

The House at Number Seventeen

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A nostalgic revisiting with an unexpected outcome

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Theodore F Walker was back in Vienna. Passers-by would have seen a slim man in his early fifties strolling in the early spring evening, apparently with no fixed objective. In that they would have been mistaken. Theo was early for his appointment by design: it gave him time to make a small detour. At the narrow entrance to Auergasse he paused briefly. The door to Number Seventeen was hidden from view beyond a shallow bend. Ten years ago, when his tour of duty ended, it had been painted dark blue. Later he would discover if anything had changed. But not yet. First he had an appointment at a konditorei a few hundred yards from the Stefanskirche. He observed with approval that the roof tiles of the Cathedral, weathering with the years, had lost some of their garishness, the gold better for mellowing. The Konditorei St Stefan, on the other hand, was exactly as he remembered it. The Frau Doktor was in her familiar place. In her own right Ursula Steinmann held no doctorate, medical or academic but, by Austrian custom, took her husband's title. The whereabouts of the good Doktor himself were unknown; deceased, divorced, disappeared - one didn't enquire. Theo approached her table, set slightly apart at the rear of the café from where she could survey the scene but converse without being overheard. She looked up and smiled. "Theodore," she said, offering a powdered cheek. When he was seated facing her she remarked favourably on the greying at his temples. "You were always ganz korrekt, but in those days you appeared too young. Now you have the look that suits you: natural dignity." He accepted the compliment with a nod. They made small talk, Ursula prompting. Was all well with Elizabeth, the new young wife (lingering just long enough on the adjective to indicate interest in a woman little more than half his age)? How was he finding life back in Washington? Where else had he been on this nostalgia tour? Did the State Department grant everyone a sabbatical? Or was it some kind of honeymoon? In an appropriate pause, he enquired whether she could accept another slice of Sachertorte. She refused, as he knew she would. It had always been part of their ritual, signalling the end of the pleasantries before business. Tonight promised very pleasant business indeed. The details had all been agreed in a series of calls to her cell phone; the Frau Doktor had no known land line number. The meeting was to verify his presence in the city and to make payment. She had offered to waive the fee, as in the past, but Theo had insisted. He was no longer in post at the Embassy, with the opportunity to steer clients her way. The envelope was passed across the table and transferred unobtrusively to her handbag. Except that her

fees were now in Euros rather than Schillings, it was understood that nothing had changed. The same applied to the quality of the service provided. Ursula Steinmann was widely believed - in circles that had access to such information - to be the most influential madam west of the Danube. If stories of franchises opening in Budapest and Warsaw were true, her network was now in the process of spreading east. And was likely to prosper. Because her operation was unique. No rival could compete with the unique service she provided: none of her women worked in the recognised sex industry. There was no coercion. They were all volunteers. Her recruitment was always by word of mouth. Contacts were established at cocktail parties, dinner parties and other social gatherings all over the city. No approach was ever made at a first meeting. The women had to come to regard Ursula Steinmann as a personal friend before the first hint was dropped. Where there was a boring, unimaginative husband - not difficult to find -there was a potential addition to the roster. In time and with care. It was admittedly painstaking and time-consuming but the results were spectacular. The wife of a senior banker, a soprano with a budding reputation at the State Opera, a high-powered PR woman, several air stewardesses, a tour guide, an interpreter at the Foreign Ministry, two or three lawyers and numerous suburban housewives were among those on call. Very few needed the financial rewards, which in any case were limited by a strict policy of no more than four engagements in a year. By that means the Frau Doktor was able to supply highly sexed women for whom the predominant attraction was an occasional escape from routine. The unpredictability of each summons added to the illicit thrill. Theo himself had delicious recollections of a female assistant curator who worked on Schoenbrunn Palace's porcelain collection. While her husband believed she was attending a conference in Dresden, she and Theo spent a week-end at a chalet no more than fifty kilometres from Vienna. Her name may or may not have been Trudi, nor was she necessarily thirty-three years of age; Ursula Steinmann always gave plausible details of such things but discretion was her priority. On the drive to their hideaway, Trudi had made polite conversation that barely disguised her nervousness with an American she had just met for the first time. Yet no sooner had they closed the chalet door than she dropped to her knees, unfastened his zip and took out his penis. With a quiet murmur of anticipation, she guided it into her mouth. When his orgasm approached, she did nothing to prevent it. It was the prelude to forty-eight hours of sex, punctuated only by the need to pause from time to time to recuperate. And that was when Trudi showed a gift for lascivious invention that had miraculous benefits for Theo's erection and his ability to sustain it. No word was spoken of Trudi's husband but it was not difficult to surmise that his shortcomings contributed to the enthusiasm with which she took advantage of a call from the Frau Doktor. That and other liaisons had occurred during Theo's years as head of the commercial section at the Embassy in Vienna. None was ever paid for; the Frau Doktor returned favors for favors. Theo rationalised that it was a reward that had been earned over the years. ***** Theodore F Walker had seemingly been predestined to serve his country in some form. The F was for Franklin. His parents had been staunch admirers of the Roosevelts. The fact that one President had been a Republican, the other a Democrat was immaterial. Baby Theodore Franklin was named to honor them both. Fortunately, his career path fulfilled his parents' implied ambition. After majoring in modern languages at UCLA, he survived a

series of exacting interviews in Washington. The outcome was State Department finance for a year of business studies in Geneva. Five years behind a desk back home prepared him for his first overseas posting and his first disappointment. Central America's prize berth was Mexico City. Theo found himself in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. Other let-downs followed. Scandinavia could have offered Copenhagen or Stockholm. Theo was given Reykjavik, though it was there he acquired a wife, a slim blonde named Astrid. Together, they moved east but not to Tokyo or Hong Kong but to Kuala Lumpur. At least Malaysia was warmer than Iceland, and this time Theo was promised a return to Europe and a more exciting appointment. This proved not to be the hoped-for Paris or Rome but Brussels. Career-wise there was much to be said for experience at the heart of the European Union, and for several years Theo immersed himself with such diligence that his State Department stock rose sharply. Astrid almost ruined it. Life on the diplomatic round had grown boring. She dutifully played hostess to visiting business delegations, attended the parties and receptions, but they had become a chore. Nevertheless, it was with complete astonishment that the rumour mill began to circulate stories of her liaison with the wife of the Italian ambassador. Titillation turned to scandal when allegations surfaced of the existence of photographs of the two women in bed together, one of them wearing a strap-on prosthesis. Theo was summoned by the Head of Personnel and baldly informed that only his recent work record could save him - and that on condition that Astrid was removed - swiftly, expensively if necessary. But removed. It was certainly expensive, making a nasty hole in Theo's inheritance from a business built up by his now late father. Astrid was prepared to cooperate as an escape route from a marriage that took second place to her husband's career, for all that their sex life, paradoxically, had been anything but dull. Part of the divorce settlement included a sworn undertaking that she would never disclose that Theo had been the photographer. Common sense dictated that Theo, too, should be moved away from Brussels. His knowledge of the European Union's labyrinthine commercial statutes, together with his mastery of several European languages, saved him from another Kuala Lumpur or Reykjavik. He was given Vienna, as number two to the Commercial Counsellor. And that was where he learned about Ursula Steinmann and the services she could offer. Wherever he had served, Theo understood that the requirements of businessmen or senators visiting from the States often needed attention outside official protocols. Some might wish to build in a holiday, others to take in some cultural or sporting activity. And there were inevitably some who would enquire, albeit casually, where the 'action' could be found. Depending on the importance of the enquirer, Theo was told, there were various contacts available. No details were on file. Theo was given names and telephone numbers to memorise (in fact, he encoded them and locked them away on his personal computer). Only CEOs and above were steered towards the Frau Doktor. Hers was not a number to be handed out by hotel concierges, even at exclusive five-star establishments. After succeeding to the number one post, he found that, however security-conscious he was, word of Ursula Steinmann's specialties had spread via the State Department grapevine. Requests for an introduction were frequent and had to be sifted with great tact. Ursula Steinmann came to appreciate the skill and discretion he brought to this opaque responsibility. It was not long before Theo had begun to receive reciprocal invitations to the house at Auergasse 17. And now he was back,

bypassing the embassy, having outlined his planned scenario in advance. Ursula confirmed that all the arrangements were in place. "Birgit will receive you. You will like her, I'm sure. A businesswoman well known here in the city. Not, of course, for ... this." Ursula waved a vague hand. "She is intelligent and, above all, discreet. She will not intrude. I have told her in general terms what you have in mind and she understands. Yes, it is a little different but that interests her." Curious to know more, Theo raised an enquiring eyebrow but the Frau Doktor had revealed all she intended to reveal. "Birgit will show you the room you have requested. But the Equipment Room is also available tonight if you change your mind ..." Theo shook his head. After so much anticipation, he knew exactly what he wanted. "Good, then. Enjoy your ... Lisl. And next time you come back don't wait so long." She offered a powdered cheek, acknowledging that their business was concluded. ***** It was somehow reassuring to discover that the door to Number Seventeen was still the familiar anonymous dark blue he remembered. Somewhere in a parallel street there was an entrance that allowed more informal access for the women who received the summons. Here, the brass plate still said Fr Dr U Steinmann, nothing more. The boutique at nineteen, however, was new. He was still wondering if the owners were aware of the service provided by their neighbour when the door opened. "Guten Abend. Herr Walker?" Birgit was a tall blonde formally dressed in a dark suit, the skirt just below knee length on seemingly excellent legs, the blouse pale blue with a high neckline. Generous curves suggested a full bosom, well supported. Late thirties, thought Theo as she ushered him inside. "Der Spiegelzimmer, nichts war?" "Ja. Richtig," he said, "That's right. The mirror room." Birgit led the way to the first floor. The room, which had always been his favourite, had been refurbished but the detail was unchanged: large bed with crisp white linen and deep pillows, fully stocked bar, video screen, fresh floral arrangements. And, borrowed from the Equipment Room, a padded bench. The lighting was clever, subdued overall, but with carefully directed illumination for the bed and for a floor-to-ceiling mirror in each of three walls. One, he knew, concealed the door to a luxurious bathroom; another gave access to an anteroom where Birgit would wait in case her services were required. Lisl, too, would enter from there. But not yet. He allowed Birgit to assist him in removing his clothes which she hung in a concealed closet. The preliminaries were complete with one exception. Smiling to show she had not forgotten the last of her instructions for the first part of the evening, she lifted her skirt to her waist, revealing black panties, stockings and garter belt. Her legs were as shapely as he had deduced. She stepped out of the panties and handed them to him. Then, with a glance at Theo's burgeoning erection and a nod of approval, she left through the mirrored door. Panties in hand, he went first to the video screen. He used the remote control to flick through the channels, finally settling on a mature brunette who was sensuously fellating her younger partner. On the bed, Theo arranged the pillows to support him in a sitting position. Then he wrapped the panties round his penis and began to masturbate very slowly. From time to time, the couple in the video changed positions, the young man kneeling to perform cunnilingus, then lifting the woman's ankles on to his shoulders while he penetrated her, and finally turning her on to her knees before sodomising her with metronomic concentration. Theo reached for a bedside button and pressed. In his precisely plotted scenario it was not yet time for Lisl. Birgit entered. She had shed the business suit and blouse but a fresh pair of

panties had been added to complete the black lingerie set. Stiletto heels emphasised the long legs. The expensive bra provided subtle uplift while the semi-transparent fabric emphasised prominent nipples. Without speaking, she crouched at the bedside, removed the panties he had been using, inspected his upright shaft, and then bent her head to take the engorged head into her mouth. Theo could not suppress a groan of appreciative expectation. He was not disappointed. Birgit's ability to bring him to the edge of ejaculation and hold him there was uncanny. Her instinct for the point at which to ease him back into self control was evidence of an extraordinary sexual awareness and expertise. Occasionally, she let his member slip from her lips so that she could look up and favor him with a smile which said that she was fully conscious of her own exquisite ability. But still this was only the preamble, the set-up, the preparation. Delicious though it was, the time came to set in motion the real purpose of the exercise. The lightest touch on the back of Birgit's head was the only indication necessary. She rose, wiped her lips with a tissue, handed him the panties he had been using earlier, and once again disappeared through the mirrored doorway. Shortly, she returned bearing an ice bucket and a bottle wrapped in a white cloth. Theo had no superior feelings about Austrian sekt but for this occasion he had specified the genuine article: French champagne, the 1999 Veuve Clicquot, and to hell with the cost. Birgit poured two flutes before crossing to press the button at the side of the bed. It was the signal for Lisl to emerge from the anteroom. Lisl was small, maybe 5'2" with low heels, dark shoulder-length hair, very blue eyes and a full mouth. She was twenty-seven. She wore a plain yellow dress, tight-fitting on a slim figure, high small breasts. She stood beside the bed with her hands crossed in front of her. Her gaze took in the erection he was still slowly stroking with the black panties. He said, "Hello Lisl." She said, "You are Theo." A statement not a question, but there was husky nervousness in the voice. "Yes, I'm Theo. And this is Birgit." "I know. We were together out there." She gestured towards the door to the anteroom. "Birgit will stay with us. To help you. But any time you would prefer her to leave, you only need say." "It's all right. I don't mind." Birgit served the champagne. They touched glasses. Ready. When they began it seemed natural that the older, taller woman should take the initiative. Lisl turned her back for the zip of her dress to be unfastened, raised her arms for it to be lifted over her head. Birgit hung it in the closet with Theo's things. Lisl was wearing panties and a flimsy bra in lemon yellow, complementing the glow of a tanned body with no surplus ounces. Small she may have been but everything about her figure was in proportion. "Come here, please." He spoke quietly, gently, encouraging rather than commanding. Birgit took her arm and steered her to the bed. Theo nodded and Birgit bent Lisl forward, away from him, presenting tight, rounded cheeks. He released his penis and used that hand to fondle Lisl's bottom. He asked her to widen her legs. This allowed him to reach between them and press the yellow panties into the damp crease at the front. She was already aroused. After allowing her to stand, he said, "Birgit has already taken care of me a little. Would you like to try?" For the first time Lisl smiled, looking directly into his eyes. "Yes," she said. "I would." When Lisl used her mouth it wasn't with the careful awareness that had characterised the attention he had received from Birgit; Lisl suckled him confidently, almost knowingly. Birgit's contribution was to move in and unclasp the yellow bra. It fell away and Theo reached out a hand to let a breast fall into his palm. When he began to twist a hardening nipple

between thumb and forefinger, Lisl tightened her lips on his shaft, flicked the tip of his penis with her tongue. Yes, go on. Like that. He closed his eyes. They had time and time to spare. This was what he had planned and he was intent on savoring it to the full. When he opened his eyes again he saw that Birgit was leaning with her back against one of the tall mirrors. The play of the concealed lighting seemed almost focussed on the hand she had slipped inside her panties. He could see her fingers moving slowly beneath the fabric. Ursula had assured him that Birgit would not participate unless specifically required to do so, but masturbation was hardly participation. The video had come to an end and the only sound was made by Lisl's lips as they glided up and down the length of Theo's taut weapon. Perhaps, even against her instructions, Birgit had become irresistibly caught up in the claustrophobic erotic atmosphere created by the couple in the circle of light at the centre of the bed. It was Lisl herself who initiated the next move. Rising and standing back to view the result of her endeavours, she seemed pleased, excited even. She kicked off her shoes, approached Theo again and asked him to take off her panties. There were no tell-tale bikini scars in the all-over tan. A neat triangle of dark hair drew the eye to clearly defined vagina lips. Naked now, she climbed on to the bed, told Theo to remain in a sitting position, his back cushioned by the pillows. Then she faced him, placed a foot delicately each side of him, braced herself with her hands against the wall and thrust her pelvis towards his face. Theo knew exactly what was expected of him and wasted no time in complying. His arms reached round her, his hands cupped her buttocks and drew her on to him. He saw puffy labia showing signs of leaking moisture, inhaled the heady aroma of female genital excretion and set to work with his tongue. Very soon, with astonishing control, she held herself firmly against him, shuddered silently and came. Theo was pleased, expecting the orgasm would have relaxed her. They could move on confidently. He lowered her gently to the bed and then drew her attention to Birgit, still slumped against the mirror, her hand now moving more urgently. Suddenly, the older woman emerged from her trance-like self-pleasuring to realise that they were watching her. She snatched her hand from inside her panties and stood forward. "Oh," she gasped. "Entschuldigen. Ich -"

"There's nothing to excuse," said Theo. "I think we can take it as a compliment. Yes, Lisl?" Lisl nodded. He put his hand on her thigh and squeezed lightly. "How about if we asked Birgit to join us? Would you like that?" "Yes. I think I'd like it very much." Although it was almost as if Lisl had been expecting the question, she waited for Theo to act as master of ceremonies. He asked Birgit to shed the black panties before taking the sitting position he had vacated against the bedhead. Lisl knelt, spread the older woman's legs, held the shaven labia apart until the clitoris sprang into view, then touched it with her tongue, tip against tip. A little tremor ran through Birgit's body. Theo took his place behind Lisl and ran his hand yet again over the curves of her buttocks. A fingertip rested briefly against the pink sphincter. Tempted, but in no hurry to pre-empt his plans, he moved on, using both hands to provide him with easy access for a penis that still showed a rigidity that was a tribute to the ministrations of both women. He rolled a condom along the length, checked that it gripped firmly. Steadying Lisl with one hand, with the other he steered his member to the vaginal entrance and eased his way inside. The sensation that always made him think of oiled silk despite the gauze-like protective, welcomed him, drew him in. Without losing contact with Birgit, Lisl pressed back against

him, letting him understand that she was ready to accept all he could offer. He began to move in her. The rapport was instantaneous, an instinctive rhythm as hard tissue slid inside moist warmth. She seemed driven to intensify her lapping of Birgit who, just as when she had leaned against the mirror, had closed her eyes. Theo wondered if she was unwilling to confront her own sexuality yet unable to deny herself the pleasure. His own response completed the circle. Aroused by the sight of Birgit's hardening nipples and the sound of her soft moans, he found himself involuntarily increasing the speed and force of his penetration of Lisl. He held her hips, sought deeper and deeper thrusting. Almost at once he was aware of a danger of exploding too soon. He needed to steady himself. In his mind he conjured up the image of the couple in the video trying to empathise with the even regularity of their precisely controlled lust. Gradually, he was able to settle back into a tempo of insertion and withdrawal that would keep Lisl moving towards her orgasm while his own no longer threatened to engulf him. Eventually, probably inevitably, Birgit broke the spell. Eyes screwed tight, breasts heaving, breathing irregular, all the signs of impending orgasm built to breaking point. She clutched the back of Lisl's head, held her in place as the tumult overtook her in a series of seismic spasms. Lisl, understanding as only another woman could, licked and nuzzled gently until Birgit crumpled in exhaustion. When she had recovered, she was embarrassed, trying to thank Lisl while apologising to Theo, fearing she had exceeded her duties. He reassured her by suggesting that they should move on to the planned culmination of the evening. Birgit's dramatic fulfilment had already disrupted the equilibrium of the three bodies, causing his penis to slip from its warm nest. He removed the condom and wrapped it in a tissue. Never mind; they were not finished. Relieved, Birgit took Lisl by the arm and led her to the padded bench. This had been placed in its own pool of light in front of one of the tall mirrors. Four adjustable steel legs were anchored to a large wooden plinth for stability. She made Lisl bend across it, face down, while she lowered the height to ensure the younger woman's comfort, taking care that Lisl's breasts were not crushed by the weight of her torso. Four velvet cuffs with velcro fastenings secured Lisl's wrists and ankles to the legs of the bench. While Birgit disappeared momentarily into the anteroom, Theo stationed himself behind Lisl's prostrate body, his eyes firmly on the pink orifice between her cheeks. Birgit reappeared. She had put on latex gloves and was carrying a tube of lubricant. She looked to Theo who indicated that she should proceed. Leaning slightly to one side, he could see Lisl's face in the mirror. She seemed calm, untroubled and trusting. The older woman applied the lubricant to a broad area of Lisl's buttocks with a soothing circular massage, moving gradually towards her objective. After a while, she squeezed lubricant on to her smallest finger and rested it against the anal opening. Theo leaned forward. Little by little, almost imperceptibly, Birgit allowed her her finger to make its way inside. At the second knuckle she rested. Lisl made no sound. Birgit withdrew and repeated the process with her index finger, this time using a slow in-and-out motion. After she had demonstrated that two fingers could enter without causing Lisl any distress, Birgit stepped aside. Lisl was now Theo's. While watching the sensitive preparation, he had been stroking his member with care. He could not have been more ready. Birgit offered him a second condom which he reluctantly accepted. He knew what he would have liked but this was not wild, irresponsible sex. In any case, there would be enough excitement; if the condom slowed him

down, delayed the unstoppable, so much the better. Theo stepped on to the plinth, took his penis in his right hand, placed it at the centre of the lubricated area. If he had been careful earlier when entering Lisl's vagina for the first time, he was doubly attentive now. The sphincter offered slight resistance but the lubricant, aided by Birgit's fingering, has done its work. The head of his penis, slipped in. The sphincter gripped. He paused, looked to the mirror. Lisl's eyes met his. She nodded. He pressed further. Surprised, he found that she could accommodate his full length. There had been no lack of muscle tone when he had mounted her on the bed, but between vagina and anus there was a sensation of an entirely different kind. Maybe it was partly in the mind, the exploration of the forbidden passage. But it was physical, too, the smooth friction, the subtle stimulation of tingling nerve ends. He noticed for the first time that there handles on each side of the bench. He gripped them, braced his feet against the dais, and began to fuck. Forget more polite forms, discard anal intercourse. At last, he told himself, he was fucking Lisl's ass. He pulled half his length out to see the moisture glistening in the light, then firmly filled her again. He wanted it to last for ever, and he did everything he could to stop himself from letting nature take its course. He tried deep breathing. He held himself still, buried inside her. He tried to put his mind elsewhere. But the urgent message from his groin couldn't be denied indefinitely. In the mirror he could see Lisl's seraphic smile, as though willing him on. Lost, he surrendered to the demand, pumping, pumping, pumping into the tightness. And then erupted. Birgit took charge of the aftermath with solicitous efficiency, releasing Lisl from the cuffs, guiding her to first use of the bathroom. Theo retired to the bed and lay there replaying in his mind the events of the evening. His hand strayed to his penis which was still semi-erect. The foreseen scenario had come to fruition. Lisl had given every sign of enjoyment and ultimate satisfaction. Birgit's involvement had been an unexpected bonus. Lisl emerged from the bathroom, fully dressed, fresh make-up, innocent demeanour. She stood beside the bed, hands crossed in front of her as she had a long time earlier. She leaned down, kissed his cheek and left through the door to the anteroom without a backward look. Theo showered thoughtfully, dressed and thanked Birgit, letting her know that if Ursula enquired there would be nothing but gratitude and appreciation from him. ***** Back at the hotel, his wife was waiting, already in bed. "How was it?" she asked. "Superb." "All you expected?" "More." He undressed and climbed in beside her. He raised himself on one elbow and looked into her face. "And you, Liz?" he asked. "How was it for you?" "I was nervous. You know that. The first time - I was afraid it would hurt. But Birgit was so gentle." He nodded, happy that it had worked so well. After a pause, Liz said, "At the beginning, when you were - you know ..." "Taking care of myself?" "Yes, then. We were watching you - we could see you through that mirror. Did you know?" "No. But I guessed." "The thing is it got to me very quickly, you using Birgit's panties. I started ... well, warming myself up. Birgit was watching me and I was turned on by that, too. She came over and went down on me. Just like that. Nothing said. We both just knew it would be all right. Anyway, you've seen me often enough like that on this trip - we've discovered a lot, haven't we? So you know by now, if you didn't before, how I love it. And I just let her. Encouraged her, really. Do you mind?" Theo shook his head, remembering adventures in upmarket swingers clubs in Paris and Copenhagen during earlier stops. "Then when I watched her giving you the benefit

of that brilliant tongue, I did myself again. Couldn't help it. So when Birgit brought me in and you made me open my legs to see if I was already wet, of course I was. And ready for more." "Now?" She laughed. "That wasn't what I meant. But yes. Why not? As long as I can be Lisl." "Meaning what?" "Well, nothing is ever the same as the first time. It can't be. But you made my first time so - so special. Now I want us to build on that. To learn how it can get better each time." She turned serious for a moment. "We mustn't do it like that as though it's routine. Not every time we make love. Let's keep it special. Only when I ask to be Lisl." She paused, looking into his eyes, wondering if he could see the smile in hers. "But you never know, the second time might be a disappointment. So perhaps we should get that over with straight away." "Yes," he said. "Lisl." She reached under the pillow for a tube of lubricant, handed it to him and turned on to her knees, her bottom towards him. He took his penis in his hand and moved forward.

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