

FREDERICK ROLFE

HADRIAN THE SEVENTH



HISTORICAL NOVEL

Frederick Rolfe

Hadrian the Seventh (Historical Novel)

Enriched edition.

Introduction, Studies and Commentaries by Spencer McKay

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Introduction

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At its heart, *Hadrian the Seventh* stages the collision between a bruised private conscience and the vast, impersonal machinery of institutional power. Frederick Rolfe's novel, published in 1904, transforms this conflict into a singular vision of ecclesiastical life seen from the perspective of a man long denied entry to it. The result is a narrative that fuses intimate self-scrutiny with the choreography of public ceremony, using the papal court as a theatre for questions of legitimacy, dignity, and command. Its imaginative audacity lies not only in the premise but in the steady pressure it applies to what authority means when filtered through a solitary, exacting temperament.

Situated at the turn of the twentieth century and moving from London to Rome, the book blends satirical fantasy with a closely observed account of clerical politics. Rolfe—also known as Baron Corvo—places a marginal English intellectual at the center of Vatican affairs, crafting a work often described as both a *roman à clef* and an ecclesiastical satire. First appearing in 1904, it belongs to the period's fascination with institutions, ritual, and the psychology of power. The settings are recognizably modern for their time, yet the novel's texture is steeped in ceremonial detail, giving contemporary readers a rare vantage on papal culture refracted through literary artifice.

The premise is disarmingly simple: George Arthur Rose, an overlooked aspirant to the priesthood living in near-obscure, is unexpectedly summoned to Rome and elevated to the papacy, choosing the name Hadrian VII. From this

abrupt ascent flows a story of first decisions, first audiences, and first clashes with entrenched expectations, all rendered in prose that can be exacting, sardonic, and luxuriant by turns. The voice is intimate without being confessional, and the tone oscillates between mordant comedy and intense idealism. Readers encounter a blend of procedural specificity and imaginative bravura that feels at once audacious and meticulously staged, inviting curiosity rather than foreclosing surprise.

As narrative, the book is propelled by the friction between reforming zeal and the costs of wielding command, exploring how a long-suppressed will can harden into an uncompromising program once it gains leverage. It treats authority not as a settled possession but as a moral trial, exposing the strains between principle and expediency, mercy and rectitude, solitude and service. Rose's elevation becomes a thought experiment in justice and responsibility, an inquiry into whether perfect clarity of purpose survives contact with human institutions. The drama, crucially, resides less in external intrigue than in the relentless calibration of conscience against protocol, memory, and pride.

Hadrian the Seventh is often read as a projection of its author's thwarted aspirations, and the book acknowledges this tension through its meticulous attention to slights, ceremonies, and symbols. Rolfe's style is ornate and learned, punctuated by liturgical and classical allusions that serve both as ornament and as argument. The satire frequently sharpens into caricature, with recognizable types from literary and clerical life passing in thin disguise, yet the effect is less score-settling than diagnostic. The narrative uses exaggeration to map real dynamics: patronage, gatekeeping, the insecure etiquette of deference, and the

way institutional languages can both elevate and erase individual character.

For contemporary readers, the novel speaks to crises that transcend its papal setting: the legitimacy of leadership, the seduction of purity in politics, and the volatility of outsider charisma. It asks what reform looks like when imagined from the vantage of grievance, and what happens when intellectual brilliance meets procedural reality. In an age skeptical of gatekeepers yet wary of strongmen, the book's fantasy of absolute office clarifies the temptations and dangers built into power itself. It also probes merit and recognition—who is seen, who is overlooked, and how institutions convert private injury into public policy.

Approached as literature rather than prophecy, *Hadrian the Seventh* rewards with its tactile sense of process, its audacious central conceit, and its rigorous moral argument. Without exhausting its surprises, one can say that it offers a study in leadership as a form of self-fashioning, where imaginative energy and administrative necessity contend line by line. It endures because it gives the dream of perfect justice a stage, then subjects that dream to the pressure of reality, ceremony, and human frailty. The result is a work that remains provocative, unsettling, and oddly bracing in its commitment to thinking power through style.

Synopsis

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Frederick Rolfe's *Hadrian the Seventh*, first published in 1904, follows the improbable ascent of George Arthur Rose, a learned but embittered English Catholic who once sought ordination and was rebuffed. Living in obscurity, Rose cultivates devotion, scholarship, and a fierce sense of injustice, convinced he was wronged by ecclesiastical authorities. The novel blends satire, fantasy, and ecclesiastical detail, building a portrait of an outsider whose spiritual seriousness is matched by formidable pride. Rolfe frames Rose's isolation not as resignation but as preparation, establishing a protagonist whose thwarted vocation and unbending conscience will collide with the highest corridors of church power.

After the death of a pontiff, Rome becomes the stage for tense maneuverings, with a conclave struggling to find consensus. In this atmosphere of impasse, senior churchmen unexpectedly encounter Rose in England and are struck by his intellect and discipline. A daring canonical solution is proposed: if Rose can be properly advanced through holy orders, he could be made eligible for the highest office and resolve the stalemate. The process is swift, solemn, and fraught, as tradition and necessity balance on a knife's edge, and Rose—who has long imagined a vocation—faces an invitation few would believe possible.

Rose accepts and is elected, choosing the name Hadrian VII. From the outset, he asserts a singular authority shaped by English habits, personal austerity, and a taste for order and

beauty. He reorganizes his household, surprises courtiers with directness, and calls for integrity in administration. Hadrian's papal persona is not a retreat into ritual but a forceful engagement with it, using ceremony to underscore reform. The Curia meets a pontiff who refuses to flatter or temporize, and the diplomatic corps finds a sovereign who measures policy against moral clarity, setting an energetic pace that makes allies as quickly as it startles opponents.

Soon, Hadrian's vision extends beyond palace corridors to the chancelleries of Europe. He advances a program of intellectual renewal and pastoral rigor, pushing appointments that prize merit over patronage and encouraging scholarship in service of faith. Encyclicals outline principles for social and political life, couched in lucid, insistent prose. He cultivates the arts, supports missions with administrative precision, and demands reciprocity from governments accustomed to handling the papacy as a ceremonial relic. Rolfe sketches audiences, state visits, and negotiations with granular color, presenting a papacy that wields spiritual authority with unusual candor, and a court recalibrating to a sovereign who will not be managed.

The pontificate is also a reckoning with the past. Hadrian remembers slights and injustices suffered as George Arthur Rose and addresses them with a mixture of severity and clemency. His responses reveal a divided inward life: a man of prayer and discipline whose imagination still burns with wounded dignity. He revisits institutions and figures linked to his earlier rejection, seeking not mere revenge but a restoration of rightful order as he sees it. Rolfe's psychological portrait lingers on habit and routine—writing, consultation, solitary contemplation—showing a ruler attempting to harmonize spiritual aspiration with a long memory and an insistence on exact justice.

As reforms bite, resistance hardens. Court intrigue, clerical pushback, and the secular press circle his initiatives, testing his resolve and isolating him from easy counsel. National governments bridle at his independence, while some theological voices accuse him of unsettling precedents. Security anxieties stalk public appearances, and the weight of office narrows his sphere of trust. Yet Hadrian cultivates allies among scholars, pastors, and administrators who see in him a chance to reset practices dulled by habit. Rolfe heightens the drama with public addresses and private interviews that juxtapose pastoral warmth and steely resolve, steering toward crises that demand personal courage.

Hadrian the Seventh endures as a sharp, provocative meditation on vocation, authority, and the imagination of power. Rolfe fuses ecclesiastical procedural realism with wish-fulfillment and satire, asking how a conscience shaped by injury might govern with justice. Without disclosing late reversals, the novel steers its extraordinary pontiff toward trials that measure his ideals against institutional inertia and worldly suspicion. Its resonance lies in the tension between reforming zeal and human frailty, between ceremonial splendor and private solitude. The book's lasting significance is its unsettling scrutiny of legitimacy—who deserves to lead, by what right, and at what personal cost.

Historical Context

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Frederick Rolfe's *Hadrian the Seventh*, published in 1904, is a satirical fantasy rooted in the ecclesiastical and political realities of the turn of the twentieth century. Its narrative follows an obscure English Catholic unexpectedly elevated to the papacy, placing Rome, the Vatican, and the College of Cardinals at center stage. The novel's institutions and procedures reflect the Roman Curia's bureaucracy, the conclave's rituals, and the papacy's diplomatic reach. Set against the transition from Pope Leo XIII to Pope Pius X, it engages a moment when the papal office wielded moral and diplomatic authority without temporal sovereignty, inviting reflection on leadership, reform, and legitimacy.

The backdrop is the reshaped papacy after Italian unification and the First Vatican Council (1869–1870), which defined papal infallibility in matters of faith and morals and consolidated ultramontane centralization. With the Papal States annexed in 1870, popes governed as “prisoners of the Vatican,” exercising influence through diplomacy rather than armies. Leo XIII (r. 1878–1903) pursued intellectual and social engagement—reviving Thomism (*Aeterni Patris*, 1879) and addressing labor-capital tensions (*Rerum Novarum*, 1891). His policy of concordats and careful mediation made Rome a clearinghouse for international Catholic affairs, a setting Rolfe deploys to dramatize power, conscience, and administrative reform.

The conclave of 1903 provides an immediate historical lens. After Leo XIII's death, Austria-Hungary exercised the *jus exclusivae* (a royal veto) against leading candidate Cardinal

Mariano Rampolla, delivered by Cardinal Jan Puzyna of Kraków. The College of Cardinals then elected Giuseppe Sarto, Pope Pius X. In 1904 Pius X formally forbade any secular interference in future conclaves, abolishing the veto. These events underscored the tension between spiritual election and geopolitical pressure. Rolfe's depiction of papal selection and the assertion of papal autonomy reflects contemporary awareness of intrigue, national rivalries, and reformist impulses within the governance of the Church.

Broader European currents sharpen the novel's stakes. Anticlericalism surged in several states, notably France, where the Dreyfus Affair fractured public life and the 1905 law separated Church and State. The Kulturkampf in Germany (1870s) had earlier curtailed Catholic influence, while the Italian "Roman Question" left popes refusing the 1871 Law of Guarantees. Internationally, imperial rivalries and alliance-building culminated in the 1904 Entente Cordiale. The Holy See navigated these pressures through diplomacy, concordats, and a global network of bishops and religious orders. Rolfe situates his tale within this diplomatic chessboard, where spiritual authority meets the calculations of modern nation-states.

In Britain, the nineteenth-century Catholic revival formed a crucial context. Catholic Emancipation (1829) was followed by the restoration of the Catholic hierarchy in 1850, provoking the "Papal Aggression" controversy. The Oxford Movement (from 1833) brought prominent converts, including John Henry Newman (1845), reshaping English Catholic identity. Disputes persisted: Leo XIII's *Apostolicae Curae* (1896) declared Anglican orders "absolutely null and utterly void," straining ecumenical relations, while the 1902 Education Act ignited debates over funding denominational schools. These controversies frame the position of English Catholics as a minority under scrutiny—an environment that

informs the novel's English protagonist and his fraught relationship with institutions.

Rolfe's own experiences illuminate the work's combative perspective. Born in 1860, he converted to Roman Catholicism in 1886 and pursued priestly training, studying briefly at the Scots College in Rome (1889–1890) before dismissal. He later adopted the title "Baron Corvo," struggled financially, and often clashed with patrons and clerics. Hadrian the Seventh channels grievances into a vision of ecclesiastical competence and moral clarity, filtered through exacting ritual detail and curial procedure. The personal animus is historically grounded: Rolfe's thwarted vocation and literary battles with clerical and lay figures inflect his critique of patronage, gatekeeping, and the uses of spiritual authority.

The intellectual climate of the fin de siècle and early Edwardian years saw biblical criticism and historical scholarship challenge established norms. Catholic "Modernism" emerged through figures such as Alfred Loisy in France and, in England, George Tyrrell—debates that culminated in the condemnations *Lamentabili* and *Pascendi* (both 1907) and, later, the anti-Modernist oath (1910). Although these formal actions postdate the novel, the ferment was already underway. The Index of Forbidden Books, the Catholic press, and university controversies kept questions of authority, method, and truth in public view. Rolfe's portrait of a reforming, learned pontiff resonates with these disputes over doctrine and scholarship.

Hadrian the Seventh thus reflects and critiques its era by staging a counterfactual papacy that confronts bureaucratic inertia, national interference, and the ambivalence of modern power. The novel's meticulous attention to ecclesiastical ceremony and curial process lends

verisimilitude, while its sharp portraits of English and Roman churchmen indict patronage and timidity. Set amid anticlerical politics, social Catholicism, and gathering European tensions, it imagines an assertive spiritual leadership unencumbered by temporal possession yet decisive in diplomatic and moral arenas. In doing so, Rolfe engages the central question of his age: how authority, sanctity, and competence might be reconciled in modern institutions.

Hadrian the Seventh (Historical Novel)

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To Mother

NEVE ME IMPEDIAS NEVE LONGIUS PERSEQUARIS

Οπως μήτε αντιστήσει μοι μήτε ε ψει πορρωτέρω

In Obedience to the Decree of URBAN P.M. VIII, I declare that I have no Intention of attributing any other than a purely human Authority to the Miracles, Revelations, Favours, & particular Cases, recorded in this Book; & the same as regards the Titles of Saints & Blessed applied to Servants of GOD not yet cononized: except in those Cases which have been confirmed by the Holy Catholic Apostolic Roman See, of which I declare myself to be an obedient Son; & therefore I submit myself & all which I have written to her Judgement.

xxij Jul. 1904

FR. ROLFE

Prooimion

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In mind he was tired, worn out, by years of hope deferred, of loneliness, of unrewarded toil[1q]. In body he was almost prostrate by the pain of an arm on the tenth day of vaccination. Bodily pain stung him like a personal affront[2q]. "Some one will have to be made miserable for this," he once said during the throes of a toothache. He was no stranger to mental fatigue: but, when to that was added corporeal anguish, he came near collapse. His capacity for work was constricted: the mere sight of his writing materials filled him with disgust. But, because he had a horror of being discovered in a state of inaction, after breakfast he sat down as usual and tried to write. Dazed in a torrent of ideas, he painfully halted for words: stumbling in a maze of words, he frequently lost the thread of his argument: now and then, in sheer exhaustion, his pen remained immobile. He sat in a small low armchair which was covered with shabby brocade, dull-red and green. An old drawing-board, of the large size denominated Antiquarian, rested on his knees. The lower edge frayed the brocade on the arms of the chair. His little yellow cat Flavio lay asleep on the tilted board, nestling in the bend of his left elbow. That was the only living creature to whom he ever spoke with affection as well as with politeness. His left hand steadied his ms., the sheets of which were clipped together at the top by a metal clip. At the upper edge of the board a couple of Publishers' Dummies[1] reposed, having the outward similitude of six-

shilling novels: but he had filled their pages with his archaic handwriting. The first contained thoughts— not great thoughts, nor thoughts selected on any particular principle, but phrases and opinions such as Sophokles[2]' denunciation, 'Ὁ μιᾶρον ἥθος καὶ γυναικὸς ὕστερον, or Gabriele d'Annunzio[3]'s sentence

"Old legitimate monarchies are everywhere declining, and Demos stands ready to swallow them down its miry throat."

The second was his private dictionary which (as an artificer in verbal expression), he had compiled, taking Greek words from Liddell-and-Scott[4] and Latin words from Andrews, enlarging his English vocabulary with such simple but pregnant formations as the adjective "hybrist[5]" from ὑβριστής, or the noun "gingilism[6]" from *gingilismus*.

He was looking askance at his *ms*. In two hours, he had written no more than fourteen lines; and these were deformed by erasures of words and sentences, by substitutions and additions. He struck an upward line from left to right across the sheet: laid down his pen: lifted board, cat, books, and *ms.*, from his knees; and laid them by. He could not work.

He poked the little fire burning in the corner of a fire-clayed grate. He was shivering: for, though March was going out like nine lions, he was very lightly clad in a blue linen suit such as is worn over all by engineers. He had an impish predilection for that garb since a cantankerous red-nosed prelate, anxious to sneer at unhaloed poverty, inanely had said that he looked like a Neapolitan. He brushed the accumulation of cigarette-ash from the front of his jacket

and seized a pair of spring-dumb-bells: but at once returned them, warned by the pain of his left arm-pit. He took up the newspaper which he had brought with him after breakfast, and read again the news from Rome and the news of Russia. The former, he could see, was merely the kind of subterfuge which farthing journalists are wont to use when they are excluded from a view of facts. It said much, and signified nothing. "Our Special Correspondent" was being hoodwinked; and knew it: but did not like to confess it; and so indulged his imagination. Something was occurring in Rome: something mysterious was occurring in Rome. That could be deduced from the dispatch: but nothing more. The news of Russia was a tale of unparalleled ghastliness. It emanated from Berlin: no direct communication with Russia having taken place for a fortnight.

"How exquisitely horrible it is," he said to Flavio; "and I believe it's perfectly true. The Tzar,— well, that was to be expected. But the Tsaritzza,— though, if ever a woman bore her fate in her face, she did, poor creature. Those dreadful haunted eyes of hers! That hard old young soft face! The innocent babies! How abominably cynically cruel! Yet there have been omens and portents of just such a tragedy as this any time these last few years. They must have known it was coming. Or is this another example of the onlookers seeing most of the game?" He fetched a book of newspaper cuttings, and turned the pages. "Here you are, Flavio," he said to the sleeping cat; "and here— and here. If these are not forewarnings— well!"

He sat down again, and studied certain paragraphs attentively.

EDUCATION BY THE KNOT

PETERSBURG[7].— All Russia is in a state of unrest and seething with discontent. The very air is alive with the rumours of tumults on the one hand and of *coups d'état* on the other. The strangest stories are being bandied about as to what is taking place at Kiev, Sula, and all parts of the Empire, in fact, but especially in Moscow. There, it seems, while students and members of the higher classes are being thrown into prison by the hundred— not a few of them being packed off to Siberia— the workers are being treated with quite extraordinary consideration. They are even allowed to say their say and hold public meetings without let or hindrance, a thing unheard of in Russia. In Petersburg itself an ominous state of things prevails, and the city is completely in the hands of the police and the military. The streets are thronged with gendarmes[8]; even private houses are packed with soldiers; and never a week passes without some disorder arising or some public demonstration being made. In February a terrible scene occurred in the house of Nicholas II., a sort of People's Palace. In the course of a theatrical performance there some students threw down from the gallery into the body of the hall leaflets in which they demanded redress of their grievances. The place was crowded with law-abiding people for the most part; nevertheless the gendarmes who are always within hail, rushed in and simply

trampled under foot all who came in their way. One great fellow was seen to deliberately stamp on the face of a poor lad who had fallen, cracking it like a nut. How many were injured is unknown and probably will remain so. On Sunday the state of things was even worse. During the previous week the students had sent to the leading journals, and even to the police, a formal announcement that they intended to hold a demonstration in the Newsky Prospect^[9] to demand in constitutional fashion the redress of their grievances. It was taken for granted that measures would be taken to prevent the meeting, and the Newsky was crowded for the occasion with the usual loungers and pleasure-seekers. But so far as everyone was aware the police seemed to have done nothing in the matter, and it was known only to a few that the courtyards of the great houses of the neighbourhood were filled with gendarmes and soldiers. Up to twelve o'clock all went well; then quite suddenly not only students but working men began to stream into the Newsky from every side-street; and within a very few minutes the place was one vast crowd. In the square before the Kasan Cathedral^[10] alone there were 3,000 at least. Suddenly seditious cries were raised, red flags were waved, stones were thrown, and in the midst of it all the gendarmes began a mad gallop through the crowd. It was a ghastly sight, for they slashed right and left with their swords, even at the

bystanders bent only on escaping. Many were wounded, some were killed— how many no two accounts agree— and in the course of the following week hundreds of arrests were made. Since then other demonstrations of the same kind have been held, and will continue to be held, let the cost be what it may, the students declare, until a clean sweep has been made of the police regime under which Russia is groaning.

THE GATHERING OF THE STORM

M. Baltaicheff's murder has drawn the world's attention to the present state of things in Russia— which is much worse than most people imagine. The present movement is not confined to the students alone, though it is that class which makes most noise. The revolutionary fever has gained a hold of the lower classes— Brains and Brawn as we said yesterday have combined, and the combination is formidable. More significant, however, than anything else, if it be true, is the statement of the *Neue Freie Presse* that during the demonstrations in the Kasan Square in Petersburg a detachment of infantry was called upon to fire upon the crowd, the men thrice refused to obey, were marched back to barracks, no enquiry being subsequently held, and that similar incidents have occurred elsewhere. With universal service the Army is only the people in uniform. Any popular feeling must sooner or later touch the Army, and if

the soldiers cannot be depended upon to shoot, the game of absolutism is up. The great cataclysm may be nearer at hand than is generally supposed.

SIGNS OF SMOULDERING REVOLT

PETERSBURG.— In two of the districts of the Poltava Government workmans' riots have occurred in consequence of the systematic repression of "Little Russia" by "Greater Russia." The journal *Pridjeprowski Krai* gave the first intimation of the state of affairs, and was promptly suspended for eight months.

PETERSBURG.— The murder of the Procurator of the Holy Synod is regarded in a measure as the symptom of the general situation in Russia. It is reported that the chateau of the Duke of Mecklenburgh in S.E. Russia has been pillaged and destroyed by rioters.

BERLIN.— On the arrival of the express train from Berlin at Wirballen on the Russian frontier today, a passenger was arrested, and Nihilist documents were discovered in his trunks. This is the third Nihilist arrest within the fortnight. The Berlin police have received information from Petersburg of numerous revolutionists having recently left France. They are now maintaining from Berlin a vigorous agitation against the Tsar's Government. From London, too, the whereabouts of several suspects have been reported. In most cases the Berlin authorities are powerless to effect arrests,

but they always supply full information to Russia, so that suspicious characters are always detained in passing the frontier.

ANARCHY ADVANCING

The *Kreuzzeitung*[\[11\]](#), which is unusually well-informed in Russian affairs, expresses the opinion that one of the immediate consequences of the triumph of Japan will be a general rising of the Russian peasants against their landlords, and of the army against the aristocracy. The same paper declares that revolutionary agents of Social Democratic tendencies have long been systematically poisoning the minds of the people.

He turned back to THE GATHERING OF THE STORM, and read the ominous paragraph again. "Warning enough, in all conscience," he said: "first, the Public Prosecutor assassinated at Odessa, then the Chief of Secret Police of Petersburg, then the Procurator of the Holy Synod; and now a hekatombe, sovereign, royalty, aristocracy, government, bureaucracy, all annihilated, and Anarchy in excelsis. France will take fire at any minute now, that's absolutely certain. Oh, how horrible! But we're all Christians, Flavio; and this is only one of the many funny ways in which we love one another."

He rose and went to the window. The yellow cat deliberately stretched himself, yawned, and followed; and proceeded to carry out a wonderful scheme of feints and ambuscades in regard to a ping-pong ball which was kept for his proper diversion. The man looked on almost lovingly.

Flavio at length captured the ball, took it between his fore-paws, and posed with all the majesty of a lion of Trafalgar Square. Anon he uttered a little low gurgle of endearment, fixing the great eloquent mystery of amber and black velvet eyes, tardy, grave, upon his human friend. No notice was vouchsafed. Flavio got up; and gently rubbed his head against the nearest hand.

"My boy!" the man murmured; and he lifted the little cat on to his shoulder. He went downstairs. He could not work; and he was going to take an easy; and he wanted a novel, he said to his landlady. He feared that he had read all the books in the house. Yes, and those in the drawing-room too. After a quarter of an hour, application to a neighbour produced three miserable derelicts, a nameless sixpenny shudder, a Braddon, and an Edna Lyall. Not to seem ungracious, he took them upstairs; and pitched them into a corner, to be returned upon occasion. That salient trait of his character, the desire not to be ungracious, the readiness to be unselfish and self-sacrificing, had done him incalculable injury. This world is infested by innumerable packs of half-licked cubs and quarter-cultivated mediocrities who seem to have nothing better to do than to buzz about harassing and interfering with their betters. Out of courtesy, out of kindness, he was used to give way; but all the same he tenaciously knew and clung to his original purpose. He knew that delay was his enemy: yet he invariably would stand aside and let himself be delayed. And now towards the end of his youth, he was poor, lonely, a misanthropic altruist.

He returned to his armchair, breathing a long sigh of irritation and exhaustion: broke up three cigarette dottels for a (tobacco famine was afflicting him), rolled them in a fresh paper, and applied a match. Flavio, with an indulgent protestant mew, bounded from his knee to a bedroom chair; and coiled himself up to sleep.

The armchair was placed directly in front of the fireplace, the ordinary garret-coloured iron fireplace and mantel of a suburban lodging-house attic. To the grey wall above the mantel a large sheet of brown packing-paper was tacked. On this background were pinned photographs of the Hermes of Herculaneum, the terra-cotta Sebastian of South Kensington, Donatello's liparose David and the vivid David of Verrocchio, the wax model of Cellini's Perseys, an unknown Rugger XV. prized for a single example of the rare feline-human type, and the O.U.D.S. Sebastian of *Twelfth Night* of 1900. Tucked into the edges of these were Italian picture post-cards presenting Andrea del Sarto's young St. John, Alessandro Filipepi's Primavera, a page from an old Salon catalogue showing Friant's Wrestlers, another from an old Harper's Magazine shewing Boucher's Runners, a cheap and lovely chromo of an olive-skinned black-haired cornflower-crowned Pancratius in white on a gold ground, the visiting-cards of five literary agents, and a post-card tersely inscribed *Verro precipitevolissimevolmente*. The mantel-shelf contained stone bottles of ink, pipes, a miniature in a closed morocco case, a cast of Cardinal Andrea della Valle's seal from Oxford, two pairs of silver spectacles in chagreen cases, four tiny ingots of pure copper, a sponge gum bottle, and an open book with

36 A figure from Greek mythology and tragedy (also spelled Eteocles), one of Oedipus's sons who appears in plays such as Aeschylus's *Seven against Thebes* and who fights his brother Polynices for Thebes.

37 A reference to the King of Italy (the name used by several Italian kings); in the novel's likely historical context it most plausibly denotes Victor Emmanuel III, who reigned from 1900 to 1946.

38 A French expression for a shared, fixed-price meal provided to guests at a hotel or restaurant, common in 19th-century Europe; it contrasts with *à la carte* dining where dishes are ordered separately.

39 A major 19th-century theatre in central Berlin (on the Gendarmenmarkt), originally the Schauspielhaus and later the Konzerthaus Berlin; it hosted dramatic and musical performances and important public events.

40 A legal and political term for offending or insulting a sovereign or state authority; historically used in many European jurisdictions to criminalize conduct or speech seen as injurious to the dignity of the monarch.

41 A German spiced baked good (literally 'pepper cake'), commonly rendered in English as gingerbread or spice biscuit, traditionally sold at fairs and festive occasions (spelling/forms vary regionally).

42 The 'M.' abbreviation denotes the German mark (the currency of the German Empire and its successors); in this context it likely refers to large sums in late 19th/early 20th-century marks (e.g. Goldmark/Reichsmark), given as alleged bribes.

43 A victoria is a light, horse-drawn four-wheeled carriage with a folding top, popular in the 19th and early 20th centuries for informal city driving and social calls.

44 'Black Pope' is an informal, often pejorative nickname historically applied to the Superior General of the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits), deriving from the order's black clerical dress and the perception of the office's influence; it is not an official title.

45 An early term for a wireless telegraph message or the apparatus used to send it, associated with Guglielmo Marconi; around the turn of the 20th century it referred to radio/Marconi communications rather than wired telegrams.

46 A cold, often very sharp northerly wind in Italy and the wider Mediterranean region; in literary usage it commonly denotes a biting, invigorating wind from the mountains or the sea.

47 Refers to the fortifications attributed to Pope Leo IV (pontificate c. 847–855), who had the Leonine Wall built to defend the Vatican after Saracen raids; traces of these walls still survived into later centuries.

48 The title of a periodical mentioned in the chapter that published the article 'Strange Career of the Pope'; in the novel it functions as a newspaper attacking the protagonist and may be a fictional or contemporary journal used by the author.

49 A senior Vatican officeholder who heads the Secretariat of State and acts as the Pope's principal minister for political, diplomatic, and internal Church affairs; historically this role is the Holy See's chief adviser and administrator.

50 An obscure phrase in the text referring to a sacred Carthaginian object; the word 'zaïmph' is not a standard liturgical or archaeological term in modern scholarship and may be an antiquarian or fictional label the author uses to denote a consecrated artifact (the exact historical referent is uncertain).

51 A papal bull issued by Pope Pius II in 1460 that condemned the practice of appealing from the pope to a general council (a position associated with conciliarism); it has been cited historically as a document defending papal authority against such appeals.

52 The Golden Rose is a long-standing papal honour: a gold ornament or bouquet blessed by the pope and traditionally presented as a pontifical tribute to monarchs, churches, or distinguished persons, a practice dating back to the medieval period.

53 A pyx is a small, usually metal container used in Christian—especially Catholic—practice to carry or hold the consecrated Eucharistic bread (the Host); priests or chaplains traditionally use it when taking Communion to the sick or for safe keeping.

54 The Danaides are figures from Greek mythology, the fifty daughters of Danaus who were condemned in the underworld to fill a leaking vessel as eternal punishment; references to them usually evoke a futile, never-ending task.

55 A flamen was a specialist priest in ancient Roman religion attached to a particular deity; the phrase 'Flamen Virbialis' in the text evokes that archaic Roman priestly office—the exact compound 'Virbialis' is literary and may be a variant or invented form intended to suggest solemn, traditional Roman ritual.

56 A newspaper name used in the novel; within the story it publishes the account of the Pope's disguised visit and functions as the source of the public calumny against Hadrian (it is a fictional paper in Rolfe's book).

57 Short for the Roman Curial office historically called the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (Propaganda Fide), responsible from the 17th century onward for Catholic missionary activity and administration of mission territories.

58 Traditional English name for the feast of St. Michael the Archangel, celebrated on 29 September and historically observed as a quarter-day in the British calendar.

59 An alternative spelling of the Monroe Doctrine, the U.S. foreign-policy principle articulated in 1823 (under President James Monroe) that opposed new European colonial intervention in the Americas.

60 The Hohenzollern were the ruling dynasty of Prussia and, from German unification until about 1918, the German Empire; here the name refers to that historic royal house.

61 Elektra is a figure from ancient Greek tragedy (notably in plays by Sophocles and Euripides) who mourns her father Agamemnon at his tomb; the spelling 'Agamemnn' in the text appears to be a printing or authorial error for Agamemnon.

62 This string lists 19th-century medical prescription abbreviations: Pot. Brom. is potassium bromide (a sedative/anticonvulsant), Tinct. Valerian. Am. is tincture of valerian (a calmate), Sp. Chlorof. likely refers to a chloroform spirit, and Aq. Menth. Pip. is peppermint water; 'Tinct. Zinzil.' is less common and probably denotes a tincture derived from ginger (Zingiber) or a similar agent (identification here is probable but not certain).