to recognize once again how great was the need to change Alois' feelings. The boy's dreadful mood, she told her husband, was even beginning to affect his marks at the little school in Leonding and all this after he had been doing so well there. Since Adolf was very bright, she said, the explanation had to be that he was mourning for Edmund. "But he is also afraid of you," Klara dared to say, "he hates disappointing you. Alois, you must become again a good man to your son."

Those were heartfelt words, but they only succeeded in reminding him of Edmund. Adolf, alas, was not Edmund. All the same, he nodded.

"I will do what I can," he said. "Sometimes my heart slams shut like a door."

Once aroused, however, she was not about to close off her own feelings. She must find a way to be near again to Adolf. His heart could also shut like a door. So, she chose to remind him that the year was 1900—they were in a new century. “Adolf, this will be your century,” she told him. “This century will belong to people like you. I know it. You will do wonderful things in time to come.”

He did feel important that she spoke in such a tone. Of course, he hardly knew whether to believe her. How could it be his century? And who were people like him? At this point, he felt incapable of accomplishing anything of high worth. So, he nagged her. “Is it really so?” he kept asking. At last, her tongue slipped enough to uncover the truth, “You are the one I must love,” she said. He brooded over her phrasing. He was aware for the first time that women were not there just to love you because that was their duty. Instead, they could offer love that was real, or a substitute that was hardly as dependable.

Here, the Maestro intervened. “Do not,” I was told, “encourage any undue interest in women. Let him remain fearful.”

-13-

On late overcast afternoons in early spring, when there was a fog, and the odors of moss and mold rose from many a tombstone, Adolf would sit in the damp of the low cemetery wall and wait in the dusk for rats to come out. When they faced to the west, their eyes would shine in the sunset, even in a clouded sunset, and so would offer sharp targets. When he was able, however, to hit one with his air gun, he did not feel up to approaching the corpse. It was too close to evening for him to be ready to step down into the cemetery from the low wall.

Early morning, however, before he was off to school, he would go by, and if no dogs or cats had been ready to dare the graveyard at night, and the cadaver of the rat was still intact, he would inhale a first hint of the aroma of carrion and that would stir his mood. He wondered whether comparable manifestations had gone on in Edmund's flesh.

Even by spring, he did not feel ready to go back to the forest. He kept to his perch on the cemetery wall.

In turn, I had decided not to discourage Adolf's guilt. Indeed, this instinct was soon corroborated. While the Cudgels were partial to guilt since they were invariably looking for more atonement in their clients, we usually chose to calcify guilt, leave it, so to speak, bone-dry, even if that did raise a risk that we were narrowing future possibilities for the psyche, a delicate choice in this situation, but I had to be ready to raise Adolf from his depression before it grew too extreme. Depression can descend into aberration. On many an evening, Adi sat on the cemetery wall wondering what he would do if Edmund's arm were to rise suddenly out of the grave. Would he run? Would he attempt to talk to Edmund? Would he ask for forgiveness? Or would he pelt the limb with his air gun?

All through the winter, the spring, and the summer of 1900, the memory of Edmund's illness remained like a dead weight on his chest.

It was not hard to discern the reason. Adolf still possessed some funds of conscience. Even as self pity is the lubricant we use most often to smooth the entrance of the heart into uglier emotions so does conscience become our most determined antagonist. The Cudgels whip their people into shape by way of their conscience. We, in turn, when dealing with the most advanced of our clients, do our best to extirpate conscience altogether. Once accomplished, we then proceed to build up a good substitute for conscience, ready and able to justify most of the passions that the Cudgels seek to repress: greed, lust, envy, —no need to list the sacred seven. The point is that when a facsimile of a working conscience is properly developed by us, our clients' ability to justify their ugliest acts becomes exceptionally strengthened. We have then succeeded in releasing conscience from the shameful memories that obliged it to develop in the first place, and I can add that we are most successful when the all-but emptied remains of the old conscience are stubborn enough to vie with one's new sense of discompassionate strength, and so are felt to be a useless scourge, an enemy to one's well being. (Murderers who take pride in