

their daring have usually succeeded in banishing all conscience.) Or, to put it otherwise, a good deal of the dread that humans feel when the angels wish to punish them, can now be obviated by violent acts, particularly by killing others. So we benefit from war. Our work is easier then. It is calm periods that call upon the skills of advanced devils like myself. I will say that it is not at all routine to convince a given man or woman to slay another. Left to themselves, they worry that murder may be the most selfish of acts. Primitives certainly know that to be true. Ready to sacrifice an animal for one of their feasts, they are wise enough to ask forgiveness before they raise the knife.

In turn, I was now ready to fortify Adi's sense of the power that murder can offer the murderer. Of course, he was too young for our developed techniques, but I did work up a dream-etching where Adolf was a hero in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870. This entailed the suggestion that he had been there in his previous life almost two decades before he was born in 1889. It was not difficult to bring him to believe he had massacred a platoon of French soldiers who had made the signal mistake of attacking his lonely outpost. Of course, such a dream-etching was gross, but it did prepare a base on which to

lay more sophisticated impulses later. Standing by itself, the Franco-Prussian dream-etching was a pure wish-fulfillment.

May I say that we knew all about wish fulfillment long before Doctor Freud had anything to say on the matter. Our approach to human psychology must of necessity go far beyond all those good Viennese doctors. Indeed, we smile at the superficiality of so many of Dr. Freud's analyses. That is his fault. He wanted nothing to do, after all, with angels or demons, and was willfully determined not to recognize the engagement of the Dummkopf and the Maestro in large or small human matters.

On the other hand, a small portion of praise can still be given to Freud for his delineation of the ego. That concept has become one of the tools by which humans have become almost as adept as we are at assessing shifts of self worth within.

Be it said that the state of Adolf's ego had become the focus of my attention. It would do no good to keep raising his estimate of his own worth if, at the same time, he was terrified that he had helped to kill Edmund. Because he did not wish to believe it, he most certainly did feel guilty and the worst of it was that I hardly knew the answer. Had he, or had he not?

The facts were simple—which is to say that the deed was clear, but the consequences were not. On a morning when Angela was working with Klara and Paula in the garden and Alois was out for his walk, Adolf found Edmund playing alone in the room that they had shared until Adolf's illness.

Adolf walked over and kissed Edmund. Simple as that. I must admit that I was impelling him. If, personally, I certainly did feel something comparable to affection for Edmund, there was little I could do about it in this situation. In those days, I was not prepared to defy any order given directly by the Maestro.

"Why are you kissing me?" asked Edmund.

"Because I love you."

"You do?"

"I love you, Edmund."

"Is that why you scalped me?"

"You must forget that. You must forgive me. I think that is why I caught the measles."

"Can that be the real reason?"

"I think so. Yes. And that is why I must kiss you now. That is the way I can give you back the scalp I took."

"You do not need to do that. So far, I have no headaches"

"We cannot take a chance. Let me kiss you again."

"Isn't that bad? You have these measles?"

"Between brothers and sisters, yes, it is bad to do. But not between brothers. It has been established medically that brothers can kiss even when one has measles."

"Momma said we must not. None of us are supposed to kiss you yet."

"That is because she is a woman and does not understand that it is all right between brothers."

"You swear?"

"I swear."

"Let me see your fingers when you swear."

Adolf was impelled most definitely by me then. He held up his hands, fingers out-stretched. "I swear," he said, and kissed Edmund repeatedly, a boy's kiss full of slobbering, and Edmund kissed him back, full of his own slobbering. He was so happy that Adi did love him after all.

Edmund came down with the measles. And the disease did prove fatal. We were responsible for his death or we were not. I knew no more than Adolf. So I buried such questions under the powers of wish fulfillment. Night after night a new platoon of French soldiers were massacred in Adolf's sleep, and if there had not been all the other problems with which he had to contend, I think he might have been ready to move his psychic strengths over to rigorous belief that murder offers power to a murderer.

BOOK XIII

ALOIS AND ADOLF

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Adolf Hitler's later readiness to exterminate humans by the train-load and the gas chamber was obviously not at all due to an active longing. If I speak, therefore, of a year like 1945, it is to make no direct connection to 1909 and the months after Edmund's death. If, guided by the Memoirs I was engaged already in intensifying the sense, that the young Adolf Hitler, could yet become a high agent of the gods of death, and so could believe that his own end would not be like others, I had, of course, no sense yet of the dimensions to come. I do find it interesting, however, that close to the last few months of his life, Hitler did wish to be cremated. The greatest aspect of his life had always been his body, that unexpected frail-smelling flesh towards which Angels often

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Adolf Hitler's later readiness to exterminate humans by the train-load and the gas chamber was obviously not at this time an active longing. If I speak, therefore, of a year like 1945, it is to make no direct connection to 1900 and the months after Edmund's death. If, guided by the Maestro I was engaged already in intensifying the sense, that he, young Adolf Hitler, could yet become a high agent of the gods of death, and so could believe that his own end would not be like others, I had, of course, no sense yet of the dimensions to come. I do find it interesting, however, that close to the last few months of his life, Hitler did wish to be cremated. The meanest aspect of his life had always been his body, that somewhat foul-smelling flesh towards which Angela often

reacted as if his soul were bound to it. Yet, this late in his life, such understanding was false. By then, his soul—by any but our measure—was more befouled than his torso. Of course it is also true that when one holds the power to select whole ranks and categories of people to be liquidated, one does become an overseer of death and such leaders are in immense need of a very hard shell to their ego, hard enough to feel no intimate horror over the price to one's soul. Most statesmen who become successful leaders of a country at war have usually risen to such eminence because they have already installed in themselves the ability not to suffer sleepless nights when obliged to think of the casualties on the other side. They have become ready to call forth the bloody deeds required. At their disposal is the mightiest of all our social engines of psychic numbification—patriotism! That is still the most dependable lever upon the masses, although it may yet be replaced by revealed religion. We love fundamentalists. Their faith offers us every promise of becoming a weapon of mass destruction.

If these are the conclusions I have come to, I must also warn the reader: Our Maestro detests large thoughts in his minions. He speaks of them as vapors. He reminds us to return to more modest matters.

I think that by the end Hitler shared this sentiment. In 1944, one of the worst years of his life, with the war going badly, the Fuehrer, out at his underground retreat in East Prussia—The Wolfschanze—liked to tell his secretaries passing anecdotes over dinner. As, for example, how his father, on many a night, would lay a whipping on him. But, he assured his secretaries, he had been as brave as an American Indian under torture. Never did he make the smallest sound. On he went, regaling the ladies with these modest tales of his heroism. By then, being much more aged than his actual years—fifty-five—Adolf was ready to enjoy the advantages of old age. He delighted in receiving the admiration of women without having to pass through the anxiety of deciding whether he should consider copulating with them. His sexual spirit, so wholly unlike Alois', had never committed itself to seeking the glories or disasters of new fornication. (The fear of embarrassment was prodigious in Adolf and we looked to keep it that way—one small tool at our command.) Given the sum of the levers and buttons we had installed in the Fuehrer by then, an earthly companion was not in the least necessary to our aims.

Of course, the story he told the secretaries was a shameless exaggeration. On occasion he would even speak of two hundred strikes of the hand delivered by his father's arm.

Once, in the late 1930's, talking to Hans Frank, he told him, "When I was ten or twelve I had to go late at night into this stinking smoke-filled tavern. I made no attempt to spare my father's feelings. I went right up to the table where he sat staring at me doltishly and I shook him. 'Father,' I would say, 'it's time for you to come home. Up you get.' And often I would have to wait for a quarter of an hour or more, pleading and scolding before I could get him to his legs. Then I supported him home. I never felt so horribly ashamed. Oh, Frank, I know what a demon alcohol can be. Because of my father, it was the bane of my youth." Indeed, he told the story so well that Herr Frank even repeated it in the course of the Nuremberg trials.

because a regular and was usually present all that night a week at whichever was the intention for that date. It is the beginning, he had been still in his entrance and departure, the condition was caused by the quiet conversation now being offered. A general courtesy was like when he entered and every offered their search when he left. "This is the good side of the gentry," he told himself. At Custer, he had always seen them as chilly in their manner except when they had something to hide.

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Actually, Alois happened to be drinking with care. He did not dare to take too much. The fact that Edmund would not be there to greet him in the morning was unendurable. He felt as if he had consumed a bowl of ashes in his sleep.

On many an evening, he now needed to be alert because he was going to the Buerger-Abends, and the gentry were certainly more cultivated than himself. So he was not ready to get drunk, not when these people could lift him for an hour out of his worst moods. Without such elegant diversion, he would have to spend his night brooding on the young one's death. And so he

became a regular and was usually present all four nights a week at whichever was the inn chosen for that date. If, in the beginning, he had been stiff in his entrances and departures, the condition was eased by the quiet compassion now being offered. A general courtesy met him when he entered and many offered their warmth when he left. "This is the good side of the gentry," he told himself. At Customs, he had always seen them as chilly in their manner except when they had something to hide.

What impressed him now was that one of the members present most often at these Buerger-Abends was a rabbi named Moriz Friedmann who had been a member of the Austrian District School for eighteen years. Alois could see that most of the members were respectful of Friedmann, and this certainly helped to reinforce his notion that humankind could be divided into those who were cultured and those who were not. If a Jew could be acceptable to a Buerger-Abend, he told himself, then so could a peasant born into the lowest circumstances, yes, even if it were never to be mentioned, a child born illegitimately to a woman who slept on straw in an abandoned cattle trough. No, he was not about to drink too much on these evenings. Adolf never had to bring him home drunk. Given the decent welcome the Buerger-Abends gave

him now, the more he thought about it the more he concluded that he had a right to belong in their society because he, too, like Rabbi Moriz Freedmann, was a special individual. Something like six hundred Jews were living in Linz at this time which, given a population of sixty thousand, meant that there was one such man or woman in one hundred. Most of these Jews came from Bohemia and were actually not as crude as one would expect—so he would have told Klara if she had not supposed he was Jewish. Indeed, many of them were assimilated. They didn't walk around in old caftans smelling of stale places. Many were professionals or manufacturers, and many, like Moriz Freedman, had honorary federal posts. So, yes, they had come from the outside and so had he.

By now, Alois felt (just like Mayrhofer) that the town tavern was too raw. Given his grief, the loud voices could bring him close to tears whenever he thought of Edmund. Of course, he drank more at the tavern—but what an unmanly sight it would be, bursting into tears.

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Adolf entered Middle School in September of 1900, close to eight months after Edmund's death. Provided he was able to pass all his grades over the next four years—no routine matter—he would be out by his fifteenth birthday. His preference had been to attend the Gymnasium with its curriculum focused on the classics and art rather than the Realschule where emphasis would be given to practical disciplines.

Alois and Adolf had discussions concerning this. Sometimes, Klara would sit in the room, sometimes not, but the point at issue was the Gymnasium. Adi felt he could work there to good effect. His talent, he declared, was for art. Looking to put Alois in a compliant mood, he added that

he was also looking forward to studying the classics. Alois was scornful. "The classics? When your spelling in German has so deteriorated."

Klara spoke. "Our boy is upset. Naturally, that affects other things."

"I can appreciate some of his unhappy thoughts," said Alois, "But what you say is neither here nor there. I see no use in trying to enter the Gymnasium when he is not going to prove acceptable." He chose to look into Adolf's eyes. "Since you seem unable these days to spell German correctly, how, in the name of what your mother calls the Good God, will you do anything with Latin or Greek?"

At this point, Alois chose to speak to him in Latin. Not to test him, but to mock him. Absque labore nihil," said Alois.

"And what does that mean?" asked Klara sharply. How cruel of Alois! He made a show of lighting his pipe, pulling smoke in slowly, then releasing it at leisure before he said, "'Without labor, there is nothing,' is what it means," he said, offering up the smoke with small cultivated puffs of his lower lip. "I would say that applies to one's of schooling. In the Gymnasium, students must master their grammar in Latin and in Greek. Those are fine knowledges to acquire. It would give you superiority over others for the rest of your life. But

there is nothing without proper labor, and that school, Adolf, is not for you. Nor do you require courses in Ancient History or Philosophy or Art. In very few of them do I believe you would excel. It is better for you, in my opinion, to go to the Realschule. Not only is their practical teaching what you need, but I can help you to get in." (He was thinking of Mayrhofer's assistance.) "The other one is out, no matter what efforts I put forth. One look at your spelling and they will send you home."

Alois knew that he could ask some of the Buerger gentry for recommendations to the Gymnasium, but to what end? He would lose so much more than he could gain, and to no point or purpose. He sighed.

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Adolf's life was now going to change for the worse. Linz was five miles away and twenty times larger than Leonding. A trolley car was available once an hour, but if one missed it, there was a long walk across fields and forest before reaching the Realschule, a forbidding edifice on dark days.

Each morning, he would be reminded in one or another manner by his father, his mother, or even Angela, that he was the only son left, and the family must be able to count on him. Before long, he loathed the Realschule. Gone was the pleasure he had taken at school in Hafeld, in Lambach, and in

Leonding where he would excel. Now, the dark halls were ready to share his gloom. He thought often of the day when Alois, weeping over Edmund's death, had come close to suffocating him with the force of his embrace as he kept repeating, "You are my only hope,"—and such hope was full of tobacco breath. Could the atmosphere ever believe in such a lie? And this recollection of his father's assertion, so full of misery and mistruth was now attached to the portals of the Realschule.

His classmates, for the most part, came from well-to-do homes. They carried themselves differently from the farm boys and town boys he had known for the last few years, and he did not believe his mother when she told him: "Your father is the second most important man in Leonding. And the first, the mayor, Mayrhofer, is his good friend."

He doubted that such importance even reached the outskirts of Linz. No one there seemed to respect where he came from. Why, the Mayor, the most important man in Leonding, also sold vegetables in his store—a most elevated mayor! Adolf had not been in the school for a day before he felt uncultivated. In recess, he overheard two students speaking of the merits of the opera they had been taken to by their parents the night before. That was enough to give

him pause, but then he also thought he had heard a remark about himself:

"This Hitler, he comes from the peasants." He decided that he was being seen as a dolt who had to walk all the way to school from the provinces. Yes, on rainy days, he could take the trolley, but only if his parents gave him the pfennigs to afford it. An outlander! So many of these boys from Linz had never seen Leonding. They assumed it was mud-ridden. And then he could hardly stay after class and make friends when he had to plod back to the Garden house. His mock wars in the forest were possible now only on Saturday. There was no time to train troops or try out new rules of warfare.

Before long he was overcome once again with the thought that he was the person responsible for Edmund's death. Once more, he chose to talk to the trees. Now, that he was at the Realschule he did not often feel enough of a man to talk to Shatterhand. But the conversations had become orations. He inveighed against the stupidity of his teachers, and the stale aroma of their clothing. "They are earning a pittance," he said to a stately oak. "It is obvious. They cannot afford to change their linens. Angela should smell these teachers. Then she would respect her brother!" He had other topics. To an old elm, he declared, "It is supposed to be an advanced school, but I can say that it is a

stupid place. It is uncouth." He could hear the leaves murmuring in assent. "I have decided to go back to my study of drawing. I will do that at once. I know that I am excellent at capturing every detail of the most interesting buildings in Leonding and in Linz. When I show these drawings to my parents, even my father approves. He says, 'You are an excellent draftsman.' But then, he must spoil it. He also says, 'You have to learn more about perspective. You have not found the right size for the people who walk in front of your buildings. Some could be eight feet tall, others are pygmies. You must learn to draw bodies to scale. The people must be in proportion to the size of the building. It is a pity, Adolf, that you cannot get this right, because your drawing of the edifice, taken by itself, would be an excellent sketch.'"

Of course, half praise from his father was worth more than all of Klara's loving exclamations. It proved his point. Art was worth pursuing, not scholarship. "Scholarly work," he told the next grove of trees, "is pretentious. That may be why my teachers show a lack of interest in my possibilities. They are snobs. They dance disgustingly over boys who come from prosperous families. The air of this school, therefore, has become intolerable to me." What he does not tell the trees is that the only students who will have anything

to do with him during recess happen to be the ugliest kids in class, or the stupidest, or the poorest.

He believes in the wisdom of these old trees. They seem as wise to him as full-grown elephants. He would not want them to have a low opinion of young Adolf Hitler.

Some mornings he would wake up late and be obliged to take the train from Leonding to Linz. That bothered Klara. It was not a large expense but it was certainly unnecessary should the sun be out. She had a gnawing sense of loss when money was disbursed heedlessly. She used to feel as if coins spent in such a manner fell into a well that was dry at the bottom and so made an awful clatter.

In contrast, Adolf had no bad conscience about taking the train whenever he could. Still, on those many mornings when he did have to walk, his route would take him across fine old meadows and he did become interested in the forts on the way, particularly after he learned that these crumbling towers were left over from the earliest years of the nineteenth century when the Austrians had lived in fear that come one year or another, Napoleon was bound to march his armies across the Danube. So, they had built these watchtowers. One

morning, thinking of the workers who had put it together and the soldiers who had inhabited it, he became so excited that he had an ejaculation. Afterward, he was languid, but joyous. He was, of course, very late for school and was sent home with a note his mother was required to sign. She did not know whether to believe him that he had missed the train. For the next few days, however, the pfennigs were available to buy a ticket and travel to school at his ease.

step, and all the while he encountered such confusion as his mind that once or twice he had to wonder if his mental balance was in question.

It was not always so fearful. In time, he began to feel as if he might recover from the death, perhaps regain his strength. Only not altogether. Not even. There remained a hole drilled through his heart.

Nevertheless, those evenings seemed to be helping him. He needed to know witty conversation. These were the smartest and best-educated people he had ever associated with socially, and, so he took undue pleasure from their wit. On one night, for example, the bear had been imported from the town of Rheingau. A splendid bear. He -5- hardly about to confess to the other

There was an irony of which Adolf's schoolmates were not aware. Far from being a mud-ridden town, Leonding did have an upper class and they owned fine homes. Indeed, they were the regulars at the Buerger-Abends where the subtle differences of status between various members began to intrigue Alois until he recognized that he was looking for a diversion from his grief, any diversion, but his sorrow could not be diverted. Grief would not dissipate by this means. He must continue to descend into his sorrow, step by

step, and all the while he encountered such confusions on his route that once or twice he had to wonder if his mental balance was in question.

It was not always so fearful. In time, he began to feel as if he might recover from the death, perhaps regain his strength. Only not altogether. Not ever. There remained a hole drilled through his heart

Nonetheless, these evenings seemed to be helping him. He needed to hear witty conversation. These were the smartest and best-educated people he had ever associated with socially, and, so he took undue pleasure from little matters. On one night, for example, the beer had been imported from the town of Rheingau. A splendid beer. He was hardly about to confess to the other regulars how many pissy libations he had rolled around in his gut. And he did listen with high attention on another night when one of the gentry, obviously possessing a comfortable, even superior knowledge of wine, said in passing, "The British call this Hock. But that is only because the Reisling they like so much comes from Hochheim." Alois had learned to give a self-satisfied nod as if each such bit of culture gained had always been in his possession. One night Silvaner was served in oddly shaped bottles called Bocksbeutel. A round of laughter followed. "Bocksbeutel" meant "Ram's Testicle." Alois' mood lifted

sufficiently to wonder whether he should speak up. Who could know more about ram's testicles? Hadn't he once owned a well-endowed pair? Ask the ladies. But he did not dare to speak. He knew the difference between himself and these gentry. Most of them were able to stay in bed after the sun was up, and so they could eat and drink well into the evening. If it came to it, they could go on to midnight. Even when he was younger, he had rarely reached midnight unless he happened to be in a new woman's bed. Sad to say, he might just as well have been a common laborer going to work with a loaf of bread, some liverwurst and a jar of soup. He could see these gentry, now in their retirement, getting up to have a light breakfast—Eggs Benedict!—and then a fine cigar. Often in the late afternoon, these gentry might enter their carriages and drive into Linz with their wives in order to have a five o'clock tea at the Hotel Wolfinger or Der Drei Mohren, founded in 1565. There they would listen to violins. What did he know of that? Yes, it would be a rare late afternoon when he would have five o'clock tea at Der Drei Mohren or look at Der Haupt Platz from the lobby of Der Wolfinger. As he told Klara, such people were the ones in Leonding with the most elevated idea of themselves.

"Forget about Mayrhofer," he told her, "he's a fine fellow but these people come from very old families, the kind who have six courses for dinner. I have heard of as many as eight."

Klara remarked, "I could do that for you."

"No, my dear, no," he told her. "I am not even considering such a venture. Because the secret is you can't offer fancy dishes unless you have Meissen china porcelain or proper wine glasses."

"Proper wine glasses?" she asked. To her surprise, she was in some pain listening to him.

"Yes," he said, "they give a ring if you flip your finger on them."

Indeed, he was invited to one of those dinners. He went alone. Klara stayed home to take care of the children. When he came back by the last trolley, Klara remarked that perhaps they should invite these people to their home.

Alois replied, "They have indoor plumbing. Their bathroom is not an outside shed. The door to their bathroom does not have a hole cut into it in the shape of a half-moon. Our new friends, if they were such, would look upon such conditions as irresponsibly . . . droll." He had never used that word

before. "No," he went on, "we cannot have guests of that sort. What could I say when they ask, 'Where might I find the water closet?' Do I tell them, 'Don't mind the hole. Nobody will peep!'"

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On the last day of January, five months after Adolf had begun his studies at the Realschule, Klara was requested to come to the school

Afterward, on the trolley, her eyes shut tight to control her tears, Klara did not know whether she had the courage to tell Alois that Adolf's report card was dreadful.

Indeed, when Alois did learn on the following evening, it came after what was now the second-worst morning of the year for him, the first of February. He was trying to be ready for the anniversary of Edmund's death on the next day, February 2, and in the course of walking through Leonding, ready to think of nothing, he encountered Josef Mayrhofer. The Mayor then suggested something most unusual. Rarely did he leave his shop in the care of

his assistants unless as Mayor of Leonding tasks were awaiting him in Town Hall, but now he proposed that they go to the tavern for a drink.

Once there, they spoke of the oncoming weight of this first anniversary. They clasped hands tightly—good men in the grip of sorrowful emotions. Then Mayrhofer did something he had never done before. He said: "You must promise not to punish the messenger."

Alois replied with confidence, "You would never be the bearer of ill tidings," but already he could feel stirrings in his chest.

Mayrhofer said, "I must ask, do you have an older son who shares your first name?"

Alois seized the Mayor's forearm so hard that he bruised it. Mayrhofer freed himself with an unhappy smile. "Well," he said, "you have punished the messenger already." He held up a hand. "Enough," he said. "I have to tell you that your son is in prison now—a report came through today that circulates through the district. . ."

"In prison—? For what is Alois-Junior in prison?"

"I am so sorry. It is for theft."



A low guttural sound came forth. "I cannot believe it," Alois said. But he knew it was true.

Mayrhofer said, "You can visit him should you so desire."

"Visit him?" said Alois. "I don't think so." His back had broken into a rash. He was full of sweat, and on the edge of losing his good manners.

"The hardest thing I ever had to do in my life was to disavow my oldest son," he managed to put together. "Mayrhofer, you understand, we are such a good family. My wife and I have been careful to raise them properly. But, Junior was the bad apple in the barrel. If I had not disavowed him, the other children would have suffered. And now the three who are still alive—" he caught himself, he did not sob—"will turn out very well indeed."

That evening, at Klara's insistence, Adolf had to show his report card to Alois. Klara may have been infuriated earlier, but now, witnessing the expression on Alois' face, she felt as if she had betrayed her son.

In tones sufficiently somber to pronounce the onset of war, Alois stated: "I took a vow with your mother. It was at her request. I said that I would never whip you again. That was a year ago. We were thinking of the tragedy in our family. But now, you can be certain, I will break my vow. That is the

only course to take when the vow has been dishonored by the person most protected by it. Come! We are going to your bedroom." Once more, he was holding his temper. It broke, however, so soon as he took off his belt and had Adolf across his knee.

At the first lash of the belt, Adolf told himself, "I will not cry out!" The blows were, however, so severe that he began to shriek. Alois had never used a leather strap before. A tongue of flame might as well have been darting out of the leather. He plummeted from one terror into another. He did not want to die! Indeed, he did not know what would destroy him first—this scourge upon his buttocks or the galloping leaps of his heart. At that moment, his father, seriously winded, stopped, pushed Adolf off his knee and said, "You can stop crying now."

The whipping was engraved in Adolf's memory, and Alois went into his own depression—to live as long as he had, and now feel no confidence in the poor remains of his male line.

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Adolf was also suffering for other reasons. He had dared to show his drawings to the art teacher. He had assumed his submissions would be chosen, and there would be no further question. His work would dominate the cork wall reserved for students. He had even meditated on what the proper responses might be to the praise he would receive. He thought of the quietly confident remark with which he would respond to the compliments of his compatriots. These fine moments would make up for all the slights. It would also compensate for the poor marks on his first report card.

I must admit that I affected the result. While Adolf had some talent, it was nothing remarkable—I could see at a glance that he would never be an artist. (Young Pablo Picasso, for example, was already by 1901 a young man in

whom we were most interested.) By contrast, young Adolf Hitler produced drawings just good enough to fasten to the cork wall.

"Prevent this," was the instruction I received from the Maestro. "The last thing we need is the pumped-up mediocrity of an artist who is full of sour spirit at his lack of large recognition. Better to put him into a real slump."

I was certainly in position to accomplish this. Adolf's art instructor happened to be one of our clients. (Indeed, he bore a close resemblance to the mediocrity described by the Maestro.) So, I had to do no more than inflict a fearful headache by way of an altercation I developed between him and his wife. Adolf's work was seen the next morning through the light-shafts of a migraine. None of the drawings were selected.

He could not believe it. In that hour, he withdrew forever from the idea that he would ever look again for success in school. He would learn to live on his own.

Of course, he would not, like Alois-Junior, leave home, no need for that as yet. Toga Boy still brought sweat to his back. No, he would continue to live among the others while developing, unbeknownst to all, a will of iron.

He continued to do poorly in school. The report card of his first full year which he handed over to his father in June showed a failure in two courses, Mathematics and Natural History. In the year to come, he would have to repeat this first year of class. Poor Alois. He could not muster the energy to give Adolf a beating.

That summer, Adolf was equally depressed, but proceeded to tell himself (with my assistance) that the art of learning was something he comprehended far better than any other student. He had the secret. He would retain the essentials, ignore the non-essentials. Students were too ready to busy themselves with the endless study of details. They were just like the teachers. They could only recite categories. They were bores. They spoke like parrots. They smiled as if they were truly intelligent whenever a teacher approved of what they said. These were the ones who pulled down the good marks.

He was considerably above such concerns. So he told himself. He was interested in the hidden core of each situation. That was the valuable knowledge for which to search. So he would not bend his mind to the methods others used. That could only damage his brain.

It was imperative to cheer him up. His best amusement these days had become his power to tease Angela. Physically, he was, at last, her equal in strength. So whenever she criticized him, he called her a "stupid goose." For Angela, this was a dreadful term. She would even run to Klara to complain. She hated geese. She had seen them landing in the town pond, and to her, they were filthy. Angela had watched these geese as they crowded up on the banks, leaving their droppings behind them. She was, she told herself, more like a swan.

I did allow Adolf one fantasy where he proceeded to imagine himself a teacher at the Realschule. He dressed in elegant style and was clear-voiced, incisive, and regarded with admiration for his wit.

ADOLF: Here is the essential, young men. Do not try to remember all the facts of every historical event. I would say instead: "Protect yourself. You are swimming in clouded water." Most of these facts you have memorized are no better than debris which contradict other facts. So, you will be in a state of confusion. I can rescue you from that. The secret is to retain essentials. Select only those facts which clarify the issue.

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I think it may be time to take another look at the Buerger-Abends. One particular night, which grew most lively, the speaker, a portly man, offered the thesis that railway travel had affected some of the most long-established social relations. "Our sense of the world has been turned inside out by the railroads," he declared. "The king of Saxony, for example, is not in favor of such travel. As he put it recently, 'The laborer can now arrive at his destination on the same train as a king.' This is equal to saying that men who are well-off no longer travel more rapidly than the lower classes. Social disharmony could be an eventual product of all this."

In the discussion period, another member stood up to say, "I agree with my distinguished friend that many of these so-called modern improvements are of dubious value. Pocket watches are certainly a prime example. Anyone can now buy a time piece at a reasonable price. Yet, I still recall a time when it used to be a privilege to carry a fine watch. People in one's employ knew then when to approach if they needed to learn the time of day. Might I add that in the course of inquiry they would have to take note of the fine quality of your watch and its chain. They would leave your presence respectfully. Now, any roustabout can pull a piece of shoddy out of his pants and declare that his time keeps better than yours. Do you want to hear the worst of it?—sometimes, that is true."

Laughter followed this remark. "No, gentlemen," the speaker went on, "a cheap watch can be more accurate in this matter than our family pieces which, after all, are cherished because they have been with us for so long."

One evening, the lecture was on dueling scars—which left Alois wistful even as he listened with full attention to discussions of the best location for the wound, be it the left or right cheek, the chin, or the corner of the lips. He did, however, chime in toward the end by remarking that when he was a young

officer in the Customs Service, many of his superiors bore those scars and “we did respect them.” He sat down flushed. His remark had contributed little. It would not do to sound lame at the Buerger-Abends.

On another occasion, his feelings were hurt by a sportsman (with a prominent dueling scar) who entered into a long conversation with him. The first auto tour from Paris to Vienna had passed recently through Linz, and the man with the dueling scar not only owned a motor car but had been in the race.

Soon, the members were having a debate over the question of whether it was sensible to purchase an automobile. The sportsman who owned one had stimulated fiery comment. Considering that this was the Buerger-Abends, the oratorical heat approached rude manners. Those who were opposed to motor cars spoke contemptuously of the dust, the mud, the uproars, and, worst of all, the fumes. But the sportsman replied, “Yes, I know—these infernal machines are awful to you, but gentlemen, I happen to like the fumes. For me, they are an aphrodisiac.”

The remark was greeted with hoots and howls. He laughed, “Say what you will, these fumes offer a hint of debauch.” At which he dared to sniff his fingers to the groans and laughter of the company. “You can rest content with

your carriages and your stables. In contrast, I like the unique vivacity of traveling at high speeds.”

“Oh, that is much too much!” someone called out.

“Not at all,” the speaker replied. “The sense of danger is welcome to me. I am stimulated by the roar of the engine. The attention of those many pedestrians who used to admire a fine horse and carriage is now offered to the virtues of my iron monster as I rush by.”

Alois was certainly impressed by this rich sport, especially when he capped his argument by saying, “Yes, to drive a motor car does offer risk. But so is it dangerous to rein in a horse who has broken loose. I would rather risk my neck in a motor car than shatter my bones in an over-turned coach. Or, sit behind some old nag of a beast who secretly loathes my guts.”

How they roared at that! Nothing worse than such a horse.

Later, when the debate was over, the speaker chose to engage Alois in a quiet conversation whose concealed agenda was soon evident. He began to ask more than a few questions about Customs’ procedures. Alois was offended. After being so brilliantly full of himself at the podium, the man had now

become obvious in his motive. "You sound as if you are preparing to cross a few borders," Alois remarked.

"Indeed I am," said the Sport. "But it's the English I am thinking about. They say the English can be the worst." He made a point of speaking in profile so that Alois might be properly impressed with the dueling scar on his left cheek.

It was a good jagged cicatrix, perfect for a man as handsome and well-possessed of himself as this fellow, but work in Customs had offered its own sagacities, and so Alois could distinguish between a genuine scar occasioned by the saber of the dueling partner hacking through the padding on your face and thereby leaving a bona-fide laceration, as opposed to a self-created dueling scar worked up by some ambitious toad looking to charm the ladies. A fellow like that would use a razor to open a wound on his face and then embed a horse-hair in the gap. That could build the scar up into a welt high enough to dignify the rest of his career.

When well done, such a scar might appear to be authentic, but Alois had already decided that this fellow had almost certainly used a horse-hair. The scar did sit too perfectly on his face.

So, Alois said no more in return than, "I expect we are still just as good as the English if it's a question of bringing precious objects into Austria without paying duty. Celer et vigilans," added Alois. "That used to be my motto." It was a happy prevarication—he had only memorized the saying before the meeting. "Quick and watchful"—that ought to give the fellow some pause.

"Numquam non paratus," answered the Sport, to which Alois could only smile.

His first act on returning home was to look up the meaning. "Never unprepared." An old wrath came back to him for a moment. How he would like to get his hands on that fellow in a Customs shed.

All the same, Alois was feeling expansive at dinner. The excitement of the discussion was still with him, and as he recounted his final observation on the dueling scars, Adolf did listen avidly. Some day he would have his own motor car. Perhaps, even, his own dueling scar.

Alois murmured, "A very good sign. Once you allow comfort to be your first concern, the real test begins known to follow."

Alois was eating up on his demands. He had been ill. Two months earlier, in December of the previous year, 1901, he had had influenza, which frightened him. Once again, he felt an overwhelming need to be able to impress this headstrong son and knew he did not know how.

So, in early February, soon after the second anniversary of Edmund's death, Alois decided to try once again to come a little closer. Having noticed that Adolf listened with intense interest whenever the conversations at the Burger-Abend were described, he

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To Adolf's surprise, there came a night when Alois did take him to the opera. This event—they were to hear *Lohengrin*—had come about by way of an improvement in his report card for February of 1902. During the first half of his second year which, due to his previous failure, was a repeat of the first half of the first year, he did receive a passing grade in every course. There were even favorable comments on his diligence and conduct. This occasioned

Alois to declare, "A very good sign. Once you allow conduct to be your first concern, the rest has been known to follow."

Alois was easing up on his demands. He had been ill. Two months earlier, in December of the previous year, 1901, he had had influenza, which frightened him. Once again, he felt an overbearing need to be able to improve this recalcitrant son and knew he did not know how.

So, in early February, soon after the second anniversary of Edmund's death, Alois decided to try once again to come a little closer. Having noticed that Adolf listened with intense interest whenever the conversations at the Buerger-Abends were described, he was also pleased to see that Adolf would read all the newspapers that had been brought home. Indeed, by virtue of a few remarks Adolf offered at the family table, Alois knew that some of his son's fellow students (obviously from the more well-to-do families) did talk in recess about operas they had attended. Alois decided it was time to take the boy.

Let me add it came as no surprise to me that walois was ready to speak derogatively of the Linz opera house. "To Linzers," he told Adolf, "this opera house is a splendid building, but if you have spent time in Vienna and know as I do, a true opera house, you will find the performance here not so impressive.

Of course, coming from Hafeld and Lambach or even Leonding, I expect that you will feel tonight as if you are hearing high opera. And, indeed, Linz has obtained the right to call itself a city and be proud of its opera house. Nonetheless, what we will hear tonight is in no way equal to Vienna. Adolf, if you prove successful, if you have a career that thrives, then someday, perhaps, you will live in Vienna and will then truly enjoy the heights of musical pleasure.”

Alois was pleased with the speech. He had come to the point in his life where he felt that if much else was diminishing, his ability to express himself with the well-rounded criticisms of a true Buerger-Abender had certainly developed.

So Adolf was taken to hear his first Wagner in a second-rate opera house. And despite his father's comments, he was, for the most part, engaged, and more than once, enthralled. If he sneered at the entrance of the great swan who was towing Lohengrin's boat forward from the wings to rescue Elsa (for Adolf could hear the squeak of the boots made by the two men installed within the swan and propelling it forward,) he was overcome by Elsa's aria of

welcome to Lohengrin. "I see in splendor shining, a knight of glorious mien. . . Heaven has sent him to save me. He shall my champion be."

Tears came to Adolf's eyes full of love, warmth and adoration for himself. Tomorrow, he would mingle among the students who spoke of operatic performances they had attended. During intermission, therefore, he listened to the comments of the most impressive looking opera-goers. "How fastidious of Wagner," said one such man to another, "that he uses the violins and woodwinds rather than allowing himself to be trapped by the harp. Wagner knows his celestial sounds. It is as if he is the first to have discovered them. Violins, oboe, and bassoon, yes, and away with the harps."

Yes, thought Adolf, he would repeat this tomorrow at school.

Alois, in turn, was off on his own meditation. Brooding over the skill of the upper classes, he decided that they had a foundation for their good fortune. They knew how to obtain proper installations for their sons in the army, the church or the law, and thereby could be proud of the achievements of their family. Yet, why conclude that he was not as good as any of them? Granted, he had started from a low place, but he was ready now to live with their point of view. They understood that the oldest son, able or not, must be ready

nonetheless to fulfill the destiny of the family. That was not only true for the army and the church but for government officials as well. Bureaucrats, after all, could become ministers of state. If that had not been for him, what with starting at the bottom of the ladder, still he felt entitled to one certainty. If he had had these advantages of birth, he would have made a fine minister. Now, should Adolf actually become a son worthy of his respect, why would the boy not be in position to rise above his father's considerable achievements? That, as Alois measured it, was also in the conceivability of things. Listening now to this music, so true to his elevated mood, so vaulting, so ambitious, so bold, Alois allowed himself to shed, in the dark, a few happy tears upon a well-spent life, and oh, now! so finely mingled were these sentiments with *Lohengrin's* final sounds. Applause! His palms were red from the outburst he gave to the company of this second-rate opera house.

Adolf, however, was not ebullient. Given the power of the last chords, he had plummeted from a high and splendid mood into his familiar despondency.

I would say this is one of our basic problems. We have more than our share of clients who can rise high into the intoxications of their private dreams,

but then plummet down to the ugliness of their real condition. So we have developed the ability to calm them. Even as he was soaring up to the empyrean with Wagner, the downfall of his confidence was commencing. Wagner was a genius. That, Adolf had decided instantly and distinctly. Every note spoke to him. But could he say this was also true of himself? Or, was he not a genius after all? Not next to Wagner.

Whatever conversation moved in that direction, however, Adolf would speak of becoming an artist. Alois would then suggest, "You can do both. Without question, you can do both. Have I not done more than one thing in my life?"

Well, there was the boy needing to gloomy resignation, as if it was obligatory to keep paying homage to a father's repetitions. In time, Alois had shared speaking of the Customs Service. The small results obtained left him feeling Jewish.

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Going back to Leonding on the last trolley car, Alois was not happy either. Now that he had given Adolf the gift of Lohengrin, he must find a way to present the bill. Would the boy feel ready to accompany him on a visit to the Customs House? For months, he had been contemplating each and every reasonable occupation for Adolf to pursue, and had come to the conclusion that Customs remained the best choice. It would, at least, be comparable to entering an esteemed profession from a good family. But he must persuade Adolf.

He knows again, and I must agree it is an interesting opinion, that the gap between the wealthy and the poor is being diminished."

Whenever conversation moved in that direction, however, Adolf would speak of becoming an artist. Alois would then suggest, "You can do both. Without question, you can do both. Have I not done more than one thing in my life?"

Well, there was the boy nodding in gloomy resignation, as if it was obligatory to keep paying homage to a father's repetitions. In time, Alois had ceased speaking of the Customs Service. The small results obtained left him feeling liverish.

Yet, the small improvement in Adolf's marks did remind Alois that a father must not fail to pick up any hint of a positive change in an adolescent son. He must, therefore, make one more effort to give the boy a worthy life. He must get him to come along on a visit to the Customs House. The architecture of the building, so powerful, might well impress Adolf.

On a given night, therefore, Alois gave one of his monologues at the family table and felt that the spirit of the Buerger-Abends now enabled him to develop a discourse with more clarity than ever. "There is one fellow in our club who keeps saying, and I must agree it is an interesting opinion, that the gap between the wealthy and the poor is being diminished."

"Is that so?" asked Klara, wishing to come into the conversation.

"Absolutely. We've had fine discussions on this matter. It is due to our railway system. You can be rich or you can be poor—no matter! You travel at the same high speed. Oh, I tell you, and you, children, pay attention to this, you, Angela, and you, Adolf. Remember this prediction: The cities are going to expand and there will be money everywhere. I've heard talk in these evenings at the Buerger-Abends of peasants, people so poor that—I will use an expression you are now old enough to understand. There are people so poor that"—he had to whisper the next—"they use their hands to wipe themselves."

"Oh, Daddy!" screamed Angela.

Alois could not resist. "And then they scrape their fingers in the dirt to get them clean."

To which Angela could only scream again, "Oh, Daddy! Oh, Daddy!" but she was laughing at how ready he was to be disgusting, and yet knew her so well.

"Oh," says Alois, "that was the way it used to be. But, now, some of these once impoverished people are smart enough to know what is coming next. I even hear of peasants who are sharp enough to sell their holdings to

men who are planning to build factories there just so soon as the roads come in. And the roads will come. Yes,” he said, “Everything is racing forward and even the peasants are in this race. But you, Adolf, with your intelligence, well, I’ve come to the conclusion that you are potentially a very intelligent young man, and will yet be cultured. So I would look to warn you. These changes in society are going to alter the nature of the work we do. Education is coming, and it will take over everything. Even fools will be able to read and write. Of course, and we discuss this often at the Buerger-Abends, it is important that not everybody become so educated that we lose all distinction of what it should still mean to be called *Herr Doktor*. Adolf, if you study hard at your school, yes, it is only the Realschule not the Gymnasium, nonetheless, you will be able to go on and become an engineer, may it be, and they will call you, once you get your Ph.D., yes, that will be the day for you and for all of us for then you, too, will be called *Herr Doktor*. I can tell you I would have liked to have been addressed in such a way and thereby enjoy even a higher level of respect in the community than I do now.” He held up his hand. “Although I certainly do not complain. Not at all. But if I had been *Herr Doktor*, your mother would have been called *Frau Doktor* even though she has never seen the entrance gates to a

university.” At this point Alois laughed and Klara turned red. “Yes,” said Alois, “It is possible that your interests may turn to business. In my day that was not possible for someone with my origins. But now it is not like it was when I was young. Now, maybe your gift will be for commerce or technology. And yet, I do not really see you as an engineer or a businessman because there is one fault with all such success—you have no time to yourself. A businessman has no peace. He takes his work home with him. So does an engineer. What if his bridge collapses?” Alois paused, took a deep breath, and remarked: “If you should ever decide to work in Customs, your evenings and your weekends will always be there, open to your choice. You will be able to work at your art.”

Despite all, Alois was having his affect. Such talk left Adolf with a nervous stomach. But that was because he was no longer certain whether his father was absolutely a fool, or might have to be listened to. If the latter, then there could be some most miserable choices ahead and nothing but awful people to live and work among. What if he was not destined to be a great artist or a great architect? What if he was no Wagner? There was one thing that

could be said for Customs, and his father had made the point—he could have a separate life after work.

So they went to the Customs House. Despite all of Alois' locutions, the visit did not succeed. The worst of it was they entered into the main accounting house where all the clerks were working. An unhappy smell came up from the general collection of middle-aged bodies gathered together under gas lamps with eye shades on their foreheads. Naturally, his father would not mind such aromas. When young, he had made shoes, boots, fancy boots and had to sniff officers' toes during the fitting. No, he, Adolf, would not spend his life in a mausoleum with cubicles full of the old smells of old men sitting on top of each other like monkeys.

At the dinner table after the visit, Alois made another attempt. "So many of my colleagues," he said, "are now fine friends. I could visit good people all over Upper Austria, men still in Breslau and Passau, yes." Adolf was wondering where they all might be. He had rarely seen anyone come to visit, not even Karl Wesseley, the often-cited best friend. But Alois went on: "There are so many benefits, yes. The pensions, the time that is there for yourself. I can tell you, security plus a good pension enables a man to avoid all

misery in his middle years and after he retires he does not have to worry about not having enough funds. Nothing, I warn you, Adolf, creates more discord in a family than lack of money. That is why our family does not have ugly arguments. There is no need for that."

Since this speech was at the dinner table, Angela, passing behind Alois, could not help herself. She was thinking of the departure of Alois-Junior. No ugly arguments! How could her father speak that way? She stuck out her tongue behind his back. Klara saw this, but said nothing. It would be bad enough when Alois came to realize that his fine talk would go for nothing. Indeed, she was correct. As the months went by, Alois gave up the idea of the Customs House. His son was not going to follow decent advice. But it did spoil many a mood.

That summer, worried about his own health, and determined to strengthen his physical condition, his spirits did pick up on hearing of a fine bargain in the neighborhood. A small coal merchant who lived nearby needed to sell a load to pay off some debts, but customers were all too few in summer. Alois made a very good deal.

He chose, however, to ignore Klara's advice. She told him to hire an assistant to help with the job of getting all that coal down to the cellar bins. He also ignored her second suggestion that he use Adolf. He did not wish to share labor with the boy—they were bound to have a dispute over his attitude.

Still, Klara's suggestions did bear some weight. Having succeeded in purchasing the coal at half price, he tried to bargain with the seller. "I expect you," he told him, "to bring it down to the bin," at which point the dealer replied, "Oh, you rich fellows. You are always ready to keep us poor. No, sir, I cannot carry your coal down for you. Not at the price you reduced me to." At which Alois decided to do it himself. "I may not be as rich as you think I am," he told the man, "but I am certainly stronger than I look."

So he did it. To pay the man what he wanted for the last part of the job would take some of the luster from his bargain. Ergo, he toted a half ton of coal down to the bin. It took two hours up in the sun and down in the dust of the cellar. Once the job was completed, he keeled over with a hemorrhage.

his grin usually reserved for the forest. When blood charged to his penis, it was blood that he shared with these particular fellow students.

I, of course, was free of attitude on this matter. I was ready to work with German clients who, like Adolf, believed in German blood, but I could be just as effective with Orthodox Jewish clients who believed in the supremacy of Jewish blood. I could also work, and very well indeed, with Jewish clients who were Socialists, or with German Socialists, although that called for being comfortable with clients whose only -11-

For weeks, following Alois' recovery, Adolf would hear the wonder in his mother's voice at how much blood had come from Alois' mouth, and he regretted, even if he could not quite admit it to himself, that he had not been there on that occasion.

Responding to the Maestro's suggestion, I encouraged him to brood upon blood. I can say that without priming by me, he was soon illuminated by a concept. Blood was magic. It could be shared by a people. When he looked at the strongest and most handsome boys in his class, he tingled in those places

his groin usually reserved for the forest. When blood charged to his penis, it was blood that he shared with these particular fellow students.

I, of course, was free of attitude on this matter. I was ready to work with German clients who, like Adolf, believed in German blood, but I could be just as effective with Orthodox Jewish clients who believed in the supremacy of Jewish blood. I could also work, and very well indeed, with Jewish clients who were Socialists, or with German Socialists, although that called for being comfortable with clients whose emphasis was on the air, the spirit, the intellect—all of those invisible currents and gasses where they hoped to find enlightenment and the security of un-bloody world views. And, of course, I also worked with clients who were Communist and would not have called themselves Reds if they did not, in their fashion, believe in blood. We were always able to work on the beliefs with which our clients lived. Once established in their prejudices, we could move to alter their certainties enough to serve our needs. Often we would intensify the hatred such clients felt for all that was opposite to them in other humans.

was allowed to advance, Alois felt considerably more disturbance in the gathering on this occasion. In the last few weeks a number of protests were registered in Linz because a Capuchine Monk named Jurkisch had been asked to preach in St. Martin's church and would deliver his sermon in the Czech language in order to collect money for a proposed Czech school. Even in the Buerger-Abends, some began to complain (most incorrectly as it turned out) that in the long term there would be a Czech invasion of Linz.

Alois was in it most surely. "If there is a Czech uprising," he said, "I will open the end of the Austrian Empire and yet," as he would answer to the others, "my best friend is a Czech."

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After recuperating from the hemorrhage, Alois gave Adolf no more beatings. Sometimes when Alois thought the boy was becoming too sure of himself, and too impolite in subtle ways towards his mother, or directly impolite to Angela, Alois would threaten a beating, but the threat had lost all drama. If only could get that up with the Prussians." Then Wendley went

At the Buerger-Abends on the night before New Years Eve of 1903, the members allowed themselves a bit more to drink. And after two years of showing up as religiously as any other member, and able by now to recognize

many a mood in advance, Alois felt considerably more disturbance in the gathering on this occasion. In the last few weeks a number of protests were occasioned in Linz because a Cappucine Monk named Jurichek had been invited to preach in St. Martin's church and would deliver his sermon in the Czech language in order to collect money for a proposed Czech school. Even at the Buerger-Abends, some began to complain (most incorrectly as it turned out) that before long there would be a Czech invasion of Linz.

Alois was left most uneasy. "If there is a bona-fide Czech uprising," he said, "it could mean the end of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire and yet," as he would murmur to the others, "my best friend is a Czech."

He almost recounted a discussion he had with Karl Wesseley, who passed by on a business trip from Prague to Salzburg, "We Czechs are no problem," Wesseley had told him, and added, "Czechs offer more loyalty to the Emperor than all of you Austrian-Germans who would dissolve the Empire in a moment if you could just link up with the Prussians." Then Wesseley went back to Prague.

His brief visit left Alois, however, in a state of confusion. Contradictory remarks were now being voiced by him at the Buerger-Abends. It was as if the

loss of blood had also loosened his tongue. First, he would be on one side of an argument, then the other. Finally, he was attacked by one of the oldest gentlemen in the club.

Unfortunately, this fine elder statesman also proved to be somewhat unbalanced on this occasion. "Herr Alois," he said, "you have been so totally opposed to our poor little local priest who wants to invite poor Czechoslovakian workers to free food kitchens when they are hungry. That does make you sound like a pro-German. 'Get rid of these dirty Czechs,' it seems you are saying. But, I cannot follow you. Your best friend, you tell us, is a Czech. Dear Herr Hitler, I hesitate to say this, but I must attribute your confusions to the one affliction we are all in danger of approaching these days, and that is premature old age. You are not an old man yet, not as old as I am, but, my esteemed fellow Buerger-Abender, I must warn you that confusions, if not cleared up, can swallow any of us." And abruptly he sat down as if to apologize for having gone too far.

Unhappily for Alois, the old man had not been inaccurate. Since the lung hemorrhage, Alois had lost exactly that clarity of which he had been so proud. Now, many of his thoughts seemed to come into his head for no better

purpose than to proclaim the opposite of his previous thoughts. Indeed Alois confessed as much to Wesseley on the last visit, after which he sighed and said, "I like talking to you. In my opinion, you are as deep as the sea."

"Alois, tell the truth. Have you ever seen a large body of water?" asked Wesseley.

"Beautiful lakes I have seen, and plenty. That is enough." He paused. "Whereas now I feel as if I am living in the desert."

A couple of nights after the old member's tirade, Alois kept remembering that some of the Buerger-Abenders had been nodding their heads in agreement. And Alois did keep hearing the old man's voice: "You say that we give too much to the Czechs, but then I hear you tell us that to be against the Jews and the Hungarians is antagonistic to good culture. Where is the focus of your thoughts these days?"

After this upbraiding, Alois had felt so weak that he had not enough vigor to get up and leave the room. But then he found such strength. Not often did members walk out of the Buerger-Abends in such abrupt manner, but on this occasion it became an imperative. Be damned to how weak he felt.

He was furious. Now, it seemed undeniably clear to him that he had been tolerated at the Buerger-Abends. Not a friend—merely tolerated. Did they laugh among themselves at remarks he had made? Was it like that? Had he been their resident fool?

It gave him a frightful headache. Five days later, on January 3, he was dead before noon.

BOOK XIV

ADOLF AND KLARA

On the morning of January 2, 1903, Adolf was not feeling too well, and so he sat idly with the Swift for a glass of wine. To cheer himself, he was dwelling in an old memory.

Once in Canton, many years ago, he had come across a box of cigars whose seal had been carefully removed, then re-posted. He could discern as much by a thin veil of canvas at the edge of the stamp. When the box was opened, he found a diamond under the cigars. He was even tempted to pocket it. The smuggler—a well-dressed traveler—indicated that he could have the doubts if he wasn't brought in for trial. Adolf, however, was afraid of a man

intention, he was proud of his honesty. He had never indulged in such dishonesty. If, on this occasion, he was tempted because the gem looked to be a valuable stone, still he did turn it over to the authorities. That certainly helped to advance his position.

He had used this consolation more than once as a tonic to his spirits, but now, at the Customs Station, he did not experience the pleasure he expected to feel on the first step of his return home. -1- The confirmation of the law

February morning of 1903 present, he collected. His last thought was to

On the morning of January 3, 1903, Alois was not feeling too well, and so on his daily walk through Leonding he decided to stop at the Gasthaus Steifer for a glass of wine. To cheer himself, he was dwelling in an old memory.

Once, in Customs, many years ago, he had come across a box of cigars whose seal had been carefully removed, then re-pasted. He could discern as much by a thin welt of cement at the edge of the stamp. When the box was opened, he found a diamond under the cigars. He was even tempted to pocket it. The smuggler—a well-dressed traveler—indicated that he could have the bauble if he wasn't brought in for trial. Alois, however, was afraid of a trap.

Moreover, he was proud of his honesty. He had never indulged in such chicanery. If, on this occasion, he was tempted because the gem looked to be a valuable stone, still he did turn it over to the authorities. That certainly helped to advance his promotions.

He had used this recollection more than once as a tonic to his ego, but now, at the Gasthaus Steifer, he did not capture the pleasure he expected to feel on the first sip of his wine. Instead, to the consternation of the few Saturday morning drinkers present, he collapsed. His last thought was in Latin: Acta est fabula. He said it aloud and passed out, proud to have remembered Caesar's last words. "The play is over!"

Now, the innkeeper and his assistant carried him to an empty side room. The waiter was ready to run for a priest, but the tavern owner said, "I don't think Herr Alois would want one!"

"Sir," asked the waiter, "can one be certain in matters like this?"

The innkeeper shook his head. "All right, get him."

But it developed that their patron was dead before the priest arrived, dead from a pleural hemorrhage, which the doctor declared as soon as he came in.

Klara arrived with the children a few minutes later, and Angela began to sob. She was the first to see her father's body. Laid out on the table he looked as if he were made of wax. Adolf burst into tears. He was terrified. He had dreamed of his father's death for so long that when the waiter came rushing to their house, Adolf did not believe the news. He was certain his father was merely pretending to be dead. That would be his father's way to rouse a little sympathy from the family. Indeed, even as they hurried through the streets to the Gasthaus, Adolf remained convinced. Only when he saw the body, was he overcome. He wept loudly and without cease. His immediate necessity was to conceal every last wish he had had for the demise of his father. It was as if the more he wept, the more might God believe he did mourn the loss. (That he was certain of God's interest in him had become a keystone of his vanity—one of my major contributions.)

On January 5, the day of the funeral, he wept in church. By now, however, it had become a labor to force his tears sufficiently to impress the men and women who might be staring at him. I, in my turn, had to convince him that God would not be angry. In consequence, I was presenting myself once again as his guardian angel. While we can, on occasion, alleviate fear of

the Lord by increasing our client's sense that the Power Above does loves one, it is a tricky task, since the better we are at it, the greater grows the risk that the client will react with piety enough to attract the attention of the Cudgels and they in turn will be particularly vindictive toward us because we dared to imitate them.

Indeed, on one occasion when I played at being a Guardian Angel for another client, one of the Cudgels threw me down a flight of stone stairs. It may be hard to conceive but spirits can also take a damaging fall. Since I was not corporeal at the time, there was no flesh to bruise but, oh, what a pummeling to my inner presence! Steel and stone are the harshest materials to come in contact with most manifestations of the Spirit. That is why prisons are built of them.

Let me not digress, however, from the funeral. I had to prepare Adolf to deliver more facsimiles of grief. We were certainly facing a demand altogether different from that first burst of tears when he saw his father dead. Now, in order to locate a few sobs, he had to recover the bits and pieces of the few good conversations he had had with Alois. It helped that he had had to admire (if grudgingly) the way his father could speak. But that might not be

enough to prime the dry well of so miserly a sorrow. At last, he had to think of the day when they went to Der Alte's house for the first time. He was able to shed tears at this recollection, but in part, he knew, it was for Der Alte's death.

So the weeping, while in full view of everyone in church, did take on its constrictions. His sobbing pinched off each time he saw Alois' body before him again at the Gasthaus Steifer. Close to hiccups, he was able to cry in earnest only when he thought of how awful it had been for Der Alte to die alone and not be found for weeks.

Klara felt close to Adolf on this occasion, and was proud of his ability to mourn openly. Her maternal sensitivities, however, never wholly removed from telepathy, had her soon thinking of bees. She remembered how she would talk to the Langstroth boxes in Hafeld on evenings when Alois was at the tavern in Fischlham. Now, she wondered whether she might even leave a wreath on the empty beehive that still remained at the back of the house in Leonding. His last little hive had only given them a modest amount of honey, but back in Hafeld, following the old customs of Spital and Strones, she had made a point of talking to the beehives and would relate to them what was

going on in the family. In childhood she had been told that it was bad luck not to speak to your bees. You were supposed to. And if you ever were so unlucky as to see a swarm alight on a dead plant, why, then, a member of the family was bound to die.

When Alois had started the new hive in Leonding, she had told him about this practice, and asked if he would like her to do it again. He laughed. "I can see the point if it's a real bee-house of the sort Der Alte had. When there's a large investment," said Alois, "one would not wish to endanger it in any manner. So, of course, a few superstitions cannot hurt, and how can one say it will not help? But, if you insist, tell the few bees we now have what there is to know about us. They will look to pass such gossip on to the newspapers," and he had laughed heartily at his own joke, enough for her to regret telling him.

She remembered how just six months ago, Alois had cursed bitterly when these bees had swarmed away. That indeed had been the end of the venture in Leonding. The ugly dreams he had had in Hafeld that his hives would desert him had taken place instead, six years later, in the summer of 1902.

Now, at this moment at the funeral, a half year later, she was convinced. The loss of his bees had helped to produce his lung hemorrhage. That was because he had been afraid to climb the tree onto which they had swarmed. She was certain he knew to which tree they had gone but pretended he didn't because by then he did not feel able to climb a tree. So, instead he had chosen instead to carry the coal all by himself down to the cellar. So foolish an act! His disappointment with Adolf, his heartbreak concerning Paula—no, she must not dwell on any of this, not for a moment. Nor dare to think of Edmund! She blinked back bottomless grief. One must weep properly at a funeral, and she wanted to scream.

The priest's memoriam proved acceptable. She had chosen not to tell him how irreligious was her husband, even as she knew he must have heard many a rumor. All the same, this priest now offered a dignified eulogy describing Alois' service to the Empire. That, said the priest, could also be God's desire.

Later, after the funeral, as people came to visit at the Garden House, Klara looked to convince herself that Adolf's grief was real. Once again, she decided that he had loved his father. It was just that both of them had lived too

much in their pride, and such pride was bound to turn into cloud-banks of animosity. They were men. Anger was natural to them. But beneath, was love. Such love could not be expressed directly, but in years to come, wisps of grief she knew, would wander through Adolf's soul, grief possessing all the tenderness of a mist.

The funeral took place on an icy day. The roads were glass. All the trees were bare, the skies were dark. Yet, virtually everyone they knew in Leonding seemed to be there as well as his colleagues from the Customs' office. His closest friend, Karl Wesseley, had come all the way from Prague. He spoke to Klara for a little while and said, "Oh, we used to tease each other unmercifully, Frau Hitler, and how we laughed. Alois, as you know, loved his beer, and I had my preference for wine. 'Ach! You are nothing but an Austrian,' I would tell him, 'so you drink beer like a German, but we Czechs are elevated enough to enjoy wine.' We certainly joked back and forth. 'Ach! You Czechs,' he would then say to me. 'You are cruel to grapes. You torture them. You stamp all over them with your dirty feet and then, when the poor grapes are feeling very sour and altogether bitter from such mishandling, you add sugar and pretend to be connoisseurs. You sip your sour juice and sugar

and try not to make a face. Beer, at least, comes from grain. Its feelings are not so tender.'" He laughed as he told her. "Your husband knew how to talk. We had such fine times together."

Mayrhofer spoke to her of the frightful day when he had told Alois about Junior's incarceration. "Dear Frau Hitler," he said, "I wake up at night and upbraid myself for having been such a messenger."

The Linz Tages Post also carried an ad in strong type:

**Bowed in deepest grief, we, on our own behalf,
and on behalf of all the relatives, announce the passing
of our dear and unforgettable husband, father, brother-
in-law, uncle, Alois Hitler, High Official of the Royal
Imperial Customs, retired, died Saturday, January 3,
1903, at 10 o'clock in the morning in his 65th year,
suddenly fell peacefully asleep in the Lord.**

In the cemetery, Alois' stone carried his photo protected by a glassed frame, and beneath was the following inscription:

Here rests in God

Alois Hitler**Higher Customs Officer and Householder.****Died 3rd January, 1903 in his 65th year**

Adolf seethed. His mother was a criminal hypocrite, he decided. She would honor her husband's memory, yes, indeed! "Rests in God," indeed! All that was left of Alois now was his picture resting in a frame set on the headstone in the cemetery, the glass in the frame ready to protect the photograph from all the wrath of the weather, his hair close-cropped, his father's small eyes standing out, as beady as a bird's, his Franz Josef sideburns, and his mustache sprouting like a dumb goat's horns. Yes, here was a man who had served his Emperor, but how could anyone say he was resting in God? His mother was a damned hypocrite.

Klara, however, was warmed by a notice the Linz Tages Post gave to the funeral:

**We have buried a good man—this might we say of
Alois Hitler, Higher Collector, Retired, from the
Imperial Customs Service, who was borne here to his
final resting place today.**

She was so proud of the notice. It was not an advertisement. The paper had done it on its own, the paper with the largest circulation in Upper Austria. She read this item over and over. The lines brought back each moment of the funeral. She could picture Adolf weeping once again, and felt considerable comfort. To herself she said, "He did love his father, after all," and had to keep nodding her head to sustain the thought.

There were other compensations. Attending the Realschule for the second half of his third year from February 1901 to June, Adolf could see that a number of the students were less studiously. Was this due to the death of his father? He also felt more comfortable with his studies now that he was free of school work and so he felt more ready to talk back to his teachers, one unhappy fellow in particular, who was there to conduct religious instruction for several hours each week.

Adolf decided this instructor must be the poor relative of somebody who had enough influence at the school to get him the job. Just Schwann was a red, dark, old man, but then he was teaching religion.

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Each year, Klara would receive a pension from the government that came to half of Alois' annual salary. In addition, other monies would be paid to the children so soon as they turned 18. The total together with her pension would be enough to keep them comfortable.

Since Adolf could remember Alois's remarks about security in a family, he now had to recognize that it did make some kind of sense. He certainly would not have liked to go to work at this point.

There were other compensations. Attending the Realschule for the second half of his third year from February 1903 to June, Adolf could see that a number of the students were less unfriendly. Was this due to the death of his father? He also felt more comfortable with his studies now that he was free of Alois' wrath and so he felt more ready to talk back to his teachers, one unhappy fellow in particular, who was there to conduct religious instruction for several hours each week.

Adolf decided this instructor must be the poor relative of somebody who had enough influence at the school to get him the job. Herr Schwamm was a sad, dank, old man, but there he was, teaching religion.

During recess one morning, Adolf heard one of the students telling others about a medieval churchman, Saint Odon, who was the Bishop of Cluny. "I have a brother who studies Latin," the boy said, "and he gave me my first lesson: 'Inter faeces et urinam nascimur.'" So soon as this was translated, Adolf was shocked, then thrilled. What forceful language! True force! He was aroused enough to dare to go to the Anatomy Museum in Linz once school was out. He managed to get in by lying about his age and so was able to see a penis and a vagina, both modeled in wax, as well as a few full-sized naked

men and women, also in wax. The Latin kept pulsing through his mind. To be born between piss and shit! That was what he had always supposed. Sex was filthy.

On the other hand, his description of the visit made him more popular with a number of his classmates. Some asked again for the details. This encouraged him to bait the teacher by daring to mention in class the phrase uttered by the Bishop of Cluny. Herr Schwamm pretended not to understand. Already a few of the boys were tittering.

"Latin must be pronounced with precision," stated Herr Schwamm.

"The manner by which you utter these words lacks all accentuation."

Adolf replied, "Then I will speak in German." He frowned, he swallowed, he managed to enunciate, "Zwischer der Urin und das Kot wer sind geboren."

Herr Schwamm had to wipe his eyes. All at once, they had filled with tears. "I have never listened to such filth before," he managed to say, and hurried out of the classroom. For Adolf, came fifteen seconds of bliss. Boys who had ignored him all year were now pounding him on the back. "You're a real guy," he was told.

For the first time in his life, he received a standing ovation from the class. One by one they all rose to their feet. But then two monitors came in to escort Adolf to the principal, Herr Doktor Trieb.

"If it were not so close to the end of the year, and if our school had not worked so hard to improve your consistently poor grades, I would be ready to expel you," said Herr Doktor Trieb. "Under the circumstances, I will choose instead to assume that the death of your much-mourned father may have been a factor in your unspeakable behavior. So, I will accept your presence in school for another semester provided there is no continuation whatsoever of this behavior. You will, of course, apologize to Herr Schwamm."

That proved a curious meeting. Herr Schwamm taught Adolf an unforgettable lesson. It is that one knows nothing about a person until a weak man's strength can be observed.

Herr Schwamm was wearing his best suit on this occasion, and he spoke to the point. He did not try to look into Adolf's eyes, yet was able to say in a tone more severe than he could muster in class, "We will not discuss the reason you are here. Instead, I will insist that you read aloud the following

prayer." Whereupon, he presented a text to Adolf. In full capitals, the words had been written out on a page of good linen paper.

FULL GLORIOUS MAJESTY, WE SUPPLICATE
THEE TO DELIVER US FROM THE TYRANNY OF
THE INFERNAL SPIRITS, FROM THEIR SNARES,
THEIR LIES, AND THEIR FURIOUS WICKEDNESS—
OH, PRINCE OF THE HEAVENLY HOST, CAST INTO
HELL SATAN AND ALL EVIL SPIRITS WHO
WANDER THROUGH THE WORLD SEEKING THE
RUIN OF SOULS. AMEN.

"Do you know to whom this prayer is addressed?" asked Herr Schwamm.

"Is it not addressed, sir, to St. Michael the Archangel?"

Of course! That was one prayer he knew well enough. At the monastery in Lambach, he had repeated it every morning after Mass. Moreover, he still retained an image of himself teetering on a stool, Angela's dress draped over his shoulders. "Yes, sir," he replied, "the prayer is to St.

Michael the Archangel," and he even felt an echo of his first erection.

Schwamm was a Lutheran and so he would not know that if this prayer had once possessed extraordinary force for Adolf, it was by now so familiar that he felt little fear and was forceful as he read it aloud.

The short speech Herr Schwamm had prepared on these fires and perils of hell now seemed nugatory. Indeed, he felt again a most unhappy inadequacy before this sullen young student, just one more repetition of previous experience. So little turns out as one expects.

He offered a few phrases to the effect that he was pleased to recognize "a sober side in you, young Hitler," and stopped before he began to stammer. "I apologize most abjectly for my actions yesterday, Herr Schwamm," Adolf now said and was obviously not in the least abject.

Herr Schwamm felt himself close to tears once more and could maintain his composure only by making a modest gesture of dismissal.

Once on the other side of the door, Adolf was in a fury. These hypocrites should be dragged to see the wax vagina at the Anatomical Museum.

Indeed, he was preparing the speech he would give to his fellow students when they surrounded him at recess to find out what transpired.

"Well," he would say, "I certainly held my own with poor old Schwamm,"

It was a late afternoon in March when he came out of school, but he initiated a snowball fight with a few students and they kept at it until twilight. He couldn't stop repeating a phrase, "Optimism, fire, blood, and steel," and was immensely pleased that the three students on his side in this impromptu and ice-cold test of battle repeated the phrase—his phrase! It had not come from a book. It had sprung out of his own throat: "Optimism, fire, blood, and steel!" (Were they my words? Sometimes I cannot remember every inspiration I have offered to each client.)

Leave it that Adolf did pick up his volume of Treitschke when he reached home and proceeded to memorize the following words:

God has given all Germans the earth for a potential home, and this assumes that there will come a time when there will be a leader of all the world, a leader to serve as the embodiment, the incarnation, the

essence of a most mysterious power which will tie the people to the invisible majesty of the nation."

He thought of this passage often in months to come. Could he believe it? Was it true? There were all kinds of Germans and some were as weak as Schwamm. Still, he used it as a rallying cry to himself when in the midst of one more battle in the Leonding woods. He hardly knew what it meant, and yet he kept repeating the words to himself. Nothing that he would read over the next four decades would live for him with such certainty, and as the years went by, given all the nocturnal support I gave to Treitschke, the words lived with him as Revelation. We devils have known for a long time that a mediocre mind, once devoted entirely to one deep idea, can yet obtain a mental strength beyond all normal potential.

By late spring of 1903, his war games took on more complexities. Sometimes, on Saturday afternoon, there were as many as fifty boys to a side, and Adolf was introduced, willy-nilly, to logistics. Each army now had to deal with its wounded and its prisoners. Even as Adolf has been seen (until recently) as a minor presence in his school, so was he now, by full contrast, a

generalissimo in the forest. Indeed, he was forever pronouncing new battle codes, then changing his own rules. On a given Saturday he would decide that once a man was captured, the only choice was to put him in prison and kill him later in the day.

Then he had to recognize that this could end many battles too quickly. So now, serious discussions arose about the length of time required for incarceration. Should it be for 30 minutes, or an hour? And who would keep track of this—it had to be a separate time-keeper, loyal to neither side. (They ended by choosing the one boy who owned a pocket watch.) Then Adolf had an inspiration. A prisoner could gain his freedom more quickly by becoming a spy. Or, he could refuse all offers and stay in prison, but that choice was not often taken. Adolf was aware that captured men soon get bored.

Schmidt, married in Tetsche, had a holding large enough to hold an estate in the Middle-Polish area. Johanna Probst, Klara's mother, was also staying there, together with Klara's sister, Johanna, the housewife. The farm came to no more than the land, the house, the sheds, the cattle troughs, and the animals, but Schmidt was a hard worker, and he had managed, at least by the measure of Spital, to make it profitable. With several fields to work, and woodlands to harvest for sale, he was ready to use all the labor Klara could offer. "It'll be good for her parents that she's here to work it off," he said.

Johanna, Klara's mother, was the one to whom Alois must—when necessary—a constant flood of help. It was now noted in the difficulty of adjusting old habits, all those many married habits, good and bad, that she

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School ended in June. The previous vacation had been spent at the Garden House, a summer to end with Alois' first hemorrhage, but now in the summer of 1903, the family put all they needed into two huge trunks and Klara, Angela, Adolf and Paula traveled to Spital where Klara's sister Theresa lived. There, they spent the summer. When Alois was alive there had been no question of returning. He could never bear to go back. It reminded him of the cattle trough in which his mother used to sleep. By now, however, the farmer,

Schmidt, married to Theresa, had a holding large enough to hold all who were in the Heidler-Poelzl clan. Johanna Poelzl, Klara's mother, was also staying there, together with Klara's sister, Johanna, the hunchback. The farm came to no more than the land, the house, the sheds, the outbuildings, and the animals, but Schmidt was a hard worker, and he had managed, at least by the measure of Spital, to make it profitable. With several fields to work, and woodlands to harvest for nuts, he was ready to use all the labor Klara could offer. "It'll be good for her sorrow that she's here to work it off," he said.

Johanna, Klara's mother, was the one to mourn Alois most—which encourages a comment. Most of Klara's grief was now rooted in the difficulty of extirpating old habits, all those many married habits, good and bad, that she had put together over the years. "I must miss them," she confessed to her mother, "more than the man."

Johanna could not believe that her daughter would speak such words. "Do not say that! Your husband was the most exceptional person in our family!" Johanna's fury was a storm. (It was also a squall of obfuscation.) She was in a rush to avoid the complexities attached to the marriage of Klara and Alois.

That summer, unlike other members of the family, Adolf did not work. He played with the younger farm children once their afternoon chores were done, and he tried to teach a few war games, even if his recruits were tired enough to fall asleep at their stations.

For most of the day, protected by Klara, he spent his morning and early afternoon reading or drawing, after which he would wander into the woods to search for new military positions. On one occasion, he was asked to join in the field work, but Klara declared that he must do no labor at all considering the ongoing trouble with his lungs. She even told her sister Theresa that since she did not wish him to do any labor, she would pay for his food.

After the summer, Angela was going to marry a man named Leo Raubel who worked as a notary in a bank. Adolf couldn't stand him. Whenever he would visit, Raubel would tell him how to live. "Your lungs are not as bad as you claim, isn't that the truth?" he would say, and thereby leave Adolf in a cold fury. Where could Raubel have picked up such an idea if not from Angela?

The positive element that Adolf could see in this marriage, however, was that his own financial condition would improve. There would be a larger

share of the pension money for him once his big sister was gone from the household. Of course, Angela was hardly bewitched by her situation. She was entering into marriage with a man she didn't adore, but a man, nonetheless, who was available. So, Klara's grand plans for Angela's future had come to little. If Angela was ready to accept such a marriage, Klara was not only disappointed but surprised. She was also furious with herself. She could not forgive herself. She had created no social life for Angela. The family lived in the Garden house, a fine place for a young girl to receive company, but Klara had not known how to make friends easily and when it came to meeting strangers and impressing them with your charm, and the possible size of the dowry, well, she and Angela had both been much too shy, and Alois had been no help at all. Raubel turned out to be all there was available. He was a clerk at the bank, one of the very few young men Angela could greet by name.

As far as Klara was concerned, this man was lucky at being able to steal her step-daughter. It was virtually a crime. Angela was entitled to so much more. Klara could not forgive herself for not knowing how to look for a young man with more stature than this Raubel. He wasn't even terribly healthy in his appearance.

What Klara did not know was that Angela had been living with a guilty secret. She had never stopped pining for Alois-Junior. Back in 1896, after his fight with Senior, she knew that Junior would never come back, but in the course of these seven years of absence, she had transmuted him into a perfect young man. She remembered how handsome he had been on Ulan. And for all these years, she had been playing at the edge of an idyllic dream. She was certain, of course, that she and Alois-Junior would never take one improper step but if they were still together, she might now allow her brother to dismount from his horse and kiss her. Even in 1898 after the family moved to the Garden House and Angela now had a room to herself, she still kept, carefully hidden, a photograph taken by an itinerant photographer of everyone in the family on a fine warm day in Hafeld, and her brother had been most pleased with one picture of himself standing by his horse. Indeed, he had taken Ulan out of the stable and led him up to the view camera.

Angela had stolen that picture as her way of paying Alois back for the times he had teased her in those weeks, all of seven years ago, when she refused to mount Ulan. All the same, once the photo had disappeared, she had

to swear to Alois-Junior that she had no idea where it might be. "I say this on a stack of Bibles," she had said.

"Where are these Bibles?" Alois-Junior asked.

"In my mind. They are there. You can trust me."

She did not mind that he was suffering just as much as if he had lost a gold watch. He deserved to suffer for the way he had teased her; so cruel!

Angela still kept this photo hidden, but, as the date of her marriage neared, she became more concerned about the carnal redolence that remained in her heart, this innocent—yet maybe not so innocent—attachment to a fading sepia portrait of Alois-Junior. Finally, she came to the cruel recognition that the picture had to be destroyed. (Otherwise, Leo Raubel would find it sooner or later.) So, on a night when she was unable to sleep in a small but most private ceremony, she tore up this piece of parchment from the past, and there by the side of her bed, in the dark of the early morning, she put the scraps in a small bowl and set a kitchen match to them, weeping silently as bits of the photograph turned to black.

After the wedding, Adolf was bothered by thoughts of how ugly must be the acts that Angela and Leo were performing in bed. Adolf had seen the

groom's phallus once when they urinated side by side in a field, and thought it was nothing agreeable to look at. Now, Leo was rubbing it in and out of this supposedly sacred passage between Angela's two unmentionable holes—how disgusting! His thoughts came to a halt when he recognized that his father and mother were no different from the newlyweds. How awful was this secret that men and women had to keep silent about.

contrary. The Master had instructed me to keep intact Adolf's belief that he was wholly apart from my and all but my own share and, indeed, now that his father was dead and Angela would be out of the house, an opportunity was open that had not existed before. Our project was aided by his attendance at a different school.

Klara had sent Adolf to a town called Steyr, fifteen miles from Linz. It was there that he would finish his Realschule. Given her position, Klara could afford to rent a room for Adolf rather than be obliged to pay for his travel back and forth every day by train. So, from Sunday night to Friday

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By May of that next year, 1904, in addition to another mediocre set of marks, Adolf failed French. A make-up exam would await him in the fall. He did receive a passing mark, but the principal was still unforgiving about the episode with Herr Schwamm. If Adolf Hitler wanted to enter his last year in a Realschule, it would not be at Linz. In retaliation, Adolf said to himself, "I will never allow this school to insult my intelligence again."

I can say with some pride that I had succeeded in creating a prodigiously spoiled mother's darling. That is not routine. One must intensify their sense of self-importance against all evidence they encounter to the

contrary. The Maestro had instructed me to keep intact Adolf's belief that he was entirely apart from any and all humans out there and, indeed, now that his father was dead and Angela would be out of the house, an opportunity was open that had not existed before. Our project was aided by his attendance at a different school.

Klara had sent Adolf to a town called Steyr, fifteen miles from Leonding. It was there that he could finish his Realschule. Given her pension, Klara could afford to rent a room for Adolf rather than be obliged to pay for his travel back and forth every day by train. So, from Sunday night to Friday afternoon, Adolf stayed with a woman named Frau Sekira who was also boarding six other students. It was her duty to see that they were reasonably well fed and did their homework and, indeed, she was motherly. Adolf always addressed her in a formal manner and then was off to his room, where he would spend his time reading and drawing. His marks in the Steyr Realschule were no better, however, than in Linz, and by the end he even failed French once more. In the fall of 1905 he would have to face a make-up exam in order to graduate.

Over the next summer, Klara took Paula and Adolf back to Spital but in September, he traveled to Steyr again for his French test. This time he passed and received his graduation certificate. In celebration, he and some of the new roomers at Frau Sekira's house decided to have a party. One of the boys had brought four bottles of wine from home and was generous enough to share them. "My father said that it is good to make a pig of yourself once a year. That is just what my father said. Do it once, not twice." They all applauded the absent father.

The students stayed up late that night and by the end, Adolf declared, "I am as drunk as my father ever was," and fell asleep on the floor. In the morning, he could not find his certificate of graduation. It had been in his pocket but now it was gone. Since he would be going home later in the day, he had to have something to show to his mother. She would never believe that he earned his degree if he could not present the certificate. Trying to put together an explanation, he wondered whether he could tell her that on the train, he had unfolded this precious piece of paper in order to enjoy looking at it, but since it was a warm day, he had also opened the train window. With no warning, a gust of wind carried it off! Yet, so soon as he now stepped outside

to clear his mind, he recognized that such a story would not suffice. It happened to be a cold day.

Preparing to say farewell to Frau Sekira, he did mention his troubles. Frau Sakira suggested that he not attempt to deceive his mother. "That is so inadvisable," she said. "If your story is accepted by her, you will then feel so guilty. And if your mother does find out, it will be worse."

Over the previous school year, she had been no more than the woman who served him food every day and changed the sheets. Now, she had become a rare and thoughtful human being. In misery, he asked, "What should I do?" "Oh," she said, "tell them the truth at the school. They may be unhappy but they will certainly give you a copy."

So, Adolf went back to a school he thought he would never see again, and the Rector kept him waiting. It was, after all, a day of registration. Yet, when the Rector did let him in, it was to open a locked closet and take out a heavy paper bag. After which he said, "Your certificate is here. It has been torn into four pieces. You will soon see its condition." Now, the Rector stared at him. "It is one thing for a student to celebrate his graduation when he is pleased that he passed a make-up examination. At last, he can allow himself to

think that perhaps he has taken an adult step toward his future. It is, however, another matter, Herr Hitler, to enter into a bout of intoxication that ends in despicable acts." He shook his head. "I can see by the absence of recognition in your face that you do not even have a recollection of the bestialities you indulged."

This was slowly becoming equal to passing before the long-nosed priest.

Finally, he managed to speak. "Sir, what have I done? Be so good as to tell me."

"My dear Herr Hitler, I will tell you. You took this document, so precious to you, and chose to leave your filth on it!" His hands shaking with disgust, he passed the bag over to Adolf and said, "I cannot bring myself to believe that any student in our school could have brought himself to commit such a low act. You would do well to fear that you will go through life never learning to govern your most perverse impulses. Shall I write to your mother? No, I will not. She is probably a good woman who does not deserve such a stinking embarrassment. Instead, you are to swear to me that from the moment you leave this office, I will never have to see your face again. Just be certain that you do not open the bag while you remain within the walls of this school."

Adolf nodded. By now, he could remember. Yes, he had wiped his ass with the certificate. The moment came back. He had been feeling so rich in his sense of self love. True inner grandeur! How his drinking mates had applauded. His ass was superior to all the scholarly nonsense.

What made it worse was that now, on the walk back to Frau Sekira's house, he had to wonder how the Rector had found out. There was only one explanation. One of the four students with whom he had been drinking must have given it to him. But who would that be? He did not want to find out. Such a confrontation could add to his shame. What if the perpetrator was one of the two fellows bigger than himself?

He spent a long time at the washbasin cleaning the certificate, then drying it. At last, pasting it onto another piece of paper, it would be evidence that he had passed his exam. For Klara, he would come up with some explanation of how he happened to tear it.

"Oh, Mother, the more I looked at it, the more did I realize how much you sacrificed for me, and how little I had understood. I tore it up to keep from crying like a baby." Yes, thought Adolf, that will take care of that.

He had to keep wondering, however, which of the students had been the traitor. It could have been all four! He decided that he would never drink again in company. "Liquor is for traitors," he told himself. He kept sniffing the document to make certain that it now smelled of talcum powder.

I have to remark that no event since Alois' death had been as ready to breach Adolf's sense of his personal importance. I had built, however, such an enclosure around his vision of himself that even this episode did not become a disaster. I knew that I could and would even be able to use the recollection as a restraint upon the full extent of Adolf's love of himself in those particular occasions yet to come when a reduction might be in order for tactical reasons.

Klara speak of Alois. The children had been pulled up in her mind. He was now to be remembered as a pillar of the empire, a profoundly dedicated Civil Servant, a strong-willed father. His pipes, particularly the long-stemmed ones, were set up by Klara on the mantelpiece, each installed in a special holder. The family group was now being composed. In his lifetime, Alois had climbed the equal of a mountain. And he had given a blessing to Adolf. It was a blessing to have so powerful.

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I was ready to tell him as much myself. These days, I looked to impart

Klara wept with love when she received the finely fashioned tale of how the certificate had come back to her in four pieces.

"It is even more valuable to me this way," she said. "I will be proud to put it into a frame."

That was the hour when he decided that the ability to lie with art was one of the finer skills, and indeed, they had a lovely evening, mother and son. With Paula soon asleep, they sat side by side on the sofa and reminisced over old times when he had been two and three.

That was a special occasion. Over the previous year, coming back from Steyr each weekend, he had certainly grown weary of listening to

Klara speak of Alois. The old man had been polished up in her mind. He was now to be remembered as a pillar of the empire, a profoundly dedicated Civil Servant, a prestigious father. His pipes, particularly the long-stemmed ones, were set up by Klara on the mantelpiece, each installed in a special holder. The family gospel was now being composed. In his lifetime, Alois had climbed the equal of a mountain. And he had given a blessing to Adolf. It was a blessing to have so powerful a father.

I was ready to tell him as much myself. These days, I looked to implant one notion into his thoughts. It was that Alois, by climbing to his particular ledge of society had given Adolf the opportunity to start from a higher place, and so become a much more prestigious father, a wholly unique father, a great man who could be father to the German people, Germans and Austrians both. I must say, whether through Klara's latter-day adoration, or by way of both of us, these thoughts became so embedded in Adolf's brain, that by the time he wrote Mein Kampf nineteen years later in 1924, he would speak of Alois in eulogy:

Not yet thirteen years old, the little boy he then was, buttoned up his things and ran away from his homeland, Waldviertel. A bitter resolve it must have been to take to the road into the unknown with only three Guilders for traveling money. By the time the thirteen year old was seventeen he had a long time of hardship. Endless poverty and misery strengthened his resolve with all the tenacity of one who'd grown "old" through wanton sorrow. While still half a child, this seventeen year old youth clung to his decision and became a Civil Servant. Now there has been realized the promise of the vow to which the poor boy once had sworn, not to return to his native village until he'd become something.

would read and he would dream. He did not need to say more. After five years of the rigors of the apprenticeship, he was certainly able to enjoy this new life on the bank of the Danube in Linz. His mother paid the bills and Paula cleaned the kitchen. He grew a mustache. He rarely stepped out into the sun. Only in the evening did he take a stroll across the Danube from Linz to Linz in order to walk by the opera house. Klara had bought him new clothes and he looked out in a good dark suit, new black overcoat, black shoes, and carried a silver-handled cane, his new reserved possessions. He would be

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Klara sold the house in Leonding, and the family moved to an apartment in Urfahr just across the river from Linz. During the day, Adolf rarely left these new premises. Given his school record, he did not see any profitable way to enter the ranks of the employed. For that matter, he had little desire to work for others. Besides, he did feel a touch consumptive—enough to keep Klara in a whole state of in-held terror. Would he, like Alois, die of a lung hemorrhage? It was not difficult to persuade her that it would be unwise to look for a career at this point. As he presented it to her, he would be seen one day as a great painter, a great architect, and quite possibly both. While staying home at present, he told her, he would amplify his education: He

would read and he would draw. He did not need to say more. After five years of the rigors of the Realschule, he was certainly able to enjoy this new life on Humboldtstrasse in Urfahr. His mother paid the bills and Paula cleaned the bathroom. He grew a mustache. He rarely stepped out into the sun. Only in the evening did he take a stroll across the Danube from Urfahr to Linz in order to walk by the opera house. Klara had bought him new clothes and he ventured out in a good dark suit, wearing a dark overcoat, black fedora, and carried a silver-handled cane, his most treasured possession. He would be seen, he believed, as part of the young gentry of Linz. Every glimpse he caught of his reflection in store windows confirmed this effect.

His need to stay in the house during the day was matched only by his love of the dark. In truth, we were ready to encourage that impulse. Not all of the clichés concerning the devil are false. Most humans do not begin to appreciate the depth of the general assumption that what is commonly condemned as Evil does indeed seek the dark. This is for good cause. The night is more open to evocation.

Klara was, of course, taking great pride in his appearance. She knew that once he was feeling better, opportunities would open. He was not only a most unusual boy, but probably needed this kind of leisure at present.

In due course, Adolf's style of masturbation also altered. His practice in the forest had been to spew all over the leaves. (He loved leaves and he loved befouling them.) Now, locked behind the door to his room, he kept a handkerchief at the ready. Yet, before he would allow his thoughts to lift up above all control, he would practice holding his arm in the air at a forty-five degree angle for just so long as he could bear it. He would think of the times in the Realschule bathroom when he had demonstrated this prowess to other students. They might have their two testicles and he only had one, but he could keep his arm erect on high, and they could not. Of course, there were all too many other occasions when the general interest had been in another direction. The boys had collected around the urinals in order to compare the size of their genitals. It had been a curious occasion. They were always afraid a teacher might barge in. Erections were lost, therefore, with great speed. Adi's ability to hold his arm high was no more than another distraction. Now, in his room, he found, however, that he could maintain his erection even while

his arm was raised. Thoughts of the great variety of personal equipment he had seen among the students was enough to keep him full of hearty remembrance.

One flaw remained, however, in his present life. That was Angela's husband, Leo Raubel. He could not speak to Adolf without droning into his ear. "Fellow, you have to start earning your living. You will keep feeling unwell until you do. I think that is because you are depressed by the thought that all your relatives in Spital think you are a good-for-nothing. We know that is not true, but you have to give up your present occupation which consists of doing nothing."

Adolf would walk out of the room. Angela would be full of dismay. How rude he was to her husband! Klara, hearing it all, would be silent, but that was only out of respect for Angela. This oaf, Leo Raubel, was, after all, her dear step-daughter's husband. Therefore, she would not cause trouble. She would not be a mother-in-law to create trouble for a young married couple. That might be even worse than having to listen as your son was scolded by this new son-in-law who had much too exaggerated an opinion of the worth of his advice. To herself, Klara declared, "Adolf is not a loafer. He

does sit at home, but he works so hard when he draws. Besides, he has no need to drink, and he doesn't smoke. That is not a loafer. He does not waste his time. There are no bad girls he likes to see. No girls I must worry about. Maybe he will yet become a great artist. Who is to know? Who is to say? He is so serious. When he is alone and working, he is so strong and so proud of himself. He is full of the knowledge that he, too, will amount to something. To that degree, he is just like Alois. Or, maybe more so. Alois wanted too many things at once." And again, she repeated, "Adolf does not waste time with girls. There are no bad girls in his life."

Nor would there be. Not for a long time. She would have done better to worry about love affairs yet to come with men and boys, some of them even with bad men.

Since Klara saw Adolf by now with all the love of her heart, she was hardly the sort to ponder what might be in his head when he masturbated. Indeed, how could she guess? There was no evidence. He was careful to rinse out his handkerchiefs. No, she did not know that while stroking himself, coming closer and closer to being shot out of his own cannon, he would wonder whether there was any connection between his refusal to work at

Customs and his father's last hemorrhage. If so, that would make two people he had scalped in real life: Edmund and Alois. And this thought, in concert with thoughts of the Realschule students at the urinals so excited the pits of his fast-increasing compressions that he could hold them no longer and presto! it was over. It was over, and he was happy, and he was exhausted by how much had been churning within—such an exceptional spew.

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Years later, a girl who went to the same school often saw Klara walking with Paula. Until recently, this girl had lived on a farm, but now almost every school day she saw Klara go with Paula for a good part of the way before saying goodbye with a kiss. Nothing like that ever happened to the farm girl. Her mother had always been busy and usually was angry. But the girl did like watching Klara. Paula was backward in class, and had been left behind, but the farm girl envied her all the same. A mother's love—that, she decided—must be as sweet as honey.

Indeed, we are there to enjoy it as well.

The Castle in the Forest

AN EPILOGUE

THE CASTLE IN THE FOREST

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The Castle in the Forest:

An Epilogue

In the beginning, I said: Call me Dieter, and that was not wholly inaccurate. Dieter was my name while I was occupying the body and person of an SS man, and I did keep to this installation until the end of the Second World War. (At which time Dieter did have to get out of Berlin in a hurry.) That, in brief, is how I came to be at the edge of an uproar on a field where a celebration was continuing through the night. A concentration camp had just been liberated by American soldiers on the very last day of April, 1945.

Installed in a small cubicle, I was being interrogated by a psychiatrist, captain in rank, assigned to the U.S. division that had captured the camp. Given the tumult of the last few days, he had been issued a .45 and it now lay on the table near his hand. I could see that he was not comfortable with it, but then he was a doctor and not practiced in side-arms.

The name-tag on his lapel was Jewish and, needless to say, he was not happy with what he saw.

A pacifist by temperament, this Jewish officer had done his best to withdraw from the worst of these surroundings—which is equal to saying the intensity of these most offensive human odors. Rank effluvia accompanied the former prisoners' cries of joy. Indeed, it was sufficiently pestilential for the American to order me, his only available opposite number, to remain with him in this office. There, after midnight, I gave answers to his inquiries.

As alone with each other as two souls on a rock in the ocean not large enough for three, I confess that I played with his sentiments. It was a time of defeat for me. I was nearly out of games. The Maestro had just relieved me of service. "For now, fend for yourself," he said. "I will be moving our operations to America, and will call on you again once I have come to a few determinations as to what we are ready to do over there."

I did not even know if I could believe him. Rumors were rampant among us. One devil had even dared to suggest that the Maestro had been demoted.

This possibility—if it were true—suggested that there were elevations and depths to the Maestro's domain beyond my comprehension. So, I acted as humans might—I chose not to think about it. I thrust myself into another

game altogether. I decided to play with this Jewish psychiatrist by pretending to explain the worldview of those among whom I had served. I expanded on the psychological ventures we Nazis had taken into uncharted regions by way of Heinrich Himmler and his theories.

I was not without effect. Dieter had been a charming SS man, tall, quick, blond, blue-eyed, witty. To give a further turn to the screw, I even suggested that he was a troubled Nazi. I spoke with a fine counterfeit of genuine feeling concerning the damnable excesses that were to be found in the Fuehrer's achievements. Outside the room, former inmates were rampaging up and down the parade field. Those who still had the strength to give voice were screaming like loons. As the night went on, this Jewish Captain could not endure his situation. Sequestered in the depths of the average pacifist—as one will invariably discover—resides a killer. That is why the person has become a pacifist in the first place. Now, given my subtle assault upon what he believed were his human values, the American picked up his .45, knew enough to release the safety, and shot me.

I can say that I have had to vacate a body more than once. So, I did move on. I traveled to America. I spoke to the Maestro. He made no

reference to the rumors I had heard, but did remark, "Yes, that Jewish Captain showed the way. We will invest in Arabs and Israelis both!"

Upon which he wished me good luck and I was left to fend for myself in America. That is another story but less interesting, I fear. The figures, including myself, are smaller. I am no longer part of history.

All that remains to discuss is why I have chosen this title, "The Castle in the Forest." If the reader, having come with me through Adolf Hitler's birth, childhood, and a good part of his adolescence, would now ask, "Dieter, where is the link to your text? There is a lot of forest in your story but where is the castle?"

I would say then that The Castle in the Forest translates into Das Schloss im Wald.

This happens to be the name given by the prisoners some years ago to the camp just liberated. Schlossimwald sits on the empty plain of what was once a potato field. Not many trees are in sight, nor any hint of a castle. Nothing of interest is on the horizon. Schlossimwald became, therefore, the appellation given by the brightest of the inmates to their compound. One pride maintained to the end (at least among the best of the German prisoners.) was

that they must not surrender their sense of irony since that had become their fortitude. Needless to say, the prisoners who came up with this piece of nomenclature were from Berlin.

If you are German and possessed of lively intelligence, irony is, of course, vital to pride. German came to us originally as the language of simple folk, good pagan brutes and husbandmen, tribal people, ready for the hunt and the field. So, it is a language full of the growls of the stomach, and the wind in the bowels of hearty existence, the bellows of the lungs, the hiss of the windpipe, the cries of command that one issues to domesticated animals, even the roar that stirs in the throat at the sight of blood. Given, however, the imposition laid on this folk through the centuries—that they be ready to enter the amenities of Western civilization before it grew away from them altogether—I do not find it surprising that many of the German bourgeoisie who had migrated into city life from muddy barnyards, did their best to speak in voices as soft as the silk of a sleeve. Particularly, the ladies. I do not refer to long German words which were often a precursor to our technological spirit today, just the syrupy, more sentimental palatals, lachrymose sounds for a low-

grade brain. To every sharp German fellow, particularly the Berliners, irony became the essential corrective.

Now, I recognize that this disquisition leads us away from the narrative we have just traversed, but then, this is what I wish to do. It enables me to return to our beginning when Dieter was a member of Special Section IV-2a. Needless to remark, it is my hope that we have come a long way since. If the act of betraying the Maestro does not succeed in obliterating me, perhaps I will be able to go back some day to this account of my share of the early years of Adolf Hitler, up to the late 1920's and the beginning of the Thirties, because in that period, Adolf had the love affair of his life, and it was with Geli Raubel, who was Angela's daughter. She was full-bodied, good-looking, and blonde. He adored her. They had the most perverse relations. As one of Hitler's high subordinates, an accomplished piano player and socialite named Putzi Haenfstengel was to put it, "Adolf only likes playing on the black keys."

In 1930, Geli Raubel was found dead on the bedroom floor of the chamber she occupied along one wing of Hitler's apartment on Prinz-Regenstrasse in Munich. She had been shot. Either that, or she had killed

herself. This answer was never established. The immediate business was, of course, totally covered up.

Nor can I satisfy myself concerning this question. Shortly before the event, I was relieved of my continuing assignment to Adolf Hitler. The Maestro had decided that the Fuehrer-to-be was now of sufficient importance to be overseen by a presence higher than myself. Indeed, I suspect it was the Maestro who replaced me. In any event, I never learned more about Geli's death. An absolute silence was the only emanation from that event. Two years later, Hitler and his Nazis were in power and I was then assigned to enter the body of that good SS man Dieter. I confess that I could not forgive the Maestro for my demotion which is perhaps the best single explanation of what led me to write this book.

There could, however, be another motivation. One theme does return. Can it be that the Maestro, whom I served in a hundred roles while holding to the pride that I was a field officer to the mighty eminence of Satan, had deluded me? Was it possible that the Maestro was not Satan, but only one more minion—if at a very high level?

There was, of course, no answer to be received, but the question remained and by its guidance, the seed of my rebellion could have taken root.

If this leaves the reader with new discomfort—not even to know now whether it was Satan's words that were reported, or the sardonic insights of an intermediary, I will confess that I remain enough of a devil to feel no great sympathy. What enables devils to survive is that we are wise enough to understand that there are no answers—there are only questions.

Yet is it not also true that one cannot find a devil who will not work both sides of the street? So, I must admit to a surprising degree of affection for those of my readers who have traveled all this way with me. I have come so far myself in offering this narration that I can no longer be certain whether I still look for promising clients or search for a loyal friend. There may be no answers but good questions still vibrate with honor within.

End